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'CORTACA CAN'
BRINGS RIVALRY
OFF THE FIELD

Ithaca combats food insecurity amid SNAP cuts

BY KAELEIGH BANDA
NEWS EDITOR

The longest government shut-down in United States history resulted in 42 million recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits trying to find other sources of food. Amid barriers to equitable access to food across the nation, the Ithaca community continues to mobilize to provide food security through food pantries, meal swipe donations, community kitchens and transportation assistance.

In a Nov. 5 Intercom post, the Ithaca College Center for Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging posted a link to a page with consolidated resources to help people find meal support during the SNAP benefit pause. Omar Stoute '18 — director of staff equity, inclusion and belonging — said he wanted to advertise the resources available as heavily as possible to increase awareness for those who were impacted by the shutdown.

"It's important that we recognize that this is a much larger issue than what we've experienced the last couple of months," Stoute said. "This is the moment right now that we need to be a community more than ever if we're going to get through this in as close to one piece as possible."

The U.S. government shut down

Oct. 1, pausing federal programs for the duration of it. The shutdown occurred after Democrats tried to negotiate in the House of Representatives on health insurance provisions being added to the spending deal. They wanted an extension of an enhanced tax credit

that lowers the cost of health care obtained through the Affordable Care Act marketplaces.

House Republicans did not want to negotiate on those terms before the spending deal was passed. On Nov. 12, the House of Representatives approved the funding package

that passed in the Senate, which did not include the Democratic health insurance provisions, and President Donald Trump signed the bill into law, ending the shutdown.

Junior Joshua Decamps — student employee at Ithaca College's food pantry, Prunty's Pantry — said

he was scared when the government restricted SNAP because people need that money.

"[Trump] is trying to redirect that money," Decamps said. "How are you as the president going to choose to spend that much money on fixing the White House while trying to [take] money from people who need it for food? How does that even make sense?"

In past shutdowns, SNAP benefits remained unaffected. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which oversees the SNAP program, has a fund to maintain SNAP in emergencies like the shutdown, but the Trump administration originally did not allow those funds to be used. States responded by suing the government for the suspension of funds being "contrary to law ... and an abuse of discretion." After two court orders, an agreement was reached to partially fund the November benefits.

Even though SNAP benefits have returned after the shutdown, new restrictions and cuts are still being implemented.

As of Nov. 1, the eligibility rules for SNAP benefits are stricter for people aged 18 to 64 who are not living with a child under 14 and are able to work. The new restrictions are part of the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" signed by Trump on July 4.

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Bombers win 66th annual Cortaca Jug PPECS hours reinstated

BY GRAHAM GOODMAN
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

The Ithaca College Bombers brought the Cortaca Jug back to South Hill on Nov. 15 in a 26-21 victory over the SUNY Cortland Red Dragons that could go down as one of the most entertaining games in Cortaca history. The win was the Bombers' first win since 2022 and first win on home turf since 2017.

The 66th annual edition of the "biggest little game in the nation" came down to the very last play after a late interception in the end zone by Bombers junior defensive back Cam Paquette left the Red Dragons with not enough time to find a touchdown once they regained possession.

This victory was not enough for the Bombers to make the NCAA tournament, missing a playoff bid by merely one spot on the NCAA Power Index. The Red Dragons advance to the tournament to play Springfield College.

The Bombers relied heavily on junior quarterback Mike Reed to lead the offense, throwing for 177 yards and two touchdowns, while leading the team in rushing, running for 98 yards and what became the game winning touchdown.

Reed's favorite target on the cloudy afternoon was junior wide receiver Nicholas Lang,



The Ithaca College football team faces off against the SUNY Cortland Red Dragons during the Cortaca Jug. The Bombers brought the Jug back to South Hill in a 26-21 win.

MARISSA MOSCHELLA/THE ITHACAN

who racked up 88 yards and was on the receiving end of both of Reed's passing touchdowns.

While the Bombers' offense had an outstanding third quarter, the defense shined in the fourth. Two late stops for the Bombers sealed the

win with less than 90 seconds on the clock.

To see photos from the game, go to page 15 for The Ithacan's Cortaca photo essay.

CORTACA PHOTO ESSAY, PAGE 15

PPECS hours reinstated

BY EAMON CORBO
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Ithaca College's Park Portable Equipment Center and Services (PPECS) had its paid student employment hours reinstated to 140 hours Nov. 17 after they were reduced to 100 hours in mid-October. The decision to reduce PPECS hours came after the college discovered in September that Technical Operations, which PPECS falls under, went over budget during fiscal year 2025, which ran from July 2024 to June 2025.

PPECS, located on the first floor of Roy H. Park Hall, is where communications students can check out professional media production equipment.

Amy Falkner, dean of the Roy H. Park School of Communications, said the college could not tell that Technical Operations was over budget because some expenses in the Park School were attributed to incorrect budget lines. She said this created a discrepancy between what Technical Operations was spending and

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WORLD NEWS

US aircraft carrier arrives in the Caribbean amid anti-drug operations

The U.S. aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford, the world’s largest warship, arrived in the Caribbean, the U.S. Navy said Nov. 16, sparking speculation about Washington’s next moves in its campaign against alleged drug-smuggling boats in the region.

The deployment, ordered by the Pentagon, aims “to dismantle Transnational Criminal Organizations and counter narco-terrorism in defense of the Homeland,” the Navy said in a statement.

— dpa/TNS

Ethiopia confirms the first outbreak of Marburg virus after testing cases

Ethiopia confirmed its first outbreak of Marburg virus disease after sending samples from a cluster of suspected cases of viral hemorrhagic fever for testing the week of Nov. 9.

The virus is the same strain reported in previous outbreaks in other East African nations, the World Health Organization said late Nov. 14.

Nine cases, including health workers, have been reported in Ethiopia’s southern

region near South Sudan. The WHO and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said Ethiopia moved quickly to identify the virus and begin containment efforts.

— Janice Kew/Bloomberg News/TNS

Israel vows to say no to Palestinian state as UN is set to vote on Gaza plan

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said there will be no Palestinian state. He also said Hamas will be disarmed by force, if necessary. This comes as the U.S. seeks U.N. Security Council approval for a plan for Gaza that anticipates Palestinian statehood.

“Our opposition to a Palestinian state in any territory has not changed,” Netanyahu said at his weekly cabinet meeting Nov. 16. “Gaza will be demilitarized, and Hamas will be disarmed, the easy way or the hard way.”

— Ethan Bronner/Bloomberg News/TNS

China warns its citizens against traveling to Japan amid Taiwan row

China urged its citizens to avoid traveling to Japan in the near future, escalating a conflict over comments from Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi suggesting potential



Rep. Greene says Trump put her life in danger

Georgia Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene said President Donald Trump put her life in danger with a social post calling her a traitor to the Republican Party.

— Tony Czuczka/Bloomberg News/TNS

REUTERS/JONATHAN ERNST

intervention in the event of a military conflict over Taiwan.

The measure is the first significant retaliation taken by Beijing in the row. The measure was sparked by Takaichi’s remarks last week that military force used in any Taiwan conflict could be considered a “survival-threatening situation” — a classification that would provide a legal justification for Japan to intervene.

— Foster Wong and Jacob Gu/Bloomberg News/TNS

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Fans react to thrilling Cortaca win

The Ithaca College Bombers won the 66th annual Cortaca Jug over the SUNY Cortland Red Dragons 26-21. Reporter Christian Gratto talks to the crowd in the stands.



Popcorn Premieres – “Bugonia”

Hosts Logan Thompson and Dylan Long run through the latest Hollywood news before breaking down recent hits “Bugonia” and “Predator: Badlands.”

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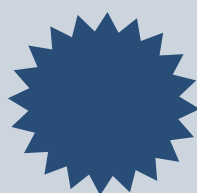
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FROM SNAP, PAGE 1

One new initiative at IC that was added in response to the shutdown was the Employee Meal Swipe Fund. The existing student Swipe Out Hunger program began in 2018 to allow students to donate their extra guest meal swipes to other students who request them through Student Financial Services. Students can then use the swipes at the dining halls or cafes on campus. Now, there is a similar effort to support employees with access to the on-campus dining halls.

Beyond IC’s campus, local food pantries and community kitchens stepped up to support those impacted by the SNAP cuts. Kelly Sauvé, executive director of Loaves & Fishes Tompkins County, said the community kitchen serves an average of 350 meals a day.

“All food providers were sort of bracing for the worst,” Sauvé said. “There was that immediate mobilization of ‘How are we going to get more food and get more donors?’ ... We have seen a number of new donors stepping up.”

In the greater Tompkins County area, Matthew Rosenbloom-Jones, general manager of the Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit, said the TCAT has provided free bus rides to Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card holders to help bring people to places where they can get food.

In Tompkins County, 7,694 people are SNAP recipients. Rosenbloom-Jones said the government shutdown brought awareness about how many people in the Southern Tier utilize these federal benefit

programs, so he hopes to find a way to continue the free ride program past the shutdown.

“We really have a lot of work we need to do as far as making sure these programs are sustainable,” Rosenbloom-Jones said. “I do think that there is a model, and we know the model works now for expanding this program in the future when some of the barriers have been addressed.”

Stoute said many of the services to help the IC community amid the SNAP cuts were already in place. According to Feeding America, millions of college students face food insecurity because of rising tuition and housing costs on top of having to buy groceries.

Prunty’s Pantry is a food pantry located on the first floor of the Campus Center. The pantry is funded through donations from the community, and is not reliant on any government funding. Decamps said he has been working in the pantry since his first year on campus and also uses the pantry to get his food.

“I feel that nobody [should] feel ashamed of using the pantry because it’s just a smart thing to do,” Decamps said. “The pantry is not for a [specific] group of people; the pantry is for whoever needs things.”

Sybil Conrad, director of the Campus Center, said that in the 2025-26 academic year alone, the pantry has seen significant growth. She said that in August, 70-80 people visited the pantry a week, and in early November, there were 140-150 people a week.

“The commitment of our community and the generosity of our



Loaves & Fishes Tompkins County community kitchen serves an average of 350 meals a day. The kitchen serves lunch Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and serves dinner Tuesday and Thursday.

KAELEIGH BANDA/THE ITHACAN

community have exceeded what we have needed,” Conrad said. “So we have been able to purchase what we feel like students and the visitors at the pantry need and not hold back because we can’t afford to get what they need. It’s just wonderful.”

Research from the National Library of Medicine found that an individual’s level of food security impacts their mental and emotional well-being. In addition to expanding resources, Conrad said one of the pantry’s goals is to make the space as welcoming as possible.

“An initiative that we’ve taken on this year is adding [food] puns

wherever possible in the food pantry,” Conrad said. “We also play music and have a Bluetooth speaker where we can make the space feel comfortable and enjoyable so that folks feel like it’s a positive experience to visit the food pantry.”

In the U.S., prices of goods are increasing faster than wages. Decamps said the impact of inflation on the cost of groceries also contributes to food inaccessibility.

“Food is a resource to survive,” Decamps said. “The fact that this country is blowing prices up in an insane way, trying to take benefits away like SNAP and food stamps, is

insane. ... The system is built up for certain groups of people to fail.”

Stoute said the initiatives to decrease food insecurity rely on community support.

He said he and others at the CEIB recognize that food insecurity is not going away and they plan to sustain efforts to combat it.

“We have always, since I’ve been a student here, worked to support people with need, and so I don’t think that’s going away from IC,” Stoute said. “It’s part of the fabric of the community.”

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FROM PPECS, PAGE 1

what was monitored.

“Some of PPECS’s hours got attributed to my budget in the Dean’s office,” Falkner said. “So it didn’t look like they were off their budget because it didn’t show up that they were off their budget.”

Senior Daisy Bolger, the PPECS Pro student manager, handles advanced cameras, lighting and audio gear. She said that during the reduced hours, PPECS — which typically has four student employees working at once — had three students working and replaced the fourth student position with a full-time Technical Operations staff employee.

“Our resources have been so depleted that there are days where we’re not even sure if we’re going to get all the equipment out to students,” Bolger said. “And that’s never something we have ever experienced before.”

Senior Rhiannon Strazisar, the assistant PPECS regular student manager, said PPECS tries to have orders built at least one day in advance from when the order’s pick-up time is. She said it was difficult to prepare orders ahead of time while the hours were reduced.

“There was a point ... where we were not even 15 minutes ahead of the time that people were coming to pick up orders,” Strazisar said.

In addition to PPECS, some students who worked in master control were laid off or had their hours reduced as a result of Technical Operations going over budget. Master control is located on the first floor of the Park School and is where broadcast operations like Ithaca College Television are managed.

Senior Madison Schriver, who worked as a key tech in master control, said she found out she was being let go in the middle of her last shift.

“I was planning on using that money for groceries and gas, and just living in [a Circle Apartment], but then also I was going to use that money to make my thesis film,” Schriver said. “So

that kind of puts me in a tight situation looking for cash for the rest of the semester.”

Falkner said the Park School is bringing back every student employee in master control, but the volume of hours available will still be reduced.

Bolger said the reduced hours made it more difficult for her and other student managers to train new student employees because they did not have enough time to train them properly.

“It probably takes us like 45 minutes to check a camera and a wireless system and all those things, and we don’t have that,” Bolger said. “So we’re having to do faster, lazier inspections because that’s what we have time for.”

Tim Downs, senior vice president and chief financial officer, said the college has spent around \$6 million in student wages a year since at least when he arrived at the college in 2021. He said the \$6 million spent on student wages is expected to continue through fiscal year 2030.

New York state’s minimum wage is \$15.50 and has increased every year since the start of 2017, when it was \$9.70. The state’s minimum wage is set to increase to \$16 on Jan. 1, 2026.

Downs said the increase in minimum wage has led to a reduction in student hours across campus because the budget for student wages has stayed flat.

“With the reduction in hours that comes from an increase in the minimum wage, students are likely going to see less than their paycheck as a result of that,” Downs said. “The hour reductions are likely going to be more than the increase in their hourly rate.”

Falkner said the increase in minimum wage was part of the reason Technical Operations went over budget. Falkner said the number of requests PPECS receives and the number of items within each PPECS order have increased gradually since the COVID-19 pandemic, while the Park School’s non-salary operating budget has stayed relatively stagnant since she arrived at the college in 2021.

“[PPECS] is such a key part of the Park School,” Falkner said. “It’s an essential need for us, we can’t really operate and be the Park



Senior Rhiannon Strazisar, the assistant Park Portable Equipment Center and Services (PPECS) regular student manager, bringing in a returned equipment order to PPECS.

EAMON CORBO/THE ITHACAN

School without students having the ability to get equipment to do the great things that they do.”

Falkner declined to share specific information on the Park School’s non-salary operating budget since it is not publicly available.

Falkner said PPECS’s reinstated hours are paid for using existing resources in the Park School’s budget. She said the Park School has enough money in its budget to finish the rest of the 2025-26 academic year.

“We’re taking a hard look at where maybe we spent money last year that we don’t need to,” Falkner said. “It’s two things, it’s, ‘OK, [we] might move some money around’ but we also need to monitor better what is actually happening on the ground.”

Falkner said both the Office of the Provost and the Office of Business and Finance are anticipating that Park will be requesting a larger budget for Technical Operations in fiscal year 2027 than in previous fiscal years.

Bolger said the work that student employees

in PPECS do is often specialized technician work that goes beyond what is taught in Park classes.

“Because [PPECS] requires so much skill and time and training, it should be a place where you can get adequate hours to pay for groceries,” Bolger said.

Strazisar said it was difficult to navigate the reduction because PPECS’s hours were reduced in the middle of the semester when there was an increase in the volume of orders that PPECS receives.

“We are sort of the backbone of the Park School,” Strazisar said. “A lot of our majors here are production-based. So you’re using that equipment outside of the classroom but also you’re using it in the classroom to get things done. So if we don’t have enough labor to get all that equipment inspected and working properly, other stuff is going to start to shut down as well.”

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Filmmaker Ira McKinley perseveres

BY JULIAN DELUCIA

ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Ira McKinley, filmmaker, Ithaca College Dining Services employee and lifelong activist, says he has never been afraid to speak his mind. He stands tall with a thin, graying goatee, a gravelly voice and glasses. The 61-year-old man was born in Pahokee, Florida — which was the setting of his 2022 award-winning documentary “Outta the Muck,” — and grew up in Ithaca’s Southside neighborhood.

On campus, McKinley works at Towers Eatery and is well-known by students for his online presence on TikTok, where he often makes videos with students. McKinley’s page details his living situation and promotes his new film project, “A Tale of Two Journeys.”

A lifelong activist, McKinley was involved in the ACT UP Movement in Ithaca in the ‘80s, as well as the Occupy Wall Street movement in the late 2000s. McKinley describes himself as a socialist and has been very critical of President Donald Trump and his administration’s cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. He said the policies of Project 2025 are meant to strip people of their freedoms.

“Everybody needs food, clothes and shelter, that’s a basic human right,” McKinley said. “That’s the



Ira McKinley, filmmaker, Ithaca College Dining Services employee and lifelong activist, is well-known by students for his online presence on TikTok, where he often makes videos with them.

JULIAN DELUCIA/THE ITHACAN

friends’ houses. He said he has been unsuccessful with getting access to Code Blue services from the Tompkins County Department of Social Services. Code Blue, or Code Blue shelters, are emergency shelters that open when temperatures are below freezing.

In 1979, when McKinley was 14 years old, he was told that his father had been shot and killed by police officers in Miami. Exactly 10 years later, after spending four

was arrested and convicted as a felon for attempted armed robbery. From 1999 to 2002, McKinley served at Arthur Kill Correctional Facility on Staten Island.

Following his release from prison, McKinley began working and learning about film at Northampton Open Media, which was formerly titled Northampton Community Television.

“They wouldn’t give me a job so I had to create a job,” McKinley said. “This is what I did, I know how to film and edit.”

In the early 2010s, McKinley began working on his first feature film. He has directed two feature-length documentaries, “The Throwaways” (2013) and “Outta the Muck” (2022). “The Throwaways” won Best Feature Documentary at the Long Beach Indie Film Festival and the 2014 New York Hi Lights award at the Harlem International Film Festival. “Outta the Muck” won the Soul of Southern Film award at the Indy Memphis Film Festival.

“The Throwaways” is a film about the effects of police brutality and mass incarceration on the Black community in Albany, New York. Told through the lens of McKinley’s lived experiences, it explores the idea that certain communities and lives in the United States are seen as expendable by the government and society. “Outta the Muck” follows Alvin and Bridget Dean, members of McKinley’s tight-knit family from Pahokee, Florida and their tale of achievement, love and struggle through an undefeated season of high school football.

McKinley codirected both films with his friend Bhawin Suchak, filmmaker and co-founder and executive director of Youth FX.

In May 2025, Trump signed an executive order cutting over \$1 billion in funding for the Corporation of Public Broadcasting through 2027. The CPB is the main funding body of both public media organizations NPR and PBS. “Outta the Muck” was produced by the Independent Television Service, a branch of PBS that focuses on documentaries

made by underrepresented voices. As a result, McKinley has struggled to find funding for his new project, “A Tale of Two Journeys,” about the legacy of Black Americans in Upstate New York through two major exoduses of the South: the Underground Railroad and the Great Migration.

Suchak said the funding cuts to PBS have made it more difficult for independent filmmakers to find funding and that the industry and nation will suffer as a result.

“It’s just closed up a huge opportunity for a lot of filmmakers,” Suchak said. “Someone like Ira who’s got incredible storytelling skills but doesn’t come from a conventional background.”

Each Tuesday and Thursday in the summer and fall, McKinley joins Charles Rhody, nutrition program director at Southside Community Center, in giving out fresh fruits and vegetables to the community. Rhody said the food comes from West Haven Farm in Northwest Ithaca. Rhody is an active member of the community, having volunteered at Southside for nearly 30 years.

McKinley has been going to Southside since he was a kid.

While the tables are getting set up, McKinley brings out his laptop and speaker and plays music. He plays mostly funk and old R&B. Using YouTube tabs, he unmutes and fades up the volume on an instrumental while starting another song, mixing tracks on the fly. He says he has been DJing since the ‘80s.

“This is my little service I provide,” McKinley said. “This is what I do. I ain’t got the mixing board, but I can count the beats.”

McKinley said he does not care about materialistic things and that he tries to give back what he can to his community despite his situation. He said he knows how to survive and keep himself safe.

“I’m an activist,” McKinley said. “People say, ‘Oh, we’re gonna break him,’ and they’re surprised when I don’t break, you know? ... You can’t make me shut up.”

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SGC establishes AI committee

BY NAOMI MARTIN

STAFF WRITER

The Ithaca College Student Governance Council met Nov. 17 to hear from David Weil, senior vice president for strategic services, and Casey Kendall, deputy Chief Information Officer, to speak about sustainability and other initiatives in the Office of Information Technology and Analytics. The council also voted on a bill to establish a new artificial intelligence ad hoc committee.

Kendall went over IT’s environmental contributions. Kendall said that IC’s small scale processing data centers run on 100% renewable energy. Other initiatives include the technology renewal program, which recycles old or unused technology on campus.

First-year student Ari Medvinsky, senator-at-large, said there are concerns regarding the environmental impact of generative AI and the large energy undertaking of data centers. Weil said sustainability and AI has continually been an issue that the office has been looking into.

“[We] have to get more nuanced, you can’t just say AI, you have to say how you’re using AI and then you can have more informed conversations,” Weil said.

IT is looking to improve communication with students surrounding AI on campus. Weil said he is a personal advocate for AI transparency beyond the college.

“The conversation has to go to a deeper level and I think that’s where we can have some good dialogue back and forth,” Weil said.

Weil said IC has been evaluating the digital steps that students take through the application process and their time at the college through a process called journey mapping. The college is working with Higher Digital, a consulting and software company that specializes in higher education, to produce this study. The study will include an examination of course registration and financial aid through the lens of different student experiences, such as international students and first-generation students. Weil said focus groups will be held in Spring 2025 to interview students.

Medvinsky, first-year student Margaret “Mega” Gem Martinez, international senator; and sophomore Abe Marron, senator-at-large, presented their bill which lines out the establishment of an SGC AI ad hoc committee. Marron said the purpose of this bill is to establish a committee that will meet twice a semester, as well as host town halls once a semester to gather and compile comprehensive student opinions surrounding AI.

Marron said the committee would require at least two members of each school present at the block meetings and town halls. The cochairs will be reviewed by the council and must pass with a two-thirds vote.

The AI ad hoc committee will run for three years and has the opportunity to be renewed for further years.

The council then voted on the establishment of the committee. The bill passed with 11 votes with none opposed.

During senator reports, senior Nikki Sutera, senate chair, outlined the current council positions that are available on SGC. These positions are two Class of 2026 senators, two Class of 2027 senators, School of Communications senator, School of Music, Theatre, and Dance senator, transfer senator, Students of Color Coalition senator, club athlete senator, off-campus senator and graduate senator.

The SGC is the sole representative body for the Ithaca College student community. The SGC meets from 7-9 p.m. every Monday in the Taughannock Falls room of the Campus Center.

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McKinley has been working at Towers Eatery for the last few months. He previously worked as a lead server at the Food Lab in Terrace Dining Hall and at the Ithaca Alehouse.

JULIAN DELUCIA/THE ITHACAN

same thing they did to the slaves, bro. They’re trying to make everyone a slave.”

McKinley moved back to Ithaca from Albany two years ago. He is currently living in a tent behind the house of an old friend. He has his bags and clothes, an air mattress and a space heater, among other items. He has a gym membership in order to access a shower and uses the nearby porta-potty for his bathroom. Items he was not able to fit in his tent were either sold or kept at

years in the Air Force, he returned to Ithaca, where he was beaten by officers in the Ithaca Police Department. Following the event, McKinley spoke up at a Town Hall meeting, causing the Ithaca Journal to write about the situation.

“When they did something to me, I would rise up and start marches and demonstrations and become a pain in their ass,” McKinley said.

McKinley left Ithaca for Albany not long after, where he said he became addicted to crack and

COLLEGE BRIEFS

Learn about fossils, dinosaurs and climate change over winter break

Students can enroll in “History of Life on Earth” during winter break. The course will focus on how life originated on Earth, the evolutionary relation of dinosaurs and birds, the significance of the big bang theory and how different mass extinctions shape the Earth. The course also includes topics like dinosaur origin and diversity, the fossil record, mass extinctions, human evolution, the evolution of viruses and bacteria and biodiversity. The course fulfills the natural sciences requirement in the college’s Integrative Core Curriculum. It will also fulfill a liberal arts credit. The course will run from Dec. 16 to Jan. 17, 2026. Those seeking more information can contact Nandadevi Cortes Rodriguez, associate professor in the Department of Biology, at mcortes@ithaca.edu.

Office of International Programs holding study abroad info session

Any student planning to study abroad during the 2026-27 academic year must register for their program using the IC Terra Dotta portal by Feb. 15, 2026. The Office of International Programs is holding an information session on studying abroad from noon to 12:30 p.m. Dec. 4 over Zoom. Students interested in studying abroad are also encouraged to watch the recording of the Sept. 2 study abroad information session. Individuals with disabilities requiring accommodations should reach out to studyabroad@ithaca.edu or 607-274-3306 as soon as possible.

Food bank of the Southern Tier needs Thanksgiving break volunteers

Ithaca College students, faculty and staff who will be in the Ithaca area over November

break can volunteer at the Food Bank of the Southern Tier. The IC community will be at the food bank from 1-3 p.m. Nov. 24. The entire event will run from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. to include time for lunch and for transportation to the food bank. Lunch will be provided to all attendees. Individuals with disabilities requiring accommodations should contact Suzie Brache at sbrache@ithaca.edu or 607-274-3244 as soon as possible.

Ithaca College Eco Reps seeking volunteers for Friday food donations

Ithaca College Eco Reps is seeking volunteers for its food donation events Fridays from 7:45-8:45 p.m. at the Campus Center Dining Hall. The group helps combat food waste by packaging and labeling unused food to give to those in need. The donations are collected through the Friendship Donations Network, a local nonprofit organization.

Applications for students to attend Creating Change conference open

The Ithaca College Center for LGBT Education, Outreach, and Services opened an application for four students to attend the 2026 Creating Change conference in Washington D.C. The conference will take place from Jan. 21-25, 2026. Applications for the attendees are due by 11:59 p.m. Nov. 30.

Creating Change is a large gathering that provides opportunities to build skills, celebrate victories and connect with people in the LGBTQ+ community. Lodging, travel, conference registration and meals will be fully sponsored for the students who are selected to attend the conference. The selected students will be notified by Dec. 10. Students selected to attend the conference will miss up to four days of the first week of classes of Spring 2026. Anyone with



Pitch Please reigns strong with fall concert

Junior Zoe Lipman sings “Versace on the Floor” by Bruno Mars, surrounded by fellow members of the a cappella group Pitch Please. The group’s “Purple Reign” Block II concert was performed Nov. 14 in Emerson Suites.

IAN LEWONO/THE ITHACAN

questions should contact Crissi Dalfonzo — the director of the Center for LGBT Education, Outreach, and Services — at cdalfonzo@ithaca.edu.

Honoring the life of former Ithaca College professor Catherine Gooch

Catherine Gooch, former clinical assistant professor in Ithaca College’s Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, died mid-November. Gooch left her role in the college’s School of Health Sciences and Human Performance during Spring 2024 because of

her battle with glioblastoma multiforme, an aggressive form of brain cancer. Gooch also served as the director for the college’s Center for Life Skills at Longview from 2000-23. During her time at the college, Gooch facilitated community partnerships with New York State Special Olympics, Franziska Racker Center’s residential group homes and Tompkins County Mental Health Association. Memorial services will be held from 11-11:45 a.m. Nov. 20 at the Groton Assembly of God, at 701 South Main Street, Groton, New York.

PUBLIC SAFETY INCIDENT LOG
SELECTED ENTRIES FROM NOV. 3 TO 9

NOV. 3

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE / INJURY RELATED

LOCATION: Dillingham Center
SUMMARY: Caller reported a ladder they were carrying fell and hit them in the shoulder Oct. 31. Corporal Robert Jones responded. The incident was investigated and a report was completed.

NOV. 4

CRIMINAL POSSESSION OF STOLEN PROPERTY

LOCATION: A-Lot
SUMMARY: Parking Services reported that a vehicle without a permit has multiple parking violations. Sergeant John Elmore determined the license plate had been reported stolen in 2023. The vehicle had left the area and the incident is being investigated.

CRIMINAL MISCHIEF FOURTH DEGREE

LOCATION: Hood Hall
SUMMARY: Caller reported that an unknown person threw food at a window, which resulted in a damaged screen. Patrol Officer Sony Jean-Philippe responded. The incident is being investigated.

SCC HARASSMENT / INTIMIDATION

LOCATION: Emerson Hall

SUMMARY: Caller reported a dog was barking inside a room for hours. Patrol Officer Matthew Patire determined that a verbal argument occurred with intimidating language. One student was referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

NOV. 5

CRIMINAL POSSESSION OF A FORGED INSTRUMENT

LOCATION: Phillips Hall
SUMMARY: Caller reported that an unknown person had tried to use counterfeit money. Patrol Officer Matthew Patire responded.

PETIT LARCENY OVER \$200

LOCATION: Job Hall
SUMMARY: Caller reported third-hand information that an unknown person stole a computer. Corporal Kevin McClain responded.

FIRE ALARM UNDETERMINED CAUSE FOR ALARM

LOCATION: West Tower
SUMMARY: Simplex reported a fire alarm. Corporal Robert Jones was unable to locate the cause of the activation.

NOV. 6

SCC FALSE ALARMS, TAMPERING WITH FIRE EQUIPMENT

LOCATION: Circle Apartments 141

SUMMARY: Staff reported a person did not evacuate during a fire alarm. Enoch Perkins, fire and building safety coordinator in the Office of Environmental Health and Safety, responded. One person was referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

CRIMINAL MISCHIEF FOURTH DEGREE

LOCATION: Emerson Hall
SUMMARY: Caller reported that an unknown person damaged a washing machine. Patrol Officer Steven Hutchison responded.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE / INJURY RELATED

LOCATION: Circle Lot 1
SUMMARY: Caller reported a person lost consciousness on a bus. Patrol Officer Steven Hutchison responded. The person injured their ankle and was transported to the hospital by ambulance.

NOV. 7

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE / PSYCHOLOGICAL

LOCATION: East Tower
SUMMARY: Caller reported a person was experiencing a panic attack and had lost consciousness. Sergeant Bryan Verzosa responded. The person was taken into custody under the New York State Mental Hygiene law and was then transported to the

hospital by ambulance.

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE

LOCATION: Muller Chapel
SUMMARY: Caller reported on third-hand information that a person had sent another person inappropriate messages on social media. Corporal Kevin McClain responded.

WELFARE CHECK

LOCATION: Terrace 9
SUMMARY: Caller reported a person made alarming statements. Patrol Officer Steven Hutchison determined the person was not an imminent danger to themselves.

NOV. 8

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE

LOCATION: Campus Center Quad
SUMMARY: Caller reported a person sleeping. Corporal Kevin McClain responded. The person left the area.

ACCIDENTAL PROPERTY DAMAGE

LOCATION: Garden Apartment 26
SUMMARY: Caller reported water leaking from a pipe. Patrol Officer Ivan Cruz responded. The leak was caused by a worn coupler.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE / INJURY RELATED

LOCATION: S-Lot
SUMMARY: Caller reported a person made alarming comments. Sergeant

Kevin Noterfonzo responded. He determined the person was not an imminent threat to themselves.

NOV. 9

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE / ILLNESS RELATED

LOCATION: Terrace 3
SUMMARY: Caller reported having a severe nosebleed. Patrol Officer Jack Nelson responded. The person was transported to the hospital by ambulance.

SCC COLLEGE REGULATIONS

LOCATION: Eastman Hall
SUMMARY: Caller reported a person sleeping in the lounge. Patrol Officer Jack Nelson responded. He issued the person a warning.

SCC UNDERAGE POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL

LOCATION: Upper Quads
SUMMARY: The Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards reported three people were referred for underage possession of alcohol. Master Security Officer Amy Noble responded.

KEY

SCC: Student Conduct Code
VT: Vehicle & Transportation
EHS: Environmental Health and Safety



ANITA CHIP/THE ITHACAN

EDITORIALS

Campus resources support students in times of need

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is a federal program that helps low-income households afford food and basic necessities.

SNAP is a critical support system for college students and their families' food security and academic success, and its need was exemplified especially when the government was shut down. It highlighted the necessity for higher education institutions to provide their students resources other than the ones provided by the government for their well-being.

IC is fighting the issue with on-campus resources, such as Prunty's Pantry, open to all students, staff and faculty. The Center for Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging has also put together a consolidated list of campus resources.

Colleges and universities should be modeling IC's efforts to protect and expand student access to food and coordinate food access with campus resources.

In order to receive benefits, students should be enrolled at least half time and must meet one or more of the exemptions outlined in the

Certification of Eligible Households.

Many students on SNAP balance just as much as their adult counterparts, and yet do not receive the same support. Unlike general low-income adults, college students are placed in a specialized category in SNAP. Students must jump over hurdles, i.e. meet increasingly specific criteria.

Even after qualifying for benefits, the Government Accountability Office estimates that nearly 60% of potentially eligible students are not receiving benefits due to reasons like the stigmas surrounding food insecurity. Though it is ultimately the government's responsibility, colleges and universities need to be filling this gap in order to maintain students' well-being.

Campus administrators from schools around the country need to support their students who are food insecure. They should be expanding on-campus resources like Prunty's Pantry and working with state SNAP agencies to support students by providing assistance and advocating for students long term.

Fan support across all types of sports teams is essential

Every year, the football teams of Ithaca College and SUNY Cortland face off in the "biggest little game in the nation," to once again get their school's name etched onto the Cortaca Jug.

While the two schools do compete regularly in other sports, none is quite as popular as the Cortaca Jug. It has grown beyond just a football game into a cultural tradition and social event. No other game IC plays carries the same history, meaning and emotional weight as the Jug.

Students from both campuses join together to celebrate the tradition, filling the stands with IC and Cortland students and alumni alike.

However, Cortaca should not be the only sporting event and team that IC should care about. IC students, faculty and alumni should support other teams and events that happen throughout the school year with the same excitement that they bring to Cortaca each year.

While the Jug has rightfully earned its reputation as a major tradition for both IC and Cortland students, it should not overshadow the wide range of athletic programs that represent

the college throughout the entire year.

Dozens of IC varsity, club and intramural teams compete every season, often making it to conference championships, some even earning national recognition; yet, many of these events draw meager crowds and receive minimal campus attention.

Last weekend, along with the Cortaca Jug game, IC hosted the Liberty League Championship Tournament for women's volleyball. However, this huge feat has been overshadowed by the ever-important football game; while the volleyball team received some campus attention, it was not comparable to the tailgates and parties thrown for the football game.

Fans should not only show up to games, but support IC's athletics through social media and programs like the Blue Crew, creating the same Cortaca experience.

By supporting other IC sports teams, the community not only strengthens overall school pride, but also acknowledges all of the hard work and achievements of athletes whose seasons unfold.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send to ithacan@ithaca.edu.

All letters must:

- Be 250 words or fewer.
- Convey a clear message.
- Be emailed or dropped off by 5 p.m. Monday in Park 220.

GUEST COMMENTARY

Send to ithacan@ithaca.edu.

All commentaries must:

- Be 650-750 words.
- Be written by an individual or group who has an educated opinion or is an authority on the subject.
- Be emailed or dropped off by 5 p.m. Monday in Park 220.



AI is becoming too realistic

BY SAMUEL RADCLIFFE
COLUMNIST

As users, we rely on digital spaces for information, while they are also increasingly being cluttered with “AI slop.” But what happens when the slop becomes convincing? Leading artificial intelligence developer OpenAI has launched a second iteration of its artificial intelligence powered text-to-video generator, Sora.

Sora 2, launched Sept. 30, has sparked controversy over its ability to produce realistic videos using AI. All the platform requires is a simple text description to generate hyperrealistic footage. Within days of its launch, early adopters of the AI generation tool have created humorous, fabricated videos of celebrities, skating animals and videos featuring fictional characters. While the old Sora could also generate high-quality videos, the new platform allows users to upload videos of real people and put them into AI-generated environments, even adding sound effects and dialogue. While some may just be looking for fun, others may use it for more nefarious purposes.

With digital spaces already increasingly entrenched in disinformation, Sora 2 is adding fuel to the fire. It has generated falsified videos of bombs, mass-shooting scares and fake security footage of crimes. Misinformation researchers say that lifelike scenes such as these can cause the truth to become blurry and create opportunities for fraud, bullying and intimidation. The platform gives us a glimpse into the near future, where it will be increasingly difficult to separate truth from fiction.

The launch of Sora 2 has also received a swift backlash from Hollywood studios. The core of the dispute centers around who controls the likenesses of licensed characters and if intellectual property owners should be compensated. The platform initially launched with some restrictions on copyrighted content, but rather than a more traditional opt-in model, rights holders were required to opt-out of their works’ being used on a case-by-case basis. Since its launch, OpenAI has shifted towards an opt-in approach, passing a cut of proceeds to rights holders.

OpenAI has made it clear with the company’s “media upload agreement” that users are to blame for any problematic content created using their technology and threatened to ban users who misuse media uploads. OpenAI’s main focus seems to have been ensuring the success of Sora 2, only cleaning up the damage afterwards. The lack of accountability from OpenAI highlights its prioritization of growth and profit over ethical safeguards.

The launch of Sora 2 should serve as a warning to everyone and underscore just how easy AI has made it to produce false and misleading content that is convincing. Users should carefully observe how the controversy plays out, as it will likely set a precedent for how AI tools will be handled in the future.

GUEST COMMENTARY

Editor’s Note: The opinions in this commentary do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial board.

Collective identity builds community

BY JONAH BARRESI
STUDENT

The summer before the 2024 election, the U.S. was facing big questions. Everyone was asking about the future of the country: where will we go, what should we do? In an effort to address the unrest and social dissatisfaction, a team of creators discovered a path to find the answers. Together.

Our short film, “Somewhere Together,” challenges our perception of community. It recommends that we look past layers of social imaginaries and recognize that beneath our differences is a common pursuit for life, liberty and happiness.

We implemented social imaginaries as a way to recognize our unconscious social groups that give structure to our society. These social imaginaries, while creating a functional society, can also create great dissonance and harmful hierarchies. In our hyper-individualistic country that lacks homogeneity, there are many ways to imagine yourself against others. Along the way, I fear that we lose our sense of collective identity and camaraderie.

Beginning the summer of 2026, we will use the film as a platform for public discussions about the diversity of American realities. Along the way, we hope to give people



Senior Jonah Barresi discusses how “Somewhere Together” challenges perceptions of community, recommending that people look past differences and recognize society’s common goals.

MEI DENNSION/THE ITHACAN

a safe place to be uncomfortable, where they can challenge their social understanding and learn more about the experiences of the people within the communities depicted and present in the audience — the people who, despite their differences, share the privilege of calling themselves Americans.

It has been a year since the 2024 election, and yet we are still questioning what to do and where we will go. The first step toward strengthening our community is acknowledging that we are one. The hardest part of that becomes stepping out of the comfort that comes within social order, especially ones that may privilege you. The truth in the matter is we do not have a choice. Whether we like it or not, we are all going somewhere together.

Jonah Barresi (he/him) is a senior Cinema Photo major. Contact him at jbarresi@ithaca.edu.

GUEST COMMENTARY

Editor’s Note: The opinions in this commentary do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial board.

Gen Z has emerging political powers

BEN ASCHER
STUDENT

“Hope over tyranny. Hope over big money and small ideas. Hope over despair.”

That is what Zohran Mamdani said in his acceptance speech Nov. 4. He won because New Yorkers allowed themselves to hope that the impossible could be made possible; they insisted that politics no longer be something that is done to them. Now, they see their impact.

Since the moment my generation entered political discourse, we have seen some of the greatest lows politics has to offer. Most of Gen Z would not have been politically conscious until at least 2016 — the year that defined modern politics. The year President Donald Trump won the election. Due to Trump’s divisive nature, the U.S. political world has been stoked by the flame of a division that has made the country feel more split and filled with hatred than ever before.

Gen Z did not witness the optimistic messaging of the early Barack Obama years, but instead, have only seen the vitriolic sentiments caused by the either incredibly loving or hateful relationship every person has with Trump. However, we are not the only victims; both parties have suffered greatly as a result of Trump’s presidency. Moderate Republicans have seemingly let their party get co-opted by MAGA and Trump’s demands, and the Democratic Party has lost any of its own identity in favor of becoming the anti-Trump party.

After the horrible losses the Democrats faced once again in November 2024, as well



Sophomore Ben Ascher discusses Zohran Mamdani’s New York City mayoral election win and what it meant for young voters to see their newfound political impact.

JAMES SIMPSON/THE ITHACAN

as the nonexistent opposition the Democrats have given Trump within the first months of his second term, it would seem like the Democrats had no hope left for their party. This would be true if it weren’t for Mamdani, the progressive candidate who won the election.

Both the left and right sought to stop Mamdani from getting to city hall by choosing to back the former governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo. The largest super PAC in NYC mayoral history, “Fix the City,” raised \$25 million in support of Cuomo. However, this did not stop Mamdani from beating Cuomo by 13% in the primary polls and 9% in the general election.

Mamdani’s win over Cuomo may be the catalyst for what the U.S. government’s politics will look like throughout Gen Z’s adult lives. It marks a new wave of politics that aims to cater toward young adults. Gen Z needs to recognize this new political power and use their votes to continue to make the changes they want to see in the world.

Ben Ascher (he/him) is a sophomore Writing major. Contact him at bascher@ithaca.edu.

Deep Dive rallies for support amid financial strain

BY SHEELAGH DOE

LIFE & CULTURE EDITOR

Just off of Old Taughannock Boulevard, facing the Cayuga Inlet, the dimly lit windows of Deep Dive look in on how music dances and swerves its way through clusters of people enjoying drinks by the bar or grabbing hands to the dance floor. Ithaca locals and college students alike swing and sway to the sound of Deep Dive's devotion to music cultivation. However, running a business so integral to the music scene is not going as smoothly as it may appear.

An Instagram post outlining a call to action from "Allies for Deep Dive" began circulating via social media in October. The post outlined a GoFundMe for Deep Dive with a goal of hitting \$85,000 by Dec. 31. After a period of uncertainty and subsequent pause in booking, Deep Dive is in a period of financial strain because its operational costs have outweighed its income during the hiatus.

According to the Instagram caption, Deep Dive is the last space for entertainment and production of its caliber left in Ithaca. In 2024, music venues The Range and The Upstairs closed, while The Haunt closed in 2021 and The Nines in 2018.

According to the National Independent Venue Association, which represents independent venues to preserve live entertainment and of which Deep Dive is a member, 64% of stages were not profitable in 2024. TJ Schaper '13, co-owner of Deep Dive, said via email that shows that might seem successful can still lose money because most of the ticket revenue goes to the artists, production and operating costs.

"We want our venues to be accessible and inclusive, which is why I believe they are vital spaces BUT these expectations (sometimes non-negotiables) don't align with the realities of being able to pay the bills to keep the doors open," Schaper said. "Balancing values with financial survival at Deep Dive has been and continues to be one of the



Deep Dive hosts a variety of music events both weekly and monthly. Students and Ithaca locals alike attend events from dance parties to local band shows and coordinated line dancing. Deep Dive is a musical hub currently facing a period of financial instability and struggle.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SHEELAGH DOE, JOSEPH BUTCHER & ATTICUS JACKSON/THE ITHACAN

most difficult challenges of my life."

Not long after this rally for community support for Deep Dive, The Downstairs Ithaca announced its closing through an Instagram post Nov. 9.

Drew Martin '23 is a musician in the Deep Dive Big Band on Jazz Nights and said that Ithaca cannot let another bar close.

"We need Deep Dive because all the other businesses right now [that] are music venues are starting to close, and Deep Dive is probably one of the last standing ones," Martin said. "After that, we're just going to have bars with music playing in the background, not solely dedicated to the music. And without that, it's going to be very damaging to Ithaca."

Mickie Quinn, manager in the Communications Department and adviser for Park Promotions at Ithaca College, worked on branding and promotion for Deep Dive during its first year. She said she had a conversation with Schaper about some uncertainty regarding Deep Dive that had risen with the Cayuga Park development, which includes the construction of a medical office building and two residential buildings along the inlet.

Quinn then decided that she wanted to help support Schaper and make it clear to the public that Deep Dive was not closing, but that it was under financial stress.

"Really, it was more important to rally the community around this space," Quinn said. "And help give

him the strength and the wind in his sails to keep going, and that we care and that we need him to do this, and so we need the community to step up and help."

Schaper said via email that sustainability for independent and locally owned venues like Deep Dive is a dream, not a given.

"Since 2022 I've worked 60-100 unpaid hours a week for Deep Dive, not including the now six figures that I have personally invested into the business," Schaper said. "Additionally, I've had to take on additional work as a way to try to keep up with Deep Dive's finances."

Included in Deep Dive's events are Deep Dive Jazz Nights every other Wednesday and Honky Tonk Sundays every second Sunday of the month.

At Honky Tonk Sundays, everyone is invited to the floor to follow along as country swing and line dance instructors shout directions aloud and lead a line dance to match the rhythm and roll of the music.

Margaret Harper '24, the lead singer for Lost Mary's and vocalist in the Cast Iron Cowboys on Honky Tonk Sundays, said that Ithaca's unique sound comes out of independent music venues.

"It's beautiful over here," Harper said. "The importance of venues like this is [that] it speaks for the people. And it's not always like a huge act, but it's heartfelt, hardworking members of the community who love music."

Soon there were spins, back kicks and twisting hips flooding to the dance floor while Harper sang with country twang.

Though Deep Dive only officially opened in 2022, the space itself has

been a staple in the Ithaca community for decades.

"[Deep Dive] has been a physical place in this community for over 50 years that so many people have a tie to," Quinn said. "If we lose Deep Dive, so many of us are going to lose our home stage."

Quinn said that the amount of money it cost Deep Dive to stay open over the summer was more than the venue ever made.

In March 2025, The Ithaca Voice published an article which said that Schaper estimated he was about \$100,000 in debt.

Out of an \$85,000 total goal, the GoFundMe as of Nov. 18 has raised \$4,042 with 76 donations.

"It might sound like a crazy amount but if that's what it takes to keep a culture alive, I think it's worth at least trying," Harper said.

Schaper said via email that Deep Dive serves a cultural role that is not reflected in its finances, and it is grateful for the community financially rallying behind it.

Quinn said they are working towards putting together a weekend fundraiser around Dec. 20 that will include a big show and event with raffles and auctions.

Martin said that while the closing of The Downstairs is unfortunate, he hopes that it gives the community an extra push to keep Deep Dive open.

"We need music ... regardless if you're a musician or not, we run on it," Martin said. "Having a music venue that is ... dedicated to music is extremely important. It brings in revenue. It brings in new people. It brings in new musicians. It keeps dreams alive."



The Big Band plays on Deep Dive Jazz Nights every other Wednesday at 6 p.m. and sometimes invites people to sit in with the band. The audience often dances as the band plays their repertoire of jazz.

JOSEPH BUTCHER/THE ITHACAN

CONTACT: SDOE@ITHACA.EDU

Opera in Ithaca strives for intergenerational connection

BY **SOFIA FITZGERALD**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Opera is considered a timeless art form. It is a collection of music written by hands of the past and recited by voices of the present. But opera is more than a relic for preservation: it is a medium for communicating universal themes and enlightening multigenerational audiences. And as Ithaca’s own professional theater company, Opera Ithaca, celebrates its 10th Anniversary season, those principles are what guide its future.

Now commencing its 11th season, Opera Ithaca’s directorial staff moves forward with cautious optimism. Lynn Craver ’14, interim artistic director and co-founder, said she grappled with this milestone and its significance for modern day small arts organizations.

“It is a thrill that we’ve been here a decade,” Craver said. “You never know what’s going to happen or how long you’re going to last. ... There’s just a lot going on in our world, and for people to make the time and have the resources for art [is challenging].”

Craver studied opera as an Ithaca College student. She said her connection with the Ithaca Opera Association, the local opera company at the time contributed to her academic development.

In 2014, she co-founded Opera Ithaca with fellow alum Zachary James ’05, once again establishing a space where artists could hone and exhibit their creative talent.

Despite this enriching opportunity housed right here in Ithaca, Craver noted that opera’s pigeonholed “high art” label is a potential deterrent for young audiences.

“We need to start fostering a younger audience that feels welcome in our space,” Craver said. “It’s not an elitist art form, that it’s something everybody can be exposed to and explore.”

Christopher Zemliauskas ’97, associate professor in the Department of Music Performance and Director of Opera and Musical Theatre at Ithaca College, holds the same philosophy in his teachings.

“I think the goal in academia and in the profession is to make [opera] more accessible for people,” Zemliauskas said. “There’s a lot of effort that I put into it here at school to make it more interesting for modern audiences.”

Emma Commisso ’24, a recent graduate of Ithaca College’s vocal performance program, said her musical journey didn’t start in opera. It wasn’t until she got involved in the college’s opera studio program and Opera Ithaca’s Apprentice Artist Program that the genre truly struck a chord.

Commisso demonstrated opera’s interpretive intricacies, improvising a cadenza with her lilting soprano tone that earned her roles in Opera Ithaca and IC productions.

“As [the opera program] slowly gains interest and adds more Dillingham students, I hope it can get more people interested in



From left, Emma Commisso ’24, Lynn Craver ’14 and senior Wyatt McDaniel in Opera Ithaca’s production of “The Turn of the Screw.” The company is celebrating its 10th season of bringing operas to Ithaca.

COURTESY OF RICHARD MONTGOMERY

opera,” Commisso said.

While the classically trained voices and antiquated prose characteristic of opera recall a bygone era, its thought-provoking themes prove that the medium is still relevant. Opera Ithaca’s most recent production was “Waking the Witch,” which ran from Nov. 14-16 at the Kitchen Theatre. The one-act chamber opera invited the audience to consider how power is

abused through fearmongering and mass hysteria.

“As somebody who produces art, [I believe] that art has a responsibility to be accountable to what’s going on in our world,” Craver said. “Do people want to go see art right now that challenges them, or do they want to go see art that [allows them to] escape?”

Opera Ithaca is a platform with the power to inform audiences. And

as Craver continues to pursue that goal, she hopes that some audiences may change their tune.

“I’m hoping that [Opera Ithaca] continues to grow,” Craver said. “She does have a pronoun in my world. I hope she continues to grow and change and shift and still be viable and impactful in the Ithaca community moving forward.”

CONTACT: SFITZGERALD@ITHACA.EDU

Q&A: Alum leaves legacy on Broadway in ‘Mamma Mia!’

BY **KAELEIGH BANDA**
NEWS EDITOR

Victor Wallace ’95 is playing the role of Sam Carmichael in the six-month Broadway revival of “Mamma Mia!” the musical, from Aug. 14 through Feb. 1 at the Winter Garden Theatre in New York City. Wallace made his Broadway debut in “Mamma Mia!” from 2012-15, and now he returns to the Winter Garden stage 10 years later to revive Carmichael’s character.

Wallace graduated from Ithaca College with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in musical theatre. After graduating, his journey with “Mamma Mia!” began in 2003 when he played the role of Sky, Sophie’s fiancé, in a production in Las Vegas. He was then brought back in 2008 to play the role of Sam Carmichael with the same company.

Wallace’s involvement with “Mamma Mia!” continued when he made his Broadway debut in 2012 as a member of the ensemble and an understudy. He was then given the permanent role of Sam Carmichael, which he continued until the run closed in 2015.

News Editor Kaeleigh Banda spoke with Wallace about his decade-spanning career with “Mamma Mia!” the musical and how his time at IC influenced his craft.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Kaeleigh Banda: How did you first get involved in musical theater?

Victor Wallace: I think the first time I stepped on stage, I was maybe seven years old, and I was asked to be in an older cousin’s school play, “Alice in Wonderland.” They needed some kids to play the Queen of Hearts’ children. So that was my theater debut, and the bug bit me. ... So ever since I can remember, I’ve been doing school plays and shows

throughout elementary school, middle school and high school. I was in choir, band and orchestra. Anything that was arts related, I definitely gravitated towards.

KB: Reflecting on your time at IC, is there a particular impactful memory that stands out to you, that either challenged you or fueled this passion even more?

VW: [Musical theatre] was a very difficult major to accomplish, because ... you’re trying to gain all these skills at the same time, so it definitely was a balancing act. I was so young and hungry for it that somehow I was able to navigate it all. ... And on top of that, you’re also trying to just discover who you are as a person, too. ... But I definitely had such great professors guiding me and preparing me for what this crazy career could be. And I was cast in shows with some super talented classmates, and several of them are working on Broadway now. So in my four years there, the momentum of feeling like this is something I could do just kept me going.

KB: I read that you have been involved in two other runs of “Mamma Mia!” in your professional career. What did you learn from that experience that you have carried with you to the current Broadway production?

VW: I have such a different perspective of the show than when I had first done it because I’ve grown up with the show. I certainly entered that show with more adolescent eyes, which worked for the role of Sky. Now playing a dad and having so many years under my belt now, I feel like a father figure to a lot of the young kids in the show now, which is an interesting thing to grow into and have a perspective about.

KB: What is unique about this particular Broadway revival?

VW: I think there’s such a feeling of nostalgia that wasn’t there before. ... When I was



Victor Wallace ’95 plays the role of Sam Carmichael in a “Mamma Mia!” revival on Broadway after playing the same role 10 years ago in the show run from 2012-15.

COURTESY OF HILLARY JONES

first doing the show, it was mostly the older generation that knew the music. Now, ABBA’s had such a resurgence in our culture that everyone, young and old, knows this music, and so a night in the theater feels like there’s so much energy. You can just feel the joy in the room for this story. ... We have a lot of repeat audience members, so it’s their chance to see it again, but also they’re bringing their children to see the show and share that with them because it’s something that they saw when they were younger. ... And it’s a great group of people. It’s a great cast.

KB: How has your IC education helped you post-graduation?

VW: It definitely prepared me professionally. ... You learn the most when you’re out in the world, yeah, but Ithaca definitely prepared

me how to be an evolving artist. As an actor, you never stop. You never stop training or working on your craft. ... It’s also fun to see other Ithaca College graduates out in the field. ... There’s a pride in knowing that they came out of the same program.

KB: What advice do you have for any students currently pursuing musical theater as a future career?

VW: I always tell kids that they should embrace who they are and the uniqueness of who they are. ... Don’t try to be something that you’re not. Bring your authentic self because it could be the special, different thing about you that sets you apart. Embrace who you are and let the world see who you are.

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THE

QUEUE

Commentary from
The Ithacan's
culture critics

“ IN A STATE OF
CONFUSION ”

“The Running Man”

★★★★☆

“ METHODS ARE
TRIED-AND-TRUE ”

“((((ultraSOUND))))”

★★★★☆

“ DISORIENTING
AND THRILLING ”

“NOW YOU SEE ME: NOW YOU DON'T”

★★★★☆

‘The Running Man’ moves too fast for its own good

BY RILEY YOUNG
STAFF WRITER

Following the releases of the Stephen King novel “The Running Man” in 1982 and the film of the same name in 1987 starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, director Edgar Wright brings a new adaptation of the novel to light, with “The Running Man” sprinting into theaters Nov. 14.

“The Running Man” follows Ben Richards (Glen Powell) who tries out for a game show controlled by FreeVee, the major corporate news network controlling and manipulating the dystopian landscape. He is selected for the titular competition “The Running Man,” the most dangerous and popular game show in the world. The three selected could win up to one billion dollars if they survive everyone in the world — including five professional hunters — for 30 days. While on the run, Richards

not only discovers how severe the totalitarian government is, but also how it uses reality television and game shows to placate civilians.

Powell brings the strong charisma and versatility needed for the character of Richards. Disguising himself in many forms — a homeless man, a blind priest and more — Powell utilizes his physicality and voice to run from the tyrannical dictatorship.

The script, written by Wright and Michael Bacall, is one of the weaker elements of “The Running Man.” Paced too quickly in action scenes and too slowly in scenes that attempt to flesh out the characters, “The Running Man” feels properly disjointed.

With palpable energy and charismatic performances, “The Running Man” is a thrilling cinematic experience that will leave the audience entertained for portions of the film.

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ROSS FERGUSON/PARAMOUNT PICTURES/TNS

‘((((ultraSOUND))))’ falls back on nothing brand new

BY ALLY DHEERADHADA
STAFF WRITER



CAMERON MCCOOL/WARNER RECORDS

The Neighbourhood made a comeback Nov. 14 with their newest album, “((((ultraSOUND))))” after the announcement of the band’s hiatus in November 2021. The result is a good and safe album, bringing back the sounds they are so well known for in songs such as “Sweater Weather” and “Daddy Issues.” The album has fallen right on expectations: nothing new, nothing bad but nothing outstanding either.

This is the first music the band has put out in five years since the removal of its lead drummer, Brandon Fried, following sexual assault allegations against Fried by Maria Zardoya of The Marias. Fried has been reinstated as a member of the band. The Neighbourhood addressed his return in an Instagram story where they spoke about his substance abuse and

recovery but made no comment on the sexual assault allegations.

The sound is fairly reminiscent of the band’s second album, “Wiped Out!” released in 2015, although “((((ultraSOUND))))” takes on a depressing tone with more vocal-heavy ballads and themes of loneliness and mental health.

“Rabbit” encapsulates this stripped-down, depressing side of the album; it starts out with a plucky electric guitar intro that slowly turns into a reverb echo that blends smoothly into Jesse Rutherford’s voice as he sings of mental health issues and feeling stuck waiting for the next wave of sadness and hurt.

The album lacks any risks and new concepts that would make it stand out. Even so, it is strong, with some hard-hitting lyrics and ear-catching beats.

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‘Now You See Me: Now You Don’t’ chaotically mystifies

BY MEITAL FRIED
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

“Now You See Me: Now You Don’t,” the third movie in the “Now You See Me” franchise, opens with a variation on its iconic catchphrase. Magician and con artist J. Daniel Atlas (Jesse Eisenberg) stands on a stage in Brooklyn, prepared to perform his first trick in years as part of his magic group, The Four Horsemen.

“The closer you think you are,” Atlas says. “The easier it’ll be to fool you into thinking old tricks are new.”

The line is a risky start to a sequel’s sequel. Like the Horsemen themselves, the movie is cocky, assuming that we are still invested in the story and will fall for its misdirection and sleight-of-hand. Though the gimmicks may feel familiar from prior movies, audiences will be pleased to see that the franchise still has

some tricks up its sleeve.

Cards fly. Diamonds explode. Rooms turn upside down. The camera darts and spins in moments of action, blurring the lines between sleight-of-hand and CGI, misdirection and movie-magic. The results are both disorienting and thrilling. The cinematography often works against the elaborate sets, vying for the viewers attention. Is a maze of mirrors exciting enough without swooping camera work? “Now You See Me: Now You Don’t” never waits to find out.

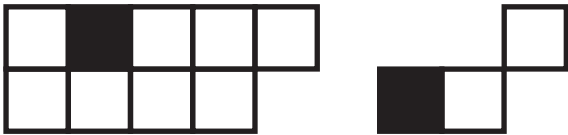
“Now You See Me: Now You Don’t” is an enjoyable movie, best experienced in a movie theater. It is a little suspenseful, a little surprising and a little shallow. Coming out almost a decade after the franchise’s last installment, the movie is a delicious threequel to a series that almost disappeared into thin air.

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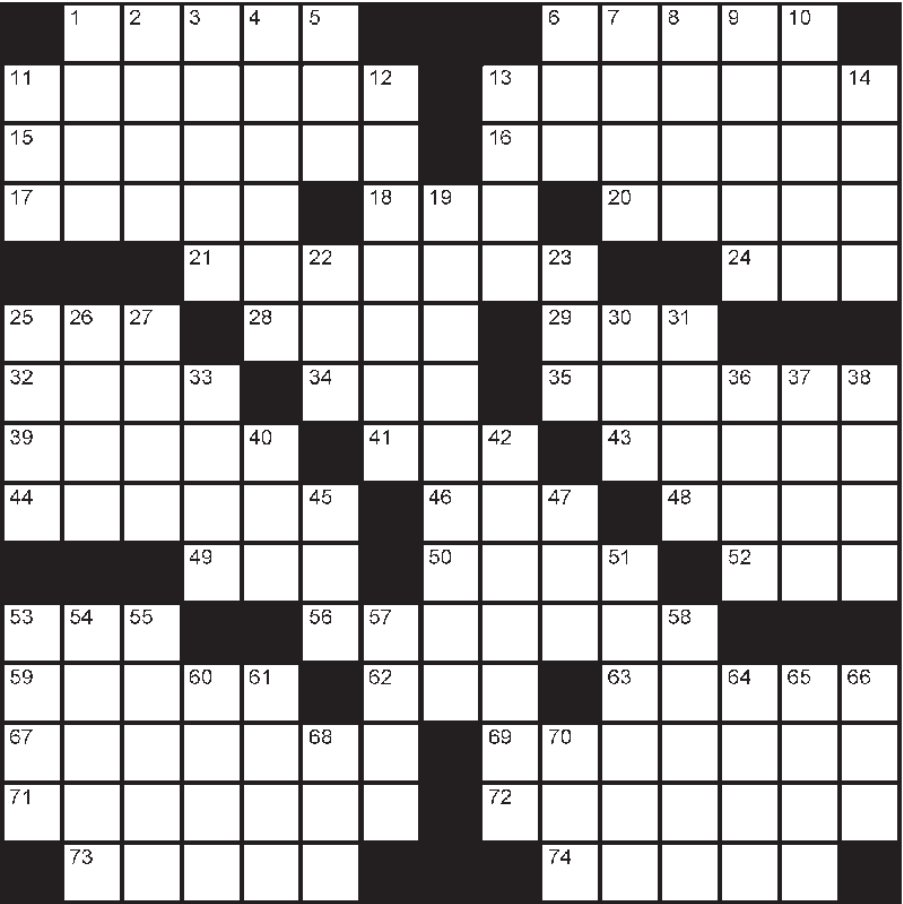
KATALIN VERMES/LIONSGATE

DIVERSIONS



CROSSWORD

BY QUILL DRIVER BOOKS



ACROSS

1 Repetitive act
6 Card deck used in divination
11 Prudish one
13 Denominator, in math
15 Roil
16 Cel material
17 Alpine vocalization
18 Cushion
20 Stormed
21 Fixed firmly
24 Curvy letter
25 Bus terminal (abbr.)
28 Dough
29 Clumsy guy
32 Lofty
34 Nothing at all
35 Boasted
39 Walter — Disney
41 Upperclassman (abbr.)
43 Jalopy
44 Reached a high point
46 Calendar abbr.
48 “— eyes have seen the glory ...”
49 Sheep
50 “— — angle Out There”
52 Youth
53 Calendar abbr.
56 Reading desk

59 Missile-alert.org
62 Greek letter
63 — Carlo
67 Wicked glance (2 wds.)
69 Joy
71 Liberate (2 wds.)
72 Urban pests
73 Sports groups
74 Sloshes through water

DOWN

1 Clothing brand — Boss
2 Needing rainfall
3 Dangerous dog
4 Type style
5 Make lace
6 Spasm
7 Afraid
8 Actress — Hayworth
9 Orange variety
10 Lugs
11 Money made
12 Archenemy
13 Sticky fruit
14 Some wines
19 Sports, games dance exercise
22 Rip — Winkle
23 Sawbones
25 Walk
26 Narrative

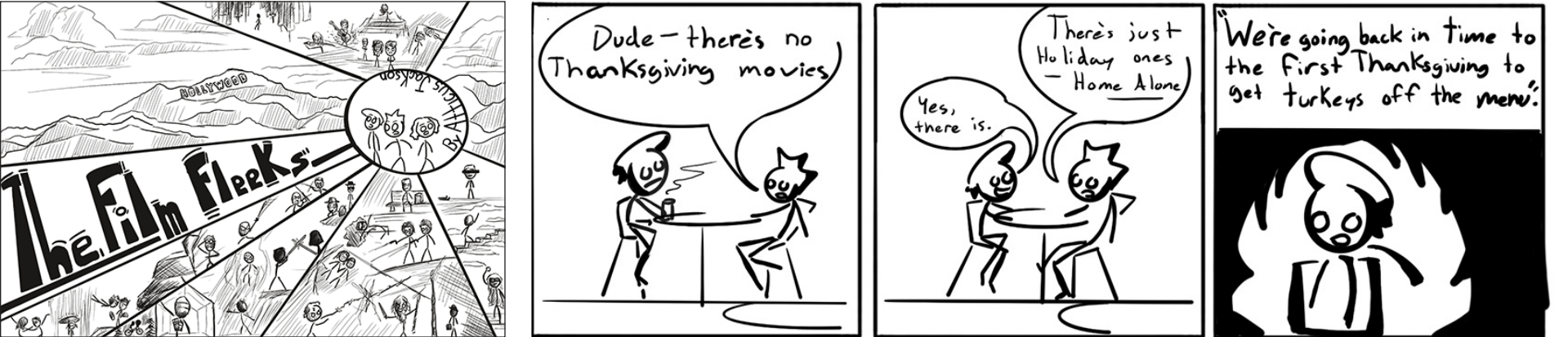
27 Inter —
30 Circle segment
31 Shape
33 “Lady in the —”
36 Express great sorrow
37 Lab burner
38 Act
40 Use needle and thread
42 Has more pecans
45 Punta — Este
47 Native of (Suffix)
51 Fleet of warships

53 Singles
54 Desire
55 Hackneyed
57 Sword used in fencing
58 Observed
60 — Romeo luxury car
61 Skin (Prefix)
64 Three squared
65 Pre-schoolers
66 Print measures
68 “— indeed!”
70 Not high

LAST ISSUE’S CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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THE FILM FLEKS • BY ATTICUS JACKSON/THE ITHACAN



MY ROOMMATE IS A WITCH • BY KENDALL STRAND/THE ITHACAN



SUDOKU

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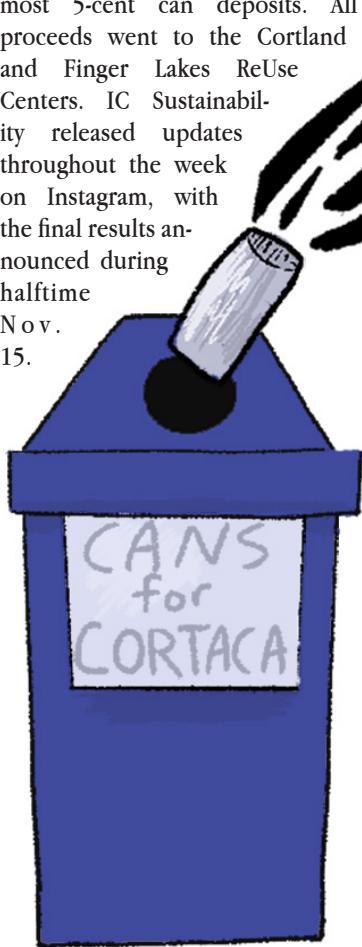
Play crossword and sudoku puzzles at theithacan.org/games.

‘Cortaca Can’ leverages legendary rivalry for good

BY ISABELLA MCSWEENEY
SPORTS EDITOR

As the Ithaca College and SUNY Cortland football teams geared up for the 66th annual Cortaca Jug, the schools’ sustainability offices joined forces for the first time to add a new, environmental twist to the biggest little game in the nation.

The Cortaca Can Collection Competition ran from Nov. 7-14, with the aim of collecting the most 5-cent can deposits. All proceeds went to the Cortland and Finger Lakes ReUse Centers. IC Sustainability released updates throughout the week on Instagram, with the final results announced during halftime Nov. 15.



The drive collected over 3,000 cans, with Cortland beating IC 1638-1554.

Talks about the collaboration began in 2024 when Scott Doyle, director of energy management and sustainability at IC, and Megan Swing, Cortland’s energy and sustainability engagement coordinator, met to discuss how to utilize Cortaca to raise awareness. Although they posted infographics on sustainable tailgating, Swing said time constraints limited their ideas. The topic was brought up again as the Bombers prepared to bring the Jug back to South Hill.

“I just had this idea of, ‘What if we did a can drive and [made] it a competition?’” Swing said. “That way, it’s encouraging sustainable behavior ... and it’s something that we can show the impact of working together but also still make it a competition to make it fun for the students. It came from just a couple conversations and a silly idea that I had that ended up raising a lot of money for the two charities.”

Swing and Doyle were joined by the IC EcoReps and Cortland Green Reps, tabled in residence halls, collected cans from donation areas and counted totals throughout the week.

“[The Green Reps] were definitely our boots on the ground for our student insight into implementing this,” Swing said. “I leaned

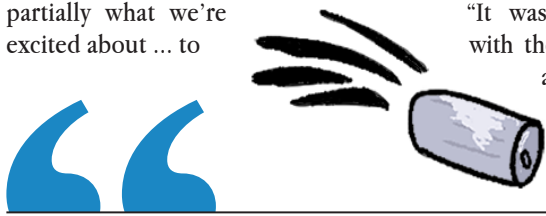
on the Green Reps a lot, trying to find ways that maybe students would receive this a little better. ... They were our eyes and ears.”

Cortaca Can is not the first time IC has blended athletics and sustainability. Doyle said he had conversations with retired athletic director Susan Bassett ’79 to improve signage at events and piloting a “Green Game” during Sustainability Week, with sustainability-themed trivia and snacks as the baseball team took on Hobart College. Doyle said athletic director Aaron Bouyea, who was appointed May 27, is interested in further exploring that relationship.

“We talked about a lot of things, like signage around the Athletic and Event Center, but this other idea, too, of how we can do things like [Cortaca Can],” Doyle said. “What do you think about promoting something in combination with these bigger athletics events to raise awareness about it?” And he was very open to that. I think [Bouyea] is going to be a strong partner as we think about how to formalize these things moving forward. He sees athletics as a platform for doing more than competing on the field and on the court.”

Athletes are already leveraging their teams to benefit the IC community. Soccer captain Rosie Bostian ’24 interned at IC’s Office of Energy Management and Sustainability under Doyle, focusing on research into the future of sustainable sports.

“There’s a whole collaborative effort around the country on this effort,” Doyle said. “Game day operations at big football events, for instance, is this really interesting piece happening around the country, but then also these interesting small-scale efforts. That’s partially what we’re excited about ... to



“It’s not just, ‘Hey, we have these one-off ideas,’ but ‘How can we do this day-to-day?’”

SCOTT DOYLE, SUSTAINABILITY DIRECTOR, ON FUTURE ATHLETIC SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

show that you’re part of this greater collective. Hopefully it can help you develop some skills [within] your team, but also help you as a citizen, too.”

After presenting her findings in an on-campus event hosted by the Student Leadership Institute,

Bostian talked to junior Naomi Clauhs, an environmental science major, volleyball team captain and Student-Athlete Advisory Council representative. Bostian helped Clauhs connect with the EcoReps.

This year, Clauhs has promoted the EcoReps’ Terraces Food Donation nights at SAAC meetings to get more athletes to participate. Clauhs said while Friday Food Donation nights can be hard to schedule around games, Terraces’ 30-minute shifts make it easy to increase

involvement.

“Having the Bombers as the general consensus for what the athletes are recognized as ... and anything that we do represents athletics as a whole has helped [participation],” Clauhs said.

Doyle said there have been prominent efforts from the women’s soccer and volleyball teams, with women’s soccer earning the “Eco-Blazer” Sustainability Award on April 24 for its participation in food donation initiatives.

Clauhs recently attended a meeting for Cornell Student Athletes for Sustainability, where she was able to connect with athletes with similar environmental ideals.

“It was good to connect with them at that meeting, and talk about the potential for collaborating with Cornell, in the broader community in general, since we’re so close,” Clauhs said. “That’s something that’s been cooking recently, and they invited me to come back [with] any of my athletic friends that are also environmental science-y. There’s a big opportunity there for some professional connections and for the school.”

CSAS was founded in September 2023 by Cornell senior basketball player Emily Pape, after she attended a conference for the nonprofit



ILLUSTRATIONS BY EILE GUENEGO/THE ITHACAN

EcoAthletes. CSAS’ two main initiatives are “green games,” where volunteers table and help direct the flow of trash, and volunteer days, where CSAS partners with other on-campus student-athlete organizations to volunteer at local nonprofits. Pape said she encouraged Clauhs to join EcoAthletes, opening the door for future collaborations between CSAS and IC.

“[EcoAthletes] is just a great community of people to know,” Pape said. “That’s a good starting point for us, getting people. ... We have 12 [members] from Cornell, and I think it’d be really cool to get some from IC, especially because we just had the founder of EcoAthletes come to talk to our class, and during his visit he had dinner with all the [members].”

EcoAthletes holds an annual Collegiate Cup, where teams track workouts to be converted into a “currency” funded by various sponsors — such as GreenGear Supply and Zenkai Sports — to help carbon removal projects. Pape said she believes the cup could be turned into a competition between the two schools, like Cortland and IC’s Cortaca Can Challenge.

When it comes to the future of

sustainable athletics at IC, Doyle said he has talked with Brian McCullough ’06 on how the school can integrate different methods into game day operations.

“It’s not just, ‘Hey, we have these one-off ideas,’ but ‘How can we do this day-to-day?’” Doyle said.

The challenge got the ball rolling on Cortland’s campus, where Swing said the sustainability department was able to get more recycling receptacles and better signage around campus that will last beyond the competition.

While there is not an official plan behind next year’s competition, Swing and Doyle agreed that they have plenty of ideas they would like to implement. Doyle said the friendly animosity between Cortland and IC is a great tool for competing together for the same goal.

“Now that we’ve had one year of doing this under our belts, hopefully next year, especially with the game being at Yankee Stadium, we can find another fun way, whether it’s doing something similar or doing something even bigger, since the game’s at a much larger scale,” Swing said.

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Volleyball eyes program’s first national championship

BY LYLA DORAN
STAFF WRITER

The Ithaca College volleyball team will hang up a Liberty League championship banner in Ben Light Gymnasium for the fourth consecutive year and the Bombers are “striving for more” as they begin the journey to an NCAA Division III National Championship. The Bombers have a 0.867 winning percentage, the highest since 1995.

The Bombers concluded their regular season Nov. 8, finishing with a 24-4 record. Each loss came from a non-conference away match, three against nationally ranked opponents. From Sept. 13 to Nov. 1, the South Hill squad embarked on a 18-game win streak, attracting national attention. The American Volleyball Coaches Association poll placed the Bombers at the No. 12 spot the week going into the NCAA tournament.

The Bombers swept the Skidmore College Thoroughbreds in the semifinals of the Liberty League Championship Tournament on Nov. 14.

The next day, the Bombers returned to Ben Light Gymnasium for the final against William Smith College. Both fought hard the entire match, but the Bombers reigned supreme 3-2 after winning a thrilling fifth set 15-13.

Head coach Tara Stilwell ‘19, a former libero of the Ithaca College volleyball team, stepped into her position in 2024. Since then, she has realized her players have been hungry for a title.

“My seniors this year have won

[four] Liberty League championships, but they’ve also lost in the NCAA tournament three [times],” Stilwell said. “And I think that they’re annoyed ... and same with my junior class. ... It’s the difference of setting a standard versus setting a legacy.”

The Bombers have yet to win their first NCAA tournament in program history. As the Bombers collected wins, junior outside hitter Naomi Clauhs and her teammates’ motivation grew stronger.

“I think when rankings started to come out and [we were] moving up the rankings, it kind of felt more real and more like we need to hold on to this,” Clauhs said. “We need to protect this.”

After defeating No. 4 Johns Hopkins University and No. 7 Massachusetts Institute of Technology on Sept. 12 and 13, Stilwell had an abundance of confidence in her team to take home an NCAA title. The 3-1 victory against MIT also was the beginning of the 18-game win streak.

“After that weekend, I was like ... we can do this,” Stilwell said. “I’m a very superstitious person. However, I think that if we’re gonna do it, this is the year to do it.”

Clauhs and her teammate, graduate student libero Ellie Benedict, agreed that the sisterhood the team created with each other made this year’s squad stand out to previous years.

“Our team has always been close, but I think this year is just something really special, because we’re just that much closer, and we didn’t even think



The Ithaca College Volleyball team captured its fourth consecutive Liberty League championship on Nov. 15. After a historic 24-4 regular season, the team is determined to win a national championship.

ERIN SOLTANO/THE ITHACAN

that was possible,” Benedict said. “I think just the closeness of our team, and just seeing how that has carried us throughout the season is really fun.”

The players were willing to hold each accountable and push each other, including the new members of the South Hill squad. During a difficult pre-season drill, Stilwell said first-year middle blocker Addison Leadbetter yelled to the team that the drill they were working on was not easy, but neither is making the Elite Eight.

Stillwell explained that the Liberty

League matchups are set years in advance, but it is her responsibility to schedule non-conference games. She strategically designed a 2025 schedule with nine nationally and 19 regionally ranked teams, including No. 1 Juniata College, who won the NCAA tournament the past three years.

“I created our schedule that way, so that when it comes to the NCAA tournament, we have already seen teams [in the tournament] at any point,” Stilwell said. “It puts in perspective that we challenged ourselves

when a lot of other teams, especially in our region, did not. It’s by design, so that we’re prepped for a higher level of competition and postseason.”

The Bombers will begin their journey to a NCAA national championship title on Nov. 20 against the Plymouth State University Panthers. Regardless of the result, the Bombers 2025 team will be known as one of the most dominant in South Hill history.

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Q&A: Men’s basketball starts over with new head coach

The Ithaca College men’s basketball team hired its new head coach Mike McSloy on June 17, replacing Waleed Farid. McSloy is inheriting a program which just won its second-ever Liberty League Championship Tournament in February.

McSloy was previously the head coach for the Drew University Rangers for three seasons. He led the Rangers to consecutive 20-win campaigns in 2023-24 and 2024-25. In the 2024-25 season, they went 24-4, including a 16-game winning streak and an NCAA tournament appearance.

For the near future, the Bombers head to Western New England University for a game at 4 p.m. Nov. 22. After the break they will host University of Rochester at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 2.

McSloy sat down with Contributing Writer Tate Mosher to discuss what it is like inheriting a winning team and what he brings to the program personally.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Tate Mosher: How is it different coming to a school like Ithaca that has a winning program in place already, versus having to rebuild the program like you did when you were at Drew?

Mike McSloy: Yeah, I don’t think they had a long history of success. They had never been to the NCAA tournament. So everything we did last year at Drew was a first for the program. Here at Ithaca, I think ... it’s a challenge, but I think a challenge that you welcome, understanding that ... they’re coming off a great season. There are expectations within the program internally, but I think the best way to manage that is you just [have] to take it one day at a time ... last year is last year. We have to be super present and be focused on today and trying to get the most out of our guys come practice tonight.

TM: What’s the process been like as far as familiarizing yourself with your new players’ skill

sets is concerned, and how you think that will translate on the court as the season goes on?

MM: [I’ve been] trying to build relationships with each of the guys ... being very mindful that ... they weren’t recruited by me. They had the idea of coming to Ithaca to play for somebody else. So I’m definitely empathetic to that. [I’m] trying to quickly understand ... where their strengths and weaknesses lie, and how we best can utilize [the players].

TM: What are your thoughts on being the underdog versus being the favorite?

MM: I don’t really look too much into whether or not we’re an underdog or whether or not we’re the favorite. I definitely like to maintain ... an underdog mentality, to always think that ... we have to put our best foot forward, to always think we’re going to get the other team’s best shot. And I think if we do that, then I think the results can take care of themselves.

TM: How do you think that you will make an impact on the program?

MM: My goal, God willing, is to be here for a long time. So ... trying to build a program that’s going to have sustained success over the course of my tenure [is the goal]. I think in the immediate ... I’m just trying to help alongside [assistant coach Mike] Sasso, trying to create an environment that the players want to be a part of. And that’s ... coming to practice every day, being excited, coming to games ready to compete and then also, too, from a recruiting standpoint, trying to bring in quality players who are also really good people, who are really good students, who will be great representations of not only our basketball program, but more importantly, the Ithaca College community.

TM: The Bombers won their first Liberty League championship since 2020 [earlier this year]. How do you get back there?

MM: [I’m going] to be honest, I’m not



New Ithaca College men’s basketball head coach Mike McSloy is taking a careful and calm approach at the helm of the reigning Liberty League champions.

MELANIE HEIM/THE ITHACAN

even thinking about how we get back to a championship. I mean, that game is not going to be played until February. It’s November. It sounds simple and kind of understated, but ... we need to have a great film session tonight. Our guys need to have a good lift. We need to have a really good practice. I kind of always say ... all we have is today’s practice, there’s nothing else that’s guaranteed. If we don’t take care of business today, then anything thinking of anything like a championship or anything down the road ... is kind of meaningless.

TM: What’s something that you want to improve on in your coaching this season, and then going forward at IC?

MM: I think the biggest thing is ... you never have all the answers. I don’t know everything about basketball. I don’t know everything about

this school and the program. I don’t know everything about our guys individually. I’m just trying to constantly learn, trying to be a lifelong learner. And ... that’s an ever-evolving process.

TM: Is there any kind of identity you can see with the team?

MM: That’s still a work in progress right now, but I think we’re going to be [intensive]. I think we’re going to be a team that shows a lot of fight, has a lot of character that plays together. [In the game against SUNY Brockport] we got punched in the face early. We were down [19-3 early, but] we were able to come back and take the lead in the second half. That shows our group has a lot of resolve and looking forward to building upon that.

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THE 66TH ANNUAL CORTACA JUG

CHECK OUT MORE OF THE ITHACAN'S CORTACA COVERAGE



Fans cheer on the Ithaca College Bombers to their first Cortaca win at home since 2017 Nov. 15. The game ended in a dominant 26-21 Bombers victory.

ERIN SOLTANO/THE ITHACAN



Bombers' junior wide receiver Nicholas Lang celebrates a first down. Lang scored two touchdowns in the game, and five over the final two games of the season.

MARISSA MOSCHELLA/THE ITHACAN



From left, Bombers' swim and dive sophomores Nick Sosa, Ignacio Fernandez-Manzano and Maggie Taplin cheer on their fellow student-athletes to the win.

ERIN SOLTANO/THE ITHACAN



Junior quarterback Mike Reed on his way to a 10-yard game-winning rushing touchdown in the third quarter. Reed's 98 rushing yards led the team for the afternoon.

MEI DENNISON/THE ITHACAN



Graduate student wide receiver Tyrell Penalba leaps forward for a two-yard gain. Moments later, Reed and Lang would connect for a seven-yard touchdown.

MARISSA MOSCHELLA/THE ITHACAN



Head coach Mike Toerper is embraced by his team after bringing the Jug home. The win was Toerper's second in the Cortaca Jug and his first in front of a home crowd.

MEI DENNISON/THE ITHACAN



From left, juniors Wesley Slavin, Naomi Clauhs and Gabriela Gonzalez-Abreu celebrate Nov. 15, post-game, while holding the Liberty League Volleyball Championship Trophy in Ben Light Gymnasium. The Bombers won their fourth consecutive Liberty League championship, winning 3-2 against the William Smith College Herons.
ERIN SOLTANO/THE ITHACAN