

The Tamarack

Our college. Our news. Our voice.

Naugatuck Valley Community College

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In Defense of “Not Anymore”

Elyse Evans

As an “older” returning student having already experienced, firsthand, the craziness of undergrad dorm life, I should’ve been above snap judgment, but I wasn’t. Like many students I’ve spoken to, I felt “contempt prior to investigation” regarding the heavy-handed federal and state mandated student training, “Not Anymore”.

After completing the 45-minute process, however, I felt like a huge chunk of my youth had finally been validated. Though rape occurred as frequently in the 70s and 80s, it was not so candidly discussed. I wished I’d been forced to take this training years ago. I was excited; I wanted my children and friends to view it.

In 1982, I was attending university, living in all-girl, off-campus housing. I was 19 and had seven roommates. One Sunday afternoon, the youngest of us came home disheveled, disoriented. We gathered around, asking what was up. “Where had she been?” After an hour or so, she said she’d gone to a dorm party with a friend Friday night and gotten drunk. This was odd; we didn’t know her as a “drinker”. Her



friend had left her passed out at the party, and she remembered, vaguely, three or four men having sex with her semi-conscious body.

As we continued trying to get the story out of her, my roommate grew agitated, beginning to relive the events of the last two days: She’d lost her virginity to a drunken gang bang. We struggled to respond appropriately, supportively. We didn’t know

what to do. One Human Services student tried to break through the young woman’s hysteria by throwing a glass of water in her face. Another kept repeating, “Who were they? I want their names.” The energy escalated until the landlord arrived.

After hours of unproductive attempts to help our roommate, someone thought to call her family. Her parents took her home. I remember their accusing looks as they gathered their daughter’s belongings. We never saw her again.

I wasn’t sure what they’d expected from us. Did we call the police? No. Did we call them immediately? No. Did we tell her not to shower, to save her clothes? Did we call campus security? No, no, no, no. Did we think her plight and our confusion mattered to anyone else?

No, we did not. This sort of thing happened; that we knew. We didn’t know the college culture agreed with us that it shouldn’t.

In 1983, I was living in a dorm and was assigned a roommate, but my first day she and her boyfriend, an R.A. in a neighboring dorm, asked if I’d mind changing rooms to bunk with another girl instead. I agreed. Here I was, again, in a culture where rules were getting confusing: the Residence Advisor and his girlfriend were “working the system” for their sexual convenience—that is until she attempted to break up, and he wouldn’t let her.

That Thanksgiving, I was alone on the first floor of the dorm except for this young woman when her ex-boyfriend broke in, climbing through her window. He beat and raped her. Hearing the commotion, I timidly knocked on her door. She answered, with him in the background, and told me “everything was okay,” not to worry. Back in my room, I listened to more brutality.

I went to our R.A.’s room, but because of the holiday, no one was there. I had no phone; there was no working emergency phone. I didn’t even know where campus security was located. I don’t remember EVER being told what to do.

The following Monday I had to recount what happened. The young woman had told our R.A. and campus police I’d tried to intervene, but she’d turned me away. She’d been embarrassed, scared for my welfare and her

own. Ultimately, her ex was expelled and arrested. The young woman left the university with a dislocated shoulder, a concussion, and lasting sexual trauma. I was left with the awareness I hadn’t done enough. Ultimately, it boils down to this: I didn’t know what to do—or if I would be CULTURALLY SUPPORTED TO DO IT.

If nothing else, “Not Anymore” made it clear victims would be CULTURALLY SUPPORTED. The training gives real-life strategies, laws, and the confidence to deny the “Snitches get stitches” dorm-life attitude. It was refreshing to be told the administration recognizes the sexual gauntlet endured by residents in college dormitories, and that what occurs is not always fun or consensual, but often, dangerous and illegal.

None of these events happened directly to me, but they ALL affected me because I didn’t know what to do, who to call, how to respond. I remember them so clearly, because I wished I had known. You don’t have to personally experience rape, stalking, or assault to be a victim of rape, stalking, or assault. Their permitted presence permeates culture. “Not Anymore” is a step toward holding perpetrators of sexual misconduct accountable. It provides language and knowledge with which to arm ourselves as we face these challenges, promoting the confidence to speak.

A Passionate Gathering

Tamarack Staff



A group of students, faculty, staff, and others gather to support speakers at the press conference.



NVCC’s Former Academic Dean Dr. Estela Lopez is flanked by Prof. Ron Picard and Prof. Kathy Taylor at the event.



Students from three community colleges wait to give their testimony against the consolidation. Photos Courtesy of Prof. Ron Picard

On Friday, March 8th, an impassioned group of students, faculty, administrators, and retired presidents and trustees braved the wintry cold to assemble at the state capitol. Gathered in and outside Hearing Room 1C of the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, this spirited group included representatives from NVCC, as well as Asnuntuck Community College, Capital Community College, Gateway Community College, Housatonic Community College, Manchester Community College, Norwalk Community College, Central Connecticut State University, and others.

The group held a press conference to release a petition in opposition to the Board of Regent’s “Students First Initiative,” the proposed plan to consolidate the 12 community colleges into one CT Community College with satellite campuses under the direction of regional presidents. According to NVCC’s Faculty Senate President, Professor Kathy Taylor, the petition is the work of “concerned faculty and others, a group calling themselves the ‘Reluctant Warriors,’ representing most of the community

colleges and some of the CSUs,” who believe “the battle to preserve the culture and tradition of the academy at each of the twelve community colleges is certainly worth fighting for.”

As of March 8th, the petition, spearheaded by the “Reluctant Warriors,” had garnered well over 1,300 signatures, including those of the following: 14 retired college presidents, five former trustees, and three former chancellors, seven past or present college foundation members, a former provost and hundreds of faculty, staff, students, alumni and members of the community.

Asnuntuck Community College History Professor Elle Van der Mark welcomed attendees to the press conference. After introducing dignitaries, she read a statement against the proposed consolidation and then went on to introduce three students, each of whom shared their personal community college story. A group of faculty and other students stood behind the student speakers in support.

Central CT State University Professor Matt Warshauer then facilitated interviews of staff, students, and retired presidents and trustees by members of the press who were present. Just after noon, those in attendance walked together as a group through the concourse to the Governor’s office to officially present the petition and signatories.

It was clear from the testimony of those present, and those who signed the petition—individuals whose lives have been shaped by their connection with these separate institutions—that many concerns exist around “Students First”. Chief among them is the fear that the consolidation will strip the individual colleges of their autonomy and their ability to best meet the unique needs of the communities they serve. The event, covered widely by local media, was a powerful testament to the passion of those protective of the current system of 12 separate community colleges, each with an individual, community-focused identity worth preserving.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



Environmental Musing

When we reflect on the aspects which have brought us to our current situation, it's easy to see all the mistakes we've made along the way. We question, "What made me go down a path I knew was not right all along?" It becomes easy to give into our temptations of eating too much or watching too much TV simply because, biologically, partaking in uncomfortable situations is painful, and survival traits developed by our ancestors have taught our bodies to do what is necessary to find a sense of safety and comfort.

Contrarily, when we're uncomfortable we develop the most. This can range from exercising our body at the gym to exercising our brain in a classroom. Pick your poison. We might, however, choose to pick on ourselves and become our own worst enemy. Deep in the sanctuaries of our conscience, where no outside force can alter our desires, we find we don't want to keep partaking in whatever we are doing. What we really want is to go out and reenact the cool lifestyles displayed on the screen. What we really want is to live.

But to live is sometimes to become uncomfortable. How interesting then is the paradoxical choice between enacting a life worth living through numerous hardships—and watching a Netflix series that just shows us one in the comfort of our beds? Yet our mind and body have become so reliant on attributes such as instant gratification, it is hard to change our behavior.

Consider: a character dwells with us all, influencing our lives as it goes on unnoticed. It is there day and night. This phantom does not speak directly to us, but sways our behavior through subtle innuendo. This character, in very sober description, is our environment. How we choose to surround ourselves with certain environments largely affects our lifestyle choices. It can be as simple as orienting our beds near a window so the morning sun hits our eyes to wake us early.

A more pronounced example is entering a facility of education, where great minds arrive to contemplate ideas—sharpening them against those who disagree. In truth and bitter reality, sometimes it is not we who fail ourselves, but our environment that fails us. Some do not have the luxury of being brought up in a community with good education. Others don't even have the luxury of an environment which is safe.

If you find yourself quick to blame your surroundings for your choices, consider changing your behavior by subtly remodeling your environment. This doesn't mean go plan a construction blueprint for your living quarters, or pack your bags and move cross continent. Instead, place your phone at a charging outlet away from your bed, so your body can eventually assimilate that bed means sleep time not scroll time.

The last thing we can do is reflect on the subtle influences our environment plays on us making poor decisions. By observing environmental cues that lead us to behave a certain way, we can eventually realize what we need to do to get moving towards our true desire. Finally, Psychologist Viktor Frankl said, "Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response." Consider your space. Is it one that inspires?

Best Regards,
Alam Khan
Editor-in-Chief
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Between the Bookends News from the NVCC Library

By Jaime Hammond



Photo Courtesy of Max Raul Egusquiza

Jaime Hammond is Director of Library Services. She loves being a community college librarian and wants you to ask her obscure questions.

There's BIG news from the NVCC Library this month! In celebration of National Library Week (April 7th – 13th), we will be unveiling our new Reading Commons!

The Reading Commons, which is located on the 4th floor of the library by the computer classroom, is an area devoted to browsing popular items, and is also a quiet reading space.

The Reading Commons includes:

- new books
- graphic novels, comics, and manga
- hot fiction books in a variety of genres such as literary fiction, suspense, and young adult
- newsmakers and other popular nonfiction titles
- magazines and academic journals

The Reading Commons was created after many students asked where to find the library's "fiction section". The library staff had dreamed of creating a new space for browsing and reading to satisfy those student requests. Then, when the library won the 2018 Association of College and Research Libraries Excellence in Academic Libraries Award, the \$3000 grand prize helped make that dream a reality!

There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony and grand opening on Tuesday, April 9th at 11:00 am in the Reading Commons. Please join us!

Other hot tips to note:

Need help with a research paper? Make an appointment with a librarian at <http://nvcc.libguides.com/appointments>

Need help with citations? Check out our handy online guide at <http://nvcc.libguides.com/CitationGuides>

Leveling the Field CSCU Announcement

This week, President Mark Ojikian announced that the application for institutional financial aid for undocumented students is now available on the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities' website.

In April 2018, the Connecticut General Assembly passed and Governor Malloy signed PA 18-2, which makes institutional financial aid available to students without taking immigration status into consideration. In ensuing months, financial aid directors and staff at the system, colleges, universities, Charter Oak State College, and UConn came together to create the application to make this funding available.

In accordance with the law, veterans of the United States armed forces who are without legal immigration status were eligible to apply for this type of financial aid for the 2018-2019 year. All other students without legal immigration status are eligible to apply for financial aid toward the Spring 2020 semester.

"A student's immigration status should never preclude them from accessing a high-quality education," President

Caught Red-handed

Christian Cruz

The 1% are at it again; this time we have a scandal involving wealthy parents—including CEOs and Hollywood stars—paying for their children to get into famed schools, notably USC and Ivy League institutions including Yale. To be honest, I believe most are not at all surprised by the latest news. It's just the fact that so many good students were left out once again when it came to the opportunity to enter these institutions. While the parents and those behind the plan are largely to blame, these schools were clearly also guilty, preferring to uphold this entitled culture on their campuses.

Communities are built on the foundation of diverse cultures coming together and building a consensus on issues within their campus. When too much of the same exists, it hurts the quality of a school's campus life. How is that rich kid going to learn there is a different world out there if he/she isn't introduced to any different types of cultures?

At the same time, opportunities are being stolen from those who may have earned them. What message does that send to students? Imagine those student athletes who fell in love with a particular campus and their facilities being told the reason they weren't accepted might have been because their athletic scholarship was given to someone who does not even play a sport. That is just dishonest and heartbreaking.

How did some of these coaches live with doing nothing for that long? USC, for example, is a Division One athletic institution. How did no one notice there weren't as many volleyball players as there should be? Maybe walk-ons filled that void, but to be honest, if you are that student putting work into both your studies and athletics, you should feel disrespected.

I honestly do not know how you solve this problem. A school like USC probably has tons of boosters investing millions on their campus, and that may involve giving their kids free rides throughout college. The value money adds to a campus to elevate their resources is probably something I cannot comprehend.

However, taking slots from hardworking students—students whose lives would literally be transformed by the chance to attend one of these colleges on their own merits—in favor of students who've probably never put much effort into anything so far in their lives is beyond an injustice; it's criminal. And it's good to see charges being filed. Adding more spoils to the spoiled does not help anyone elevate; it just helps increase the expiration date.

SGA PRESIDENT



Happy Spring!

The SGA has a lot of great events planned for students for the month of April! To start, this month, the SGA is hosting some important campus conversations. The first is the annual Teal Pinky Painting to raise awareness of sexual assault, as April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. This Campus Conversation event will be held April 9th in room L501 from 12:45 - 1:45 PM.

Later in the month, on April 16th, a Campus Conversation on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence will take place; it will also be in room L501 from 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM. Both Campus Conversations will offer a great opportunity to learn about resources available for those affected by the issues of sexual assault or domestic violence.

Also this month, the SGA and Veterans Club are hosting a bus trip to the 9/11 Memorial in New York City. The trip will take place on April 13th. If you are interested in attending, you can visit S514 to purchase tickets.

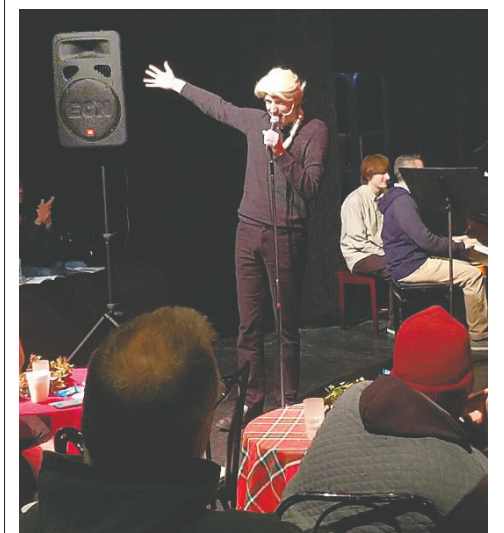
Don't forget the SGA meets every Wednesday in room L501 from 4:00 – 5:00 PM. These meetings are open to everyone, and students are encouraged to come. It's a great way to learn about upcoming club activities and campus initiatives. You might even be inspired to get involved in student government.

As always, if you have any questions about upcoming events, club membership, or anything at all, feel free to reach out to the SGA via email at nv-sga@nv.edu, or come to our office in room S516 to say hello. We're here to help!

Have a happy April!

Best Regards,
Tabitha Cruz

February Fun with Music Society



Prof. Jason Seabury entertains the crowd with song—and a daring new hairstyle—at the February coffeehouse. A great time was had by all. See page three for details on the upcoming April coffeehouse! Photo courtesy of Kathy Chesto.

THE NVCC MAX R. TRAUIG LIBRARY INVITES YOU TO ATTEND THE **READING COMMONS GRAND OPENING & RIBBON CUTTING**

Tuesday, April 9
11:00 AM
Library 4th Floor

Celebrate National Library Week 2019 with us!

Tamarack EDIT MEETINGS

Tuesdays 2:30 pm, S519
ALL WELCOME!!

The Tamarack

"Standing, like a resolute tree, as your source for news."

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Tuesdays 2:30 p.m., S519

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EDITORIAL

Invasion?

Invasion (n): an armed instance of invading a country or region with an armed force; an incursion by a large number of people or things into a place or sphere of activity; an unwelcome intrusion into another's domain.

This was the prominent word used by an ignorant individual filled with hatred and fear this past week after 50 people were tragically murdered while worshipping in their New Zealand mosques. Aside from President Trump, this word was also, incidentally, the major focal point in the ranting document posted by the shooter who decided people he did not know, whose only crime against him was belief in a differing religion, deserved to be executed.

This latest incidence is one more drop in the rising ocean of white supremacist violence our leader is at best blatantly ignoring, and at worst intentionally fueling, simply to sway his voter base into giving him more power. Either way it is sickening.

Using the definition above we can logically spot the stupidity in claiming other cultures are invading "white nations."

First, "armed instance": There has been no report of the 50 dead having any sort of weapons as they spent time in spiritual contemplation. Therefore, the gunman's actions must be denounced as purely an act of hatred as his excuse of invasion by force is objectively false. Confronting unarmed Muslims with violence is unacceptable.

Next, "incursion by large numbers": In 2018, according to the Customs and Border Protection Agency, approximately 638,000 enforcement actions were reported in reference to people seeking to enter the United States, approximately 404,000 being unlawful. On its face, that number might seem large. Adding context, we see the first number is merely .00228% of the total U.S. population. The percentage for non-lawful actions is .00133. Amazingly, this implies if people seeking entry into our country (legal or otherwise) were allowed to enter in 2018, they would not meet statistical significance to warrant a round up to .01 percent. This rules out the invasion the President's fearmongering lies offer as necessity to build a wall.

As for the rest of the definition, "unwelcome intrusion," I cannot speak for New Zealand's stance on immigration, but judging from the response to this deadly attack, I can assume it is similar to the United States' own. The US policy on immigration can best be summed up in the words of Emma Lazarus:

The New Colossus (1883)

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

Clearly, our country has a long tradition of publicly welcoming immigrants.

Using these accepted definitions of the word *INVASION*, we can conclude there is absolutely no invasion taking place by people of other cultures and religions. This wave of violence and hatred is fueled only by ignorance and propaganda. By simply taking a few minutes to actually think about what is being claimed, we can see the truth.

I offer heartfelt condolences to the worldwide Muslim community for having their safety stripped away yet again. No one deserves to be made a symbol of hatred due to minor external variations, such as traditional dress, that make absolutely no difference. May your prayers be answered by a loving God, and let us work for peace and prosperity for everyone.

#SHOUTTogether

Steve Parlato



Parlato with the author, Laurie Halse Anderson at the *SHOUT* Book Launch, March 11, 2019. Photo Courtesy of Jillian Parlato

First reading Laurie Halse Anderson's debut young adult novel, *SPEAK*, as a 37-year-old grad student, I was floored by the author's bravery. Thirteen-year-old Melinda Sordino's story was no typical escapist fare; instead, the author presented, with unflinching honesty, the journey from victim to survivor. Halse Anderson immediately became one of my YA heroes. What impressed me as much as the story was the complete authenticity of voice and experience. Like most readers, I wondered whether the author had written from personal experience, if she too, had been raped.

In interviews, Halse Anderson gracefully dodged that question, sharing how her protagonist came to her, a crying girl, in a dream. Still, I wondered; Melinda's reactions—her unraveling, her slow healing—seemed too perfect to be mere creation or even the product of research. She spoke to me on a gut level as a fellow survivor. Her story, which I've used in several writing classes, has led to some of the most uncomfortable yet vital classroom discussions of my career; *SPEAK* was also a book that convinced me there was a place in YA literature for my novel, *The Namesake*.

Now, twenty years after *SPEAK*'s release, Halse Anderson, author of several other groundbreaking novels, and a vocal defender of free speech, has chosen not just to speak, but to shout the full truth. In her latest, *SHOUT*, a memoir in verse, she tells—again in beautifully crafted and unflinching detail—her own story, of her rape at age thirteen, and her long road beyond recovery to passionate advocacy. As it happened, stop one on the *SHOUT* Book Tour brought Halse Anderson to Fairfield University, where my daughter and I had the chance to meet her on March 11th. In her discussion with fellow NY Times best-selling author, Meg Wolitzer (*The Wife*, *The Feminine Persuasion*, and other novels), she touched on everything from the importance of discussing consent with kids to the responsibility of whites to support diverse voices in YA and elsewhere.

In person, Halse Anderson defies expectation. Given the serious topics of her books, one might imagine she's somber. She's not. Her quick wit and charm perfectly balance the important work she does as both writer and activist. More than once, she referred to herself as "a large woman"; at about 6 feet tall, this is accurate. Yet, her largeness goes well beyond physical stature. She is a woman of enormous generosity of spirit. She happily held her pose in her RBG t-shirt, so the crowd could get a photo, and was warmly encouraging of audience members who began their questions, "As a fellow survivor..."

It's rare to meet our heroes. Too often, if it happens, the result is disappointment. For me, meeting Laurie Halse Anderson in person was a gift. Her genuine interactions with readers struggling to heal was inspirational. Presenting her with a copy of my book as thanks for inspiring me—and her responding by calling me "brother"—were moments I'll treasure.

Like *SPEAK*, Halse Anderson's latest, *SHOUT*, is a mix, harrowing yet hopeful. It's clear after meeting her where her motivation comes from: living through hard truths—and finding courage to declare them aloud—she's performed that precious alchemy. She has turned pain into compassion and motivation. She is someone to shout about, indeed.

Zero Discrimination

Gwenydd Miller

"Discrimination (n): the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex. Example: 'Victims of racial discrimination' Synonyms: prejudice, bias, bigotry, intolerance, narrow-mindedness, unfairness, inequality, favoritism, one-sidedness, partisanship."

This definition, printed on sheets of bright yellow paper, set the stage for the most recent Social Justice Series event. March 1st was Zero Discrimination Day; the day before, February 28, a riveting and vitally important discussion took place in Café West addressing just what discrimination looks like and how to combat it.

Prof. Nikki McGary coordinates the Social Justice Series along with Prof. Kathy Taylor. McGary also co-advises the Safe Space club with Prof. Christopher Rempfer. Together, the Social Justice Series and Safe Space hosted a panel discussion addressing the questions, what does discrimination look like; what is it like to experience discrimination; and how can we be allies to those suffering discrimination?

Most panelists were members of NVCC clubs. Among them were Student Government Association (SGA) President Tabitha Cruz, and SGA Secretary Christian Soto. Michael Matovu represented the Black Student Union, and Safe Space President Alexis Levesque and member Heath Ruszkowski also participated. The final panelist was Joel Gonzales, an employee of Stay Well Health Center, and one of the founders of QUEST (Queer Unity Empowerment Support Team).

The panelists did their best to answer the previous question: What does discrimination look like? They all had different answers depending on the reason they had experienced discrimination. The biggest topics to surface during their discussion were race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, although these are only some of many possible characteristics to be met with discrimination. A handout with statistics stated the motivation categories for single-bias incidents in 2017 were 58.1% on the basis of Race/Ethnicity/Ancestry; 22% focused on religion; 15.9% sexual orientation-based; gender identity accounted for 1.7%; disability 1.6%; and gender was listed as the motivation for 0.6% of incidents.

The majority of stories told during this event had to do with assumptions based on appearance. These included an individual sharing the experience of being told they are "so nice for someone who is Puerto Rican"; another panelist recounted being told they're White even when they aren't. Another panelist experienced someone claiming they could change an individual's sexuality. The biggest takeaway seemed to be that experiencing discrimination is being told who you are—and treated as less-than—based on stereotypes and ignorance.

The last question asked was: How can we be allies against discrimination? One by one we heard stories of people both failing and succeeding as allies, and what it means to the panelists for someone to truly be an ally. The consensus was an ally is someone who offers support and listens. It's important to stand up for those dealing with discrimination, while being careful not to take away their individual voice. Another message they had was that some battles you win and some battles you lose, if you've failed as an ally in the past, then forgive yourself and try again.

SPEAK UP

Are you interested

in where your Student Activities Fees are spent? If so, voice your opinion at **NVCC's Student Government meetings** held every **Wednesday, 4-5 p.m. in L501**, across from the Library. For more information call 203-596-2185, stop by S516, or email SGA@nvcc.comnet.edu.

Music Happenings

Coffeehouse

Tamarack Staff



Music Society members rehearse over spring break for the April coffeehouse. Photo Courtesy of Kathy Chesto

If you missed the February 28 Music Society Coffeehouse, don't despair! The previous page included a scene from that event, another great success. It was well attended, and as always, featured heartfelt performances and delicious refreshments.

Even better, there's another coffeehouse coming up this month. It's scheduled for April 11th, and members of the Music Society, pictured here, were busy over spring break planning and rehearsing. On March 14th, they met to share a meal and practice together. They're excited to perform and encourage others to sign up as well. The event will once again be held in the Playbox Theater, April 11th, from 6:30 – 8:30 PM. Doors open at 6:00 PM. The event is free and open to all!

From Class Straight Into Real Life

Christopher Gordon



Photo Courtesy of Christopher Gordon.

On March 2nd, 2019, the Eastern Psychological Association held its annual convention in New York City. In attendance were students Alexandria "Allie" Miller, whom you might remember as a Face in the Crowd in the February *Tamarack*, and myself. Advisor and mentor Dr. Kim O'Donnell was on hand to show support for her students, even while feeling under the weather.

Over the 2017-2018 school year at NVCC Allie and I immersed ourselves in developing a project to explore in Dr. O'Donnell's two-semester course (listed in the catalog as RES 211 and RES 212) teaching interested students how to perform psychological research. Reviewing literature, creating and drafting a proposal that would then be assessed by the Institutional Review Board, and finally collecting and interpreting data, a small group of psych students demonstrated intellectual and educational capacity that is the proud norm at NVCC.

Another professional benefit of the class is a requirement to complete an online workshop designed to prepare researchers in how to design and conduct experiments without causing harm to subjects. A passing grade for this test provides a certificate that signifies to graduate school admissions officers and future employers that a student understands the true nature of psychological research is ultimately to help people.

According to Dr. O'Donnell, "Actually doing research in your field of study is one of

the most significant educational experiences a student can have. For students interested in psychology and related fields, that is especially true, since it's an important part of the admission process for graduate school. Allie and Chris were part of a small group of students who piloted this course as it was developed—and I'm so grateful to them for their hard work and so proud of their accomplishments. This year 13 students pursued their own projects in RES 211 and RES 212, and I expect they will follow in Allie and Chris' footsteps to present at Eastern Psychological Association next year."

During the evening undergraduate poster presentation session at the EPA, as Dr O'Donnell's students, we excitedly explained the research we undertook and the answers those studies offered. Among the few community college students presenting, Allie and I described the results of our experiments alongside many fellow undergraduate students. A large number of posters in the undergraduate category were presented by upperclassmen attending four-year institutions.



Photo Courtesy of Dr. Kim O'Donnell

Allie stated, "Well, I really enjoyed the freedom and independence the class allowed. I felt Dr. O'Donnell to be an amazing mentor who brought a lot of insightful guidance to the group. I'd highly recommend the class based on her merit alone. And, honestly, the conference made it all feel real—like all my research had gained newfound respect. I briefly got to feel like a 'real life' psychologist!"

Any student interested in a career in psychology or human services would find it advantageous to schedule a meeting with Dr. O'Donnell. Take advantage of the opportunity to get more information on this amazing experience and how it can boost your future.

Honoring Adjuncts

Joyful Spirit

Robin Gerber, ESL



Gerber with daughter, Maya, and husband, Rick. Photo Courtesy of Robin Gerber

Since leaving Woodbridge School District to raise my daughter Maya, NVCC has become a second home a stone's throw away. I joined the ESL program in fall 2006, when I began teaching evening classes. A year later Maya began school at The Child Development Center. As a family, we have worked closely with the creative and nurturing early childhood educators, and we've also joined talented faculty and staff in special campus events.

As an adjunct I have primarily taught the 6-credit course, ESL 152 Reading and Writing V. I deeply respect immigrants and English learners who work incredibly hard to establish a new life here in The States. I LOVE the work I do, for every day my students demonstrate true grit.

Over the years, I have also facilitated First Year Experience and ASD (Academic Skills Development). A few years ago, I was specially chosen to be the interim ESL Program Assistant planning course schedules, organizing events, and overseeing individual students' academic progress. My responsibilities included student testing and placement as well as advising new and continuing students.

In that position, I learned how to effectively liaise with agencies and family members, advocating for all the students under my charge

and collaborating with deans, advisors, directors, and faculty to ensure student success and satisfaction. However, I'm most satisfied when in the classroom. I have learned to finesse an honest rapport with individual students, small groups, and the whole class.

In addition to NVCC, I've enjoyed working part-time in middle school settings as a SRBI support writing tutor at Memorial Middle School in Middlebury and SRBI support math tutor at Naugatuck's Hillside Intermediate School. I've also taught Hebrew school and Sunday school at B'nai Israel in Southbury for the past few years. While passionate about academic work, building community and collaborating with others is at the heart of my discipline. I build relationships that foster trust, so people feel at ease in my presence. I'm grateful for Kundalini yoga, running, snowboarding, and hiking to provide a sense of peace. These teachings from off the mat and trail are often most applicable in the classroom.

Equally joyful to my work in the classroom, I often seek volunteer work, community outreach, and social activism. Years ago, a student encouraged me to join Naugatuck's Cultural Council. Together we built a community embracing human diversity, while promoting a process of acculturation that informs, inspires, and connects people.

For several years my family has volunteered at Naugatuck's Hidden Acres Therapeutic Riding Center. Additionally, we're committed to Harvesting Hope Culture Camp, a parent/child cooperative, where art, music, cuisine, and theater are celebrated. Through group process, we find truth and conflict as we study the sociopolitical issues of a chosen culture. Throughout the year we plan, take action, and often my role connects camp members with culturally diverse people in the community.

I grew up outside of Philadelphia, later receiving a progressive education at UVM. After receiving my Masters in TESOL, I joined my husband Rick—a true Naugatuckian here in The Valley. I seek adventure and travel often with my family, but there's nothing like coming home where I love to cook, garden, bake pies, and tend to our backyard chickens. I've found The Naugatuck Valley to be a special place, and NVCC has a collective energy where folks are excited about new trends in education. This college community is a gem, and the integrity of my colleagues and students radiates. I feel the comfort.

Center for Teaching

Being and Doing

Dr. Althea Hayes

Dr. Hayes, formerly Coleman, when not basking in newly wedded bliss, loves teaching students to write and to read literature!

My Grandma trotted out a saying every year. It's corny, but, with a single word change, has relevance to faculty and students' shock at returning after Spring Break:

*Spring has sprung—
The grass is riz—
I wonder where the students** is!
**the original is "birdies"*

Questionable grammar aside, the message applies to our situation: as winter melts into spring, classrooms become sparsely populated by people staring out windows instead of taking notes.

Returning from Spring Break is a shock to everyone's system. Midterm grades provide a grim reminder to get to back work. But just as that realization sets in, skies become robin's egg blue, warm breezes waft seductively through classroom windows, and greening lawns provide an almost irresistible lure to be out *there* instead of in *here*.

Teachers face the same temptations. Who wants to grade when birds are singing? After winter's enforced inactivity, it's time to get out—walk—toss a ball—play with the dog. It's not only students who have difficulty concentrating as Spring Fling streams music through the open windows!

As a result, classrooms become emptier: "I need a mental health day!" Assignments pile up; schedules get ignored: "It's too nice to sit inside and study!" But the pleasant languor of April hides an inescapable truth: classes end May 12th. That research paper is due soon! Lab reports need finishing! Lovely spring days give way to finals panic.

Having been teaching for about forty years, I've seen it happen year after year: a perfectly wonderful season ruined by work put off, then work crammed in. There must be a better way.

College seems always to be about doing: attending class, finishing homework, preparing presentations, finishing projects. Even fun stuff becomes work: learning songs for acapella group, planning celebratory events,

rehearsing the spring dance program. Our exhaustion invites us to look longingly outside, wishing we were anywhere but *here*, doing anything but *this*. But semesters have end-dates, and assignments must be done. That wonderful career, those future accomplishments—so good on résumés—don't happen by themselves.

What's the remedy? I came across something in a book recently that perhaps suggests a path out of this self-inflicted craziness. The passage involves a change of perspective.

Comparing two seemingly contradictory New Testament stories, the Parable of the Talents (hard workers rewarded, slacker punished) and the story of Martha and Mary (Mary is praised for sitting to listen, while Martha does all the work), Ronald Rolheiser notes "the difference between *being* and *doing*," that is "emphasizing the importance of taking our sense of worth from *who we are* rather than from *what we do*," and concluding "when we ground our identity on our achievements, our sense of self-worth drains whenever we cannot do things that make us feel worthwhile" (9-10).

What struck me is that Rolheiser is NOT saying we need to work harder or relax more. What he *IS* saying, I think, is we need to focus on why we're working and assign *doing* and *being* proper places in our lives. That involves,

for teachers *and* students, understanding why we're in college.

For teachers, the answer has everything to do with opening minds, lighting intellectual fires, sharing knowledge and skills that transform lives. For students, college isn't just a means to a paycheck. Face it: a decent livelihood is possible without college. College is about learning a new way to think and live, about creating a future that fits the *YOU* you're building.

If teaching and learning are all about living, doesn't it make sense that we—students AND teachers—take time to live while we work? Make time between assignments and grading to immerse ourselves in spring; make room during lovely weather to move toward goals that first brought us to college. This means not sacrificing *being* for *doing* or *doing* for *being*; that involves balance.

But I have grading to do, and you're late for class because you savored your coffee while reading this article, so I'll leave you with a favorite piece of bathroom graffiti illustrating the balance of being and doing that should be our goal:

"To be is to do"—Socrates
"To do is to be"—Sartre
"Do Be Do Be Do"—Sinatra

Think about it. It's not so silly. Sinatra had it right.



CAPSS CORNER

What's your Plan?

While you might think I mean what's your plan for the rest of the spring semester, I'm actually asking about your academic plan. Whether you're intending to graduate and transfer to another college or you're returning to NVCC for summer or fall 2019, make sure you have a plan to help you reach your goals. NVCC and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system has implemented Degree Works to help students plan, track and complete their academic goals.

Degree Works can easily be accessed when you sign into myCommnet. Once you log in, you can see what percentage of your curriculum (classes needed to complete the major) have been completed. This way, you'll know how close to graduation you are. This worksheet updates in real time, so when you register for classes, they will show up on your audit and demonstrate how much closer you are to your graduation goal. The worksheet also clearly shows what courses are still needed along with the possible options of courses to fulfill core competencies or electives within your major.

The beauty of Degree Works is that you can click on the course listed to learn more about pre-requisites and get both historical and current offerings of days/times, so you can ensure the class you need is available in the semester in which you plan to take it. If you meet with your advisor, they also have the ability to create a Student Educational Plan (SEP), so you can choose classes for future semesters and ensure you graduate in a timely manner.

Another powerful feature of Degree Works helps students determine how their coursework will fit in if they want to change their major. You can use the "What If" function to see how the courses you have already taken, or plan to take, will fit into a different degree. You can then make an informed decision, knowing whether the change of major will keep you on track to graduate or will set you behind.

Registration for summer and fall courses opens on April 2nd, so make sure you have a plan in place to meet your educational goals. Degree Works is the easiest way to craft a plan while continually monitoring your academic progress. Take the time to explore Degree Works on your own, or make an appointment with your academic advisor to create your plan. If you need assistance with using Degree Works, you can also stop by the Registration Lab in K 522 or the CAPSS office in K520.

Regards,
Bonnie Goulet,
Director of Student Development Services

Rhyme with a Reason

April is National Poetry Month, so it was perfect timing to receive this original poem from NVCC student, Eoa LaFrance.

Music

The sound of a bow drawing across a string
My ambitions were born from a single note
The violinist's movements were inspiring
To think he was only playing what the music wrote

It was the vibrato that drew me in closer
Emotions were mixed as the piece went on
Making me wonder who was the composer
Nothing in this moment would be forgone

But the piece ended as soon as it started
Silence, a second, applause, forever
Hunger remained to play so wholehearted
To always play well in my endeavors

However, it's hard to recreate the moment
Succeeding isn't always enjoyment

~ EoaEve

Powerful Words

Tamarack Staff



WCSU Prof. and Poet, Brian Clements



Poet and Teacher, Jen Sage-Robison



Professor and Memoirist, Marilynn S. Turner



Poet and Scholar, Sherezada Luisa Chiqui Vicioso



April Reader, Poet and Professor Edwina Trentham

The first spring 2019 Confluencia took place on the Danbury campus, Tuesday, March 26th, featuring four writers: three poets, and a memoirist. Brian Clements, a faculty member at WCSU is a prose poet and advocate for sensible gun control. Jen Sage-Robison is an affiliate of Amherst Writers and Artists and on the faculty of Westport Writers Workshop. Marilynn S. Turner, a Professor of English at Asnuntuck Community College, has participated in many area writing workshops and is at work on her first essay collection. Sherezada Luisa Chiqui Vicioso, considered an essential poet, playwright, and essayist of the Dominican Republic is the author of 19 books. Having

officially taken over the Confluencia reins from Dr. Marianela Medrano in fall 2018, Prof. Steve Parlato again served as moderator.

As April is National Poetry Month, it is fitting another Confluencia will take place on the Waterbury campus. The event was still in the planning stages at press time, but will be held on Monday, April 22nd, Earth Day, in the Playbox Theater. While the full roster of readers has not yet been confirmed, we are excited to welcome back Edwina Trentham, poet and Professor Emerita of English at Asnuntuck Community College. Trentham, who previously read at the November 2009 Confluencia (and graciously agreed to read

English translations of poet Veronica Aranda's work in 2016), is widely published in several journals, and is the author of a collection, *Stumbling Into the Light*; and a chapbook, *Dinner Parties*. She is the founder of ACC's poetry journal, *Freshwater*.

April's Confluencia begins at 5:30 PM, Monday, April 22, with a musical presentation. Open mic readers are invited to sign up to read a poem, with original work especially encouraged. Refreshments will be served, and a Q&A session follows the reading. Though free and open to the public, reservations are suggested and can be made by calling: (203) 575-8044.

Supernatural Journal

Gwenydd Miller



In the journalistic tradition of serialized fiction, The Tamarack occasionally features a multi-part story by one of our staff. We hope you enjoy part two of Gwenydd Miller's paranormal fiction.

Journal of Ellie Smith
March 12th, 2019
10:35 AM:

Mrs. Turner, Becca's mother, called a psychic—medium, whatever—who will be visiting their house today. It's a family affair, but they asked me if I would come. I don't want to, but now that midterms are finished and Spring Break is here, I don't have an excuse not to. I will be keeping a log on the off chance something actually happens, or maybe just to make fun of people...

11:05 AM:

The medium set up an altar type thing on the coffee table with a bunch of candles. She's a dramatic one at best. I suppose this is still better than spending my day in the cemetery, and at least it's comforting Becca's family (her mother, really) buys into this stuff.

11: 23 AM:

The medium (I already forgot her name) asked me if I've had an "experience." I shook my head no, and she gave me a look, which was either because she doesn't believe me, or because she hates skeptics.

12:22 PM:

The medium, Luna Crowfeather, (that is so not her real name), gave this mumbo-jumbo performance where she lit the candles and "called Becca from the dead." She spouted stuff out about how Becca is sorry she took the drugs; that she did it because the pressure was getting to her, but she's at peace now. Which isn't true. I'd like to laugh at Luna more, but afterwards she pulled me aside

and put a small bag into my pocket. She told me "this is something for protection, and something else to tune the frequency. They work best not where she is, but where she was." Weird.

12:37 PM:

After Luna left, Mrs. Turner made lunch for everyone, turkey sandwiches and salad. There was a lot of conversation until Becca's uncle brought up the drugs... Mrs. Turner left the table and so did I shortly after. I went to Becca's room to look at what Luna gave me. It looks like some bags of herbs labeled sage, St. John's wort and yew (whatever that is), five small candles and five quartz crystals.

12:45 PM:

It's weird to be in her room now. It's quiet, slightly messy, but still cleaner than mine. I miss her. She always spent a great deal of time in here...wait.

12:56 PM:

I set up the quartz in a circle on the carpet and put my radio in the middle. I'm not sure what any of the herbs do, so I don't want to use them yet... You'd think there'd be instructions.

1:11 PM:

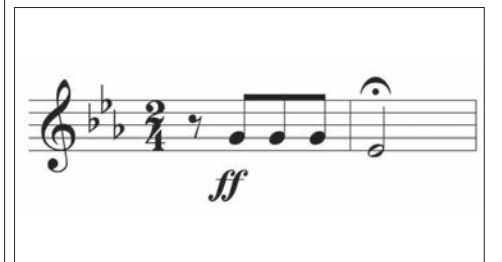
I asked what she wanted to tell me, but without a reply I ended up kicking her bedframe in frustration. I put all the crystals and my radio back into my bag.

1:15 PM:

I heard someone calling my name from downstairs, and I was just leaving the room when I heard a loud thump from behind me. A book had fallen out from under Becca's pillow and flipped open to a page where an old atlas was being used as a bookmark...

Beethoven in My Living Room

Tom Conte



The most common things in an American household's living room are a television, a couch, a recliner, maybe a coffee table. Not commonly found is a piano. Pianos used to be common in households, not just in America but across the world. They were a symbol of high status back in the 18th and 19th centuries. Even in the 20th century, many American homes had a piano tucked into a corner of the living room, due to many Americans taking piano lessons. Now, in the 21st century, pianos have become a rarity outside of a music class or stage theater.

A couple weekends ago I had a few friends over. The usual took place: talking about politics, philosophy, and personal interests. In my living room I have a piano, mostly for show, but it is functional. All of a sudden, one of my friends began to play on said piano.

With no sheet music in view and no requested melody, he just played what came to mind; Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. All from memory, my friend pressed the keys and brought Beethoven to life right there in my living room. Later that night, my friends and I found out he's been teaching himself to play piano for the past seven years.

I never knew how amazing classical music sounds in real life. Listening to it on the radio or through computer speakers can't hold a candle to the real thing. I think what made it more amazing was that he did it all from memory; like I stated before, no sheet music was in sight.

Today, most people would pull up the sheet music either on a smart phone, computer or tablet. It seems today many of us have forgotten the finer things civilization has brought us. The rest of the night we listened while our friend played Beethoven's Seventh and Ninth Symphonies.

Another interesting thing we learned was he writes his own music as well. After playing a few of his personal works we were amazed; they sounded like they could've been written by Beethoven himself. Now, whenever I hear classical music, I think about the day my friend played Beethoven in my living room.

FACE IN THE CROWD

Read My Lips

Madeeha Sheikh

Hello, my name is Madeeha Sheikh. I'm a Visual Art student at NVCC, and I intend to pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Art Education when I transfer to a four-year accredited college. I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, where I lived for twenty years prior to moving to Waterbury.

It's definitely taken me quite a bit of time to get used to living in such a small town in such a small state, but I can finally empathize with suburban pop punk, so there's that.

Before starting at Naugatuck Valley in the fall of 2017, I had next to no studio art experience whatsoever. Back then there weren't many opportunities for me to pursue the arts, thanks to the combination of a lack of funding to NYC public schools, and my parents wanting me to become a doctor, or an engineer, or virtually anything to do with the sciences. Despite this, I am an artist, and in the future I hope to be an art educator as well.

My artwork often centers on identity. I'm strongly motivated by social justice activism and counterculture aesthetics in my daily life. I'm certain the latter is evident to anyone who's ever seen me, and the former to anyone who's ever heard me. In February, I was



Photo Courtesy of Madeeha Sheikh

honored to have two of my works exhibited in the Hartford Art School Community Exhibition.

At NVCC, I am a student worker in the art studios and the secretary of the Art Club. We present art-related events on campus such as student, faculty, and alumni art exhibitions. This semester, the Art Club worked in collaboration with the Theatre Department to make masks for their production of *Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play*. Additionally, the Art Club will begin painting a mural for the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) in April.

I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to pursue art at a college level and for the positive learning environment provided by the studio art professors at NVCC, most notably Amanda Label, who teaches Drawing, Printmaking, and Two-Dimensional Design, and is the Art Club advisor. Her contributions to Naugatuck Valley are immeasurable.

Return to the Kingdom

Alam Khan

When Kingdom Hearts 3 came out in late January, it was a moment of bittersweet emotions. Fans, having waited more than a decade for the next installment, had the opportunity to find some form of closure. Sora, Donald Duck, and Goofy would go on one last journey where they meet alongside other memorable Disney characters. On their journey to put an end to organization thirteen which was preparing for a Keyblade War, Sora would get help from the likes of Buzz Lightyear, Simba, and Elsa, to name a few.

Talking about the plot anymore than this will result in confusion. Having picked up on the game after so long, it is a welcome feeling knowing most gameplay mechanics have remained the same. In keeping with the same style, players do not have to relearn different move sets and can maintain their original focus of enjoying the game. Veteran players of the franchise will also notice the health bar and command menu is still in its original location from the first iteration.

Although most aspects of the game have borrowed from the past, there are still others which are fresh and new to the series. For example, Tetsuya Nomura, the director of Kingdom Hearts has implemented a system known as "attraction flow". This system allows the main character, Sora, to call forth memorable rollercoasters from Disney theme parks, which aid him in taking out the enemy. Furthermore, there is now the ability to have more than three allies.

In the previous game, one of Sora's allies would be substituted by another character for whatever Disney world was being visited. An example is, in the past, if you were visiting Agrabah, then Donald or Goofy would be substituted with Aladdin. Now, gamers do not have to choose which character they prefer over the other as they will all remain in the party. In the grand scheme of surviving hordes of enemies, it becomes easier to delegate the number each party member will need to take on.

So, is Kingdom Hearts 3 a good game? Quite honestly, if you have been waiting for so long, it may feel like the wait has made the game lose its value. Interests change with the passing of time, and game developments take a long time. During that time people mature.

Most of the time, children use their imaginations to soften out the pixelated graphics of an old game. The child's mind, while experiencing everything for the first time, feels inexplicably pulled into the screen. When matured and with some level of reality, there may be a hesitance to believe, or perhaps even put up with, such childish endeavors. However, if you find yourself needing to partake in a journey of fantastical characters, instead of watching them on TV, pick up that controller and try out Kingdom Hearts 3. Your inner child might just thank you.

RECENTLY READ



Unfu*k Yourself

Going through various life stages, people pick up on what they need to do in order to get by. It may be someone close, such as a family member, who guides us to understand what is expected. Our social systems and hierarchies create slots for where people need to be and how they are to behave.

In some circumstances, we recognize what others try to teach us is not necessarily beneficial for us simply because they are still figuring out whatever stage of life they are going through. So where does that leave us? Spinning the hamster wheel in a monotonous rut, because the expectations others place on us are sometimes beneath our true potential—or even in a totally different ballpark.

*Unfu*k Yourself*, by Gary John Bishop, highlights the importance of getting out of the set expectations and damning lifestyles which keep us from truly experiencing our highest form of life. Bishop accomplishes this by encouraging his reader to focus on the use of mantras, inspirational phrases we repeat in our head. These mantras keep us going towards what we really desire.

In an example from the book, Bishop mentions how, sometimes when we want to go out and try something new, we shoot our own foot by talking ourselves down. In doing so, we keep turning the wheels of a monotonous lifestyle. The mantra to be used in this scenario is, "I am enough." This catalyst, when used correctly, can lead readers to get off the metaphorical hamster wheel and try whatever it is they truly feel pulled towards despite "first-timer" apprehension.

While discussing the use of mantras, Bishop also reminds the reader of the importance of looking out for pitfalls in life. By doing so, readers begin developing themselves to become more defined. Interestingly enough, the book calls for readers to visit its pages time and again as they continue their journey toward whatever their chosen accomplishment.

This is because there is a tendency for a reader to forget the lesson learned or come upon a situation that hasn't been addressed in personal experience. The beauty of the book is it can be applied towards whatever the reader is trying to pursue.

In comparison to picking up fictional stories or a magazine, it is useful to find an important book we can come back to with the goal of developing ourselves. Readers can do this by picking up a copy of Gary John Bishop's *Unfu*k Yourself*. Despite its audacious title, its nine short chapters hold a wealth of possibility. Readers can also try the audiobook to opt for self-improvement instead of music on those long drives.

Alam Khan

NYT Travel Show: Five Great Destinations

Robert Pinto

After attending the *New York Times* Travel Show, there are five places I recommend visiting: Aruba, Jamaica, Poland, Maine, and Italy. The Caribbean is so serene. Every aspect exudes excitement and appeal. The islands are a place to escape to, rightfully so. The people of Aruba are extremely kind, gracious, and accommodating. The food is amazing, arguably, the freshest I've ever tried. Walking on Palm Beach is lovely; the sunsets are what make Aruba's Palm Beach world famous. I recall taking dozens of photos. Flying to Aruba on American Airlines is wonderful; it's my favorite airline to fly internationally. Flights are smooth and comfortable.

Jamaica is next on my list. Jamaican people are so warm, with a great sense of humor. The music of Jamaica is legendary and still has an incredible influence today. I listen to Bob Marley when I do my chores at home. In Jamaica, I want to take a tour of Marley's Kingston home. Every beach has a unique, picturesque quality. To walk on the beach in Negril would be pure paradise. You cannot visit Jamaica without sampling rum made on the island.

Poland is a place I've wanted to visit for a long time. I live about an hour away from New Britain, CT, which has a large Polish population. Magdalena Gromek, whom I spoke to while attending the NYT Travel Show was very gracious, informing me that Poland is a wonderful travel destination for Americans. Many of the young people speak English which helps smooth out relations with people. Another

great aspect about Polish culture is centered on food. I love a good pierogi, though it has to be cooked just right, with plenty of sautéed onions.

Living in New England, Maine is right in my backyard. At the Travel Show, I spoke with Paige who gave me plenty of valuable information about the state of Maine. With Maine only four hours from New Haven, there's no excuse not to visit Maine during the summertime. According to Paige, there are hundreds of things to do when visiting Maine. In the capital, Augusta, there are many historical societies and museums, definitely a must-see for those interested in learning about New England. There is also great hiking. The Appalachian Trail starts in Maine, and smaller hiking trails wind throughout the state. It would be a shame to visit Maine, without trying the lobster, caught fresh daily.

When picturing Italy, you might think of eating some delicious pasta or travelling by gondola. Italy has amazing appeal for travelers. You can learn so much through the Italian way of cooking. Food is a huge part of Italian culture. There are so many food and wine tours to choose from; you can customize a tour to your palate, your appetite, and your schedule. In Italy, they are very gracious and hospitable to your requests.

The travel agent I spoke with was very open to accommodations, and most are happy to extend themselves to fit the needs of the prospective travelers. It's never too soon to start planning your next getaway, and I recommend consulting an expert like those I met at the *New York Times* Travel Show.

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The “Stop Snitching Movement”

Matthew Spence



Photo Courtesy of Getty Images

As of 2019, Tekashi 6ix9ine's reign as “King of NY” has officially come to a screeching halt. Whether you were a fan or not, it's hard to deny the 2018 6ix9ine had: from a collab with Nicki Minaj, to beefing with...well... with pretty much everyone in the rap industry throughout the country.

Sadly, all the trolling and negative energy he put out in the world has come back around, and now he has gotten into an undesirable situation, charged according to the RICO Act, (the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, a federal law designed to combat organized crime in the United States), with the possibility of spending over 20 years in prison.

As of now, 6ix9ine has taken a plea deal; if he gives up everyone in his camp involved in the actions he's being charged for, he will receive no jail time and will be put into Witness Protection. This seems like a win (I say), but in the hip-hop community, it's really a lose-lose situation for 6ix9ine, because with this plea deal, he's already being labeled a “rat”. He's gotten flak from a few rappers and more:

his Twitter name was hacked and changed to Snitch9ine at one point.

Hip-hop—well, street culture as a whole—and it's intolerance of “snitching” has a long history, going back decades. Whether it's loyalty, street ethics, and so on, never snitching has been embedded in hip-hop culture. Many rappers, from Biggie to Drake, and countless others have given their stance, expressing their disdain for snitching and snitches themselves.

Jay-Z, on 2003's “Justify My Thug,” said, “I will never tell, even if it means sittin in a cell.” The list of anti-snitching lyrics is continuous, but art reflects reality and many rappers stand by the street code of ethics and don't snitch. For example, Cam'Ron, from The Diplomats, was shot in an attempted carjacking, but he refused to tell who shot him.

Appearing on *60 Minutes* soon after, in an interview, Anderson Cooper asked if he'd call the police on a serial killer living next to him. He replied, “If I knew the serial killer was living next to me, I wouldn't call and tell nobody on them, but I'd probably move.” Overall, this is a muddy situation for his reputation (well, his life overall, but I focus on the music career).

Even though his camp were trying to KILL HIM, people truly believe Tekashi 6ix9ine shouldn't have snitched and instead did the time (Note: I'm not saying he should or shouldn't have snitched). Will this ruin his credibility with his core audience? Will they even care if he snitched? Will his streams increase or decrease after all this? How will he change his life going into the Witness Protection Program? So many questions, but as with everything, time will tell.

Revolutionary Rhythms

Fleetwood Mac



Photo Courtesy of Jillian Parlato

Not often are we able to say we've witnessed living legends in their element. Many times, we look back at certain artists, actors, musicians, and say, “I wish I could have seen them. I wish I had been there.” I wish, I wish...

So when I heard Fleetwood Mac was coming to Hartford's XL Center, I knew I had to go: after all, almost no other band has had such an impact on our culture, crafting a paradigm shift as seamlessly as this group of musicians.

Fleetwood Mac, whose music personified the 70s' contrast of hard-living, sex, and drugs coupled with sensitivity and focus, was formed in London, in 1967, by guitarist Peter Green, drummer Mick Fleetwood, bassist Bob Brunning, and guitarist Jeremy Spencer. John McVie shortly replaced Brunning as bassist. With the release of their second album, Christine McVie joined, playing keyboards. While, for many, Stevie Nicks is synonymous with the name, Fleetwood Mac, she only joined the band in 1975, eight years after its formation, following the arrival and departure of several members.

While formidable and undeniably talented before her arrival, the band benefited greatly from Nicks' signature vibrato and poignant delivery. A majority of their hit songs have largely featured her.

Through the years, and many changes to the lineup, their staying power has always shone through; that's what made me so eager to see them. Today, the band is comprised of

Mick Fleetwood, Christine McVie, John McVie, newcomers Neil Finn and Mike Campbell (of Crowded House and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers fame, respectively), and yes, Stevie Nicks. Notably missing is Lindsey Buckingham, who joined the band with then-girlfriend Nicks, as lead guitarist and veritable maestro, and was responsible for hits such as “Go Your Own Way,” “Tusk,” “Second Hand News,” and “The Chain”. Buckingham departed amidst turmoil and tension with the rest of the band, but is open to rejoining someday.

Despite Buckingham's absence, it's clear the band still has great passion for music and entertainment. They played for two hours with not much of a break, and I found myself particularly impressed with Mick Fleetwood, whose long, fiery drum solo about halfway through the show stunned and amazed the crowd, and whose lively personality and stage antics amused and engaged.

Nicks' voice has stayed miraculously intact. Her powerful vocals were most strongly exemplified in her rousing performance of “Gold Dust Woman,” during which she showed off her signature, rhythmic dance moves: a bohemian caught in the crossfire, lace and fringe swaying as if moved by the wind.

The most touching moment came when Neil Finn, a New Zealand native, dedicated the Crowded House classic and staple of hope, “Don't Dream It's Over,” to the victims of the Christchurch massacre. Tearfully, Stevie Nicks joined him towards the end of the verse, introducing “Landslide” afterwards, also dedicated to the victims.

This night will always stay with me, not only for the excitement and fun, but for the fact that I felt the band all truly cared about their audience, engaging us, friendly and warm. There's something to be said for musicians who, years and years, decades and decades after their debut, still give it their all, making sure the audience feels alive and connected. If you get the chance, please go see them; I promise they're worth the admission price.



Jillian Parlato

alumni SHOWCASE



Amanda Jones

Committed to Care

My name is Amanda Jones, and, ever since I can remember, nursing has always been part of my identity. Being the first in my family to attend college and obtain a degree, NVCC was my stepping stone in my educational journey, where I met so many supportive advisors and professors. My desire to help others and learn about the pathophysiology of illnesses led me to become a nurse. However, I also have a great passion for helping women and children in the community. This is why I've chosen to advance in the nursing profession by pursuing a Doctor of Nursing Practice and Family Nurse Practitioner degree.

I began my career as a visiting nurse in case management and primary care nursing. Working with patients in low-income and Hispanic communities, who knew little to no English, I advocated for them, educating them on disease processes, medications and treatments. Doing this really opened my eyes to the lack of education patients were receiving and to the misunderstandings experienced during appointments and hospital admissions. I worked collaboratively with healthcare professionals to educate my patients, so they could live safer, healthier

lives in their own homes—while maintaining their independence.

This experience led me to continue my education; in spring 2016, I completed my BSN, at Lincoln College of New England, and expanded my nursing experience in a clinical setting. I began working at Hartford's Saint Francis Hospital on a medical surgical unit, caring and advocating for patients during their hospital stay, ensuring they received adequate education in preparation for discharge.

Furthering my education and pursuing my FNP is one of my greatest desires; I know the more I educate myself the more I can give back to my patients. Becoming a Family Nurse Practitioner will allow me to provide preventative care and primary care for my patients. I enjoy all aspects of nursing, but I have a special place in my heart for preventative care, women's and children's health. Once I obtain my FNP and DNP, I plan on specializing in women's health. I'm excited for this career advancement, which will allow me to be a resource for women in underserved communities.

I currently work as a labor and delivery nurse, in Waterbury Hospital's Family Birthing Center. I educate new mothers on what to expect during the birthing process. I care for women during the most life-changing experience of their lives, managing pre-term, term and post-term pregnancies. Sharing these moments with my patients really keeps me motivated to do more for them. As a mother myself—my husband Dwayne and I have a four-year-old, Isabella, and a newborn, Ezekiel—I feel a special connection with new mothers.

Throughout my career, I've been exposed to nursing in a community setting and clinical environment. I've chosen to share all the skills and knowledge obtained through my nursing practice with my church's ministry, Value of One. This organization performs community outreach, educating individuals within the community about healthy living, and guiding them toward resources to stay healthy. Helping with blood pressure clinics, teaching about diabetes care, and advocating for members of the minority portion of the community have ignited a spark in me to continue my education and obtain my degree as a Family Nurse Practitioner.

Satanic Panic '81

Mitchell Maknis

Music is a powerful form of art; its ambiance resonates within each listener on a personal level, carrying an emotional influence throughout life. Music has also been known to send chills down one's spine. Horror scores, especially, can instill a lifelong trepidation, reminding people of the insidious terror they once experienced through film. Composers Brian Burdzy and Bruce Tedford have encapsulated their passion for the macabre by creating an authentic sense of eeriness and fear-invoking music, personified in their stage name: *Satanic Panic '81*. The pair appropriately dubs their musical style as horrorsynth, their modern incarnation of the classic musical formula.

Growing up in Sussex County, New Jersey, Burdzy was isolated from his friends and spent his weekends alone at home. He listened to mixtapes and rode his bicycle to the local Maple Tree Video Store whose proprietor would allow him to rent racy horror features not suitable for children. Aside from watching horror pictures, Brian spent his pre-pubesence secretly listening to punk music, knowing his mother would have discarded his CDs and cassettes if she'd found out. Brian went on to mention that because of these genres' influence, his worldview, as well as how he interacted with people, changed. He attended two years of community college, enjoying life as a college student, hanging out with friends and utilizing his musical inclination by performing in local bands. When Brian joined the band, *Screams from the*

Burn Unit, he met the other half of *Satanic Panic*, Bruce Tedford.

When asked about their first meeting

Burdzy recounts Tedford being “a nice guy” and “a big metal head.” He further expanded on their endless conversations on music and pop culture. When *Screams from the Burn Unit* broke up, Brian and Bruce remained in contact, later deciding to collaborate on a joint venture. Initially, the two launched a horror movie podcast which served as the seed of inspira-

tion for composing their own horror themes. As a result, they formed the musical duo known as *Satanic Panic '81*.

Throughout this musical union, the pair has effectively captured the essence of vintage horror composition, while also incorporating an aspect of sinister storytelling, evident within their debut album *The Sacrifice Hunter*. Encouraged by their expanding following, the two musicians have been reportedly stockpiling synthesizers in preparation for their next album. Brian disclosed he is excited by the direction in which Bruce is taking their next venture. Additionally, *Satanic Panic '81* has been exploring the prospect of performing live shows and is now in negotiations with writer/director Kurtis Spieler to compose a score for the upcoming motion picture, *The Girl In Apartment 3*.

Support the works of *Satanic Panic '81* by following them on Bandcamp, Spotify, or any of their social media outlets.



That's What She Said

I Ask.
Do You?

Jessica Ney

The theme of this year's Sexual Assault Awareness Month, set by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, is "I Ask." This takes a step away from the idea that women must be the main fighters of sexual assault. There is a sense of change in the community around the topics of assault and consent. Thanks to the #metoo movement, and general social reform in our country, sexual assault has become a household conversation.

The focus is changing to healthy relationships, communication, and always asking for consent. This is an important change for men and women everywhere. There is a need for consent to be understood and respected. In ongoing relationships, it is often "understood" consent, rather than each partner responsibly communicating if they do (or don't) want to consent.

This current movement is changing that mindset, which could hopefully drop the rates of marital rape and sexual assault in youth populations. When each partner, male, female, or other, takes responsibility for asking, "Is this okay?" "Can we _____?" "Are you interested in this?" it brings an openness to the relationship that may not have existed. This creates a new level of comfort, communication, and mutual respect.

Asking for consent doesn't kill the mood or interrupt anything; consent is a powerful tool in all relationships: long-term, monogamous, open, one-time, or new. Asking for consent stimulates communication about pleasure and what each partner enjoys. It relieves pressure, allowing us to take a step back and consider what we actually want.

This theme can have a profound trickle-down effect. Imagine a generation of empowered people, educated properly on sex. If health classes addressed consent, pleasure, and how to ask and give consent, feelings of shame would be a thing of the past; giving in to pressure and relentless "come-ons" would happen less. Even teenage pregnancy rates could drop.

Sexual Assault Awareness is more than just an explanation of rape and how to avoid it, or how to protect oneself. Sexual Assault must be prevented through education, not just reacted to afterward. This "I Ask" campaign will spark conversations about how sex should be, and how to respect one's partner, opening eyes and minds.

Maybe people will finally understand that so-called "false claims" are often occurrences of women giving up on fighting a forceful partner. Others involve a girl at a party who came out of her shell after a few drinks. In the moment, maybe she was interested in sex, but had been saving herself for marriage, or a long-term relationship—and when she said "No," it was ignored. Or maybe the person who committed the assault persisted until getting an unsure yes.

Consent is not static. A grudging yes is not enough. "I Ask" is addressing this as well. Crossing boundaries is assault. If a partner wants one thing but not another, that must be respected. And ignoring signs and refusals is assault, regardless if you were initially given the "go-ahead".

It's time for a social awakening regarding sexual assault, consent, and what a healthy relationship needs. This April, challenge norms. Ask for consent. Ask your partner what they want. Challenge people who call #metoo a waste of time. It's our time to take back the bedroom and our bodies. Sex is powerful and should always be pleasurable. Being timid about our needs and limits isn't helpful. Listen to your body, listen to one another. Communicate.

Socialism and America's Youth

Ryan Martins

The American Dream, in many ways, is the promise of upward mobility. It's the expectation that American children will make more than their parents, and the simplistic belief that—with hard work—equality is possible for all citizens. In effect, it represents hope for a financially secure life.

Yet the economy the American Dream was built on has been disappointing Americans, and in particular, American youth. With nearly 55% of millennials showing little to no trust in capitalism, a growing number blame an irresponsible and greedy free market, one they believe has placed the interests of the elite above the middle class and those in poverty.

Lately, an ideology has resurfaced in American politics that is quickly gaining popularity, particularly with millennials. Its influence is growing among Washington Democrats and has been claimed as a check-and-balance for current capitalist greed. The ideology, socialism, has been around for a while, but recently it has begun creating conversation in American politics.

Politically, socialist advocacy has been referred to as Democratic Socialism. Representative Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez has referred to herself as a Democratic Socialist, as has Bernie Sanders. Simply put, Democratic Socialism is a push for the American economy to adopt socialist values, in hopes of improving quality of life for middle-class Americans. Examples would be universal government-funded healthcare, a marginal tax rate for the rich, free education, and universal basic income.

A controversial example is Congresswoman Cortez's "Green New Deal," a resolution advocating for environmental health that also includes proposals stemming from socialistic ideology, such as free college education and a basic income plan for all. Surprisingly, this arguably radical resolution was met with tremendous support from the left and especially from millennials.

The push for socialism in American politics hasn't received unanimous acclaim, however, with many conservatives referring to the "Green New Deal" as a "Trojan horse for socialism." The weekly magazine, *The Economist*, published a late February article titled "Millennial

Socialism," subtitled "A new kind of left-wing doctrine is emerging. It is not the answer to capitalism's problems." The article accurately articulated that a growing number of millennials are embracing the movement to Democratic Socialism but argued that change or opposition toward the free market is a dangerous course of action. While *The Economist* has a pro-free market editorial board, the stance echoes a sentiment across the political right that the growing support for socialist values is dangerous. Some argue that any form of socialism is simply a stepping stone toward the United States becoming a communist nation.

However, socialism is not a concept that can be explained, rebutted, or defended in one article. Neither can it be said millennials are inherently socialist for supporting proposals like the "Green New Deal". Nonetheless, the debate on whether socialism and its influence is healthy for Democracy continues on, but how many truly understand the concept? Many have faith the free market will restore middle-class living, while others advocate for radical change. Really, though, when has an economic system ever completely delivered on its promises?

YouTube's Shapeshifting Dominion

Jane Courlet

In 2005, when many college students were only a few kilobytes into their phone data, tech friends Jawed Karim, Steve Chen, and Chad Hurley, who met in Silicon Valley while working for PayPal, launched the iconic do-it-yourself video platform, YouTube. YouTube immediately scored a self-ratifying victory by airing a Nike ad that garnered a resounding one million views. Advertisers sat up, and the slightly wobbly world of piano-pounding cats, Batdad, and Justin Beiber was soon denized by podcasts, challenges, webinars, weirdoes, and enthusiasts of every kind.

At the same time that ordinary citizens of the world showed their unique skills—or lack thereof—educators saw the free forum as a way to assign projects and spread information, and companies saw consumers posting videos showcasing the "unboxing" and reviews of their products, providing user instructions on everything from abdominal stimulators to zither tutorials. It was soon possible for YouTube to offer select contributors a chance to have their "channel" sponsored for money.

The title for a video blogger, "Vlogger," was added to our lexicon.

In many ways, the immediate thrill of YouTube is still with us. There we can yet see, for free, live streams of solar eclipses as well as coverage for pressing terrestrial and socio-political events. We can still, like *The Office's* manager, Michael Scott, confess to not working for days, instead getting lost in hilarious spoof videos. At times, we can all benefit from a harmless "Epic Rap Battle" between Miley Cyrus and Joan of Arc. It's a nice escape to see a sunset in Bali or comforting to view an osprey pair take really stellar care of their chicks. Life is better knowing there is now an acronym, ASMR, for pleasant little sounds that make us feel happy, sleepy and tingly, though some of the videos are slightly icky.

On the other hand, there are hints YouTube might be changing forever. Promos abound for "YouTube Red," a pay-for service launched without fanfare in 2016, in order to develop serial content such as that found on Amazon

Prime and Netflix Originals. "Red" is still being offered for a free trial, which leads one to believe that, like the trial, the free, wide-open nature of YouTube is set to end at some undisclosed point in the near future. In reality, the prototype "YouTube Red" has already been rebranded as YouTube Premium, with a separate music-streaming version, named YouTube Premium Music, Google's alternative to Apple Music and services like Spotify.

There probably is no way to slow down these trains, but questions abound. Will the monthly paying subscriber find YouTube has banned forever those robotic voiceovers that tinnily mispronounce every other word? Will it be thinning out the herd of conspiracy theorists who believe they see a politician's face turn "reptilian" at the 13:07 mark of a video? Will the delightful woman who repeatedly pretends to find "treasure" in the creek near her house be excluded from the premium service? If YouTube's answer to these critical questions is yes, our unjaded online world may vanish quicker than a tiny hamster eating a tiny burrito.

Love/Hate

Anonymous

I hate the words "I love you." The sentiment's nice, but I can't stand the phrase itself. When two things occur together, humans tend to create an association between them; if one happens, we expect the other. So I hate that wonderful little phrase. I'm sure anyone would if they'd experienced what I have. Though it wasn't violent, it can be just as damaging to a child's mind over time, especially when they realize just what happened to them. They can feel used, trapped, and even more violated than when the act occurred. It's even worse if it keeps occurring over a long span of time. At least it was for me.

One reason I've never told this story is because I felt as though I didn't have a right. Logically, I know that's ridiculous, but emotions don't deal in logic. What I went through was nothing compared to other stories I've

heard, so in comparison, what right do I have to feel victimized by it? In comparison, how is my story anything to complain about?

Every time someone talks about sexual assault, they think of a violent crime, but that's not always the case. For me, it wasn't violent. He was actually overly nice, which made me sick to my stomach every time. I felt trapped, used, violated, and didn't think anyone would listen. There was a time in my life it got to the point where I actually wished something more would happen to me, just so I would have the right to feel the way I'm feeling.

Only adding to this illogical notion, I've also always felt it was my fault... I was seven when it started and thirteen when it ended. It only got worse when I realized all it took was standing up for myself. I probably could've stopped it years before I did, if I had only been brave enough to speak up and realize the power he had was only in my head. He threatened that

bad stuff would happen if I told anyone, and I was terrified of being the reason my friend lost her grandfather. So I obeyed, but really there was no reason to be afraid in the first place.

It wasn't as horrible as it could've been, I know, but I still think about it every day. I still remember how he put his hands on me... inside me. When I did finally break free, I hated myself for years for letting that happen. Of course I know it wasn't my fault. I know I didn't just "let it happen," but it still feels that way sometimes. What I have the hardest time forgetting now is how he whispered "I love you" into my ear.

I do still find comfort when people I love say that to me, but I have a hard time saying it, unless I'm sure I really love them. Right now, there aren't a lot of people I can say it to, but the number is growing. Hopefully, in light of recent realizations, I may soon even be able to say it to myself.

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Earth Matters

Yellowstone's Supervolcano



Alyssa Katz

Yellowstone National Park has been in the news regarding its caldera volcano and recent "awakening" of the Steamboat Geyser. The park's recent bout of seismic activity has scientists wondering if an impending volcanic eruption is possible. Yellowstone, the oldest national park in the US, stretches across three states—Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho—with the bulk of the park in Wyoming. Along with the park's natural beauty, its nature and wildlife, it's also home to supervolcanoes.

A supervolcano is a very large volcano whose magnitude reaches eight on the Volcanic Explosivity Index, meaning that it spewed out over 240 cubic miles of lava and ash upon eruption. A caldera is a volcanic depression, similar to a crater, that is generally formed when magma is expelled or erupted from its magma reservoir. As a result of this, the ground deforms because it cannot sustain the amount of volume or pressure from the eruption.

Interestingly, these natural wonders: geysers, mud ponds, and hot springs, are caused by hydrothermal/magmatic flow activity from volcanic magma chambers that lie beneath the Earth's surface. According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), if such an explosion from the Yellowstone supervolcano were to occur, the results would be catastrophic. The question is whether the caldera is active, and if it is "overdue" for an eruption.

In January, 84 earthquakes were reported across the park, and 81 in February, with 17 occurring in one day alone, along with many "swarms" of tremors that followed. The largest magnitude was recorded at 3.1, with the largest tremor marking at a 1.3. While it may seem alarming, this activity is normal, considering the park experiences thousands of earthquakes each year. The USGS states that "Earthquake swarms like this are common and account for roughly 50 percent of the total seismicity in the Yellowstone region."

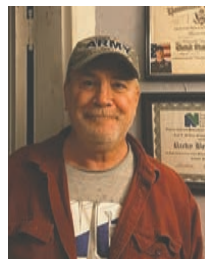
The caldera that's been receiving recent attention resides in the Northwest region of Wyoming. It formed from the Lava Creek Volcano that occurred over 650,000 years ago, which was also the last time an eruption at Yellowstone occurred. Its diameter stretches 34 miles by 45 miles. Yellowstone Scientists stated if the caldera were to erupt, it could kill thousands of people and countless animals, and destroy cities. The ash from such an eruption could spread across the entirety of the United States.

From a report in early March, the caldera's ground deformation has been increasing by a couple of millimeters each month since 2015. Other than that, not much activity has been reported and the volcano has remained fairly stagnant. Regardless, it's likely an eruption wouldn't occur for thousands of years. It's interesting to consider that something as beautiful as Yellowstone can rest atop something so deadly.

Veteran's Voice

Organizations for Veterans and Families

Rick Bellagamba



Today, with thousands of non-profit organizations in the United States, it's hard to know which ones are legitimate and worth giving your time and hard-earned money. You should know whether your donations are funding services for those in need first, especially when there are so many recently exposed

scams.

During my research, I found a list of Top Trusted Military Organizations and Non-profits, including: Fisher House Foundation, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), Give An Hour, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), United Service Organizations (USO), Semper Fi Fund, Honor Flight Network, Bob Woodruff Family Foundation, Children of Fallen Patriots Foundation, Operation Gratitude, Operation Care & Comfort, Operation Homefront, Hope For The Warriors, and the Gary Sinise Foundation, to name a few.

However, I also found about 6 to 10 other lists with different names, many of which overlap the ones mentioned. The ratings are all over the place, but the non-profits who do not have high paying CEO's and administrators are giving the most to those in real need. Many so-called non-profits use professional fundraisers who can keep up to 90% of funds collected. This is not only true of military causes, but a fact with all charities. So it seems important to research any organization asking you for a donation.

The veteran's organization, *Soldier On*, is a nationally-recognized non-profit organization committed to ending veteran homelessness. *Soldier On's* goal, since 1994, is to provide

formerly homeless veterans, men and women, with permanent, supportive, sustainable housing, assisting them in their transition from homelessness to homeownership while working closely with the VA by providing a safe and sober environment.

For more than 119 years, the *Veterans of Foreign Wars* (VFW) have been pillars of support in communities throughout the world, from coordinating welcome home celebrations and community picnics, to building playgrounds and organizing clothing drives, to name a few activities.

The *American Legion*, chartered and incorporated by Congress in 1919, is a not-for-profit organization with large political influence, advocating many programs promoting a wholesome lifestyle for veterans. The *Legion* stands behind issues most important to our nation's veterans, backed by devoted volunteer leadership. It is the nation's largest wartime veterans' service organization, committed to mentoring youth and sponsorship of many programs advocating patriotism and honor, promoting a strong national security.

A form of gratitude we military veterans enjoy are discounts from retail establishments. I found lists consisting of many participating establishments, too many to mention. I've also discovered many retail and service centers, hotels, airlines, and just about every field of service imaginable, do not advertise their discounts for military service members. I recommend asking when paying your tab (make sure to carry military ID). There are hundreds of American businesses willing to show support for military members, (and first responders), and let's face it, we served our country for below average pay, so why shouldn't we enjoy a few extra bucks off now and then?

Different Roads On Civil Discourse

Kathleen Chesto

Years ago, with my youngest home from college with friends, there was a heated discussion about directions back to campus. Liz's friend, David, and I disagreed about the correct exit to the college; several friends joined in the fracas on both sides. I don't remember the exit numbers we disputed, but they weren't even close.

I knew I was right. Liz was my second child at Wesleyan. I'd been driving that route for more years than David had had a license. But he insisted he was correct. Thinking perhaps one of us had the number confused, I asked what his exit looked like, where it came out. As we compared exits, we realized we were talking about different highways. I was on I-84, and he was describing Rte. 9.

When we stopped laughing, David looked me in the eyes, smiled, and said quietly, "See, Kathy, I don't have to be wrong in order for you to be right."

The wisdom in that simple statement will stay with me forever. You don't have to be wrong in order for me to be right. How many arguments, particularly in the political arena, are about trying to prove someone else is wrong? Why? Because somewhere, deep inside, we still believe we must prove someone wrong in order to be right.

Maybe they *are* wrong. But maybe we're just on different roads.

Civil conversation begins with listening, really listening, not just keeping quiet until we get to make our point. It means making sure we're discussing the same road, understanding the direction from which the other is coming, and how that might change the choices they make.

Civil conversation requires being comfortable enough with what we believe to allow someone else to simply believe differently. Civil conversation requires being comfortable enough with ourselves to consider trying a different exit.

Thank You All

Gardens of Delight

Kathleen Chesto



Photo Courtesy of OCM

In spring 2016, I ventured onto NVCC's campus to register for a summer class, my first time on campus in several decades. My overwhelming initial impression was its beautiful landscaping and lovely little gardens. After a brief, indoor conversation, I ventured outside, wandering the grounds and discovering one lovely garden after another, quiet nooks inviting peaceful meditation.

Thinking back, I combed my memory for gardens on the many college campuses I'd attended or visited. My recollections conjured up grassy malls and majestic old buildings, but no gardens. Curiosity sent me back to Kinney's fifth floor, where I was astonished to discover the grounds were the work of our own Horticulture Department students and faculty.

That summer, I shunned the garage, chose a variety of parking lots, and enjoyed different landscaped spaces on my way to class. Last November, noticing the greenhouse filled with activity, curiosity drew me in, and I was offered a detailed tour by teaching assistant Jayne Dunn.

Dozens of young poinsettias were being fostered for a holiday sale. Just beyond them, large vegetable plants were being grown hydroponically. Students are being taught to prepare for a sustainable future when arable soil may become limited. The harvested fresh vegetables would be sent to the College food pantry and Hospitality Department. I studied these focused students, recognizing they were involved in feeding the earth.

When asked to write this "Thank You All" column for *The Tamarack*, I knew exactly whom I wanted to thank. A conversation with Horticulture Professor Chris Tuccio revealed far more than I had been able to observe.

NVCC's Horticulture Program is a two-year associate degree program in plant production or landscape service or design. Students are involved not only in feeding us, but in caring for the carefully manicured grounds we have the privilege of enjoying. We have twelve gardens; two are part of national research projects. On Earth Day, April 22nd, you'll find horticulture students cleaning up wetlands on campus, helping preserve its undeveloped areas.

Our horticulture students are currently creating a garden for the new Mary Jean Pisani Alcove that holds the sculpture, "The Unfulfilled Kiss," donated by Guiseppe Pisani, but their contributions extend far beyond campus. They designed and built a children's learning garden for Prendergast Elementary School in Ansonia.

In February, students created a landscape display for the CT Flower Show, competing against professional landscape businesses throughout the state. NVCC's student design won two awards: "Best Outdoor Living Space" and "Best Urban Garden". Two judges also contacted Professor Tuccio privately to note how impressive the display was and to commend the great work of our students.

Thank you to all who have worked so hard for our campus and community and brought distinction to our college. We may not know your names or faces, but we recognize the beauty you have created, and we benefit from your dedicated service.

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Harassment 101

Gwenydd Miller

There's no way to really approach this topic without sounding redundant or preachy, or without people feeling they're being singled out or blamed. Or maybe those who feel singled out are those who've been on the receiving end. Either way, sexual harassment is something that affects us all in some way. It's a serious issue we hear about again and again. But I'm not sure how much we actually hear; when something is repeated enough, it can become background noise. People hear it without actually listening. They nod their heads and agree it's bad, but what do most people actually do to prevent it?

Just to be clear, let's go back to basics: sexual harassment is defined as "uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature, especially by a person in authority toward a subordinate (such as an employee or student)." Sexual harassment makes an environment hostile and extremely uncomfortable for those who experience it. It can come in the form of asking for sexual favors, or making unwelcome comments. The advances may or may not be designed to make a person feel uncomfortable, but that's the effect they have.

Sometimes we don't recognize harassment because we're not looking for it, or we're looking in the wrong places. When people think of sexual harassment, they normally think of a woman being harassed by a man or group of men, but that's not always the case. Men also experience harassment, though people don't usually take as much notice. Besides, aren't men supposed to just shrug that sort of thing off—or even like it when it happens?

People have ideas passed down by society; one of these is that men are sexually promiscuous and women are prudes. And that's true...as true as saying all African Americans listen to hip-hop, or all Italians are loud, or all gay men are fashionistas. While these examples seem to hold some truth in relation to certain individuals, they're really just stereotypes. And they're damaging to both groups and individuals because they blind people to what's really happening—and to seeing the individual—in front of them. Of course, all men aren't promiscuous, nor are all women prudes. Men can be harassed the same as women, and women can be perpetrators the same as men.

So, how can we stop harassment? Well it's a bit more complicated than you might think. Unfortunately, there's more to it than just telling people to stop. Sometimes they might not even realize they're doing something wrong (remember those damaging societal ideas), and stepping in might create a worse situation. The best ways I can think of would be to moderate your own behavior, to comment to friends if you see them behaving inappropriately, and to stand up for and support others.

Other proactive ways to combat harassment are to look online for resources or go to events—like those held on our campus—specifically organized conversations about abuse and consent. How harassment should be handled depends on the situation, but the best approach is to listen and be there for people. Really, the most we can do is our best.

Jay-Z's Def Jam Presidency

Matthew Spence

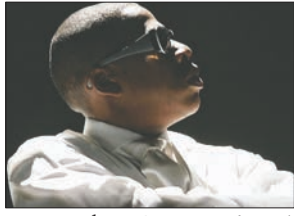


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The mid-2000's were a wild card of an era for Jay-Z to say the least. From retiring from music but still giving features, to releasing two more albums after his supposed final album, which includes dropping the beloved *Black Album* to dropping 2006's *Kingdom Come* to mixed reviews, it was quite a ride.

Even so, in 2004, Shawn Carter reached a milestone in his career to that point. He was named President and CEO of Def Jam Records. With this being set in stone, a freshly "retired" Jay-Z officially established a boss/hustler persona and definitely added to his legacy and his greatness. With Jay given this "big boss" role in his music, it was time to put his money where his mouth was and head the biggest, most important label in hip-hop history (which is also the label he is under at this time).

However, as he took that job behind the desk, the rocky presidency began. Under Jay's presidency many artists have had their issues with the man behind the desk. DMX, years after Jay's presidency, claimed he lost respect for him once he became president of Def Jam, stating, "Don't misunderstand me. He is talented, but he has no heart behind it. There's no soul behind it. It's motivated by money...But I still maintain the respect, because our birthday is in the same month and you know, we have history. But I lost it when he became president of Def Jam, that's why I left Def Jam."

Hip-Hop legend LL Cool J made his issues with Jay-Z and Def Jam public with an MTV interview in 2007, in which he said, "Things are not all rosy up there [at Def Jam]. Too many [artists] have suffered: Method Man, Redman, the Roots, Fabolous, Ludacris! The list goes on. Nobody is getting promoted the way they should be promoted. I'm one man. I can't battle a whole record label. So we not gonna try to turn this into what it's not. To try and battle a record label is foolish. It's bad enough they are calling around to radio stations telling them not to play my records."

To LL's point, a lot of the Def Jam artists failed to go platinum under Jay's term. Many factors may have come into play, such as the increase of music piracy and decrease of music sales in the mid-2000s. But few Def Jam artists did well, outside Rihanna, Ne-Yo, Kanye and Young Jeezy. Many artists got pushed back and so on, while, some left like DMX.

With all that happening, it wasn't a good look when Jay-Z released two albums while president and was able to give more promotion to his own projects than to his artists' (including former rival, Nas). At the end of this era, Jay-Z has lost his status as an artist, and is considered merely a *businessman*.

Queer Code Representation

Alexander Wilson



Let's take a minute to talk about media. Specifically, fictional media. More and more, I see a rise of LGBTQIA characters in books, TV shows, and movies. Cool, right? I thought so. Until I did a little research. And by research, I mean binge-watching *Orange is the New Black*.

Don't get me wrong, I love the show. I'm a sucker for drama. But I found a lot of fault in how they treated queer characters. Hell, the main character herself is clearly bisexual, but they never seem to use that word. They dance between straight and lesbian. She's married to a man, but has a history with women, and seems to be content in how she feels in terms of her sexuality. Yet they continuously try to force "a side".

Unfortunately, this mirrors real life. Bisexual people are often told to "pick a side." It's worse depending on one's gender presentation. Feminine people are often told they just haven't found the right man. Masculine people are told they're secretly gay. They often have difficulty finding (and staying) in relationships due to their partner's insecurity and fear they'll be left for someone of the other attraction.

Okay, I admit, one good thing the producers did was hire a trans woman to play a trans woman character, Sophia. Downside, they forced her character to explain herself to everyone. She shouldn't've had to justify her existence. Granted, it was similar to how trans women are treated in prisons, as far as I can tell. I still wish they'd have done better.

Speaking of trans women, a movie you may have seen, *The Danish Girl*, starred...Eddie Redmayne. Uh, excuse me? No cisgender man should EVER play a trans woman. And don't

get me started on drag. I get that it's a subculture within the community, but it makes life a lot harder for trans people. Back to the movie, a highly fictionalized account of one of the first trans women to undergo sex reassignment surgery. If anything, this could've been a great documentary, not unlike *Becoming Chaz* (2013). Sadly, they chose a cis man to play a trans woman through transition, because—what?—they needed a penis. Not like there's makeup artists who make prostheses or anything... *insert rolling eyes emoji here*.

Also rarely seen are non-binary characters. Netflix came through with *One Day at a Time*, a remake of the original show of the same name. In season two they introduced Syd, a non-binary character, as the dating partner of main character, Elena. Not only is there proper LGBTQ representation, but this show features a Latino family—great all-around representation. Unfortunately, it recently got cancelled.

We're finally seeing representation in kids shows, despite adults' backlash. Popular Hulu cartoon, *Steven Universe*, features loving romantic relationships between two women, as well as their marriage. There is also a non-binary character, a sort of gendermorph between two characters. Another show, *Andi Mack*, has a gay main character, come out to his female friend, saying he wasn't jealous of her love interest, but of the friend herself. He wanted to date her boyfriend.

People ask why we want representation so badly. Maybe because we've had to watch the same romantic comedy repeatedly, with just the names changed. Maybe because trans characters are reduced to a joke, or their transitions, and are never just people. Maybe because, despite all the evidence we exist in real life, it's never represented accurately in popular media.

You get to see yourselves represented all the time. You can put yourselves in the shoes of whatever celebrity is in that rom-com. They match you. We want that same chance. Like the old rallying cry proclaims, "We're here! We're queer! Get used to it!"

Alexander, who will write these characters himself if he must

Public Image

Christian Cruz

March was filled with sex scandals, from Robert Kraft being involved with a human trafficking organization, to R. Kelly finally being charged for sex with underaged women. The news has given U.S. citizens an opportunity to reflect.

Regarding Kelly, people have ignored his antics for decades. Now, after the documentary, *Surviving R. Kelly*, they're suddenly outraged, crying, "Oh those poor girls!" Hmmm, outrage is good, but... This man has been doing this for decades. What, you expected him just to stop?

Kelly's approach seems to be: no harm/no foul. He's been given a supreme "nothing-can-touch-me" card. Why change if no punishment has ever been levied? I believe in our court system, but money talks. For some reason we've always allowed it: With enough money, most any problem can disappear, no matter the evidence. It's shameful, and the same goes for Robert Kraft.

If someone has enough cash, almost any problem can go away. In Kraft's case, he's the

billionaire owner of the Super Bowl Champion New England Patriots. You'd think he'd be above paying for sex. This isn't just another black eye for the NFL. If Kraft is complicit in an industry that dehumanizes people, using them as objects for gratification, he should be held to the highest of standards. I want to say he should sell his franchise, but I doubt those lines will be crossed. His cash will likely make him untouchable, with this, too, swept under the rug, even though it involves something as disgusting as human trafficking.

Public image seems not to matter anymore. Everyone seems to be doing something shady when they think nobody can see. Whether for more money, pleasure, or to elevate their status, they take risks. What happened to just following the laws on the books? Of course, these are famous figures not only in the U.S., but worldwide, and fame often leads people to feel they're above the law. However, we're all human, so we should afford each other the equal value we like to preach every day. I'm interested to see what kind of punishment is levied. If it's another slap on the wrist, why even bother?

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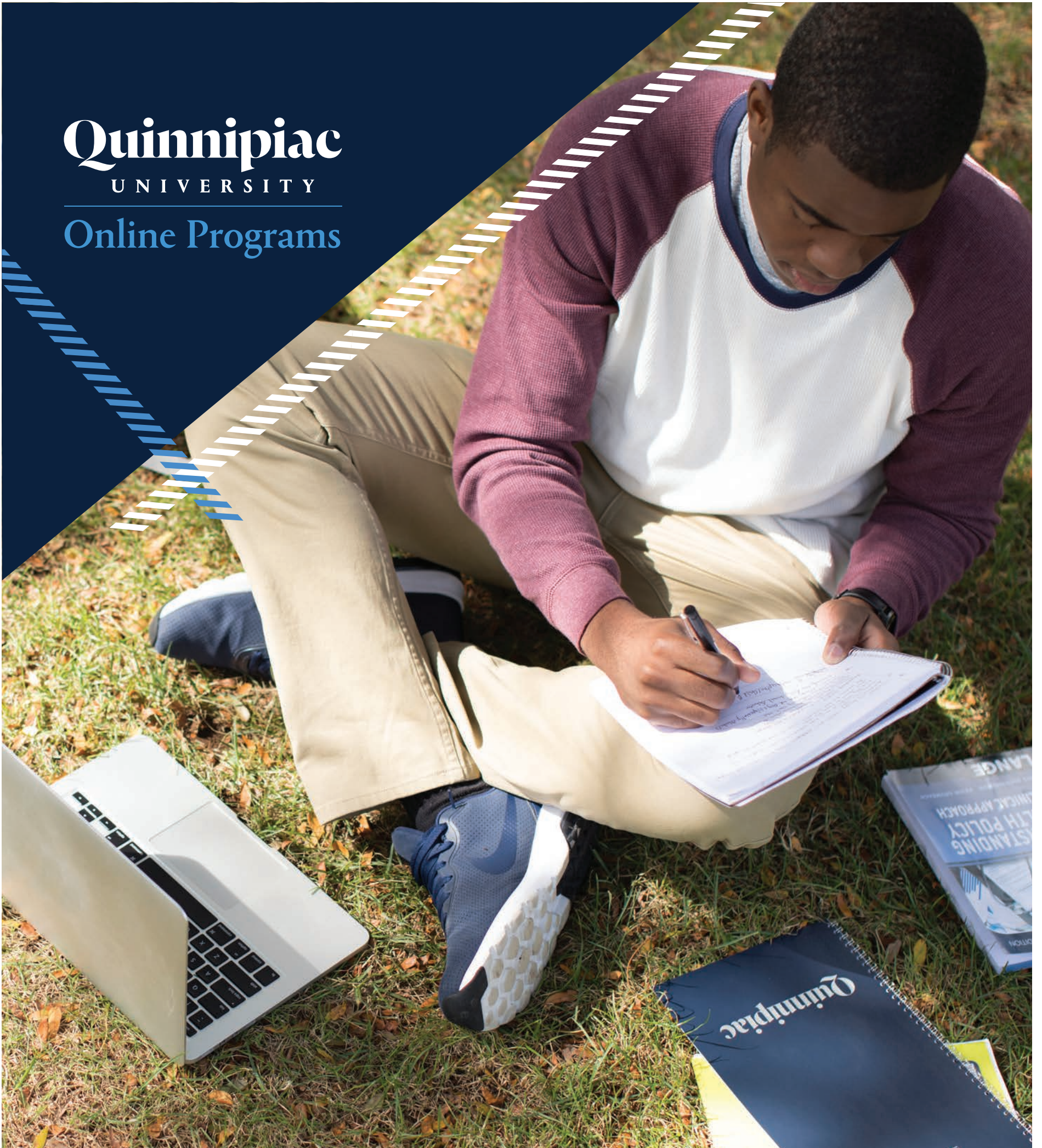
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