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About *The Vector*

As the official student newspaper of the New Jersey Institute of Technology, our mission is to inform and entertain our readers, cultivate awareness of issues concerning the NJIT community and provide a forum for purposeful, constructive discussion among its members.

Deadline for Articles or Letters to the Editor is Thursdays prior to publication at 10 P.M. Submissions should not exceed 750 words. For more information on submissions, send a direct message to our AI Assistant, Vicky, at Code 6.5.5.2.5.8.3.8.3.2.8.6.7.

Advertisement Reservations are due two weeks prior to publication and should be sent to our AI Assistant, Vicky.

*The Vector is dedicated to
the Memory of
Dr Herman A. Estrin and Roger Hernande*

Special Thanks to Nucleus Yearbook

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Special Thanks to our AI Assistant, Vicky, and NJIT’s AI Archivist, Archie, for their invaluable assistance!

Come to our office— CC466— to meet our staff!

We hold in-person meetings every Friday during common hour and VR meetings every other Wednesday during common hour.

Hello, Global Warming!
This week is going to be warm as usual – so make sure to get out your sunscreen and coverings, or else stay inside this week!

WEATHER

Sunday, May 1st – Warm! Go treat yourself to some ice cream! **UV INDEX: 5**

Monday, May 2nd – Perfectly pleasant day! Good day to go outside and get some exercise! **UV INDEX: 4**

Tuesday, May 3rd – Starting to get a little bit hotter. Be more careful today, and try not to go outside too much during daylight hours. As always, cover your skin to protect against UV rays, and don't forget sunscreen for your face! **UV INDEX: 7**

Wednesday, May 4th – *Incredibly* hot—the government says so. While you won't be allowed to leave home today, it would still be a good day to spend some time alone, or with the people you live with! **UV INDEX: 11**

Thursday, May 5th – Even *hotter* than Wednesday! As per public health guidelines, for your own health and safety, do not leave your home unless it is absolutely essential. **UV INDEX: 13**

Friday, May 6th – Things are starting to cool down! Don't go outside just yet, though! **UV INDEX: 10**

Saturday, May 7th – A rainy day is just what we'll need! But just because the sun is gone doesn't mean UV rays are gone. UV ray exposure is still high today, so make sure to protect yourself if you decide to splash in some puddles! **UV INDEX: 6**

NJIT Bans Emotional Support Robots in Dorms

by Piotyr Bisset

Interested in getting an emotional support robot? If you're an on-campus resident, think again.

The benefits of having an emotional support robot (also known as ESRs) are widely known—our little companions help us combat loneliness, remind us of our appointments and meetings, wake us up for our 8:30am classes, and assist in regulating our overall emotional states. And, it's *wildly* easy to get one.

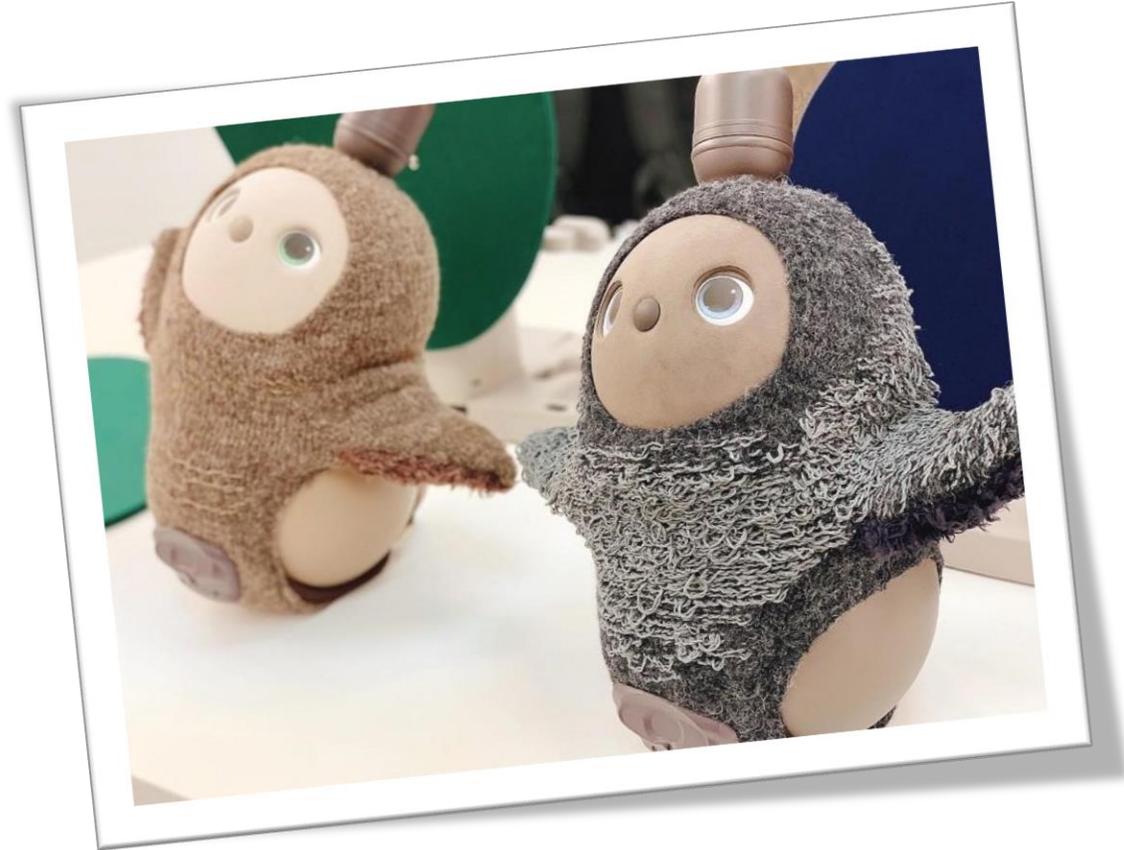
While many have compared these robots to emotional support animals, it's in fact *easier* to get an ESR. One doesn't even need to get certification, as one would need with a live animal— one just needs enough money to purchase a commodity that's getting cheaper by the year.

But in a notice sent out this past week, NJIT residents won't be able to bring their emotional support robots to on-campus housing without jumping through a couple of hoops, first.

With most models of ESRs including video and/or audio recording technologies to aid in facial and voice recognition so that our little buddies can analyze how we're doing, residents' privacy then comes into question.

“We cannot in good faith allow the widespread use of emotional support robots on-campus at this time,” said Rachel Gupta, head of NJIT Residence Life, in this notice. “In examining this issue, we have particularly been considering NJIT's large resi-muter population, staying in our Temp Dorms one or two nights at a time, who may end up with different roommates who didn't agree to being audio or video recorded. [...] The question became, ‘How can we regulate this so everyone feels safe?’”

Second-year Biology student and Oak Hall resident, Annhah Nielsen, disagrees with the new rule.



LOVOT, a robot that's largely stayed the same in style, but not in mechanics, since the late 2010s, has continued to dominate the ESR market, with new models coming out every year. They are particularly popular amongst college students.



ESRs can come in a variety of models, the latest dog-like iteration by Google being a reimagining of the Aibo robot of years ago.

“My [permanent] roommate has an ESR, and I didn’t know about it beforehand. But why would it bother me? The robot is there for her. I’m sure it doesn’t care about me!” said Nielsen.

It’s important to note that this doesn’t mean that you can’t have an emotional support robot at *all*.

“You will need a detailed note from a physical or mental healthcare provider detailing why you need it,” Gupta’s notice explains, “and a meeting with the Resident Coordinator of your building, while not yet required, is strongly encouraged.”

To some students, this might undercut the university’s claim that this measure is being taken in order to protect student privacy.

“I think being forced to say exactly what the issue is, is like, a little bit too much,” says Nielsen. “I feel like that singles students with emotional/mental disabilities and illnesses out, so it no longer is, ‘Oh, look at these cute robots all the people on my floor have,’ it becomes ‘Oh, what issue does this individual have that makes this necessary for them?’”

To this, Gupta’s notice counters: “Student opinions are very important to us, and we have taken student opinions into account when making this decision. Remember that none of the information we’re gathering is information we won’t have anyways from the health files you’re already required to provide.”

When *The Vector* asked for comment on the notice and student responses to it, Gupta replied: “When applying to be a student here, you consent to the distribution of that information to our staff, but the stranger you’re rooming with for the night or the year may not have consented to their personal information potentially being gathered by other students— and that’s where that difference lies for us here at Residence Life.”

From Virus to VR

Changes to NJIT Graduation Ceremonies in Recent Years

by Eireann Babenko, Dominik Bowman, and Kareem Ricci

Hey, Class of 2050— as you invite your grandparents and best friend from home to get dressed up and sit in your living room in matching virtual reality sets to watch you graduate from NJIT (congrats, by the way!), have you ever wondered what an NJIT graduation in the physical world would look like?

Seems strange to think about nowadays, but it wasn't until relatively recently that graduations moved to the digital realm.

Zack Kellett, a member of NJIT's Class of 2019, and current Harbinger of Chaos for the Make-a-Wish Foundation (a very fun and fulfilling position, he says happily), was one of the last to experience a true in-person graduation— an experience that can only now be found in a few colleges around the country, and an experience that is continuing to change year by year.

"The narcissist in me really loved to see my face on the big screen of the Prudential Center all decked out in my regalia for all my friends and family," said Kellett.

But 30 years ago, as the coronavirus pandemic swept the world, colleges and universities almost unanimously decided to move their 2020 commencement ceremonies online.

Left: A 3D model of the coronavirus

Right: An individual participating in a Virtual Reality (VR) meeting

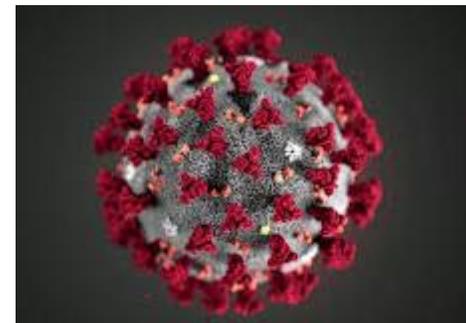
Alexis Telyczka, a member of the NJIT Class of 2020 and current Head of Social Research for the emerging United Slavic States (made up of former countries East Ukraine, West Russia, Belarus and Poland) was one of the first to experience virtual commencement.

"It's incredible, how far virtual commencement has come in the years since I graduated NJIT," Telyczka said.

The Class of 2020, famously, graduated by sending in videos of themselves wearing caps and gowns. All of those videos, along with a graphic describing the degree(s) they received, were then stitched together.

"Basic tech, but effective enough to make us feel at least a little bit celebrated," said Telyczka.

Within four years, with unfortunate but widespread "pauses" in the world's institutions of higher education, the coronavirus pandemic died down with the development of a vaccine and improvements in preventative care measures.



But the damage to the traditional graduation ceremony had already been done; within the next five years, the graduation ceremony as we now know it, in virtual reality, was created. Now, with a customized avatar, you can walk across the virtual stage with your avatar-ized classmates, from the relative safety of your own home, and shake a virtual President Bloom's hand using your VR glove.

Now, while corona season is as expected as the flu season, it's made permanent marks on our society in small ways that only individuals born before the coronavirus are likely to remember and miss.

"I did attend an NJIT graduation ceremony before 2020— and, yes, all those people in the same space definitely wasn't beneficial for now-obvious health reasons," said Telyczka. "But I feel like I missed out on the excitement of being in the same room as people, of being together with the graduates, and to be able to hug and take photos with people other than my family after the ceremony. And these newer generations aren't even *aware* of what they're missing out on, here."

Others might have to disagree, and find the virtual ceremonies far better than the in-person experiences they replaced.

"You know how much I wish I could have logged off as soon as I walked across the stage so I wouldn't have to sit through all the engineers graduating?" said Kellett.

Overall, the health and safety of NJIT students and their families must be a priority. As of right now, it seems that virtual reality celebrations are the best way to honor graduates while looking out for the whole community, even if students are getting a different experience from graduations of the past.

"I *am* thankful that I've never had to shake Joel Bloom's exposed hand," Telyczka said with a laugh, "especially since I have sweaty palms. But seeing as he's trying to upload his consciousness into a bot now, I guess that won't even be a problem very soon!"



Alexis Telyczka, member of the Class of 2020, in a photo taken at home just before the first virtual graduation.

Weekly News at a Glance

by Alexander Gonzalez, Saili Byrne, Cameron Sokolov, and Kwame McNair

- The current U.S. President, Salma Schinella, was revealed on April 28th to be genetically engineered— part of a controversial generation of experimental “designer babies.” She emphasized that this does not and will not affect her policies, particularly with regards to her platform on disability rights, of which she is an avid supporter of.
- For the first time ever, NJIT’s incoming Fall 2051 class is *not* expected to be majority-male, with 49% of committed incoming freshmen identifying as female, 47% identifying as male, and 4% identifying outside of this binary!
- NJIT President Joel Bloom to attempt to upload his consciousness into a mechanized body. “I just want to be able to continue to help the NJIT community however I can, for as long as I can,” Bloom stated in a university-wide notice on April 26th. He is also reportedly looking into investing into an AI which would replicate his essence, should the mechanized body fail.
- Nicholas Cage, long thought to be dead, was recently found alive in Ontario. “Please, I just want to live in peace,” he is reported to have said to the nosy teenagers who found him on April 29th. According to the photos quickly snapped by the teenagers, he doesn’t seem to have aged at all.
- “Maybe we were too quick to colonize the moon,” said NASA officials on April 25th after Operation C, a widely supported attempt to find a suitable replacement for Earth, proved to be a massive failure. Of the thirty individuals, each chosen to represent the thirty developed countries in NASA’s Space Colonization Alliance, sent to the moon to permanently reside in what were colloquially known as “Moon Rock Communities,” the only creature found to have survived the thirty-day trial period was an unauthorized pet lizard. NASA officials are unsure of how the pet lizard made it through security, and of how it was able to survive.
- The 25-year-old Newark Dams, known by many as “waterwalls,” protecting the city of Newark from flooding due to rising sea levels, are beginning to show signs of wear and tear. The City of Newark is calling on residents to come up with a plan to strengthen the walls, and have now stated that if a solution is not quickly found, fleeing the city within the next couple of years may be likely.



The lizard who survived NASA’s Operation C



United States President Salma Schinella, recently revealed to be a product of genetic engineering



Nicholas Cage, photographed in Ontario this past week

NuCal Pod

Now available at Forte's!



Running late between classes and meetings? Stop by Forte's to grab a NuCal pod— 350 calories, all the nutrients you need, in one cheese-pizza flavored tab!

Only \$5 each!

Opinion: I Hate Self-Driving Cars

by Annah Bianci

Unpopular opinion: I'll never use a self-driving car again.

A couple of weeks ago, my friends and I called a self-driving car to take us to Sagras, a bar in the Ironbound area of Newark. We got in and got to the bar, no problem— but *leaving* the bar was an entirely different issue.

We called the car at 2:00am (don't judge us!), expecting it to come over five minutes later, as usual. It came, limping over to us, a flat in its tire and graffiti on its windows, forty-five minutes later.

We called Uber, the company responsible for the car. While they thanked us for letting them know about it, and said they'd send a technician over to pick it up shortly, they *also* said they couldn't do anything about us, personally, to help us get back to the Temp Dorms at NJIT. Because the car had arrived at its intended destination, we weren't eligible for a new car or refund, either, as they had automatically categorized the incident as us "declining the service." So, we navigated Newark at the early hours of the morning, and took the light rail back to NJIT.

A lot of people don't like self-driving cars because they're so expensive— at a base price of \$35 per ride, no matter the distance, using one can be quite pricey, especially if you're not traveling in a group. In Newark, especially, I've found that a lot of college-aged and professional people around the University Heights area use self-driving cars to get to their jobs, or to go out to eat— but a lot of Newark natives don't seem to be using them.

Instead, in informal conversations I've had with other students around campus, my recent experience with vandalism isn't unique, and is often blamed on Newark residents.

"That happens to me often," said Kayla Cate, a junior Computer Engineering major.

"I go out to dance and eat in Newark a lot, so it's something I see at least once a week. I once saw a group of people *actively* spray-painting a car outside of Iberia at 10:00pm! Though, I notice spray-painted cars more often than *actually* damaged cars, so, you know, at least they're still usable."

But not every student is willing to go out as often as Kayla.

"I avoid going out into Newark in a self-driving car, unless I'm going around the University Heights area or the train station," said Lailah Nour, a senior Information Technology Major. "I definitely feel like it makes you a target, especially if you're alone, because if you can afford a self-driving car, it makes it seem like you have more money. I'd rather drive or walk— that feels much safer to me."



An Uber-operated self-driving car

My parents and grandparents often talk about how much safer these self-driving cars are when compared to the cars of the past— and, especially, the illusion of safety they offer when compared to taking public transportation, or walking. Because of this attitude, I've never experienced driving, myself. After this experience, I think I'd like to— because even if I were to get into an accident, at least I can blame myself. And, maybe I'll even save some money, and feel a little bit safer, by doing so.

Politics: Students Speak on Universal Healthcare

For years, the concept of equal healthcare for everyone in the nation was merely a dream. Now, on the ten-year anniversary of universal healthcare being implemented in the United States, how do students on different sides of the political spectrum feel about universal healthcare?

LEFT – MELANIE ABBOUD

I, for one, am very grateful for universal healthcare. Last year, my youngest sister had a really bad reaction to UV-ray exposure— she's six years old and got cancer in her cornea— and she was able to get treatment quickly and efficiently at our local hospital. My parents were really scared at first, and then shocked. They both vividly remember a time when dealing with things like cancer could send entire families into massive amounts of debt. That's what happened to my grandmother, actually. My family couldn't afford her cancer treatment, and she didn't want them to go into debt because of her, and so she chose to ride it out. She passed away really quickly. My family is really grateful for universal healthcare because it's proven to us to be good for the community. We don't know if we would have been able to help my little sister otherwise. If we have to be taxed more for people like my little sister to get the treatment necessary for them to live, then I, for one, think it's worth it.

RIGHT: SHRISHTI ESPOSITO

I know this makes me sound callous. But I believe we should go back to a privatized, monetized healthcare system. I don't think it's fair that just because my family makes above a certain threshold of money, they have to pay more of their salary for some other person to reap the benefits. I know it's beneficial for the community overall— but my parents have to pay up to 85% of their combined salaries in taxes, now. They worked hard to get where they are— don't they deserve the chance to enjoy the rewards associated with that hard work? We have a nice house and we're doing alright, so many people say I shouldn't be complaining. On some level, I agree, but at the end of the day, why are they working, then? To help save someone else's life or family, when they have their own lives and families to worry about? If we want a truly equal, universal healthcare system, shouldn't people be taxed equally? That just doesn't seem very American to me.

The Staff of The Vector Watches Hamilton!

by Mohamed Boucher



The staff of The Vector watching Hamilton together on April 17th.

On April 17th, as a part of our annual retreat, the staff of *The Vector* saw the long-running Broadway classic *Hamilton* online—and wow!

All decked out in fake pearls, sparkling outfits, and towering heels, we sat in the Campus Center, roughly imitating the in-person crowd there to see the live show. Our virtual party looked slightly different from the in-person crowd, though; they mostly seemed to be white men and women in their 60s sitting at least a couple of seats apart from each other, while we were a diverse group of college students crowded into our meeting room watching the show projected from somebody's phone.

They sipped cocktails and ate real mini-meals. We made mocktails and had popcorn, chocolate, and chip-flavored Treat Pods—a far better alternative to the real things, the staff unanimously agreed, as they're much quieter than the munch and crunch of solid food, especially when in closer quarters.

The crowd of older folks who could afford a vintage experience really seemed to enjoy it—but I can almost guarantee they didn't enjoy it as much as we did. We were able to sing along to every song (those of us who knew the songs) and be as loud and rambunctious as we wanted. While the people seeing it live could only express their enthusiasm through clapping, we danced.

"This is my third time seeing it online. It's fantastic!" said our Editor-in-Chief, Lana Tchir. "And it's even better seeing it with my *Vector* friends!"

Upon the conclusion of the show, we all had a conversation about whether any of us would be willing to see it in-person, for the price of \$2,000 per ticket, versus the online experience for \$70 per ticket.

"Maybe if I have a good enough job, I'd be willing to go in-person!" said one of our photographers, Fehintoluwa Hernandez.

"But probably not, to be honest—I prefer the experience of being able to laugh and dance and talk with all of my friends. And if we were to go in-person, I'm sure a lot of my friends wouldn't be willing to spend that kind of money, so it'd be a much smaller group, and a different experience."

The middle tier between our sort of "movie night" and in-person viewings is virtual reality, at \$800 per ticket. But many of our staff said they wouldn't opt for that option either.

"We're college students—we can't afford the ridiculous prices," said one of our business assistants, Kwame McNair. "But seeing it online lets us spend time together enjoying art. And does it really matter whether the art is online or offline, real or in virtual reality, as long as we're having fun?"

There you have it, folks, straight from us at *The Vector*—*Hamilton* is worth the online price, and the online price only, for an awesome night in with friends, so be sure to be there the next time the Student Activity Council sells discount online tickets!

HOROSCOPES

Aries— This is a popular, optimistic, flirtatious week for you. Be open to using a matchmaking AI— they'll have new insights for you.

Taurus— Chase opportunities, especially this week. It's a smooth, lucky week.

Gemini— The week continues your easy luck with finances and intimate encounters. It's the perfect time to invest in a corporation you're passionate about.

Cancer— The time has come to commit. If you don't, a rare chance could fade into history.

Leo— Love and business relationships excite and challenge you this week. A tremor in the environmental sphere is coming, and it will affect you deeply— be prepared.

Virgo— This is a sweet, easy, happy, *hot* week. Use this time to get some organizing done inside.

Libra— You're on a winning streak. But take care, don't get in too deep, especially when it comes to your tech. Your real life needs tending to, too.

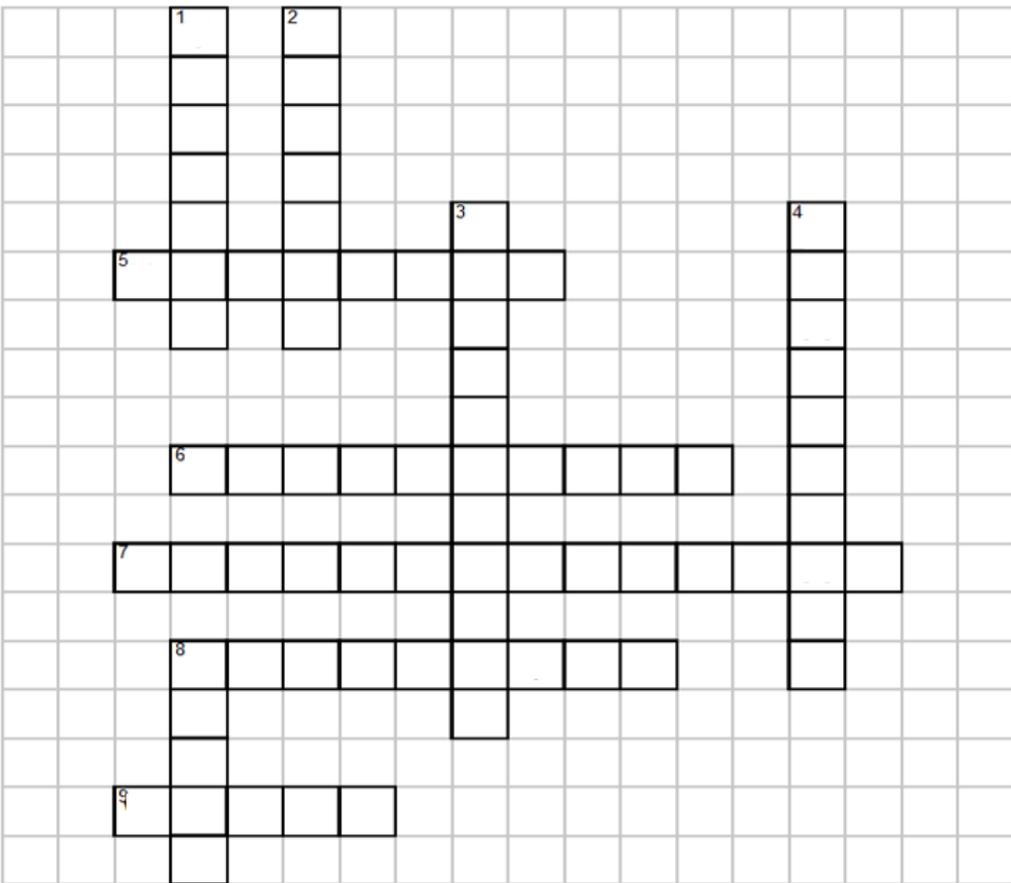
Scorpio— The week needs caution. Investments, intimacy and research are a bit unpredictable, but very lucky around mid-week.

Sagittarius— Dig deep this week. Commit funds or your heart. Invest. Say yes to a deeper bond. Consider using VR to shake things up a bit in your intimate relationships.

Capricorn— Work, machinery and health concerns fill the days ahead. Be careful.

Aquarius— Rest this week, because you have a busy week ahead.

Pisces— Lie low, rest, stay in the background this week and next. It's an excellent week to visit an AI psychic and/or financial advisor.



Across

- 5 The Broadway show that the staff of the Vector saw online together.
- 6 Synonym for "commencement."
- 7 What will our staff writer, Annah, "never use again." (no spaces)
- 8 A nickname for NJIT students who mostly commute, but may stay in a Temp Dorm for a couple of nights at a time.
- 9 For the first time in NJIT's history, __ outnumber men in the incoming Fall 2051 class!

Down

- 1 Starting in 2020, graduations began to be this.
- 2 What sort of engineering assisted in creating the latest U.S. President?
- 3 We have the flu season, we have the ____ season.
- 4 Should this be universal? Our contributing writers battle it out in the opinion section!
- 8 The "R" in "ESR."

CROSSWORD

How closely did you read this issue?

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