

AWARD-WINNING PIECES

These are select pieces that won at the 2018 Awards for Excellence in Illinois Community College Newspapers in Division I under my leadership as Co-Editor-in-Chief of the JJC Blazer.

I either wrote or edited these pieces.

Cybergate: Students outraged



The new cybercafe located in T-1041 is under construction.

Photo by Jessica Mack

By Jessica Mack

Co-Editor

Students are speaking out to protest the loss of their beloved Cybercafe, which was closed with almost no warning on May 18, 2018.

The Cybercafe was an ideal hang-out spot for many students; not just the Gamers Club. Students would go to spend time with friends, play games, or do homework. Faculty and students alike only received notice a month before the close, resulting in a disconnect with administration.

It has been speculated by affected students that all of the lab's resources, excluding the computers, were sold on private auction, which makes it likely that the plans to close

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the Cybercafe were in the works months before it was discovered.

The previous Cybercafe space was turned into the Center for Excellence. The idea here is to make things more convenient for faculty and staff to meet in one place. One of the only perceived pluses from the student view is for Phi Theta Kappa, the Honors room, Dual Credit and High School Partnerships and Institutional Research and Effectiveness to be connected to the new center.

Dr. Yolanda Farmer, Vice President for Student Development, says, "Most colleges now have some version of their own Center for Excellence in order to provide training needs for JJC employees...having a central location for the center was important."

Prior to public knowledge, there had been no meetings or disclosure to the student body about this closure.

However, Farmer says something else. "Notices were provided regarding the closing of the Cybercafe to impacted faculty, staff and students."

Contradicting Farmer's statement, advocate Jefferson Cherrington, a previous president of the Gamers Club says that, "There was definitely a strong lack of communication between the administration who made that decision and the people who actually use that facility."

Thanks in part to their efforts, instead of cutting the Cybercafe completely, administration attempted to relocate the space to the computer labs or the library. Students expressed negative feelings about such an action and continued to fight. The aftermath was a "temporary solution space" located in T building (T-1041), however this unmarked area is not officially a Cybercafe replacement yet.

The new room is out of the way and significantly smaller. Paul

Schroeder, Nursing lab assistant and adviser of the Gamers Club, says that he attempted to work with administration to make the new room functional and maximize the space. Administration has not complied to his requests. Instead, the new room received leftover furniture.

"They did the minimum amount of work to get away with [our new Cybercafe space]," Schroeder stated.

"It's definitely 'out of sight out of mind,'" said Jacob Hollings, student at JJC majoring in Art and a member of the Gamers Club. "The student space should be somewhere you can see it."

Farmer stated that the new space contained the same computers and hoped to upgrade in the future. But students and faculty said otherwise.

According to Schroeder, the Cybercafe was given computers around 10 years old that are unable to play actual games efficiently. There are also no academic computers or printers available anymore.

Cherrington was disheartened over how administration handled the ordeal. "It sends the message to me that this space is trying to be eradicated through statistics. Because if no one can find it, no one wants to go there and because the machines don't work, then there's no need for the space."

He also decided that following this incident he would become a growing clubs are all working towards obtaining a permanent dedicated student space.

Schroeder also mentioned that a few years ago, administration decided (in advance this time) to take the front half of the Cybercafe. By doing so, they eliminated the pool table, arcade games, and the overall spaciousness of the room.

Maxwell Scott-Schroeder, student at JJC majoring in Computer and Network Security and a member of the Gamers Club



The sign posted outside the old Cybercafe informing of the closure.

Photo by Madeline Wheaton

as well, stated his thoughts on the old Cybercafe. "I remember the original Cybercafe before they took away the first half of it and it was incredible. There were students who would go there just for the pool table, arcade games, and it was fun. There was more stuff to do than sit on our computer and do homework or play a video game. It was like Students began to approach Schroeder when they learned of the Cybercafe closing, even though he was not officially in charge of it. When he learned what was happening from Pam Dilday, Director of Student Activities, and when students started coming up to him for answers, he decided to step in and attempt to speak to the President, Dr. Judy Mitchell. It ended with no results.

"They just wanted someone to lead the fight, so I actually started volunteering those hours,"

Schroeder said. "Students asked me to stick up for them and represent for them, and that's what I've been doing."

The Cybercafe, in Schroeder's opinion, was just a tiny piece of the problem. The overall issue was with student space.

Student Government has been consistently bringing up the Cybercafe and the overall issue differently.

"They say we can't just make space out of nothing, but you can: that's how buildings exist."

In the past, administration also attempted to defund OSA to the astonishment of the faculty and student body. It was met with harsh aggression from students going to board meetings and never passed.

"[At] town hall meetings, [JJC] as a whole works to provide this idea that we as an organization are transparent with our students. We

are trying to communicate with our students when something happens. We don't just make moves and expect the people that we serve to 'hopefully' get the hint," Cherrington added. "That's why this situation to me has been aggravating."

This situation may lead students to question their ability to trust the administration's of its former self.

Farmer remains hopeful for the future. She says that administration is pleased that the Cybercafe was relocated and not closed, and that the students have done a great job of expressing themselves. She also wants to commend Cyndi Vasquez-Barrios and Schroeder for working with administration and serving as a resource and student liaison.



JEM Edits
Editor and Writer

Cafe changes coming to main campus



The cafeteria will soon be undergoing major changes.

Photo by Jessica Mack

By Jessica Mack

Co-Editor

Plans to change the food service operation at the JJC main campus are currently underway.

Over the past few years, Food Services has been working diligently to reduce expenses and increase revenue. Director of Business and Auxiliary Services, Janice Reedus, states that cafeteria sales have reduced significantly due to issues that Food Services has been unable to resolve.

According to Reedus, there has been a significant decrease in on-campus enrollment as more online classes are being taken due to convenience. Along with less Pell Grant funds being granted which is possibly due to

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a shorter deadline for students to use the Pell Grant funds.

"...the cafeteria having a financial loss of \$242 thousand last year and \$148 thousand the year before. This financial loss is driving the need for change," says Reedus.

There are two options that are being considered. The first is to restructure the operation, and the second is to outsource it to a third party vendor. The goals for both options are to reduce the financial loss, preserve as many jobs as possible, and support employees through the possible rough transition.

For the restructuring option, JJC would continue to operate as is and the Food Services managers would work together to develop a plan of action in order to reduce the expenses without reducing the sales. This could lead to eliminating many of the menu offerings, operating hours, and even staff. Regarding staff, there will most likely be changes but it is unknown at this time what these changes will be until the restructuring plan is finalized, says Reedus.

For the outsourcing option, JJC would issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to all interested parties requesting that they submit proposals on how they would manage the college's food service operations and how they would plan to compensate the college itself. JJC would then go on to require that the chosen outside firm interview all current employees due to the firm making all hiring decisions. All cafeteria employees of JJC would become employees of the new firm instead.

Vice President of Administrative Services Rob Galick says he would prefer the college to continue the food

service operations, but cannot let his personal feelings affect "what is best for the college and for students."

According to Reedus, in order to determine if they are meeting the budget projections for revenue and expenses for the school, they review the entire financial situation of each operation. If they aren't being met, then they have to analyze the situation to determine the cause(s).

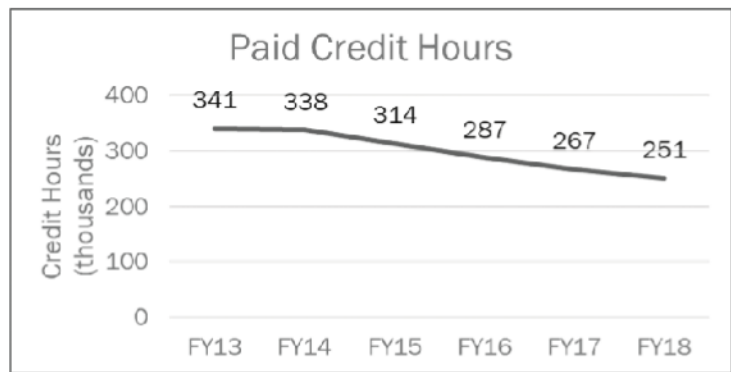
"We will work on both options simultaneously with a recommendation going to the JJC board of trustees in February of 2019. The board makes the final decision," says Reedus.

Both plans may lead to a loss of jobs available in the cafeteria, but it may be inevitable due to the lack of finances available for the food services. This all comes down to the current enrollment slump that JJC and many other community colleges are going through.

In general, enrollment slump in community colleges happens when the economy is strong, leaving students with the opportunity and funds to attend a 4-year institution rather than going to a community college and then transferring on to save money.

While the economy being in a good place is an excellent opportunity for most people in the U.S. it creates a dire situation for community colleges. JJC has seen an enrollment decline recently, but Galick has seen other community colleges having an even larger decline.

Galick says that they are attempting to find new academic programs that can result in good jobs for students and are currently reviewing current academic programs and their curriculums to determine if they are still meeting



Graphic courtesy of Robert Galick

This graph shows the decrease in student enrollment over the last six years.

the needs of employers.

According to Galick, reduced enrollment will always mean reduced tuition revenue, resulting in the school having to make up the difference elsewhere.

"Our objective is to always balance the college's budget while minimizing the impact on students."

He also states that they could reduce costs of things, but it's not that simple: this could result in reduced services available to students. On the other hand, they could also increase the rate of tuition.

"Please know that a tuition increase, no matter how small, is always the last resort," Galick says.

The overall objective of the

options available is to improve the financial situation that JJC's food service operation is going through currently to combat the enrollment slump issue. It will hopefully reduce the college's expenses and perhaps even generate more income.

Galick says they also hope to have a student representative on the committee to make the food service decision. "Like all major decisions at the college, it is critical that we receive student feedback."

"Improving the financial picture means more money to support programs for our students," says Reedus.

No matter what, Galick says the student body will always be a priority in mind.

"I want to ensure that we have the most competitive prices and the highest quality possible. At the same time, we need to reduce the cost associated with having a food service operation. By minimizing the college's cost (not just in food service but across the entire institution), we are reducing the need for future tuition increases to balance our budget."

While we can only hope that these options are going to assist the food services program, it makes one wonder what could happen to other programs within the school due to enrollment slump.

The board is looking to make one of these options effective by July 1, 2019.



JEM Edits
Editor and Writer

Colleges face enrollment struggles

During the 2000s, college enrollment was at an all-time high. You could definitely assume that community colleges were making bank as the economy was trying to pick itself back up again. But starting in spring 2011, when enrollment was at its highest peak, community colleges in general started the slow decline. Now, according to cbsnews.com, these colleges have lost over 1 million enrollments between 2011 and 2013.

So what happened?

In this issue "Cafe changes coming to main campus" discusses the issue of the enrollment slump with the idea that the economy was in a good place, resulting in students attending a 4-year institution instead, according to Rob Galick who is the vice president of administrative services. Ever since 2010 when the Great Recession ended, two-year colleges have been struggling with declining enrollments according to pbs.org.

However, that cannot be the only reason, and we wanted to discuss that here.

Perhaps students are wondering if college is really

worth it and if they're getting their money's worth. The cost of college has risen significantly over the years.

According to marketwatch.com, the average price of an undergraduate degree increased by \$63,973 dollars, or roughly 161%, since 1987. These numbers were adjusted for inflation.

That's a huge amount. With the minimum wage being around \$7.25 an hour, being able to pay for college, rent an apartment and be able to afford other expenses is stretching it for a college student.

Perhaps students are finding that trade jobs have become a nice alternative to getting a degree. They tend to have a shorter time frame of being required to go to school, with some trade jobs taking only two months to get their certificates, giving them the ability to almost immediately go out into the world and get decent-paying jobs.

On the other hand, when the economy is not good, students might believe that a degree is absolutely necessary in order to get a job. Going to college could be considered a safe alternative,

giving students a chance to get away from their parents when they can't find a job.

In just 2014, according to pbs.org, "The unemployment rate for Americans with bachelor's degrees or higher is just 3.2 percent, compared to a national average of 6.1 percent." This is a significant difference. But are statistics really enough to convince students?

In recent years, employers have been requiring many students to have at least 2 or more years of experience in order to work for them. That's a huge problem considering the thousands of dollars students pay in obtaining "book smarts", rather than experience.

Perhaps the job market is currently winning a tug of war with community colleges.

But there are other problems. According to insidehighered.com, in 2012 there was a policy change in the Pell Grant program. It lowered the required income threshold for the federal financial aid program and ended up decreasing the number of low-income students that would qualify.

In reality, state and federal legislators aren't helping

community colleges. These officials tend to withhold reimbursement, and with enrollment declining over the past few years, it doesn't look good for community colleges overall.

One thing that could combat this situation would be high schoolers participating in their school's dual-enrollment program with a community college and then continuing with that same college. Unfortunately, it seems a large number of students go to a 4-year college instead of continuing on with classes at the community college.

There are multiple problems with this entire situation. But not all hope is lost. For community colleges, a few changes are certain to be made, such as what will happen at JJC with the cafeteria changes.

Our most powerful weapon as a community college is the impression that the college is truly worth the investment. And we can only hope that JJC, despite recent student space issues, can continue to work with the students to provide a healthy and hopeful environment.



Chaos follows Kavanaugh

The Brett Kavanaugh debacle began as a political outburst which turned into a moral rampage in the past month, resulting in Kavanaugh being sworn in on Oct. 6, 2018.

President Donald Trump nominated Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court on July 8, 2018. Before Kavanaugh's official nomination, Palo Alto University Professor of Psychology, Christine Blasey Ford, contacted a Washington Post tip line with allegations saying Kavanaugh had assaulted her during a high school gathering in the 80s.

Two other women, Deborah Ramirez and Julie Swetnick, also came forward and testified against Kavanaugh, saying they were also victims of sexual assault.

Ford decided to do a polygraph test and passed with flying colors in order to prove that she was honest with her allegations. Kavanaugh did not agree to take one and although a polygraph is not always accurate, it could have helped Kavanaugh's case a bit in the sense that he was willing to prove himself not guilty. However, he opted out, which definitely contributed to the turbulence of the trial as a

whole.

What's more, the FBI was sent to investigate Kavanaugh. Instead of launching a full investigation, they only completed a partial investigation due to a lack of time and depth they were allowed to go into it. It was ultimately up to the discretion of the White House, and since Trump was the one to nominate Kavanaugh, you can see how that had a large influence on the investigation.

More allegations arose after this investigation. Sworn under oath, an accuser claims that Kavanaugh lied through his teeth about numerous incidents concerning his past. James Roche, a friend from Kavanaugh's notorious high school days, accused him of lying under oath about sexually assaulting Ramirez, his drinking habits, and a yearbook entry in high school.

According to Roche, Kavanaugh would consistently get "blackout drunk" and he lied about a sexual game name, saying it was "simply a drinking game".

On Saturday, Oct. 6, Kavanaugh stood before the Senate, where he was nominated by a vote of 50-48. He was sworn in later that day

despite the outcries in the streets of D.C.

This sticky situation leaves Americans with a question: what are the implications for our country? It is clear that, regardless of those who still pine for justice, or those who felt he was innocent until proven guilty, that Kavanaugh's presence on the Supreme Court will change America for generations to come.

In a society riddled with black and white thinking, serious questions about Kavanaugh's hearing and election process are left dangerously unanswered. Do Americans really view this man as unfit to judge, due to the cacophony surrounding him? After the dust has settled in what was anything but a seamless functioning of our democratic process, is it safe to trust Kavanaugh to remain unbiased in his judgment after what he might have perceived as a direct threat on his life from the other side of the aisle?

Many agree his charges were not thoroughly investigated in the end. Add this to the other witnesses and victims who were deprived of the spotlight, one might experience vertigo if they stood on top of a mountain of printed out objections to his

election.

The Senate, per the view of the American audience by now, is dysfunctional and corrupt at best. We can only hope that as part of the Supreme Court he will become a man who works his heart out to attempt to repair the damage to the court and his own reputation.

Was he guilty? Was he innocent? As Article 11 reads, he is "innocent until proven guilty" by a fair court of law. But, if this is the case, how is it that so many feel the trial was handled with political malice? The moral fortitude of both the accuser and defendant were called into action, in a public "trial by fire" from those standing on both sides of the aisle.

No matter where a person stands politically, it should be pointed out that this entire situation has become riddled with emotions, leaving it difficult for the public to decipher candidly observable truth from defensive political maneuvering.

The Kavanaugh debacle was not handled right and it will be a continuing narrative of the country for a long while to come.





Donating blood: A bloody good time

By Lauren Bulow

Copy Editor

Why do vampires consider themselves good artists? Because they like drawing blood!

There was a lot of blood being drawn on at JJC: over 100 pints total was collected on the bridge. And no, it was not the work of vampires!

It was, however, the result of a fundraiser for two of JJC's Clubs: Latinos Unidos and Press Pause, paired with the Red Cross. The drive took place on Oct. 7 and 8 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. and there were veins of people eager to donate! At the end of the drive, over a hundred pints of blood were donated!

Many people donate and volunteer for different reasons. Nathalia Chavez, a volunteer for Press Pause, donated her blood and time to raise awareness and funds for Press Pause.

For those who have not heard of the club, Chavez explains that Press Pause is a "...mental health advocacy group." Chavez went on to relate how the group spreads awareness around campus to break the stigma surrounding mental illness.

According to Chavez, "last year we hosted a fair where we had people come talk about what mental illness is and how it is actually an illness even though people don't see it that way. We also had the counseling department, people you can actually talk to or go to for help. Through the blood drive we get funds for our club so we can keep doing events and spreading awareness."

Another donor, Kaitlin Miller, says that she donates because she really likes to. "It started out with me and my dad doing it together as soon as I was able to and then I kept doing it because I get free stuff because I'm O negative, the universal donor." Since Miller's sophomore year of high school, she has donated blood almost every eight weeks.

"I like knowing that I can help all types of people. I find it rewarding. Donating blood is fun and you get free food."

The process of donating blood is very simple. First the donor talks with a nurse from the Red Cross and answer a series of questions that confirm that they are eligible to give blood. Then, they take a sample of the donor's blood by pricking their finger and testing the iron levels. Once that stage is complete the donor will wait their turn to have their blood drawn.

When it is their turn they will get on the cot and another nurse will check them in, take their blood pressure, and mark a vein. After finding a vein the nurse will stick them with the needle and take a pint of blood. The donor only feels a small pinch and their only job after that is to lightly squeeze a stress ball. Once the bag is filled, the needle is removed and a bandage is

placed on the vein.

The whole donating part only takes six to 12 minutes. After that, the donor is given orange juice and snacks. If a student does choose to donate, they should be sure to eat something beforehand so they don't pass out!

The blood donated will go to the American Red Cross, where the blood will be separated into transfusable components – red cells, platelets, and plasma – and then sent for testing. The Red Cross tests each unit to establish the blood type and to make sure there are no infectious diseases. Once the test results come back and the units are cleared, the red cells, platelets, and plasma are stored and ready for distribution.

There is always a need for blood. The Red Cross estimates that about every two seconds, someone in the United States is in dire need of blood. A single car accident victim may need as many as 100 pints of blood.

Sickle cell disease affects around 90,000 to 100,000 people in the U.S. these patients require frequent blood transfusions, three pints of blood per transfusion, throughout their lives. By donating to the Red Cross, you are able to save lives.

There are many opportunities to donate blood at JJC. There is another drive in February or you can find nearby drives on the American Red Cross website.



Press Pause member, Nathalia Chavez, donates blood at the Red Cross blood drive to support her club.

Photo by Lauren Bulow



JEM Edits
Editor and Writer

Bath design cleans up for award

By Jessica Mack

Co-Editor

This year, JJC's Interior Design program won an Excellence in Education from the six available from the National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA) out of roughly 300 entries.

The NKBA is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting professionalism in the kitchen and bath industry, and has since expanded into an association of designers, retailers, remodelers, manufacturers, distributors, fabricators, installers and other industry professionals.

The design program is accredited by the NKBA, and each year they submit two student samples for review by the association. This year, Jenny Weidenaar and Tyler Rodgers were the two lucky students to be submitted and recognized.

Interior Design Associate Professor Oksana Alfredson says that as part of the accreditation requirements, she has to submit two students projects for NKBA to evaluate and stay within the professional requirements.

"In order to get recognition in the Educational Excellency, students' works have to be graded against 100 requirements and earn at least 90 points. Two submitted projects of the students' works were graded with a 96.5 and 94 points [respectively]."

Warren County Habitat for Humanity participated as being the real project and was assigned to all schools accredited by NKBA. This year, the assignment was to submit and

present a kitchen or bath design for a Habitat for Humanity home.

Alfredson said the main challenge was a tiny budget. "Students had to design a kitchen with only \$16,000 and a bathroom with \$4,000."

The project was assigned to all students of the INTD 233 Advanced Kitchen and Bath class. Students must be knowledgeable of kitchen and bath designs, materials, finishes, lighting and budgeting, "but [must be able to] apply AutoCAD and AutoCAD Architecture skills for drafting and 3D rendering," says Alfredson.

She also says that students work extremely hard since this project counts towards their grade

as well as their future portfolios.

The JJC Interior Design program won their first Excellence in Education from NKBA in 2014.

The same project was assigned for the NKBA Annual Students Design Competition as well, which is a different venture compared to Excellence in Education.

The JJC Interior Design Program has been a member of the NKBA since 2008 and have been fully accredited since 2009. It is a broad-based program allowing students planning to work in design to gain the necessary academic skills in order to continue later on past an associates level.

It offers multiple options for a career in designing, such as residential designing, contract designing and office planning, which are the main options students have available to them.

According to the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ), interior design is the art and science of understanding people's behaviors and fashions in order to create functional space. Interior designers must be able to analyze the clients needs and goals and even life safety requirements.

The Interior Design program offered at JJC offers multiple options for a career in designing. Residential designing, contract designing and office planning are

the main options students have available to them.

They apply creative and realistic solutions within a space that are attractive, functional and useful to the client and their wellbeing. Designers are required to be licensed or registered and have their education and training documented.

This program is for people who are interested in interior design work: kitchen and bath design, contract work, real estate consultation, home accessorizing and so much more.

If students have an artistic eye, maybe the Interior Design program is a path to investigate.

Alfredson says they will try again next spring to win again.



Jenny Weidenaar bathroom design submitted for judging.

Photo courtesy of Oksana Alfredson



JEM Edits
Editor and Writer

Cancer can't beat love



By Lauren Bulow

Copy Editor

Cancer sucks. Especially breast cancer. About 40,920 women in the U.S. are expected to die in 2018 from breast cancer. That's an awfully high number, but it has been decreasing due to research and early screenings.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. I'm not sure why it's October, maybe because it's spooky season and the scariest thing that could happen to you would be cancer.

Either way, there are fundraisers and 5Ks almost every weekend, athletes will wear pink socks or jerseys, snapchat has half a dozen filters relating to it, and you can find pink shirts at nearly every store that say, "fight like a girl."

All of these events are intended to educate people about the importance of early screening, and the money raised goes to finding a cure for cancer which is so important.

My mom was diagnosed with breast cancer December of 2014.

I guess you could say she got cancer for Christmas.

When the doctors told us she had an aggressive form of breast cancer, I thought it was a death sentence. Thankfully, they caught it early on so she had a good chance at fighting it.

However, my mom was already sick with a very rare lung disease called Pulmonary Alveolar Proteinosis (try saying that ten times fast) also known as PAP. Basically, her body couldn't create enough of the protein that breaks down the mucous in her lungs so it was like she had pneumonia all the time.

And no, she was never a smoker. She just has really, really bad luck.

She was diagnosed with PAP in 2003 and it went into remission around 2008 but the disease had already taken its toll on her, making her reliant on an oxygen machine and causing her to go into violent coughing fits multiple times a day.

When the oncologist diagnosed her with the breast cancer I remember my mom saying, "you've got to be kidding me." Unfortunately and unsurprisingly, he was not. Either way, my mom was determined to kick cancer's ass.

Right off the bat she had a double mastectomy, which is the fancy term for chopping - I'm sorry - surgically removing both breasts. For weeks after, she had a tube coming out of the incisions that drained the blood and other fluids from the wound. My siblings and I had to measure the fluids that came out. It was super



Breast Cancer Statistics



- 1 out of 8 women U.S will develop breast cancer
- 1 out of 1,000 U.s men will develop breast cancer
- Breast cancer has the highest death rate, under lung cancer
- For women under 45, African American are more likely to get breast cancer than white women
- About 85% of women diagnosed had no family history of the cancer



All facts from BreastCancer.org



gross, but it toughened us up.

After surgery, she went through six rounds of rigorous chemotherapy. Over time, she lost all of her hair and I don't just mean the hair on her head. She lost all of it.

Her eyelashes were gone, so her eyes were easily irritated. All of the hair in her nose fell out so she had a runny nose all of the time. She was not amused when I told her to catch her runny nose.

Chemotherapy makes everything taste like chemicals, so my mom lost an unhealthy amount of weight. After just a couple months, I could see every single one of her ribs. It was so hard to see her waste away. I felt absolutely powerless.

I was never angry, though. I realized that getting pissed off at

the world for not being fair was not going to help anything. So instead, I did my best to be my mom's rock. I was there for every chemo treatment, every follow-up appointment, and to hold her when she cried.

We had a huge support group, though. My mom was very recognizable in our community due to her kindness, her oxygen tank, coughing fits, and bald head. People I didn't even recognize would stop me and ask how my mom was. They all wanted me to let her know that they were sending us their prayers.

Neighbors, friends, and family would bring a dinner every other day to help out our family. We would get gift cards in the mail from teammates along with get-well cards. I never realized how

ridiculously kind people could be.

Cancer sucks, but it sucks less when you have the right people on your side.


After six months of chemotherapy the breast cancer went into remission and we thank our lucky stars every day. Breast cancer sucks so hard and my mom went through an incredible difficult journey that we pray we'll never have to go through again. However, it could have been so much worse. They caught the cancer at a very early stage at a routine mammogram.

So please, take your health into your own hands by doing self exams and annual mammograms no matter your age, because catching cancer at an early stage could be your greatest defense.



JEM Edits
Editor and Writer

Student Newspaper Wins Best in Show

 OCT 11, 2018

Joliet Junior College's student newspaper, The Blazer, has been named Best in Show by the Illinois Community College Journalism Association (ICCJA).

The paper's staff was honored at the ICCJA's fall conference, held Oct. 4 at Eastern Illinois University (EIU) in Charleston. This is the second straight year The Blazer won top honor for the award, which is based on its first issue of the academic year and judged by a committee of EIU faculty. JJC was among nine Illinois community colleges participating in the competition.



From left: Writer Arianna Karnezis, Assistant Production Manager and Photographer Meghan Blenck, Writer Ricky Saravia, Co-Editor Jessica Mack, and Faculty Advisor Bob Marcink. last year.

"I was absolutely ecstatic when they called our name," said Jessica Mack, the paper's co-editor. "I was also extremely proud of the team and how well they handled the pressure for it being our first issue of the semester. It's one of the best things in the world that something you've worked on so hard gains recognition."

The Blazer is comprised of 18 active members, most of whom are new to the team. Mack said only a few current members were on staff

"Winning this award I believe motivates us to work even harder and have another great paper for the next conference coming up during the spring semester, and to just continue to be our very best to the students and to the school providing relevant and timely information," said Mack.

Faculty Advisor Bob Marcink said he's proud of the staff, adding that despite several new contributors they published an excellent first issue.

Articles from The Blazer is available online at www.jjcbblazer.com.

For media inquiries, contact Communications and Media Coordinator Scott Harvey at 815-280-2844 or sharvey@jjc.edu.