THE MIRROR

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Fairfield University joins eight Connecticut colleges in hosting a silent walk across college campuses. Shown above are a handful of posters made by students advocating for a ceasefire in Gaza.

Fairfield Muslim Student Association Demands Ceasefire in Gaza with Silent Walk

BY **JULIAN NAZARIO**Copy, Head News Editor

Eight college campuses across the state of Connecticut will hold silent walks demanding a ceasefire in Gaza and proclaiming their solidarity with the Palestinian people on Nov. 29. Every university will have its own variation of the event, which is sponsored by its Muslim Student Association (MSA). Fairfield's MSA will start its walk from the Stag Statue at 1:00 p.m.

"We call on you to join us to unite on this nationwide day of protests," reads the official flyer of the event. "We call on you to stand with the people of Palestine and demand a permanent ceasefire on Wednesday."

The confirmed silent walks happening on Wednesday are expected to occur at Yale University, Quinnipiac University, University of Connecticut Stamford, Eastern Connecticut State University, Western Connecticut State University, Southern Connecticut State University, University of New Haven and Fairfield University. However, while the general convocation calls for the walks to be held at noon, individual chapters will be holding their events throughout the day with their own goals and other MSA chapters are expected to join the national call for silent walks.

At Fairfield, the MSA hosted a poster crafting event in the Commuter Lounge and its adjacent Resource Room for students to "create powerful posters and banners for the upcoming Ceasefire in Gaza Silent Walk" on Nov. 27 and Nov. 28.

The online promotions for the event references watermelons, a Palestinian symbol of solidarity and resistance that first emerged as a result of Israel's ban on the display of Palestinian flags during the Six-Day War in 1967. To evade the prohibition and its legal consequences, Palestinians started to use watermelons as a sign of resistance against the Israeli government, as once the fruit is cut open it displays the colors of the Palestinian flag, which are red, black, white and green.

Fairfield's MSA walk preparation event provided students with a safe space for them to create their posters without having fear of being targeted because of their identity or support for the Palestinian people. An off-the-record conversation with multiple students highlighted the widespread fears of being identified as supporters of the Palestinian people and the ceasefire, and ultimately, being victims of doxxing campaigns.

A Nov. 19 story published by Yale Daily News highlighted the efforts made by a conservative group that displayed personal information of Yale and Harvard Pro-Palestinian students during a Yale-Harvard football game on Nov. 18. Yale's MSA will be one of the confirmed student organizations to join the national call.

Other students expressed that their status as first-generation students and family pressures were some of the reasons for not wanting to be identified by name, as their parents may not approve of their involvement.

Some of the posters created by students read phrases like "Stop Genocide in Gaza," "Free All Hostages," "Stop Genocide in Gaza" and "Ceasefire NOW". Students who participated in the two days of poster-making had access to posters, paint, brushes, markers, coloring pencils and stencils.

The silent walk, which coincides with the end of a two-day extension to the original four-day truce brokered by Qatar, Egypt and the United States last Friday, marks the first student-led demonstration of support for either side of the conflict. It is also the third event related to the Israel-Hamas conflict to be promoted on campus since the war started on Oct. 7, with Campus Ministry promoting an off-campus "Pray for Israel" gathering happening at Westport on Oct. 8 and a heated faculty Teach-In that was held in the Nursing building on

"Our silent walk is a powerful call for peace, advocating for the well-being of all affected by the conflict, especially Palestinians in the Silent Walk, regardless of background," reads the caption of an Instagram post made by Fairfield's MSA. The post also emphasizes that the event is a silent walk and thus, they ask participants to remain silent throughout the walk and to cause "no blockades or disruptions."

The Mirror obtained access to a document prepared and released by MSA detailing the purpose and guidelines for the event. The document was shared with student organizations, faculty, staff and students who have expressed interest in participating

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Fairfield's Chick-fil-A Set To Open on Dec. 7



The first Chick-fil-A Fairfield location will operate at 750 Post Road and will only operate as dine-in and carry-out.

BY **KATHLEEN MORRIS**Assistant News Editor

While studying astronomy in college, Rich Beattie's success was not dependent on a keen knowledge of celestial objects. Instead, he relied on the sustenance provided by the Chick-fil-A chicken sandwich he brought to class each week.

Today, Beattie's devotion to the fast food chain has manifested itself in his ownership of the new Chick-fil-A franchise set to open at 750 Post Road on Dec. 7.

"My friends and I would often joke in college that I needed to own a Chick-fil-A one day, and I am honored to have spent the last nine years fulfilling that dream," Beattie remarked in a press release from Chick-fil-A, Inc.

Beattie will enter this new role with a plethora of experience, as he has held leadership roles within the restaurant and was selected as the Owner-Operator of Chick-fil-A Danbury Fair Mall in Danbury, Conn.

The Fairfield location, which joins 13 other Connecticut franchises, will be open for dine-in and carry-out from 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. from Monday through Saturday.

Beattie will oversee 130 full and part-time employees, referred to as "Team Members". The press release underscored that "Chick-fil-A Operators are committed to hiring, developing and retaining top talent and providing a positive work environment for people of all ages and backgrounds."

Team Members, who must uphold the company's signature hospitality standards, will have the opportunity to apply for scholarships to support their continuing education.

Chick-fil-A is committed

to fostering meaningful relationships with the community, which is evidenced by their support of Connecticut Foodshare's local hunger relief efforts and a \$25,000 donation to Feeding America. Additionally, the press release noted that Chick-fil-A Post Road will celebrate its opening by "recognizing 100 local heroes making an impact in the Fairfield area by providing them with free Chick-fil-A entrées for a year."

The restaurant also plans to take part in the Chick-fil-A Shared Table® program, an initiative that donates surplus

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-Rich Beattie Restaurant Owner

food to local soup kitchens, shelters, food banks and non-profits

Students have expressed their anticipaion for the upcoming opening.

"I'm thrilled for this new Chick-fil-A," Christo Traub '27 exclaimed. "Now, I don't have to wait to go home to get my chicken 'sandys'!"

Senior Katie Touhey is thrilled that, "Chick-fil-A is opening in town right in time for Christmas!"

"I love getting the grilled chicken Cool Wrap with waffle fries and Chick-fil-A sauce,"

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Organizers Emphasize Event Goals, University "Fully Supports" Students' Right to Freedom of Expression

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In the two-page document, the club organizing the event highlights that only approved materials are permitted "to avoid any misinterpretation of the event's message." Additionally, they encourage participants to maintain a respectful atmosphere and avoid arguments that remove the solemnity of the walk.

The walk will start at the Stag Statue and pass through the Quad, 42 Langguth Road, the front of Canisius Hall, Campus Ministry, the Dimenna-Nyselius Library, the Barone Campus Center and conclude at the Leo D. Mahoney Arena. A post-event debrief session with counseling services will be located at NHS 224. A map of the route can be found on the club's Instagram page.

The document, which was also shared on Instagram, pleads with participants to maintain the event's focus.

"Our focus is on a peaceful expression of our shared concern for the well-being of those affected. Anyone deviating from this principle does not represent our collective message," reads the statement at the end of the document.

Jennifer Anderson '97, '02 MBA, Fairfield University's Vice President of Marketing and Communications reflected on the university's commitment to "a culture that embraces and celebrates inquiry, actively encourages our students to express their views and opinions and fully supports their rights to free expression."

"The University is committed to continuing to engage in substantive dialogue around current events both domestically and internationally as we build a community of learners and globally minded citizens from a variety of social, economic, racial, cultural, national and religious backgrounds," Anderson said.

In regards to student concerns about safety, Anderson expressed that the standard practice in the university is for "students to meet with our department of public safety which the MSA has done." The event will have two DPS officers in attendance.

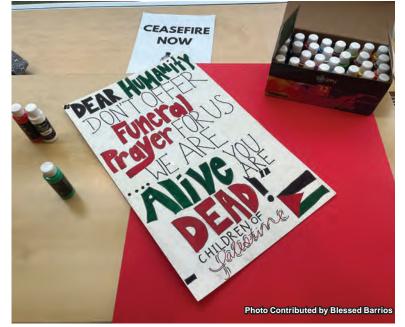
The Mirror reached out to the Department of Public Safety for a response regarding the multiple safety concerns from students and participants but referred the request back to Anderson.

Student-organized walks are not uncommon at Fairfield. In April, the Fairfield University Student Association organized a Black Stags Matter Walk as a way to support underrepresented students on the anniversary of the "Community in Action" protest.

At the moment of this publication, only the Black Student Union indicated support to MSA's event and even published a statement on Nov. 27 supporting the Palestinian people and the Muslim community as a whole.

"We encourage other clubs, organizations and departments to show their support for the MSA and for our overall Muslim and Palestinian communities," reads their statement on Instagram.





The walk, scheduled to start at the Stag Statue and end at the Leo D. Mahoney Arena, will be the first on-campus demonstration since the Israel-Hamas war started on Oct. 7. Students are encouraged to engage according to their comfort level, which can range from holding a candle to making a poster.

Victoria Buitron Will Give Talk at Bellarmine Campus on Multicultural Experiences

BY **SAMANTHA RUSSELL** Assistant News Editor

Aluma author Victoria Buitron MFA '20 will share a full circle moment with Fairfield Bellarmine in a presentation of autobiographies highlighting her journey as a multicultural writer.

A former Fairfield graduate student in Creative Writing, Buitron will host a free event at Fairfield Bellarmine's St. Ambrose Hall on Dec. 1 in which she unveils her



Buitron will discuss her story as an Ecuadorian through highlighting her debut memoir, "A Body Across Two Hemispheres."

personal story as an Ecuadorian, her academic story at Fairfield University and her professional story within the book publication process. While times and logistics are subject to change, the event is set to begin at 12:30 p.m. and conclude around 2:00 p.m.

Buitron will walk guests through her award-winning memoir, "A Body Across Two Hemispheres," which examines her experiences of growing up between two countries, cultures and languages.

"It means everything to me because it encapsulates so much of my life," Buitron confessed. She added that the opportunity to speak at Fairfield Bellarmine establishes "a way to honor where [she came] from and the foundations of what made [her] a writer."

Beginning with her process of becoming a writer, the speaker plans to outline her complex background as a member of the Latinx community and read excerpts from three of her short pieces, tentatively ranging from creative nonfiction, fiction and poetry. Her presentation will finish with a question-and-answer session and an audience activity regarding the essay, "Where Are You From?"

Credited with establishing this event is a REFOR-MA Noche de Cuentos mini-grant awarded to Fairfield Bellarmine Research and Learning Librarian Ivelisse Maldonado. A press release published by FairfieldNews acknowledges REFORMA as "a national association that promotes library and information services to Latinos and Spanish-speaking populations." The association is marked with undeniable value for storytelling and oral traditions not only to preserve Latino cultures but to pass down as well.

Maldonado, B.B.A, M.L.S, first reached out to the Fairfield community seeking a local Latinx writer to spotlight within the university. Buitron quickly got in touch with the librarian through contact with Chris Madden, founder of Woodhall Press. Woodhall Press is the publishing $company\ of\ Buitron's\ highlighted\ memoir.$

In 2021, Buitron was awarded with the Fairfield Book Prize for "A Body Across Two Hemispheres," a distinction sponsored by Woodhall Press. The award is upheld through a partnership with the publishing company and Fairfield University's MFA program in Creative Writing.

"Winning this award meant that a dream I'd been working toward for years finally became a reality," Buitron shared. She noted that while every author's goal is to become published, she was never sure if her debut memoir would meet that final destination.

Aside from it being published, she declared that "it was an even greater honor that it got accepted for publication through a contest affiliated with Fairfield."

The path that led Buitron the Fairfield's MFA program is a multifaceted one. Its low residency program allowed her to continue working, and she compliments the university's faculty as well as the beauty of Ender's Island.

Moreover, the institution "taught [her] how to be a writer beyond the solitude of it—to be a writer in community."

Since her time at the Jesuit university, Buitron has dabbled in poetry and fiction – continuing to write, nonetheless. Posted on her website, her work was recognized for 2022's Best Small Fiction and Wigleaf's Top 50 Very Short Fictions, and she is the current competition editor for Harbor Review.

Buitron recently edited the 2023 Connecticut Literary Anthology, which she attributes to with considerable honor having chosen the book's poetry, fiction and nonfiction inclusions

With this event, Buitron holds a similar sense of ambition which has pushed through her writing career.

"I hope that students and the community come away with a sense that their dreams are worthy and that they can achieve them."



Compiled by Kathleen Morris Information contributed by the Department of Public Safety

11/2

1 p.m

Two students were flying a drone on campus. The students identified themselves as members of the "Drone Club". DPS reminds students and staff to seek permission and provide legitimate reasoning before operating unmanned aerial vehicles on private property.

11/26

4 p.m.

A carbon monoxide detector was set off at an off campus residence on North Benson Road. After returning from Thanksgiving break, residents noticed a persistent beeping sound coming from the alarm. To stop the noise, they removed the batteries. The students were advised against tampering with the detector and told to contact DPS in the future.

11/27

10:30 a.m.

A catering vehicle hit an unoccupied student vehicle in the Bowman Hall parking lot. The student was notified of the incident.

11/27

1:30 p.m

A student reported theft from a laundry machine in Loyola Hall. According to the report, the student's gray Lululemon Scuba hoodie was stolen between 10 p.m. and midnight on Nov. 16. DPS is reviewing video footage to identify the suspect.

11/27

10:30 p.m.

A speed limit sign on McInnes Road was struck by a vehicle. The debris has led DPS to believe that the vehicle was a black Mercedes-Benz. DPS is reviewing video footage to identify the vehicle involved.

11/28

12:15 p.m.

There was a two car accident with airbag deployment in front of the RecPlex. The accident involved a student and a university employee. The Fairfield Police Department has taken over the investigation.

THE MIRROR

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The Mirror is the recognized student newspaper of Fairfield University. Opinions and ideas expressed herein are those of the individual student authors, and not those of Fairfield University or its Board of Trustees



The event held in the Oak room has multiple social and academic organizations to attract new student participants

Fairfield Experience Fair Promotes Student Leadership on Campus

BY SAMANTHA RUSSELL Assistant News Editor

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"I hope that students and the community come away with a sense that their dreams are worthy and that they can achieve them."

New Post Road Restaurant Owner "Can't Wait" to Engage with Fairfield Commnity

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Touhey revealed.

Chick-fil-A's loyal fanbase has formed due to their commitment to serving high-quality food.

"Chick-fil-A was one of the first in the industry to eliminate chicken raised with antibiotics to ensure guests have an option for high-quality food on the go," the press release stated. "To complement the great-tasting chicken, fresh produce is delivered to Chick-fil-A restaurants up to six times a week ... The fresh ingredients are raised and grown by farmers who share the company's elevated quality and safety standards."

In an article published in May 2023, The Mirror reported on the dialogue surrounding potential traffic issues associated with the opening of the Post Road establishment.

Initially, the Fairfield Independent Commission denied the permit request from 750 Post Road Associates, LLC., as they feared that "vehicle queuing capacity on site is likely to result in internal congestion blocking ... parking spaces and preventing [the] flow of vehicles."

However, as the proposed renovations did not include a drive-through, concerns were alleviated and ap-

proval was announced on April 24.

After four months, the construction of Chick-fil-A Post Road has been completed. Customers will soon file in, greeted by the aroma of their favorite treats and an undeniable essence of Southern

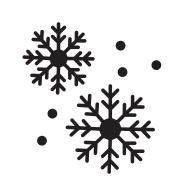


Chick-fil-A Post Road will be locally owned and operated by Rich Beattie, a father of four who formerly ran Chick-fil-A Danbury Fair Mall in Danbury, Conn.

hospitality.

Beattie concluded, "I can't wait to make a positive impact in Fairfield by fostering strong connections in this new community and showing care to our Guests through our top-quality food."





TUES **05** 4PM-8PM

NATIONAL COMFORT FOOD DAY

WED

11:30AM-1:30PM

CHEF SHOWDOWN

THURS 07

9:30AM-11AM

EGGNOG FRENCH TOAST

MON

11:30AM-1:30PM

TEA TIME IN THE TULLY

TUES

124PM-8PM

CHRISTMAS DINNER

WED

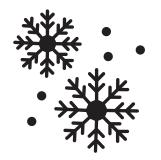
1311:30AM-1:30PM

FUELING UP FOR FINALS

FRI

11:30AM-1:30PM

CRAM CART



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Opinion

Editor: Liz Morin Email: elizabeth.morin1@student.fairfield.edu

When It Comes To The Violent Parts Of History, Choose Truth Over Comfort

By **Meghan Holt**Contributing Writer

Our nation has time and again chosen a path of willful ignorance. This becomes especially concerning when it comes to the dignity and well-being of all people, and in this sense, Thanksgiving is no different. Before the United States even existed, indigenous people suffered as a result of our arrogance.

We remember the first Thanksgiving feast as a time of harmony, cooperation and more than anything, people from one culture recognizing and appreciating the humanity of people from another culture.

This narrative is present in holiday pageants, textbooks, television and other popular depictions.

But what we neglect to include in our cultural accounts of the first interactions between Europeans and Native Americans is that which is less pleasant to visualize: decimation by disease, removal from ancestral lands, unthinkable violence and genocide against Native American peoples.

The gap between these alternative interpretations of history appears almost unbridgeable. The question is: How much stems from genuine misunderstanding, and how much is deliberately misremembered?

It is important to consider whose visibility we are

obstructing when we leave out the violent parts of history.

Furthermore, why do we choose comfort over truth? And perhaps most of all, why do we pass on these deceitful tales to our children, who don't know any better?

The truth is, history is easiest to understand and most attractive when any complexities or nuances are removed from it.

The stunning misconception by the first settlers in America that there was only one God, one way of managing property ownership and overall, one way of life, is representative of this



The past and current treatment of Native Americans is often overlooked while a majority of Americans celebrate Thanksgiving every year

intrinsic desire for simplicity.

Americans present themselves to be immature and incapable of learning when they continue to oversimplify and group thousands of indigenous tribes together, continuing to refer to them as "Indians", as if no one ever realized Columbus' mistake when he "discovered" the Americas centuries ago.

Some argue that whether we like it or not, we are power-less in the face of past events.

But we are not powerless when it comes to the future. We are able to rise above our ignorance and recognize that we would have no country if it weren't for the people that we stole it from.

Thanksgiving certainly is not going to go anywhere. But as long as we celebrate, let us do so in the manner of responsible, thoughtful and educated citizens.

Let us acknowledge history without abandoning all hopes that we might be better.

We must choose to affirm one another's humanity while recognizing that the ability to renounce a group of people as less than human has never been in our power.

We must honor human losses and condemn inhuman cruelty. Let us heal together.

Don't Forget About World Issues Once They Leave Your Instagram Feed

BY **LIZ MORIN**Opinion Editor

If you have Instagram, TikTok or even Snapchat, I can guarantee that you've seen someone post an infographic or informational video on a world conflict.

This became more common in 2020 with the start of COVID-19, the murder of George Floyd and the rise of movements like #MeToo and Black Lives Matter protests. It's been the general consensus, and I agree, that social media has been a great way to share information with people quickly and straightforwardly.

Pew Research Center conducted a study on individual's thoughts on social media activism, saying, "Some 64% of Americans feel that the statement 'social media help give a voice to underrepresented groups' describes these sites very or somewhat well." It's an easier way to hear about protests that are happening, more minor details that major news corporations may not necessarily cover, and a way to hear from people directly impacted by the incident at hand.

As Thai Jones from Columbia Magazine put it, social media shows us "the Internet's power to amplify political outrage." I will not deny how important social media is for

addressing world issues.

What I am going to question is how social media activism is frequently used as a trend.

There were often thousands of posts that flooded in when something horrific happened. Still, those posts trickled down rapidly days after the event until many people stopped addressing it altogether.

"It's also an opportunity, if we're honest, for easy activism. Like, if you post this Breonna Taylor thing, you let people know what it is you support, and you support justice for her, but it can become very performative," said Lydia Kelow-Bennett, a professor of African Studies at the University of Michigan.

With the rise in social media activism came two waves of people. Some took their time in lockdown to learn about the state of the world and attempt to help; some saw others helping and wanted to jump in for the ride.

For example, pretending to want to help online rather than attending a protest is much easier.

Dahlia Solomon of Next Generation Politics writes, "A lot of people have felt pressure to become 'activists' even if they didn't actually care about the social issues they 'advocated' for, and those who failed to take a stance were subtly (and sometimes not subtly) ostracized



The humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo has recieved less coverage from the news compared to other world issues. However, it's important to remember that even if we do not see it on the news, it does not mean people are not struggling in the world.



The conflict between Ukraine and Russia has been occuring for decades, but it escalated in February 2022. At the time, it made headlines and was all over social media, but today, even though the war is continuing, there is no major coverage of it.

for not caring."

She further goes on to say that people use social justice causes as a way to gain social media popularity. Depending on your use, there's a line to how much social media can do.

Reposting news on your Instagram story will spread the word, but beyond sharing it, there's not much else to help.

And when people only share what they see others sharing, no one addresses the issue, making the conflict primarily forgotten in the public eye.

Last week, I was speaking to a friend from my hometown, who expressed her confusion on why she hadn't heard about how bad the Israel and Gaza conflict had gotten.

Personally, I have seen waves of others sharing infographics regarding the situation for years. Still, since the number of people addressing it online lowered (for a period of time), others came to believe that the conflict may not have been as serious. When the Russia and Ukraine war began, every Instagram story I tapped on or TikTok video I watched was regarding the war, and now, despite the war still going on, I haven't seen a post in months.

There are ways social media can help beyond getting news across, if you use it correctly. For example, TikTok user Jourdan Louise created a TikTok filter titled "Filter for Good," the funds she received from others using the filter would be donated to the people of Gaza.

I found this a unique and great way to use social media to raise money to help others. Instagram also has a donate sticker to attach to Instagram stories to raise money directly for a nonprofit.

Our knowledge of the world heavily revolves around what the news tells us.

So when we stop hearing news about something that is going on, we're more likely to forget about it. I believe it is our responsibility to continue educating ourselves, even if the news stops reporting on the issue or if we stop seeing it all over our social media feeds.

For example, the humanitarian crisis in the Republic of Congo has yet to gain any social media attention or significant news attention, so many people are uneducated about what is happening there. This is extremely harmful to the people in Congo—they shouldn't have to rely on help based on how much attention they are getting online.

Sharing stories can be a way to help if you don't forget what you are sharing in a week or a month because mindlessly posting and reposting hurts social media activism.

Tour Ambassadors Have Massive Impact On Fairfield's Growth

By **Julian Nazario**Copy and Head News Editor

We all know that Fairfield is in the midst of a transition period from a regional to a nationally-recognized university. We see it in Dolan and Egan's yearly rankings, and our being here as students is also proof of that.

Most notably, we all have seen the big tour groups on campus. Whether you are going to the library early in the weekend mornings, trying to make the Dunkin or Tully line or just walking through the Quad, you definitely have seen the larger group sizes.

I have heard people saying tours look bigger this semester compared to other years, and even Fizz users have noticed this. Some of my friends have said they feel as if Fairfield is a zoo and they are animals being looked at when they see multiple tours at the Tully (which sounds hilarious).

As a tour ambassador, I can say that my weekend tour groups definitely feel larger than those of last year. The past couple of weeks, I have had tours of 10 to 12 families on Saturdays or Sundays, while on Fridays, my groups usually have five families on average.

With the fall tour season over, I want to answer the question that most families ask me while giving tours: Why are you a tour ambassador?

To be honest, I didn't have a clear reason for joining the group of ambassadors; giving tours was something I did back in high school, and I was looking forward to doing that in college, too. I can say for sure that it's been one of the best experiences so far for me at Fairfield.

We are the most influential people for families for the one hour they are on campus. We can make or break their





The rise in tour groups shows that Fairfield has progressed to a national level and demostrates the schools success.

perceptions of Fairfield, and indirectly, their future is on us. While the counselors and the brochures give the facts of Fairfield, tour ambassadors put a face to the whole Stag experience.

No brochure or section on our website talks about riding the Stag. I do, and ironically, the Stag is my second favorite stop behind Leo D. Mahoney Arena.

I am a tour ambassador because I want people to see the Fairfield I have experienced. For me, Fairfield is about community, faculty support and the commitment to our future

I also do tours because I want Fairfield to be more diverse. Nothing brings me more joy and excitement than to hear that someone from Puerto Rico is visiting us. Last spring, I casually got two Puerto Rican families on my tour

for Fairfield in Focus, and that was the first time I did a tour in "Spanglish" and the highlight of my spring semester as a tour ambassador.

Spring tours are my preferred because we are both showing the school to juniors and trying to convince admitted seniors to come to Fairfield. It makes every tour feel different.

So, while it's more challenging to do larger tour groups, and I do agree that sometimes there are groups all over campus—like during orientation day—I'm excited to see our school growing.

We should all be excited and waiting for President Nemec to announce the biggest applicant pool and the most academically and diverse class in the university's history—again.

Children Should Not Be Used As Social Media Content By Their Parents

By **FIONA KILLEEN**Contributing Writer

We are living through a heavily digital age. Forbes estimated that during 2023, around the globe 4.9 billion people are engaging with social media. Across all platforms, social media offers a plethora of different types of content ranging from political takes to silly videos of pets. One type of content that seems to spread through each platform is family vloggers.

Whether it's long-form videos on YouTube or short videos on TikTok, I frequently see children at the forefront of social media fame. To viewers, seeing endearing videos of families going about their daily lives or surprising their children with gifts may seem harmless and even heartwarming. However, there is a darkness associated with parents creating young social media stars.

During the time that I was in middle school, "family vloggers" became ubiquitous on YouTube. I remember seeing YouTube channels that focused on families reaching social media stardom. One of the channels that experienced a steady increase in popularity was called the "8 Passengers" The primary creator behind the channel was Ruby Franke, a mother of six who documented her children's activities and home-schooled education along with her husband Kevin Franke.

In August, the curtains fell on the dramatic reality of the children's horrific circumstances when Ruby Franke was charged with six counts of child abuse. Throughout the years, the Franke parents have faced criticism for their parenting approaches including when Ruby refused to bring lunch to her six-year-old daughter at school citing that she should be accountable for packing her own meal. The criticism that the Franke's received as well as Ruby's startling charges brings more attention to the fact that the idealized versions of reality that social media influencers present can



"8 Passengers is one of many social media accounts that centers around a family and their children. However, the Franke family is just one example of the abuse these children endure behind the camera.

sometimes be a complete facade.

Another danger of parents posting content that regularly includes their children is the risk of hateful comments being posted under the photos and videos. While parents who have been engaging with social media for a long time may have developed the coping skills to tune out negative comments, children who will grow up to eventually interact with social media may not be as well versed in dealing with rude opinions. It is no secret that people on the internet can sometimes be insulting with their comments, especially when there are anonymous accounts involved.

Parents who frequently include their children in their content, unfortunately, open the door for ruthless comments to be made that could

really impact the long-term mental health of a child. Not only can commenters on social media contribute negativity, but when children start attending school their peers can also be hurtful.

Celebrities such as Kerry Washington have come forth as deciding not to publicize their children on social media. It is especially important for celebrities who have amassed thousands, sometimes even millions of followers, to limit the amount of information about their children that they publicly share. People whose jobs don't revolve around social media or Hollywood fame and don't have thousands of followers can manually filter which accounts are following them when they have a private account.

It is unrealistic for celebrities who have large

social media platforms to be able to restrict their followers to just people who they trust. There are also ways for parents to mitigate the dangers associated with children on social media by only occasionally posting them and focusing the bulk of their content on topics not involving their children.

People who don't earn an income from social media and have private or small accounts run less of a risk of negatively impacting their children by posting them since they have less reach. I can understand why parents would want to post proud moments of their children; however, more caution needs to be exercised to protect the mental wellbeing of children who are being raised in a society fascinated with social media.





By Caitlin Shea Contributing Writer

As the calendar switches over from November to December, jingle bells and jolly monetary reward. begin to fill the air.

as dorms transform into winter wonder- family. lands, and lights are strung up around each

of giving, spending time with family and spreading cheer.

For first-year Samuel Enriquez, the holiday tradition that comes to mind is the Pickle Ornament tradition. "No, it is not a real pickle, though that would be cool," he

For those that don't know, this tradition better than that." originated in Germany. As the tree is decorated, an ornament shaped like a pickle is some of her best memories. hidden somewhere within its branches.

Whoever the lucky searcher is to find be decorating the tree. the festive fermented cucumber is rewarded with an incredible prize.

Fairfield University has its own rendition of this festive tradition. Come finals each year, despite the dust constantly mak- but Fair-

week, the Dimenna Nyselius Library hides many pickle ornaments around the library for students to find and win prizes.

Not all holiday traditions must involve a

First-year Madison Ryder loves to at-On campus, the holiday spirit is evident tend an enchanted village each year with her

"It's really beautiful," Ryder shares.

Consisting of magical lights and beauti-For many Stags, the holidays are a time ful festive scenes, walking along the streets with some warm hot chocolate is a tradition sure to put anyone into the holiday spirit.

> Traditions can also take place inside of the home. For first-year Anna Minino, spending time with her family is everything. "Sitting by the fireplace on Christmas Eve surrounded by my loved ones, it couldn't get

Anna attributes this time to creating

As for me, my favorite tradition has to ter season rap-

Turning on a cheesy Hallmark movie and rummaging through boxes of ornaments is an aspect of decorating I look forward to

ing me sneeze.

Not only does a well-dressed tree transform a home into a winter wonderland, but it is a prominent symbol of the love and the giving that the holiday season is all

Oh, and don't you all forget, a beloved Fairfield tradition, the Tree Lighting Ceremony is coming soon on Dec. 5 at 6:15 p.m.

The holiday spirit is complete with caroling from the Glee Club, hot chocolate and other treats and even free Stag merch to keep you warm this winter! You better not miss it!

As the winidly approaches, the days may seem darker,

field University is illuminated by the holiday spirit of its stags.

Through tradition, the student body is not only able to promote giving, cheer and spending time with loved ones, but each Stag is granted the opportunity to practice these

values, curating a happy holiday season

never fear, your finals SVrvivAL quide is Here!

different areas to study.

Between three floors, private study

Snag a table in the newly renovated Mez-

zanine or in the Lower Level alone or with

rooms, the collaboration room and much

more, you will be sure to find a spot that

works for you. The Barone Campus Center is

also a great place to get some work done.

By Erica Schindler Contributing Writer

The end of the year has finally arrived and with it comes colder weather, holiday prep and of course, finals.

As we approach the end of the semester and the start of finals season, many Fairfield students wonder how they can do well on their exams while also maintaining a healthy level of mental sanity.

Here are some of my best productivity tips for a happy and healthy finals season.

1: Find the study method that works for you

Every student is different, so no one method of studying will work for all of us. In order to study, write or work effectively, it's important to find what will work best for you as an individual.

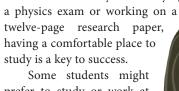
A great place to start is figuring out what kind of learner you are. If you're unsure, there are countless tests online that can help you determine your learning style.

Common learning styles include visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Each learning style has its own set of study strategies that work best for those in each category.

For example, auditory learners might best prepare for finals by recording and listening to Voice Memos about their exams' main points while visual learners might benefit the most from creating mind maps or charts.

2: Find your perfect study spot

Luckily, Fairfield's beautiful campus offers many great spots for students to prepare for finals. Whether you're studying for



prefer to study or work at their desks or a common area of their dorm or town-

of scenery there's no shortage of options.



3: Take time to relax!

As college students, we often forget to take time to relax and unwind, especially during finals season.

Just as studying is important in order to a good grade, rest is important for your mental and physical health. Do your absolute best to avoid all-nighters and get a full night of sleep. Not only will this help you feel better overall, but it will also improve your performance academically!

Eating healthy and getting exercise is also something to remember to do even during this busy season.

Taking breaks in between studying is a great way to make sure you're finding time to enjoy yourself this time of year.

After days of studying, get together for a dinner out with your roommates or a movie night in! During study sessions, take breaks for snacks, holiday shopping, time outside or anything else your heart desires.

I hope these tips can help the end of your semester be as successful as possible.

Most of all, remember to take time for yourself during these next couple of weeks. Before we know it, winter break will be here and the long days and nights of studying will be behind us.

Happy finals!

Bostor Ballet Brings On The Holiday Spirit With 'The Nutcracker"

By **ABIGAIL WHITE** Head Vine Editor

On Friday, Nov. 24, 2023, the Boston Ballet celebrated its opening night of the beloved holiday ballet, "The Nutcracker". Having experienced the true magic that is "The Nutcracker" performed on stage by the Boston Ballet (and various other renditions of this ballet) before, I can attest that this year's performance at the Citizens Bank Opera House in Boston, Mass. truly was nothing short of magical.

The Opera House felt alive when I arrived. The excited crowds were bustling in to find their seats. The grand foyer was decorated with a tall, golden Christmas tree. Show-goers were even presented with the opportunity to take pictures with the dancing bear from the ballet before the show started.

I could feel the excitement of the holiday season in the air as I took my seat, and when the lights dimmed and I heard the opening notes of Tchaikovsky's incredible score, I could not help but smile to myself. There truly is no better way to start the holiday season than at the ballet with "The Nutcracker".

For those that are unfamiliar with the plot of his ballet, "The Nutcracker" is loosely based on the fantasy story by E.T.A Hoffman, "The Nutcracker and the

Mouse King" in which a young girl, Clara, befriends a nutcracker who comes to life on Christmas Eve. In the ballet, after battling the Mouse King, Clara joins her new friend on his journey back to The Kingdom of Sweets. She meets the Sugar Plum Fairy, who, in gratitude for saving the Nutcracker Prince's life, puts on all kinds of festivities in Clara's honor.

I was surprised to find myself laughing throughout the first act of the ballet. Aidan Buss, who was cast as Fritz had the whole audience chuckling as he danced around Clara, played by Chisako Oga, showing off his Christmas presents and fighting with Clara for her nutcracker soldier.

The mice (the minions and helpers of the Mouse King) were also a big hit with the audience as they appeared on stage in the first act one by one after Clara falls asleep. The darkened stage was illuminated with a spotlight as each mouse made its way into the scene, striking a pose as the light hit them. The poses ranged from splits to meditation poses to playing dead. Each pose had the audience howling with laughter.

The first act finished strong with one of my personal favorite dances: "The Waltz of the Snow-flakes" in the Land of Snow. With the combination of the music, the costumes, the floating cloud that whisks Clara away into the sky and the snow that falls from the sky

and lands on the stage, this final dance takes my breath away every time.

After the intermission, the second act of "The Nutcracker" was just as impressive. Some of my favorite dances come from the second act as Clara is welcomed into the Kingdom of sweets where she

is honored by the Sugar Plum Fairy with a showcase of "cultural flair" as the Boston Ballet describes it: The Spanish Chocolate, the Arabian Coffee, the Chinese Tea, the French Marzipan, the Russian Troika and, finally, the waltz of a Dewdrop and her flowers. Each performance brought a unique talent to the stage with the Arabian Coffee dances demonstrating incredible acrobatic skills, the Chinese Tea dancers playfully skilled in their ribbon twirling and the Russian Troika dancers showing off their unbelievably high

I found each demonstration to be an incredible showcase of the talent of each Boston Ballet dancer.

Of course, "The Nutcracker" is not complete without the beautiful pas de deux with the Nutcracker Prince and the Sugar Plum Fairy.

I could not keep my eyes off Viktorina Kapitonova,

who danced the role of Sugar Plum, as she dazzled the stage in an impressive finale performance.

To see the hard work of the dancers, the musicians, the choreographer, Mikko Nissinen, the costume and set designer, Robert Perdziola, etc. was incredible. From the applause that each per-

formance garnered, it was apparent that the entire audience appreciated the talent and hard work of the performers as well.

The Boston Ballet puts on an incredible performance and this opening performance of "The Nutcracker" is one that I will not forget



Boston Ballet celebrated its opening night of "The Nutcracker" on Friday Nov. 24, 2023 at the Citizens Bank Opera House in Boston, Mass.

TOP FESTIVE FINDS: UNVEILING THE BEST HOLIDAY SHOPPING DESTINATIONS

By **FIONA WAGNER**Contributing Writer

As the holiday season quickly approaches, the hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping echoes through crowded streets and festive shops. The anticipation of gift-giving mingles with the stress of actually figuring out what to get everyone.

The quest for the perfect gift for loved ones often transforms into a frenzied scramble running from store to store. I am here to offer you a guide to the best holiday shopping destinations here in Fairfield!

The number one place on my holiday shopping list is Marshalls. I find myself at Marshalls all the time and it's nearly impossible to leave without spending money. Marshalls has everything you can think of—from candy and toys to clothes and shoes. If you're not

sure what to get your loved one, I can guarantee you will find something at Marshalls. Also, as a bonus, the store is relatively cheap—perfect for any broke college student.

If you are looking for great places to find cute and

trendy clothing and accessories, I highly suggest going downtown. Apricot Lane Boutique and Snappy Gator are both perfect places to shop. Both stores offer a large variety of trendy clothing, accessories, shoes and unique gifts.

Apricot Lane Boutique has very nice jewelry that I love and recommend. Even though both stores are more on the pricey side, they guarantee good quality

Another boutique/clothing store that just opened is Here For You Clothing. The store is located on Post Road, so there is easy access downtown.

Here For You Clothing just opened in No-

vember and it is a brand dedicated to spreading awareness about mental health.

They offer comfy and trendy clothing which proceeds go to mental health organizations. This store offers many different styles of clothing with an array of colors, perfect for anyone!

One last store that I would recommend is sort of obvious, but it's the Fairfield Bookstore.

You can either stop by the one in town or the store on campus.

Personally, I will be getting "Fairfield Mom" and "Fairfield Dad" shirts for my parents this year. I recommend doing the same if you don't know what to give them.

Getting Fairfield merchandise for your loved ones is perfect because they can now represent you and your college. Who wouldn't want a Fairfield mug or a car magnet?

In the whirlwind of holiday shopping, the stress can feel quite overwhelming at times, but don't let it take over. It's important to remember that the real meaning of the holidays is spending time with those you love.

As the final weeks approach before the holiday season, let's focus on the true spirit of the holidays in finding love and gratitude.

I hope this shopping guide eases your stress, even if it's just a little bit.

"THE BALLAD OF SONGBIRDS AND SNAKES" FILM REVIEW: A HAUNTING PREQUEL TO "THE HUNGER GAMES"

By **Brooke Lathe**Executive Editor

As someone who was once obsessed with "The Hunger Games" trilogy back in 2012, I was beyond thrilled to learn about the film adaptation of "The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes". Due to this, I was proudly in attendance at the AMC theater on its opening night with a large bucket of popcorn in hand and a cheesy smile on my face.

Suzanne Collins originally published the series' prequel in 2020, sharing President Snow's origin story starting at the tenth Hunger Games. We see how the once empathic boy turns into a hateful man after he is forced to work as a mentor in the annual bloodbath in order to win a grand prize that could potentially pay for university.

In working to win the fund, he coincidentally falls in love with his tribute from District 12, Lucy Gray Baird, and attempts to do everything in his power to make her the victor.

I will admit, I was skeptical going into the theater. I had recently read the novel for my book club and wasn't in love with it. The writ-

ten story was over 500 pages and as a result, felt incredibly slow. I also had a hard time connecting to the characters when they were only in my hands.

After watching the new film, however, I was absolutely blown away—and surprisingly found myself ranking the prequel movie close to "Catching Fire" and the original "Hunger Games" story.

The performances were nothing short of fantastic. I went in with reservations about Rachel Zegler due to the recent Snow White controversies but quickly understood why she got booked for the role in this film. Tom Blyth, who played young Snow, was as equally as incredible.

I think it's safe to say that the fan favorite was Lucretius Flickerman (Jason Schwartzman), the game's host, as he served as the comedic relief in what is supposed to be an incredibly disturbing premise. Every one of his lines has the crowd chuckling amidst a highly anticipated scene.

I also just loved and appreciated the diverse casting. It seemed so refreshing to see a mix of everything, from various genders to ethnicities and even actors with differ-

ent abilities.

As for technical aspects, the soundtrack was beautiful, the cinematography was stunning and the costumes were incredibly fitting. I genuinely could not spot any red flags.

The story itself was also flawless in my eyes. The structure of the film was separated into three different blocks, each with its own exposition, climax and resolution which I believed to be the reason for its quick and seamless pacing.

By the end of the two-and-ahalf-hour-long film, I was shocked that the time seemed to fly by that fast

There were so many parallels to the original series that made it fun to pick out and connect, and although most fans have a hard time watching prequels because the main characters that we fell in love with a decade prior aren't there, I can assure everyone that you will fall just as hard for the new cast.

While I usually just wait for movies to come out on streaming to go back for a second watch, I find myself becoming more and more tempted to drive back over to the AMC for another incredible watching experience. And probably will.



"The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes", the prequel to "The Hunger Games" series, based on the novel by Suzanne Collins, hit theaters on Nov. 17, 2023.

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS YEAR'S GRAMMY NOMINEES

By **FIONA KILLEEN**Contributing Writer

On Friday, Nov. 10, musicians and producers celebrated the announcement of the 2024 Grammy nominations.

If your TikTok "For You Page" is anything like mine, you likely saw heartwarming videos of musicians such as War and Treaty or Noah Kahan reacting to the thrilling news of receiving a Grammy nomination.

The 66th Annual Grammy Award Show is scheduled to air live on Feb. 4 from Los Angeles, Calif. and will be particularly exciting since three new categories were added.

The Recording Academy voted on the inclusion of three newly developed categories during a meeting in May of 2023.

The additional categories include Best African Music Performance, Best Pop Dance Recording and Best Alternative Jazz Album.

SZA, who received nine nominations, earned the most number of nominations compared to any of the other nominees. Victoria Monét, Phoebe Bridgers and Serban Ghenea also impressively earned seven nominations each.

Not only are SZA and Phoebe Bridgers nominated separately, but SZA's song "Ghost

in the Machine" which features Bridgers was nominated for Best Pop Duo/Group Performance.

Considering the number of artists who are nominated for such a

ists who are nominated for su wide variety of categories, it will be interesting to see if the amount of nominations correlates to the number of wins.

One of the categories that I always look forward to seeing and usually garners a lot of attention is Best New Artist.

The nominees for this year are Noah Kahan, Victoria Monét, The War and Treaty, Coco Jones, Jelly Roll, Gracie Abrams, Fred Again and Ice Spice.

I am especially excited to see who wins this category because

some of my favorite artists are nominated.

I would love to see Noah Kahan receive the win as he has truly had such a monumental year with The "Stick Season" Tour and the extended "Stick Season (We'll All Be Here Forever)" al-

He also
is committed to discussing the topic of mental health
and does this in a very
raw way with his emotive song "Call Your

Mom".

He has recently released multiple incredible collaborations with artists such as Hozier and Kacey Musgraves.

While Kahan's style usually fits the indie folk genre, his country feature on Zach Bryan's "Sarah's Place" proved that his talents are not confined to just one genre.

Another category that is highly anticipated by the public is the Record of The Year category

This year's nominees include boygenius with "Not Strong Enough," Taylor Swift's "Anti-Hero," SZA with "Kill Bill," Miley Cyrus with "Flowers," Jon Batiste's "Worship," Victoria Monet with "On My Mama," Olivia Rodrigo's "Vampire" and Billie Eilish with "What Was I Made For?"

Some of the most popular and accomplished names in the music industry are nominated for this award so I predict a lot of attention will be placed on the result.

While Miley Cyrus has been nominated for Grammys in the past, winning one of the current categories she has been nominated for would earn her her first Grammy win.

It is always exciting to see the artists whom you have been listening to all year be honored for their musical contributions during The Grammys.

This year's variety of nominees brings together veteran winners as well as fresh rising artists.

The 66th Grammy award show should be a rewarding night for music artists, and an inspiring night for their fans.

Cozy Christmas Carols For The Holiday Season

By Sophia Cossitt-Levy Contributing Writer

Come holiday season, I'm not usually the type to listen

I'll listen to a few while decorating the tree and then a few more on Christmas Eve when my family comes to my

This, I'm beginning to learn, is definitely a character flaw on my part. So, I'm using this article as an excuse to expose myself to more Christmas music and put together a playlist of holiday songs.

To start, here are a few of my favorites, ones that definitely get played when I actually do listen to Christmas

- 1. "Christmas Tree Farm" by Taylor Swift I love Taylor Swift, so of course her Christmas song is my absolute
- 2. "Little Drummer Boy/Silent Night/Auld Lang Syne" by Jimi Hendrix — This is my dad's favorite holiday song, so he always infiltrates my phone to add it to the queue. I've come to enjoy it, along with his commentary on why it's the best Christmas song.
- 3. "Carol of the Bells" I tend to play the versions by Cathedral Choir and Pentatonix the most. I love the drama of Cathedral Choir's version, and Pentatonix's is so fun and upbeat.
- 4. "Last Christmas" by Taylor Swift To be honest, her whole holiday album is such an underrated serve. This is my favorite version of the song, and I'm manifesting a Taylor's Version for this album.
- 5. "All I Want for Christmas is You" by Mariah Carey I can't leave out what is possibly the most iconic Christmas song, so here it is.

Next, because my friends listen to more Christmas songs than I do, I texted them to find out some of their favorites. I made a little playlist to bake chocolate chip cookies too, and here are my top five from that playlist:

1. "Christmas Wrapping" by The Waitresses — This was recommended by two of my friends, Fiona (Fairfield '27) and Holly (a friend from home). Both of them have taste because I absolutely loved this one!

2. "Happy Xmas! (War is Over)" by John Lennon and Yoko Ono — This was recommended by my friend Emily (Fairfield '27), and my parents (who were watching me bake cookies) were so happy to hear it. I also enjoyed it, so it's definitely going to make regular rotation.

3. "Pance of the Sugar Plum Fairies" by Royal Philharmonic Orchestra – Emily recommended this song, too, and I

loved it! It's probably my favorite from this section. 4. "Wonderful Christmastime" by Paul McCartney -Fiona recommended this song, and it was also another favorite from this section.

5. "Let It Snow" by Michael Bublé — Another Emily recommendation (she really slaved with the recommendations). I've listened to this before, and I really enjoyed it, so I'll definitely listen to it more often come holiday season.

Finally, here are some songs that aren't Christmas songs, but remind me of winter and the holidays, based on vibes alone:

1. "'tis the damn season" by Taylor Swift — Honestly, Taylor's probably going to dominate this list. This song (and the entire Evermore album) reminds me of winter, specifically November, December and Janu-

2. "New Year's Pay" by Taylor Swift — I think this one is pretty self-explanatory.

3. "About You" by the 1975 — I can't really explain this one, but it also reminds me of winter, especially the end of November and mid-January.

> Maybe it's just that I had it on repeat all winter last year, but I promise it'll make sense once you listen to it.

> > 4. "Back to December (Taylor's Version)" by Taylor Swift — Don't let "The Summer I Turned Pretty" fool you. This song reminds me of the part of winter that drags on (looking at you, February and March), where you're reminiscing on better times, just like Taylor does with

> > > this song. 4. "ceilings" by Lizzy McAlpine —

Maybe it's just that TikTok trend from last year, but this feels like the first snowfall, where you're happy to spin around outside in the snowflakes, or a late-night drive on woodsy backroads with some flurries.

Hopefully, this gives you some inspiration for your holiday playlists this

If you're looking for this playlist exactly as it is, I've added it to Spotify, and it's called Christmas Music for The Mirror.

Mastering The Art Of Winter Fashion

By Hannah Collins Contributing Writer

With Thanksgiving behind us and Christmas rolling in, the holiday shopping begins! This is the chance to spruce up your winter wardrobe with holiday sales.

Dressing for this winter season can be daunting, but I assure you that there are plenty of ways to style the season.

The best way to do this is to invest in good quality staple clothing items; this makes it easy to create various outfits with the same clothing pieces!

Here are my go-to staple items that get me through the winter season:

Knee-High Heeled Boots

Having a pair of quality knee-high boots is a must for the fall/winter season.

They can be paired with almost anything and make you look sophisticated in the simplest of outfits. I tend to pair these boots with stockings and a skirt for a classy look (perfect for the holidays!).

If you want to make it more casual, you could wear them with jeans and only show-

Steve Madden is a great place to begin your boot-shopping journey!

Long-sleeved Bodysuit

of long-sleeved bodysuits will make your life so much easier. Keeping it neutral with colors such as black, white and brown, you dress this outfit up or down. A bodysuit, jeans and a leather jacket is the perfect date night outfit that can be thrown together in minutes. For a fancier look, pair a bodysuit with a skirt, tights, boots and a blazer. This is another great holiday outfit that will have compliments rolling in! Although on the pricier side, Aritzia has great quality bodysuits that will have you wanting every color.

Oversized Sweat-

A chic and cozy sweater is your next staple piece for the winter. Once again sticking to neutral colors, having the perfect sweater can go a long way. It can

While it may seem simple, having a couple be hard to find a sweater that's not itchy and bulky, so I suggest shopping in-store for this piece. Paired with leggings and UGGs is the classic cozy winter outfit, either to see friends or just to hang out in. If you want to spruce it up, pair your sweater with stockings, boots a slip dress underneath. This will leave you feeling comfy while tasteful. Free People is a great company if you want to invest in a sweater-my purchases from there last forever!

winter wardrobe is a stylish trench coat. This is the perfect winter coat to wear on the daily. For a casual look, you can wear this with a matching hoodie and sweatpants set topped off with a pair of sneakers or UGGs. To dress it up, dig out any black dress, a pair of tights and heels for the perfect chic outfit. This is perfect for a night at the ballet or a dinner

Trench

The next item

essential to your

Coat

These coats are definitely a pricey investment but will stand the test of time. Macy's and Nordstrom tend to have great coats that people love.

The Essential Hat and Scarf

The hat and scarf combo may be the most essential of all the pieces. Though you can be stylish in the winter, staying warm is a necessity. A cozy scarf and hat will go a long way when you're spending a day in NYC visiting the Christmas markets! My choice is a white or cream combo to help pair with any outfit choice. Amazon has hundreds of styles to choose from for lower prices. If you want to invest in a more expensive combo, Anthropologie is the place to go.

These five winter wardrobe essentials are timeless and guaranteed to spiff up your closet. I have splurged a little on each of these and I can say it's worth it! Having staple pieces is the best way to become a fashion connoisseur. Stay warm and get to shopping!

COFFEE BREAK



Composed by Brooke Lathe, Max Limric and Kathleen Morris



25 DAYS OF HOLDAY MOVIES

Die Hard

2 The Santa

The Santa Clause 2 The Santa Clause 3 Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

6

Love Actually 7

Frosty The Snowman

Clause

The Christmas

Chronicles

/

Klaus

10

A Nightmare Before Christmas

11

Four Christmases 12

Rise of the Guardians 13

The Year Without a Santa Claus 14

A Charlie Brown Christmas 15

Fred Claus

16

Jack Frost

17

Home Alone

18

Home Alone 2: Lost In New York 19

It's A Wonderful Life 20

Miracle of 34th Street

21

How the Grinch Stole Christmas 22

Elf

23

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation 24

The Polar Express

25

A Christmas Story

HANUKKAH COLORING PAGES!

This year, Hanukkah will be celebrated from Dec. 7 through Dec. 15.

On a dreidel, each of its four sides is inscribed a Hebrew letter nun, gimel, he, and shin—which together stand for "Nes gadol haya sham", meaning "A great miracle happened there."

On a menorah, each light symbolizes the creation in seven days, with the center light representing the Sabbath.



SPORTS

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Men's Basketball Halted By New Hampshire in Comeback Quest

By BILLY McGuireAssistant Sports Editor

The Fairfield University men's basketball team played host to the University of New Hampshire at Leo D. Mahoney Arena on Friday, Nov. 24. Despite partaking in a competitive battle, the Stags fell a tad bit short, falling to the Wildcats, 83-80.

It was a close contest throughout the course of the contest, as the two teams were separated by two points heading into the first half, 37-35. Fairfield fell further behind at the start of the second half, as they trailed by as many as 14 points at one point.

Fairfield managed to erase this deficit by taking their first lead of the game with 2:23 to go before a back-and-forth showdown over the last 153 seconds of play ended up in New Hampshire's favor. During this time frame, the two teams traded leads three times, a nailbiter that ended at the final buzzer.

Lamenting the loss, Interim Head Coach Chris Casey was impressed with his squad's resiliency after overcoming a huge deficit.

"First of all, I think if you're a college basketball fan, you loved that game today. But unfortunately, we came up on the short end of it," Casey says, according to the game's official press release. "But I love our resiliency; I love our fight. And I truly believe that when we get our whole group together and healthy, that we can be a very good basketball team."

Leading the Stags on offense on Friday was guard Jalen Leach '24, who netted 25 points. Leach's 25 points came from shooting 10-16 from the field, which included one three-pointed and shooting 4-for-5 from the free throw line. Leach was helped out by fellow guard Jasper Floyd '25, as the Tampa, Fla. native clocked out with 23 points while playing tremendous defense with six steals. Floyd's six steals were the



Jalen Leach '24 carries the ball for the Stags during their tilt against the University of New Hampshire. The Stags fell short,

most by a Stag in 11 years, when Colin Nickerson '13 committed six steals in a game at Milwaukee University on Feb. 18, 2012. The backcourt duo accounted for 48 of the unit's 80 points on the day.

Senior forward Jack Brown helped Leach and Floyd, who had a career day off the bench. The Greenville, Del. native registered seven points while securing six rebounds. Guard James Johns' Jr. '26, Forward Peyton Smith '27 and Louis Bleechmore '24, added 11, eight and six points respectively on the day. Bleechmore also put down a team-leading seven rebounds in the process.

Overall, Fairfield accounted for a 32-for-70 (45.7%) shooting

performance from the field, as well as a 4-for-20 (20%) shooting performance from three-point range, as well as a 12-for-15 (80%) performance from the free-throw line.

The Stags will enter conference regular season play with a 1-5 record. They will commence Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) play with a date against Iona College this Friday, Dec. 1 at Leo D. Mahoney Arena.

Tip-off will take place at 7 p.m. For more information about the Fairfield University men's basketball team, please visit www.fairfield-stags.com.



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Women's Volleyball Crowned MAAC Champions for the 13th Time

BY **BILLY MCGUIRE**Assistant Sports Editor

The Fairfield University women's volleyball team is going dancing this December, as they became the champions of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) for the 13th time in program history on Sunday, Nov. 19. They secured this feat by knocking off the defending champions, the Quinnipiac University Bobcats, 3-1, in front of a raucous Leo D. Mahoney Arena crowd.

This is the sixth time that the MAAC Championship game has been hosted by Fairfield and the first championship game that has been held in the history of Leo D. Mahoney Arena, which opened just a short while ago in November 2022.

In addition to their 13th conference championship, the Stags won the regular season MAAC championship for the 22nd time in 28 seasons. Furthermore, the Stags accomplished all of this with a new head coach, Nancy Somera, who was hired this season after the previous head coach, Todd Kress, resigned to take the same position at San Jose State University this past January. Somera achieved something that no MAAC coach has done in 19 years, which is leading their team to a MAAC championship title in their first season on the job. She became the first coach to win the MAAC in year one since Kris Zeitler did so in her first campaign with Iona College in 2004.

"We started this season as a

completely new staff with seven new players and seven returners. Even then, we felt like maybe we had the pieces to have a successful season, but we had to find our way as individuals and as a group," Somera says, according to the game's official press release. "We're not standing here today without all 14 players buying in completely and working their tails off from Day 1."

Leading the charge for the Stags during their championship run was none other than middle blocker Maya Walker '26, who was crowned as the championship MVP. The Stone Mountain, Ga. native put on a masterful showing, hitting .429 in the teams' wins over Rider University and Quinnipiac to lock down the MVP nod. She averaged 2.63 kills per set to go along with 11 blocks in eight frames of work.

When asked about her MVP performance, Walker did not forget to credit those around her who have been in her corner throughout the season and conference tournament.

I'm grateful to my team, without my setters I couldn't get any kills," Walker says. "And without my awesome defense to allow me to work in transition, which is my favorite time to get swings."

She also thanked the fans who showed up on that Sunday afternoon for providing a muchneeded home-court advantage, which the Stags certainly benefited from

"It was really exciting to

have such a big crowd. It's good to know the student body supports us," Walker exclaims. "This year was different because we had a new staff and a lot of new members, but we came together really well and the play of our new teammates was what ultimately led us to the win."

This was not the only milestone that Walker achieved in this tournament, as she was placed on the conference's all-tournament team with teammates Mikayla Haut '25 and Kyla Berg '24.

Haut, an outside hitter, was honored as a first-team all-MAAC pin hitter for her efforts this season. The Monroe, Mich. product generated the bulk of the offense for the herd this weekend, leading the unit with 3.63 kills per set at a .253 rate on the outside as well as an even 1.00 block per frame. During the course of the afternoon, she had 17 kills to go along with a .250 clip on the outside in the afternoon. Haut finishes the campaign with 2.85 kills per game as well as 259 kills overall.

Berg, a libero and defensive specialist leading the herd's back row, posted 4.25 digs per set as the Stags limited both of their opponents to a combined .151 hitting percentage. The only four-year senior on this year's squad, the Fishers, Ind. native is very

gracious for how this season has gone and is fired up to become a champion upon conclusion of her last game at home.

"It's exhilarating. I'm thankful for my team for getting me here, especially for my senior year," said Berg, according to the game's official press release. "It's been such an exciting year with a new building, new coaches and half of a new team. To be standing here today in Mahoney Arena as the MAAC Champions, I couldn't be prouder of what we have accomplished."

Read full article at www.fairfieldmirror.com



The Fairfield University volleyball team clinched their 13th MAAC title in program history on Sunday, Nov. 19, by defeating conference foe Quinnipiac University.

The Weekly 5x4

Five People. Four Questions. Because we have witty things to say.



What's your biggest hot take?

What class are you most looking forward to next semester?

Do you have a favorite Fairfield holiday tradition?

Best holiday movie?



Tommy Coppola Editor-in-Chief

Disney World is over rated.

My Media Strategy course. It should be fun!

I mean, decorating my apartment or house has always been great.

With time, I've really grown to appreciate "Christmas Vacation".



Brooke Lathe Executive Editor

Boxed brownies are better than homemade ones. I said it.

Intermediate screenwriting. It's posed as a writer's room and taught by Matt Ember!

I countdown the days until the yearly tree lighting! It's looking a bit scrawny this year, though ...

This question is tougher than any math test I've failed. But I can quote "Elf" from start to finish.



Max Limric Managing Editor

I have no clue. Such a broad question to ask.

Nerd alert, all of them. But especially Dr. Crandy's class.

Submitting my last assignment and going home.

"The Year Without a Santa Claus." Claymation wins.



Julian Nazario Copy, Head News Editor

I just literally said the same thing as Max. But MLB is irrelevant.

Broadcast Communication ... I've heard it is a hard class.

Does leaving town for 80-degree weather count?

I love "A Christmas Carol".



Billy McGuire Assistant Sports Editor

The Giants will win the Super Bowl within the next couple of years.

Probably my Sports Management class. Can't wait to learn about making some trades!!

I guess watching some football with the boys.

"Home Alone". And it's non-negotiable.

Opinion: Is Sports Betting Worth the Time and Money?

By Ryan Marquardt Head Sports Editor

Betting on professional sports became legalized in 2018, and since then 27 states have legalized online sports betting and 33 have legalized in-person sports betting with other states voting on it soon. Even with it being legal in just over 50% of US states, it still had a projected revenue of \$7.62 billion in 2023 with a projected growth rate of 17.33% over the next four years, projecting \$14.44 billion by 2027. Overall, I think sports betting will have a positive impact on sports and on people because it makes it more fun or more painful to watch (depending on if you hit your

As someone who does bet on sports using Fanduel, it is very fun when you win and Fanduel is always offering some sort of promotion to keep you betting. Sports betting should be legalized across the U.S. simply because you should be able to use your money how you see fit. If they can draft me into the Army at 18, why can't I place a wager on the Giants winning the Super Bowl? It's going to hit eventually.

Some of the cons with sports betting come with concerns that the companies exploit vulnerable individuals and feed off their addictions. While possibly unethical, it is not illegal as can be seen with the legality of selling cigarettes and alcohol. Fueling the concerns are the constant advertising and incentives to sign up making it easier and more enticing to begin betting. Once betting starts, it can be difficult to stop for many.

In addition to the advertising, the thousands of different bets that can be made on the game between any combination of parlays, anytime scorers, overs, unders, spreads, moneylines, alternate spreads, alternate yardage or point totals, including live bets. All of this, in turn, fuels addictions because you always feel like there's another chance to make your money back. The government has not helped those with gambling problems as well as, according to CNN, there

are no federal funds designated for problems with gambling or research for it, while there are such funds for tobacco, drug and alcohol problems.

While all of these are valid complaints about sports betting as a whole, there are some solutions to it with some government funding

leagues should not be able to be sponsored by these companies because it creates a conflict of interest. When the two partner together, it will lead to the leagues wanting the companies to succeed and wanting more people to bet because it will lead to more people watching

or Fanduel pay the league, but it is not okay when the sportsbooks pay the players. This is yet another way the NFL and its owners are managing to profit off the players without allowing the players to see that money. However, leagues such as the

MLB and NHL allow their players to

In an NFL game, if 60% or more of the money is on an underdog's money line, and the sportsbook could lose a significant amount of money if the underdog wins, there is a possibility they could have some influence on some flags thrown late in the game. In my eyes, the main concern with sportsbooks is the effect on the integrity of the game. Every time there is a blown call at the end of the game, which occurs all too often (make the refs full-time employees and hold them accountable), but, again, that's a conversation for a different day. The question will be asked if the sportsbooks needed the game to end the way it did. Lastly, the impact that the constant advertising for the sportsbook has on kids and young teens is concerning and will likely breed more addicts. Having kids from the

to how the leagues could cheat to

benefit their sponsors.

day they start watching football to when they can legally bet seeing constant sports betting ads will just breed more and more bettors, which could fuel an addiction. This would be difficult to stop though, as they will always be able to advertise, just like alcohol can advertise, but finding a way to limit the advertisements and not having them sponsor the leagues could lower exposure to the sportsbooks for children and teens.

It is pretty clear why the major leagues want to have the sportsbooks sponsor them and now support sports betting, it's for money at the end of the day all the leagues and sportsbooks want is to make money first, then grow the sport and provide a good product. This is likely why NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell stated in 2015 that the NFL has been "very open about our position that we oppose legalized sports gambling. We haven't changed our position on that, and I don't anticipate us changing that going forward at all. We think the integrity of the game is the most important thing."

> Read full article at www.fairfieldmirror.com



Common sportsbooks like Caesars, FanDuel and DraftKings make it extremely easy for sports fans to gamble.

and possible betting limits on the apps. While most agree that it should be legalized, the more interesting and impactful debate comes when discussing the regulation of betting, and if it is ethical to have leagues partnering with and being sponsored by betting companies. According to a study by Seton Hall University, over 50% of the United States believes that sports betting should be legalized.

In short, I don't think so. The

the sport. Players cannot bet or be sponsored by sportsbooks, but the league can.

NFL players are not allowed to bet on other sports when they are in their teams facility without getting six-plus week suspensions, but the multi-billion dollar machine that is the NFL is allowed to have a partnership with DraftKings, Fanduel and Caesar's. The NFL is telling the players that it is okay when DraftKings

have sponsorships with sportsbooks which may still be unethical but is more ethical than the league being sponsored by them. That just doesn't make sense to me and it seems like just another way for the massive companies to profit off people just trying to enjoy the sport. Especially in sports like the NFL, NBA and MLB where officials can very easily decide games with horrible calls, it is pretty easy to connect the dots as

Offensive Powerhouse Propels Women's Basketball to Slate of Victories

By Danny McElroy Contributing writer

Guard Janelle Brown '24 and forward Meghan Andersen '27 had 22 points apiece as the Fairfield University women's basketball team took down Central Connecticut State University 78-52 on Sunday, Nov. 26, improving their record to 4-1.

After an uncharacteristically sluggish start for an offense ranked 28th in the country in scoring going into the contest, Fairfield found its groove in the second half, exploding for 50 points on 63 percent shooting from the

The defensive effort from the Stags was outstanding regardless, as the Blue Devils managed just 15 points in the first half themselves and were limited to a 29 percent shooting percentage as a team.

As has become the norm for Fairfield, nine players saw over 10 minutes of action in the game, with 11 players total getting on the floor. The depth of the roster has been key to the team's early success, with many of the new additions, spearheaded by Andersen and fellow classmate Kaety L'Amoreaux '27, making an immediate impact.

Describing the team as "athletic and

versatile," Brown said in an interview prior to the season that the Stags are "looking to run teams out of the gym with the roster we got."

That has certainly been the case thus far. The squad has yet to score under 70 points in a game this season, their longest streak of such an offensive output since 2001-02. Andersen leads the team at 17.2 points per game, followed by Brown and L'Amoreaux, both sitting

The win over the Blue Devils comes as the Stags approach the tail end of what has



Junior forward Morgan Beach (left) is averaging 3.6 points per game and 2.4 rebounds per game.

been a successful but lengthy road trip. After trouncing Lehman College at home in historic fashion to begin the season on Nov. 6, the team has been away from Mahoney Arena and will not return until a Dec. 7 matchup with St. John's University.

If the travel has become tedious for the Stags, however, they haven't shown it on the court. Their only loss of the road trip came in a three-point nailbiter to Power Five opponent Vanderbilt University, 73-70 on Nov. 12. Otherwise, the team's average margin of victory has been just over 24 points per game, including a dominant 78-54 win over another Power Five opponent in Rutgers University on Nov. 20. That victory was Fairfield's third ever over a member of the Big Ten Conference.

The terrific start has the Stags positioned as a force to be reckoned with once conference play begins on Dec. 16.

"We have great talent on this team," Brown said. "I want us to make it all the way." With the way things are going, Brown's preseason prophecy might just become a real-

The Stags will finish their road trip against crosstown rivals Sacred Heart on Wednesday, Nov. 29, with the opening tip-off set for 7 p.m.

SPORTS 16

- Week of November 29, 2023

Matthew Sponhour Outlines Path To Becoming A Sports Influencer

By **AIDAN McGrath**Contributing Writer

Sometimes, a change of scenery can be daunting. That was certainly the case for Matthew Sponhour, who moved from South Carolina to Ohio in elementary school. And while living away from "home" can be especially difficult for a fourth grader, Sponhour credits the move as an early kickstart for what he deemed an "unlikely" career path.

With the 500-mile journey north came an increased admiration for sports. Growing up a Charlotte Hornets and Carolina Panthers fan—two teams Sponhour is passionate about to this day—he developed an affinity for the Cincinnati Reds and college football, particularly his now-beloved Ohio State Buckeyes.

About a year later, Sponhour's life changed completely. This change existed in the form of sixth grader Blaiden Kirk, whom Sponhour credits with motivating him to enter the TikTok scene. "I knew nobody," he said after moving to Ohio. "So having Blaiden definitely helped."

Just before the COVID-19 pandemic started, Sponhour began familiarizing himself with the popular social media app. "The hardest part is starting," he explained, before adding, "you'll get into slumps—whether it's you or the app—but staying the course is key. TikTok is a good place to start because it promotes your 'stuff' well. If you're making good stuff, it's easy to get

During his high school years, Sponhour spent some time in the TV journalism program, where he refined the video-making skills and content creation that were vital in his ability to build a decent following on TikTok. "The way I got better with TikTok is almost like practicing a rep in a sport," he explained. "It's not enough to just make the video. It's about asking yourself, 'How can I get better?""

Upon graduating from high school, Sponhour attended the University of Cincinnati, where he became a diehard fan of Bearcats athletics. It was also at Cincinnati, however, where his TikTok following began to explode—and his career took off.

"I actually dropped out," Sponhour explained while reflecting on his college days. "When this started going really well, it was just too much of a time commitment and I was already doing what I wanted to do. I figured I was better off spending time on what I was working on, so I did that instead," he added.

In a sports world where the so-called "hot take" has become commonplace, Sponhour believes being unbiased and comprehensive has allowed him to gain a big following on social media. "Nowadays, there are not a lot of people giving takes straight-up," he said. On the other hand, Sponhour admitted that the opinionated culture of the sports media industry is here to stay. "If you're giving interesting takes and engaging with fans then you can certainly build a good following."

Sponhour built such a large

following that opportunities began to open up outside of TikTok and X, where he has also had great success. "There's always opportunities from places you don't expect," he said. "Like 'Stay Hot' was a really crazy one where me, Blaiden and Theo [Ash] were like, 'we should do a podcast."

"The next day, Blue Wire reached out to us and asked us if we wanted to do a podcast, and it was like 'WOW." Sponhour said he hadn't told anyone about his idea to create a podcast and that the stars aligned at the right time. That the experience was shared with one of his best friends, Blaiden Kirk, and fellow TikTok sports personality Theo Ash only made it more exciting.

In April 2021, Sponhour, Kirk and Ash launched "Stay Hot: A Sports Podcast" with Blue Wire. Over two years later, Stay Hot has amassed over 181,000 followers across TikTok, X, Instagram and YouTube. It also helped that the trio developed a good social media following before the podcast's launch.

Their podcast's website states that "They're going to hit you with the hot takes you crave and that no other analyst has the foresight or courage to give. Covering the NFL, NBA, and when hot, MLB, NHL."

The unforgettable experiences that have come as a byproduct of Sponhour's hard work over the years have been the most rewarding. Alongside podcast co-hosts Kirk and Ash, Sponhour traveled to Las Vegas for the NBA Summer League in 2022. Yet again, though, it was the unlikely experience that resides in his brain to this day.

"Out of nowhere, we randomly got some invite to do a little talk show at the MLB All-Star event," he began. "We go there, and they put us up in the Santa Monica Proper, which is like this ridiculously nice hotel like four blocks off Venice Beach," he continued. "They gave us \$150 for room services each day."

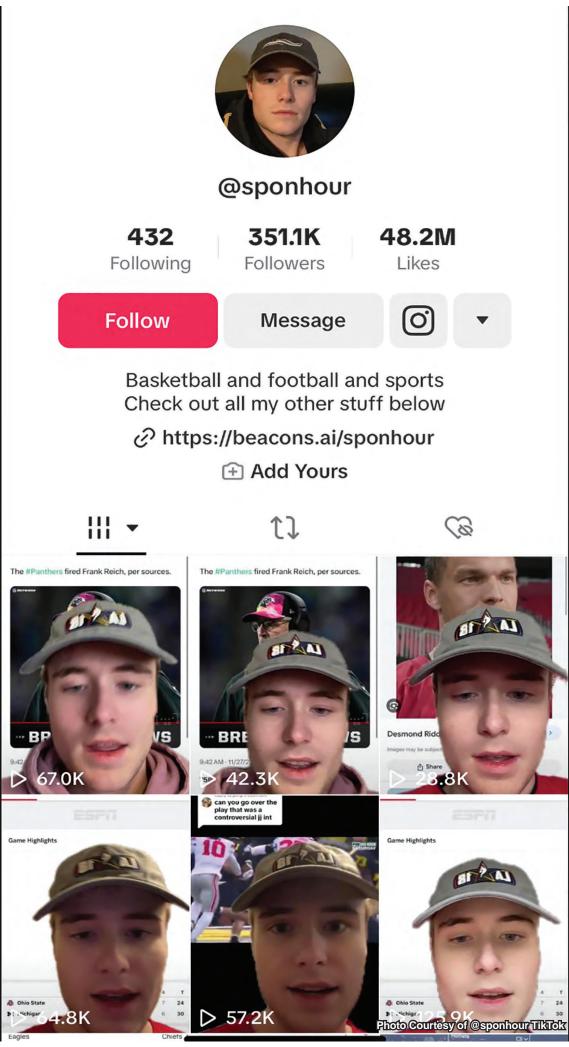
"That's the coolest thing we ever got to do," Sponhour remarked. "That was pretty sweet, and the best part is we knew absolutely nothing about baseball."

"A podcast is something that doesn't easily promote itself," Sponhour explained. "You have to supplement it somehow, whether it's through Twitter or TikTok or something else," he continued. "I probably spend a couple of hours a day working on TikToks alone, I'm always on Twitter a little bit, and then for the podcast, it's only an hour or two-time commitment each time we do it, but then you really gotta study up for those."

Like any sports fan, Sponhour's studying comes from watching games and monitoring statistics. On top of that, he says, he spends anywhere from 25 to 60 hours a week creating content and watching films.

In short, that hard work has paid off. What started as motivation from Blaiden Kirk nearly a decade ago has become a sustainable career for the 22-year-old Sponhour.

As of this writing, Sponhour has accrued more than 350,000 followers on TikTok, while his following



Matthew Sponhour has over 350,000 followers on his TikTok profile that provides content on professional sports.

on X hovers at around 100,000 and although he has seen many opportunities arise due to his popularity, he maintains that he loves what he does already and wants to expand on his work even further.

"I just want to continue to grow my audience and see what opportunities open up," Sponhour replied when asked about his plans for the future. "I think I'm working on potentially going on YouTube at some point. You know I like working on the podcast."

While Sponhour cited Tik-Tok and X as his main avenues for producing content today, he provided insight into a new project he's been working on. Having studied marketing at Cincinnati, he said, he has begun "working on marketing for a start-up sports app." And while it's still "in the very early stages," according to Sponhour, he called it "an exciting opportunity" and one that he hopes will effectively supplement his work on social media.

With precisely 48 million likes on TikTok, Sponhour has cemented himself as one of the leading sports content creators on the app. And while he has met many people along the way, Sponhour points to one of his "likes" as his most fond memory over the last several years.

Legendary Panthers linebacker Thomas Davis, a player Sponhour called his "all-time favorite," liked one of his tweets.

So, while his Panthers (and Hornets) fandom hasn't changed since his move to the Midwest, much else has. In addition to developing friendships and attending prominent sporting events, Sponhour admitted he had found "home in Cincinnati" and sees "no reason to move out of here anytime soon."

Although being a content creator has allowed Sponhour to construct his own image, he cited meeting Kirk as the most influential factor in his career path.

"If Blaiden weren't the one to do it first, then I probably would have never done it," he said. Let's just say it's a good thing he did.