



The Trinity River is mostly frozen after a snow storm on Monday, Feb. 15, in Fort Worth, Texas
Yffy Yossifor | Associated Press

Winter storm ravages southern states, impacting virtual learning for Hampton students

WILLIAM PAUL ELLIS
STAFF WRITER

Concurrent winter storms that swept much of the continental United States has left millions throughout the south without power or water for several days, according to the Associated Press.

For many Hampton University students, power outages from the winter storms created a new obstacle for virtual learning.

Mariah Smith, a sophomore economic major from Houston, Texas, says that living through a utilities crisis while being a student was not just an inconvenience, but it was highly stressful.

“The power and water outage was [sic] very stressful for my family,” Smith said. “Spending most of the day in the dark with limited food and water was very mentally taxing.”

Furthermore, Smith feels the severity of the situation was not com-

pletely respected by her professors.

“The power outage caused me to miss days of classes,” she said. “Accommodations were not made by professors once I reached out to them. The vast majority of them did not respond to the emails.”

For Brianna Cry, a senior kinesiology major from Jackson, Mississippi, a lack of power and water for multiple days further exacerbated her angst connected to an atypical final year at Hampton.

“Of course, being engaged in online learning this year has been somewhat difficult for most students,” Cry said. “But not having power, water or internet for days has left me with a lot of assignments to catch up on during my last weeks of college.”

The storms, known unofficially as Winter Storm Uri and Winter Storm Viola, left deep southern states such as Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi covered in ice—a rarity for this region.

This most notably led to a power outage crisis in Texas, caused by an

Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) infrastructure failure, according to a report from CBS.

According to its website, ERCOT is a nonprofit corporation that operates Texas’ electrical grid and supplies power for more than 90 percent of the state’s electrical needs.

ERCOT is unique in being the only deregulated energy market in the nation, meaning that it is completely disconnected from the national power grid and was ultimately unable to borrow power from other states.

The domino effect of a power outage not only led to food and water shortages but is also connected to dozens of deaths, according to the Texas Tribune.

The impact of the winter storms was widespread, with many communities still feeling the aftershock of the weather.

Madani Dembele wins Mr. Ivy Pageant

NICOLE PECHACEK | STAFF WRITER

Premiering on YouTube on Feb. 19, Hampton University was able to host yet another successful virtual pageant thanks to the Gamma Theta Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Madani Dembele, was chosen to become the next Mr. Ivy.

Dembele, a graduating senior strategic communication student, expressed his excitement after finding out that he had achieved his dream of winning the Mr. Ivy Pageant.

“I was ecstatic,” said Dembele. “I was really happy my hard work paid off.”

Anticipating the pageant since junior year, Dembele’s opportunity to participate was ripped away when the pageant was canceled due to COVID-19. When he saw the opportunity to join again this year, he was admittedly hesitant to take the chance.

“The pageant came around a few weeks ago this semester. A couple of my friends said I should do it again. I said ‘Nah’. I was a little bit hesitant,” said Dembele. “I didn’t send my application in until the day of, but I said ‘Hey, I’m gonna do this.’ It was just a matter of time because this has been one of my goals for a long while.”

Despite the pageant being virtual, it still left a huge impact on Dembele, allowing him to step out of his comfort zone.

“It allowed me to bring everything that I’ve been working on to light. For example, for my talent, I did rap, but I’ve been writing raps here and there for a few months now,” he said. “It’s sort of like a hobby for me, but the pageant allowed me to go into full production mode.”

Dembele said that with the help of a friend who studies film, the video was shot, and he was able to put everything together. He wanted to bring three things together for his talent performance: Black History Month, the Gamma Theta Chapter and his platform, “Rising Above the Ashes.”

Continued on page 3

HU student-athletes reflect on cancellation of spring sports

ALIYU SAADU | STAFF WRITER

Hampton University student-athletes have faced a fair amount of adversity since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the cancellation of all 2021 spring sports, HU spring athletes have now forgone two consecutive seasons.

“I was on vacation to hang out with my parents and my friends. We were on Zoom, and we found out we weren’t playing. We were devastated,” junior softball standout Jenae Lyles said when she found out that Hampton was canceling 2021 spring sports.

In October 2020, Hampton University announced the cancellation of the 2021 spring sports seasons. This decision affected track and field, sailing, softball, tennis, triathlon and lacrosse.

Lyles was a member of the 2019-20 softball team that had their season cut short due to the coronavirus. Unfortunately, they were not able to finish their season and ended with a record of 15-4.

Hampton University sophomore tennis player Laura Peralta learned a lot about herself since HU’s cancellation of spring sports.

“The thing I learned about myself is that I can do anything, but having two jobs is hard. I had to learn how to do time management,” Peralta said.

The university has not allowed students on campus since March 2020. The school’s decision to continue virtual learning during the spring semester led to the decision to cancel the 2021 spring sports season. The only HU teams to compete this academic year have been men’s and women’s basketball.

“[I’ve] been trying to keep up with my training,” junior track and field thrower Nicholas Edwards said. “There are people in the conference that are getting better, and I am at home.”

Hampton track and field won both the men’s and women’s indoor and outdoor track and field titles in their first year in the Big South Conference in 2019.

Continued on page 3

Coming 2 America cast discusses continuing an iconic legacy more than 30 years later

ANYAE JOHNS
STAFF WRITER

Thirty-two years after the culture-shifting film *Coming to America* (1988) premiered, Zamunda is still a part of Black culture, exuding royalty displayed in its highest capacity while delving deeper into traditions and a keen sense on how to bring generations together in the highly anticipated sequel, *Coming 2 America*.

During an HBCU roundtable interview February 10, cast members of *Coming 2 America* discussed some of the highlights and gave insights into what is going on in the world of Zamunda all these years later.

The *Coming 2 America* roundtable discussion featured Eddie Murphy, Arsenio Hall, Tracy Morgan, Jermaine Fowler and Rotimi. Throughout the discussion, there were many prominent themes such as the unification of Black culture, women empowerment and family dynamics in the Black community.

Jermaine Fowler (Lavelle) exposes the disconnect between older and

younger generations, dives deeper into his character’s story and bridges the gap between generations to move the culture forward.

Intergenerational tension is not a foreign idea by any means, and Fowler considers this when he speaks highly of his own relationship with his father.

In light of this, Fowler said there is still a responsibility to “pay it forward and pay it back to him” through this experience.

Fowler continued by sharing a personal story of how he got his dad his first therapist recently and how the moment led to his realization that we need to respect what we’ve been through because not much has changed.

He noted that while guidance from elders is essential, there has to be ways in which the present generation can “work together for a common goal and figure out what we all do best to get things moving forward” in a culture that is full of division.

Continued on page 4



Courtesy of Amazon Studios

OPINION

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2021

NEWS

Chicago begins return to classrooms after bitter union fight

CHICAGO — In Chicago, students in pre-K and special education briefly returned last month.

Even after agreeing to the district’s safety plan this week, the union continued arguing that that the district hasn’t done enough to protect teachers and too few students have been interested in returning. Roughly 3,200 pre-K and special education students briefly returned last month, about 19% of those eligible.

Many parents remain skeptical. Rosa Esquivel said she won’t send her two children, ages 10 and 12, because she doesn’t believe that the schools will be safe from the virus that hit her mother and sister and killed an aunt and uncle in her native Guatemala.

She worries that her diabetes and her husband’s high blood pressure could put their own lives at risk if their kids brought the virus home from school. And they have no idea when they will get access to the vaccine.

Esquivel said she struggles with anxiety because of infections in her family and she doesn’t want to worry anymore.

—Associated Press

Teens may be more likely to use marijuana after legalization

PISCATAWAY, N.J. — Adolescents who live in California may be more likely to use marijuana since adult recreational marijuana use was legalized in 2016, according to a new report in the Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs.

“The apparent increase in marijuana use among California adolescents after recreational marijuana legalization for adult use in 2016 is surprising given the steady downward trend in marijuana use during years before legalization,” says lead researcher Mallie J. Paschall, Ph.D., senior research scientist at the Prevention Research Center of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation in Berkeley, Calif.

The researchers observed significant increases in the prevalence of lifetime and past-30-day marijuana use among nearly all demographic groups from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 school years, after legalization of adult recreational use: an 18% increase in the likelihood of lifetime use and a 23% increase in past-30-day use.

“I was somewhat surprised to see relatively greater increases in the prevalence of marijuana use among younger adolescents (7th graders) relative to 9th and 11th graders, among females versus males, among non-Hispanic versus Hispanic youth, and among Whites versus youth in other racial groups,” says Paschall.

—Associated Press

Yara Shahidi doesn’t use her voice just to hear herself talk

NEW YORK — Despite Yara Shahidi’s position as lead and executive producer on ABC’s “grown-ish,” being young and a woman — particularly a Black one — doesn’t guarantee that her ideas are always taken seriously.

“We’re still in conversation with — I don’t know how many people — like, ‘I don’t know if you heard me the last time, but this point that I made wasn’t just to hear myself talk. It’s because it’s important to me.’”

Recently, Shahidi kicked off Facebook Watch’s Black History Month special “Forward: The Future of Black Music” and appears in the new Will Smith-hosted docuseries “Amend.”

Shahidi is part of a swelling group of young Black women in Hollywood, including Zendaya and her “black-ish” TV sister, Marsai Martin, who are producing projects and starting productions companies to ensure authenticity within their stories.

“There are times in which we are absolutely misheard by the people around us. And I think that, layered with just being two Black women in this industry, that can have ripple effects. And so, it’s been important in those times to be of a team and to be a part of this duo where we’re OK sitting down to have those tough conversations,” said Shahidi of her mother-daughter team.

—Associated Press

RYLAND STAPLES
STAFF WRITER

As the number of serious COVID-19 cases is on the decline, President Joe Biden has made it a part of his 100-day plan to ensure that most K-8 schools reopen to students and teachers. He says that he expects them to be open for the full five days a week like pre-COVID.

I understand that it’s important for students, especially younger ones, to return to an in-person environment. However, I feel like it’s just flat-out irresponsible to put both students and teachers in that kind of situation. In this situation, they’re not vaccinated and are actively interacting with other people. Without the proper precautions, going to school can worsen the problem.

It has been a tough year for students at any level since COVID-19 shut everything down, but I feel like it has been especially awful for students in the K-8 grade levels. These education levels are crucial for the development of children.

According to Politico, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the Institute for Allergies and Infectious Diseases, said that vaccinating all teachers before

KAILAH LEE
STAFF WRITER

Chances are, if you watch any film or series today, you will see someone using some sort of controlled substance. Whether that be a group of friends comforted by a bottle of booze, smoking cigarettes, or puffing on some “Zaza,” these instances are almost impossible to miss.

Partaking in substance abuse is justified with older crowds because these actions are understood as adult behaviors. After 21, a person surpasses legal thresholds and is considered grown enough to decide what they should or should not put into their body--illegal or not.

However, the issue is not adults participating in adult activities on TV. It is the media portraying normalcy in substance abuse among minors.

One might argue that producers are trying to capture the verisimilitude of a high school student. A television show may highlight the reality of events that could potentially happen at a high school party, but are these instances a sample of truth or an extreme?

In the award-winning HBO hit series “Euphoria,” the story centers on the life of a teenager struggling with a narcotics addiction as well as other teenage turmoil. Although the show reveals the horror and sadness of substance abuse, there is a sense

JAMAIJA RHOADES
STAFF WRITER

It feels like all recent coming-of-age films such as (but not limited to) Booksmart, Love Simon, To All The Boys I’ve Loved Before and Sierra Burgess is a Loser all revolve around superficial and effortlessly watchable topics. The films tell stories of teenagers whose most significant problems revolve around their grades’ status and where the next hot party will take place.

While I love a good coming-of-age film (Ferris Bueller’s Day Off is my personal fav), I cannot help but notice that Black teenagers are rarely the main characters within these stories. The few times individuals of African descent have starred in these films, they are either extremely heavy (Moonlight) or seek to make a statement about racism (The Hate U Give).

This lack of carefree, innocent films that showcase Black teens simply falling in love or having fun without the interruption of discrimination or poverty is related to the popular association of the Black experience and struggle.

“I feel like parts of society only view Black people as people who will inevitably struggle through life -- that we must face an obstacle, big or small, in our lifetime,” said Meraiah Cannon, a recent nursing graduate from Norfolk, Virginia.

Of course, I am fully aware that anybody with melanated skin will face

Opening schools shouldn’t be the priority

going back into the classroom would be “non-workable.” So why would President Biden claim to have the grand plan to open up K-8 schools in his first 100 days in office if his top advisers on the pandemic said that it’s “non-workable”?

This rash decision will not only ravage the teachers, it will impact the children -- specifically Black students, who are at a higher risk than their peers. According to the University of Michigan, Black people are three times more likely to get COVID-19. With schools going back to in-person instruction, Black students would have to take more caution if there was a return to school. Understandably, students would want to go back to school, but is it worth putting Black students, Black teachers and their families at risk?

Due to the pandemic, students have had to stay home and experience virtual learning’s ups and downs. Now we can all confidently say that virtual school isn’t the same as in-person learning. You’re not exclusively paying attention to the lessons, and you’re just not engaged. It has gotten so bad that school systems consider summer school to make up for lack of learning.

I understand the rush for trying to get students back into school buildings

and out of the house. If I were in the students’ shoes, I would want to go back as well. It’s been almost a full year since this started. However, people have to make sacrifices, and I know everyone is tired of hearing that phrase. We’ve been collectively hearing it as a country ever since late March of last year.

However, such a sentiment still remains true. Parents shouldn’t have to worry about whether schools will reopen and potentially send their child back into a potentially contagious environment. President Biden is wrong for making this proclamation without consulting this team of people who are well-versed in this area.

Ryland Staples is a graduating senior strategic communication major from Silver Spring, Maryland.

Glamour or scam: Teens’ use of substances in media

of glamour weaved into the idea of underage drinking and drug use. Scenes of pill-popping are embellished with glitter, neon lights and music.

“Not going to lie, seeing people smoking weed, hearing the music create the vibe and feeling of relaxation made me more curious to try it,” Hampton University student Jamaija Rhoades said. “It looked cool, if I’m being honest.”

Psychologist Birgit Wolz told the Chicago Tribune that “many films transmit ideas through emotion rather than intellect. ... Watching movies can open doors that otherwise might stay closed.”

Substance use usually is painted with the idea of a stressor. An alcoholic beverage can be associated with relief or a lavish event. Marijuana can be associated with a way to unwind and bond with peers. Being compelled to try drugs or engage in drinking is more than seeing the act. It’s also about the aesthetic.

“Production companies have a way of making it all look beautiful and acceptable while the actors are not even teens,” Hampton alumnus Tyler McColley said.

Media companies cast older actors and actresses to play younger roles because employing minors is a greater liability. Minors have restrictions with hours and content.

According to Screenrant, older actresses and actors ensure that “all potential romances be legal.”

So, it’s OK for an adult to play a teen and assimilate illegal behavior, although that reality is taboo?

That just seems misleading. HBO said “Euphoria” is actually for adults despite the content circling around teens. Still, the show is viewed more by teenagers than adults. Not to mention, the actress who plays Rue, the main character of “Euphoria,” is Zendaya, who was once a Disney star building her fanbase at a young age.

“Euphoria” is one of many examples of this phenomenon of substance abuse portrayal. There are an abundance of contradictions in the media. One minute there is a commercial demeaning nicotine use among teens, and in the next instance, a hit show is making the act look cool.

An older woman, Natane Herrera, thinks that “the media appeals to a younger audience because they’re looking for potential buy-ins. ... With people my age, there’s no point in trying to sell us.”

We’ll never honestly know the media’s intentions. Maybe it’s a subliminal act of business. Perhaps the media is trying to push an image, or maybe it’s just to entertain.

“The media knows what it is doing,” said Amanda Jones, a writer from Charlotte, North Carolina, “and it will target those susceptible to its narrative.”

Kailah Lee is a graduating senior journalism major from Richmond, Virginia.

Let the Black kids escape, too

some hardships in some shape or form due to things they cannot change. However, I do not believe we need to be reminded of this all the time.

Most people watch movies to escape their reality or just enjoy a couple of hours where they do not have to be reminded of their struggles in their day-to-day lives. Few people need to escape the realities of life more than people of color, particularly children, yet they rarely get the chance to do so.

As important as it is to tell these heavy stories that are the realities of many Black people, Black creatives need to also ensure that they are creating films that highlight the innocence of Black teens and Black children as a whole. We often see children of African descent being forced to become adults and be strong in moments that other children are given the space to be vulnerable and make mistakes without extreme consequences.

Despite what major production companies may believe, the Black community craves more films that showcase Black characters experiencing a sense of normalcy.

“To see Black teens just getting to be kids and living out their best, normal teenage lives would be a dream come true. We need at least five of those movies within the next five years,” said Simone Williams, an HU graduate student from Newport News, Virginia.

Creating light-hearted coming-of-age films starring Black teens would not only be refreshing, but it would

serve as a reminder to the world that despite the color of our skin, we are the same.

Just as white teens crave love, a good time and adventure, Black teens do as well. Highlighting and emphasizing the reality that Black teens are also teens would assist those individuals who still believe that Black teens are less than. It would help them realize that we are human just as they are.

Jamaija Rhoades is a graduating senior journalism major with an emphasis in cinema studies from Richmond, Virginia.

CAMPUS/SPORTS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2021

Madani Dembele wins Mr. Ivy Pageant

Continued from page 1

With the pageant being virtual, Dembele found the experience interesting in how he had to plan for a video.

“It was kind of complicated. I had to make sure certain things would sound good through all outlets since everyone is watching through different devices,” he explained. “I just wanted to make sure it was cohesive and that everyone would have the same experience watching what I put out there.”

Dembele expressed that virtual pageants allowed contestants to have more creative control than in-person pageants. He saw the ability to control things as an advantage.

“In a virtual pageant, you have a lot more creative control, and you can correct or fix things that you don’t want to showcase. As opposed to an in-person pageant, you don’t get that opportunity to go back and edit what you just did on stage. It’s irreversible,” said Dembele.

His platform, “Rising Above the Ashes,” is a program targeted at African American youth, promoting mentorship and overall wellness. Dembele believes that the youth are the future, and thinks his platform will help them see that.

“I do believe that the youth are our future, and I think that they can be damaged which prevents them from living to their fullest potential. It can be hard to see the brighter things in life when all you’ve been seeing is darkness,” he expressed.

Dembele says the main takeaway of his platform that he wants African American youth to know, is that they are enough and are deserving of more than they think.

Dembele plans to accept a job offer at AT&T for their B2B Sales Development program after graduating in May of this year.



Courtesy of Madani Dembele

HU student-athletes reflect on cancellation of spring sports

Continued from page 1

Looking to build upon their momentum, HU track and field suffered from yet another season of cancellations due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of these athletes have not played in 11 months and are eager to compete.

“[I’m] going hard for practice. Not taking hard workouts for granted. Not taking any meet for granted,” senior hurdler Dylan Beard said. “I just want to run my race and be the best at it.”

Even though spring sports are not playing, there is good news to share. The Hampton men’s lacrosse team is joining a conference for the first time. Hampton will be a member of the Southern Conference on July 1. The Pirates are the first men’s HBCU program to join the Southern Conference. They are expected to play in the Spring 2022 season.

According to ESPN, the NCAA Division I Council voted to allow student-athletes to have an extra year of eligibility when seasons were canceled. The NCAA will extend the eligibility to all spring student-athletes, not just seniors. It will allow schools to expand their rosters beyond current limits of scholarships to account for future recruits and seniors who were expected to graduate.

This may be an opportunity for spring student-athletes at Hampton to consider an extra year of eligibility. That decision will have to be made by them, but it gives these men and women an opportunity to finish what they started.

Hampton’s very own: Spotlighting student entrepreneurs

ANGELA SESSION
STAFF WRITER

During the summer of 2020, there was a call to support Black owned businesses in response to the re-awakening of social injustice around the country. Since then, many consumers have been trying to become more conscious about who owns the companies and products they spend their money on.

Hampton University is home to many innovative student entrepreneurs. In honor of Black History Month, here are two HU students making an impact through their entrepreneurial efforts.

Ju’s Mobile Auto Care

Julian McDaniel is a second-year graduate student majoring in community mental health counseling. He received his undergraduate degree from North Carolina A&T in 2016 with a B.A. in liberal studies with a concentration in race, class and culture. McDaniel is a native of Charlotte, NC, and is the proud owner of Ju’s Mobile Auto Care.

Ju’s Mobile Auto Care was created because McDaniel realized that he has skills that other people didn’t have. Due to his passion for helping others, he thought it would be a good idea to start a business that offers automobile services.

As a child, Julian had a keen interest in cars, so it was only natural for him to continue to expand his knowledge of them. He worked on his car while at NC A&T, and worked for

Discount Tire for some time where he learned to mount, balance, and rotate tires. After graduation, he worked at O’Reilly’s Distribution Center before moving to Hampton. Even though he wasn’t working on cars there, he would get discounted parts to work on cars at his leisure.

In 2019, McDaniel moved to Hampton and got a job at Jiffy Lube where he learned most of what he knows today.

Recently, he quit and started his business to help other Hampton students with their car repairs at affordable prices. As a member of the HU Marching Force, McDaniel was able to spread the word to fellow band members and in student group chats.

At the moment, McDaniel is focusing on creating more exposure since his business is fairly new.

Advice he would give to other aspiring business owners is, “to do what you have a passion for and make a side hustle that can bring in extra cash.”

“Stay focused, keep an open mind, and work hard as you will get what you put in,” said McDaniel.

WaistHisTime

Joy Coates is a third-year kinesiology major from Montgomery County, MD. Her business is WaistHisTime, a holistic business that is centered around improving the confidence of women.

Coates’ mother kickstarted the business by traveling to Ghana and bringing back waist beads. For Joy, waist beads are a part of her Cameroonian culture. With that in mind, she

started WaistHisTime because she knew that making traditionally crafted waisted beads available would serve as an enhancement to women’s beauty and confidence.

She was initially able to spread the word through her friends, and eventually began posting flyers, sales and products. Her friends would also tell others where they got their beads from. She also began creating more social media content for her audience.

Coates plans to rebrand WaistHisTime into Tyme, a unisex athletic clothing line. She says this is something she wanted to start since freshman year and she knew she had it in her, the idea just needed to be unlocked.

Her advice to aspiring business owners is that they must get to know themselves first.

“You are your only competition,” said Coates. “Take time away to get to know yourself, because having a business requires a strong mindset and the vulnerability to accept failure.”

To learn more about Joy and WaistHisTime, follow her on Instagram @waisthistime. To learn more about Julian and Ju’s Mobile Auto Care, follow him on Instagram @757_mobile_auto_care.

Good Girls take Hampton: The birth of a new movement

VASHTI DORMAN
STAFF WRITER

In an effort to unify and empower women, The Good Girl Movement was born. Arriving on Hampton University’s campus in 2020, the movement is dedicated to redefining what it means to be genuinely and unapologetically good.

During the week of February 14, Good Girls Hampton hosted a wide range of events celebrating women and putting spotlights on various Black businesses.

To kick off the week, the Good Girls Movement along with Dr. Em-path, an empathic psychologist focused on healing the mind, body and soul, led an event on spirituality and how to attract your desired love. The session delved into different types of spiritual connections and how to differentiate the good

On day two of Good Girl Week, HU student Janice Jallah led “Girls

Need Love Too,” a dance class on Instagram live. Celebrating various body types and doing choreography that was easy for everybody allowed participants to relax and have fun.

A virtual Black business seminar took place on day three. The event consisted of 6 business owners and panelists including; Danielle Boateng of Dbandz Luxe, Alexis Scott of the Bad Girl Network, Ashanti Johnson of Strength of a Broken Women and Spiced by Shanti, Ayana Iman; Fashion Influencer, Dayvondria Braxton of Von Capri and Sienna Nelson of White Lephant.

During this event, panelists were able to give their insight and advice on creating a successful business as a Black woman, while also giving the do’s and don’ts of starting a business.

Keeping the week going, Good Girls held a service initiative event hosted via Zoom, where participants were able to write love letters to incarcerated women. During the event,

participants learned statistics about women in prison, including that women account for 7% of the population in state and federal prisons.

Ending the week off, Good Girl’s member, Sage, gave numerous tips on maintaining physical health, including maintaining a good sleep schedule, a healthy diet and exercising. She went into detail on how to maintain emotional health through therapy and to evaluate the people we allow into our lives.

She also shared tips from her personal experience on developing techniques to stay healthy in all facets of life, from keeping a clean room to reading the bible every day.

To conclude the week, the Good Girls Movement won “Best New Organization” at the Student Organizational Bazaar for the 2020-2021 academic school year.

Keep up with the Good Girls on Instagram @goodgirlstake_hampton

NBA All-Star Game to benefit HBCUs

CAMERON CROCHERON
STAFF WRITER

The NBA announced on NBA.com that the 2021 All-Star Game festivities will be a one-day event March 7 in Atlanta that will benefit HBCUs and COVID-19 relief efforts.

The All-Star events, which all will take place on that Sunday, look to generate more than \$2.5 million to support HBCUs and defenses against COVID-19, according to New York Times reporter Marc Stein. In support of HBCUs, the NBA has partnered with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCFF), United Negro College Fund (UNCF), National Association for Equal Opportunity (NAFEO) and Direct Relief’s Fund for Health Equity to focus on bringing awareness to HBCUs.

“I think it’s a good thing to have the NBA support HBCUs,” Hampton University student Joe Wells said. “It brings more awareness to our sports as well.”

The league plans to highlight the importance of HBCUs while raising awareness around the direct impact of COVID-19 on communities of color. Storytelling and content told by HBCU alumni and students along with special performances from HBCU musical

groups will be featured throughout the events, according to the league’s website.

Previous rumors of the 2021 All-Star Game being held sparked controversy across the league as many viewed the game being unnecessary considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

“I think it’s stupid,” Sacramento Kings point guard De’Aaron Fox said when asked about the potential All-Star Game in a postgame news conference Feb. 3. “If we have to wear masks and do all this for a regular game, what’s the point of bringing the All-Star game back? But obviously money makes the world go ’round.”

Many players, including Los Angeles Lakers superstar LeBron James, spoke out against the NBA hosting the All-Star Game given the health risks involved, the Associated Press reported. Additionally, the 2021 All-Star Game has been deemed unnecessary by some college basketball players who have undergone similar COVID-19 protocols during their season.

“They shouldn’t have an all-star game this year,” Hampton University men’s basketball junior Raymond Bethea Jr. said. “It’s been an odd year, and we haven’t had fans or anything.”

The idea of the All-Star Game being non-mandatory for players voted

in is being discussed between the National Basketball Players Association (NBPA) and the NBA. The possibilities of players being able to opt out of the game to rest for the second half of the season or because of health and safety risks is being discussed.

Additional protocols and safety measures are being taken by the league, which stated in a memo that players will be provided private travel to Atlanta and the creation of a “mini-bubble,” requiring players to always remain in their hotels except to participate in All-Star events.

“There should be an NBA All-Star Game because it’s not something that people have to go to,” Hampton University men’s basketball guard Davion Warren said. “It’s an option, so if you decide to go, then you know the risk.”

Usually, the NBA All-Star events would take place over an entire week-end beginning on a Friday, but this season, all events will be held on the same day for the first time in league history. The NBA skills challenge and 3-point contest will take place earlier in the day, with the Slam Dunk competition taking place during halftime of the All-Star Game. The only canceled event for the 2021 NBA All-Star festivities was the annual NBA Celebrity Game.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2021

Coming 2 America cast discusses continuing an iconic legacy more than 30 years later

Continued from page 1

Speaking to the intergenerational power of this film, Fowler voiced his hopes for the new story to allow for fans of the original to find that same success they once experienced that will make “people to sit down and enjoy what makes them so great together” and connect them with the new audience in a way that’s interactive and conversational.

Rotimi (Pretty Iddi) shed light on what he hopes people will gain from watching the sequel.

Rotimi expressed that the powers of enjoyment and escapism are necessary to utilize as unifying tools during our present times, noting that “something nostalgic ... something that’s a positive piece of Black anything is good right now.”

Rotimi looks forward to seeing how fans will react to the movie on social media.

“I’m excited to see Twitter go crazy and Instagram go crazy, and a couple memes of me, you know what I’m saying, everybody else don’t worry

about anybody else,” Rotimi said. “I think that we just need to embellish on the positive. I think our culture needs something like that, the world needs to laugh, that’s really what it is.”

Eddie Murphy (King Akeem) raves about his experience coming back more than 30 years later to portray Prince Akeem in a new sense of power as king of Zamunda.

Murphy illuminated the power of venturing into “uncharted territory” by attempting to continue the story of Coming to America 32 years later. The ambitious journey was a four-to-five-year period of creative exploration that turned into a “great script” to make something special. Therein lies the joy of getting to be “doing something that’s never been done before.”

The cast is excited for all *Coming to America* fans to finally get to watch the sequel they put a lot of work into. The anticipated film will premiere Friday, March 5, through Amazon Prime Video.



Courtesy of Amazon Studios

Review of New York Times presents: Framing Britney Spears

NOAH HOGAN
STAFF WRITER

For the past 13 years, Britney Spears has lived her career in the shadows due to a court-sanctioned conservatorship.

“Framing Britney Spears,” a documentary by The New York Times, delves into the tumultuous career and personal life of Spears.

Since 2008 at age 26, Spears has been placed in a conservatorship to her father, James “Jamie” Spears. Now 39, the same fandom that Spears had built over the years is combating her conservators by using the hashtag #FreeBritney to bring attention to her legal battle against her father.

“I did not realize Britney Spears was trapped in a bad contract with her father. It felt like she slowly disappeared from the spotlight,” said Calyx Stover, a Hampton University journalism major from Boiling Springs, South Carolina.

According to Merriam Webster, a conservator can be defined as “a person, official or institution designed to take over and protect the interest of an incompetent.”

Usually used for the elderly, a conservator is only needed when an individual does not have the ability to take care of themselves.

As conservator of the Spears estate, James “Jamie” Spears has controlled every aspect of his daughter’s life. From her career earnings to her medical decisions, Britney is seeking to take back control of herself.

A major focus of the documentary is the re-examination of the media’s role in the descent of one of the biggest pop stars of all time.

Journalists within the film explore the idea that Spears was ridiculed due to factors such as being a woman in a male-dominated industry and the confidence she carried within herself.

Inappropriate topics such as her breast or virginity were the type of conversations that Spears dealt with from an early age.

As she matured during the boom of blogs and tabloids, Britney was forced to publicly address tabloid narratives about promiscuity and her



Associated Press

motherhood.

The docu-series extensively showcased the overt and systemic misogyny Spears and other female performers of the early 2000s faced within the entertainment industry.

“It’s sad that this episode highlights some of the sexism issues that women still go through in any field but especially in the entertainment industry today,” Stover said. “It left me asking myself, ‘Has anything changed?’”

The documentary features key interviews with important members of Spears’ inner circle, including family friends, marketing executives and lawyers who have worked on the conservatorship.

Although Britney Spears’ uphill battle with the media has been enlarged in part to her fame and fortune, her battle highlights the struggles that she and artists of different genders, ethnicities and genres go through on a daily basis when displaying their art.

“We’re loved and hated so much, especially in the entertainment culture,” recording artist and Hampton University alumnus Kaicash said. “We’ve already broken so many barriers and got the masses to adapt to what we create, but in hindsight, we’re still looked down upon, we’re still misunderstood, and we’re still ridiculed as well.”

As Spears’ conservatorship battles have not concluded, she is still optimistic that her fortunes will change for the better. She is hopeful to have her conservatorship transferred to a third-party institution that will keep her best interest at heart.

Both sides returned to court to determine the roles her father and the acting co-conservator, will play in handling her estate. The next hearing is scheduled for March 17.

Creative block: Promise Robinson’s triumph through music

NYLE PAUL
STAFF WRITER

The COVID-19 pandemic is still affecting the lives of many artists, and they are still coping with the restrictive reality that this “new normal” has brought.

Here at our home by the sea, we have a large community of artists, all of whom deserve to be recognized for their talents. As the wrath of the coronavirus still lingers, it is important to get insight on how these artists are staying dedicated to their work.

Promise Robinson is a second-year audio production major from Neptune, New Jersey. A musician, songwriter and producer, Robinson has produced and released a number of pieces throughout the pandemic, including productions that feature other artists at Hampton. To give a bit more insight on her artistry, Promise goes in depth with her craft.

“To describe my artistry, I’d like to think of it as baking a layered cake,” Robinson said.

“I started getting serious about music my junior year of high school, so from there I found the right resources, or ingredients, to build up my career. From getting to open up for little showcases in my city to winning those showcases, I used that as my foundation, my base, to get me to where I am now, which is best described as the second layer of the cake. I can feel myself getting closer to my goals, the top, etc., but I still got a lot more learning, teaching and reaching before it’s time to blow the candles out.”

Promise then touched on the influences that helped her step into her creativity.

“Though my list goes on forever, whenever someone asks who my influences are, I think it’s the most Jersey thing in me to say Lauryn Hill, but that’s who is a major influence on not

only my life but my career,” Robinson said.

“She’s been real since she stepped on the scene, and she never steered away from showing vulnerability as an artist. I feel like music is at its purest form when it’s relatable, when you’re telling your story, and it’s not only therapeutic for you the artist, but for the people listening. And you know, I think that’s why I gravitate so close to Ms. Hill because her music is that for me, and that’s what I aspire to be for others.”

As mentioned, the coronavirus has left many in financial hardships. The heavy physical restrictions that were set in place also challenged many artists’ capabilities to support themselves by getting the equipment needed to better their craft. Promise shared how the difficulties that she ran into affected her craft.

“My biggest takeaway from the pandemic is that it taught me how to be still,” Robinson said. “I was so used to being out and spending money I didn’t really have, so because I didn’t have anywhere to go and spend all my money, I was really able to save up and ultimately invest in myself, and that started with my music equipment. I was fortunate enough to keep my summer job, and even more fortunate to have no delays when ordering things like my laptop, studio monitors and desk. Curbside pickup is a blessing!”

With the physical and financial hardships, the pandemic has lowered people’s motivation to do the tasks that were once a part of their daily lives. Promise touched on how her artistic motivation has been altered throughout the pandemic.

“It wasn’t that I didn’t want to work on music,” Robinson said. “I loved working on music, especially working on my first love, which is music production. It was really having motivation for writing songs and gathering my thoughts for my project that wasn’t really flowing like I wanted

it. However, it wasn’t until I mentally took myself to things that I’m passionate about and expanded as a songwriter. I expressed myself in ways I’ve only dreamed of, and it came down to me remembering the joy of writing isn’t just to write about where I’m at right now in life, but it’s to write about where I came from and where I’m going, too.”

Creative block is something that almost all artists are familiar with, and the pandemic creates a space for artists to be more prone to creative block. Promise explained how often she suffered from creative block throughout this pandemic and what she did to push past it.

“If I have a creative block, it always seems to happen when it doesn’t feel like the right time or place for my creativity to flow,” Robinson said. “However, I knew I needed to figure out the best times for each of my creative processes, and that became the most effective way to get the most out of my day. Much like everybody else, I really found what works for me during this pandemic, and with that, I noticed that I work best when I make beats at night, write lyrics in the morning and record in the afternoon. It’s almost like the beat marinates in my mind overnight, and then I wake up, and the lyrics are just cooking up. It’s a super satisfying feeling, and you would be surprised how much free time I’d still have after going so hard.”

With the pandemic skewing normality, it brings about the question of how some artists have been able to keep focus on their art during this difficult time. Promise shares her difficulties with focusing, and drops gems while explaining what she did to get past distractions.

“It all came down to a matter of knowing myself, knowing where I want to be, and knowing that I didn’t want to be the same person I was coming into this pandemic when I came out!” Robinson said. “Just off personal experience, and losing my Pop-pop,

cousins, uncles, etc. I realized how easy it is to fall off, rather than keep moving forward, but that would be my advice. Keep moving forward! Put good purpose behind the pain and get inspired.”

“I had to go through and find the small joys in life, dreaming, and manifesting to realize my drive can go through any obstacle that’s in my way,” Robinson continued.

“And with that I was able to drop music every month since May, including my multiple singles, three projects, two of which were my own, and one of which was executed by me, for a good friend of mine. With so much going on right now, this brings me so much joy and motivation because I found my rhythm, and I really don’t plan on stopping any time soon.

While dropping music throughout the pandemic, it goes without saying that Promise has been putting in work this year.

“I’m currently working on releasing another single called ‘Brown Sugar’ featuring two amazingly talented singers who I love dearly!” Robinson said. “This single will also be included on the deluxe version of my latest project called ‘Colors Too.’

“But in the meantime stream the non-deluxe version titled ‘Colors’ and stay tuned for more!”

Fans can support Promise Robinson by following her instagram account @Prometheproducer, where a lot of her work is featured. Her music is available on all streaming platforms.

LIFESTYLE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2021

Protective hairstyles by Hampton students

NIA WHITE
STAFF WRITER

Protective styles are a form of expression and hair care in the Black community that offer a break from the daily manipulation of hair.

“Protective styles keep your hair tucked away to reduce manipulation which is proven to aid in hair growth,” said Camille King, senior Biology pre-med major, self-taught stylist, and owner of Hair Worth a Millie. “The more your hair is manipulated from brushing, pulling, and tugging, the more likely your hair is to break off. Your ends are the oldest and most fragile part of your hair strand so keeping them tucked and protected reduces breakage.”

Some Hampton University students specialize in providing protective styles to students on and off campus and the surrounding Hampton area. Some student business owners include Ariana Greene, Kayla Waite and Camille King.

Ariana Greene is a senior marketing, cosmetology student and owner of Ariana’s Canvas. Kayla Waite is a senior strategic communication major, self-taught stylist and owner of Slayed by a Goddess. Camille King is a senior biology pre-med major, self-taught stylist and owner of Hair Worth a Millie.

“I provide so many styles from braids, [faux] locs, twists, cornrows and natural styles,” Greene said.

The type of protective style most effective varies by season.

“These [protective] styles are meant to reduce manipulation and or styling time for your hair. [They] also protect your strands from the harsh weather,” Waite said.

During the winter when the weather is harshest, full coverage for hair is best. This protects from damage and gives the hair a break from manipulation.

“For colder months I really like doing [faux] locs on clients because it’s full protection like a coat or scarf for your hair, your hair isn’t exposed,” Greene said.

Other protective styles for the winter include “wigs and weaves [be-



Courtesy of Ariana Greene, Kayla Waite and Camille King

cause] as it gets cold, it becomes more difficult to keep your hair and scalp moisturized. Wearing wigs and weaves can protect your hair and scalp from all extreme environmental elements enhance hair growth,” King said.

Warmer months are the time for lighter protection, that don’t weigh down the hair as much.

“One good protective style for spring would be bob butterfly [faux] locs, they give off a playful vibe and are lightweight so they don’t irritate you in the summer heat. Marley and Havana twists are good choices as well,” Waite said.

“I love all braided and twisted styles for the summer! They are so versatile and pretty,” King said. “Whether you choose to add hair or style your natural hair, it will be bomb. Just remember to keep your hair moisturized

using oils, creams and butters.”

Protective styles also depend on how long they will be kept in and the overall goal of getting the style.

“I would consider any form of box braids, like goddess braids or knotless braids long term styles. Twists, depending on the texture can also be considered a long term style,” Waite said. “Marley twists which typically are more coarse will usually last longer than passion twists. Straight backs, butterfly locs, and most jumbo styles would be short term.”

The type of protective style can also differ depending on hair density.

“Hair texture as in 4a-4c doesn’t matter but the density is really important. [For] clients with fine hair [or] thin hair excluding texture I recommend lighter styles like knotless [braids] or a few feed-in tribal braids. For thicker

hair I would not typically recommend knotless [braids] but [faux] locs are cool,” Greene said. “Honestly it depends on how the client likes their hair to shape their appearance too.”

While protective styles are mainly protective from weather and manipulation they also offer other benefits.

“[If installed correctly by stylist] protective styles help because they can give low tension styles that give you a break from your hair,” Greene said.

The emergence of organic feminine care products

TIGIST ASHAKA
STAFF WRITER

Periods. Something women get every month and a topic that men get so uncomfortable talking about. So let’s talk about it. What is really in the products? Many pads have toxic chemicals which cause damage to the body. Why are we using products that have a heavy chemical base? There are many reasons why we should use organic products when it is that time of the month. One reason is that it is good for the environment and also for your health.

According to the World Health Organization, many pads and tampons contain chemicals such as dioxins,

furans, pesticide residues and fragrance ingredients that can cause hormone issues. These chemicals can cause problems with your immune system, developmental problems, and reproductive problems such as endometriosis, painful periods and even infertility. Dioxins are absorbed through the tissues of the vagina and can introduce these hazardous chemicals into our bloodstream.

Hampton University student Angela Session, a second-year Cybersecurity major on the Criminal Justice track, said, “since I started using organic pads, my period has been shorter and wasn’t as heavy as it used to be.”

Another student at Hampton, Aijee Morris, a senior Criminal Justice major,

said, “I’ve used both organic pads and tampons. With organic pads, there’s no itching or irritation, and my flow usually is lighter than it is when I use commercial brand pads.”

Some other students know the benefits of using organic products but haven’t transitioned yet because they want to make sure that they have found the right products that fit their needs. “I don’t use organic pads, but I want to because I’ve heard of how unhealthy regular pads are,” said Sydney Saunders, a third-year psychology major from Hampton. “I am only apprehensive about using them because I want to make sure I get the right ones.”

There are many organic products women can use. One of the most

popular is a company called The Honey Pot. The Honey Pot is the world’s first plant-based feminine care line and was created by Beatrice Dixon, a Black woman. Additionally, Ruby Love is a period panty that provides “first-time kits” for teens.

These are just two Black-owned products you can try out, but there are more. Find what fits you the best, whether it is a pad, tampon, period panty or even a dive cup. Most importantly, make sure it is organic and free of harsh chemicals!



Unsplash User LacyGhett

LIFESTYLE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2021

Highlighting entrepreneurial efforts of Hampton students

BROOKLYN YOUNG
STAFF WRITER

Hampton University has always been well-known for its trendsetters and innovators. Many Hamptonians still uphold that reputation by using their creativity to not only influence others but also create change in their communities. Hamptonians have used their creativity to start their own brands and create impactful content. Some of your favorite YouTube vloggers, fashion designers and original magazine creators got their start at Hampton. Here is a glimpse of some entrepreneurs from Ogre, Quintessence and Onyx classes.

Accent Films

“Don’t forget the accent mark.” Accent Films started off as your typical college YouTube vlog in 2018. As time progressed, Bria Dickerson, better known as Bria DéShaun, has made her mark on Hampton’s campus by commemorating social moments as “the student body’s historian,” and creating promo videos. The meaning behind the accent is to “put emphasis on your purpose [and] put an accent on your wildest dreams,” said Dickerson. This brand allows the inner creative in Dickerson to be depicted visually and expose her authenticity in various projects. Accent Films is also a direct reflection of her journey as an individual and as an entrepreneur.

“You can be carefree in who you are and do it without hesitation,” said Dickerson.

Recently, Accent Films collaborated with the Greer Dawson Wilson Student Leadership Training Program (SLP) for its 20th anniversary of the Black History Extravaganza (BHX) by creating a short film, “Tales of an HBCU.” You can stream this on SLP’s YouTube channel now.

Dickerson is a junior, journalism major with a minor in leadership studies and cinema studies from Bear, Delaware.

COVRT

With encouragement from friends and family, Trajan Baker, a sophomore

architecture major from Winston-Salem, created his fashion brand Crafted Vision, which is now known as COVRT. At COVRT, you can have it your way with his unique clothing customizations. Baker hand paints jeans, jackets, shoes, hats and just about any clothing item you can think of. The brand is symbolic to self-discovery and revealing the artist within everyone.

“My acronym for artist is a rare talented individual seeking truth,” said Baker.

The relationship between Baker and his clientele are most meaningful and seeing them wear his designs makes him extremely proud. On average, it takes between 10 to 20 hours for Baker to make a single piece. Right now, COVRT is creating a graphic sweat-shirt line and painting series. Baker is looking forward to where his brand will go and hoping to be a featured brand in a Hampton event like Springfest. Trajan Baker is a sophomore, architecture major from Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

EPOK

Dictionary.com defines epoch (EPOK) as “the beginning of a distinctive period in history of something.”

This Virginia and New York based brand began with two fashion-forward individuals making T-shirts in a bedroom in the Harbor Apartments for fun. Austin Johnson, a senior marketing major from Hampton, Virginia, and Jarrett Dines, a senior strategic communication major from Queens, New York, constantly strive to take chances and continue going after new avenues to gain even more exposure for their brand.

“Buying into a concept; you are in your Epok,” said Johnson. “Each piece is personal.”

Opening doors and creating better access to resources for the next entrepreneur is the ultimate goal for Johnson and Dines.

“Jarrett and I knew we were gonna make history, this is just the beginning,” said Johnson.

Over the past two years, EPOK has had pop-up shops in New York and Virginia, countless photoshoots and has

even shipped orders to London. For these entrepreneurs, they see no limits.

For more information on their next event(s), an interactive pop-up shop and new releases, visit their website, www.epok.store

Reign the Magazine

Editor-in-Chief and journalism student Tasha Smith, a junior from Baltimore, launched the first issue of Reign the Magazine on January 1, 2021. The magazine was created to exhibit Black content, including fashion, beauty, culture and music. Smith’s goal is to create an enjoyable and inclusive atmosphere, where everyone involved feels comfortable showcasing their creativity.

“I want to create a community that celebrates Black joy and creativity,” said Smith.

Smith was inspired by lifestyle journalist Elaine Welteroth.

“I have read her book ad nauseam,” Smith said.

Since the Black youth is so impressionable, Smith mainly targets this demographic.

“I am sick of feeling like I have to ‘skate around’ my Blackness for white people,” said Smith. Knowing the importance of unapologetically loving and accepting your Blackness is the Magazine’s endgame.

Currently, Reign the Magazine is working on the March issue, which is the first style issue, featuring a young stylist. A new issue drops on the first of each month, so be sure to get yours March 1!

Threadz Boutique

The reputation of inimitability and uniqueness that boutiques possess has always enticed Taylor Robertson, a third-year, five-year MBA major from Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas. That attraction and passion for fashion design created Threadz Boutique! Threadz Boutique seemed out of reach for Robertson, but with the encouragement from her mom, it became a brand.

“I just got started,” said Robertson. Growing up with both parents being entrepreneurs, Robertson tapped into her entrepreneurial side. Robertson enjoys

that she is able to deeply portray herself in her craft and offer rare clothing to women ages 17 to 40.

“Everything that I have is something that I would pick up in a store and have to buy,” said Robertson.

If you want to stand out and tap into your uniqueness, be on the lookout for new drops over at shopthreadzboutique.com.

1868 The Brand

Fashionista, Inaya Henderson, a junior strategic communications major from Atlanta, decided to put a twist on traditional university paraphernalia by launching 1868 The Brand. Representing the year that Hampton University was founded, 1868 The Brand also looks to connect the Hampton University community through apparel and accessories.

“It’s a line that encapsulates the essence of Hampton and transforms it into the form of fashion,” said Henderson. With 1868, Henderson intends to show the world that Hampton is more than what you see on the surface, but that Hampton is full of creativity and innovation.

1868 is intended to be a classic everyday wear, whether you’re going on a Target run or on a trip, 1868 is made for it all. Currently, 1868 is working on rugs, household items, sweatsuits, workout gear, skateboards for each class and a potential collaboration with another HBCU.

The newest drop is expected for summer 2021 to kick-off the summer vibes, so keep an eye out!

For anyone scared to start their business, just look at these young entrepreneurs making it happen. It is all about believing in yourself and simply taking that first step!

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