The swine flu is an infection caused by an influenza virus that infects the lungs of pigs and has crossed over to humans. It is called the H1N1 virus and is contagious.

The first vaccine for H1N1 recently became available on Long Island. The destination is headed to health care institutions in Nassau and Suffolk. Health care providers and emergency personnel top the list of those who are targeted to get the vaccine. An emergency state mandate requires these workers to get the seasonal and H1N1 vaccine to prevent the spread of the swine flu.

According to Kathy Coley, Institutional Advancement, Farmingdale State College has taken all appropriate precautions to ensure the well-being of the students, faculty, and staff. “The College is ready in case of an outbreak,” said Coley.

Andrew Hesse, 21, student at FSC said, “Yes, I will get the H1N1 vaccine if Farmingdale decides to distribute the shot.”

Mariam Omar, 20, another student at Farmingdale State College said, “I will also get it, I do not want to take any chances.”

The symptoms of the H1N1 are fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. To prevent getting swine flu wash your hands often, make sure you get plenty of sleep, drink plenty of fluids, eat nutritional food, and avoid contact with people who are sick.

Peace on Earth is what the human race strives for but it is all too often that world peace has its price. The struggle to spread harmony is one of the most complex problems faced today. Some may not always support our country’s decisions but most always make the decision to support our country.

Barbara Sarringer, a secretary at Farmingdale State College, is putting in the extra effort to support our country and more specifically, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“Operation shoebox was first started in December of 2003 and has been an annual event,” said Sarringer. Operation Shoebox is a program designed to help gather items for soldiers overseas. The program is not-for-profit and is solely designed to show support for our soldiers overseas.

Sarringer is the head coordinator of the program and she also receives help from Dr. Carter and Dr. Goodstone. “The campus wanted to know how they could help with supporting the war.”

Operation Shoebox is a unique program offered at Farmingdale State College and has a great turnout every year. One can imagine the number of items that are collected. Sarringer has a closet on the first floor of Knapp hall which stores all of the items. “The deadline to contribute is December 1, and there is also a scheduled day that the post office comes to the college to pick up the items,” said Sarringer. It is critical that all contributed items are packed properly and addressed to their desired destinations.

Solomon Machia, a senior at Farmingdale, is one of the many students who is contributing. “I don’t support the war in any way but I support Americans fighting for our country.” Machia donated socks and t-shirts for soldiers.

Stephanie Mueller, also a senior at Farmingdale, was contributing countless socks, calling cards and other items. “My brother is serving over in Afghanistan and this just really makes me feel that much closer to him,” said Mueller. “I don’t just donate items for him, I also give a general donation to all the soldiers in need.”

Operation Shoebox is one of Farmingdale’s most recognized services. Because it is an annual event, it attracts a lot of attention not only from school faculty and students, but the surrounding community as well.
So many loud voices talking and laughing, on top of the even louder Trey Songz “LOL Smiley Face” song, blasting through the speakers. Young men and women of different ethnic backgrounds crowd the dance floor, dancing, clapping, snapping, and singing, while others stand idly along the walls of the large multi-purpose room in Roosevelt Hall, all enjoying the atmosphere.

“Where my ladies at?” said the DJ, shouting into the microphone from his booth. This set off a loud roar from the majority of the ladies in the room.

As the night went on it wasn’t hard to notice that the music being played had a mixture of a lot of different artists even though reggae, hip hop, and R&B dominated the majority of the spins.

Hundreds of students and non-students were present; however; the room was not filled to maximum capacity. Although Ram Jam had all the elements of a great party, music, people, food, and a safe place to contain it all. Whenever there’s a public function anywhere there is also a risk that anything can happen.

“You can’t ever gather a lot of people nowadays, without something going down,” said student Christina Lafayette, regularly attends different social functions held on campus.

By the end of the party there were several fights. “Those fights weren’t necessary; they ruined the whole party,” said Lafayette. The first official party of the semester started off as a night to remember but because of the inability to control emotions Ram Jam ended as a night some students would rather forget.

“The night was going good, but the fighting that ended the party early definitely changed that,” said David Sikora. Sikora attends FSC; however Ram Jam 21 was the first Farmingdale party he ever attended. “The party had so much potential,” said Sikora.

While the fighting that closed the party seemed to ruin the night for some of the students who attended, others feel that the party didn’t live up to expectations in other ways.

“I know there were a lot of people there, but there should’ve been more people there,” said James Taylor. Taylor attends Nassau Community College and claims to party every weekend. “A party doesn’t feel right unless it’s at full capacity or at least close to being full,” said Taylor.

Another issue that arose was lack of variety in the music being played by the DJ. “I swear I heard most of the songs like three times in less than two hours!” said Erica Hatcher. Hatcher who also attends Nassau Community College was invited by a friend to attend Ram Jam 21. “I know that some songs move the crowd more than others but c’mon that was ridiculous,” said Hatcher.

According to Lafayette, Sikora, Taylor, and Hatcher, Ram Jam 21 did not live up to expectations. “Despite the disappointments, I think there should be another Ram Jam this semester,” said Lamar Hall. Hall runs track for the school and has a strong love for Jamaican dance. “I can have a good time anywhere, Ram Jam wasn’t that bad overall,” said Hall.

The College Life, What's That?

By Gregory Tomaï

College is place known for its annihilation of teen and post-teen inhibitions; a renaissance in a student's life where they are free to do what they please and to unleash their inner party animal. Farmingdale State has a way of its own.

“Come here, go to class and go home,” said David Brown, a sophomore commuter student. “At Farmingdale, at least, it’s that way. Working at an old-fashioned deli and doing construction work, I keep real busy.”

Most people would have you think that average college students spend a majority of their nights “on the town,” so to speak. But Brown would have you think otherwise. “I like it the way it is. I'm not the party type at all, really.”

According to the Dean of Students office at Farmingdale State, there are 6,987 students enrolled for the Fall 2009 Semester. Out of the nearly 7,000 students, only 505 are residents on campus. Farmingdale has always been a commuter college, which is made obvious since a mere 7 percent of the students dorm. Approximately 82 percent of students are employed.

Kenny Vasquez, a freshman living on campus has a slightly different story. “I’ve met plenty of people already that have little to say if it isn’t about drinking,” said Vasquez. “Me? I like to keep a fine balance between partying and studying, but I’ve always been that way.”

There are those chosen few students who have the privilege of being spoon-fed income wise, but Vasquez isn’t one of them. “I work at CVS Pharmacy and have to keep up with school work and attempt to have a life as well.”

Things haven't changed so much since a few decades ago.

“I had gone to Adelphi University. I remember how people acted back then,” said Professor George N. Caviris, a physics professor at Farmingdale for almost 40 years.

“My friends went to parties. I went to parties too, but I wasn't a party animal.” Caviris didn’t differ much from the students today. “In the summers, I sold furniture, and in the winters, I worked in the drug department of a supermarket.”

The Rampage Student Newspaper 2 Farmingdale State College
Farmingdale’s Hidden Oasis

By Emily Aguayza

Stepping in for the first time can be a bit surprising. Filled with tall shady trees, flower trailed pathways, goldfish ponds, and an extensive array of plants, the Teaching Gardens present a calming oasis secluded from the rush of college life. The greenhouse, a short distance from Thompson Hall, marks the entrance to the Teaching Gardens at Farmingdale State College.

“The gardens have often been called the best kept secret on campus,” said Dr. Gary Brown, long-time professor and ex-chairman of Farmingdale’s Ornamental Horticulture program. He calls the gardens the most serene and calming place to go on campus.

Though the aesthetic value is evident, these gardens also serve a more technical purpose. The Teaching Gardens serve as a sort of learning laboratory for Farmingdale’s Ornamental Horticulture students. Students help maintain the gardens while gaining invaluable experience in their field of study.

The gardens are used to identify plants and to better understand the elements of garden design. Students in the Ornamental Horticulture program receive outdoor lessons once a week in addition to two traditional lectures.

Classes on plant material teach students how to identify different types of plants. Students learn how to differentiate one plant from another by viewing their leaves or twigs.

Farmingdale offers four degree programs in Ornamental Horticulture. A student may get either a B.S. or an A.A.S. in General Horticulture or Landscape Development. There is also a certification program. Popular careers that students within the program may pursue include landscape development and design, landscape architecture, nursery production, arboriculture, plant propagation, and forestry. One of the less heard-of careers that is gaining a small following is horticulture therapy.

The Ornamental Horticulture students and faculty are a small but close knit group of individuals. “I like how everybody is friends,” said Jeff Howe, president of the Ornamental Horticulture club. “Students hang out and talk to the faculty. They’re really friendly to students, receptive.”

These thoughts were echoed by the vice president of the Ornamental Horticulture club, Patrick Jones. “You get to know people in the field, people in many age groups” said Jones. “The professors make this program special. You get to know them.”

Perhaps it is that bond created by a shared passion that first brought together the Ornamental Horticulture Club. The club meets every Thursday in the Greenhouse during the common hour. Many of the meetings consist of guest speakers who share their knowledge within the field. Future events include plant sales, trips to gardens, and the construction of a sustainable green roof. It is not necessary to be in the program, all interested students are welcome to join.

Where the Wild Things Aren’t

By Katie Robertson

The oversized posters promoting the movie “Where the Wild Things Are” popped out in the movie theater. The popcorn was overflowing, but the tickets were moving slowly. And there were more empty seats in the theater than anticipated.

Opening weekend was a bust for the movie that is Spike Jonze’s adaptation of the beloved children’s book about a boy named Max who escapes the troubles of his childhood to his own world where the wild things are: in his imagination. Set in present time, the movie follows Max through being bullied, overlooked by his mother, and misunderstood. He runs away after a fight at home and finds himself deep in his imagination- where the “Wild Things Are.”

Opening weekend for Wild Things was not bad when looking at the actual numbers. It took in $32,695,407 the first weekend nationwide. This is certainly not a flop. But according to the seats occupied in the United Artist Farmingdale Theater, the movie seemed to not be doing as well.

The advertisements were streaming weeks before the event. The theater promoted the movie in hopes of bringing people in. The sales were disappointing though. “We did what we could, but it wasn’t good,” said Ms. Blunt, manager at the United Artists Farmingdale movie theater.

Moviegoers who did show up for the opening weekend didn’t seem to notice the low sales for the movie. How well the effects were done was gushed about most.

“It was more than I expected. And I like that it was emotional and reached out to a lot of people,” said Trisha O’Connor of Levittown. She read the book as a child and was very excited for the movie.

The trailers and advertisements for the movie were the most common way those who saw the movie found out about it. The promotion for the movie was there, the sales just weren’t. “I was hesitant going into the movie. But I liked the effects and would recommend the movie to someone else,” said Mrs. Paretta of Wantagh.

“Where the Wild Things Are” had potential to rock the box office, but it didn’t deliver during the opening weekend. The movie itself did not disappoint, with the excellent effects and storyline.
Farmingdale State College is a place of intellect, skill, and partially untapped activity. While the college prides itself with strong staff and curriculum, many of the students barely have any knowledge of the extracurricular activities that happen on campus.

Both FSC’s student government and Student Activities Office say it isn’t for lack of trying.

“We try hard to get the activities out to the students using as many means as possible. We send mandatory e-mails every Wednesday regarding information on Backstage, Health and Wellness, and any other important activity that is going on, on the campus.”

“We even have a commuter outreach in Gleeson Hall during activity hours, because commuters are kind of out of the loop,” said Alicia Femoyer, a senior at FSC, and representative of the Farmingdale Student Government.

A good number of the sports teams and club members are students who dorm. On the other hand, there are those who have that certain drive. Whether it be sporting events or working on campus, there are participants who are commuters.

“I’d love to do more if I could, but besides the S.A.D.H.A. (Student American Dental Hygienist Association) where I work as a TA, there isn’t a lot of time. I’m a commuter, but even a lot of people I know who commute in the dental hygiene program are devoted to a lot of the activities. Many of my friends here play sports, and do the yearbook,” said Katelin Clements, sophomore at FSC.

Some people confess to just not having enough time to attend the functions that happen on campus. “I don’t really know what goes on around campus. I mean, I get the e-mails on my phone, but I usually delete them. I commute, and I work whenever I’m not at school, so there really isn’t a lot of time,” said Matthew Szokalski, senior at FSC.

Commuters will often admit to being in a hurry, and that they rarely ever stop to even look at the notices in the hallway. Whenever they do find a break, a lot of them do not exactly know where to look for activities.

A popular place where students seem to congregate is the circular wooden-bulletin board located outside Gleeson Hall. However, instead of reliable campus information, the board is a clutter of papers regarding sexy singles, available boarding space, and cheaper textbook requests.

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**Broadcasting By Bulletin or Bullhorn**

*By Carolyn McKeon*

Megan Wright, 23, attends FSC as a Professional Communications major and she is a cancer survivor. She was diagnosed at the age of 2 months with Opticglioma. Prior to this, doctors believed Wright was blind and deaf. Doctors also told Wright’s mother that she would not survive past the age of 3 months.

By the time Wright was 6 to 7 months old, she had been given seven different types of chemotherapy. “It is difficult because I was blind and deaf. When I was 15, I could begin to see,” Wright said. “I was so happy, the tears flowed.”

Wright can see now out of one eye, and her hearing is good enough to speak with others in person but speaking over the telephone is a challenge.

Wright spoke about the sources of strength in her life. “I had a BOCES teacher who believed in me,” said Wright. She also had a few teacher aids that she met with twice a week.

Wright’s biggest heroes have been her grandmother and mom. There were sources of pain in her life that were not merely physical.

“I hated my formative years. I couldn’t do gym so I put on weight. I am the oldest in my family and the smallest.” Wright saw her old gym teacher recently who was shocked when Wright walked up to her. “She was always so sweet to me.” Wright said that she experienced so many things earlier than most children.

“I love writing,” said Wright. “It was a great way for me to counter the pain of the chemo and the loneliness of my childhood.

Wright is a published poet. She struggles with many things, and most people wouldn’t notice. She provided a demo of Zoomtext, a software program geared toward aiding students with audio visual impairment. The program can magnify text as well as provide audio as long as the textbook software is installed or available on line.

Carmen Capoziello, a school friend of Wright’s, first met her at a get-together with one of her friends just over two years ago. At the time, Capoziello was recovering from knee surgery. She had a benign tumor on her femur bone, and she shared her past health issues with Wright.

“I found her to be a warm and friendly person who is easy to talk to,” said Capoziello. “I also admire her determination. Getting to campus isn’t always easy for her because she has to take the bus, but you can tell that she wants to be at FSC.”

Wright’s education is very important to her. “I noticed that when the professor asks a question or is looking for comments on a subject, Megan is always first to raise her hand,” said Capoziello.

Wright struggles to tolerate those around her who complain about petty things. “I try to cultivate gratitude every single day that I’m here,” Wright said, adding that her family continues to be the most important thing in her life.

Dominick Cassarro, a co-worker and friend said, “Megan is a hard worker, kind, smart and gives me a whole different perspective on life.”