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Danielle Holley delivers Day of Dialogue keynote address

AUDREY BAKER
NEWS EDITOR

On Monday, Kenyon observed Martin Luther King Jr. Day with its annual Day of Dialogue, which included a celebration breakfast presented in conjunction with Mount Vernon Nazarene University and an afternoon keynote address delivered by Danielle Holley, dean of the Howard University School of Law. Holley's speech — entitled "Where Do We Go From Here?" — encouraged the audience to examine current injustices facing Americans and to live out King's values not only on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, but also every day in between.

Acting President Jeff Bowman welcomed the audience and spoke about the importance of not forgetting or oversimplifying King's legacy, noting that the complexity of King's thinking is often reduced to simple quotes that do not reflect the continued existence of injustice. He urged the audience not to take the holiday for granted before introducing Holley, who has in

the past practiced civil litigation in Houston and served as a law clerk in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Holley began her speech with a quote from King stressing the power of love and questioned whether the fulfillment of King's teachings could exist in a capitalist society, suggesting that this more radical version of King was more difficult for an American audience to accept.

"The version [of King] that asked us that [question] challenges us to think about the structures of a society that allows millions of people in the wealthiest country in the world to be impoverished," Holley said.

Holley went on to claim that Americans are currently living in one of the most challenging periods since King's assassination in 1968, citing an increase in white supremacy and antisemitism, the rollback of anti-discrimination laws and a rise in censorship. She brought up an increase in Voter ID laws, the murder of George Floyd and other un-

armed Black people by police and the anti-critical-race-theory movement as examples.

"This is a Dr. King that challenges us today to think about, where do we all go from here when we are faced with one of the most difficult periods in American history?" she said. "How do we continue towards a pursuit of racial justice? And how do we chart a better course forward?"

Holley ended her address by highlighting the importance of communication across ideological boundaries. "Intergroup dialogue encourages collaborative communication, in which we broaden our perspectives, challenge preconceived notions, build relationships and develop mutual understanding," she said.

Vice President of Student Affairs Celestino Limas praised Holley's speech. "She connected with so many in attendance — including myself — and I look forward to seeing how our campus can use her wisdom to make demonstrable change at Kenyon," Limas wrote in an email to the *Collegian*.



COURTESY OF PRINCE ADABLAH

Swimming and diving flock to Florida, continues season



De Silva '23 | COURTESY OF MIKE MUNDEN

CALEB NEWMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

While Gambier was cold and dreary during winter break, the Owls traveled south to sunny Sarasota, Fla., for their annual training trip and an unscored meet with Illinois Wesleyan University. After returning to Ohio, swimming and diving competed in two different meets

on Friday. Half of the team went to face a Division I opponent — the University of Cincinnati — where both men's and women's swimming and diving suffered their first loss of the season. The other half of the team was able to pick up wins in a double-dual meet against NCAC opponent Oberlin College and fellow Division III squad Ohio Northern

University.

In Florida, the Owls were able to focus on training and team bonding heading into the upcoming championship season. The team had practices most days, and they were only a one-minute walk away from the beach, so they bonded near the ocean as well as eating ice cream and donuts together nearly every night. Ania Axas '23 appreciated these simpler moments from her training trips at Kenyon. "It was a really fun environment to be in," she wrote in an email to the *Collegian*.

Cherantha De Silva '23 and Ben Czech '23 enjoyed being a part of a special tradition. Every year, the class and gender group with the highest GPA gets treated to ice cream by the coaches. This year, the seniors on the men's swimming and diving team performed the best in the classroom. "Nothing better than a well-deserved reward," De Silva wrote in an email to the *Collegian*.

Overall, the trip was a suc-

cess. "I can say with confidence that we came out of Florida both as better swimmers and divers but, more importantly, more connected as a team," Czech wrote in an email to the *Collegian*.

In Cincinnati, on the home team's Senior Day, the Owls lost 170-130 (women) and 193-106 (men), respectively. The women's swimming and diving team was able to pick up six wins, including five individual events. The men's swimming and diving team was able to grab four events away from the Bearcats. De Silva played a part in both relays and touched the wall first in the 50-yard freestyle and 100-yard butterfly.

Despite the difference in NCAA Divisions, both Axas, who won the 200-yard butterfly, and De Silva feel that the distinction was not a big deal. "Whether it be racing a Division I school or a Division III school, it's still swimming, and they're all still athletes swimming the same events as us and working as hard as we do," Axas

said. "I really feel as though the division your team is in shouldn't impact how you swim your race or how you plan to compete."

Up north in Oberlin, Ohio, the Owls found more success, winning 181-88 (women) and 180-99 (men) against Oberlin. They also defeated Ohio Northern 194-61 (women) and 189-91 (men). Of the 14 events at the dual meet, the women's swimming and diving team won all but one. The men were led by Czech, who won three individual events (200-yard individual medley, 100-yard backstroke and 200-yard backstroke). "I was really happy with the races that I saw at the meet," he said.

The Owls next compete Saturday against Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. "We've all been working so hard over the past few months and I'm very proud of what we've accomplished so far," said Axas. "This team is really special and I'm so happy to be a part of it."

Giving Hope Charity serves local Knox County students



COURTESY OF GIVING HOPE CHARITY

HANNAH DOURGARIAN
NEWS EDITOR

The Giving Hope Charity (GHC), a Mount Vernon-based nonprofit that serves Knox County children, helped to make the holiday season a little brighter for local underprivileged elementary school students with their traditional GHC event on Dec. 17, which included a holiday party and a Walmart shopping spree for students and their families.

The GHC event occurred for the first time during the 2020 Christmas season, when many local students were facing pandemic-related social isolation and heightened financial difficulties. In an effort to increase holiday spirit for students, a group of Mount Vernon City School District bus drivers and maintenance employees decided to donate profits from their bus garage's snack shop to fund a small holiday party and shop-

ping outing for kids in need.

The GHC was officially established as a non-profit organization in 2021 and has been able to grow each year since, largely due to the generous number of donations it has received and sponsorships it has with local businesses. In 2020, the event served six elementary school students, one from each of Mount Vernon's six public elementary schools, who each received \$200 to spend at Walmart, accompanied by a volunteer. Students celebrated the season at a small holiday party with their families before they boarded a festively decorated school bus commandeered by Santa to head to Walmart.

According to GHC Executive Director Dave Shoro, each year social workers, guidance counselors and principals at each Mount Vernon City school recommend students who have displayed impressive personal, academic or extracurricular achievement despite unfavorable circum-

stances they have faced, and the organization selects which students are served.

The number of students served by the program has increased each year since its inception. According to GHC Secretary Christine Hohman, the organization served 12 elementary school students, three middle school students and four high school students in 2021. Last year, it served 18 elementary school students, six middle school students and eight high school students, as well as 20 residents of the Children's Resource Center, a local foster care center. At its most recent event, the organization was able to give students \$250 as well as add new activities to the traditional holiday party, such as face-painting, cookie-decorating and ornament-making.

Shoro noted that directing the organization is a difficult but humbling task. He explained that a number of students use their money to buy gifts

for their family members, for small household appliances that their families could not normally afford or for clothing to wear to job interviews. "There's so many stories to tell that it's just heartwrenching," he said. "It makes us feel good that we're able to really have a direct effect on the kids that we serve every day."

In the future, Shoro noted that he hopes to help donors and sponsors become more involved in the organization's work. "We want our sponsors to come in and encourage them to be part of the charity and be part of the event that they're sponsoring," he said.

The GHC also has a second project in the works: a book bus, which is an old school bus the organization has purchased and plans to fill with hundreds of books. The GHC plans to begin driving the bus around the area this summer to pass out books in an effort to encourage local students to spend more time reading.

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Kokosingers embark on 10-day winter tour of the East Coast

MADELEINE MAGILL
FEATURES EDITOR

Once a year, several Kenyon singers take flight to experience the East Coast. Along the way, they encounter strangers, alumni and current students throughout the country who are eager to hear them perform. During this winter break, Kenyon's self-described "premier tenor-bass a cappella group," the Kokosingers ("Kokes"), embarked on the "Kokosingers Magical Mystery Tour." Throughout the 10-day tour, the group performed in front of energetic audiences in venues such as retirement homes, mental health clinics, high schools and restaurants.

While the tour usually takes place annually with the help of a community of Kokes alumni, the a cappella group was unable to tour in 2021 and 2022 due to the pandemic. This year, however, the group revived the tradition with a big set list for various gigs in Newton, Mass.; Essex, Conn.; New York, N.Y.; Washington, D.C. and Pittsburgh. From putting together a concert at Connecticut's Griswold Inn to landing a gig at a vibrant New York City bar called Madame X, Kokes President Brian Coburn '23 organized most of the trip's agenda.

Sam Morris '25 shared that the tour was one of his favorite college experiences thus far. "A lot of it was just focused on bonding and making sure we get closer as a group, but while also trying to do as much community outreach as



The Kokosingers are Kenyon's oldest all-male a cappella group. | COURTESY OF WILL BREINHOLT '25

we could," he said. "A lot of the highlights were with meeting previous Kokes alumni and getting to hear what it was like in years past. Definitely a personal highlight was [that] we got to visit Cape Cod and do a bunch of these retirement home gigs. And it just felt really good to see how happy the music was making people."

The tour was one of the first times that younger members were able to perform with the group in front of an audience outside of the Kenyon community. Morris admitted that nerves presented a challenge for him: "As funny as it sounds, it's still nerve wracking performing in front of an audience of high school-

ers, probably more so than it was even with older Kenyon alums." He was able to tackle nerves with the help of his musical mates, who were always able to uplift one another with pep talks and daily practices. Additionally, to ease members into the experience, Coburn organized the tour with the intention that the audiences would gradually grow in size throughout the 10 days.

Audience members and performers alike described that the event at Madame X was a very lively evening, when the Kokes performed in a joint concert with The Owl Creeks, another Kenyon a cappella group. "A highlight

would definitely be Madame X because it was so fun to see so many Kenyon people," said Will Breinholt '25, a second-year Kokes member. "It was just packed, like, people out the door. And I felt like the energy was really good and everyone was excited. And it was fun to be with the Owl Creeks, too."

Niamh Cahill '25 ventured to New York City from neighboring state New Jersey to attend the performance that night. "I've always been a really big fan of a cappella here at Kenyon," she said. "It was kind of like a little reunion... I'm used to hearing [the Kokes] sing at Rosse Hall, so [hearing them in] a different

space was really cool. It was very intimate."

To Morris, the strong community is what makes Kenyon's oldest all-male a cappella group so special. "It's a really tight-knit group. If anything, it feels more social club than 'sing-y.' I mean, obviously we practice a lot and our goal is to sound super good. But the most noticeable thing is making sure that we are a group of friends — that we all like to spend time with each other and be around each other," he said.

The group of 10 hopes that more students will be eager to join next year, especially because many Kokes seniors are graduating this spring.

First-year students find adventures new and old over break

SACHA FRANJOLA
FEATURES ASSISTANT

After enjoying a month-long break during the holiday season, the Kenyon community has finally returned to the Hill. Many students have expressed gratitude for the four week respite from classes and are feeling refreshed ahead of the spring semester, and for the class of 2026, this break also marked the first extended vacation period in their academic careers. The time off allowed first-year students to engage in a variety of activities ranging from traveling to catching up with old friends. As a result, stories of adventure and intrigue are being shared all across the freshman quad.

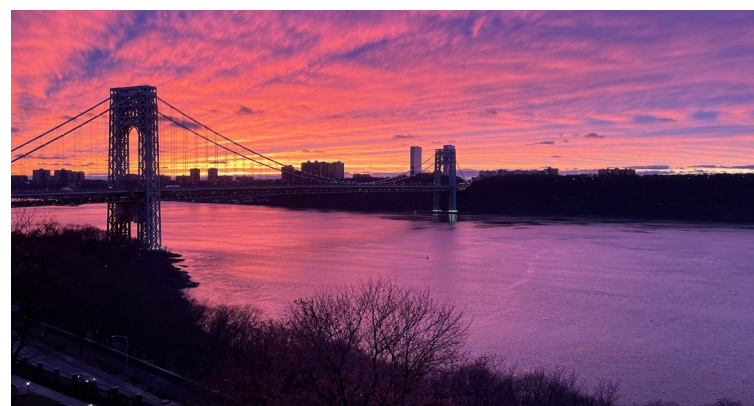
Among the students who traveled abroad during the vacation was Tristan Lewis-Schurter '26, who spent the break with his family in South Africa. "I stayed at [my

family's] home in the Limpopo Province, built a boat, went camping with horses and camped by the beach for a week," he said. Lewis-Schurter also noted his surprise at the cultural differences between the United States and South Africa that he observed during his time there: "There are obvious political and ideological differences between our two countries, and in the three years since I last visited, those differences in beliefs on things like masculinity and education only got more severe." Despite this, Lewis-Schurter enjoyed his holiday and had a "lovely time adventuring" with his family.

Others stayed close to home during winter break, including Hannah Ehrlich '26, who returned to New York City for the holidays. "I saw some friends from high school and spent a lot of time with my family," she said. "I stayed around where I live and visited my favorite

parks and restaurants." Ehrlich took advantage of the time off to process the first semester and recuperate from the stress of finals. "It was really nice to have some time to relax and reflect on what I did last semester. I was able to plan new ways to be more productive this semester. I think it was just the right amount of time to help me recover from last semester, enjoy being at home and get excited about [the] second semester."

For some, the vacation from schoolwork meant an opportunity to pursue other types of work at home. Dalton Hastings '26 returned to a restaurant job in his hometown of Wilmette, Ill., where he came upon a surprising new hobby. Having always heard co-workers complaining about the price of lettuce, Hastings began to consider growing his own. "I stumbled into something called hydroponic lettuce, which is where you



COURTESY OF HANNAH EHRLICH '26

grow lettuce in water," he wrote in a message to the *Collegian*. "I went to my local hardware store and bought all the materials I needed to make this contraption, and after my first prototype, I kind of fell in love with the idea. The beauty of it is that it's cheap and efficient." After successfully growing his first crop, Hastings began selling the lettuce to local restaurants, and he hopes

to continue to become a successful supplier.

Overall, first-year students seemed to enjoy their time off immensely and are eager to return to daily life in Gambier. Lewis-Schurter expressed it best. "I'm incredibly grateful to be back on campus. Now more than ever, Kenyon feels like a true home to me, and the people here are a family of my choosing."

“M3GAN” is a satisfying blend of horror and comedy

DOROTHY YAQUB
OPINIONS ASSISTANT

I’ll admit it: I had low expectations for “M3GAN.” A film tackling the existential horror of AI technology, made by a middle-aged production team? This sort of movie doesn’t exactly have the best track record. (See “Nerve,” “Unfriended,” etc.) Add in the difficulty of balancing horror with comedy, and “M3GAN” seemed like a recipe for disaster. However, when I finally sat down to watch it in the theater, I was pleasantly surprised.

“M3GAN” follows tech developer Gemma (Allison Williams), a workaholic struggling to connect with her recently orphaned niece, Cady (Violet McGraw). When Gemma creates a life-like android, M3GAN, to be a companion for the little girl, things quickly go awry as her mission to protect Cady at all costs takes a violent turn.

Beat for beat, it’s not a particularly original film. The “invention gone wrong” story can be traced back to *Frankenstein*, and it hasn’t changed much since then. However, its skillful use of comedy to critique the tech

industry sets “M3GAN” apart. It taps into that existential dread we all have about being replaced by technology while simultaneously delighting in the schadenfreude of watching egotistical tech CEOs get murdered by their own inventions.

Additionally, the film is gloriously gory. Because M3GAN’s defining character trait is her lack of humanity, she mechanically and methodically racks up a sizable kill count. The viewer understands that a human villain isn’t committing these vile actions, which means the film doesn’t have to tackle that classic quandary that bogs so many horror stories down: Are humans inherently evil? “M3GAN” is uninterested in answering this question, which allows for the deaths to get bloodier and bloodier without the tone becoming too serious.

A few excellent performances breathe life into the already strong story. Child actors are notoriously bad in horror, but McGraw brings a surprising emotional depth to the character of Cady, and Jenna Davis as the voice of M3GAN perfectly straddles the line between youthful innocence and computerized

inhumanity. It is Williams, though, who steals the show. Gemma is a dynamic character who changes a lot over the course of the film, and Williams’ subtle performance makes this development feel natural and believable.

Another of the film’s strongest points is its CGI, and not for the reason you might expect. It most definitely doesn’t look photo-realistic (more Marvel Cinematic Universe: Phase Four than “Avatar: The Way of Water”), but by falling into the uncanny valley, the CGI contributes to the unsettling atmosphere. The subtle differences between M3GAN and the other characters are a major theme of the film, and conveying this visually spares the viewers from having this explained in expositional dialogue.

“M3GAN” has something to offer everyone: If you are a horror newbie, the humor will provide a sense of levity that keeps you from getting too scared. If you’re a megafan, there are enough gory deaths and references to iconic horror franchises to keep you hooked. Because I highly recommend checking the film out for yourself, I won’t spoil the ending, but



COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES

let me just say this: After seeing the final shot, you’ll want to take a baseball bat to all of your electronics. For a film about the horrors of technology, I think that is pretty much the highest praise possible.

Review: Kingsolver retells Dickens tale in '90s Appalachia

ANNALIA FIORE
ARTS EDITOR

This review contains spoilers for Demon Copperhead.

During my race to complete my Goodreads book challenge for 2022, I read Barbara Kingsolver’s (*Poisonwood Bible*, *The Bean Trees*) most recently published book, *Demon Copperhead*. The book is a clever retelling of Charles Dickens’ classic novel *David Copperfield*, set in the Appalachian Mountains during the opioid epidemic of the late 1990s. It really does feel like a Dickens novel for our time, though in some respects much heavier, both because of its content and the reality that the issues addressed in *Demon Copperhead* not only remain, but have grown considerably worse since the '90s.

Kingsolver’s novel mirrors the original story of *David Copperfield* down to the minute details. As with David in Dickens’ novel, Demon is orphaned at a young age, experiences neglect, child labor and substance abuse and eventually finds success and family. But whereas David becomes a gentleman in English society, Demon has to perpetu-

ally battle the cycles of addiction and poverty that afflict his family and community. In this way, Kingsolver maintains the essential plot structure of Dickens’ original novel, as well as his cast of colorful characters, while also creating a story that is entirely different from the original source material. Characters like the sniveling, mawkish Uriah Heep and the scar-faced Rosa Dartle are reinvented in startlingly new ways while remaining reminiscent to their original characters. Angus, in particular, possesses the same good-natured, mature character of her predecessor Agnes, while also casting off the Victorian angelicness in favor of a tough, no-nonsense type of personality.

Similarly to Dickens, Kingsolver depicts the condition of the poor, though, in her case, in the often-overlooked parts of the United States. Whereas in Dickens’ time the oppressors were factories and corrupt orphanages, for Kingsolver the enemy is a little closer to home: East Coast pharmaceutical companies. These medical establishments — Purdue Pharmaceuticals in particular — targeted impoverished regions like Appalachia with opioid prescription drugs, creating a generational spiral of addiction

and overdoses. This aspect of Kingsolver’s novel was chilling and especially well done.

Despite my appreciation for the novel overall, I do think it has few problems. As expected from the author who came just shy of winning the Pulitzer Prize for *The Poisonwood Bible*, Kingsolver’s writing is very good, but at times it feels like she’s deliberately trying to write the next great American novel. I also wished there was more description of Appalachia, which felt lacking especially considering that Kingsolver lives there and has a background in ecology. There’s a bit here and there at the beginning and end of the book, but I think more in-depth naturalist passages describing rural Kentucky would offset how depressed and trashed Lee County seemed.

Kingsolver seems eager to correct the perspective that Appalachia is the armpit of America, where only backwards, red-necked and doped-out hillbillies come from, but she doesn’t do a great job of this. I came away with the impression that people like Demon can only escape the cycles of generational addiction with outside help — altruistic do-gooders like Annie and Mr. Armstrong, Demon’s teachers. The parts where the Appalachian



COURTESY OF SHAWN MILLER/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

community did rally together to care for the addicted, orphaned and grieving felt slapped on at the end. I wanted more of the folk art and front porch banjo shindig intermixed with the overdoses and Walmart parking lot drug deals.

Finally, as much as I loved the last act of the book, the last three chapters or so felt truly rushed, with the ending carelessly tidied up without much consideration

of Demon’s future. This was a bit disappointing after a series of amazing chapters in the last third of the book that I was consistently impressed by. I got the feeling that Kingsolver was running low on word count (the book is already a hefty 546 pages of dense writing). That being said, I think that the novel succeeds where it matters most by retelling *David Copperfield* in a way that is pertinent and prescient for our time.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Next president must prioritize equity and students' concerns

This semester, Kenyon has embarked on the search for a new president. The choice of a president is a chance for Kenyon to set its values and goals for the coming years, as the College looks into its third century and beyond. The presidential search committee has invited members of the community to share their perspectives, and so the executive staff of the *Collegian* would like to take the space this week to share our thoughts on what the new president of Kenyon should hold as their priorities, whoever they are.

First, the new president must be someone who will take action on Kenyon's commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion, supporting marginalized students and continuing President Sean Decatur's commitment to move Kenyon toward being an anti-racist institution. Such work, like mandating anti-racist professional development training for the Board of Trustees, ought to be continued and expanded under the new president.

The new president should also be someone who works transparently with students and takes students' concerns seriously. This should include respecting the rights of student workers, which means not blocking K-SWOC's path to an election as well as negotiating a contract in good faith if the union wins. The president must also listen to students' calls regarding support for transgender students — something that was notably missing last year, when LG-BTQ+ affinity organization leaders issued demands for support, including for Kenyon to speak out more strongly against transphobia and transmisogyny.

Kenyon is a unique institution, and the new president should be committed to what makes Kenyon Kenyon: its strong sense of community. Part of the College's allure lies in this sense of camaraderie, and the next president must be its largest supporter. The new president should be actively involved in Gambier and its community: advising and teaching, as Decatur did, informally participating in community events and reviving pre-pandemic traditions like "Pizza with the Prez."

We encourage all members of the Kenyon community to engage with the process. Community members can fill out this form: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KenyonPresidentialSearch> to share their opinions with the presidential search committee. This is an important opportunity to have our voices heard and shape the future direction of Kenyon.

Sincerely,
Salvatore, Amelia and Reid

The staff editorial is written weekly by Editors-in-Chief Amelia Carnell '23 and Salvatore Macchione '23 and Executive Director Reid Stautberg '23. You can contact them at carnell1@kenyon.edu, macchione1@kenyon.edu and stautberg1@kenyon.edu, respectively.

We need to talk about consent without making a joke

HANNAH SUSSMAN
OPINIONS EDITOR

Despite the "consent is sexy" pins that you might have received at any number of events at Kenyon, consent isn't sexy... It is mandatory. In fact, sex without consent isn't sex, it is rape. Given that in 2019, the Association of American Universities found on average 26.4% of women, 23.1% of transgender, genderqueer and nonconforming people and 6% of men are sexually assaulted in college, one might expect the topic of consent to not only be explicitly and repeatedly discussed, but also to be taken seriously. Yet, the pressing question Kenyon has posed to students through the creation of custom stickers around campus is "Owl you doin? Give a HOOT about consent." Kenyon has once again failed to take students' well-being and complaints seriously enough to create real change; instead they opted for a ridiculous sticker campaign. Although Kenyon has a habit of correctly identifying problems but failing to amend them properly (see the continued over-enrollment of students while building a new admissions office), trivializing assault and consent to the tune of an owl pun seems a new low. However, while Kenyon should be critiqued for these stickers, they are merely a symptom of a broader trend. Administrators and students alike are engaging in efforts to avoid difficult conversations more and more often, instead opting for fun events.

The use of catchy marketing for consent such as the "consent is sexy" pins given at many sexual wellness events is riddled with troublesome connotations. First, it avoids mentioning that not getting consent is also illegal and inhumane. Furthermore, describing consent as sexy plays into the notion that men — on college campuses nearly 99% of perpetrators are male — in particular need to be motivated by sex rather than human decency. Finally, the phrase is generally wrong. Consent is often clunky, sweaty and nervous, and that's okay. There is nothing "sexy" about sex in a twin XL bed, or the inevitable hallway conversations you can hear from almost anywhere on campus, yet these are still parts of sex.

While simply blaming Kenyon would be easier and make for a more succinct piece, I believe this opinion would be shallow without noting the broader current Kenyon is caught in. Over the last decade there has been a sharp rise in the policing of "triggering" language. The 2021 *New Yorker* article "What if trigger warnings don't work" outlines the fact that although more and more words are being added to

a list requiring a "trigger warning" before use, these warnings are doing little to actually help trauma survivors. In fact, the article points to evidence that instead of protecting students, policing language largely results in increased anxiety for survivors. Avoiding difficult topics, such as sexual assault, also denies all students the ability to interrogate their own experiences and perceptions through open dialogue.

The trajectory of Kenyon's now-discontinued Take Back the Night (TBTN) campaign was a worrisome example of Kenyon students and administrators choosing to move away from difficult conversations. According to a 2012 *Collegian* article, TBTN was an optional "week-long student-run program that strives to open dialogue and bring awareness to community members about sexual assault." A notable event in TBTN was the "Speak Out" portion, during which students could share their own experiences of sexual assault or misconduct. Despite students and faculty advocating for the benefits of these events, the campaign was discontinued in 2016 due to some survivors describing the event as triggering. The discontinuation of TBTN represents a turning point at which the substance and significance of discussions became less relevant than the emotional response difficult topics elicit. Engaging in serious conversations about consent and sexual assault used to be a standard at Kenyon, and as a community we are worse off without these conversations.

"Give a HOOT about consent" did not arise from nothing. As a school and community, we have moved too far from difficult conversations, choosing catchy phrases over meaningful discussions. Conversations around sex and healthy sexual relations should be fostered and encouraged. However, the way to make people comfortable with talking about sex is to engage in conversation rather than avoid conversation. Through attempts to shelter the student body, Kenyon has risked the physical safety of students by trivializing consent, the most fundamental and serious part of sex, in favor of providing a linguistically safe college experience. It is the responsibility of every Kenyon student and administrator alike to not shy away from difficult conversations, but to instead advocate for discussions as the necessity they are.

Hannah Sussman '25 is the opinions editor at the Collegian. She is a sociology major from Glencoe, Ill. She can be reached at sussman3@kenyon.edu.

The opinions page is a space for members of the community to discuss issues relevant to the campus and the world at large. The opinions expressed on this page belong only to the writers. Columns and letters to the editors do not reflect the opinions of the *Collegian* staff. All members of the community are welcome to express opinions through a letter to the editor.

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Cooke collects 2 NCAC honors over winter break

KATIE SPARVERO
SPORTS EDITOR

As many Kenyon students returned home for winter break, the women's basketball team hit the hardwood. The Owls split four non-conference games and earned their first conference victory over the College of Wooster, but also fell in a trio of NCAC games. With a month left in the regular season, Kenyon's record is 5-10 (1-4 NCAC).

On Dec. 10, Kenyon fell to Penn State Behrend (Pa.) 69-66 at home. The Owls led 22-14 after the first quarter, but the Lions outscored Kenyon by 15 points in the second frame, taking a seven-point lead into halftime. After an even third quarter, Kenyon scored the first 10 points of the final frame to lead 55-51 with five minutes to play. Though momentum swung in the Owls' favor, the Lions roared back and took the lead for good with three minutes to play. Despite the loss, center Claudia Cooke '24 took home her first of two NCAC Women's Basketball Player of the Week honors for her strong performances against Berhend and Penn State Shenango.

Kenyon got back on the court on Dec. 18 to face Otterbein University. After a low-scoring first half that saw the Owls lead 14-13, the Cardinals' scorching third-quarter shooting from the floor (62.5%) propelled them to a 57-50 win.

The Owls picked up play again on Dec. 30. In its final game of 2022, Kenyon went on the road to play North Central College (Ill.). Though the Cardinals led early in the game, Kenyon gained the lead halfway through and never trailed again, with strong shooting from beyond the arc in the



Cooke led the Owls to their first NCAC victory. | SEJIN KIM/SID/NCAA

second half (87.5%) lifting the Owls to a 73-61 win.

Unfortunately, Kenyon was unable to open the new year with a win, as it fell to Ohio Wesleyan University (OWU) at home on Jan. 4. In the 76-44 loss, Kenyon's 22 turnovers proved costly, as OWU scored 17 points off turnovers.

Looking to get back in the win column, the Owls faced off against the University of Maine Fort Kent Bengals on Jan. 9. Kenyon never trailed throughout the game, leading by as many as 28 points. The Owls' 58 rebounds helped them secure the 65-44 win. Alyssa Gest '26, who paced Kenyon with 14 points, highlighted the team's offense as a key factor to their 4-6 record in non-con-

ference games. "We played well with non-conference teams by staying competitive and looking for great shots," she wrote in an email to the *Collegian*.

On Jan. 11, Kenyon looked to stay in the win column with a victory against the College of Wooster. The outlook was dire for the Owls, as they trailed for the entire first half. Down 37-30 at the start of the third quarter, Kenyon opened the half with a big run to take its first lead of the game. From there, the two teams stayed close, trading points throughout the third and fourth quarters. After a Wooster free throw with 10 seconds on the clock tied the game at 65-65, Cooke, who earned NCAC Player of the Week, put home the layup in the paint to give the Owls

their first conference win of the season. Cooke believes the win can help propel Kenyon to further success in NCAC play. "It felt really good, we were all happy with the win and it gave us momentum for the next conference games we have to play," she said.

Unfortunately, Kenyon was unable to win consecutive conference games, as they fell in lopsided fashion to DePauw University on Saturday. Though the Owls kept it close early, the Tigers pulled away late in the first quarter and never looked back, taking the contest 82-54.

On Wednesday, Kenyon fell behind early on the road to Wittenberg University. After the Tigers took a 21-6 lead in the first quarter, they continued their torrid scoring on the way to a 62-40 win.

For Orefice, a continued emphasis on defense in conference games will help Kenyon find further success. "I think we can continue to improve on defense, in limiting runs, getting stops and defensive and offensive rebounding, which will then help us push the ball a bit more offensively," she said.

Kenyon next plays on Saturday, when they will host Oberlin College. Orefice hopes that the team will continue to grow in the final month of the regular season. "This season has been a good experience so far. As a young team, we have faced some ups and downs as a team, but have stayed together throughout and are now focused on improving as we play more conference games," she said.

Cooke highlighted a chance to go dancing in the NCAC tournament as the team's primary focus over the upcoming weeks. "My goal and I believe the rest of the team's goal is to go into the NCAC playoffs seeded in the top half of the conference," she said.

Men's basketball still searching for first conference victory

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Over winter break, the Kenyon men's basketball team faced a busy schedule of games, including a trip to Daytona Beach, Fla., and a slew of conference games. Though the Owls found some success against non-conference opponents, they were winless against NCAC foes. Their record stands at 7-10 (0-8).

After a heartbreaking last-second layup sealed DePauw University's 69-67 win on Dec. 10, Kenyon got back in the win column against Alma College (Mich.) a week later. Poor first-half shooting had the Owls on the wrong side of a 39-21 lead, but they came out of the break hot, scoring 10 unanswered points. A free throw from Anthony Testa '24 gave the Owls a 64-63 lead with just over five minutes to play. In the waning minutes of the game, the two teams traded the lead. With just five seconds left on the clock, Miles Versa '25 put the game-winning layup home, securing the 74-72 road win.

As temperatures in Gambier grew colder, the Owls headed south to the Sunshine State to take part in the Daytona Beach Shootout. For Florida-born David Mazon III '25, the chance to play in his home state was an ex-

citing one. "One of my favorite things about basketball is traveling to new places and the bonds you deepen with your team while traveling," he wrote in an email to the *Collegian*. "It was nice for my family to come see me play in person for once."

On Dec. 20, Kenyon faced off against Stevenson University (Md.). Despite clutch 3-point shooting from Sam Walch '23 and Versa to help the Owls mount a first-half comeback, the Mustangs took the lead with seven minutes to play in the second half and never looked back on their way to a 72-67 victory.

Looking to head home with a split, Kenyon returned to play a day later against Marymount University (Va.). The Owls quickly jumped out to an early lead, capitalizing on 46.4% field goal shooting to take a 39-24 lead into halftime. However, the Saints tied the game at 74 with under a minute and a half to play. Nick Nelson '26 gave Kenyon the advantage with a free throw before making a layup to seal the 77-74 win.

For Gefen Bar-Cohen '25, who led the Owls with 24 points against the Saints, the trip to Florida represented some of the team's best basketball, but he emphasized that the team knew not

to lose focus of the season's larger goals. "It felt good to play well in Florida, but immediately after the trip, we all shifted our focus to our upcoming conference games," he wrote in an email to the *Collegian*.

As the Owls returned to their roost, their struggle with slow starts followed them. In the first half of its Jan. 4 game against Wabash, Kenyon trailed by as many as nine points, before strong shooting helped to give the team a 40-34 lead at halftime. However, the Owls were unable to close out the game, losing in the waning minutes 71-67. Kenyon was unable to rebound from the loss in their next two games against conference foes Denison University and the College of Wooster, losing 82-61 on Jan. 7 and 81-67 on Jan. 9.

On Saturday, Kenyon was in good position to get its first NCAC win against Wittenberg University, taking a 37-27 lead into halftime. However, the Tigers took advantage of a run of Kenyon mistakes to regain the lead. The game was a back-and-forth affair, and at the end of 40 minutes the score was tied at 57. Wittenberg took the lead 17 seconds into overtime and never relinquished it, winning 75-72.

The Owls returned to Tom-



David Mazon III '25 | SEJIN KIM/SID/NCAA

sich Arena on Wednesday to play the Oberlin College Yeomen, with both teams looking to win their first conference game. Though Kenyon scored the game's first four points, Oberlin took over for the rest of the first half. The Owls pulled close throughout the second half, but Testa's buzzer-beating three was not enough, and Kenyon fell 58-57.

Both Bar-Cohen and Mazon agree that the Owls are capable of being competitive in conference but acknowledge that it will take more to win games. "We play each team in our conference twice a year, so if we can scout and know how they play, their go-to moves and tendencies; we will have an upper hand if we can stop those

things," Mazon said. "We want to be more than just competitive; we want to win," Bar-Cohen said.

The Owls will return to play on Saturday, when they travel to face conference-leading Ohio Wesleyan University. With around a month left in the regular season and only conference opponents left on the schedule, Mazon highlighted finishing the season strong as a main goal for the team. "We started out really strong this season and are currently right now going through a drought. I want us to at least be .500 by the end of the season and to make it to the playoffs," he said.

Bar-Cohen's goals can be summed up in just one word: "Win."