

Come on in, the water's fine: Polar Plunge raises funds for scholarship

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The air measured an arctic 11 degrees – not counting the brutal wind chill – while the water only managed to reach 40. Hearts, however, stayed warm with generosity and the spirit of adventure during the second annual Polar Plunge on Feb. 26.

A brave group of faculty, staff and students took a dip in a hot tub full of ice water, provided by 21st Century Pools and Spas, after obtaining pledges for each minute they could last in the frigid water. The longer they stayed, the more money they raised – and the more they shivered. Click [here](#) and [here](#) for media coverage.

It's not too late to donate! You can donate via the Broome Community College Foundation and note the Wes Warren Memorial Scholarship in the memo portion of the check or, if [donating online](#), in the gift designation.

"I'm ready for a nice, hot shower," chattered Student Assembly President Philip Butts, as ice cubes and a rubber ducky floated his way in the pool. "I was so stupid, but it's great."



**Student Assembly President Philip Butts,
center, freezes in the pool.**



Rey Wojdat and Gerry Loy enjoy their time in the tub.

Called the Thrill of the Chill, the event raises funds for the Wes Warren Memorial Scholarship, which will benefit students in the Criminal Justice program. Warren, a Criminal Justice professor who passed away last year, beat out all the other contestants in the first Plunge, held in February 2013.

Two years ago, Professor Rey Wojdat was sitting at a bar with Warren and another colleague, discussing dares. That discussion gave rise to the Polar Plunge – an event that Warren enjoyed enormously. Warren was larger than life, gregarious and loved by students and colleagues alike, Wojdat remembered.

If he were at this year’s Polar Plunge, Warren would have cheered louder than anyone there, and be the first one in and the last one out, he added.

“Anything outrageous and loud, that was Wes Warren,” Wojdat said.

Students in SUNY Broome’s Hospitality program helped coordinate the event and sold refreshments – as well as bags of ice to make the water even colder.

Smartphones in hand to snap pictures, crowds gathered before the Plunge. Participants dressed in their festive best: two students wore grass skirts and leis to give the event more of a tropical feel, while Meigo Fitzpatrick of the Department of Information Technology Services sported a pink bathrobe, life jacket and a headdress made out of ice cube trays. Wojdat did his fashionable best in a cowboy hat, bathrobe and swim trunks – but that was part of his strategy.

Grass skirts and bath caps were among the fashion choices at the Polar Plunge

“The wind will get you. It’s better to do it in your bathing suit so nothing sticks to you when you get out,” he explained.

The Learning Assistance Department’s Heather Darrow, who was participating for the first time, said she enjoys challenging her physical limits. Before taking the dip, she warmed up by dancing and jogging along the quad – wearing a bathrobe and bathcap.

“I’m trying to prepare myself mentally,” she said of her game plan.

Professor Gerald Loy was off to a strong start, dancing with Wojdat in the pool and sipping cool beverages provided by students.

Strategy couldn’t always compete with the temperature, however. Jeff Hatala of Information Technology Services cannon-balled into the pool wearing a blue wig and a crown of ice-cube trays – but immediately jumped back out.

Jeff Hatala prepares to leap into the pool.

Cannonball!

**Meigo Fitzpatrick and Heather Darrow watch as
Jeff Hatala jumps back out**

**Meigo Fitzpatrick (underwater), Heather
Darrow and Trevor Peachey are in the tub, while
Gerry Loy stands outside**

According to the leader board, this year's bragging rights may go to Assistant Professor Trevor Peachey of the Criminal Justice Department, who appeared to have stayed the course for a hair longer than Wojdat.

“Wow, that’s cold,” Peachey grimaced as he entered the pool.

Organizers plan to make the event bigger and better each year – both to benefit the scholarship fund and honor Warren’s memory.

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