Astronomers fund copy of Jupiter’s Big Red Spot on dwarf star

by Ray Courtney | @ | December 11, 2015 11:52 am

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**Dwarf Stars shows both of tar-like and planet-like characteristics**

L-dwarfs are a special subset of tiny stellar objects that possess both star-like and planet-like characteristics.

Known colloquially as “failed stars,” brown dwarfs are too massive to be classified as planets, but they are too small to be clearly defined as stars. They form a bridge between planets and stars and can weigh-in at many times the mass of Jupiter (although their physical size is approximately that of Jupiter). They are celestial mongrels in a way; they have qualities of both stars and planets, but can be clearly defined as neither.

L-dwarf star W1906+40 and its giant storm
For example, although some of the more massive brown dwarfs (such as M- and L-dwarfs) can experience some low-level fusion in their cores (a star-like quality), it's not enough to raise the object's temperature beyond a couple of thousand degrees. Therefore, their atmospheres can become stratified (layered) and possess very planet-like phenomena such as clouds and, in this case, powerful storms.

NASA's Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer discovered W1906+40 in 2011 and astronomers realized that the object was within the field of view of NASA's exoplanet-hunting Kepler Space Telescope. Usually, Kepler will look out for "transits" of exoplanets that orbit in front of their host stars — the slight dimming caused by the planet blocking star light causes a dip in brightness. But sometimes "starspots" can also be detected by Kepler — basically huge dark patches of magnetic activity in the uppermost stellar layers.

So, using Kepler, although the light generated by W1906+40 is faint, astronomers detected a huge dark patch rotate with the L-dwarf's spin. Could it just be another star sporting a vast, dark cluster of star spots, like our sun does during periods of high magnetic activity?

While planets have been known to have cloudy storms, this is the best evidence yet for a star that has one. The star, referred to as W1906+40, belongs to a thermally cool class of objects called L-dwarfs. Some L-dwarfs are considered stars because they fuse atoms and generate light, as our sun does, while others, called brown dwarfs, are known as "failed stars" for their lack of atomic fusion.

The L-dwarf in the study, W1906+40, is thought to be a star based on estimates of its age (the older the L-dwarf, the more likely it is a star). Its temperature is about 3,500 degrees Fahrenheit (2,200 Kelvin). That may sound scorching hot, but as far as stars go, it is relatively cool. Cool enough, in fact, for clouds to form in its atmosphere.

"The L-dwarf's clouds are made of tiny minerals," said Gizis. Spitzer has observed other cloudy brown dwarfs before, finding evidence for short-lived storms lasting hours and perhaps days.

In the new study, the astronomers were able to study changes in the atmosphere of W1906+40 for two years. The L-dwarf had initially been discovered by NASA's Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer in 2011. Later, Gizis and his team realized that this object happened to be located in the same area of the sky where NASA's Kepler mission had been staring at stars for years to hunt for planets.

Kepler identifies planets by looking for dips in starlight as planets pass in front of their stars. In this case, astronomers knew observed dips in starlight weren't coming from planets, but they thought they might be looking at a star spot — which, like our sun's "sunspots," are a result of concentrated magnetic fields. Star spots would also cause dips in starlight as they rotate around the star.

Follow-up observations with Spitzer, which detects infrared light, revealed that the dark patch was not a magnetic star spot but a colossal, cloudy storm with a diameter that could hold three Earths. The storm rotates around the star about every 9 hours. Spitzer's infrared measurements at two infrared wavelengths probed different layers of the atmosphere and, together with the Kepler visible-light data, helped reveal the presence of the storm.

While this storm looks different when viewed at various wavelengths, astronomers say that if we could somehow travel there in a starship, it would look like a dark mark near the polar top of the star.

The researchers plan to look for other stormy stars and brown dwarfs using Spitzer and Kepler in the future.

"We don't know if this kind of star storm is unique or common, and we don't know its frequency so long," said Gizis. Other authors of the study are: Adam Burgasser—University of California, San Diego; Kelle Cruz, Sara Camnasio and Munazza Alam—Hunter College, New York City; New York; Stanimir Metchev—University of Western Ontario, Canada; Edo Berger and Peter Williams—Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Kyle Dettman—University of Delaware, Newark; and Joseph Filippazzo—College of Staten Island, New York.

NASA's Ames Research Center in Moffett Field, California, manages the Kepler and K2 missions for NASA's Science Mission Directorate. JPL managed Kepler mission development. Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. operates the flight system with support from the Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

JPL manages the Spitzer Space Telescope mission for NASA. Science operations are conducted at the Spitzer Science Center at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena. Spacecraft operations are based at Lockheed.
Jupiter’s Big Red Dot fund on W1906+40

Viewing the brown dwarf in infrared light, Spitzer was able to determine that the large dark feature on W1906+40 isn’t driven by magnetism, so it isn’t a star spot. It’s actually an atmospheric phenomenon. It’s a big, dark storm near the north polar region.

“The star is the size of Jupiter, and its storm is the size of Jupiter’s Great Red Spot,” said John Gizis, of the University of Delaware, Newark, lead author of the study to be published in The Astrophysical Journal. “We know this newfound storm has lasted at least two years and probably longer.”

He added: “We don’t know if this kind of star storm is unique or common, and we don’t why it persists for so long.”

It goes to show that the moniker “failed star” may be a misnomer; perhaps brown dwarfs should in fact be known as “overachieving planets.”
How a Supreme Court case could disempower communities of color in the South

This week the Supreme Court heard arguments in a Texas redistricting case that tests the potential to change the balance of political representation in congressional and legislative districts across the country and the South.

Currently, political lines are drawn to capture roughly equal numbers of residents — including citizens and non-citizens ineligible to vote. But in other states, districts where most of the population is eligible to vote are split up, as in Texas. That means that districts are "out of sync" with the population — with representatives voting for constituents who overwhelmingly favor Democrats and represent communities with few noncitizens and few white males.

According to Reade, districts in Texas and the South — with lower shares of African-American or Hispanic populations that would lose representation — in general are split up in a way that would disempower communities of color. In Georgia’s 7th Congressional District currently represented by Rep. Doug Collins (R), 20 percent of the population are non-citizens of voting age and would not be counted. In North Carolina’s 10th Congressional District — now represented by Rep. Mark Meadows (R) — 20 percent of the population are non-citizens of voting age and would not be counted.

At the state level, legislative districts in areas including Nashville, Tennessee and Louisville, Kentucky — major urban centers in the region — would also lose representation. And in Arkansas’s 3rd Congressional District currently represented by Rep. Steve Womack (R), 20 percent of the population are non-citizens of voting age and would not be counted.

Reade found that districts likely to lose representation at the congressional and state levels are more racially diverse and tend to have lower average incomes and levels of educational attainment and higher unemployment rates than those that would not lose representation. Five congressional and a state Senate district would switch from Democratic to Republican, according to Reade.

"African American residents of these districts would lose some of their political clout, while white residents would gain some," Reade said. "This would mean that representatives in these districts would be more likely to vote in favor of policies that benefit white constituents and less likely to support policies that benefit African Americans and other minority groups."
The CUNY Dance Initiative (CDI), a university-wide residency program heading into its third season, is awarding 23 dance companies/choreographers residencies at 12 CUNY colleges in 2016. CDI, led by New York City’s public university system, is a new model for collaboration. By facilitating residencies for New York City choreographers and dance companies on CUNY campuses, CDI aims to support dance artists, enhance college students’ cultural life and education, and build new audiences for dance at CUNY performing arts centers.

Between January and December 2016, 12 CUNY colleges in all five boroughs will host a total of 23 residencies. The residency artists and their projects represent a wide range of ideas and styles that reflect the diversity of the CUNY communities. In addition to providing space for artists to create work and rehearse, all of the CDI projects include programs for students and faculty (master classes and open rehearsals), along with public events such as work-in-progress showings and performances. CDI directly assists colleges with artist fees, rehearsal expenses, and marketing efforts. Artists are selected through an open application process, and each campus chooses its residency companies.

"We are very pleased to offer residencies to 23 dance companies and choreographers throughout CUNY. The previous residencies added an important dimension to the cultural life of our campuses with performances and opportunities for our students and faculty to follow the creation of an art form through open rehearsals and master classes," said James B. Milliken, Chancellor of The City University of New York.

CDI supports both established and emerging choreographers, and most of the artists choose to develop new work during their residencies. Held in studios and on stage, these residencies can take the form of early exploratory rehearsals or a refining of a nearly finished work for
Chloe Arnold, Director of the Syncopated Ladies, stated, "In 2014 the CUNY Dance Initiative gave us a history-making platform to present our first full-length, all-female tap show in New York City. We are thrilled to be returning to CUNY through a CDI residency at City College Center for the Arts in 2016 and are excited to be creating and presenting new work."

John Heginbotham, another returning choreographer, commented, "Dance Heginbotham had such a wonderful, productive experience during our residency at On Stage at Kingsborough last year, and we are honored to have been chosen to participate in a residency in 2016 at Brooklyn College. One of the major hurdles to the creation of new dance work in New York City is finding affordable rehearsal space. We are so grateful to the CDI and the presenter partners for this invaluable resource."
COMMUNITY NEWS

After first year, boutique continues to evolve
By Gabriella Vukelic

It has been more than a year since a pair of Valley Stream sisters opened a women’s clothing boutique on Rockaway Avenue, and in that time, the store’s offerings have expanded from items for adults to include fashion for all ages.

“Every year, our customers have a lot of fun,” said Gabriella Mosti, 25.

She said she found the transition into business ownership fairly easy due to her years of experience at Ask Alice, the boutique that occupied the space at 126 Rockaway Avenue for 30 years. She started working there when she was 15, and when the shop closed she decided to try her own venture. She collaborated with her sister, Michelle, 26, and they opened LUXE on Aug. 22 of last year.

In the time since, customers’ demands have shaped the shop’s inventory. From season to season brought a flurry of business, and they added seating in the back of the store where customers could wait while their daughters searched for the perfect dress. Women would bring their younger children, too, and Gabriella and Michelle started ordering a more diverse range of apparel that would appeal to them.

The sisters apply their own fashion sense as well as staying on top of trends, like the bohemian style, or “boho.”

“Our biggest summer sellouts were rompers and two-piece sets,” Michelle said.

A graduate of Queens College with a pre-law degree, Michelle said her education has helped her navigate the ins and outs of owning a business, which compliments her sister’s years of boutique experience.

Gabriella emphasized the value of building relationships with customers, and matching each with clothing that meets their specific needs. “We know what everyone should be wearing for every occasion — at least we try,” she said.

Many of their early customers were relatives, friends and former classmates. The lack of options for women’s clothing on Rockaway attracts business from neighboring nail salons and other stores, the women said.

Gabriella said that the street’s parking meters are a frequent source of customer ire. Enforcement will resume on Jan. 5, once the holiday shopping season is over.

The women took their business online in April, creating their website, Shopluxebtq.com, where customers can place orders to be shipped to their homes. They said they hope to open a second boutique in a different location on Long Island in the near future, but are focused on their current endeavor. Their investment on Rockaway Avenue has led them to hope that other new businesses will make it a more enjoyable destination.

“We would like to see more boutiques and restaurants here, because there isn’t much,” Gabriella said.
Wanted in New York City: A thousand black, Latino and Asian male teachers

By Lyndsey Layton  December 11 at 8:00 AM

New York City, which has the nation’s largest public school system, wants to hire 1,000 black, Latino and Asian male teachers by 2017 to create a teaching corps that more closely matches the student body.

The program, called NYC Men Teach, is part of the Young Men’s Initiative, a city program that focuses public and private funding on ways to reduce disparities between young black and Latino men and their peers when it comes to education, health, employment and the criminal justice system.

While approximately 43 percent of New York City Public Schools male students are black, Latino or Asian, about 8 percent of male teachers belong to those groups. Of the city’s 76,000 teachers, just 6,600 are men of color, city officials said. Nationally, black men make up just two percent of the nation’s teaching workforce.

Richard Buery, the city’s deputy mayor, said that kind of imbalance is unfortunate.

“It’s both common sense and common sense reinforced by research that we will do better if we have a more diverse workforce in our school system,” Buery said in an interview. “There is lots of research that shows it promotes self-esteem and better academic performance. We think white students will benefit as well from having diverse teachers because it breaks down stereotypes.”

NYC Men Teach is a three-year, $16.5 million initiative under Mayor Bill de Blasio (D) that aims to step up recruiting, guide applicants through the selection process and retain current teachers.

Just 6 percent of recent applicants for teaching positions in New York schools were men of color, city officials said.

The school system will work with the City University of New York and Teach for America to recruit new teachers, Buery said. The program will offer help to undergraduate students to make sure they complete teaching certification requirements and will offer professional development grants for current teachers, run advertising campaigns and work with career counselors at local and national universities to promote teaching as a career for men of color.

If teachers outside of New York want to teach in the city’s schools, the program will help them obtain reciprocal teaching credentials, Buery said.
A number of barriers exist that prevent black, Latino and Asian men from choosing teaching as a career, he said.

Nationally, fewer people overall are seeking to enter the teaching profession, Buery said. But men of color are frequently turned off by teaching because they had negative experiences themselves, he said.

In addition, there are structural problems, such as when prospective teachers who get job offers in the spring cannot afford to wait until the following fall to start earning a paycheck, he said. To remove that barrier, NYC Men Teach will offer short-term employment to men of color between their hiring and the start of school.

Once men of color do become teachers, they often feel isolated, he said. "If you are one of only one, or two male teachers in your school, that could be alienating, as it would be in any workplace," Buery said.

"More than anything, we want to make sure that people around the country know we value teachers of all dimensions here in New York City," he said. "We want to welcome teachers of any background, but we're offering support so that teachers of color will want to come here and stay."
Gov. Andrew Cuomo is fond of calling himself a "progressive." If Cuomo wants to truly earn that distinction, he should adequately invest in
one of the most progressive institutions in New York – its public university systems. The City University of New York offers an important educational opportunity for almost 500,000 low- and moderate-income New Yorkers – many of them students of color.

But despite arguing that tuition increases should “make it possible for the public university systems to add faculty, reduce class size, expand program offerings, and improve academic performance,” Cuomo has instead let yearly tuition increases go to fill the hole left by state funding cuts. Per-student funding remains essentially flat at 14 percent below its pre-Recession 2008 levels, and Cuomo has, thus far, refused to help reverse the state’s disinvestment in CUNY. This year, CUNY was forced to absorb an additional $51 million in unfunded operating costs.

Now Cuomo has an opportunity to throw CUNY a lifeline by signing a bill that was passed almost unanimously by both houses of the Legislature. The legislation, known as the Maintenance of Effort bill, requires the state to provide steady funding in future budgets to maintain the educational and administrative operations of CUNY and SUNY. It would also provide necessary funding from the state’s substantial surplus to fund a fair contract for CUNY workers.

Why do we turn to the governor to seek adequate funding for CUNY? For more than 50 years, New York state helped underwrite CUNY. Following CUNY’s creation in 1961 and dramatic expansion thereafter, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller agreed that a share of its costs should come from state coffers. This percentage increased dramatically after the 1976 fiscal crisis in New York City, thanks to Gov. Hugh Carey. But that trend has been changing under recent governors—including Cuomo. Today state aid accounts for 53 percent of revenues to CUNY’s senior colleges, far less than the 74 percent the state committed in 1990.

CUNY’s 25,000 faculty and staff have been working without a contract since 2010. Since then, the cost of living in New York City has risen more than 20 percent. Many faculty and staff – the people we depend on to provide an excellent education for the young men and women who go to CUNY – haven’t had a pay increase, even a modest cost-of-living boost, in the last half decade. As one can imagine, this leads to trouble attracting and retaining faculty; many job offers are turned down because of uncompetitive pay and the city’s high cost of living.

CUNY is integral to the intellectual, cultural, and civic life of the city. Three of every four college-bound city high school graduates attend one of CUNY’s 24 campuses. CUNY’s current full-time student body is 26 percent African American, 30 percent Latino and 38 percent immigrant. A full 54 percent of CUNY students have family incomes below $30,000. A third of the city’s public school teachers and a quarter of the New York City Council have at least one degree from CUNY. Three-quarters of CUNY graduates become
city taxpayers, working as lawyers, teachers, police officers, firefighters, social workers, health workers, writers, poets, scientists and tech workers.

Many of us who teach at CUNY left elite universities to come here; we remain at CUNY because of the institution's vibrant, multicultural, and democratic heritage and the belief that a broad system of public higher education is a precious, if increasingly precarious, public service. One might argue we have a faith-based commitment to public higher education.

We hope Gov. Cuomo will join us in that faith and invest in CUNY students and faculty.

*Stephen Brier and Michelle Fine are professors at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.*
Where art and science collide

An exhibit brings new purpose to a decommissioned UW research facility

by BOB JACOBSON
DECEMBER 10, 2015

Art and science are like oil and water to a lot of people, but in reality they are more like chocolate and peanut butter — "two great tastes that taste great together." In the right conditions, they act in tandem to plumb the physical and metaphysical mysteries of existence and advance our collective understanding of life and the universe.

"Condensed Matter Community," a curatorial project featuring work by 34 artists in a variety of media, seeks to spark dialogue about the art/science nexus. Instead of a nondescript white gallery, the project has been installed at the Synchrotron Radiation Center, a recently decommissioned particle accelerator in Stoughton. It's a visually rich environment, with evidence of past experiments, in-progress preparations for new experiments, and even the random personal effects left behind by scientists who worked there.

Once home to the Aladdin electron storage ring, the center was the site of cutting-edge research for 45 years before the loss of $5 million in federal funding
forced UW to pull the plug. The synchrotron beamed its final beam of electrons on March 7, 2014.

The idea of repurposing the space for a site-specific exhibit came from curators Evan Gruzis and Kristof Wickman, who both hold undergraduate and master's degrees in fine art from, respectively, UW-Madison and Hunter College in New York. Gruzis currently teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Brooklyn-based Wickman is a guest lecturer in the UW's sculpture department. The two heard about the space when center staff notified the sculpture department they would have scrap materials available. Gruzis and Wickman thought it would provide an interesting context for an exhibition as it transitioned to other kinds of scientific work.

"We discovered that there was this amazing history with the site and that there was a lot of space there, and we thought this would be a great time and place to do an art exhibition," Gruzis says. Working independently of any sponsoring institution, Gruzis and Wickman reached out to their network of artists, particularly those based in the Midwest, to solicit works. They received double what they expected.

A wide range of media are represented, including video, sculpture and abstract painting. The themes underpinning the collection touch on the connections between pieces of art and scientific tools; the ephemera of scientific experiments; and the relationship between objects and workplaces. One piece, a 3D-printed prototype sculpture by Tauba Auerbach, is based on the iconic Greek key (meander) pattern, melding technology, history and design. *Hand 2* (2014), by Tony Matelli, looks like a finger-streaked dusty mirror, but is actually a permanently fixed composition.

There's also appropriation art, in the form of work by David Robbins, who for several years has been appropriating books by an author also named David Robbins and placing them in various settings. The effect is a fusing of identities, creating ambiguity about authorship. Which David Robbins is responsible for the art if it took the efforts of both guys for the book to land in that particular place at that particular time?

"What's interesting is the pieces being in this context," says Gruzis. "Some of the work could even get lost in there or blend in or get camouflaged, in a way."

UW senior instrumentation technologist Mary Severson is a beamline scientist who worked at SRC for 24 years. She is in charge of finalizing the decommissioning of the facility and disposing of the equipment, some of which has been sold, some repurposed through UW Surplus With A Purpose, or SWAP, and some recycled.

The facility will next be used to manufacture equipment for detecting neutrinos (subatomic particles produced by radioactive decay) as part of the Deep Underground Neutrino Experiment, an international project based out of Fermilab (the particle physics accelerator located outside Batavia, Ill.). Visitors to the art exhibit can also view the massive ice drills and neutrino sensor.

The Synchrotron Radiation Center is located at 3731 Schneider Drive in Stoughton. A public reception is slated for Saturday, Dec. 12, 5-8 p.m. The exhibition can be seen by appointment for about four weeks afterward. All of the artwork will be documented and made available at condensedmattercommunity.org.
TANWI NANDINI ISLAM ON HER BOOK TOUR: "I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO THE CROWD IN MIAMI"

BY DANA DE GREFF

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2015 | 23 HOURS AGO

What do you get when you cross Brooklyn and Bangladesh, a coming-of-age tale with subtle wisdom, the hardships of reality and a healthy dose of hallucination? Bright Lines, a debut novel that will make you feel strangely at home in its fabricated world (it also happens to be a finalist for the 2015 Oprah's Book Club). By Tanwi Nandini Islam.
Tanwi Nandini Islam, much like the characters in her book, has led an eclectic life thus far, working as a community activist, playwright, and artist before becoming a published author. The obsession with reading and books started early on, thanks to her parents.

"I grew up in a family that wanted me to be a literary person," says Islam. "I remember my father would take us to the library and we'd get lost and collect all sorts of books and then he'd ask us to do a written synopsis on each book we read. I really used to hate it, but now I'm grateful that he made us do that."

While her father instilled a love and respect for reading in Islam, her mother also had an influence on her relationship with language and taught her to read in both English and Bengali. Although her main language is English in terms of how she thinks and writes, she has an appreciation for the other side. "When you're immersed in another language or culture, it's not really about shutting your brain off but more about utilizing a different part of your brain," Islam says.

After attending Vassar College, the author decided to live a little before going back to school and started working as a community organizer and with community theater in the streets. Writing a novel was not at the forefront of her mind as she made space in her life for experiences, and it wasn't until she moved to India in 2006 that she realized she wanted to write again. It was then that she applied and got into Brooklyn College for an MFA in fiction. The move allowed her time and space to work on a novel.

"I was excited to be immersed in my passion and I was also thinking about how to meet other writers, and the MFA was a great way to do that," says Islam. "I loved everyone in my program, in the end, and they wrote very different from what I wrote, which was intimidating but helped me a lot."

After graduating, she got roped into selling shawls in a hotel in France, which proved to be difficult, but necessary for her novel in the end.

"I started writing Bright Lines in France, and I wrote quite a bit that was supposed to be used in the original but now I might use for my second book," she says. "It was a good exercise for me to not edit and delete everything right away."

For the past few months, Islam has been on a book tour and is busy with her company, Hi Wildflower Botanica, a small-batch niche perfume, candle, and skincare line. On Saturday, Islam will be in conversation with local author Jaquira Díaz at the Betsy Hotel.

"I'm sure we'll discuss some of the similar themes in our work, things like home, dispersal of family, coming of age, and sexuality," says Islam. "So far on my book tour I've had some great dialogue with the audiences so I'm looking forward to the crowd in Miami."

**Tanwi Nandini Islam in conversation with Jaquira Díaz**

**Saturday, December 12, from 7 to 9 pm at the Betsy South Beach. For tickets and more information, visit thebetsyhotel.com.**
The Newsies! award winner: Computer science meets feminism in new game 'Tampon Run'

BY LILY GORDON / BARD HIGH SCHOOL EARLY COLLEGE / Thursday, December 10, 2015, 2:00 PM

BHSEC's very own Sophie Houser, '15, co-creator of "Tampon Run."

This story was originally published by the school newspaper at Bard High School Early College and is now being presented on the Daily News website as part of The Newsies! high school journalism competition for 2015.

First place, Feature Writing

Gory warfare, zombie assassins, armed robbery, and guns are commonplace themes for computer games. Society has desensitized itself to apocalyptic fantasies by trivializing violence through virtual recreation, yet people still consider menstruation, a basic bodily function, to be a taboo topic. Two high school students, one of whom is Y2 Sophie Houser, designed a computer game last summer to challenge this value system. In the 8-bit game "Tampon Run," a pixelated girl with a pigtail has two missions: to throw tampons at oncoming boys (while occasionally leaping to catch floating tampon boxes to refuel her unconventional ammunition) and more importantly, to de-stigmatize menstruation.

Since its release, "Tampon Run" has gone viral and received widespread publicity. A variety of publications, including the feminist blog feministing.com and the Huffington Post, have raved about the new quirky computer game that uses comedy to make the topic of menstruation more approachable. Houser and Andrea (Andy) Gonzales, a junior at Hunter College High School, met at Girls Who Code, a nonprofit organization that aims to bridge the gender gap in computer science. With females
comprising only 12% of computer science graduates, programs like Girls Who Code are invaluable. Miranda Leong ’17, a member of BHSEC’s feminism club (Students Taking Action for Gender Equity) remarked, “I think it’s extremely important to work on closing the gap in the tech world because each field needs to have a balanced perspective. So much of the gaming world is exclusive and sexist, so to have young girls have more of a say and a voice in that particular field would be beneficial.”

Women are underrepresented in a number of fields and, as computer technology becomes increasingly integral to American society, it becomes representative of social norms. For instance, Houser laments that “people are turned off by blood, except oddly blood in video games and movies is okay when it’s associated with violence. It’s not okay when it’s associated with something as normal and natural as menstruation.” Houser and her partner Gonzales came up with the idea for “Tampon Run” when Houser jokingly suggested that we should make a game where a girl throws tampons.

The game, which started off as a joke, became an opportunity to spark a conversation about how our society views menstruation. Through designing the game, Houser encountered “the sense in many cultures around the world that women are unclean when they menstruate... Women are often separated when they are menstruating because they are ‘unclean.’”

In America, a women getting her period often experiences obnoxious comments made by peers, complete avoidance of the matter, or a misguided assumption that she is “P.M.S.-ing” when she expresses a forceful emotion. In other countries, menstruation is a death sentence for education. UNICEF estimates that one in ten girls in Africa drop out of school because treating menstruation as a taboo leads to the social separation that Houser described. The New York Times reported that 23% of Indian girls leave school when they enter puberty. These girls are taught that their monthly bodily function is a pollutant and that it dirties anything they touch. The high dropout rates are a result of teasing, lack of safe and hygienic resources, body education, social exclusion, and early motherhood expectations.

Houser and Gonzales created “Tampon Run” to combat the fact that “we are made to feel like we can’t talk about menstruation, or that it’s something to be ashamed of.” Miranda Leong ’17, criticized society’s skewed standards for leisurely conversation topics, saying, “The fact that gun violence is more commonplace in gaming than menstruation is outrageous. Menstruation is something that not many people like to talk or think about and even companies that sell tampons push women toward hiding their periods.”

It has received a broad spectrum of interest. Ramon Reyes ’17 commented, “I like the [social] statement it made about the taboo and the continuous subjugation of women, which is often ignored by politcs. It’s a whole piece of feminism we need to talk about and makes the situation more approachable. [The game] is really well designed and... I heard about it instantly.”

The Internet has also taken a liking to feminism. Websites, blogs, and social media are beginning to embrace the label “feminist.” Miranda Leong ’17 says, “As technology’s influence increases, games like “Tampon Run” become even more important. Technology is a way to easily spread an idea widely, and that can be either really helpful or really dangerous. A game like “Tampon Run” allows people to think about something they probably haven’t before while playing a fun game.”

More and more celebrities are declaring themselves “feminists,” such as Beyoncé, Taylor Swift, Benedict Cumberbatch, Daniel Radcliffe, and Emma Watson. An increasing number of people, men and women alike, are writing about why they need feminism, yet as the movement gains more popularity, it also loses some of its ideals across the masses. There is a danger in having the face of the feminist movement turn into a celebrity fad or a Facebook challenge, transforming a legitimate effort into a blind following of fads driven by social pressures and misunderstanding, rather than a true interest in feminism.

Some might see “Tampon Run” as the newest participant in the growing online feminist trend, but it is groundbreaking. It is incredible how widespread a simple and fun little game has become. Perhaps its success follows the mob effect that online social media seems to generate, or perhaps it is because “Tampon Run” makes a formerly forbidden topic completely conversational and hilarious. When asked what caused the game to be so readily accepted, Miranda Leong ’17 said, “I think the humor of the game had something to do with its exceptional reception. It’s really great how accessible and approachable this game is. The game tackles a really important issue of menstrual taboo while being on a fun and light platform.”

“Tampon Run” arose as a joke, evolved into a summer project, and now the game is a raving sensation. It is a testament to the power adolescents have to combat social norms and pave the path of progress. Looking to the future, Houser says, “I want to stay in tech and keep coding. I’m not sure if I want to continue with games, but I want to use coding to make a difference in our world. It is so exciting to use code to build something from the ground up and then to have it affect so many people.”

The publicly clamored-for game (literally, several BHSEC students shouted their approval at the
game's mention), demonstrates the incredible feat the little computer game has undertaken. If society is going to be determined by technological influences, it seems only reasonable that we cultivate our technology to reflect the kind of balanced and opportunistic world we wish to see off the screen.
Keryx Announces Appointment of John P. Butler to its Board of Directors

December 10, 2015: 08:00 AM ET

BOSTON, Dec. 10, 2016 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — Keryx Biopharmaceuticals, Inc. (Nasdaq:KRX), a biopharmaceutical company focused on bringing innovative therapies to market for people with renal disease, today announced that John P. Butler has been appointed as a new independent director to its board of directors pursuant to the company’s financing transaction with The Baupost Group, L.L.C. effective immediately. Mr. Butler is an industry veteran with significant experience in guiding corporate strategy.

“I am pleased to welcome John to our Board, as he brings extensive strategic knowledge derived from his successful career at Genzyme as president of its renal business,” said Michael Tamok, chairman of Keryx’s board of directors.

“John’s long track record of success commercializing medicines for patients with kidney disease and his global view will certainly prove valuable as we advance the Auryxia™ franchise and build a leading renal business.”

“I believe that there is a significant need for innovative therapies that improve the lives of people with kidney disease,” said Mr. Butler. “I believe Auryxia has that potential, and I am excited to work with Keryx’s management team and board to realize this vision and create value for our shareholders.”

Mr. Butler has more than 25 years of biotech and pharmaceutical industry experience. He has served as the president and chief executive officer of Alkebia Therapeutics, Inc. since September 2013. From October 2011 to April 2013, Mr. Butler was the chief executive officer of Inspiration Biopharmaceuticals where he led the successful sale of the company’s assets for a total aggregate consideration that could exceed $1 billion. Prior to Inspiration, Mr. Butler held various positions at Genzyme Corporation, now Sanofi, from 1997 to July 2011, including president of the company’s rare genetic disease business. Notably, he also served as president, general manager of Genzyme’s Renal Division, which grew from $150 million to more than $1 billion in revenue under his leadership. Prior to Genzyme, Mr. Butler held various positions of increasing responsibility at Amgen Inc. John is an active member of the renal community and has served on several non-profit boards, including chairman of the board of trustees for the American Kidney Fund. Mr. Butler received a B.A. in Chemistry from Manhattan College and an M.B.A. from Baruch College.

Forward Looking Statement

Some of the statements included in this press release, particularly those regarding the commercialization and subsequent clinical development of Auryxia, may be forward-looking statements that involve a number of risks and uncertainties. For those statements, we claim the protection of the safe harbor for forward-looking statements contained in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Among the factors that could cause our actual results to differ materially are the following: whether Auryxia will be successfully launched and marketed in the U.S.; whether we can successfully obtain additional reimbursement coverage for Auryxia; whether we can adjust our operating expenses to projected levels while maintaining our current clinical and commercial activities; whether we will be able to identify and negotiate acceptable terms with a commercialization partner in the EU; and whether we or a partner can successfully launch Fresenix in the EU, whether Riona® will be successfully marketed in Japan by our Japanese partner, Japan Tobacco, Inc. and Taria Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. The risk that we may not be successful in the development of Auryxia for the treatment of iron deficiency anemia in non-dialysis dependent chronic kidney disease patients; and other risk factors identified from time to time in our reports filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Any forward-looking statements set forth in this press release speak only as of the date hereof. This press release and prior releases are available at http://www.keryx.com. The information found on our website is not incorporated by reference into this press release and is included for reference purposes only.

About Keryx Biopharmaceuticals, Inc.

Keryx Biopharmaceuticals, with offices in Boston and New York, is focused on bringing innovative therapies to market for people with renal disease. In December 2014, the company launched its first FDA-approved product, Auryxia™ (feric citrate) for the control of elevated serum phosphorus levels, or hyperphosphatemia, in patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) on dialysis, in the United States. In January 2014, feric citrate was approved for the treatment of patients with all stages of CKD in Japan, where it is being marketed as Riona® by Keryx’s Japanese partner, Japan Tobacco Inc. and Taria Pharmaceutical Co, Ltd. In September 2015, the European Commission granted European market authorization for Fresenix® (feric citrate coordination complex) for the control of hyperphosphatemia in adults with non-dialysis- and dialysis-dependent chronic kidney disease. For more information about Keryx, please visit www.keryx.com.

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K-1 fiancée visa can bring partner to U.S., but expect vigorous screening

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS / Friday, December 11, 2015, 3:16 AM

A U.S. citizen must petition for their foreign national partner’s fiancée visa and, in most cases, the couple must have met face-to-face in the two years prior to the application.

Q. How can my boyfriend bring me to the United States so we can marry there? I would like to get a green card and make America my home.

Name withheld. Singapore

A. If your boyfriend is a U.S. citizen, he can petition to bring you here on a K-1 fiancé or fiancée visa.

Some want to make it more difficult for foreign nationals to get a K-1 visa because of the recent San Bernardino mass shooting — one of the terrorists entered the U.S. on this visa, which is only for immigrants planning to marry U.S. citizens. Critics of the K-1 program should note that only about 50,000 people come here on fiancée visas each year while millions come on other types of visas. The screening for this type of visa is far more vigorous than for most other visas.

Only a U.S. citizen can petition for a fiancée visa for a foreign national. Usually, the couple must have had a face-to-face meeting in the two years prior to the petition being filed. On very rare occasions, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services will exempt a couple from this meeting requirement.

Examples are where the couple met more than two years ago but the U.S. citizen now can’t travel for health reasons or if meeting before the wedding would violate the couple’s customs, religion or culture.
THE BEST PATH TO GREEN CARD MAY BE VIA WEDDING AISLE, NOT COURT-RULED ASYLUM

The U.S. citizen files the fiancée petition in the United States. If USCIS approves the petition, a U.S. consular officer abroad will interview the foreign national. The applicant will go through a "biometric" screening: the applicant's fingerprints, photo and name will be checked against an extensive database.

If the U.S. consul grants the K-1 visa, the spouse-to-be can travel to the United States for a 90-day stay. If the couple marries, the foreign national can then apply for a green card. At that point, a foreign national goes through a second biometric check screening and a USCIS interview.

If all goes well, USCIS will grant the applicant permanent residence. Typically, the permanent resident gets a conditional, two-year card. The applicant must then apply for a permanent card and go through a third biometric screening 90 days before the card expires.

Allan Wernick is an attorney and director of the City University of New York's Citizenship Now! project. Send questions and comments to Allan Wernick, New York Daily News, 4 New York Plaza, New York, NY 10004 or email. Follow him on Twitter @awernick.

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Whose University? Criminalizing Student Organizing on Campus: A STATUS/الوضع Episode of Reclaiming Academic Freedom

by Status Audio Journal Hosts

In this episode of Reclaiming Academic Freedom, Status/الوضع host Tareq Radi interviews four students on the university’s stifling of political organizing via the criminalization of student activities that challenge institutional decisions and policies.

The program episode below includes four parts that you can click on separately. Please find the transcript below the player.

Khalil Antonio Vasquez grew up in Spanish Harlem and the Bronx raised by his Puerto Rican grandmother and father. His experiences as a young Afro-Latino urban male growing up working class led him to become a revolutionary communist. He and his comrades founded the Revolutionary Students Coordinating Committee to liberate the educational institution of CUNY for working class and oppressed nationality communities. They have faced various forms of militant and legal repression but have only grown stronger and gained numbers and momentum.

Mohammad Abou-Ghazala is a senior studying Global affairs and Islamic Studies at George Mason University. He organizes with GMU Students Against Israeli Apartheid, Black Students Alliance, Student Power, and Mason Dreamers.

Omar Zahzah is a PhD student in comparative literature at University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA), as well as a member of Students for Justice in Palestine at UCLA and the Palestinian Youth Movement.

Tina Matar is a recent graduate from the University of California-Riverside (UCR), with a Bachelors degree in Business Marketing. While at UCR, she was the president of the Students for Justice in Palestine and a co-founder of the Middle Eastern Student Center at UCR. During her time at UCR, she led many campaigns, including Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions initiatives. She wrote and presented a successful resolution to her student senate for divestment of UCR funds from companies that profit from apartheid in Israel. She also led a movement to boycott Sabra hummus and remove it from the campus stores. Tina has also taught a class about Palestinians in Palestine, creating a safe space for Palestinians and non-Palestinians to talk about Palestine and it's people.
Tareq Razi [TR]: This is Tareq Razi hosting Reclaiming Academic Freedom on Status Hour, where we expose violations of academic freedom and repression on campuses in both the region and the United States. For our third segment, we are focusing on the methods in which the university stifles political organizing by directly criminalizing activities that challenge the university’s decisions and policies. Joining us are three student organizers who have been incredibly active on their campuses: Khalil Antonio Velasquez, Mohammad Abou Ghazala, Omar Zahrab, and Tina Matar.

Khalil Antonio Velasquez, an organizer with Students for Justice in Palestine [SJP] and the Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee [RSCC] discusses in detail the events that unfolded at City College New York in response to the 2011 tuition hikes and the 2013 appointment of former CIA director general David Petraeus.

Mohammed Abou Ghazala, president of George Mason University’s [GMU] Students Against Israeli Apartheid [SAIA] recounts the establishment of the organization and the university’s restructuring of the student handbook in response to the organization’s political activity on campus.

Omar Zahrab—a PhD student in comparative literature at University of California, Los Angeles [UCLA], as well as a member of SJP at UCLA and the Palestinian Youth Movement—highlights the role of California’s House Resolution 35, which aims to suppress Palestine activism by conflating with anti-Semitism.

Finally joining us is Tina Matar, a recent graduate from the University of California, Riverside [UCR], a former president of UCR’s SJP and the co-founder of the Middle Eastern Student Center at UCR. Tina discusses the lack of support she received from the administration in response to the course she taught entitled “Palestine-Israel: Settler-colonialism and Apartheid,” where she was targeted and threatened by off-campus Zionist organizations.

City College has a strong history of radical student organizing dating back to 1969, when Black and Puerto Rican students at City College fought and won an unprecedented opening of admissions at CUNY resulting in a radical transformation of the university. In 1999, the board of trustees voted to eliminate remedial classes at CUNY’s senior colleges, thereby finally eliminating a central pillar of the policy of open admissions and effectively ending it. As the neoliberalization of the university advances, technocratic administrators attempt to strip the university of its radical history and its access to marginalized communities.

Khalil begins with discussing both the global and local struggles for equality during the 2011 tuition hikes that were implemented in the City College of New York network. He elaborates on the political climate and activities taking place on universities throughout New York at the time. But explains there was a vacuum for a coalition that addressed the needs marginalized communities.