

The Tamarack

Our college. Our news. Our voice.

Naugatuck Valley Community College

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Sexual Assault Awareness Month April in the Age of #metoo

Trevor Lilly

Sexual assault has been an ongoing issue since the dawn of time. It's been addressed everywhere from the Bible, to opera, to popular TV shows, but the abuse has continued to persist in the shadows—and sometimes more boldly in the light of day. Only over the last year have claims of abuse and harassment finally begun to be taken seriously on a widespread scale. Movements like Me Too and Time's Up have encouraged women—and men—who have been victimized to speak out against what has, for too long, been accepted as part of the status quo.

Some history on the Me Too Movement: the phrase was actually coined in 2006 by activist Tarana Burke. It was meant as a way for survivors of sexual assault to know they were not alone. However, the term was re-popularized over a decade later, when actress Alyssa Milano recently referenced the phrase in a tweet saying, "If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet." Since then, the phrase has shown up all over the internet as more and more individuals, men and women alike, have begun speaking out.

The movement has not just given victims a voice, but it has also proven to be effective in bringing them justice through the identification—and in some cases prosecution—of their assaulters. Since the first major accusation in 2017, big names in Hollywood and other arenas, such as Harvey Weinstein, Louis C.K., Kevin Spacey, Roy Moore, Matt Lauer, and many others, including our current president, have been



Photo courtesy of U.S. Air Force. Airman Jodi Lange, 20th Medical Support Squadron, poses for a photo depicting an abused woman silenced by her abuser as a result of sexual assault

thrust into the spotlight as their misdeeds have been exposed.

Some have even given Trump credit, claiming the movement as part of his "drain the swamp" campaign. However, considering his history of sexually harassing women and his open admission to assaulting women throughout his career (known even before the election), he should be considered one of the predators caught by the movement rather than its spokesperson. One can only hope the movement grows until even he takes responsibility for his digressions.

While many agree the movement has made a positive change, some have criticized it. In a February op-ed, Kyle Smith, a *New York Post*

writer and critic at *National Review* stated, "Companies are firing perverts and sexual harassers, which is great, but those who can't find any bad behavior to punish are casting around angrily, looking for random things to attack." While it is true false accusations make it more difficult for the Me Too Movement to be truly effective in creating needed change, claims such as these—constituting backlash against a movement intended to support victims and bring perpetrators to justice—miss the point and are in poor taste.

And Smith isn't the only detractor. Many men have started to play the role of victim, claiming they can't be left alone with a woman for fear of being accused of assault. Of course,

the irony of that statement seems lost on them. But those who share this opinion are missing, or intentionally choosing to overlook, some important points. Those listed above were not randomly accused. The accusers are not some attention-seeking women who wish to bask in the spotlight. In fact, such pervasive myths have kept women from coming forward for generations. The number of abuse reports proven false is extremely low. And victimhood has no allure.

These were legitimate cases and examples of the justice system actually doing its job. Harvey Weinstein has been accused by dozens of women in the film industry; after a month lying in court about the allegations he's admitted to them, claiming his actions were "reflective of 'the culture' when he came of age in the '60s and '70s." Both Louis C.K. and Kevin Spacey openly admitted that the allegations against them were true and issued their own apologies. Roy Moore and Matt Lauer had substantial evidence against them explicitly proving that the allegations against them were true. And, as of February 22, our commander-in-chief has been accused by no less than sixteen women of a variety of sexual improprieties. These are but a handful of examples of a problem that pervades every level of society.

During the Oscars, several women stepped forward, including actress Ashley Judd, who said of the movement, "The changes we're witnessing are being driven by the powerful sound of new voices, of different voices, of our voices joining together in a mighty chorus that is finally saying time's up." It is, indeed, truly time for change, not only in Hollywood and the world of politics, but at every level of society and for everyone who has faced sexual assault or harassment. While those few may question the motives behind this movement, willfully missing the point, the majority are in agreement that this much needed change represents real progress.

Neurodiversity From Awareness to Acceptance

Mark Kacyrat

"Different, not less" has been the mantra of Temple Grandin, the most famous successful person on the autism spectrum. According to WebMD, "Autism is a complex neurobehavioral condition that includes impairments in social interaction and developmental language and communication skills combined with rigid, repetitive behaviors." To promote knowledge of autism and those who have it, the month of April has served to promote "Autism Awareness."

Many advocates with and without autism, and caregivers of those on the spectrum, are looking to completely change the conversation. These activists argue that simply promoting awareness of autism is insufficient, and in many respects harmful. Writer and self-advocate with autism, Michelle Sutton, has a published visual diagram that shows contrasting language between awareness vs. acceptance. The language associated with mere awareness involves more negative words such as "epidemic," "tragedy," "burden," and "hopeless." This contrasts with acceptance of autism, which associates with more positive words including "accommodations," "unique," "worth," and "diversity." The logical underpinning of movement from "Autism Awareness" to "Autism Acceptance," is the concept known

as "neurodiversity."

According to Syracuse University's National Symposium on Neurodiversity, "Neurodiversity is a concept where neurological differences are to be recognized and respected as any other human variation." The symposium adds "for many autistic people, neurodiversity is viewed as a concept and social movement that advocates for viewing autism as a variation of human wiring, rather than a disease. As such, neurodiversity activists reject the idea that autism should be cured, advocating instead for celebrating autistic forms of communication and self-expression, and for promoting support systems that allow autistic people to live as autistic people."

Science writer Steve Silberman, in his book *NeuroTribes: The Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity*, claims people with autism have always been part of the human community but have been rejected to society's margins. He adds "For most of the 20th century, they were hidden behind a welter of competing labels—'schizoid personality disorder,' 'childhood schizophrenia,' ... the initial diagnosis of 'minimal brain damage,'" etc.

Silberman also states, while these terms are no longer used, society insists on framing autism as the tragic, crippling disability of the modern world. However, Silberman presents

recent cutting-edge research that pokes holes in that perception. Researchers determine that most cases of autism are not caused by newly occurring rare mutations. Rather, Autism Spectrum Disorders are rooted in "very old genes shared widely in the general population while being more concentrated in certain families than others."

Silberman adds "Whatever autism is, it is not a unique product of modern civilization. It is a strange gift from our deep past, passed down through millions of years of evolution." Likewise, advocates in support of neurodiversity and "Autism Acceptance" believe autism should be recast as a valuable part of humanity's genetic history. Advocates seek to provide proper support for people on the autism spectrum to adapt and integrate into a "neurotypical" society." Neurotypical refers to human brain wiring shared by most people, unlike those on the autism spectrum.

The CDC estimated in 2012 that prevalence of autism among children in the United States stands at 1 in 88 (up from 1 in 110). While this could seem proof of an "epidemic," then-CDC Director Thomas Frieden stressed that the increase likely came through superior detection, not a true spike in the number of autistic kids. According to Silberman, "Clinicians, teachers, and parents, have become better at recognizing autism, particularly in very



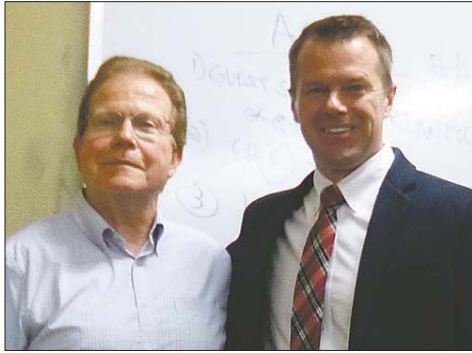
young children." The once narrower criteria for autism has also been broadened with publication of DSM-5 to the umbrella term "Autism Spectrum." The updated terminology also includes related sub-categories such as Asperger's Syndrome, and PDD-NOS. While this has helped recognize wide variances of those on the autism spectrum, neurodiversity and acceptance advocates have argued to redistribute the money given in autism research and support services.

In addition to pejorative stigmatism and stereotypes, people with autism face discrimination in housing, education, and employment. People on the autism spectrum can also more easily become victims of violence. The monetary redistribution advocates support includes spending less on research on causes and unattainable cures, and more on helping improve the actual quality of life of millions on the autism spectrum.

Silberman presents the idea that one way to understanding neurodiversity is thinking in terms of human operating systems. With autism (an atypical operating system) not all the unique features are bugs. In other words, "just because a computer is not running Windows doesn't mean that it's broken."

Official Visit

Gerald Hikel



As a longtime NVCC adjunct, I like to enliven the classroom experience with a variety of activities. Most recently, the Deputy Chief of the Hartford Police Department, Brian Foley, was the guest speaker in my "Introduction to Criminal Justice" class on Tuesday, February 27th.

An excellent speaker, Foley is very progressive. Many students were surprised by his very thoughtful views. He stated many interesting points including his family's long history with the CT police. Foley's father, grandfather, and daughter have all served or are serving as Connecticut State Troopers.

Foley also spoke about the challenges facing our state as a result of the opioid crisis. He explained that heroin overdoses have increased dramatically. Due to the high cost of opioids, many users turn to heroin which is much cheaper, but presents many risks. The Deputy reported that about one hundred people a year die due to drug use in Hartford. One solution he offered is for doctors to stop prescribing opioids for pain relief.

Foley also shared information about Hartford's "diversion" program, which has shown great results by getting people right into treatment after their arrest. Foley said the worst thing to do is to lock up a heroin user. Instead, treatment, like that provided through the diversion program, gives people a much better opportunity to receive the care they need.

It was clear from speaking with Chief Foley, and from the way that he spoke about the Hartford community, that he really cares about the city, which he's served for 24 years. My class and I extend our sincere thanks for his visit.

Providing Warmth

Tamarack Staff



Photo Courtesy of Christine Cocchiola Meyer

February efforts by members of the Human Services Club, including a successful Valentine's Day bake sale, paid off in warmth for members of the Greater Waterbury community. As the month ended, students in the club got to work. Using proceeds from the bake sale to purchase supplies, they created cozy blankets to donate to clients at the Waterbury Hospitality Center. This is just one example of NVCC students wrapping local residents in heartfelt care.

Pictured l to r: Maya Cooper, Abigail Ramirez, Emily Verdosci, Jennilee Quito, Glenn Johnson, Sha-Asia Providence, Tanya Singh



SGA PRESIDENT

Showers of April Events



In the light nearing the end of the semester, the SGA is now giving away free bunnies for Easter! ... April fools! Instead, the SGA is working hard to lead the initiative for financial success in our students. I know it's not as cute as bunnies, but way more beneficial. Come by the SGA office (S516) and find out how you can attend a four-week-long program and learn real skills about how to manage your future (FOR FREE).

What does the first of the month look like to you? Do you feel that you never seem to have enough money to manage your bills and debt? Are you coming into more debt? Well, the efforts of the Student Government are on your side. In this program, you will conquer the firsts of the month and gain money, not lose it. So, free up 90 minutes for a few Fridays: April 6th, 13th, 20th, and 27th. Grab hold of your future! You CAN live debt free!

NVCC is also hosting a blood drive on April 2nd and 3rd as well as mental health training April 6th and 13th. There will be a Campus Conversation about financial wellness in L501 at 12:45 p.m. on April 9th, as well as one on rape culture on April 11th. SGA is also hosting a Boston Red Sox bus trip Apr 15th, so stop by S514 to get your tickets! The International Festival will be held in Cafe West this year on Apr 17th. Financial Literacy workshops will be held in L501 at 12:45 p.m. on April 17th and at 4:45 p.m. on April 19th. SGA is also hosting a trip to the One World Observatory / "Do your own thing" trip to NYC April 28th. Finally, SGA meetings will be hosted in L501 at 4 p.m. every Wednesday this month.

Thank you to everyone who worked hard on completing budget packets for your clubs and attended the budget meeting. Your time and efforts in the SGA are much appreciated, and we're so looking forward to continuing to work with clubs, helping them grow to their full potential! We are always looking to hear students' voices! If there ever are any matters arising on campus or any new ideas worth implementing, please stop by and say hi to us in our office, S516, in the Prism Lounge. We love to chat and make new ideas happen! Good luck with the end of the semester.

God bless!

Emily Verdosci, SGA President



Join the Human Services Club & Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury for **Sexual Assault Awareness Day** on Monday, April 9th from 9am to 2pm



Movie viewing: The Hunting Ground ~ a documentary film about the incidence of **sexual assault on college campuses** in the United States and what its creators say is a failure of college administrations to deal with it adequately.

2 Emmy Award Nominations "terrifyingly true"
<http://thehuntinggroundfilm.com/>

1st viewing: 9:30 am

2nd viewing: 11:30 am

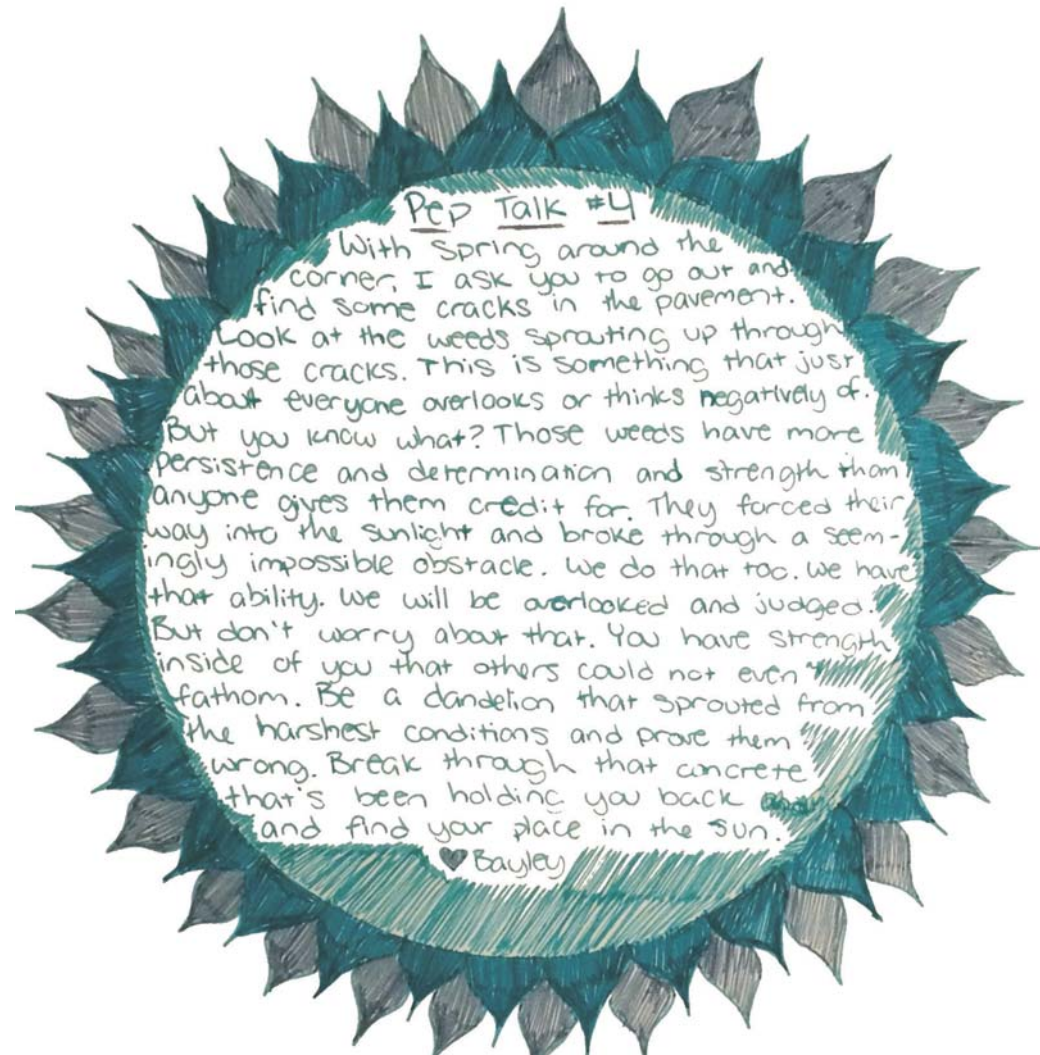
You are welcome at any time!

Stop by the **Café West** to watch the movie and have a snack. Paint your nails in honor of sexual assault awareness. Questions? Contact Christine at ccocchiola-meyer@nvcc.commnet.edu

Take the pledge!

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The Tamarack

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EDITORIAL

Just and Safe?

How many shootings have occurred in the past weeks? In the past few days? As of the writing of this editorial, there were two in one week, and one alleged threat of a shooting—from a Watertown High School student. Yet, according to very knowledgeable people, it would be disrespectful to the victims of mass shootings to attempt to address this urgent issue so soon. It is also considered disrespectful to trample on the Second Amendment in an effort to correct a major problem.

Sadly, there appears to be a major issue these "knowledgeable" people forget. What happened to the First Amendment? Did our founding fathers want to protect civilians' liberties and ensure they might never have a legal system that removed entirely the individual right to responsibly own a weapon? As it is the second major law from over 200 years ago, I will assume they did. Why, though, must our very FIRST law get abused and ignored to prop up this lesser law?

Our highest law claims we have the right to speak up on issues of major concern to us, and yet that is deemed unacceptable to a vocal few. They use our first law to defend the second law by denying everyone else the rights of the first law. If any organization refuses to acknowledge the rights of citizens, and the laws meant to give a sense of safety and prosperity to everyone, in order to disguise a growing sense of chaos, then those people should not themselves get the protections of the law.

I'm a big believer in honesty, justice, and above all, liberty to address problems affecting us all. I am also not stupid. I'm fully aware guns are merely tools, and all problems with them stem from people who choose to wield them with wrong and violent intentions. Our founding fathers' gun laws made sense given their situation. In the 18th century, it took around 20 seconds to reload after a shot. We can assume a well-trained militia man could shoot three times a minute. In the 18th century, it would've taken many men with many easily identified weapons to try to create a mass shooting scenario we see all too often today. The notion that one single person could spit out hundreds of lethal shots from one easily-concealed, easily-reloadable tool would not be taken credibly by anyone during our nation's creation.

Our laws were created in a time when modern conveniences were not even conceived of in fantastic imagination. Some laws stand the test of time, and some need to be updated as the technology the law governs changes. The first law doesn't need a makeover at this stage in our nation's existence. The human mind is the most powerful force that currently exists, and it hasn't changed much in 200+ years since the First Amendment. The law governing our minds is perfect as it is.

If now's not the time to talk about matters concerning and affecting us all, when is? We mustn't trample laws protecting the average citizen, but which law is being trampled? If the law is designed to guarantee a just and safe society, which society is just and safe?

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



Diamonds of Wisdom

As we leave behind the cold months of January, February, and March, the sun thaws the snow to reveal hidden treasure. Yes, under the blanket of white are dormant crystals of wisdom and patience that have developed in our journey through a sort of meticulous passion. These priceless red rubies and green emeralds could not have formed without the slow pressure of the need to develop critical thinking and other attributes of a scholarly mind. Where we all stand now as students and our drive to complete this 2017-2018 school year requires finesse, or better yet, buffing, when referring to those gems.

As the grind continues to polish away the imperfections, and we shine radiant hues of different colors, know it could not have been done alone. It is through our mentors that the development of each facet of the said precious stones harnesses precisely distinct lines unique to our relation with them and forms our identity.

Looking back and forth in decision-making as we all move about in life, let none of us lose Naugatuck Valley Community College from our hearts. It was this place that brought us all together. Any one of us could have chosen to go elsewhere with regards to college; however, it was this place that felt like home away from home. This is not to say that our prestigious college is immune to certain things it could do better, but that is for a different topic.

If you remember in one of the earlier issues of *The Tamarack*, during the beginning of the fall semester 2017, there was mention of making calculated mistakes to learn about decision-making and development. We naturally want to feel good, but feeling good does not necessarily mean we are doing the right thing. In real-life scenarios, a haze of perplexity sometimes makes it hard to distinguish between these two: logic and emotion.

We may have all wanted to keep pushing assignments away from actual completion because of the desire to binge another season on Netflix, yet deep down, when we apply logic, we all know it is more useful to turn our focus towards the prior. So why is there a mention of this, when it is apparent? It is because of the need to value in each of us the growth of responsibility that has been instilled in us through our own lessons.

As we creep towards the end, it may not be unreasonable to have a little skip in our steps. Thus, I leave the haters speculating with a famous saying by Friedrich Nietzsche, "And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music."

Regards,
Alam Khan
Editor-in-Chief
tamarack@nv.edu

Refugee, Survivor, Success!

Chanelie Moukuko



I am a survivor because I survived the violence of political war and six years in a refugee camp before coming to the United States where I am now a success. It was 8 a.m. on a

beautiful Sunday morning in June 2002, in my small village in Congo Brazzaville. Birds were singing, the chickens were making morning noises, and the leaves were blowing in the air. My family and I were woken by gunshot shots coming from left to right—Boom! Boom! Boom! Those noises were very frightening; after all, I was only eight years old. A bullet flew past me. While it missed me, it went straight through my uncle's chest, killing him instantly. My mother whispered that this was war.

Going through war is like facing death because you don't know if you will live or not. The soldiers were very mean and rude to the women. They raped women in front of their husbands. Husbands could not say anything; if they did, the soldiers would have killed their wives in front of them. The useless men raped young girls in front of their fathers. I remember looking at one man, sweating and very angry. The man was suffocated by the soldier, but his face told a story of a helpless father. His daughter was raped in front of him, and he could not help her.

Nobody in my family was raped, but my uncle was killed. My family and I began running until we could not run anymore. Finally, we made it to a bus stop where we rested for four hours. We saw a bus coming. Everybody was glad because it was a refugee shelter bus. The bus took us to a refugee camp in another country, Gabon. We stayed at the refugee camp for six years.

Every morning when I woke up, all I did was pray to God in hopes of making it out of the camp safely. My mother used to read the Bible to me a lot. The camp workers shared food in small portions because they wanted to feed every refugee. Although it was not easy living at the camp, my family and I still had hope about getting a visa to come to the USA. My mother and I got the visa to come to America after six years living at the camp. We were excited, but at the same time sad because my other family members did not get a visa. They had to go back to my country.

I was 17 years old when I arrived in Buffalo, NY. I must admit it was not easy for me adjusting to American culture. Learning English was the hardest part. However, I went to summer school every summer and took extra ESL classes to help improve my English. Here I am today, living the American dream. I am attending Naugatuck Valley Community College to become a registered nurse.

I have 3 kids and a wonderful husband, Robert. My mother still lives in Buffalo, NY and she works at the hospital as an LPN. I work very hard for everything I own. My husband and I recently bought our first single-family house, and I am thankful to God for that. I always send money to my family living in Africa. I know how hard it is living there. Whoever knew that a poor girl from a small village in Africa barely making it through a war would end up in Connecticut one day? That's me, that girl! I do not take things for granted. Every day when I wake up the first thing I do is give my prayers to the Lord. Chanelie, a young African woman, is living the American dream. Yes, I am a refugee, a survivor, and a success!

Introducing...

Tabitha Cruz



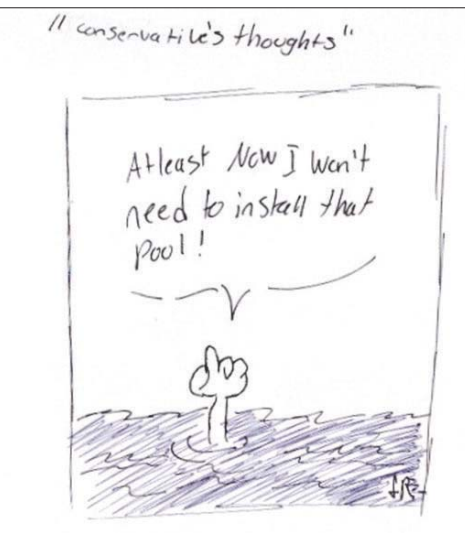
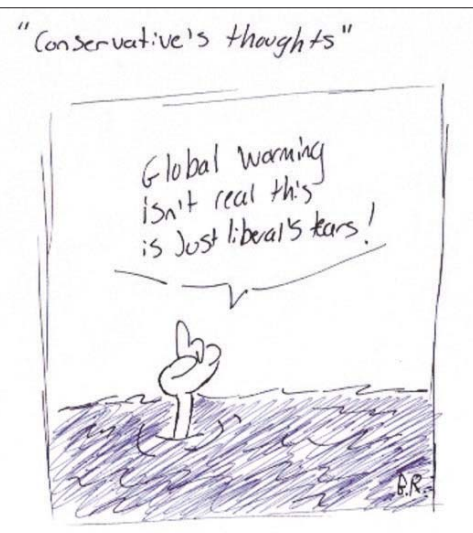
First and foremost, I would like to say it is an honor to be the new SGA Vice President. I must admit that this new position is a bit daunting, but also exciting. Having only been Vice President

for a few weeks, I know I have much to learn; thankfully, the support I've received from my peers has been astounding. Emily, Abigail, and Chris are delightful to work with and create an astonishing support system that I'm so grateful to have.

Here at NVCC, I am a music major and am not quite sure what I intend to do in the future. Music is extremely versatile and includes many careers. Who says I can't do it all? I believe NVCC is the best place to truly refine and improve my musical abilities.

NVCC is filled with wonderful opportunities to really get in touch with the school community. When I joined the SGA as a senator in fall 2017, I had this in mind. I attended and volunteered at every event simply because I felt a sense of solidarity amongst my peers while attending various events.

NVCC really does have a sense of companionship amongst its students, and being involved in the student government deepens that. Although it may seem rather odd that a music major in on student government, I feel as though I really am representing that community of students. I'm looking forward to a great semester as Vice President.



George Ramirez

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Happenings @ Other Colleges

Alyssa Katz



Centre College

In Kentucky, on April 24th, Centre College will host a conversation with Muslim author, Sophia Rose Arjana, who will discuss her latest graphic novel. The event, "Muslim Heroines in Graphic Narratives," explores the appearances and challenges of portraying Muslim superheroes in comics, graphic novels, and such. Arjana has previously published three books on Islamic topics. Muslim superheroes are somewhat rare, but their faith and costume attire only adds to their heroic, powerful, independent, and strong portrayal. One can look to Kamala Khan, a.k.a. Ms. Marvel, and the *Burka Avenger* animation series for inspiration.

<https://www.centre.edu/events/convo-muslim-heroines-in-graphic-narratives/>



Bard College

This New York school will host a conference, on the 24th, on "Tolerance in the Classroom: Microaggressions, Trigger

Warnings, and Safe Spaces". Bard calls the classroom a place for students to create a learning community where their thoughts and ideas are heard and respected. The conference is not only for students, it's for teachers as well, since the energy in the classroom is generally established by the teacher. Three speakers will attend: Ileana Jiménez, Michael Sadowski, and William Webb. Jiménez, a high school Feminism teacher, has a strong presence through social media, has written several books, and received awards for her activism. Webb has had many educational teaching roles. Sadowski is Associate Professor in Bard's MAT program. His latest book, *Safe is Not Enough*, "was cited by GLSEN founder Kevin Jennings as 'the most important book written on LGBTQ issues in education in my lifetime.'"

<http://writingandthinking.org/programs/april/>



Sarah Lawrence College

In their 15th annual Poetry Festival, Sarah Lawrence

College invites poets from across the country to share their work. Started by students, the festival is an anticipated weekend filled with craft talks, panels, book-signings, receptions, open mics, and more. Poets from last year included J. Mae Barizo, Joshua Bennett, Lucie Brock-Broido, Aracelis Girmay, Jeffrey Harrison, Rachel McKibbens, Erika Meitner, Sam Sax, Robin Beth Schaer, Brenda Shaughnessy, Ocean Vuong, Monica Youn, Matthew Zapruder, and Rachel Zucker, poets who've published multiple books as well as being honored with prestigious awards for their work. Current students and alumni are encouraged to join in.

<https://www.sarahlawrence.edu/writing-mfa/poetry-festival.html>



University of Kansas

To raise awareness of April's status as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, KU dedicates the entire month to education and support of those who have experienced sexual assault. One flyers depicts the words "Embrace your voice" with a #metoo button. Guest speakers will attend certain events, sharing stories of how they were affected by sexual assault. The college also hosts a weeklong art exhibit, titled, "What Were You Wearing?" an artistic installation by survivors sharing stories without words.

<https://sapec.ku.edu/sexual-assault-activism-month>

Winds of Change

Ariadna Lopez



I was born on a beautiful island in the Caribbean—Borinquen, otherwise known as Puerto Rico. For eighteen years, I saw the beauty of my home from sunrise to sunset. I've heard lullabies from our native frog, *el coqui*, at night, and my favorite songs from a variety of gorgeous birds every morning. I've felt the fresh air and the warm sun caressing my skin. I've tasted fruits that no longer exist. Once upon a time, everything was bright and green, but then one day in September 2017, all I saw was pure darkness.

I wasn't worried about other hurricanes. Hurricane Irma, which had hit only a week before Hurricane Maria, didn't affect most of the Puerto Rican population; it didn't impact my family or me. On September 19, my life changed when Hurricane Maria hit. We were terrified. With no hope and no way to escape, we were trapped in our house. We lost electricity and had no water. It was as if the hurricane came with anger to destroy our island.

When everything calmed down, I couldn't resist the urge to cry. I thought my life, my future, and everything I had dreamt of since I was a child was gone. Most houses were gone or destroyed; mine was one of the last standing. Sadly, most of our plants and animals were destroyed. Even after the hurricane was over,

the days after weren't the best. We were disconnected from the rest of the world for three days. My favorite mango tree was blocking our way out, and we had to survive with whatever we still had in our home. The situation each day was critical, and I couldn't start school as I had planned.

After a month of trying to contact my mother, who has lived in the United States for nine years or so, I finally got through to her. She offered me help and a new life here in Connecticut, so, I said yes and I moved to Waterbury. Two months passed, and still I couldn't study or get a job. It seemed like my luck was betraying me. Again, I was losing hope, but then I started hearing about Naugatuck Valley Community College.

At the beginning, I had no idea what I was doing. As it would be my first year as a college student, I was completely lost. I knew my English wasn't perfect and that I probably

“On September 19, my life changed when Hurricane Maria hit. We were terrified. With no hope and no way to escape, we were trapped in our house. We lost electricity and had no water. It was as if the hurricane came with anger to destroy our island.”

wouldn't have a chance here. Then I heard NVCC was opening a Winter Session in December 2017, and I decided to give up my holiday vacation to take ESL classes.

I want to be a better version of

me each day, and I'd like to inspire people to not give up. No matter the situation you're going through, there's always a way out. I'm thankful for the assistance I've gotten, and that Naugatuck Valley opened its doors to people like me to achieve our dreams and goals.

No matter how life changes, don't let your circumstances be an obstacle to becoming who you want to be as a professional. I'll continue my journey until I complete it. And I know that even from this distance, my father and the rest of my family back in Puerto Rico will be proud of my hard work and who I become. It will not be easy, but the motivation I've gotten ever since I came to this college is more than enough for me to keep on dreaming.

Honoring Adjuncts

Dancing Through Life

Dana Shavonne Rainey



Photo Courtesy of Dana Shavonne Rainey

I'm Dana Rainey, and I'm grateful to experience teaching, learning, creativity, artistry, history, culture and, spirituality through dance.

A Cincinnati, Ohio native, I studied as a young dancer at the Annaliese Von Oettingen School of Ballet, School for Creative and Performing Arts, Cincinnati Ballet School, The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Urban Bush Women's Summer Institute, University of North London, The American Dance Festival. I received my high school diploma from the North Carolina School of the Arts, Bachelor of Arts degree in Dance at Hollins University and a Master of Arts degree at Drew University.

Prior to working at NVCC, I performed with the Washington Shakespeare Company, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (*Memoria* production), Cincinnati Opera, Cincinnati Ballet, Arts in Christian Theater, Dance Ministry Institute, Act 2 Dance Company, Negro Ensemble Theater Company, Hadley Players Theater Company, Black Spectrum Theater Company, and New Seasons Dance Ministry. I worked with Heidi Latsky, Ron Brown, Donald Byrd, Bill T. Jones, George C. Wolfe amongst many others.

I performed Off Broadway, and nationally and internationally in theaters throughout the U.S. and Europe, including appearing as an original cast member of the musicals, *Harlem Song* and *Fela*. I was featured on the front cover of *The New York Times Arts and Leisure* section for my work in *Harlem Song*.

I've choreographed for the Alvin Ailey School's Junior Division, Negro Ensemble Theater Company, the Apollo Theater's Performers Project, Blue Herron Theater, Black Spectrum Theater, Mc Donald's Gospel Fest and the Off Broadway production, *One in a Million Musical*. A was Assistant Choreographer for Dance Ministry Institute's production of *Nativity Birth of a King* and for the emerging Broadway Choreographers' concert called *Dance Break*.

My company, Life Movement Ministry, is dedicated to moving from the life of God to minister reconciliation, healing and deliverance to the people, (2 Corinthians 3:4-6). I work with dance ministries and organizations throughout the U.S., Europe and Caribbean to minister, teach, counsel and choreograph. This year I'll travel to Asia to help build the dance ministry community.

In addition to teaching dance and dance history at NVCC, I'm a consultant and teacher for the Apollo Theater, training dance students throughout New York City's public and private school systems. I've also authored a book, *Letters to a Dance Minister*, a devotional that counsels dancers who are interested in theology and dance. The book can be purchased on my website, www.danarainey.com

Loved it? Hated it?

Send us your letters in response to articles, features, and profiles in *The Tamarack*. Limit them to 200 words and email them to tamarack@nv.edu with the subject line READERS RESPOND. Letters may be edited for length and grammar.

FACE IN THE CROWD Expectations and Dreams

Waleed Shaikh

Hi, my name is Waleed Shaikh! Different people call me different names, like my father calls me Waleed and my mother calls me Shaikhu. At college, everyone calls me "Valid"; my friends call me Shaikh, and, believe it or not, some people call me "Hero" (don't worry, I'll explain about this).

At age nine, I moved from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia. I spent the next nine years of my life in Saudi Arabia. After that, I moved to the United State of America, on December 31, 2016.

There has been a drastic change in me after moving to the United States. Recently, on my last visit to Saudi Arabia, I met my old English teacher, and she was surprised to find me speaking really well in English. I used to talk in English when I was in Saudi Arabia, but I was really bad at it. Most of the time, I had to finish off my conversation in the middle because I wasn't able to explain to the other person what I was trying to say. But after moving to the United States my English has really improved.

I started continuing my studies at Naugatuck Valley Community College in spring 2017. My major is Computer Information Systems. I'm not personally interested in my major, but I have to do it because my father wants me to do it. My personal interest is in acting. Only some people close to me know about my interest, and that is why they sometimes call me "Hero".



Photo Courtesy of Waleed Shaikh

My father hasn't forced me to study CIS, but an expectation from his side to see me as a software engineer in the future is the reason I'm studying Computer Information Systems. I got interested in acting just about two years ago, but my father had this expectation way before I got this interest. Because of this, I think my father's expectations are more important to me than my interests. That's why I have planned to get my bachelor's degree in Computer Information Systems.

Although I'm planning to get my bachelor's in CIS, I've also planned to keep up with my interest in acting. That's why I'm soon planning to shoot a film featuring me in a story I wrote. I'm also planning to start a YouTube channel soon. If you see me in any video on YouTube, or any other platform, please do leave a comment. And if you see me anywhere on campus, or anywhere else, please do say hi! I would love to talk to you.



CAPSS CORNER

Engagement Empowers

Learn. Engage. Advance. As a member of NASPA, the professional organization for student affairs professionals, I wasn't surprised to find these three words posted as a tag line on their website. But, when thinking more deeply about these words, their meaning and importance, I realized that while they are relevant to us as professionals, they actually demonstrate the student experience even more effectively.

If a student fully embraces their learning, actively engaging both within and outside of the classroom, they will most certainly advance. This progression and movement forward isn't simply limited to expanding one's mind by learning new material, but also results in personal growth and development. I'm a true believer in the power of education, how it changes our minds, our viewpoints, and our connection to the world.

Two of my favorite quotes support the premise that learning changes us as individuals. Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. said, "A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions," and Dr. James Corner stated, "No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship." Both quotes resonate with the concepts Learn, Engage, and Advance.

They reinforce the importance of engagement and personal connection to move us forward. They demonstrate that when students learn deeply, not just memorizing facts and figures, but truly striving for and grasping new knowledge, they are changed at their core. This change is not easily reversed because the new knowledge allows them to see the world differently, through a new lens.

Through this new lens our world view is changed; we also develop the ability to view differently the worlds of those around us. By engaging with others and trying to learn a new perspective on a topic, be it an academic, personal, or political issue, we begin the process of moving forward to positive change.

As college students, you are at a point where you can use your new knowledge and personal growth to help create change in your personal lives, in the workplace, and in your local communities. These small changes will radiate outward, making a positive impact on the larger world community. Now that's an empowering thought!

Remember, though, it all begins with true engagement, so I challenge you to consider how deeply you're learning and whether you can engage more fully. The potential benefits could positively change not just your life, but the lives of those around you. Because, when you truly advance, we all do.

Bonnie Goulet

SpaceX Oddity

Trevor Lilly

On February 6, SpaceX, a private American aerospace manufacturer and space transport services company, performed a successful test launch of their Falcon Heavy rocket. This is the largest rocket ever launched into space, with a lifting capacity of 141,000 lbs, twice that of the previous largest, the Delta IV Heavy. To put this into perspective, SpaceX added on their website that this is "a mass greater than a 737 jetliner loaded with passengers, crew, luggage and fuel."

The test launch was one of several performed by the company in the past few years and scheduled in the years to come. Their ultimate goal is to take over the space exploration industry and spearhead efforts to become a multi-planetary species, colonizing the moon and Mars.

While the Falcon Heavy rocket was a huge milestone in reaching their ultimate goal, they are still striving to do more. The final rocket, aptly code-named "BFR" (Big F**king Rocket), is currently in production and boasts an even greater holding capacity.

To make this possible, SpaceX has revolutionized how we approach space travel, making it much more affordable. One major way they have achieved this is by developing the first reusable rocket. This way, the same rocket can be used for multiple missions, instead of having to discard each one after each trip and build a new one.

In order to fund the BFR, they are planning new ways to bring the cost down even further. "Essentially, we want to make our current vehicles redundant," said Elon Musk, SpaceX's founder and CEO of Tesla, Inc. "We want to have one system, one booster and ship, which replaces Falcon 9, Falcon Heavy, and Dragon. So if we can do that, then all the resources that are used for Falcon 9, Heavy, and Dragon can be applied to this system."

The BFR's primary function will be to transport people outside Earth's orbit in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible, making space travel more accessible to the masses. But its potential functions can range far beyond that. Musk claims that a version of the BFR could potentially be used to launch multiple satellites into Earth's orbit at a time. It could even be used to transport people and cargo anywhere around the world within an hour, at roughly the same cost as a standard plane ticket.

Musk claims that the first mission to bring humans to Mars is scheduled for 2024, using the completed BFR, which will feature 40 cabins, each with the capability of carrying 3 people. After that, he hopes to have regular missions to and from Mars every 26 months or so, when Earth and Mars are aligned.

for a second, though, since it led me to meeting so many of you. But I am happy to say that I am now an NVCC alumna, as I graduated a couple months ago with two associate degrees and one certificate. Before transferring to University of New Haven this coming fall, I've decided to take a much-needed break.

Usually, this would be where I talk about what I have accomplished since graduating, but I'll be honest, there's not much. I haven't won any awards, and I haven't been offered some important internship. Instead, I'm taking this time to improve myself and my well-being.

I realized that I was so focused on not letting other people down that I didn't think of how all that stress was impacting me. Before graduating, everything that I once loved doing turned into work. I painted for class; I drew for class; I read books for class. Everything was for a grade.

But in these past couple of months, I've rediscovered the love and passion that I had temporarily lost. I get to read a book without having to analyze plot themes for a later essay. I can paint without rushing and worrying about a deadline. I can enjoy things without a grade looming over my head.

I have learned that sometimes in life, we need to stop for a moment, breathe, and reflect. And honestly, I can't think of a better accomplishment.

Center For Teaching The Function of Education

Elma Solomon

A longtime CFT committee member, Elma Solomon has offered several workshops for the group. She is a professor of Accounting and also serves as co-advisor to NVCC's Black Student Union.

April 4th marks 50 years since the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Though most of us did not grow up during King's active years, all of us can say that we grew up on his legacy. Dr. King was renowned for his speeches or sermons (since he was a pastor), and part of his legacy is those speeches. Given that there are lots of memorable messages in these sermons, I searched for one that would speak to us at NVCC. So here goes:

"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education"—King at Syracuse University, 1965.

King believed that this type of education would help rid the nation of "the notion that the color of a man's skin determines the content of his character." He continued "that it would do more to speed up the day when the fears of insecurity, the doubts clouding our future will be transformed into radiant confidence, into glowing excitement to reach creative goals and into an abiding moral balance where injustice will run down like water and where the brotherhood of man will be undergirded by a secure and expanding prosperity for all."

He went on to tell the students that "the emphasis in education should be on intensive and quality vocational, professional, and academic training."

As we approach the close of the 2017-2018 academic year, I reflect on the many opportunities we have had at NVCC to immerse ourselves in that "true education" in order to become an "aware and aroused nation" recognizing as

King did that "change is not self-operating ... and that raising the level at all times is thus a primary task." I think of the yearlong Social Justice Series hosted by Professors Taylor and McGary, of the Campus Conversations hosted by the Student Government Association, the discussion on culture and acceptance hosted by the HSU, and the panel discussion and lecture series hosted by the BSU. The CFT also hosted a number of professional opportunities where faculty and staff engaged in discussion centered not only on pedagogy, but also on the understanding of the whole student.

The academy should always be a safe space for these types of discourse and provide the opportunity to open our minds and challenge ourselves to objectively engage in civil discussions. When King talked about education including academic training, I believe he was referring to that which is not just content to fulfill requirements for the students' major, but the opportunity to be exposed to critical discussion on current issues. Education does not only happen in the classroom; it is the development of an ability to think critically of the issues affecting society. It is heartening to know we are part of an institution where students, faculty, and staff are exposed to King's ideals.

Most students are normally asked "What is your major?" meaning what do you plan to work at when you graduate? This sounds like education is to prepare them to find employment. Very few students start college thinking I am here to learn to think intensively and to think critically. It is the responsibility of the institution to provide these opportunities, but it is also incumbent upon each of us—student, faculty, and staff—to avail ourselves of these opportunities, this King would argue, is a mandate of educators and those being educated.

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alumni SHOWCASE



Bayley Shean

Hi everyone! Some of you may remember me, since I was involved in quite a few things last semester. I went by many titles, including: Art Club Co-President, SGA Representative, staff writer for *The Tamarack*, PTK member, art show curator, et cetera et cetera. I overextended myself just a little bit and I was always doing some thing or another. If extracurriculars raised GPAs, I would have been valedictorian.

I don't regret my campus involvement

Thirty Days of Verse

Tamarack Staff

Once again, to mark April's status as National Poetry Month, *The Tamarack* has gathered the work of talented students, both staff writers and others, to share. NVCC is a community rich in experience, and here, some of our members share unique moments in verse.

Trevor Lilly

Soul Mates

Although I haven't met you yet,
I know that I can get lost in your eyes.
Like they're a maze with no end you built
for me yourself
Because the last thing you want to do is let
me go.
And I know that I can get captivated by
your smile.
And every time I see you smile,
I'll try everything in my power to make it
bloom into a laugh,
Because I've been told that laughter is the
best medicine,
And I only want the best for you.
And who knows, maybe our paths have
crossed
As we've wandered down this winding
road through life.
Maybe we've even bumped into each other
once or twice,
But we were so scared of losing our balance
that we kept our eyes at our feet.
I wonder how it all would have changed,
If I had just looked up.

Bayley Shean

Looking Back at the Photograph

Looking back at the photograph
Of the sunset on the beach
The paralyzing beauty
Of how far the light can reach.

Looking back at the photograph
Eyes in awe of the sun
Nearby is the warmth of a fire
And children having fun.

Looking back at the photograph...

Jessica Ney

An Honest Obituary

He smoked menthol cigarettes
and craved attention
from his father.
He got a haircut last week
getting ready for college.
A new start.

He liked fast cars, and science
and the way his girl smiled
when he sang to her.
He drank a little too much,
trying to keep up.

Sometimes it's just
easier to be high.
But he had plans,
finish school,
marry his girl
and have a great life.
Love his kids
better than his dad

Like the man across the street,
who was always laughing,
running, playing with his kids.

His mother loved him fiercely
She'll blame the father
to keep the guilt
Out of her way

He probably felt the impact,
although the paper said
he died instantly.
I wonder if he saw it coming.

Death is funny that way,
leaving us with questions
but never an answer.
It seems we never can do enough.
Especially once we're gone.

Bayley Shean

Mosaic

There are times when you will break
Your world will fall apart
You will feel like the universe is against you
But darling this is just the start

Yes you will break but you will also rise
Rise like a phoenix from the ashes
You will piece together all that is broken
But sometimes a piece no longer matches

You will not be the same as before
And incredibly far from basic

Because you will no longer be broken
Instead, you will become a mosaic.

George Ramirez

Sewer Rats

Time
lapse

Bar
closed, must've gone and dipped

Surviving
in the back alleys

Shitting
with the rats and can't even piss

Ironically,
diseased and garnished with

Struggling
to make it out the bottomless pit

Kicked
out at 16, already throwing in the towel,
calling the quits

Abandoned
by the stork, shit, must've dropped you off
quick

Nothing
was fucking awesome of the circumstances

Sadly
nothing is

Guess
life surely is for the winners

And
losers dine on the scraps with
the starving crying kids

Raised
with bullet proof mentalities

No
intention of losing none of this shit

Launched
up by family members

Knowing
full well, you're a hit or miss.

The Financial Ruin of *Blade Runner 2049*

Joe Steele



Blade Runner 2049 is an instant classic, and in my opinion one of the most underappreciated films of last year. In an age where the movie box office has been oversaturated or even dominated by

countless sequels and spinoffs, seeking to capitalize on fan nostalgia for beloved franchises, 1982's *Blade Runner* was a film most fans did not expect to see revisited. When news first surfaced that a sequel was being developed, most fans thought its dark and rainy cyberpunk world was better left untouched. Many feared the film's mature tone, heavy artistic style, and complex human themes would be diluted in favor of more palatable, light-hearted sci-fi action akin to say... the Star Wars franchise. They did not expect it to do the original justice, let alone expand its themes to create a story arguably better than its predecessor.

Despite this, *Blade Runner 2049* got dazzling reviews from critics and fans alike, with little to no competition for its October release. It had an all-star cast, including the likes of Ryan Gosling as the lead, Robin Wright of *House of Cards* fame, an especially eerie Jared Leto, and Harrison Ford returning to reprise his iconic role as Rick Deckard. All of them delivered stellar, memorable performances. By all means, it was set

**"...it's a visually gorgeous movie...
providing a deeply visceral
sensory experience all around"**

to be a smash hit at the box office. Instead, it barely topped its opening weekend only to be swiftly toppled by the likes of *Happy Death Day*, *Geostorm*, and perhaps most terrifyingly, Tyler Perry's *Boo 2! A Madea Halloween*.

Now, considering the wide quality margin between those films and *2049*, that's pretty damn spooky, to say the least. So why did such a miraculous critical gem fall so quickly under the public radar? Well, some of it likely has to do with the fact that *Blade Runner* has never done big in the box office. Those who remember may recall the original didn't gross very much either.

The original was perhaps only fully appreciated years later, gaining cult film status following the release of numerous different cuts, each significantly altering the viewing experience. In fact, most would argue it's impossible to fully understand the plot without a particular origami scene from the Final Cut. The theatrically released version is generally regarded as confusing, lacking in key plot points, and altogether wholly inferior to other cuts of the film. So it likely didn't help *2049* that most audiences who saw the original in theaters weren't able to fully understand or appreciate it.

Luckily, however, there are HD versions of the Final Cut online today, and although it isn't entirely necessary, I highly recommend watching it first if you intend to view *2049* as it definitely adds to the overall experience. While *Blade Runner 2049*'s 2 hour 44 minute runtime may look daunting (I kind of wish it was 2 hours and 49 minutes to be honest), I highly recommend seeing it if you're a fan of *Black Mirror* or any deep, dark, complex sci-fi with an acute philosophical angle.

For one, it's a visually gorgeous movie and its two Oscars, for effects and production design, were well-earned, providing a deeply visceral sensory experience all around. The characters are intriguing, the world is interesting, and the plot is engrossing all the way through. For those who choose to watch, *Blade Runner 2049* is sure to be an eye-opening experience—and that's a pun—you'll just have to see it to understand.

Second Rim

Mitchell W. Maknis



In July 2013, director Guillermo Del Toro brought to life one of the most thrilling and visually stunning cinematic experiences of the year: *Pacific Rim*, an action science fiction story detailing the struggle for humanity's survival against the antagonistic forces of the

Kaiju. These huge creatures from the depths of the Pacific Ocean, could only be combated by Jaegers, giant mechanical humanoids, engineered to be piloted by two humans. This modern-day action film was a loving ode to classic Japanese monster films and Del Toro's distinct vision and superb storytelling skills turned it into an action epic.

Five years later, on March 23, 2018, its sequel, *Pacific Rim Uprising*, releases. The second installment in this franchise has gone through some notable changes. No longer being helmed by Guillermo Del Toro, it instead will be the directorial debut of Steven S. DeKnight. Not only does the film have a new director, but it also has a new cast, with the exception of Charlie Day and Burn Gorman who reprise their roles. One can only wonder about these creative changes and if this film can recapture the essence of its predecessor that made audiences' hearts pound. Let's look at the aspects that made the first movie great.

The ensemble cast is momentous and the leads respectively portrayed by Idris Elba, Charlie Hunnam, and Rinko Kikuchi enjoyed remarkable chemistry. Whether they were in mechanized robots fighting Kaiju, or engaged in domestic banter, there was never a dull moment. In my opinion, the actor who really shone was Charlie Day (*It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*). His

show-stopping, comically clever performance never failed to entertain, even during times that didn't feature a giant monster brawl. When sharing the screen, Day and notable Del Toro collaborator, Ron Perlman (*Hellboy*), stole the show with witty dialogue and charismatic nuance.

The original movie boasts epic confrontations between the Jaegers and the Kaiju with distinct imagery aesthetics that set it apart from dry and repetitive action flicks, and visuals that send

quivers and chills up the spine. Guillermo Del Toro succeeded in providing filmgoers a superb action film that, even upon multiple viewings, never loses its charm. *Pacific Rim* was the blockbuster that summer 2013 unquestionably needed. Now, with a new team of filmmakers behind the sequel, it makes one wonder if they can please longtime fans with drastic changes all around, as well as adding a unique niche to make *Pacific Rim Uprising* stand out from its predecessor.



Alpha Beta Gamma: Tau Chapter
(Business Honors Society)
Marketing Crossword Puzzle

Across

1. A particular sector of a population
4. A research discipline of identifying business needs and determining solutions to business problems
5. An audio or visual form of marketing communication made to promote or sell a product
8. The power or opportunity to act or take charge before others do
9. The systematic computational analysis of data or statistics
10. The latest time or date by which something should be completed

Down

2. When someone famous uses their own image to help promote a particular product
3. The action or process of supplying goods to stores and other businesses that sell to consumers
6. A specific, defined series of activities used in marketing a new or changed product or service
7. A reduction in price

For information on joining ABG please contact: Robyn-Jay Bage, M.P.A. Professor of Management rbage@nv.edu
Answer Key on pg 10



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What a Dream!

Christopher Gordon

At the beginning of March, the Stage Society took on the worthy goal of introducing the NVCC community to Shakespeare. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a charming tale full of love, mischief, and magic, came to life in the hands of our wonderful students and theater faculty. Each night of the production saw most every seat of the Playbox Theater filled, as we collectively dreamed together.

While I try to remain somewhat objective with my opinions (never mind the oxymoron, just go with me), I do plan on focusing on one of the lovers, Helena, and her current host, Samantha Mankowski. Taking on a Shakespearean character as charmingly chaotic as the lovelorn Athenian is no mean feat, yet Sam played her part masterfully. This comes as no surprise, at least to this reporter who was once paired with this young actress for our final scene performance in Acting I. Even for a five-minute skit, Sam showed her dedication to the part and immersed herself in her character—as a man who talked about his wife, for those interested.

As this exercise was for a class in acting, the story represents the entire Theater Department here at NVCC. Dedication is the first rule in any task; if we aren't dedicated to what we want, we generally won't achieve our goal. The students of NVCC's Stage Society proved their dedication by bringing Shakespeare to life so well. Each member of the cast brought energy and enthusiasm to the playing of every role, whether large or small. Lovers, nobles, mechanicals, and fairies, every part was played with great skill and humor, and the technical aspects—music, sound, sets, costumes, and lighting—were also excellent.

The quality of the production is also representative of the stage crew and faculty involved. Details are important, so any overlooked point is more than just an annoyance for the audience; it is potentially show-stopping. By teaching students to put so much work into even a five-minute scene, the likelihood of missing small but relevant details shrinks exponentially. This evening of theater, comprised of a series of five-minute gems, was truly a triumph.

For a lover of English literature and a student of psychology, nothing gives me more joy than the immortal words of the Bard of Avon. It is always great for old lovers of Shakespeare, like myself, to be surrounded by new lovers—introduced to classical comedy in such grand fashion.

Computer Hardware and the Consumer

Bradley Edwards

Computer hardware is something a general consumer might not often think about, if they're not looking for gaming rigs or school laptops. However, like many aspects of life, there's merit in thinking about it. This matters particularly when one doesn't build their own PC, because a large majority of commercial, economy-grade computers are inefficiently optimized, and typically come with a tradeoff for their price.

This discussion revolves around some simple terms: RAM (Random Access Memory), hard drive memory, cores, and processor speed. There's also graphics cards, but if one doesn't plan on gaming, that's not quite as important—unless, of course, one wanted to do something video- or film-related. Most graphics cards will do for basic economy computers. On that note, when it comes to a lot of common retail computers, they either prioritize processing speed and graphics, hard drive memory, or RAM.

Over four gigabytes of RAM is important to run most modern computers and the applications on them to a comfortable degree. Getting a good deal on the RAM typically skimps the hard drive memory on most computers, leaving one with five hundred gigabytes instead of a terabyte, or even less. The cores of a computer also reflect the computer's processing speed and power.

Dual-core computers aren't the worst product of this era, but they're below the consumer standard, and one generally won't be playing the latest games on them. That said, they're an affordable option. Quad-core computers are the latest commercial standard and are genuinely reliable for both gaming and constant use; then it's down to making sure one gets at least four gigabytes of RAM, as much space in hard drive memory as needed, and a decent processing speed.

An advisable processing speed is generally 3.2 gigahertz. Depending on one's budget, a good build can range from five hundred to a thousand bucks, also depending on where one shops. When it comes to computers, it's a necessity to compare prices, consider a budget, and reflect upon what one really wants in their computing experience.

FACE IN THE CROWD Never Give Up

Mark Kacyrat

Born in Connecticut but raised in upstate New York, I'm attending my sixth part-time semester at NVCC. My major is Digital Arts Technology, with a concentration in Graphics/Animation. Also a *Tamarack* staff writer, I'm current president of the Digital Arts Technology Club. The most important thing about me, is how I am different from most people. This difference is invisible, unseen, and can impact individuals from any race and socio-economic background. It's a neuro-developmental condition known today as Autism Spectrum Disorder.

As a very small child, I was known as outgoing and friendly. It seemed I was developing like any other little boy—one lucky to live in a household with above average income, and other privileges of being white and male. It wasn't until well after I was a toddler that something started to sink in with my parents: something was different about me compared to my peers; however, they couldn't put a finger on what it was.

My differences became more apparent as I inched closer to my teens. In addition to being sensitive, I was hyperactive and showed signs of social awkwardness. Even more glaring were difficulties concentrating and focusing on certain tasks, clear signs of Attention Deficit Disorder. There was no more obvious place for these characteristics to manifest than school.

By the time I started sixth grade, it was more apparent than ever something was "wrong." I was taken to a psychiatrist for evaluation. Not only did I have ADHD, but also what is known today as Autism Spectrum Disorder. While he knew I had it, he didn't have the means to formally test me. I had to wait nearly two years to get tested and documented. The twists and turns on this emotional roller coaster from diagnosis, documentation and beyond, was probably more devastating for my parents than for me. My mom was in tears through the entire ride. My father was in denial. It was very difficult, at first, for him to accept his son was autistic.

Acceptance of the neurological differences between autistic vs. "neurotypical" brains is very important for all parts of society. For me, it's always been more difficult to forge lasting friendships and relationships.



Photo Courtesy of Mark Kacyrat

Autism, first and foremost, involves impairments in social communication and interaction. I don't as easily interpret social cues, facial expressions, and body language as neurotypical individuals. Sometimes I may unintentionally say or do things that become humiliating social gaffes. People with autism can have varying common strengths in visual, auditory, lingual, and/or mathematical skills. We're known for rigid thought patterns, which are sometimes difficult to break. As it's a spectrum, any individual with autism can vary in the characteristics described. In other words, one person you've met on the autism spectrum is one person on the spectrum.

Since revelation of my condition, my parents and I fought and advocated endlessly for acceptance of me in the education system. We've also worked hard climbing up, after falling off, the "services cliff." In other words, we've fought tirelessly to develop the network of support and services, in the aftermath of losing much of it after my high school graduation. The goal is simple: to become a productive member of society and be able to live a decent life. My difficulties stem from the reality that I must adapt to a society that isn't built for brains like mine.

As of today, everyone says I've come a long way in a short time since starting at NVCC. My confidence and self-esteem are on the rise, and I feel I'm finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. What I am most thankful for, are the support I've received from caring faculty, and an understanding student body. I feel I'm finally gaining the social and professional skills I've always needed. Besides my own volition, my successes are in being accepted as merely different, not less than. If you see me around NVCC don't hesitate to say hi! I tend to be deep in thought while walking about the campus, but I love making new friends!



Photo Courtesy of Wolcott Dog Pound FB Page

Shelter of the Month

Wolcott Dog Pound

Bethany Dvilinskas

April's Shelter of the Month is the Wolcott Dog Pound, located in Wolcott, CT. Wolcott Dog Pound has recently been trying to catch people who dump their dogs in a certain section of town. Not only is the abandonment of pets

illegal and irresponsible, it leaves animals vulnerable to many dangers.

Within the last couple of months, the town has been dealing with an increased presence of coyotes. As a result, dogs have

gone missing. When a small dog was found dead due to a coyote attack, someone shot and killed two coyotes, and dumped them on the walking trail that goes around Scoville Dam.

Wolcott has a dog park next to Peterson Park to bring dogs of all sizes and breeds to run freely and play together.

Officials at the Wolcott Dog Pound have been warning pet owners to keep a close eye on their animals when using the dog park, especially with the elevated danger from coyotes.

The Wolcott Pound is a full-service facility, providing shelter to dogs and cats, and aiding animals in distress, such as a pit bull that

was recently rescued from a storm drain. For information on dogs or cats available for adoption, check their Wolcott Dog Pound Facebook page, updated on a daily basis. To inquire about dogs or cats available for adoption, you can visit WDP at 775 Bound Line Rd in Wolcott or call them at 203-879-7620.

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Wednesday, May 9, 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Wednesday, May 23, 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm



Veteran's Voice Brand New World

Shayne Pratte



Hello again, everyone! In this month's column, I'd like to discuss some of the challenges and benefits that come with leaving the military for college life. As always, this column is simply

personal experience. I never speak for any other member of the armed forces; I can only offer up what I know to be true for me. Anyway, one of the biggest challenges I found when transferring out of the military for civilian life was not only the huge amount of paperwork and mental health checks, but the culture shock. Going from a far more rigid environment, where you must be ready for anything on a moment's notice, to the far more relaxed nature of civilian life, was an interesting transition.

In military life, you stay busy, and most days are planned out for you. If it's not the mission, which it almost always is, there's some sort of mandatory fun day or an event you're "voluntold" to do. Needless to say, active members are often busy with much more than what many assume. Moving from your day-to-day being plotted out to nearly no influence can be a bit more unsettling than one might think. Personally, I remember being very excited for a short period, until the "What do I do with all this free time?" realization hit.

Have you ever taken a long vacation, or been home for a medical reason, for a long period of time? In my experience, I always hit a point, usually a week or two in, where I say to myself, "Man, I'm bored what's next?" If you've ever been there, then you know what I'm talking about. Leaving the military is a lot like that. So what did I do to fill my time? I decided to get my degree, as many veterans do.

This is where the benefits of military service come into play. The most important, which helped me immensely, was discipline. Lack of discipline is the one biggest factors holding back many young college students today. College offers a level of freedom most students right out of high school aren't used to experiencing.

There are no truancy issues; no one's going to call your parents and tell them you're skipping class. This can make cutting class and procrastinating very alluring, but these choices will almost certainly have an effect on one's grades. Professors will do their best to help students keep up, and in my experience, many will go above and beyond what should be required of them at this level of education to make sure students succeed.

Military life prepares most veterans for the transition to college life by helping them understand what is expected of them and giving them experience rising to the occasion no matter the challenge. That's the biggest thing to which I can attribute my success here at NVCC.

I owe the military a great debt for that. Not only have they made sure I can afford to be part of this great school without having to worry financially, but they've set me up to do my very best. This is not meant to sound like some sort of recruitment ad. It's simply a small look at what it's like for this vet to go from my former world to the one we now share.

Food For Thought

Bayley Shean

In a society that constantly comes out with new fad diets, it's hard to be someone who actually has dietary restrictions. I'm gluten free, and no, it's not by choice. I am going to give you a glimpse of what my life with Celiac Disease is like, especially as a college student. Celiac Disease is an autoimmune disorder that makes my body think gluten is a virus. The only treatment is a gluten-free diet, which means no wheat, rye, or barley.

But imagine the response I get as a 22-year-old woman asking a waiter if they have a gluten-free menu; or when I send something back because I found an onion ring in my fries. Just one crumb can affect me for months on end. I'm not doing this to be difficult! And the same goes



Feed by M.T. Anderson

Feed is the first book in the Newsflesh trilogy, following sibling bloggers Shaun and Georgia Mason. Set in the years 2039-2040, it takes place a quarter of a century after the zombie apocalypse, known as the Rising. Zombies are created when two experimental drug cures, one for cancer and one for the common cold, meet in a non-laboratory setting. They worked; no one gets colds or cancer anymore. In exchange, the world got zombies.

The zombie virus, known as Kellis-Amberlee, impacts way more of life than just reanimating the dead. There are certain conditions that stem from an immune response to the active virus before someone can amplify (a.k.a. become a zombie). Some people have live pockets of the virus stored in their bodies, but aren't actually "infected". The real kicker is that any mammal over 40 pounds can become a zombie.

Clearly, much in American life has changed, but one thing remains fairly steadfast: politics. Journalism has shifted into a blogging format, making it easier for people to stay safe in their homes. There are different kinds of bloggers. Georgia is a Newsie, someone who wholeheartedly fights for truth and facts above all else. She has Retinal KA, meaning the live virus is stored in her eyes. She has a hard time in direct sunlight because her pupils don't contract. Shaun is an Irwin; he goes outside and films his encounters with zombies for fun. He likes to live dangerously. His only medical condition is being an idiot. They also have a friend, Georgette "Buffy" Meissonier, who is their tech guru and a Fictional. She posts poetry and stories for her readers, so they can be distracted from the harsh realities of the world.

The story begins when the trio are offered to be the official bloggers for the presidential candidate, Senator Peter Ryman, registered Republican. This immediately gives them more journalistic notoriety, jumping up from their small "beta" site to a much more well-known position. Anything they write is now tagged to the campaign.

However, things start happening on the campaign trail. Zombie outbreaks happen more frequently than they should. Senator Ryman's ranch suffers from an outbreak of zombie horses, and his oldest daughter and his in-laws are all killed. Is it just a coincidence, or is there something much bigger going on? I know the answer, because I've read the book four times. Looks like it's your turn to find out. "Rise up while you can." (518)

Alexander Wilson

Tamarack
EDIT MEETINGS

Tuesdays 2:00 pm, S519
ALL WELCOME!!

We Are All American.

Daniela Ullauri

President Abraham Lincoln once said that, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." The idea of division implies that what was once unified, or whole, is now in conflict, is now split. In a world full of divisions, we are forgetting we once had to be unified to even become divided. Everybody has different views of what unification means to them, and how broadly they utilize that term, but in general the idea of unification means being part of something greater.

In this country, we are divided in many ways, politically and culturally, but united in the main way that we are part of the United States of America. However, there is a unity even surpassing that, a unity of continents, of an entirety of a landmass that truly is America. While it is difficult to deny the meaning of this word, America, the land of the free, many other countries actually lie within its definition, something we seem to have forgotten.

As "Americans", we live in the "United States" of America, not implying an ownership of "America," but implying a belonging to this land, with unifying states to make up our borders. The real meaning of the term "American" comes from the continents associated with it, and there are two continents to America, both North and South America.

Often today, we refer to being "American" as being just a United States citizen, and there is a simplicity in saying that one is simply "American," as opposed to saying one is a "United States citizen", but the idea of America transcends this country. We need to understand that we are all American on these continents, from North to South, and we do share this land by that definition.

Now it can be argued the United States is the most well-known of the American countries, mostly for being one of the, if not the only, world power. However, does being in a position of such power mean we define the entirety of the land with which we are associated? Does it mean other countries on these continents do not have the right to be called "American"?

While this is a beautiful country, with a beautiful landscape, and diverse culture, there are other countries on this continent equally—if not more—beautiful. Though some of these countries may be considered "third world countries," with economic positions that do not come close the United States' ranking, that does not mean they are not associated with "America," the whole. There is great pride in all of these countries, a pride of being a part of the Americas, the new world, and of being "American".

So, how can we mend a division that is not seen, but is felt? How do we make our neighbors feel part of the same whole? It begins with that simple understanding of what is "American" and simply calling our neighbors by that same label that we are so proud to call ourselves. Should United States citizens stop calling themselves "Americans"? Absolutely not! They have that right, but they should be aware of the thirty-four other countries that are "American" as well.

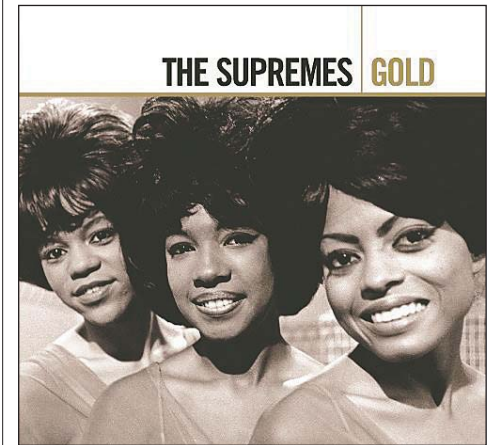
allergies. And I'm not just talking about my food allergy, but all the others. Have you seen any options for those with a peanut allergy? Or anything for those who are lactose intolerant? Because I haven't.

Sure, you may think there are options like fries or fruit or something else, but guess what? We don't know what those foods have come into contact with. Were those fries cooked with the breaded chicken nuggets? We don't know, and we don't want to take that risk. Was that fruit cut on the same surface that had some lingering crumbs? Who knows?! Cross contamination is a huge issue for us and it is often overlooked. But if the food staff was trained in allergy awareness, maybe that would make us more at ease and more willing to purchase the food and make our lives just a little bit easier. It's something to think about.

Revolutionary Rhythms

The Supremes

Alyssa Katz



“At a time when the Civil Rights and Women's Rights Movements were taking hold, the Supremes appeared as symbols of Black achievement and womanhood.”

Motown surfaced in the 1960s as a headquarters for predominantly Black pop music. The Jackson 5 started with Motown, and many other famous artists, such as the Four Tops, the Temptations, and Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons also called the record company their home. A female presence was secondary to the male talent, but there was one female trio that made an indelible mark. Diana Ross, along with Mary Wilson and Florence Ballard, made up the super-group known as the Supremes. At a time when the Civil Rights and Women's Rights Movements were taking hold, the Supremes appeared as symbols of Black achievement and womanhood.

The three women met in high school and enjoyed singing together. Known as the Primettes at the time, the three gained local popularity as they finished high school, but were deemed "too young to sign" to a record label until one manager took that chance and signed them. A name change was suggested once they were signed to a record label, and thus they became known as the Supremes.

Their first number one hit occurred in 1964 with their single "Where did our Love Go?" The record sold over two million copies, resulting in two more big hits before the year ended, "Baby Love" and "Come See About Me". The next three years the Supremes had several other number ones hits, including "Stop! In the Name of Love" (1965); "You Keep Me Hangin' On" (1966); and "The Happening" (1967). In addition, they made frequent weekly television appearances and did many concerts. This led to the Supremes headlining many Las Vegas venues, performing at fundraisers for President Lyndon B. Johnson, and even being invited to sing at Martin Luther King Jr.'s funeral in 1968.

Behind all of the success, though, were three young struggling women. Ross was credited with more of the fame, even though Ballard was the one who founded the group. Ballard had had enough and left the group in 1967. It was either because she stopped caring, or because she was jealous of Ross's incredible popularity eclipsing her own. She ended up dying at age 32 from cardiac arrest; both Ross and Wilson attended her funeral. After losing Ballard, the Supremes replaced her and released more hits throughout the rest of the decade.

Ross ended up departing the group in 1970, leaving Wilson the only original member, until she left as well, in 1977, to pursue a solo career. Ross and Wilson drifted apart as time went on, and Ross chose not to attend the induction ceremony of the Supremes into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1988. Whether they were driven apart by the pressure that came with being a popular girl group, or because their fame burned too brightly too quickly, the Supremes remain a symbol of Black womanhood and empowerment in an era when such achievements were not easily attainable.



Alyssa Katz

Earth Matters

College Recycling



Alyssa Katz

Recycling is vital, as it breaks down materials, such as plastic, cardboard, and glass, to be repurposed and transformed into new, green-friendly materials. While we (hopefully) try to recycle as much as we can, there are some items we may not even know are reusable. Some of these include aluminum foil, paper towels, wrapping paper, even laundry baskets. Many college campuses across America implement recycling programs for students and faculty to ensure cleanliness and reusability, both of which help the planet.

Wesleyan University, in Middletown, CT, utilizes a single-stream recycling program so students don't have to separate recyclables, by instead putting them all into one sizeable container. In addition, the campus encourages students to collect food waste and dispose of it using one of the campus's 13 backyard bins. These are then sent to a local farm, where the waste is generated into useable compost. Wesleyan does not recycle plastic bags on campus because they can be brought to grocery stores. Wesleyan's website includes a full list of items they recycle and accept for composting.

Harvard University in Cambridge, MA, also does single-stream recycling, and has an extensive composting program. As their website says: "By 2011, Harvard collected more tons of organic waste for composting than it collected for recycling." The school supports waste reduction, and tried to implement a composting initiative in the dining halls, at major campus events, and even in dorm rooms. Items that can be collected for composting include coffee grounds, tea bags, wooden stirrers, napkins and paper towels, as well as any food waste. Harvard even runs programs for recycling e-waste and empty ink cartridges. Their programs continue to evolve.

Pepperdine University in Malibu, CA, also adopted single-stream recycling campus-wide. While their transition to this system just took action in 2016, they have other programs for reusing materials. For instance, campus tree trimmings are collected and turned into compost which replaces fertilizer. Also, whenever a new building project takes place, Pepperdine, on average, recycles 80% of their construction waste. They additionally collect used batteries and e-waste. Even more impressive, they collect used motor oil, reducing the amount released into groundwater.

Chatham University in Pittsburgh, PA, takes things one step further, with portions of campus running on renewable energy. Their main source of energy comes from wind. The school even participates in RecycleMania, an annual event in which schools compete in recycling, composting, and trash reduction events. The event raises awareness about the importance of waste reduction and recycling. To reduce plastic even further, Chatham stopped selling plastic water bottles in 2011.

Recycling and composting may require more effort, but it's the difference you are making in helping a planet that is hurting deeply from the damage humans have caused. These colleges recognize climate change and its consequences, and they also see how important trash reduction is. You can do your part at NVCC by making use of the blue recycle bins across campus, and making every effort to conserve resources.

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Readers Respond

Dear Editor,

Inspired by Chris Gordon's "Being Brave," I would like to share my personal experience with mental illness. I have had anxiety from a young age, which has negatively impacted every aspect of my life. Things got worse as I grew older, undiagnosed, and without treatment. By the end of middle school, I had fallen into a deep depression, and had to be hospitalized for self-harm. Still, I refused to accept I had a mental illness, and services which I received were extremely inadequate. The next few years were rough. Dropping out of high school was another low. Only about a year ago, did I finally accept I needed help, and go searching for it. I was formally diagnosed with general anxiety, social anxiety, and depression. I am now on medication, and I have been through several therapists, still searching for the perfect match. Of course, I still have bad days, or even months, but overall, I finally have hope of recovery. I want anyone who may be struggling to know there is no shame in asking for help. The negative stigma around mental illness must end, and it is only through conversation and connection with others who have experienced it, that we may achieve this. In the short amount of time being a student at NVCC, I have already made strides, and done things of which I am incredibly proud. As Chris Gordon said, "There is a lot of bravery in our everyday life (10)". I am grateful to people like him whose words have inspired me to share my story, as well as to the entire community at this school which has allowed and encouraged me to grow.

~ Sincerely, Molly Riley

Dear Editor,

After reading the article, "Veteran's Voice," by Shayne Pratte, I wanted to reach out and add a few things. My son is an active Marine, based in Yuma, AZ. Shayne definitely hit it home with his article [on the impact of the government shutdown on the military] with one exception. I feel the government lacks in teaching service members how to put their finances in order, including how they should all have a savings account as an emergency fund. They should plan to have enough money in this account, so they can live off it for six months, if an emergency, like a shutdown, arises again. You can't depend on the government; you can only depend on yourself.

Thanks, Lois Barcomb

Dear Editor,

The article entitled, "Sisters, All," by Alexander Wilson, in the March Tamarack is an interesting and empowering piece. As a woman myself, and with March being National Women's Month, there are difficulties that are a reality to women. As mentioned,

the "marginalization, oppression, and abuse in silence"(8), are sufferings that women, as a collective whole, are no longer going to tolerate, and society should no longer tolerate as well. Currently, society is changing for the better, with the MeToo movement serving as a recognition of a problem that exists and needs change. Recognition is always the first step in change, and there is so much to improve on from here. In service of the National Women's Month, an open mind to new possibilities in society, to a change that our country and world can hope for, can lead to a brighter tomorrow.

~ Sincerely, Daniela Ullauri

Dear Editor,

In regards to "Suicide Awareness Month," by Bethany Dvilinskas, I wanted to thank you for publishing an article about a subject most people do not feel comfortable openly discussing, let alone see in the front page of a newspaper, even though it is a topic I feel should be talked about more. Many people that suffer from depression have that thought go through their head at least once or even multiple times in their life, myself included. It is something I have seen take the lives of classmates, friends, and even family members. Even though it is a difficult topic to bring up, by talking about suicide and getting people to understand that having those kinds of thoughts is not something to be ashamed of, then hopefully people will be more willing to seek the help they need. Suicide affects people of all races and ages and is one of the leading causes of death in America; it seems the people you least expect to be depressed are the ones that take their own lives. How are we to help people suffering through this when we don't even feel comfortable talking about it? As stated in the article, "These efforts to end the stigma of speaking about suicide represent progress" (1). I'm happy to know there are songs and movements and other ways of making suicide prevention more public. I hope by doing so it'll reach out to those that may not want to admit they need help. By publishing this article, you are also helping spread awareness and ending the stigma of talking about suicide, which is a great way to remind people this is never something they have to go through alone.

~ Sincerely, NVCC Student

Dear Editor,

In the article, "Tell Your Story," I was expressly told about the library's "Human Library" event. I think the HL is an awesome idea! Many people have stories to tell, but without the opportunity to write, it goes not forward. This human library gives people the opportunity to tell their stories. I am an actor. I tell the stories of others for a living. With this, maybe I can finally tell some stories of my own.

~ Sincerely, Kevo Somerville

Thank You All



Chris Gordon

Uncertainties

I am unsure how to find thankfulness this month. I'm not ungrateful for all that people do in support of promoting excellence and being the inspiration

for both this column and in my life. Unfortunately, though, there are some incidents that leave a person drained to the core, and being able to work at their best capacity is impossible. I am currently experiencing one of those periods.

As always, I thank the people who stand with me and show their support and share their strength with me as I deal with my own personal problems. I have thanked them previously in this column: my friends, mentors, coworkers, and role models. That outpouring of support is much more than anyone could ever hope to find. And yet, this time, my dejection is simply on such a personal level that I am left unable to find a way to lift this cloud from around my spirit.

I am a hard worker; I never simply sit on my butt when I know something needs to be done. Those previously mentioned in this article know this and praise me for it. There are others out there who know this as well, and have not hesitated to use it against me when they need things done. I have learned the hard way who it is I can count on, and who is simply not worth the effort.

I have an old metaphor in mind I'd like to share with readers concerning the nature of generosity and charity. Everybody starts life with a collection of gold coins, all of equal weight and value. You can either choose to hoard your coins, or spend them as you see fit. You do not have an infinite supply, and your coins are very limited; once they are gone, they are gone forever. You cannot take coins from anyone else who does not first choose to give one to you. It seems as if I gave all of my coins away and received nothing in return, at least nothing I thought my coins were worth.

Now those who take my coins without any worthwhile return on my investment have their hands out, expecting to receive another shiny gold coin. Well, I ran out of gold coins, and while I'm slowly getting some back through the people I can trust, I feel it would be inappropriate to simply waste them by throwing them away again.

To those who have shared their coins when I needed one, thank you so much. To those who are returning for a free coin without deserving it, get your coins from the sources you used my coins to support. You will have no more from me.

Broken Promise

Alam Khan

To the victims of the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting, you have endless sympathy from most every American under the U.S. flag. Yet, how can that be enough? What has happened to you is unbearable by any measure. And what is further unfathomable by any standard is the irresponsibility that lurked in various departments of the government, at the state and federal level. You put your trust into a system that broke its promise of maintaining peace and endowing a hopeful future. You put your trust in fellow servants appointed and voted above you who did not have the merits to fulfill what each of us deserves.

Now lays before us all, and especially you, the petty convergence in the aftermath, as we watch politicians play the blame game. The problem is there are so many dynamics to this event and so many voices which rebuke each other. Many who do not have any expertise in the matter will further express opinions that spiral the issue downward. The bottomless

pit does not end here, either; those who vote on the matter are then seen taking money from contributors, like the NRA, to sway legal matters.

We the people, who humbly choose to put quality titles like "The Honorable" in front of names of politicians, have been betrayed by their commitment to monetary donors. Looking at the bigger picture, one thing is apparent among many, the comfort these "public servants" feel in office has been taken for granted! This comfort could not have been relied upon without consistent re-election to office. These long terms have blinded and corrupted common sense ethics.

Shame on Chief Tony Pustizzi for not stepping down. Shame on Deputy Scot Peterson for inaction that screamed cowardice while wearing a badge of responsibility. Shame on America, which let another travesty manifest, while arguing separate sides instead of discussing together. What is guaranteed among the many discussions to be had in the wake of this event are the unspeakable comparisons to the many others which occurred previously.

In the grand scheme of misfortunes, looking at the world, there is a realization to be had. These kinds of shootings are a daily sight in war-torn and impoverished countries—countries influenced by our "diplomatic" and business interests. Isn't it then hypocritical that, because now these shootings are taking place within our own borders, they weigh more heavily upon the mind? What does a child in Syria who observes bombardment look forward to after everything has been taken?

Fellow *Tamarack* writer, Chris Gordon remarked, "There's a lot of talking going on, but not a lot of solutions, while the problem keeps getting worse". These children, alike though on opposite horizons, bear the brunt of the deeds perpetrated by those we elect to govern. These children are subjugated by a society run on the idea of making a profit.

The issue which can be uncovered behind all of this is not remedied by a quick gun ban. We need to go back, all the way back, to the drawing board. We are evolving as a society that is being driven apart in many ways. We need to unify. We need to pray. We need to change together with benevolence and care.

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