

The Tamarack

Our college. Our news. Our voice.

Naugatuck Valley Community College

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The Week of March 9th

Kathleen Chesto



The second week of March 2020 will, I suspect, stand out in our memories for years to come. In some ways, it feels like the week the world stood still. More realistically, it feels like the week our world began spinning off its axis. March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus, or COVID-19, a pandemic. A pandemic is announced when the World Health Organization determines a disease for which there is no known immunity or cure will affect a large majority of the nations of the world. An epidemic, in contrast, is an outbreak of serious illness within one country.

Dr. Nathalie MacDermott, of the National Institute for Health, says: "The change of term does not alter anything practically as the world has been advised for the last few weeks to prepare for a potential pandemic, which has hopefully been taken seriously by all countries. The use of this term, however, highlights the importance of countries throughout the world working cooperatively and openly and coming together as a united front in our efforts to bring this situation under control."

As of March 13, 2020, there are over 145,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 worldwide, but health officials say the number is far greater, with many unreported and undiagnosed cases. There have been at least 4,613 deaths. The United States has over 1,200 cases, and the numbers at this time are doubling every day. At NVCC, the event hit home on Monday, March 9th. All large events, all school trips were cancelled into April. This is a small event on the world scale but, given the complaints in the halls, a wakeup call. COVID-19 was not only real, it was here. The threat of school closing and online classes hung in the air.

March 10th, Wuhan, China, ground

zero for the virus, reported hopeful signs of recovery. The stock market responded by making its own slight recovery, in the hope the world economy might ride out the storm if things improved rapidly enough. That evening, the president addressed the nation. Times of crisis have been opportunities for past presidents to unite the nation, to be a beacon of hope, with concrete plans and strength to face the future. Unfortunately, this president chose to attack the European Union, blaming its open borders for the spread of the virus. He was barring all planes—passenger and stock—from the continent. Far from comforting people, it sent businesses and families into panic mode.

March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus, or COVID-19, a pandemic.

In Europe, the announcement sent the stock market into a downward spiral and world leaders into a state of fury. In a strong statement echoing Dr. MacDermott of NIH, the European Union voiced its disapproval, stating, "This is a global crisis, not limited to any continent and it requires cooperation rather than unilateral action." On Wednesday, March 11, the NYS Exchange opened with a similar response: stocks plummeting. For the first time in history, trading had to be shut down twice to keep the market from going into free fall.

No one wants the market to lose 10% of its value, no matter how long it takes. To watch it happen in one day, as it did Wednesday, March 11th, moved the financial world into shock. Those numbers translate

into lost revenue, lost jobs, a downslide in the economy. In France, where virus cases still numbered in double digits, President Macron, in a preemptive move, shut down all schools. He feared becoming another Italy, where the whole country had been on lockdown. Macron recognized children are least likely to catch the virus but pointed out they are the most likely carriers. Denmark and Norway had already closed school systems.

Back at NVCC, an official announcement indicated CSCU institutions would remain closed after spring break and all classes would continue online until April 5th. By Thursday, the decision had been made not to wait. The college system closed Friday, March 13th. Throughout the day, public school systems followed suit across the state. By Friday morning, it was announced all CT public schools would be closed for two weeks and the state had waived the 180-day attendance requirement.

The primary purpose of virus containment is not to stop people from getting it. Most will be exposed, regardless. The primary purpose is to spread out the development of symptoms to ensure the medical system is not overwhelmed and unable to care for the critically ill. By the time this *Tamarack* is in your hands, you'll be able to judge if this was too little, too late, or if these preemptive measures were too extreme. Even if we're fortunate to claim the latter, we'll still be left with one question: Were the extreme measures of the week of March 9th what ultimately prevented us becoming another Italy? If so, it will be to the credit of government officials who responded quickly, and to citizens who complied reasonably. Either way, it will be time for us to focus on recovery, for ourselves, our economy, and our world.

Reassurance from the President

Excerpted from March 19, 2020 Weekly Bulletin

Dear Members of the NVCC Family:

The first lines of Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* set the stage for my brief remarks: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." One understandably could argue these are the "worst of times." Yes, the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, the illnesses and deaths, the economic hardships, and increasing uncertainties can make us sad and fearful. They are testing us internationally in ways most of us have not seen since previous world wars and major natural disasters.

However, we are seeing the "best of times" among those who demonstrate kindness, patience, and resilience during these challenging times. The calls for helping each other have been heard around the state and in our communities. Each day we hear about family helping family and neighbors helping neighbors, especially our most vulnerable citizens.

Here at NVCC, we strive for the best of times amid this seemingly worst of times. Our faculty continue to prepare online classes so students can complete them on time, as conditions allow. Thanks to our technology experts, students have the internet tools to access the content and class interactions to benefit from the revised ways of teaching and learning. Web access to tutoring and academic advising will keep them on track toward their course responsibilities and graduation goals.

As of this writing, both NVCC campuses are closed through the end of spring semester. However, NVCC staff are available by email and phone to address financial aid, records, payments, and other concerns. While we were on Spring Recess, our hardworking facilities staff cleaned classrooms and buildings to maintain a healthy environment when campus-based classes and activities resume. The NVCC Family on the Waterbury and Danbury Campuses are taking care of our own.

March 17th, CSCU System President Mark Ojikian issued directives to all 17 institutions, designed to responsibly minimize exposure to Coronavirus while making sure our students continue their studies this semester. Therefore, classes will resume online on Monday, March 23rd and remain online through the end of the semester.

As you are all aware, these are unprecedented times for higher education. I am working closely with my senior leadership team to consider ways in which we might celebrate our wonderful students and their multitude of successes while complying with guidance issued by President Ojikian and in keeping with best practices recommended by the CDC. Please be patient as we work to plan the rest of the semester and how NVCC moves forward together. We will continue to update everyone as more information becomes available; please be on the lookout for further communications.

In the meantime, NVCC Family Members, please follow state and national guidelines about social distancing and personal hygiene. Both are important ways to curb this unfortunate, quick-spreading virus outbreak. Conditions change almost daily, so we will monitor advisories and requirements from Governor Ned Lamont and the CSCU System Office. You'll hear from us as further guidance is available. Please continue checking college email frequently. We are looking still toward the best of times.

Mil gracias y bendiciones to all NVCC Family Members.

Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D.
President, Naugatuck Valley Community College

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



An Unanticipated April

Welcome, April! I hope by this point everyone is holding up well against the virus. This extended time away has brought me little but cabin fever. It's not the way I wanted to spend my last semester at NVCC, and I know plenty of others who feel the same. Hopefully things will start looking up.

The thing that struck me most when the coronavirus first started surfacing in CT wasn't the panic. It was the number of people saying, "Oh, I don't care if I get it. I'm young and in good enough health that it won't affect me much." While that might be true, they never seemed to consider that if they do get sick, the danger is not to them but rather to their loved ones—or strangers they might come in contact with—who may not be able to fight it off as easily.

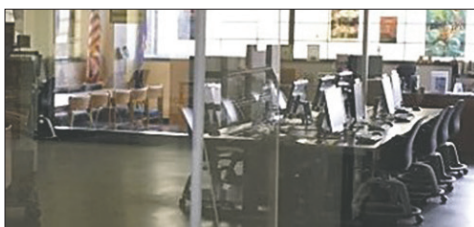
I swear, none of them seemed to grasp the idea of staying healthy, not for themselves, but for the people around them. Americans tend to have an egocentric way of thinking, and I say that as someone who's lived here my whole life. It could be a sign we need to be more conscious of the surrounding world. Not on a global scale, although it's always good to stay informed, but more on a day-to-day, local level.

As we are all painfully aware, many of the events we had planned for this semester have been moved to the fall or cancelled altogether. The poetry workshop with Bessy Reyna has been moved to the fall, when graduating students will not be able to attend. Of course, quite a few of us were looking forward to *Carrie the Musical*, to be produced by Stage Society.

These events, as well as the many bus trips that have been cancelled, will be missed. Of course, there's always the option to take individual day trips to some of these places over the summer, or whenever the coronavirus has been eradicated. New York and Boston are always fun, and Salem is a beautiful place to visit in July.

All things considered, I wish everyone a good and healthy rest of the semester. I may have mentioned this previously, but in yoga, they teach surrender. It basically means going with the flow, not fighting things, because if you go where life takes you, you're likely to end up where you need to be. So maybe the cancellations and concern over the virus are leading us to where we need to be.

Best Regards,
Gwendydd Miller
Editor-in-Chief
tamarack@nv.edu



Success in Bloom

Prof. Chris Tuccio



Photo Courtesy of Chris Tuccio
Horticulture Students construct the display.

The Connecticut Flower Show is an annual event held in late February to get garden enthusiasts excited for the upcoming Spring season. Traditionally, a diverse group of landscape designers and plant nurseries participate in a landscape exhibition, which displays unique and beautiful plant displays for the Flower Show visitors. Typically, the displays are focused upon the show's unifying theme – the 2020 Flower Show theme was "Celebrating Earth Day".

The NVCC Horticulture program was asked to participate in the landscape exhibition, after having had a successful showing the previous year with a display recreating a Parisian streetscape in April. For this showcase, I worked to integrate the exhibition into specific class learning outcomes for my design, construction, and plant production courses (HRT 202: Landscape Design 1, HRT 101: Landscape Construction, and HRT 222: Greenhouse Management).

Our overall goal with the display was to showcase four separate "habitat" displays that highlighted environmentally sensitive building practices (this was later truncated to three displays). The display included a Greenhouse, a Hobbit Hole, and a Desert Earthship. The students in the classes had specific objectives to complete, which not only included designing the habitats, but also the execution of construction techniques in order to build the framing members or panels for the structures themselves.

One Horticulture student, Dayton Durlay stated "I really enjoyed working on the Flower Show project. It was fun coming up with the design and getting hands on with the building materials. There is so much work that goes into this project, and it felt good to contribute to such an amazing event."

The greenhouse class assisted with growing plants and forcing spring bulbs within the

main Technology Hall Greenhouse to be used in the displays. (The term "forcing bulbs" means creating an artificial environment of warmth in order to get the plants to bloom in the colder, winter months). Since the show is only four days long, this is no small feat. In order for the bulbs to flower at exactly the right time, we needed to ensure they were placed into the proper environment at checked periodically for growth performance and progress. Adjustments to light and temperature were made to ensure the plants were tracking correctly.

The setup for the show itself was very labor intensive. Students, staff, and volunteers all chipped in to help get the display built over the course of the week leading up to the show. A sincere thank you should be given to all the students, staff, and loved-ones that helped make it a success.

The program's display won several awards including "Best Educational Display," "Best Fulfillment of Intent," "Most Environmentally Sensitive," "WFSB CT's Award for Best Landscape Display," and the "CT Horticulture Society's Design" Award. The award plaques will be showcased on the bulletin board outside the Horticulture classroom in Ekstrom Hall (E320).



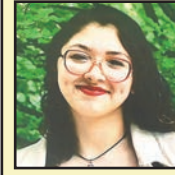
Photo Courtesy of Chris Tuccio
Flower Show Attendees admire NVCC's award-winning Hobbit Hole

Horticulture student and Hobbit Hole designer, James Marchetti, summed up his experience, saying, "A hobbit hole is a paradigm of solitary living and secluded existence, but I found

it pleasantly ironic that this design project was the most communal and inclusive experience I've had at NVCC. The creation process was arduous at times, but through the hard work of the fellowship of the horticultural program, the hobbit hole exceeded my wildest dreams."

The Tamarack staff joins the whole NVCC community in wishing the students, faculty, and staff of the Horticulture Program congratulations. Bravo to all for a job well done!

SGA PRESIDENT



One Strange April

This month my column is going to be a bit different than usual. Normally, I use my column as a way to discuss important SGA topics and promote upcoming campus events. Unfortunately, this month there will be no events to highlight. As many of you know, due to COVID-19, all activities are cancelled for the rest of the semester and all classes will be held online.

This news is disappointing for many of us, to say the least. It can be especially disappointing for those of us who are graduating. As a student who is graduating, I know I am really disappointed I won't be experiencing my last semester the way I wanted, the way I imagined. But just because we feel disappointed now doesn't mean we'll feel this way forever.

Every day we're getting new updates and new plans. Who knows, maybe by the time you read this, we'll be back to having regular classes. Okay, that's not likely, but it's important that we're paying attention and staying informed since things can change in an instant. And maybe there's a silver lining. Staying home doesn't have to be all bad. Think of this as an opportunity to get away from the daily school pressures, and maybe the shift to online learning will actually suit some of us who'd never have tried it on our own.

Maybe we can devote some energy to new hobbies during this time, when we aren't busy with our online classwork, of course. I know I'm going to be using this time to procrastinate and knit blankets. Maybe I'll finally learn to play the ukulele my mom bought me last summer.

While I know we'd all much prefer to be with our friends and learning in person, it's important that we make every effort to stay well. If we follow guidelines and keep ourselves healthy, we'll be doing our part to keep everyone else healthy. Keep this in mind as we continue forward with this unprecedented spring semester. Have a great rest of your April; stay healthy and keep busy!

Regards,
Tabitha Cruz

Students Making a Difference

Christine Cocchiola

Over 25 Human Services/Social Work Studies students have been trained as CLICC mentors. CLICC, which stands for Connecting Through Literacy: Incarcerated Parents, Their Children, and Caregivers, is a CT-based nonprofit that used "mentoring and literacy activities to strengthen communication and deepen bonds between children and their incarcerated parents," according to connectingfamilies.org.

Joy Haenlein, Program Director of CLICC, came into my classes recently to inform students about the training. My students are required to complete an Advocacy Assignment which requires they commit to approximately two hours of community service and/or an educational training here at NVCC or in the community. CLICC seemed like the perfect combination for both students and the community, and students are very excited to have this opportunity!

CLICC trains mentors on topics around incarceration, and specifically, how to use literacy to create connections with and provide support for a child with an incarcerated parent. Mentors meet with children for one hour, one day per week at a local library, after school program, or other community site. After their time commitment of one year, each mentor receives a \$500.00 stipend as a "thank you" from CLICC.

I'm so excited about this opportunity for our students, and proud of the impact they'll continue to make on community members in need!

Between the Bookends

News from the NVCC Library



Photo Courtesy of Max Raul Egusquiza

Jaime Hammond is the Director of Library Services. She and her staff are prepared to serve students with a range of online resources.

With the Coronavirus forcing us off campus for the remainder of the spring semester, I wanted to take a moment to highlight the online resources the library has for your courses. You can see all of the library's online research guides at <http://nvcc.libguides.com>.

There, you will see a listing of all the research guides created by the NVCC library staff. Click the subject to expand to see all course guides available.

Each guide contains links to articles, e-books, and films that pertain to your courses or assignments, almost all of which can be accessed remotely. In addition, you will notice a pop-up chat box that is staffed by the NVCC

librarians, so please ask us any questions you have!

We are happy to develop new guides, or update existing guides with new materials, to support you and your students. Your related library guide is likely to already be linked in your Blackboard course shell, under "Library Study Guide." Please don't hesitate to contact us for assistance!

Remember, we're available via live chat and email during normal business hours. All library databases and other resources, including e-books, are available from home with your net ID and password. We're here to help you get through the remainder of the semester successfully—even from a safe social distance.

The NVCC Library Staff

The Tamarack

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

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EDITORIAL

Ignorance Pandemic

March 2020, a time of global chaos. Coronavirus is a pandemic that must be dealt with in a serious and open manner, yet the most powerful nation in the world is led by people who cannot find their asses with two hands and a map. This is the chaos we must live with, made worse by an inept leader.

Within a week of schools closing, the American president showed once again how little he actually knows. Deflecting hard questions with illogical fallacies, he unsuccessfully masks his lack of understanding with bluster and posturing. As president, he should know what he is talking about, he should provide a steady demeanor to help the nation deal with this pandemic. Instead, at every turn, this orange menace abuses his power, hurting the nation, allowing the virus to spread. And the fools who see him as a leader continue to believe.

So many lies come from the White House, and that is a terrifying prospect at the best of times. This is a time when we need the buck to stop at the Oval Office once again. Trump seems not to grasp what Truman meant by this phrase. It doesn't imply a place where money piles; it denotes the spot where responsibility should be centered. Responsibility is one of the most important aspects of being a leader, not a good leader, not a great leader. ALL leaders need to be responsible. Of course, two other vital aspects of leadership are intelligence and compassion, but that ship sailed in 2016 where the Oval Office is concerned.

April is going to be a time of even greater chaos, and it's up to all of us to work together—at a distance, that is. Humanity is a difficult concept; it requires self-care and knowledge, and the ability to do what is necessary despite how difficult that may be. Coronavirus does not care if you support Trump or not. Everyone from Bernie Sanders to Colonel Sanders is at risk of illness. The lies and racist rhetoric of the White House—Chinese virus? Kung Flu? Really!—might comfort, or sadly, amuse some in the very short term, but lies and racist invective will not shield anyone from a pandemic.

Evaluate what is truth and ignore pompous dirtbags who lie because they cannot be bothered telling the truth even once. Holding your breath for ten seconds doesn't prove you don't have COVID-19; it shows you watch too much propaganda parading as news. We must protect ourselves and one another by thinking for ourselves and following the advice of actual medical experts. Stay safe and be mindful that, even if you feel great, you may still spread the virus to those you love—or those you don't even know—who may not fare as well.

Art Achievement

Tamarack Staff



Shane Armatino. Photos Courtesy of Amanda Lebel

Community college students enrolled at Asnuntuck, Capital, Gateway, Greenfield, Holyoke, Housatonic, Manchester, Middlesex, Naugatuck Valley, Northwestern CT, Norwalk, Quinebaug, Springfield Technical, Three Rivers, and Tunxis Community College were eligible to



Madeeha Sheikh

submit a portfolio of recent work for inclusion in "Community: Transfer Student Exhibition." In addition to a portfolio of up to 10 pieces, artists were required to submit their academic transcripts, a letter of recommendation, and an artist's statement to be considered for the exhibition—as well as for transfer scholarships to the University of Hartford.



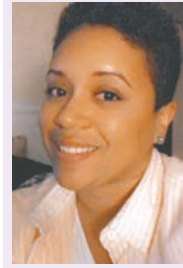
Charlotte Silver

Five NVCC students were selected and recently exhibited their artwork. In the photos, Shane Armatino, Madeeha Sheikh, and Charlotte Silver pose with their selected prints. Yoelis Rodriguez and Jane Linnell (not pictured) also had work accepted and on display in the juried exhibit, which ran from February 20th to March 12th at the Donald and Linda Silpe Gallery at the University of Hartford's Hartford Art School. Congratulations to all selected students and to Fine Arts Chair, Professor Amanda Lebel, for her role in their success!

Women's Center

Justice for Victims

Nicole Hayes



Rape kits, comprised of small boxes, microscope slides, and plastic evidence collection bags, can be crucial for identifying and prosecuting sex offenders. Rape kit backlogs, otherwise

known as DNA backlogs, occur when a collection of sexual assault forensic exams go unanalyzed.

The process of collecting evidence can be highly invasive and time-consuming, as some examinations can take up to six hours. Law enforcement agencies across America are responsible for collecting forensic exams and sending them to the appropriate crime labs for testing. When crime labs test forensic evidence, the DNA of the perpetrator is entered into the CODIS database, where the individual's unique profile can possibly find a match.

DNA testing helps eliminate serial offenders and evidence collected from those kits can be used by prosecutors in cases that go to trial. DNA testing has changed the way sexual violence cases are pursued in America, but even with all these advances—and the crucial nature of the evidence—there are said to be hundreds, if not thousands, of rape kits backlogged.

One non-profit organization, the Joyful Heart Foundation, has created The End the Backlog Program, which campaigns for legislative reform. The campaign has established six legislative pillars that offer guidelines for preventing and eliminating existing backlogs: "Annual statewide inventory of untested kits, mandatory testing of backlogged kits, mandatory testing of new kits, statewide tracking system, victims' rights to notice, and funding for reform." Legislative reform is one way of eliminating the multitude of forensic exams currently in police storage.

Furthermore, allocating enough resources to local governments can help alleviate backlogged rape kits. The average cost to test a rape kit is \$1,000 to \$1,500. Law enforcement agencies sometimes pick and choose test kits to process because they do not have enough resources for investigating purposes. Some states, such as Minnesota, have introduced bills that would require all law enforcement agencies in the state to test rape kits for all victims who give consent. Minnesota's House File 2983 would appropriate general funding that would allow for more specialists and funding to be allocated locally, ensuring enough test kits and proper resources are available.

Mandatory testing of rape kits should be implemented nationally. Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, and New York are among the few states which have enacted laws that prevent rape kits from being backlogged. Connecticut has also adopted the six legislative pillars recommended by Joyful Heart Foundation to reduce the number of backlogged rape kits and increase justice for victims. These preventative measures provide a level of transparency and hold law enforcement agencies accountable.

For Mariska Hargitay, her role as Captain Olivia Benson, on the long-running NBC drama, *Law and Order SVU*, has turned into a personal crusade. The actress has become an outspoken advocate for the rights of victims of sexual violence. On the matter of rape kits, Hargitay states, "Testing rape kits sends a fundamental and crucial message to victims of sexual violence: You matter. What happened to you matters. Your case matters." While this message is powerful, procedural change is imperative to make testing a reality; this will allow victims to focus on becoming survivors.

Earth Day Preempted

Shyanne Caporuscio

As Earth Day approaches the Art Club had major activities scheduled. We'd been actively planning multiple events to support our NVCC community in acknowledging the need for environmental awareness and how to be proactive in helping the environment. We were collaborating with other clubs on campus such as Actions for Animals, the Male Encouragement Network, the NVCC Food Pantry, and the SGA.

As we go to press, the Board of Regents has just announced that all on-ground classes and spring events will be suspended due to COVID-19. This includes our Earth Day campus cleanup—in collaboration with the SGA—and all other scheduled Earth Day events. Though this is necessary, we're disappointed that the string of events planned for April 22, 2020 in L501 won't be taking place. Still, we thought we'd share a description of what would have been, in hope it will inspire you to take your own actions in support of our planet.

Art Club President, Mads Sheikh, had planned an information session on how to make paper using pulp made from invasive plants. In place of an in-person workshop, Mads has created a papermaking How-To you'll find in this issue. Reusable bags with original designs hand relief-printed by Art Club members were also going to be sold at the Earth Day event, with all proceeds going to the NVCC food pantry. The Male Encouragement Network was at work sewing bags to be sold as well. Stay tuned, as we hope to hold the bag sale at a future date, once things return to normal!

The Earth Day event was also scheduled to include a discussion on composting, along with a "Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle" workshop. Professors Amanda Lebel and Chris Tuccio were collaborating on these events, as they both share a passion for environmental sustainability. The workshop and discussion will likely be rescheduled for fall.

Finally, a poetry reading/workshop with visiting group, Poets for the Planet, including Professor Steve Parlato, was planned. Attendees of the reading would've heard poetry in response to the climate crisis, and been given a chance to write short pieces, create images, or declare Earth Day resolutions based on prompts provided. These creations were to be completed using recycled *Tamaracks*, modeling how we can give new purpose to "leftovers," simultaneously creating art while lessening waste. Though the campus closure means the poets won't be visiting, some of them have shared poems in this issue.

With this series of events, we hoped to inform and engage the NVCC community, showing not only how we affect the Earth, but how living more aware and sustainable lives can help us make much-needed changes in our environment. While we're sad at the missed opportunity to come together, we encourage you to do your part in honor of Earth Day. If each of us makes just one small change, the results can be dramatic.

The Weakest Link

Part Two: Attack Vectors

Steven Jones

Remember the game show opponents mentioned in my previous article? If you didn't read it, on the show, *The Weakest Link*, contestants answered a series of questions to win. They had to avoid receiving votes against them from fellow contestants, or else they'd be voted off the show.

I'll use these opponents to demonstrate how cybercriminals and hackers use a series of votes against to get you kicked off the game. Only difference is, life is no game. Losing can mean: losing money, your identity, or something worse. This article is meant to expose cyber-opponents, showing how you can tip the odds in your favor, so you won't end up being the weakest link.

When discussing mobile attacks, the buzzwords are "attack vector." This is the method the hacker or cybercriminal uses to get information from your mobile phone. We'll address just four of these vectors here, literally the tip of a growing iceberg of attack vectors against the wider mobile community.

Hackers use this attack vector to gain access to your phone and install "bad code," called a payload. The vector allows a hacker to either take advantage of a vulnerability in your phone's software, or utilize social engineering techniques to trick you into giving up personal information it can use to attack you further. Of course, it won't say, "Now, I'm going to attack you further"; rather it makes you think you're getting something desirable.

Because security is SUCH a huge area, our discussion will be mostly high level, opting for awareness first. Options you can take to adapt your mobile habits when studying at Starbucks or the school cafeteria will be covered next month in part 3.

Vector 1 – Malware – generic term referring to "bad code"

- Virus and rootkit: bad code enabling hackers to gain control of your device without being detected.
- Application modification: once the hacker has access to your device changes to common applications can be made to alter their normal functioning to become a means for continued surveillance and theft of data for profit.
- OS (operating system) modification: once installed, some viruses affect your phone's operating system so it no longer functions as the vendor intended.

Vector 2 – Data Exfiltration – an unauthorized movement of data

- Data leaves the organization: theft of data
- Print screen: bad actor accesses your device and prints screen content
- Copy to USB/backup loss: cybercriminal gets physical access to device

Vector 3 – Data Tampering – modification of data in transit or at rest

- Modification by another application: when a payload is installed on your device, it begins the purpose it was written to perform.
- Undetected tamper attempts: not all attempts to access devices succeed; many times, attempts are caught by device logging programs.
- Jail-broken devices: bypassing restrictions placed on a device by a vendor

Vector 4 – Data Loss – result of hacker gaining access to your device

- Device loss: hacker or cybercriminal steals an unattended device
- Unauthorized device access: unattended devices are fair game to hacking attempts
- Application vulnerabilities: rogue applications unwittingly installed get inside your phone's defenses and begin snooping for personally identifiable information with which to profit.

While the above details can be discouraging, procedures and modifications to your mobile habits can tip the balance in your favor. I'll describe some of the more popular approaches in this series' May installment to make sure you don't become...the weakest link!

SGA President Honors Waterbury's Dominican Mayor for a Day

Special from the Office of College Marketing



Photo Courtesy of OCM

On Friday, February 28th, two exceptional individuals with a connection to NVCC came together for a very special occasion. At the City of Waterbury's ceremony honoring a Dominican Republic Mayor for a Day, a traditional flag-raising ceremony was held at City Hall. This year's honoree, Sergeant José Mundo Diaz was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., the son of parents who emigrated from the Dominican Republic. A graduate of Wilby High School, Diaz went on to attend Naugatuck Valley Community College.

Waterbury Police Sergeant Diaz was instrumental in establishing the city's first mounted police unit. Today, the longtime city resident heads the Waterbury Police

Department's Community Relations Division. He was celebrated as Dominican Mayor for the Day in a ceremony where state and local officials recognized his contributions to the city and the community.

Tabitha Cruz, President of NVCC's Student Government Association presented the Sergeant with a poem on behalf of NVCC President Daisy Cocco De Filippis, who had also been named Dominican Republic Mayor for the Day in 2013. De Filippis praised Tabitha for her poise and leadership saying, "I am honored to be represented by our own SGA president, Tabitha Cruz, whose leadership continues to blossom. I am also so happy to congratulate Sergeant Diaz on this wonderful honor. He is a talented leader and community member whose dedication to Waterbury is being recognized. Bendiciones."

Cruz presented a copy of the poem—elegantly wrapped in NVCC colors—*There is a Country in the World*, by Dominican poet, Pedro Mir. She then read the poem aloud and thanked Sergeant Diaz for his service to the people of Waterbury. In her remarks, Cruz praised Diaz for his leadership in the role of community relations and his initiative with the mounted police unit; she ended by congratulating Sergeant Diaz, on behalf of President De Filippis and NVCC, on his many accomplishments.

alumni SHOWCASE



Jason Hesse

Twice the Joy

"Was machst du hier (What are you doing here?)?" Music professor Gil Harel asked me this question last year after handing back my first Music History exam. Actually, his wife first asked the question, reading through the essay answers on some of the exams, but I only heard it from him as he later told me the story. Apparently, appraised as a highly intelligent student and a talented writer, I seemed out of place at a local community college, or at least in an intro level Music History class. However, if my three semesters at NVCC taught me anything, it's that things are not always what they seem.

When I first began attending, to some extent I felt I didn't belong. I should be at a four-year institution—a real college. To me, it was not merely an opinion of the college; it was just something I knew to be true. But the more I saw and experienced around NVCC, the less I believed that. I was not heavily involved in many programs or extracurricular activities, but the glimpses I saw gave me insight and perspective, quite frankly, knocking me off my high horse.

While perhaps not as prestigious as many four-year universities, NVCC has many things to make it worthy of regard: a fantastic music program, many wonderful teachers and faculty, and a flood of passionate and creative students of diverse backgrounds and age groups. By the time I transferred to

WCSU in January, my opinion of NVCC had been wholly changed.

I returned to college after a few false starts for an English degree, which basically means "barista-in-training," and I entered as part of the Transfer Ticket program, which sets up students to transfer to any of the several CT

"There's never a shortage of connections to be made or like-minded people to meet, and, as the Germans say: 'Geteilte Freude ist doppelte Freude (A joy shared is twice the joy!)!'"

state universities after two years at NVCC earning their associates. My experiences at NVCC pleasantly surprised me, and when it came time to consider transferring, I wasn't sure what to expect. On one hand, I was anxious about the potential course load; on the other, I was sorry to say goodbye to so many positive experiences.

Funnily enough, despite my original assumptions, my experience so far at WCSU has been almost no different. Teachers are similarly passionate and supportive; assignments and coursework are exactly the same; and the facilities, while different, seem somehow familiar. The registration process was identical, and many classes incorporate Blackboard. Even the classrooms have the same lack of participation—no matter where you go, there will always be enough social anxiety to go around.

This is my first semester at WCSU, and I only received my associate degree two weeks ago, but I don't think I would be as comfortable with the change in scenery if not for my experiences at NVCC. I'm still pursuing my bachelor's in English Literature, but I'm also seeking a minor in Computer Science. I will most likely end up working in software development, since it tends to be a far more stable field than that of literature studies, writing, or teaching, but writing will never be completely off the table.

If I had any advice to give, it would be: Involve yourself. Find clubs or other extracurricular activities you might be interested in. Talk to your teachers about extra opportunities. There's never a shortage of connections to be made or like-minded people to meet, and, as the Germans say: "Geteilte Freude ist doppelte Freude (A joy shared is twice the joy!)!"



CAPSS
CORNER

Resources for a
Trying Time

As I sit to write this column, the College has closed to the public until the end of the semester; all classes are transitioning to online format, and the Governor is about to close all non-essential businesses. While this is alarming and unprecedented, I'm making a conscious decision to focus on the positive, rather than panicking over what I can't control.

Over the past two weeks I've witnessed teamwork, compassion and support like I've never seen. As I've emailed, called, and met virtually with staff, students, and faculty alike, there has been one recurring message: care for others. "Are you ok?" "What can we do for our students?" "Stay safe!" "Take care of yourself." Whether starting or ending a conversation or email, it's always there. Care for each other, concern that students will navigate this new world and be successful, and hope that we remember to take care of ourselves both physically and mentally.

One helpful resource to deal with stress and anxiety during this difficult time, and throughout life, is provided by the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA) at www.adaa.org:

Mind:

- Accept that you can't control everything; keep stress in perspective.
- Do your best; don't aim for perfection, which is impossible. Be proud of achievements.
- Maintain a positive attitude; replace negative thoughts with positive ones.
- Learn what triggers your anxiety. Keep a journal to record anxious thoughts and identify patterns.

Body:

- Limit alcohol and caffeine, which can aggravate anxiety. Stay hydrated!
- Eat well-balanced meals. Don't skip meals; do have healthy snacks on hand.
- Get rest. Under stress, the body requires extra sleep—beyond the recommended eight hours.
- Exercising daily can help relieve stress and maintain good health.

Action:

- Take deep breaths; make a point of inhaling and exhaling slowly when feeling stressed.
- Slowly count to 10; repeat and count to 20, if necessary, to calm anxious thoughts.
- Give back to your community by volunteering. Creating a support network, even virtually, soothes stress.
- Take a time out. Practice yoga, meditation, or listen to music. Step back from stress.
- Get help online. Consider taking a confidential mental health screen: www.mhscreening.org.

Talk to someone:

- Tell friends and family you're feeling overwhelmed; let them know how they can help you.
- Talk to a physician or therapist for professional help.

Although we're not on campus, CAPSS staff members are here in many ways to help and support you. Everyone in our office is working remotely, ready to assist with keeping your educational goals in focus during this time of transition. We can assist by phone, email, Teams, or WebEx, whatever format works best for you. We're also setting up virtual meetings for you to learn more about Mental Health Strategies, Degree Works, Advising and Registration Questions and Transfer Planning.

Look for the Clue Me Newsletter in your college email early in April for a full list of activities, or check out the CAPSS page at <https://www.nv.edu/student-resources/academic-support-resources/academic-advising-capss>. Remember, we're here for you! We can be reached at CAPSS@nv.edu, 203-575-8025 or simply respond to any of the emails our advisors have sent to you directly. Stay healthy and take care of yourselves!

Regards,
Bonnie Goulet,
Director of Student Development Services

Center for Teaching Connections

Dr. Althea Hayes

A longtime committee member, Dr. Hayes has offered many CFT workshops. She has also enjoyed serving on several other NVCC committees, but her real love is teaching students to write and to read and interpret literature.

Last December, when I volunteered to write the April Center for Teaching column for *The Tamarack*, I never imagined we would be where we are now, and I am a little at a loss for what to say. As I write this, it is the first day of Spring Break, a time when I plan my summer gardens, sleep late, read a good novel, and, oh yeah, get caught up on the grading from the first half of the semester. I expect many of my colleagues do something similar, and I know many of my students travel, sleep late, pick up a few extra hours at work, visit family, and, oh yeah, get caught up on the work from the first half of the semester.

What I never expected was that an unknown virus (we know it as COVID-19) would disrupt the semester. Instead of thinking about my gardens, I find myself barraged

into numbness by the non-stop drumbeat of the latest coronavirus updates, the unceasing litany of school and business closings, the appalling news that my own Archdiocese has closed churches and suspended church services. Unlike many who read this, I am lucky enough not to have my work imperiled by closures and prevention measures, but I can imagine the frustration and fear of those of you who work in the food, retail, and service industries as place after place is shut down in an attempt to keep people safe from infection.

In the course of my 64 years, I have become as used as one can get to life throwing curveballs that turn daily life on its head. Yet I cannot help but worry about how the current crisis feels to you, our students. What will happen to your classes? Your grades? Your jobs and families? And more urgently, what can I do to help? And what can students do to help each other?

Among the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the one that strikes me most forcefully is encapsulated by the phrase of the day:

social distancing. I am terrified that the solution to this pandemic is to put distance between us. My favorite parts of teaching are the connections made in the classroom—the give and take that enlivens the class discussion, the friendships that develop, the respect that grows from working together toward a common goal. I am terrified of losing those connections as we keep our distance, communicate virtually, react with fearful caution to physical contact with anyone other than our most intimate family members.

Perhaps by the time you read this, life will have returned to normal and we will have come through this ordeal mostly unscathed. But perhaps the most enduring lesson the coronavirus has taught me already is how much we all need to connect with each other in meaningful ways. I ask you as I urge myself to reach out to each other, to nurture the relationships that sustained us when we could all be in the same space and that we will return to with a renewed joy when we are again all able to be in the same space together.

Face from the ACE Science Captain



Said El-bakhar

Hello, I'm Said El-bakhar, the science captain at the Academic Center for Excellence, where students receive absolutely free

tutoring in many subjects. I am pleased to be part of the growth and expansion at the ACE that covers many valuable programs; simply put, we care about our students' success. I have been a tutor for about twelve years.

At first, I started as a student tutor for mathematics, and I'm proud to have gained the confidence and trust of Professor Jane Wampler, the Department Chair of Mathematics, to assist her students in self-paced math courses she created. It allowed me to gain valuable experience in the classroom, as well as to progress academically while I was a student at NVCC.

Two years later, I graduated with an Associate degree in math and science, and I was promoted to the position of Educational Assistant at the ACE, helping students with chemistry. In the meantime, I was accepted to the Chemical Engineering Program at University of Connecticut, Storrs. While I commuted to Storrs full time, I continued working, making progress and being part of the (ACE) success.

In May 2019, I received my Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering, and I was proud to receive support from ACE Director, Robert Sheffel; my ACE co-workers; and my former boss, Kathy Taylor, along with my family. I would not have made it this far without them and the support of my classmates at UCONN.

Born and raised in Morocco, Africa, I went to a technical institute, where I received my automobile technician diploma, and I worked for Audi and Hyundai for a year and a half combined before moving to the US in 2001. Before joining the NVCC family, I worked many different jobs to support one of my sibling's college tuition and living expenses.

Away from the academic world, I was a soccer player, playing for the number one team in Morocco, and I still play here and there whenever I find time. My brother and I taught ourselves how to swim when I was 20 years old, and believe me, we can swim a mile. But my favorite hobby is drawing, especially with charcoal. I also taught myself roller-blading, another thing that I could not afford when I was a child.

I live in Waterbury with my parents (and without their prayers, life has no meaning), also my wife, Souad, and my two lovely daughters, Zainab, age 7, and Hajar, age 5. We love drawing together and playing math games.

On the Field COVID-19

John Williams



March 12th, 2020, a date that will live in Sports history. COVID-19, a coronavirus strain, has spread around the globe in recent months. Along with other serious consequences, it has caused sporting

events to be canceled all over the world.

When two NBA players tested positive for coronavirus, the NBA season was suspended, and the NCAA followed by canceling all remaining spring and winter championships, including March Madness. The NHL suspended gameplay and Major League Baseball stopped their spring training games and pushed back MLB's opening day by two weeks. Even Major League Soccer stopped its season. Golf's first major tournament of the year, the Masters, has been postponed. The Boston Marathon will delay its race until September 14th, and the London Marathon has been postponed from April 26th to October 4th. Even NASCAR pushed back several events. The NFL cancelled any off-season programs or meeting.

With the federal government's recommendation restricting events of more than 50 people for the next eight weeks, stadiums,

ballparks, and arenas are all empty; the sports world has gone dark. Millions of fans wonder: How long will the sports shutdown last? The reason for widespread uncertainty is that so much about the coronavirus remains unknown. The NBA has said it will remain suspended for at least 30 days, but the league has reportedly told owners to expect a delay until at least June or July.

MLB says it will adhere to CDC guidelines suggesting public gatherings of more than 50 be postponed for at least eight weeks, leaving the league with a target start date of mid-May. The National Hockey League is listening to the CDC's 60-day guidelines against gatherings of more than 50. This would make a re-start in May the earliest possibility, with training camp taking place in late April. As far as the NCAA goes, there's no indication yet as to whether coronavirus concerns will affect the college football season.

The Premiere League was originally due to be postponed until at least April 3rd, but March 19th, this was extended until April 30th. IOC officials and the Japanese prime minister made the unprecedented move of rescheduling the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics to 2021. The NFL is out of season right now, but even so, coronavirus has affected the league's free agency and early

owner's meetings. The league has postponed all training camp activity, much of which was to begin in April. The NFL also announced its April draft would take place with no fans in attendance, with the league banning pre-draft visits as a result of coronavirus concerns.

The WNBA, currently out of season, issued a statement that the league will monitor COVID-19 in anticipation of the scheduled start of their season May 15th. Training camp is due to begin April 26th. NASCAR is suspended through May 3rd. The league postponed seven races, with their ideal restart date May 8th for the Martinsville Speedway. NASCAR is currently evaluating how to reschedule postponed races.

UFC was perhaps the last major sports league to suspend operations. Bouts Saturday, March 28th and April 11th were postponed after public pressure as UFC defied health authorities in holding out hope the March 21st UFC on ESPN could take place. President Dana White has said the fights will be rescheduled.

Sports Networks are replacing programming with historic games and interactive entertainment. Don't worry, sports fans; we'll survive this. Someday soon, sports will reconvene. Until then, be safe and practice social distancing.

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SVU, Relevant as Ever

Tabitha Cruz



Law and Order: Special Victims Unit's history-making 21st season beats the original *Law and Order* series by one season. That makes the series older than me! As the longest-running, primetime live-action series, it's home to the longest-running TV character, Captain Olivia Benson, played by Mariska Hargitay. The series continues making history as it was just renewed for three more seasons, bringing it to a 24th. Even after 20+ years, every episode tells an original story, creating avenues for important conversations. It's clear *SVU* has remained on the air because of the relevancy it holds today.

SVU has always been relevant and continues to grow with the modern world. When it started in 1999, it addressed uncomfortable truths surrounding rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence. Stories told in Season One alone brought to light the whole idea of a "rape culture." The show boldly criticized stigmas surrounding sexual assault on a large platform, letting survivors know their stories were being heard and they weren't alone. As the series continued, it tackled new issues and new stories. Characters on the show grew with the times. Having open conversations about cases, they often disagreed and tried to educate themselves on relevant issues. They explored topics such as whether a man could be raped, or if a sex worker could report a rape.

Years later, these issues would become more complex with the rise of the internet. Issues that were once black and white landed in a gray and pixelated world. The detectives of *SVU* would discover the internet, chat rooms, and eventually social media, along with viewers. Exposing viewers to the good, they also warned of many online dangers. Issues like internet slut-shaming and how we present ourselves online became topics of conversation. With the internet, also came easy access to pornography, leading to questions about how porn depicts sex and women—another topic tackled on *SVU*.

Today, in the #MeToo Age, it's important to see characters fight tirelessly for survivors, both women and men. Seeing Captain Benson and her squad believe survivors and shame officers who victim-blame is important. As these characters engage in discussions and educate themselves on the gray areas of sexual assault, they encourage viewers to have open conversations and educate ourselves, especially when any number of our friends could have a story like those on the show. For 20+ years, *Law and Order: SVU* has created original, compelling episodes, sparking important conversations about rape culture. Because of that, it has remained not just my favorite show but an incredibly relevant one.

Loved it? Hated it?

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



The Arts of April

Tamarack Staff

Among many events canceled in the wake of the coronavirus closure was the International Center for the Arts' annual Festival of the Arts. This year's event, with its Caribbean Arts and Culture Theme, promised to be exceptional. Though NVCC won't likely reschedule the roster of musical and cultural events, this Tamarack is not devoid

of artistic, creative content. After all, April is National Poetry Month, and even as quarantine measures persist, we celebrate community through poetry, an essential human artform. Here, we offer poems from NVCC community members—and guest contributors, Poets for the Planet (members denoted by *)—as well as thoughts on writing work that sustains us.

Confluencia and Writing

Kathleen Chesto

Last semester, I had the tremendous privilege of reading my own work at Confluencia. I have used pieces I've written—poems, essays, reflections—for conference talks, class lectures, and retreats, to supplement a lesson, personalize a point, or clarify an idea. But simply putting my words out there, allowing an audience to do what they pleased with them, was more like publishing a book and letting it go to a wide, unseen audience. However, that can be filled with uncertainty and anxiety; this held nothing but warmth and acceptance. The end of the evening was reserved for audience questions, and President De Filippis asked the two presenters what compels us to write. Why do I write? I've been writing since I was a child, but I don't remember ever being asked that question. It has never felt like a choice, and I struggled to make the question fit my experience. Questions that cast a whole different light on what I've known but never voiced, that honor what I believe, but turn it upside down so it is suddenly new, those questions deserve an answer.

Why I Write ~ Kathleen Chesto

To President De Filippis

I Write
Compulsion. Need.

A nagging itch
That becomes an ache
A sore
I must stop rubbing
If it is to heal.

Inspiration?
Perhaps, but not divine.
Not from outside,
From inside:

Anguish
A lost child,
A degenerative illness,
A mother's Alzheimer's
A shocking betrayal,
A darkness,
Where suicide lurks in the shadows.
It must be woven into the fabric of life
If life is to be endured.
I write.

Gratitude
Bursting, overflowing,
Beauty that must be acknowledged,
Loveliness that must be named,
Effervescent joy,
That must be spoken,
Or the very stones will shout.
I write.

Confusion
Muddle of thoughts,
Unmade decision,
Conflicting voices
Battling for dominance
A pencil is needed
To unravel the tangled perplexity,
To bring clarity.
I write.

Love,
Admiration,
Respect
Needing to be shared.
I write.

Not a choice.
A compulsion.
An irritating fly
Buzzing around my ear,
Brushed away repeatedly
Until it refuses to be ignored.
An irritating question,
Probing and persistent,
From a perspicacious president.
I write.

Sunshine Pools ~ Suellyn K. Callaghan *

His supple body a sleek coat
warmed by early Summer sunlight
spilling across wide oak
floorboards
stretching endlessly in serene
pools of rising contentment soothe
him as cool downy breezes waft
through open windows carrying
tempting cat-titillating scents
tickling curiosity
to stir him from slumber seconds
pass sonorous sigh emanates
floating again in sunshine pools
bathed in warmth such glorious
warmth
sunlight glistens drowsy
breathing
slows rhythmically eyelids
flutter close peacefully we sleep.

Song Sparrow ~ Carol Chaput *

Melospiza melodia

Little
brown
wizard,
your name itself means
song,
means you are here with your
ringing bell, looking for love.

But in winter,
in your sensible brown coat,
you slip songless among the boughs
of survival,
into the suspense of long nights.

Light,
quick,
quiet,
you make it through
the dark winter to the light,
you make it through
the ruffled cold, back to the silver grasses,
you make it through
to the grace of May.

Opening your brimming throat,
you shake forth verse and chorus, refrain,
interlude, a trilling bridge,
the long vocal run,
a twelve-bar blues finale,
perfecting the art of your
splendid
determined
solo.

September Morning Glories ~ Edwina Trentham *

They've won the garden over, bowering
the fence with white-throated trumpets,
shifting blue to amethyst from one day
to the next, drifting the dry earth
with heart-shaped leaves on their way
to taking on the last of the vegetables.
Even the tomato cages, clumped with hard,
green holdouts, have offered their support.

Foolish to believe I could stop them,
to think I could train that early
scatter of seedlings to be background.
By mid-June I was ripping them out
by the handful, spent July mornings
on my knees, unwrapping the swift creep
of threads, to let broccoli,
pepper, zinnia, and zucchini breathe.

Feet still bare in September's wet morning
grass, I survey the summer's end, marking
the marigold's bright fall into embers,
the leggy sprawl of the moss rose's decline,
how the nasturtium ponders its move
from orange to bronze, all caught up
in that last throaty laugh at cultivation,
as I let the garden go in a rush of purple.

Evensong ~ Thomasina Levy *

Sing unto the Earth a new song
for She has done marvelous things

Glory be to sparrow for her hymn
of laudation to the eventide

Glory be to surging and surrendering
like the ruffling and swirling and furling
waves

Glory be to gossamer clouds, buoyantly
scudding
above our strife and struggle

Glory be to the sanctifying wind, chanting
a psalm of mystery

Glory be to a sunset exuberant, slowly
cloaking
itself in sacred twilight

Sing praises to Wisdom
Sing praises to Beauty
Sing praises to Creation

Glory be

Look at this poetry-it came right to my door! ~ Lana Orphanides *

Who would have thought after years of
dreaming
and scheming and doubt
that poetry would slip in among us, to bind
us,
to rouse us, like light through the curtain
at beginning of day.

Look at the flowers trailing behind it. See
how one smiles,
one whispers, one stares into heaven. See the
dark doorway, how swiftly it enters,
catching the blossoms of wounds, mouths,
and eyes,
bringing such friends who love the same
light,
who listen for words and wings in the air.

Invitation ~ Steve Parlato *

Follow me back then, long before Adam's
brazen labeling, when chipmunks still wore
secret names (*Shik-Ché, Ahl-Haroo*), and
fawns
gamboled spotless, no need for camouflage

Tall grasses will kiss swallows' toes, as those
blue darts dip and wheel across whispering
fields, where each ant's fat, black thorax
glints, pearled
with morning's vapor. Beneath canopies

bathed in birdsong—those notes foreign no
more—

fern will rustle as snake and turtle pass.
As dragonflies, rotors spinning, lift from
monarch-thick milkweed beds, abuzz with
hum-

ble bees, we, dawn-drenched ramblers,
sheened in
meadow sweat, will drink deep this
newsprung earth.

"Oh no!" ~ Morgan McSherry

Mounded guilt arose above
my red lollipop cheeks.
Oh no, what have I done?
My mouth used to be a vault
that held the promises
of precious people.
There the letters lay on my tongue,
plumped up on a pet bed.

But the words dangled out,
due to the peer pressure that gripped
my brain. The promises were packages.
They were supposed to be safe.
But they were delivered in the mailbox,
damaged, ready to be returned.

Papermaking from Plants

Mads Sheikh

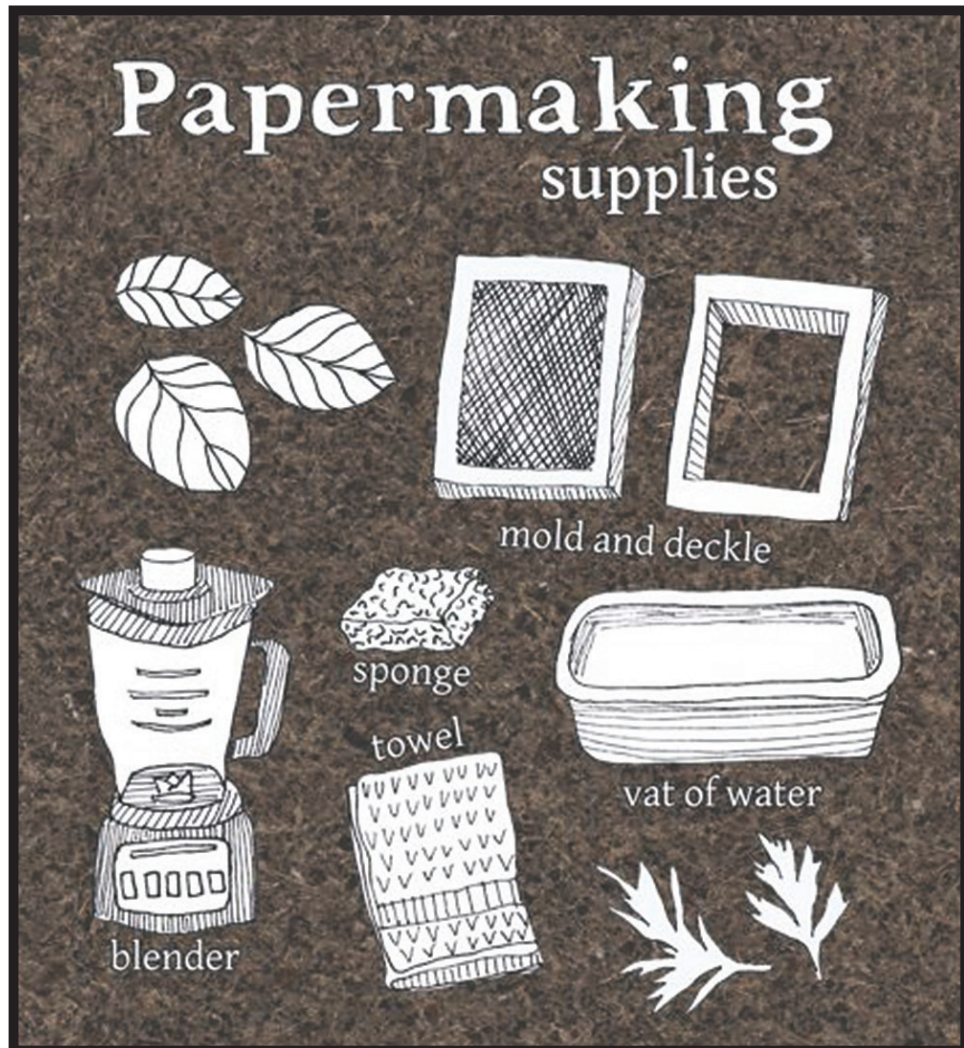


Illustration by Mads Sheikh

March 13th NVCC closed, and classes will be online-only for the rest of spring. All scheduled events are cancelled, including the Earth Day Event scheduled for April 22nd. To close the event, I'd planned a presentation on making paper from invasive plants. Instead, I've described the process here.

Before the industrialization of papermaking, woody plants were not as frequently used to make paper because it's harder to break down tree fiber than fiber from leafy, herbaceous plants. I began making paper from herbaceous plants last semester. I wasn't sure which plants to use, so I did some research and learned all sorts of fibrous plants can be used. This was great, but overwhelming, because I didn't know where to start. My supervisor in

the Visual Art Dept., Prof. Amanda Lebel, recommended I learn what invasive plants grow on campus; because they would be plentiful, I wouldn't get in trouble with the Horticulture Department or Maintenance for harvesting them. Mike Schwartz in Horticulture even directed me to campus locales where I could harvest Japanese Knotweed and Mugwort for my project.

I absorbed extensive knowledge available through Do-It-Yourself videos on YouTube to learn how to make paper. There weren't any books available at our library on this subject, so Jaime Hammond, Director of Library Services, ordered one that's been a great help: *Papermaking with Garden Plants & Common Weeds*, by Helen Hiebert. If you want to compare how

different varieties of plants look when they're used to make paper, I'd recommend knowing what you're harvesting beforehand. That said, you can also use readily available plant material like fallen leaves and grasses.

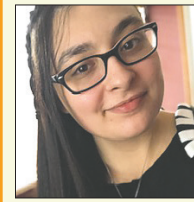
Once you've accumulated plant material, you must break it down into smaller fibers; remove leaves from stems and cut them to reduce decomposition time. Then, boil plant material in water. Cooking time varies depend-

“Before the industrialization of papermaking, woody plants were not as frequently used to make paper because it's harder to break down tree fiber than fiber from leafy, herbaceous plants.”

ing on what plants you're using, and the size of the pieces. It should take a couple hours to break down material. After boiling, strain the water, beat the plant material, and put it in a blender to break down the fiber even further into pulp. The finer the pulp, the smoother the final paper will be.

To make paper from pulp, you'll need a mold and deckle, vat of water, sponge, and towels. A mold and deckle are two frames of the same size used to form the sheet of paper; the mold has a mesh for water to pass through; the deckle sits atop the mold. First, pour pulp into the water; then, “hog the vat”, which means disperse pulp in the water with your hand. Pull the mold and deckle through the water so a layer of pulp remains on the mold, and let the water drain out. Remove the deckle and sponge-dry the sheet you've formed before laying it on a towel to dry. Paper lightens as it dries. If you have a hard time pulling an even layer of pulp onto the mold and deckle, pour pulp directly onto the mold and deckle in the vat. Happy papermaking!

The . . . Journey Expectations and Acceptance



Shyanne Caporuscio

Naturally, we want to belong and feel accepted. Maybe that's not entirely problematic. However, when the choices we make on a day-to-day basis become solely based on how we can obtain the approval of others, we risk getting caught in a cycle that leads to disappointment. As kids we prided ourselves on the high-fives and stickers given in praise of a good job or nice work. We grow up learning we're doing our best when we are pleasing others. As we grow older the expectations change. Suddenly, our best does not seem to matter as much to the world because the standards we're held to are constantly increasing.

Life brings all these expectations and pressures from both society and ourselves to succeed. Often, it seems our value as individuals is primarily determined by our achievements and our ability to conform ourselves to what is considered socially acceptable. Suddenly the why does not matter and doing things despite our feelings around them becomes an expectation. Everyone has been told, “Life is full of things you don't want to do, but you have to do them anyway because you're an adult.” Of course, in certain aspects, it is a valid statement, but when did being an adult become accepting less for ourselves and dismissing our wants and needs more and more?

Everyone is always trying to figure out what's next and how to get there. It's not easy for anyone but can be especially difficult if a person is still trying to figure out who they are and where they belong. How can we decide what we want, if our personal desires aren't good enough in the eyes of everyone else? What if what's “good enough” just isn't what we want? Maybe it could be considered naïve to think the answers will come when they come. Maybe it's not completely unheard of to have no clue about what's next.

Making a choice about what we want for ourselves in the future tends to be anxiety-provoking, especially when everyone is constantly giving their own opinions about our individual choices. Many find it unrealistic when they hear someone say their goal in life is to change the world, automatically picturing a superhero swooping in to rescue everyone. What if figuring out how to make a difference for someone, is the first step towards changing the world—one person at a time? What if no one ever tries to take that step just because it's labeled unrealistic? If we never try to reach our goals, regardless of what others think of them, we'll only be left with regret, not knowing whether we could've accomplished something great.

We might feel defeated when it seems there's no way to live up to society's expectations—or even our own—but it doesn't always mean we're not doing a good job. The next move doesn't necessarily have to be based on what everyone else is doing or saying. It's okay to make choices that suit us as individuals, even if others don't understand them. Essential to the journey is making it our own. We don't need everyone else's approval or acceptance, especially if it compromises our needs as individuals.

All of us would benefit from occasionally giving ourselves a sticker and reminding ourselves we're doing a great job. Maybe after complimenting ourselves for a while, we'd no longer need praise and approval from everyone else for it to feel true. Even when we feel lost or stuck somewhere between the now and the next, we may be well on our way to success, whatever that might look like for each of us.

Revolutionary Rhythms

Sultan of Swoon

Alyssa Katz



Photo Courtesy of Clipartkey.com

Frank Sinatra rose to stardom in the 1940s and 50s, not only as a singer, but also as an actor. Hailing from Hoboken, NJ, he was inspired by Bing Crosby in the 30s, and decided he wanted to be a singer. Following high school, he sang in nightclubs, and after some radio exposure, he gained attention from a bandleader, Harry James, who asked him to join his band.

Sinatra recorded his first hit with them, “All or Nothing at All,” in 1940. After a couple years of success with the band, he decided to branch out and try it out on his own. Between 1943 and 1946, his solo career really blossomed; his smooth, soothing baritone

captured audiences, and earned him nicknames such as The Voice and The Sultan of Swoon. He was also known as Ol' Blue Eyes, and later, The Chairman of the Board.

Sinatra's acting career also took off at the same time, when he starred in *Reveille with Beverly* and *Higher and Higher* in 1943. Then in 1945, he won an Academy Award for *The House I Live In*, a short promotional film about racial and religious tolerance. Being unfit for the draft because of a punctured eardrum, Sinatra stayed on the home front during WWII.

Post-war, though his popularity declined, in 1953, he made a triumphant comeback with his role in *From Here to Eternity*, which earned him an Oscar. He continued to star in more movies and record music simultaneously. Though his record sales declined in the late 50s, they picked up again in the mid-60s. With the Rat Pack, he worked alongside members: Sammy Davis Jr., Dean Martin, Peter Lawford, and Joey Bishop. During this time, however, he began a descent into destructive behavior, such as gambling, smoking, drinking and womanizing.

His acting and singing careers continued to coincide throughout the 60s, along with his Las Vegas debut, with the Rat Pack.

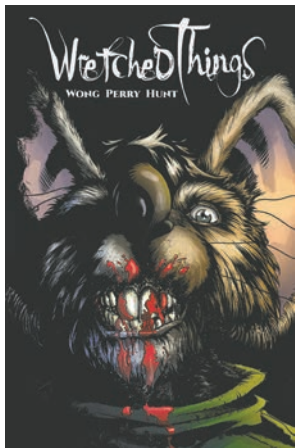
“...his smooth, soothing baritone captured audiences, and earned him nicknames such as The Voice and The Sultan of Swoon. He was also known as Ol' Blue Eyes, and later, The Chairman of the Board.”

He received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1965 and also headlined the 1965 Newport Jazz Festival with Count Basie's Orchestra. His 1966 hit, “Strangers in the Night,” won him a Grammy for Record of the Year. This was followed by a 1967 duet with his daughter, Nancy, “Something Stupid,” and then his take on a French song, “My Way,” featuring lyrics from Paul Anka. It became one of his signature tunes.

Frank Sinatra had many hits throughout his 50-year career: “Come Fly with Me” (1958), “Fly Me to the Moon” (1964), “Love and Marriage” (1955), “Luck Be a Lady” (1965), and perhaps his best known, “New York, New York” (1977). Sinatra gave his last performance in 1995, dying of a heart attack three years later. His legacy lives on through his music, movies, and countless fans.

Wretched Things Review

Created by: Devon Wong
Illustrated by: Ken Perry
Mitchell Walter Maknis



It's rare to find a piece of literature that elicits a sense of fear and unsettling dread while also providing an underlying theme of morality. Comic creators Devon Wong and Ken Perry have done just that with a meticulously

crafted, gritty, and chilling tale about the lives of the restless and vengeful critters hidden within the walls and floorboards of an everyday household.

Wretched Things follows a diminutive mouse named Bran, who, under the protection of his father, has lived life isolated within his kin's nest. However, for the good of his clan, Bran ventures into the heart of the house. He soon becomes entwined within the fatal domain of humanity and is pulled deeper into its depraved inner workings. This leads Bran to an undesired destiny filled with distress and heartbreak.

Writer Devon Wong has crafted an immersive world, both mysterious and frightening. Even a reader such as myself, who detests all forms of insects, arachnids, and vermin, couldn't help becoming attached to the story's characters. By exploring the varying clans and species riddled throughout the house, the creative team provided intricate history and lore to the wide array of creatures.

From their distinct visual appearances to their personality quirks, they truly felt like individuals with their own internal motives and struggles. I was especially engrossed in the complexities of the six-legged spider, Impatience, who guided the naive Bran on his expedition. Her motives were particularly interesting, and I found myself entangled within her complicated web of intrigue, fascinated to see where she'd take the young protagonist next.

Wong also served as letterer, skillfully applying text and dialogue, which made for a well-paced read. I enjoyed the unobscured look at Ken Perry's distinctive and unnerving illustrations, which not only captured such rich emotion in every panel, but also implemented innovative angles. Perry's illustrations gave unique perspectives to the narrative's brand of psychological horror.

Initially, some readers may find the story's aesthetic to be off-putting, but its uniqueness makes this tale truly memorable. From its organically constructed cast of characters to the story's philosophical messages, Source Point Press's revolutionary title, *Wretched Things*, is the type of story that will keep readers engaged and craving more from this disturbing world. You can purchase the title at your local comic shop or order it at www.sourcepointpress.com.

FACE IN THE CROWD Around the World and Back

Samantha Cruz

Hi, my name is Samantha Cruz. I'm 23 years old, and I had been attending NVCC up until this zombie apocalypse happened. Just kidding! But not really, right? Anyways, back to me and not the plague.

Currently I am a biology major, but I plan on switching to Veterinary Science soon. I originally planned on enrolling at Naugatuck Valley back in 2014 when I was a senior in high school, but then I procrastinated on applying to college. I eventually ended up joining the Marine Corps instead.

While in the Marine Corps I was a Motor Transport Operator, and I got the opportunity to travel to many different places. I was stationed in Okinawa, Japan for two years. I then spent my last two years of service in California; that's me on a pier in San Francisco.

Here we are, almost six years after I initially considered registering, and I'm back where I started! I figured why waste my money on a big, expensive college, when I can attend NVCC and probably receive better education for less money. I'm only two semesters in at NVCC, but I plan on continuing my



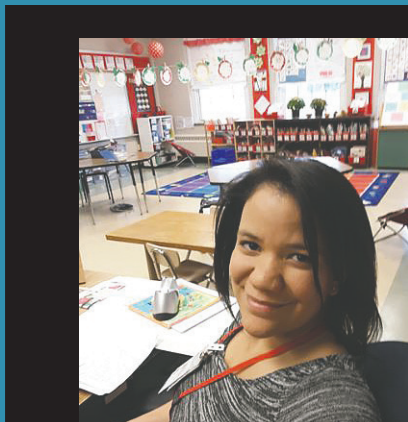
Photo Courtesy of Samantha Cruz

education at Colorado State University.

Some experiences that have stood out to me are...just the entire college experience, honestly. I actually like taking classes and learning new things. I also served a short stint with the Student Government Association as an SGA senator for a semester. There was even a whole two weeks as SGA Treasurer; that was fun!

So far, I have enjoyed my time at Naugatuck Valley Community College. I'm disappointed that we'll be finishing out the semester online, but I hope to see everyone when we come back after the plague!

alumni SHOWCASE



Clarissa Baez

Paying It Forward

Hello, my name is Clarissa Baez. I started at Naugatuck Valley Community College in fall 2009 and graduated eight years ago. NVCC is a great college that had all the resources I needed. The Academic Center for Excellence was very helpful, and I had some exceptional instructors, most importantly, Prof. Parlato who always believed in me.

As a first-generation college student, the WAVE Program was especially helpful for me. I met some amazing people, and we became like a team, or better yet a family. We were never on our own because the WAVE family was always there to help. I owe a special thank you to Bonnie Goulet and Mitch

Holmes who were like academic parents for all us WAVE students!

I always encourage everyone to attend Naugatuck Valley; it's affordable, local, and has all the resources anyone needs to succeed, most of all, people who really care. After NVCC, I earned a bachelor's degree from

"Our children are our future, so it's important to invest in them."

Western CT State University and a Masters in Elementary Education from Sacred Heart University. I aspire to work with young kids and help them to become well-educated individuals.

Education starts in the home, then reaches our schools, and should never end. We should never stop learning. Besides teaching children content knowledge (science, math, reading, and social studies), I also plan to teach about perseverance, dedication, and the fact that knowledge is power no matter where you come from. We live in the information age; thus, I believe a strong education, with research and hard work, will lead to success regardless of one's socio-economic status.

Anyone can reach success through education and hard work. This is not to say everyone has equal access. That's why I strongly believe in helping low-income families, those who struggle with English, and minorities succeed. I plan to do this by introducing my students to resources all over the state and online. By helping others, we help ourselves. Our children are our future, so it's important to invest in them. God bless.

RECENTLY READ



Sarey by Lantern Light
Susan Williams Beckhorn

There's been a book sitting in my bookcase since I was little, and I just recently sat down to finally read it (a little late, right?). At the time I received this book, I couldn't get past the first chapter, maybe the second. I think it was the word "dyslexia" that tripped me up, and so the book remained on a shelf...until now. A children's chapter book, nonetheless, it still has its merits.

We meet Sarah "Sarey" Harris, who's just failed third grade because she's unable to read or write well. Sworn off reading after being humiliated by her classmates and her teacher, she exclaims, "I'm not ever going to read again!" Teachers didn't understand her disability, and classmates called her "baby" because she was the smallest in class. Because she couldn't read, she would always call herself dumb. She and her parents felt most comfortable in the country, so, after some discussion—and with little money—they took the risk and moved out of the big city of Buffalo, far north of Caribou, Maine.

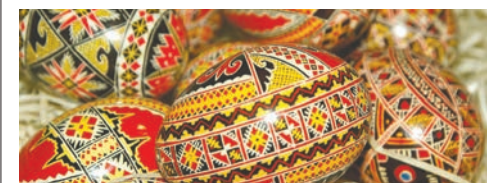
While it was an adjustment to go from city to country, this new place felt more like home. Sarey made her first friend, and she found a teacher who understood her disability and found alternate ways to help her learn. Sarey was very talented at drawing, and, seeing that she was still paying attention to class lessons, her teacher had her draw pictures instead of doing written assignments to earn grades.

When Sarey tried to read and came across a word she didn't know, she would give up. It wasn't just her disability keeping her from reading; it was also her will to learn, to get it right. Her mother said, "...it's her fear of making a mistake that's really keeping her from learning to read."

With time—as her mother predicted—Sarey began growing more confident in Caribou, feeling like she could, in fact, be smart. Williams Beckhorn writes, "She felt the little seed of strength growing inside her." Secretly, at night, she would attempt to read and write, no longer feeling sick to her stomach anymore, or giving up when she thought she'd spelled something wrong, or when she came across a word she didn't know. She learned it was okay to ask for help, and that it's okay to make mistakes.

The author of this book was inspired by her own siblings who had dyslexia, and in her dedication, she writes: *To my wise and kind brother, David, and to every kid who has ever struggled.* This was a delightful read about a bright young girl who, while giving up on something because it was too difficult, regained that will and courage to prove to herself that she could read, that she was just right, just as she was

Alyssa Katz.



Easter Eggs and Abundant Joy

Kathleen Chesto

Many believe Easter egg had pagan origins. This is understandable, since the egg has been a symbol of life and fertility from ancient times, and Christianity supplanted the pagan religions of Rome and Greece. But the source of the tradition, like many Christian traditions, is more historical than mythical, more earthy than mystical.

In medieval Europe, Lenten season was far more strictly observed than it is today. Upper classes fasted from meat throughout the entire 40 days. The poor, serfs and peasants, fasted from eggs and dairy, their primary source of protein. Many had small flocks of chickens; cheap to feed they required little

land. Throughout Lent, eggs would be left, and many went to waste. It was permitted to gather them before Easter, when they were boiled to last until the holiday. Eggs became the traditional Easter breakfast when the poor broke their Lenten fast. Since many abandoned eggs had been fertilized, baby chicks also became associated with Easter customs.

The practice of coloring, hiding, and hunting eggs belongs to several other national traditions. While there is some historical basis for the association of a rabbit with Easter, the fantasy of a bunny who delivered eggs was first brought to this country by the Germans and Dutch who settled in Pennsylvania.

Our family tradition has always been to hide wrapped chocolate eggs and gift-filled plastic eggs throughout the house. Easter weather can be unpredictable, and we've always lived in an area with enough wildlife to decimate an outdoor egg hunt. We continued to hide Easter eggs long after our children outgrew the fantasy, until our grandchildren took over the tradition.

Katie, our first grandchild, was a toddler for her first Easter egg hunt. Our adult children all gathered as spectators in our living room as we handed her the tiny basket and demonstrated the task at hand. We found the first egg together; when she discovered its contents, it took little encouragement to engage her in the hunt. She searched with frantic concentration, finding joy in each new egg.

By the time a fifth egg was added, her tiny

basket overflowed and spilled on the floor. We were surprised how this tickled her. She giggled, clapped her hands, then ran off for more. When the basket overflowed a second time, she broke into delighted laughter; a little dance accompanied the clapping. By the third egg spill, we were all laughing with her.

At that point, her Dad said, "Will someone please give that child a bigger basket?" The rest of us all shouted "No!" and I turned to my son-in-law to explain gently, "The joy isn't in finding the eggs, or even in what they contain. Her joy is in the abundance, the overflow."

Katie taught us all an important lesson that Easter. It's much easier to experience abundance if you keep your basket small. I wish you an abundance of joy, however you celebrate the season.

It's Okay to Scream

Nichola Rosa

Friday...mid-afternoon. Dense clouds, and a blanket of moisture soaks the air. But a drab backdrop can't sully the energy rising for my end-of-week ritual. I'm headed off to greet new faces, get a little loud, and maybe even end up in a headlock. No, it's not happy hour down at the pub. I'm making my way to Self-Defense I, an introductory, karate-based, single-credit offering this semester at NVCC. I'll admit reservations in partaking at the age of...well, past 21. But I needed a charge in order to outlast these weeks of stingy daylight and fading New Year's resolutions.

I found it down in classroom A404 where the mood is welcoming and the group an

eclectic mix. Some are here for the workout. Others want to feel safer walking at night. And a few simply yearn to blow off steam. The initial moments are light-hearted. Then the work begins. Our instructor is Carlos Plaza, a 14-year practitioner of Tang Soo Do, a Korean martial art imprinted with Chinese and Japanese influences. He issues an opening directive: This is our time, a time to declutter the mind and align with the self. Who doesn't like the sound of that?

After a brief warmup of stretching and calisthenics, we go into *Maggi*. That's Korean for blocking. High blocks. Mid-line. Low blocks. I sense new muscles firing as pathways open

that have too long lain dormant. Then *Chigi*, or punches. As I work through combinations, my focus tightens, and residual angst peels off with each series of throws. Now *Chagi*. Those are kicks. Front and side. Roundhouse. Axe kicks. All of this is accompanied by a reminder from our teacher, added with a playful glint: 'It's okay to scream'.

Now on to bag work. Rightly liberating. Something about unloading those feet, fists, and elbows into the pads at full bore has garnered more therapy than any guru or bartender I've happened to consult. Finally, we partner up for two-person drills. We (gently) maul each other with bear hugs, choke holds, and, yes, headlocks. With each repetition, trust in

my own facility heightens, delivering a critical takeaway: Confidence kicks ass.

Class winds up as we fall in line with a final group *Kyungnet*, or bow. In a brief after-class interview, Plaza, who also teaches math at the College, discloses some philosophy. It's about overcoming barriers. Doing the thing you think you cannot do. In math. In karate. In life. Whatever the challenge faced, we have three options: to flee, to freeze, or to fight. And all we do here supports our decision in that moment. Reflecting on this, I'm on my way to feeling a bit richer each week in the wisdom of the ancients even as I anticipate our next class. Maybe you'll be there. Remember... It's okay to scream.

FACE IN THE CROWD Artful Experience

Jane Linnell

My name is Jane Linnell, and I am currently an Art Studies major at NVCC. A member of the Phi Theta Kappa National Honor Society, I will be graduating with my Associates in Art Studies this May.

Before attending NVCC, I started my freshman year down in North Carolina at Cape Fear Community College. The experience allowed me to explore different parts of the city, beaches, and culture. I took some prerequisites while trying to decide what I wanted to do because that was always a challenging decision for me. Thankfully, I have my teachers here at NVCC who have helped me along with this decision, including the fabulous Amanda Lebel.

My artwork has never been about one specific subject. I enjoy the outdoors, so creating landscapes has always been an interest of mine. Animals are a passion of mine as well. My family rescued a puppy from Arkansas about two years ago, and I created a print of him during my printmaking class. My influences include my everyday life mostly and what I enjoy admiring. Whether that be landscapes, animals, or anything that makes me smile, I want to reflect the beauty in this world that people may overlook on a daily basis.

Printmaking was a class I had never taken before, but I'm glad I did. It ended up being a great class that taught me how to use a different medium and create such interesting works. One of my prints was in the



Photo Courtesy of Jane Linnell

**"I will be forever grateful
for the experiences I've had
here at NVCC."**

Community Exhibition held at University of Hartford. It was a scene of the water, rocks, and a lighthouse on Winter Island, Salem, MA; I'm holding that print in the photo.

Other than my academics, I work two jobs. I work at a restaurant as a hostess and taking people's orders. In addition to this, I am a certified in-house caregiver. I also did a work study for the Art Department for a semester. My other hobbies include photography, hiking, and exploring new places.

Overall, I will be forever grateful for the experiences I've had here at NVCC. Amanda Lebel has been an ongoing inspiration, guiding me through every semester. I cannot imagine what my life would be like if I had not met her and had her as a mentor. I can proudly say I will be an Art History major at the University of Hartford next fall, with the goal of pursuing a career as a curator.

Toilet Paper Forts

Alexander Wilson

It's all I can imagine at this point. All these people buying toilet paper in bulk—four or more multipacks at once—they must be building forts out of toilet paper. I've worked in a grocery store for three years now, and I haven't seen anything like this. Our entire paper goods aisle has been wiped out. There are no more canned or frozen vegetables. Pasta and rice are scarce.

You can forget about soap and hand sanitizer; we haven't had those in a couple weeks now. We have no water of any kind. Five-gallon jugs for coolers? Gallons of spring or distilled? 24-packs of Poland Springs? Nope, nope, and nope. We have no meat and barely any seafood. There's really nothing left to buy, unless you want to live off of Chips Ahoy cookies.

It wouldn't be so bad if we were getting shipments in on time. Then we'd have stock to put out, even if it disappeared in half a day. We'd at least have the excuse that we *had* water, but we sold out. Unfortunately, every store is experiencing the same extremely high levels of demand for the basics, so warehouses can't keep up with orders. When I tell customers this, they don't get it. We're doing our best to get what you need, but what you need simply isn't available. There either isn't enough being made, drivers aren't able to get it here quickly

enough—or both.

I understand we're all worried about being stuck under quarantine and running out of things we depend on daily. But for many reasons, grocery stores cannot close. All these employees are risking their health daily to make sure people can get food. There's no reason to treat them like garbage because the store has the audacity to be out of Lysol. Think about the other people in this world without access to these same things. Think about the people who maybe can't afford certain items. Remember, you aren't the only one looking to stay healthy.

The best thing we can do right now is to respect the rules grocery stores have to put in place to keep shopping fair. Listen when employees tell you there's a limited purchase quantity on certain items. Respect the change in hours so clerks can get work done. Don't badger them about potential inventory in the back (I assure you, there's nothing back there).

Lastly, treat store employees like human beings. Smile, thank them, and move on, so they can take care of the next customer. Respect is rare as it is, and it's even rarer in a crisis-ridden world. Be a good human being. Remember it's the employees who keep stores running. We can only do so much, and trust me, we're doing our best.

Biden for the Nomination?

Kathleen Chesto

Our nation is no longer composed of three groups of voters—Democrats, Republicans and Independents—but of at least seven groups: progressive activists, traditional liberals, passive liberals, the politically disengaged, moderates, traditional conservatives, and devoted conservatives. But with such a huge variance in political affiliation, why are our political discussions so polarized?

As a traditional liberal, I stopped talking long ago. Progressive activists are so loud and angry, and ultra-conservatives are so bombastic and self-righteous, I'm exhausted listening, let alone trying to get a word in. The far left has become belligerent, while the traditional conservative base has moved further and further right in support of the president they put in office. Many in the middle have grown silent, comprising the "exhausted majority."

Joe Biden comes from the middle, the middle of the political muddle, the middle social strata, the man referred to in many states as "Blue Collar Joe." He is what many liberals hate, a "Washington insider," and what many fear, a "corporate man."

In the ten days between the South Carolina primary and Super Tuesday, he rose decisively from lackluster candidate struggling to stay in the race to the most likely winner of the Democratic nomination. Part of that rise is due to Biden's own warmth and personal appeal; part is due to the coronavirus that has most Americans focused on short term plans of survival, not long-term social revolution, and part is necessity to overtake the incumbent president.

In the Biden/Sanders debate, March 15th, the pandemic, and the question of how each candidate would respond if in office, threw a spotlight on Biden's experience. Sanders stressed the need for Medicare For All, a more economically balanced society, so that all would bear the brunt of the financial effects, putting a long-term plan in place for later emergencies. I believe in his ideals; I'm just not concerned about them right now.

Biden swung directly into presidential role, saying he would hold daily consultations in the situation room, with world and scientific leaders and medical experts to create strategic plans. He would open ten drive-in virus testing

sites in every state and mobilize the National Guard and the armed forces to build hospitals in every state, like those built during wartime, to prepare for the spike in cases that could overwhelm the medical system. Focused in the moment, Biden showed complete awareness of the presidential power to get things done. His eight years as vice president sounded like on-the-job training for the role. Comforted by his words, I wished he were already in office.

On economic policy, environmental and foreign affairs, both candidates agree on the changes needed, just not on how to get there. Sanders simply wants to take on the whole system and turn it over. His revolution is appealing, but perhaps not to a nation presently fearful of what tomorrow will bring. Biden's more measured plans and more limited approach may not work as well, or accomplish as much, but probably will have a better chance of winning the election. His rise in popularity has matched the rise in fear.

On immigration, both candidates made me believe we may not have to take down the Statue of Liberty after all. Biden promising to name a woman as his running mate certainly won't hurt, and both promised a cabinet of 50% women.

Biden is a step in the right direction, and America is more willing to step than to leap, ready to accept the tried and true. Biden brings direct experience in the executive role, as one of the most active vice presidents in recent times. His foreign affairs experience makes him known to and trusted by many world leaders.

Biden's relationships in Congress have been less contentious than Sanders', and that bodes well for his ability to work with a Republican Senate. The best executive ideas in the world must still make it through the legislature.

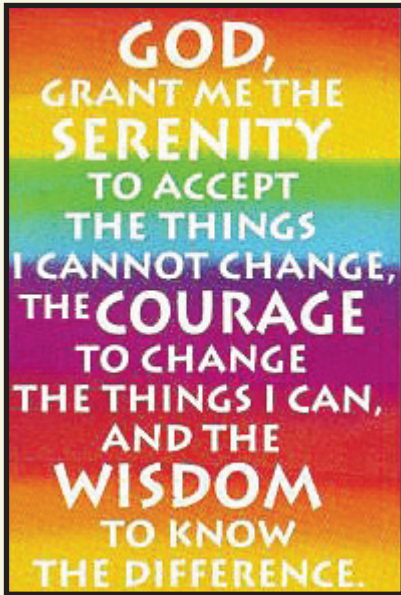
Moving from radical right to radical left is not likely to heal the country, even if it could win the election, which is doubtful. Many moderate conservatives hope to move back toward the middle, which has always been their stronghold. Democrats would be wise to offer that.

While our nation definitely needs the ideals of a more radical move into the future, economically, socially, and environmentally, perhaps it's wise to spend time first patching the cracks in the foundation.



Addressing COVID-19 with Serenity

Sandra Valente



The COVID-19 pandemic has presented us with new challenges this week, as schools shut down, restaurants and gyms close, and students are asked to complete their classes from home in an online format. Worldwide, we are all being challenged. We are all in this together.

As Coordinator of the DARC Program, one challenge has been with students completing their clinical internships—for which they work 15 hours per week at Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities across Connecticut and New York. The internship represents the last class before DARC students graduate, so concerns have been raised about how it will affect them if facilities advise students to remain at home.

In my conversations with the many facilities who take our students, the feedback has been that they are remaining open and are continuing to take clients seeking treatment for substance use and mental health disorders. Adaptations have been made, such as screening everyone who walks in the door, asking anyone with symptoms to stay home, and suspending group therapy. Many services are still being provided, and clients can still get individual therapy. Many facilities are looking into the use of telehealth as an additional option to provide counseling services.

Many of my students have asked whether they will graduate, because completion of internship hours is the major component of their course work. To quell these concerns, an email was sent out indicating we would work with all students and provide accommodations as needed so they will get the credit for whatever hours they were able to complete.

More importantly, it was reiterated that we need to stay calm. *Tranquila* (Spanish for “stay calm”), is a phrase often used in Costa Rica to suggest to those who are anxious that it will be okay and not to panic. In the addiction counseling field, we often use Reinhold Niebuhr’s Serenity Prayer as a means of teaching those struggling with addiction to discern what we have control over versus what we cannot control.

We all have control over how we respond to adversity, our attitudes, our behaviors and emotions, and the way we respond to external circumstances. There are those things that we have no control over: school closing, no toilet paper in grocery aisles, having to stay home, not being able to engage in our typical activities. There is nothing we can do to change this for the time being. Having the wisdom to *know the difference* involves asking the question, “Is this something I can control?” If not, let it go and focus on what you can do.

Adversity often leads to new insights, patience, new understanding, and a profound respect for the life we had been leading and things we took for granted.

Tranquila.... we will get through this, and we will be better for it.

Earth Matters

More Conservation



Efforts

Alyssa Katz

Transitioning from last month’s article on aquarium conservation efforts, this month, we move on to zoos. Zoos house thousands of species of animals—some injured in the wild and nursed back to health, some on the verge of extinction. CT’s own Beardsley Zoo, in Bridgeport, makes many conservation efforts through the animals they take in and through education meant to spread awareness about endangered species and planetary stewardship. A complete—and growing—list of animals that can be found at Beardsley is listed on their website.

Conservation efforts reach far beyond Bridgeport as the Beardsley Zoo has teamed up with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA); according to their mission statement: “AZA zoos and aquariums are places where people connect with animals. We are therefore dedicated to excellence in animal care and welfare, conservation, education, and research that collectively inspire respect for animals and nature.”

The AZA supports over 238 zoos and aquariums nationwide; 216 accredited facilities in 45 states, plus 22 in 11 other countries; they have plans on helping increase dwindling populations for the next 100 years. About 800,000 animals, 6,000 species and 1,000 endangered species are in the care of AZA facilities. These statistics are proof that the AZA is making an impact in helping protect our planet’s wildlife.

In addition, one of their newer projects, with support from the Turtle Safety Alliance (TSA), is the American Turtles Program, geared toward protecting native turtles, particularly endangered ones, such as the sea turtle. It also aims to help stop turtle trafficking, which has become a critical issue, though not many people know about it. Turtles are endangered, being kept as pets, and used for food and medicine—particularly in Asia. It’s gotten so critical that some species are nearly extinct. Paired with degradation and habitat loss, 60% of the world’s turtle population has declined, with several species facing extinction.

The TSA is just one of 26 current programs run by SAFE, the Saving Animals from Extinction program. Started in 2015, SAFE works to protect and save animals from extinction. Some species include the African Penguin, Asian Elephant, Black Rhinoceros, Cheetahs, Gorillas, Western Pond Turtles, species of sharks and rays, Vaquita, and Whooping Cranes.

Upon visiting the Beardsley Zoo website, I discovered the AZA website, which led to link after link, detailing all their programs and their amazing efforts toward wildlife conservation. It was interesting to see other programs they’ve started, the animal species they’re protecting, and the impact they’ve made. If you’d like to do some more investigating, start with Beardsley Zoo’s website: <https://www.beardsleyzoo.org/conservation.html>, or the AZA website: <https://www.aza.org/>.

Facing the Truth

Audrey Winter

I was around nine years old. I remember walking home from my best friend’s house; she lived just across the street. Tears streamed down my cheeks, and I clenched my fists tight at my sides. This is abuse, I thought. Of course, at that time, I had no idea what that word really meant; it just sounded right for my situation. I’d put together that “abuse” was similar to “misuse”; therefore, it had to mean something similar. Because even though I didn’t know what was going on, I knew being put on someone’s lap and touched all over was not proper use of a child.

When I got my first personal computer, I started Googling. I looked up abuse, and I sought out stories of people with similar situations. I never would’ve guessed what I had been through was a form of sexual assault. It just didn’t seem horrible enough at the time, although that also came from not understanding what had been taken. It wasn’t until I was in my early teens that I fully realized the extent of what had happened. It wasn’t violent, but it was an invasion. Still, I blamed myself for letting it happen. Locked in a cage of ignorance, I was not brave enough to open the door. He’d taken advantage of that ignorance and had done as he pleased.

I shared my story here last April, but this time I want to be completely up front about what it is I went through. I got so good at hiding the truth I still can’t say it. In fact, I’ve never said it, but I’ll say it now: I’m a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. It was isolating, and I knew I couldn’t tell anyone what had happened, so I hid. I buried it so deep that now I have trouble talking about anything related to the topic. Even writing this is hard, but I know I need to do it. If not for me, then maybe for other people who need to find their voice in similar matters.

The problem with being a victim is you start to get into the mindset that you can’t say no. Most of my sexual experiences after that were just to please the other person, not because I wanted it. I started thinking the only thing I was good for was to please other people, and I made that my life’s mission. As horrible as it is, that way of thinking actually saved my life. I’ve had suicidal thoughts since I was at least thirteen, but I never acted on them because I didn’t want to hurt the people around me. Now, almost a decade later, I’ve finally decided to live for me.

Surviving a sexual assault, to me, is surviving the years that follow. In my experience, the aftermath was worse than the actual experience. I suppose it was just a delayed reaction, because you can’t grieve until you know what you’ve lost. Sometimes though, I felt my emotions were more intense than they should have been. I never wanted to share my story because I felt a little ashamed it hadn’t been violent. So many people have it so much worse, so what right did I have to complain? I even started being reckless, hoping something would happen that was horrible enough to justify how I felt. I didn’t actually want anything violent to happen, I just needed to feel like I had a reason to hurt. So, I hurt myself.

Recently, I’ve realized I do have the right to my own feelings. Truth is, it all hurts, whether it be an unwanted grab, or a full-out violent assault. It all hurts in different ways, but it’s still the same horrible feeling of helplessness and loss of agency. All sexual assault survivors, regardless of their experience, have to deal with loss: loss of innocence, loss of control, loss of virginity, and loss of choice. That’s the real tragedy, but it is survivable. And I’m proof.

Thank You All

For Caution and Commitment

Kathleen Chesto

It’s been a strange few weeks. For me, concern around the coronavirus pandemic has a haunting familiarity. I was in elementary school in Rhode Island during the polio epidemic of 1953 - 1955. During that time, 35,000-45,000 people were sickened every year, predominantly children and young adults.

Everyone knew someone who’d been sick, and enough of us knew someone who had become paralyzed or was in an iron lung, to keep all of us terrified. We couldn’t swim in lakes or pools. We avoided large gatherings. We were constantly reminded to wash our hands, and we washed them with PhisoHex, the antibacterial soap used by doctors to scrub before surgery. In 1954, all schools, public and private, remained closed through September and the governor waived the 180-day attendance requirement.

As the threat of COVID-19 grew through February, so did my sense of déjà vu, along with a quiet, nagging fear. At least once every day, I would overhear the comment: “We don’t have to worry. Only the elderly are dying.” Never once, in those scary childhood years, did I hear an elderly person say, “We don’t have to worry. Only the children are dying.”

I want to thank our administration, both state and local, for demonstrating to our whole student body that isolation and quarantine are not just about protecting ourselves, but about accepting responsibility for the good of the wider community. Thank you for recognizing the very real threat this disease presents, and for acting with a caution that others may criticize as excessive. Our youth may survive, but they could become carriers to the 16% of the population at serious risk from COVID-19.

All of us want to thank our professors for the additional effort needed to put their courses online, particularly those who struggled to do this for the first time. A special thanks to instrumental teachers who had to devise and develop interactive lessons on Skype, then teach their students both set up and use. We hope that we have made it worth all your effort.

I suspect the best way we can say thank you is by becoming more aware of our dependence on all of you on this journey, and our own obligation to the rest of our community. In the words of the poet John O’Donohue, “We live in the shelter of one another.”

Readers Respond

Dear Editor,

In regards of Christian Soto’s “Puerto Rico in Crisis,” I like what Soto and the community are doing to help assist Puerto Rico because it is part of our country. The natural disasters that occurred there are devastating, and they need any help they can get. I agree with the creation of the fundraiser to provide necessary essentials [for victims] to eat and wash up.

I did not know that they were hit with at least 11 earthquakes this year. To hear the devastation that it has caused breaks my heart. It is believed that [inhabitants of] the island feel they are forgotten, so really, they need anything we can do to help. We have to give them tools and resources so they can live as normally as possible.

So, I love that people are taking time out to help those in Puerto Rico. It is useful and greatly appreciated by the residents that live there and we should not stop helping them because they are part of the U.S.

Sincerely, Ariel Goris



Queer Code

Bi vs Pan vs Omni

Alexander Wilson



I'm going to start this month's column with a multiple choice question. Which of the following sexualities is trans-inclusive?

- A. Heterosexuality
- B. Pansexuality
- C. Bisexuality
- D. Homosexuality
- E. Omnisexuality

It's a trick question. All the above are trans-friendly. There's no distinction of a single trans-inclusive sexuality because they *all* are. Trans men are men, and trans women are women. Anyone, trans, nonbinary, or cis, can experience attraction to anyone, trans, nonbinary, or cis. The coolest thing about this is your sexuality doesn't have to be questioned if your partner is trans and you aren't.

If you're a cis man dating a trans woman, congratulations! You're still straight. If you're a trans man dating a cis woman, yes, you are also straight. A trans woman and a trans man dating? Still a straight couple. A trans woman and a cis woman dating? That right there is a lovely lesbian couple. Two trans women dating? Also a lesbian couple. Gay couples can also be a trans man and a cis man, or even two trans men.

Gender doesn't define sexuality, though; let me make that abundantly clear. Sexuality also doesn't define gender. You can be nonbinary and call yourself gay, but that doesn't mean you just date nonbinary people. Gay doesn't simply mean "same gender attraction" anymore.

Often, people just call themselves gay because it's easier. Many in bi, pan, or omnisexual relationships call themselves gay if they're in a "gay" relationship because there's still a lot of biphobia in this world. Say you're bi all you want, but once you're in

a committed relationship, people will start claiming you've "picked a side." No, we've picked love. That's what really matters here.

So, what's the difference between these three sexualities? Bisexuality, pansexuality, and omnisexuality are very similar, and the definitions overlap so much that really, the only true differences are nuance, and how one decides to define their own sexuality.

Bisexuality is defined as attraction to two or more genders. "And more" is important to include. Bisexuality has never "just" meant attraction to the two binary genders. It was always trans-inclusive. Anyone who tells you otherwise is probably biphobic, transphobic, and not a fun person to hang around.

Pansexuality is most often described as attraction to people regardless of gender. A popular saying in the pan community is "hearts not parts." Some pan people say they fall in love with souls, with people, that how the body looks is just secondary. That doesn't mean other sexualities are shallow. Everyone falls in love with a soul. Some people just factor in body type more than others. There's nothing wrong with how your sexual attraction works.

Omnisexuality is an attraction to all genders. There really isn't much difference between this and pansexuality. Being attracted to all genders is the same as being attracted to people regardless of gender. As I said before, it comes down to personal preference and how you want to define your own sexuality.

Remember, you're allowed to label or not label your own sexuality as you please. You're definitely not allowed to police other people's sexuality. Have a friend in a "gay" relationship who identifies as bi? They're still bisexual, no matter who their partner is. Know someone who's dating someone nonbinary despite being cis themselves? If they call themselves omnisexual, that's their right. A cis man who's had both cis and trans woman partners will call himself straight because that's what he is. Awesome, keep on loving women, friend.

Stay sane out there. The world's getting crazier. Let's not add to it by fighting over love.

Love, a very tired queer writer, Alexander.

The Importance of Pain

Gwenydd Miller

Pain gets a bad rap these days. Just ask anyone, they'll say pain is bad. No one wants it (except for the really kinky) because, let's face it, pain hurts. We do everything we can to avoid it. We take pills, we keep away from things we know will do us harm. But that doesn't mean pain is without value.

This horrible sensation we're all familiar with does have reasons for being. If it didn't hurt when we cut our finger, we'd keep doing it, and might eventually die of an infection we couldn't feel. Pain is a warning, a message from our bodies telling us what to avoid to survive. Pain is the siren going off in the brain, telling us we need to take care. True, pain feels bad, but where would we be without it?

An early *Grey's Anatomy* episode featured a girl who couldn't feel pain. Good for her, right? Unfortunately, because she couldn't feel pain, she didn't realize anything was wrong, and she almost died from internal hemorrhaging. One example of how pain can save lives. Emotional pain can be very similar.

As social creatures, we need one another to survive. There are the occasional outliers, hermits who "don't need anyone," but for the most part, people need social interaction. Therefore, emotional distress is a good way to corral us together. We form bonds, and when those bonds break, it hurts. When loved ones pass, it hurts. But if it didn't hurt, that would be bad for society. There are too many murders as it is; if we erased the pain of losing people, nothing would matter. I understand wanting emotional pain to end, of medicated numbness, but that's not always the answer.

There is one more reason not to dismiss pain so easily: not only does it keep us alive, but it also can enhance the life we have. If this sounds weird, bear with me. Everyone knows the phrase "You don't know what you've got 'till it's gone (they paved paradise...)." Well, you can think of pain in terms of paradise being gone. You never know how good life is without pain if you've never experienced pain. After all, in order to appreciate the sunrise, you first have to experience a dark night.

To us, scarcity is desirable. The less available something is, the higher the price tag. Diamonds, rare dog breeds, gasoline. This relates because, let's face it, paradise is scarce. Pain makes life more enjoyable by giving us an alternative. When we know time is short, we make the best of it. If life were all sunshine and rainbows, we wouldn't be living in a paradise, we'd just be living. What is considered "good" is relative, based on experience. We cannot have dark without light, yin yang, balance and all that. Maybe that's why masochism exists, for people to feel the bad in order to feel good in comparison.

Obviously, pain isn't something most people desire, and there's nothing wrong with avoiding it. That only means it's doing its job. But next time you pop a pill for a headache or take an antidepressant to numb the pain of a loss, take a minute to reflect on how much pain has done for you. For you are alive, and life, lived fully, can be painful.

Christian View

Christian Soto

Have you ever been afraid of something small, but realized it's so simple? Or has a huge problem arisen and produced a spirit of fear? All people go through dark valleys of life, but we realize we can get through them eventually. Struggle comes no matter your race, ethnicity, culture, or religion; it's a big part of our journey on Earth.

Each problem that comes will give us wisdom and strength to get through the next. Picture an elevator to visualize the levels you achieve as you progress throughout life, readying for the upcoming floor. Doing this can help us get a handle on problems—like the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic.

This illness is spreading, a new and unknown strain, causing a spirit of fear. Sad to admit, yet it is happening. Coronavirus may be similar to the flu, but it has a higher death rate, especially among people with compromised immune systems. Some people have blamed the media for blowing the situation out of proportion. Regardless, each illness is a big deal. We should remember to practice good hygiene, follow precautions, and keep a clean lifestyle. Why does it take the media to scare us to be clean in our everyday lives?

I'd like to switch gears to a Christian point of view. There will always be problems; these may be small as a penny or big as a giant. Regardless of where the problem lies, as a Christian, I believe the word of God can bring an understanding and a spirit of peace. It should allow us to be open-minded to the possibility of a higher power.

I believe Jesus Christ is coming back very soon. The end times deal with plagues, according to the Book of Revelation. As you come to a general understanding, you can see there are warnings and prophetic words which have been spoken about plagues. Maybe this virus is the start of the end times.

Fortunately, it's laid out in the Bible for us to be prepared. Knowing this makes me wonder about this current pandemic. God will always warn his people. We all are his children, so for those who fear the Coronavirus, I strongly encourage people to pray. Being dedicated to my faith and having a close relationship to God, I know His word constantly tells us to fear not!

This is repeated over eighty times within the Bible. In Isaiah 43:1, "Don't fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine." Also, in Psalm 18:2 "The lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer." We need to cling to God in troubled times.

No matter how long dark times last, we should turn to God to defeat the spirit of fear. The Coronavirus is not to be taken lightly. We should practice good hygiene always and wash our hands more frequently now. We should also open a Bible and discover the beauty of our faithful, wonderful, and mighty Creator.

In Mark 10:27, it is written, "And Jesus looking upon them saith, 'With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.'" The Coronavirus is another illness God can handle. Hold on tight in this storm; this pandemic will pass.

Considering Solitude

Vanessa Hughes

When my grandmother was very old, she sat at the kitchen table where she'd gathered her children and their children for decades. She sat next to her husband of 62 years, surrounded by family photos, shelves of knickknacks, calendars with days crossed off and days yet to be crossed off. Neatly kept curtains, though faded, filtered afternoon sunlight on her coffee mug.

She had raised a family of sons, who'd gone on to do great and medium-great things in the eyes of the world. One engineered large dams and designed municipal stations. One was in the Air Force. Another was a janitor so beloved in his community, that when he died, the mayor sent the family a letter of appreciation that was read at his funeral.

None of these things were on her mind, though, as she sat in the afternoon light at her kitchen table. She was asking her husband to take her home. My grandfather tried to convince her she was truly home, but with age, her mind was stuck in another time. She needed to be somewhere else, though she could not articulate where that was. It had been happening more and more in the year before she passed.

My father thought he had a solution. He bundled her into the car and drove her around the city they had lived in so long, past their church and newspaper, around the statues in the center, and along the block of stores where she loved to shop, all the while reminding her of where she was and how long she'd been there. They stopped for dinner, then drove to

the ocean as my father retold their entire life together.

My grandmother was a sharp-tongued, difficult woman, at least to her sons, but on this journey, she was a pussycat, laughing, nodding in appreciation of all the memories my dad resurrected. Inheriting her sense of humor, he'd had her giggling at the funny things he and his brothers had done, while we waited patiently at the table for their return.

I've been thinking of this since our collective isolation due to Coronavirus. To be sure, nobody likes to be told what to do, and the many challenges imposed by closures make us feel panicky, like we need to somehow get home. What I've found, though, is that despite uncertainty, this crisis is shining through our afternoon windows in a way that highlights who we are, and what we have, and that now, we can remind others they are remembered. During these weeks of worry about the pandemic, we've been checking in with loved ones more than we ever had on birthdays or even holidays.

My father returned from his tour of the city with my grandmother, each holding nubs of ice cream cones. My grandmother's face shone with the happiness of being with her son, of being validated, remembered. She sat at her place at the table, handed my mother her cone, and said wryly, "That was nice. Now, I want to go home." My father laughed because he'd tried. Winning is anyone's guess. Caring enough to try is the real victory.



Ask Nicole April Advice

Dear Readers,

With all that's going on concerning the coronavirus, it can be frightening. I understand it's important to take precautions, but I sometimes worry the media is scaring people even more. With the president and the governor making announcements through press conferences, we're getting constant alerts. Colleges and public schools are sending announcements as well. This is important information for sure, but I sometimes feel like enough is enough.

My purpose is to tell you to be careful and cautious. Don't stop living life, but know how to stay safe. Keeping hands clean and covering sneezes is just common sense. It shouldn't take a viral outbreak for people to keep up personal hygiene. Of course, my sympathy and concern go out to those currently dealing with the virus, and especially those who've been contaminated.

Schools, including all CSCU institutions, have closed to thoroughly disinfect facilities and prevent transmission. That's a great idea. With colleges closing and resorting to online teaching, there will be challenges, but opting for safety is crucial.

The answer is not to stop living—it's simply taking every precaution to stay safe and healthy. Even if you're in good health and not in a high-risk group (over 60 or with a compromised immune system), it's important to follow guidelines for others' sake.

I could go on about this issue, but I think you've seen enough. I will remind you of NVCC President De Filippis's message for students and staff:

"It is critical that we at NVCC do our very best to keep ourselves, our peers and colleagues, and our families safe during this time. The best way for each individual to do their part is to follow the precautions listed in the emails and practice the good hygiene tips provided."

As we continue the semester online, if you're not feeling well, you should contact professors via email. You should always keep in touch with faculty, but it's more essential now than ever to take responsibility for ourselves, stay in contact, and stay safe. I can't stress that enough.

Before we know it, this nasty virus will be a memory, and, hopefully, everyone who was infected, will be on the road to recovery. Let's all remain hopeful that this will turn out okay. In the meantime, continue checking the NVCC website for updates regarding this virus.

I wish you well until my next column. Remember to message me with questions or concerns. I appreciate the contact and will do my best to help. Names are kept anonymous to protect privacy. I look forward to getting emails at dearnicole@comcast.net.

Until next time,
Nicole

Disclaimer: Ask Nicole is designed for NVCC students and others to discuss college-related topics (academics, college transfers, school/life balance, etc.). Questions, sent anonymously, will be answered as such. Content should be appropriate for all audiences. By submitting a question, you grant The Tamarack permission to publish it. Names and contact details will never be included or shared.

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Inward or Outward?

Shyanne Caporuscio

Many people don't fully understand the terms introvert and extrovert. We've turned these words primarily into labels that further separate our society into little boxes. Extroverts we consider loud, outgoing, easy to talk to and get to know. Introverts are thought of as quiet, timid, hard to talk to or get to know. To an extent, there is truth in that. However, there's so much more to it.

On a deeper level, extroverts are focused primarily on the external aspects of life, people who get their energy and feel more themselves when partaking in social events or gatherings. This isn't to imply people with extroverted personalities don't enjoy or need alone time. Everyone, regardless of personality type, needs a little "me" time.

It's an extrovert illusion that makes people believe they're easier to get to know because they project themselves outwardly. Extroverts exert a lot of themselves into the world, so people assume—because they allow so much of themselves to be seen—they're easier to get to know. Perhaps, in some cases, that is true. However, sometimes people forget we only see the parts of others they allow us to see. One's personality type doesn't determine how easy it is to get to know them.

Unlike extroverts, introverts primarily turn into themselves and focus on their inner world. Introverts feel most themselves when in tune with their thoughts and feelings, connecting with their innermost self. While introverts tend toward the quieter side of life, and are sometimes less outgoing, it doesn't mean they're harder to talk to or get to know. The nature of the introvert is to internalize, keeping most parts of themselves hidden from the world. It's rare for a person to feel they know an introvert just by being around them. To really know a person with an introverted personality, a connection must be formed; they must allow

someone to see them. With both introverts and extroverts, there is more than meets the eye.

Some would say it's ignorant to assume a person with an introverted personality doesn't enjoy participating in social activities. People often make the mistake of counting the quiet ones out, before even offering them the chance to participate. An introvert myself, people always leave me out, then tell me they didn't invite me because they know I don't like being around people. The truth is that couldn't be farther from the truth. Like most people, I enjoy participating and being in the company of others, provided I don't feel those around me are

"Extroverts we consider loud, outgoing, easy to talk to and get to know. Introverts are thought of as quiet, timid, hard to talk to or get to know. To an extent, there is truth in that."

draining my energy. I also enjoy these things in moderation. The point is, regardless of whether a person has an introverted or extroverted personality, we're all people; we shouldn't define others and assume what they like based solely on their personality type.

While most times our personalities give those around us a glimpse of who we are as people, they don't encapsulate the entirety of an individual, so we shouldn't keep placing people in boxes, separating ourselves from others. Looking past or letting go of labels allows us to see people as they are, instead of relying on how we've perceived them to be.

Veteran's Voice

Legionnaire Buddies Walk

Rick Bellagamba



John Ring drew inspiration from a woman veteran who reached out in her time of need. After her service, dealing with the aftermath of military sexual

trauma (MST), injuries, and addicted to Oxycontin, she'd lost her children before leaving the Army. Ring said, "There are veterans going to treatment facilities, where there's nobody that understands what it's like to have served." Having successfully persuaded the VA to assist the woman, he says, now she's back on her feet, receiving treatment and has a job. "She's doing good," Ring says, "But it made me dig deeper. This is just one veteran. What about [helping] more veterans?"

That experience was his inspiration for "Ring's Buddy Watch Walk Pier to Pier" mission, a 2,462-mile walk from Georgia's Tybee Island Pier to the Santa Monica Pier in California. His goal is to raise awareness about veterans' issues such as PTSD, MST, homelessness, and suicide.

"It started with one person's struggles," he points out. "Now we're just trying to help as many veterans as possible. And not just veterans, family members, too. Spouses of veterans who are dealing with PTSD because of their spouse. Not only are we identifying epidemics of veterans suffering, now we're advocating for family members, and children." Envisioning a solo effort, Ring started walking October 1st. But seven weeks into his journey, he picked up a buddy who is willing to finish with him on May 8th.


Jimmy Mathews, a recently retired U.S. Army Master Sergeant, heard of the Buddy Walk on social media and reached out to Ring. Mathews joined the walk November 18th in Pearl, Miss., four days after his retirement. Mathews said, "It was really personal to me, and I wanted to help all the others dealing with the stigma of not really wanting to talk about having PTSD and all of the other symptoms that drive them to commit suicide."

He says he remembers soldiers he lost to suicide and thinks about the families left behind. He also wages his own battle with PTSD. "It's difficult to talk about but it's needed because that's what leads veterans and others to commit suicide," he says. "Once you hold all that trauma inside, it just builds up pressure, and then you feel like you're alone, and you get in a dark place. Others reach out to us and say how much we've helped them through their struggles. A trauma is very serious, so we just want them to know they're not alone." After hundreds of miles walking with Ring, Mathews has already felt a difference in his PTSD. "The walk is helping me cope. My anxiety's a lot lower than it was when I got out of the military."

When James Gillespie, of the American Legion, met Ring, he knew immediately he wanted to help. "It's something the Legion feels very strongly about. We're very well aware of and supportive of reducing the veterans' suicide rate." This rate, by the way, is over twenty a day. The American Legion, with the guidance of Gillespie, made sure Ring and Mathews were received and accommodated in every city they approached on their journey.

"This is exactly what The American Legion is and stands for," Gillespie explains. "We are veterans serving veterans. We are helping them all the way on their journey. You are always going to be there for your brothers and sisters, whether it is in peacetime or combat time. It's just what we do."


Rick Bellagamba Member Post 195
Oakville, CT



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