

# the meridian

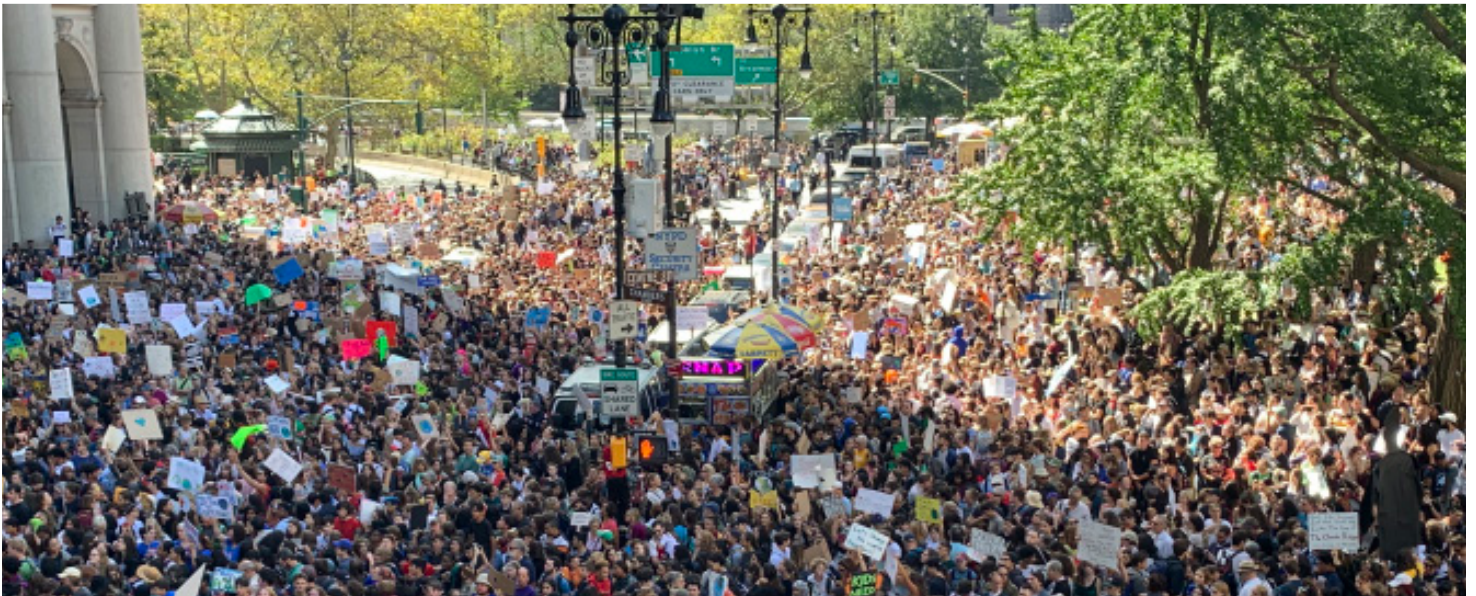
THE STUDENT VOICE OF LEHMAN COLLEGE

October 2019

lehmanmeridian.squarespace.com

Bronx, New York

## Devastation from Climate Change Leads to Protest



**Protesters demanding action to combat climate change** (Photo Credit: Zarin Siddiqua)

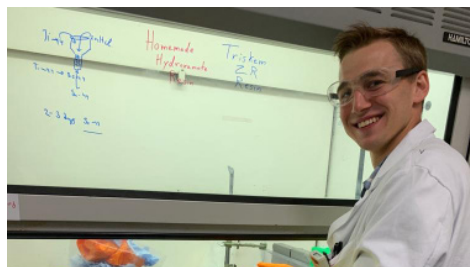
**Article by Zarin Siddiqua on Page 3.**



### NEWS

Lehman Completes  
Renovation of Performing  
Arts Center

Page 5



### LIFESTYLE

Growing Number of  
Lehman Students Win  
Prestigious Awards

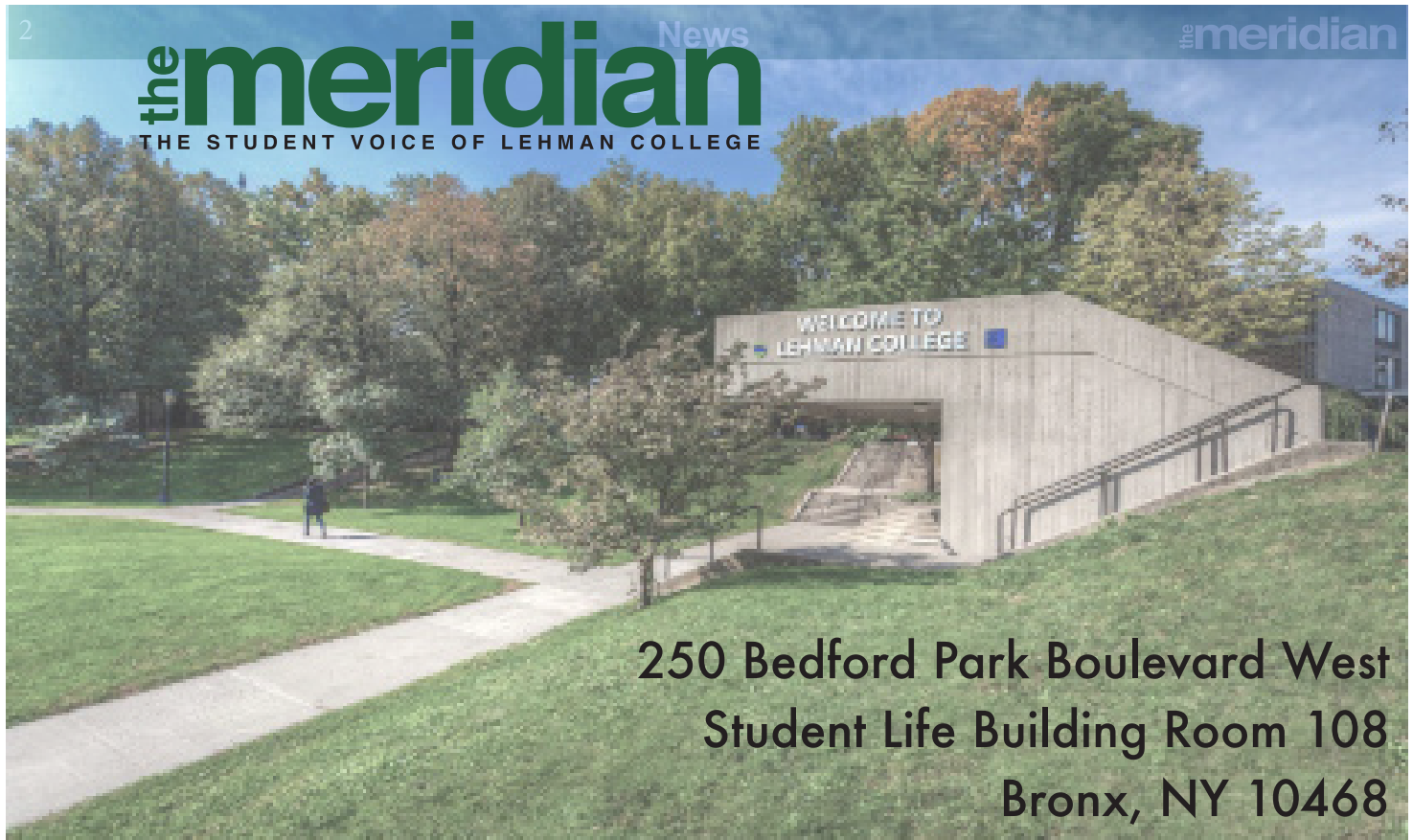
Page 14



### ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Netflix Documentary Shows  
Women Winning

Page 16



250 Bedford Park Boulevard West  
 Student Life Building Room 108  
 Bronx, NY 10468

## BUILD YOUR PORTFOLIO WITH US

Be part of our team of reporters, writers, photographers, videographers and artists. Send your sample writing, photography, and/or art to our email, or come find us in our office at the Student Life Building Room 108.

## the staff

**PERLA TOLENTINO**  
 EDITOR IN CHIEF

**MICHAEL OMORUAN**  
 MANAGING EDITOR

**LYSA VANIBLE**  
 OFFICE MANAGER

**PETER WATSON**  
 PRINT PRODUCER/WEB EDITOR

**MAYTE PEÑA**  
 SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

**JENNIFER MACKENZIE**  
 FACULTY ADVISOR

**DEANNA GARCIA**  
 NEWS EDITOR

**BRITTANY AUFIERO**  
 ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

**ALLEN MENA**  
 LIFESTYLE EDITOR

**ALLEGRA MYERS**  
 COPY EDITOR

Questions? Comments? Write us at [lehmanmeridian@gmail.com](mailto:lehmanmeridian@gmail.com)  
 Check out our website: [lehmanmeridian.squarespace.com](http://lehmanmeridian.squarespace.com)

**WRITERS: Zarin Siddiqua, Deanna Garcia, Mayte Peña, Sally Barrilla, Beauty Kolade, Hector Bello, Nelson Fernandez, Michael Omoruan**

## GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Meridian reserves the right to edit articles and letters as the editor(s) see fit. The views expressed in editorials are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Meridian staff. Ads published both in print and online do not reflect the views or opinions of the Meridian staff. The message or product being sold in the ad may not be in accordance with our staff's personal beliefs. The Meridian articles, in whole or in part, may only be reprinted with permission from the editor(s) of The Meridian. All letters, opinions and articles sent to us must have the name, phone number, and email address of the author for verification. Letters without the author's name(s) will be ignored. Upon request, authors' names may be withheld from publication.



# Devastation from Climate Change Leads to Protest

By Zarin Siddiqua



**Protesters demanding action to combat climate change.** (Photo Credit: Zarin Siddiqua)

“Climate change won’t discriminate against religion, politics, race, or age,” said Danysha Reyes, a junior English and philosophy major at Lehman, who joined the New York global climate strike with other CUNY students and local residents on Sept. 20, 2019. She was one of

about 7.6 million people from 150 countries who joined the biggest climate mobilization in history, initiated by Greta Thunberg, a 16-year-old Swedish environmental activist. “If we don’t take care of the earth

now, everyone will be directly affected,” Reyes explained. Lehman students are not only at the front lines of climate activism, but they are also among those most directly impacted by the growing threat of climate change.

Jennifer Monique, a Lehman senior English major, described how her family in Puerto Rico was affected during Hurricane Maria. “I have a sister who has two children, her husband, and her ailing mother, who had no

access to clean water. We were unable to get in contact with my uncle, unaware of what happened to him.” Monique added: “I think global warming is definitely real. I think that we should take some sort of action toward helping our planet survive.”

Meanwhile, storm intensity and damages continue to increase. The cost of the devastation from Hurricane Dorian totaled more than \$40 billion, according to the National Hurricane Center. Hurricane Lorenzo, a powerful

storm that reached category 5 overnight, was registered as the strongest recorded hurricane in the north and east Atlantic basin and is listed among the rare and most intense category of storms, CNN reported. According to the Washington Post, more storms like Lorenzo will continue to form. Already, 15 storms, including about eight hurricanes and four major hurricanes are predicted to hit coastal and inland communities, according to a 2019 hurricane season forecast of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Climate Prediction Center.

Lehman students also expressed concern about other natural disasters tied to global warming, including increased fires in California and animal extinction.

These fears are heightened in light of President Trump's decision to withdraw the United States from the United Nations' Paris Climate Agreement, an international effort to combat climate change. Trump is among the administrative officials who don't see climate change as an immediate crisis, according to ABC News.

Commenting on the need to address the global crisis, Lehman junior accounting major, Miguel Batista said, "Instead of having wars, and discriminating against each other, we should be working together to save the only planet that we live in." "My grandma's house was destroyed when Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico. All of our sentimental things went along with it, and it was really hard for them.

**"We have to realize that global warming is about the world, not just one country."**

**—Danysha Reyes,  
Lehman junior  
English and  
philosophy major**

We weren't able to contact them for months, and we didn't know if anyone was alive or dead," said Marissa Morales, a Lehman senior English major. "I very much believe that this is because of global warming and we need to do something to stop more natural disasters from happening."

To take concrete steps in that direction, Lehman initiated a

Puerto Rico service trip to rebuild homes and provide help for the Puerto Rican community after Hurricane Maria damaged much of it in 2017. Under the program called Leadership Involve for Everyone (L.I.F.E), Lehmanites travel the country during spring breaks, in collaboration with CUNY Service Corps Puerto Rico, who served during the summer.

"We created a garden, so people have access to food if there is another storm," said Lehman senior theater major, Quameisha Moreno, who was one of the participants. "We only help when the damage happens, but what about after? Why should we wait for something to happen? Why not prevent the world from the damage?"

Reyes also affirmed her commitment to activism for change. "We have to realize that global warming is about the world, not just one country. People sense the urgency when millions stand united, despite skin color and ideologies in a country so politically-charged," she said. The climate protest "was an amazing and empowering experience to stand up for this world and the people in it; I hope to do it again."

# Lehman Completes Renovation of Performing Arts Center

**By Deanna Garcia**

On its 40th anniversary, Lehman's Center for the Performing Arts celebrated the completion of a \$15.4 million renovation with a grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony on Sept. 19. Started in November of 2017, the upgrades include a 5,595-square-foot expansion of the lobby, new box office, handicap-accessible en-

hancements to the hall's floors and 2,276 seats, new ramps, new restrooms and elevators that ascend to the balconies. Lehman students praised the transformation of the center, which bills itself as the largest entertainment venue in the Bronx. "When you think about the Bronx, you don't think about an amazing space like this, especially at Lehman," Johana

Gracia Lara, a music senior major at Lehman. "It makes me even happier that I attended here. It's just rare to even have something beautiful and a legitimate performing arts center here in the Bronx." "It's something in our backyard and something that we have a personal attachment to as students who attend this college," said Kassandra Mon-



**A view of the additional 5,595-square-foot-expansion of Lehman's Center for the Performing Arts.** (Photo Credit: Deanna Garcia)





**One of the ramps in the Center for the Performing Arts. (Photo Credit: Deanna Garcia)**

tes, a Lehman biochemistry and philosophy senior. “So to have other college students come to our campus and say, ‘Wow your college is amazing,’ that’s great gratitude to us.” “Most of us can take the bus or walk here instead of preparing one day to travel all the way to Lincoln Center,” said Lehman biochemistry senior, Tarily Hernandez, about the convenience of the center. According to the center, over 200,000 visit it between September and early June; visitors come from Manhattan, Westchester and even Connecticut. Lehman officials said the renovation’s

main goal was for the center to be more compliant for Americans with Disabilities (ADA). “In 1980, people weren’t thinking about handicapped

**“When you think about the Bronx, you don’t think about an amazing space like this, especially at Lehman.”**

**–Johana Gracia Lara,  
senior music major**

people as much as we do now,” said Executive Director of Lehman’s Center for the Performing Arts, Eva Bornstein.

“Now people are becoming more aware that handicap individuals need access to the same seats and bathrooms as anyone else.” All costs of the upgrade were covered by the Office of the Governor, the New York State Legislature, the Bronx delegation of the New York City Council and the Office of the Bronx Borough President. The center will receive additional funding with a seat naming initiative. Goya Foods Inc., the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Department, the New York State Council on the Arts,

Con Edison, The Hyde and Watson Foundation, the Havana Café and the Friends of Lehman Center all support the center as sponsors for the 2019-2020 season. Bornstein told the Meridian that she wants more national companies to perform at the center. “I’m excited because we get to bring all of these fantastic events from around the globe to the Bronx,” she said. “I think it’s important that people on campus know something about the Lehman Cen-

ter. This would be a great opportunity for students and faculty to explore their own college.” Many took this opportunity at the grand opening, where attendees included Lehman President Dr. Daniel Lemons, CUNY Chancellor Dr. Félix V. Matos Rodriguez, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and city council members. Lehman’s Urban Male Leadership Program offered tours of the new renovations, and the Lehman Student Jazz Ensemble played live music.

“One, if not the major ingredient of our DNA is music,” said Diaz Jr. about the influence of music on Bronxites. As they carry on this legacy, some Lehman students are excited to start rehearsing at the center.

“It’s just really nice for me because as a senior, I get to still perform in in this new renovated space now,” Gracia Lara said. “Hopefully I can continue to work in my career and come back here to actually perform.”



**The newly renovated seats in the Center.** (Photo Credit: Deanna Garcia)



# Lehmanites Question Petition to Troll Trump with Street Name Change

By Sally Barrilla



## Trump Tower

(Photo Credit: Shutterstock)

A petition to rename the section of 5th Ave. that runs along Trump Tower after former President Barak Obama has gone viral, but Lehman students are divided on its impact.

Created by award-winning director and actor, Elizabeth Rowin via the sociopolitical advocacy platform MoveOn.org, the initiative calls for the stretch of 5th Ave. between 56th and

57th streets to be renamed President Barak Obama Avenue. By the end of September, it racked up 446,539 signatures.

Rowin claims that she was motivated to create the petition after reading an anti-Trump tweet and thought she could use the opportunity to poke fun at him. The British actress told the Washington Post, "Trump uses Twitter

so much to tweet and bully people. I thought it would be fun to troll him back."

Lehman students, however, are ambivalent about the name change protest.

"A name change isn't going to wake people up to madness that's happening nor will it urge people to vote or register to vote," said English senior



at Lehman, Davidia Boykins. “I think this will be an insult to Obama. Trump is working his hardest to destroy everything Obama created and awaken more discrimination.”

“I feel like it will have very little to no impact in New York City, but it’s a big slap in Trump’s face, so go for it,” said Lehman junior biology major, Shomari Dixon. “I can’t speak for all Trump supporters, but from what I’ve seen, Trump supporters can be pretty extreme. I can definitely see a big protest happening soon.”

At least one Lehman faculty member also pushed back on the proposal. “Naming a street after Obama, regardless of Trump, seems

wrong to me. Obama is a war criminal, an enemy of immigrants and the working class in general,” said philosophy professor Russell Dale.

**“Naming a street after Obama, regardless of Trump, seems wrong to me.”**

**–Russell Dale,  
philosophy professor**

“It is part of the way United States’ society functions that a criminal like Obama is perceived and treated somehow gentler than some other criminal like Trump.” Even if it has popular support, the petition might be challeng-

ing to pass in New York’s City Council, since according to USA Today, the honoree must already be deceased in order for a street to be named after them. Meanwhile, New York City Council Speaker and City Council Member of District 3, Corey Johnson, a well-known fan of Obama, likewise does not support the petition nor think it’s effective to oppose President Trump.

“I am not positive this is the best way. The Obamas epitomize class, dedication to public service and respect for the Oval Office,” Johnson told ABC News. “I’m pretty confident we can find a better way to honor the greatest president of my lifetime, than by trolling the worst president of my lifetime.”



**The stretch of Fifth Avenue between 56th and 57th streets** (Photo Credit: Getty Images)

# District 15 Candidate Prioritizes Student Debt Relief

**By Hector Bello**

Jonathan Ortiz is running for Bronx District 15's Congressional seat in the 2020 Democratic primaries on a campaign to eliminate student loan debt, and Lehman students welcomed the initiative.

"We signed contracts to get loans that we didn't fully understand; we can't get rid of debt through bankruptcy," Ortiz told the Meridian in an August team meeting at his Soundview residence. The Democratic candidate

said high school graduates feel less motivated to pursue higher education because they fear the consequences of student loan debt. "One of the main reasons why I am trying to eliminate student loan debt is because it keeps families from getting decent homes and might also contribute to depression," Ortiz said.

If elected, he plans "to help Congress tax five percent of the wealthiest citizens across the country and use that money to eliminate the debt." He com-

pared his idea with Elizabeth Warren's plan of funding student loan debt forgiveness programs by using a two percent annual tax on people whose fortune exceeds 50 million dollars. "I think it's pretty cool that Ortiz is trying to relieve student loan debt, which prevents most people from continuing their education. I have a \$30,000 debt, and it adds more hardship to my future career plans," said Lehman junior and studio art major Liz Thomas, 26. "After college, people try to be independent; debt is blocking my independence."

**"After college, people try to be independent; debt is blocking my independence."**

**-Liz Thomas,  
studio art major**

Other Lehman students and alums agreed that student debt is often prohibitively high.

"My debt is really high compared to my income, which makes it really hard for me to purchase a home; I will have to rent forever," said Elise Rodri-



**A campaign event for Jonathan Ortiz**

(Photo Credit: Hector Bello)



guez, a 31-year-old who participated in Ortiz's meeting.

Rodriguez couldn't graduate from her community college because of student loan debt, explaining, "I'm forced to be in an income-driven repayment plan because I don't have enough money. I would love a loan forgiveness plan; I wish I was more educated about this before."

Student loan debt is a problem that currently affects thousands of students across the state. The Department of Consumer Affairs stated that in New York City, more than

one in six, or approximately one million adults, have at least one student loan debt that collectively amounts to \$34.8 billion. Bronx's District 15, which houses 731,101 residents, is one of the poorest in the country, with a median household income of \$23,894 per year; this includes Lehman's neighborhood, Bedford Park.

Some neighborhoods within the district include Mott Haven, Hunts Point, High Bridge, University, West Farms and Fordham, where only 10 out of 60 percent of high school graduates hold college degrees, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

At Lehman, 21 percent of all undergraduate students, including freshmen, utilize federal student loans to afford a college education, College Factual reported. Lehman's online financial section advertises that borrowers have a fixed interest rate of 3.7 to 4.4 percent based on the first disbursement date. But many Lehman students say the entire system of student loans should do better.

"I think student loans are a travesty," said Lehman senior and journalism major Wayne Townsend. "We're an advanced, rich and developed country, so education should not be a capitalistic industry!"



**A campaign event for Jonathan Ortiz**

(Photo Credit: Hector Bello)

# “La Casa de Papel” is Netflix’s Most-watched Spanish TV Series

By Mayte Peña



**Fans of “La Casa de Papel” dress up as characters at New York Comic Con 2019**

(Photo Credit: Mayte Peña)

“It has intrigue, action, love... What else do we need?” said Lehman’s 22-year-old junior psychology major, Jaden Reyes of the Spanish crime-drama “La Casa de Papel” (Money Heist). Reyes hailed it as “one of the best television productions I’ve ever seen.”

Reyes isn’t alone in her enthusiasm. Two months after its third premiere, it remains one of the most-watched foreign language-streamed Netflix originals; its watch rate of 34,355,956 household account views was reached

within just the first week of the season on July 19, 2019.

The series’ third installment also reached non-Spanish speaking countries like France, Italy, Portugal, and even India, according to entertainment news source Variety.

Spanish television producer, writer, series creator, scriptwriter and film director, Alex Pina originally planned to launch the series on Spanish television network Antena 3. Netflix was granted global streaming rights and decided to divide

the original 15 episodes into 22 shorter episodes across two seasons, released worldwide on Dec. 20, 2017, and April 6, 2018, respectively.

These seasons introduced the audience to the famous criminals who execute the biggest robbery in the history of Spain. After months of preparation, they steal €2.4 billion and Stam Factory, while wearing red jumpsuits and masks like those of Spanish painter, Salvador Dali, an outfit that becomes a symbol of



resistance later in the series. The iconic criminals protect their identities by using the names of famous cities that they would like to visit, such as Tokyo, Nairobi, Berlin, and Rio. Mastermind, Sergio Marquina (Alvaro Morte), known as El Professor is the only exception in the group.

“I admire the character of the Professor,” said Reyes. “He is not just the mastermind behind the robbery who’s ensuring nobody sabotages the plan, but he also cares for the band members.”

Other Lehman students said that they loved the production’s plot intrigues.

“The show is really great and completely different from anything I have seen on TV,” said 21-year-old senior journalism major, Lili Stevens. “‘Money Heist’ gives a message to society: [it] is important for everyone to stick together, otherwise things may not go as planned.”

This is evident after the first robbery when all the characters’ vacations are interrupted once Rio is captured by police officials. Another organized robbery is held to negotiate

Rio’s freedom. The series’ ending could form a bridge to a possible part four, rumored to air at the end of 2019, according to The Digital Weekly.

“The direction, actors and plot are all part of an incredible production that keeps us wanting more with no disappointments. I like Tokyo and Nairobi. Both characters have terrific, compelling and powerful backstories,” said senior journalism major, Paola Pontier, 24. “I believe that the resistance movement serves to encourage people to fight back [against] the system.”



**“La Casa de Papel”**

(Photo Credit: Mayte Peña)

# Growing Number of Lehman Students Win Prestigious Awards

**By Beauty Kolade**

“It felt so great to know I won, and I didn’t have to pay to study abroad,” said Bolanle Olatunji, a 22-year-old health services administration senior at Lehman who won both a Gilman and a Chancellor Global scholarship in the spring of 2019.

Olatunji is one of more than 50 Lehman students who were granted major awards for the 2018-2019 academic year, including Fulbright fellowships, National Science Foundation awards, Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) fel-

lowships, National Institute of Health Summer Internships, National Institute of Health Summer Internships, Jeannette K. Watson Fellowships and Chancellor’s Global Scholarships. In the last year, the numbers have continued to grow.

“For the 2017-2018 academic year, we had \$750,000 in awards given; for the 2018-2019 academic year, we had \$2.3 million,” Lehman’s Office of Prestigious Awards (OPA) Director Alice Michelle Augustine told the Meridian.

“Awards I have seen Lehman students win the past few years are definitely Jeannette K. Watson fellowships, NSF, REU and a giant increase in Fulbright’s awardees,” said Augustine, who herself won a Jeannette K. Watson fellowship as a Lehman student. Augustine was recognized at Lehman’s convocation ceremony on Sept. 18 for her contribution towards students’ success and outstanding performance. Lehman students and alumni agreed that more students are participating in the awards process.



**A staff member of the Office of prestigious awards talking to students about the Jeannette K. Watson fellowship** (Photo Credit: Mayte Peña)



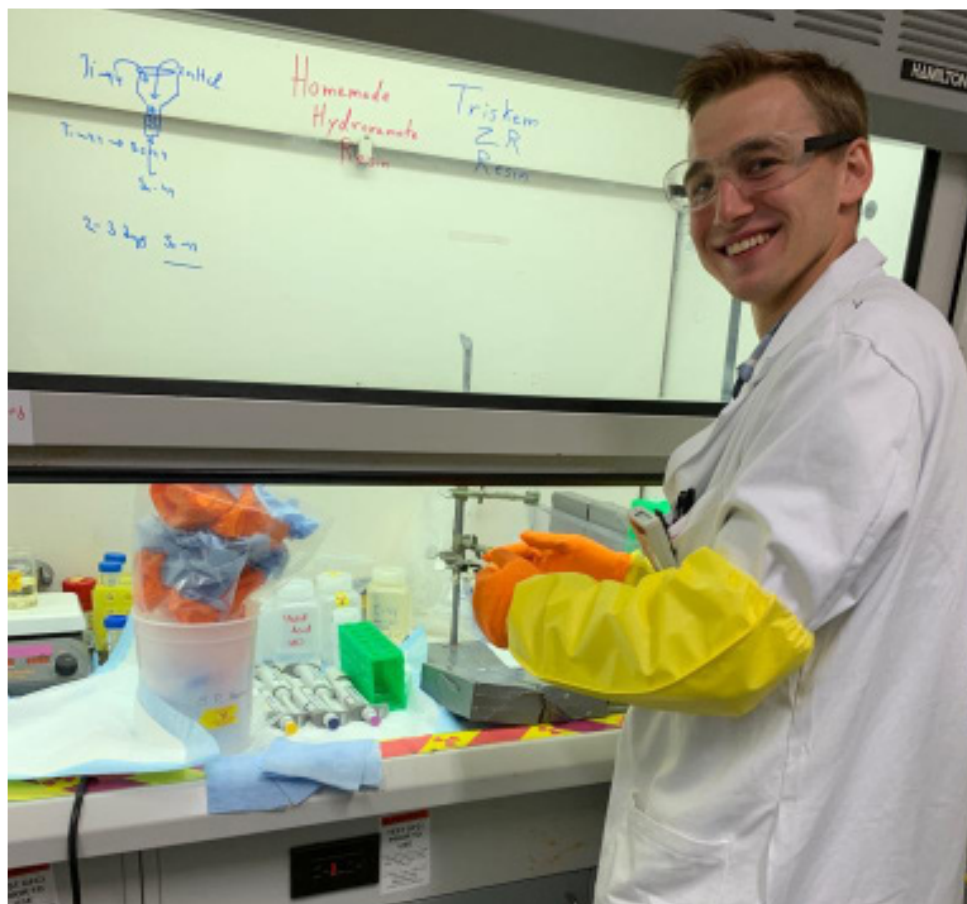
“We have seen a major increase in students not only applying for awards but winning them,” said Hillary Frank, an OPA staff member, Lehman graduate and Jeannette K. Watson award recipient. She attributed this partly to outreach, “Through in-classroom presentations and events, such as the Prestigious Awards day, we encourage students to come and see the awards.”

Student winners praised the opportunities the awards provide for them.

“This was an advancement towards my career goal; I want to travel to different countries working with a Master’s in public health,” said Olatunji, who used both her scholarships to embark on a study trip to Spain in the summer of 2019.

Vladyslav Bodnar, a 21-year-old chemistry senior who won an REU award in the spring of 2019 funded by the U.S. Department of Energy said, “It was very nice to win this award, it made me feel worthy and motivated to pursue my chemistry career.”

Bodnar aspires to be a radiochemist and had the privilege to work with great scientists at Brookhaven National Laboratory for 11 weeks in the summer of 2019. He explained that his project “was focused on evaluating two



**Vladyslav Bodnar working at a radiochemistry lab at Brookhaven National Laboratory** (Photo Credit: Beauty Kolade)

resins based on hydroxamate functionality, to conveniently diagnose cancer through radionuclide generator.”

A Jeannette K. Watson Fellow winner, Rene Clever, worked on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and helped with the development of two courses at IBM during the summer of 2019. The 20-year-old computer science major and business management minor won her three-year fellowship in the spring of 2019. She credits “a boot camp hosted by the [OPA],” with helping her access the award process.

As an NSF awardee, Rawan Aldasooky worked at Colum-

bia University during the summer of 2019, where she worked on the fabrication of glycan microarrays, a technology that would allow for the rapid analysis of glycan mediated biological processes. The 20-year-old senior chemistry major won her award in the spring of 2019 and said it helped clarify her future career path. “I was contemplating if I would pursue an MD-Ph.D. degree,” she said, “but my summer experience helped me realize that I do not want to pursue a Ph.D. degree in the future.”

# Netflix Documentary Shows Women Winning

**By Nelson Fernandez**



**The four congresswomen who star in the documentary “Knock Down the House”**

(Photo Credit: Netflix)

“Knock Down the House” is a fantastically moving and ground-breaking narrative of resilience and determination. Starring congresswomen Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Cori Bush, Paula Jean Swearingen, and Amy Vilela, the May 2019 Netflix original documentary shows women and working-class people of America fighting for a voice

in politics. Directed by Rachel Lears, the film is emotionally powerful and resonant as it follows women from New York, West Virginia, Missouri, and Maryland who share the main goal of winning an election.

The stories of these women are presented in a non-linear order, starting and ending with Ocasio-Cortez. They give an inside

look into the lives of Bush, Vilela, and Swearingen, and how their struggles inspired them to enter politics and seek to enact change. Shifting back and forth between each woman’s perspective and personal and political motivations, the film does a good job showing how these brave women rose to prominence behind the scenes. The film opens with Ocasio-



Cortez applying makeup as she addresses the double standards and social expectations faced by businesswomen regarding dress code that are not faced by men. Old clips then show her working as a bartender in the Bronx while talking about the mistreatment she received from co-workers and clients in the workplace. Ocasio-Cortez states that partisanship between the Democrats and Republicans is not the focus of her campaign; her focus is bridging the divide between the working and upper classes.

The documentary also shows how she and the other three politicians reach out to citizens from their hometowns and gain the support necessary for their campaign. Swearingen, for example, decided to run because she witnessed firsthand how lack of adequate healthcare impacted many residents of her small hometown in West Virginia. These residents were ignored by the government as they became ill and died of cancer. The film takes the angle that these women ran their campaigns to take power back for their citizens, not for personal

gain. Ocasio-Cortez shows that even a top-positioned Democrat with millions of dollars from supporters and huge cash premiums can't withstand the intensity of working individuals banding together.

To reinforce this point, the film closes with Ocasio-Cortez winning the 2018 debate, where she shares a heartwarming story about the time her late father took her on a trip as a child to the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. There her father told her in reference to the House of Representatives, "This is all ours."



**Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is victorious in "Knock Down the House"**

(Photo Credit: Netflix)

# Exceeding Expectations, “IT” Sequel Floats to Top of Box Office

**By Michael Omoruan**

After facing a notoriously fearsome clown, the Losers Club has come back 27 years later, following their oath to put an end to him someday. In “It Chapter Two,” released on Sept. 6, 2019, two years after the first film, Pennywise the Dancing Clown once again returns to Derry, Maine to feed on the inhabitants’ fear. Much of the film is really well made, blending humor and horror

as skillfully as in the first film. Almost too well, since according to Entertainment Weekly, playing Pennywise left Swedish actor, Bill Skarsgard with very strange Pennywise-filled dreams. “Every night, he came and visited,” said Skarsgard. Pennywise’s scares in the film are executed with an intensity that even shames the 1990 television movie. All the film’s special effects show advance-

ment in technology and make you really empathize with the characters fighting the clown.

Now adults, the “Losers” Bill Denbrough, Ritchie Tozier, Ben Hanscom, Stanley Uris, Eddie Kabsbrak, Beverly Marsh, and Mike Hanlon reunite to face off against Pennywise once and for all.

Most of them seem to have moved on from their childhood



**The official theatrical poster for “IT Chapter Two”**

(Photo Credit: Collider)





**The IMAX poster for “IT Chapter Two”** (Photo Credit: Collider)

days in Derry. Ritchie is now a headlining stand-up comedian, while Ben Hanscom leads an architectural firm. Only Mike, played as a kid by Chosen Jacobs and as an adult by Isaiah Mustafa, has stayed behind.

In the first film, Mike worked on his grandfather's farm. As part of one of the only minorities living in Derry, he fell victim to racism and bullying by Henry Bowers and his cronies. Shortly after, he joined up with the Losers. In the sequel he now lives a reclusive life, listening to police scanners for reports of potential Pennywise attacks. When he overhears an incident involving the murder of two gay men, he calls each Loser to convince them to come back home.

Though most show apprehension or even forgetfulness of the pact they made almost three decades ago, eventually

all but one agree to find time to head back to Maine. The scene of their reunion offers great levity, mainly through Ritchie's sense of humor. Played as a kid by Finn Wolfhard and as an adult by Bill Hader, he begins cracking jokes at the Losers' expense and gets the audience laughing along with him.

Many of the characters from the first film return, even if just for brief appearances. Beverly's dad returns in a flashback scene where he continues to torment her for looking so much like her mother. Eddie's mom makes a hilarious yet almost sad appearance as Eddie's wife, implying she was the only woman he could ever get close to.

The skillful casting is another highlight, especially James Ransone, who plays older Eddie, and Jay Ryan as older Ben. They resemble their young counter-

parts so accurately they look as if they were relatives. Another old face to return is Henry Bowers. Since he killed his father on Pennywise's orders in “Chapter One,” he has become the clown's henchman, breaking out of an asylum to try to kill each Loser one by one.

Pennywise, for the most part, plays mind games on the losers that are downright cruel, including when he taunts Bill with the memory of losing Georgie. While Curry's interpretation of Pennywise in the first version is more like an ailing father figure, in this second film, Skarsgard has a youthful demeanor that makes his luring and terrorizing of the kids a lot more believable and scarier. He also isn't as hammy as the 90s Pennywise when delivering lines of dialogue.

The phenomenal acting, special effects and makeup were always of high quality, and the film's music, composed by Benjamin Wallfisch, keeps you in a constant state of unease. Make sure to keep an eye out for cameos from director Andy Muschetti and “IT” writer, Stephen King. This film was made to be watched in theaters, so enjoy!

# Season 3 of ‘Stranger Things’ Returns With its Nostalgic 80’s Vibes, Only to Make Fans Wait for the Next Season

**By Sumana Ali**



**“Stranger Things 3”** (Photo Credit: Netflix)

The Upside Down and its creatures have returned to Hawkins, Indiana in the third season of Netflix’s original series “Stranger Things”. Complete with nostalgic 1980’s vibes, malicious Soviet Russians, shopping malls and throwback soundtracks, Season 3 is a blast from the past that stays engaging despite being somewhat redundant at times. As usual, the well-directed and cleverly calcu-

lated eight-episode installment features new characters and heartbreaking deaths, leaving audiences craving more of the small town and its residents.

Though it has a fair amount of surprises, excitement and drama, the season opens with a strange sense of normalcy. Previously younger characters like Eleven (Millie Bobby Brown) and Mike (Finn Wolfhard) start dating, while the older char-

acters like Steve (Joe Keery), Nancy (Natalia Dyer) and Jonathan (Charlie Heaton) juggle challenges at work after high school. Things quickly shift into high gear when Will (Noah Schnapp) starts sensing that the Demogorgon has returned.

Indeed it has, since the bad-boy resident, Billy (Dacre Montgomery), one of the most hated characters on the show, is possessed by the Demogor-



gon. Now for the first time Billy is given a chance to gain audience sympathy, and his character development and ultimate fate was met with mixed feelings from longtime fans. Montgomery's performance is definitely one of the best things about the season.

Though a bit odd at first, the storyline remains engaging throughout, with charming team-ups between characters, stunning visual effects and action weaving together separate, entertaining storylines that eventually converge in the finale. As in previous seasons, Dustin and Steve together make a pretty hilarious team, but paired with Erica (Priah Ferguson) and a new addi-

tion to the quirky team, Robin (Maya Hawke), the comedy of the season was really elevated. The audience also gets to laugh at fan-favorite conspiracy theorists like Murray Bauman (Brett Gelman) chasing evil Russians with Jim Hopper (David Harbour) and Joyce Byers (Winona Ryder). Though Hopper and Joyce meet an unexpected fate, it feels heartfelt all throughout.

Nonetheless, the season is very emotional and serious at times. Characters are given a chance to develop in meaningful ways through the plot, the brilliant script and fantastic acting. The season finale includes the death of a major character, and the cast mourns. However, since the creators chose not to show

the death on-screen, it's unclear if the person in question is really dead. Especially since in the ending credits it's revealed that the Russians have an American prisoner and creatures from the upside-down in a secret Russian base.

Though the season can feel a bit mediocre at times because of the seemingly repetitive storylines, there is a fair amount of character development and visual effects to compensate for that. Other than these elements, nothing really significant happens, although it was very hyped up. Compared to previous seasons, it could have been more exciting, but its fast pace keeps it interesting. Overall, it is a solid B+.



**Max, Will, Eleven, Mike, and Lucas in "Stranger Things 3"** (Photo Credit: Netflix)



OBSCURA PRESENTS:



# Autumn Festival Open Mic Night

Chill out to smooth beats, improv sets, and  
spoken word performances!



NOV. 21ST, 4 PM - 7 PM  
STUDENT LIFE BUILDING  
ROOM 111 A + B

Email us at [LehmanLitMag@gmail.com](mailto:LehmanLitMag@gmail.com)  
to book your performance slot today!







LEHMAN COLLEGE'S  
CELEBRATION OF ACCENT AND  
CULTURE CLUB (CACC)



CACC  
CELEBRATION OF ACCENT  
AND CULTURE CLUB

# HALLOWEEN PARTY

JOIN US FOR:

- ★ A cultural presentation on Italy by Ian McDonald
- ★ Guest speaker Sandra Cortez from Study Abroad to discuss study abroad opportunities, scholarships, fundraising activities and Peace Corps
- ★ Culture-themed games

**OCTOBER 30, 2019 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM**  
**SPEECH & THEATRE BUILDING 146C**

**FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED**  
**Follow us on Instagram & Twitter @LEHCACC**

*Celebrating Accent and Culture in a judgment-free environment  
no matter which part of the world we come from!*



# the meridian

THE STUDENT VOICE OF LEHMAN COLLEGE

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE FOR  
UP-TO-DATE DIGITAL NEWS,  
STAFF BIOS, AND LEHMAN EVENTS.**

**LEHMANMERIDIAN.SQUARESPACE.COM**