

The Tamarack

Our college. Our news. Our voice.

Naugatuck Valley Community College

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Five Years

Alyssa Katz



Photo Courtesy of Gary Katz

This year marks the 5th anniversary of the Sandy Hook tragedy. It may seem like old news to some people, especially with more recent, more deadly attacks such as the recent Las Vegas massacre. But for someone such as myself who grew up in Sandy Hook my whole life, it still lingers. Our twenty-six angels, as we refer to them, twenty children, six educators... completely unexpected—a town completely scarred. Forever changed.

There are events that occur that we'll always remember so vividly, it's as if they happened yesterday. For me and many other Newtown residents, Sandy Hook is one of those events. While the facts are there as to what may have influenced twenty-year-old Adam Lanza's behavior, there is one question that likely can never be answered: Why did he kill his mother, then proceed to murder innocent victims, including children?

In late March of this year, the book *An Unseen Angel*, by Alissa Parker was released.

I got as far as the dedication page before tears welled in my eyes. The book, about the Parker family losing their daughter Emilie in the Sandy Hook tragedy, is written by mother Alissa. In it, she relates how she was able to overcome the darkest times.

Not only were the Parkers new to Newtown that year, Alissa had also lost her father just months before. On December 14th, 2012, after hearing the news of a terrible occurrence at Sandy Hook Elementary, Alissa, along with other panic-stricken parents, waited outside the adjacent firehouse all day long...only to learn her daughter was dead. Six-year-old Emilie, so full of happiness and a zest for life, was gone.

Through the extremely rough times, kindness was shown to the Parker family in so many ways. Costs to hold the funeral in Utah where they'd recently moved from were taken care of; necessities were paid for as well—oil, food, and so on. Support was all around her when she felt so weak and helpless, not only from her

family and friends, but also from people she didn't know.

The journey to seek answers and forgiveness brought Alissa and her husband Robbie face-to-face with the killer's father, Peter Lanza. While he couldn't answer what caused his son to commit murder, because of their strained relationship, he knew Adam wasn't the same boy he once was. Regardless, Alissa and Robbie got a sense of clarity after speaking with Mr. Lanza, and eventually, Alissa found a way to forgive. She came to realize her daughter's new purpose in (after)life was to be "an unseen angel" for others, to shine a light and provide love and comfort for those who needed

it. Through her faith in God, Alissa was able to overcome the darkness and not let evil win.

At about the same time the book came out, a Sandy Hook documentary, created by filmmaker Kim Snyder, aired on PBS. Simply titled, *Newtown*, it opens with 9-1-1 calls from that morning, and includes an aerial view of Sandy Hook Elementary—the original school has since

been torn down and rebuilt on a different site.

The film was very rough to watch. In it, multiple testimonies were given by those who were willing. Some who appear include the parents of angels Daniel Barden, Kyle Malin, and Dylan Hockley. First responders and survivors are also featured, and Monsignor Robert "Father Bob" Weiss, from St. Rose of Lima Church is interviewed. The film mainly follows the Hockleys and Bardens, as they discuss the immediate aftermath of Sandy Hook, and how their lives have changed since. Hockley and Barden are co-founders of Sandy Hook Promise, a non-profit organization that seeks to prevent gun violence and improve school safety.

It was a horrible, despicable thing that happened to innocent children, robbing them and their families of the chance to see what they would become as adults. After it happened, I was in shocked silence. I didn't want to talk about it. I just couldn't believe something like this had happened. In the town I'd grown up in. At my school. I was a member of Sandy Hook Elementary School, class of 2005.

Despite everything, we wouldn't allow darkness to overtake us. The entire world opened their arms to us in our sorrow, and we still cannot thank them enough. Even something so tragic held a small silver lining. We became closer as a town, as a community. We joined hands and through resilience were able to once again gain strength.

It's hard to accept that something so tragic had to occur in order for any of this progress to be made, but the strength we've found in one another makes me appreciate my town even more. And the outpouring of love from complete strangers affirms there is still good out there. Evil cannot win when, in the face of something so horrendous, we choose to reflect back love and kindness across the globe.

Evil cannot win when, in the face of something so horrendous, we choose to reflect back love and kindness across the globe.

e-MERGING Thoughts

Alam Khan

Here at NVCC, the quality of services is regarded in high esteem. It can be felt through the in-depth, quality education provided by the faculty and the willingness of students to partake in extracurricular activities and discussions. This small community is dynamic and robust in its own way, compared to other CT state colleges. This doesn't mean those other higher ed institutions don't have quality experiences to provide. This is Naugatuck Valley, however, and they are not. The issue is identity and character that make the initials NVCC a symbolic badge of honor for the past, current, and future generations of students.

So then, the current plan to consolidate and iterate all the community colleges into a single body brings not only raised eyebrows and apprehension to the students, but also anxiety for the faculty, staff, and administrators whose way of life and process of making a living is quite frankly, jeopardized. BOR President Mark

E. Ojakian, alongside other important contributors, has provided detail of what will happen through the merging of twelve community colleges into a single entity.

No doubt, these official reports have focused mainly on the proposed benefits in enacting this course of action, while avoiding mention of anything bad. Mainly and most importantly, the amount of money that is promised to be saved is somewhere in the ballpark of \$28 million. This is an astounding number, but then, that saved amount is going where? And will the consolidation negatively impact services in the pursuit of savings? In a series of November webinars, President Ojakian answered questions from the twelve colleges, providing detail on the proposed merge, titled, Students First.

The benefits of consolidation include merging admissions into one central branch to save students time in reapplying at multiple

locations. Classes could easily transfer from one branch to another with seamless acceptance, as coursework for all degree programs would be aligned and similar, if not the same. Furthermore, there would be no need to fill out additional financial aid documents as financial aid will also be centralized. These changes are meant to create a more streamlined experience.

The notion of being able to jump from one location to another with an equal experience sounds appealing. However, it seems a simplistic, easy fix in a general overview. What's bothersome, on the other hand, is that the shortcomings of this implementation aren't mentioned. When judging the weight of good and bad, there seems to be a cloak of camouflage distracting students and the general body by solely focusing on what is good, and this is problematic. No doubt, students have been allowed a say in the layout of the consolidation and a chance to question the format of how things will be implemented. However, like bills proposed in the House and Senate, the details which are most provocative are in small print and often overlooked until far after both parties have agreed and shook hands.

Furthermore, it may seem apparent that, if all twelve community colleges unify, it will be easier to enforce new policies than if they remain separate. Will this homogenization cause individual campuses, like NVCC, to lose their distinctive character? Looking to the future promised in the original plan, it is easier to be weary than hopeful. With budgetary constraints hitting state schools hard, saving money is a necessity, but there is a danger that cost savings will lead to a loss of uniqueness at each institution.

In all, for students and faculty, the climate of the past few years has been filled with nothing but sacrifices and bending to the will of higher ups, which continues to increase the rift between the two. After all the colleges have been united, there is sure to be a study conducted to determine the effectiveness of this action. Let us all pray that between now and then this consolidation maintains its original intent and is not found to be an effort to subjugate a group of somewhat autonomous institutions into a single entity under one rule, a sort of academic dictatorship.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



Perseverance

The end of the year is drawing to a quick close, and with it, the fall semester. It is often easy to commend those who did great, but

to continually nurture those who are not succeeding is often tacked away. However, whether you have failed as a student or succeeded in classes, either should inevitably give you a reason for more drive and passion to succeed in the pursuit of your degree.

Our society is so quick to blame those who fail that it perpetually degrades the outlook and perspective of our peers who in fact did try with all their intent. Perhaps we should grow closer to those who are floundering in class; by seeing where they are lacking, we can provide and support that person through their weakness. This thought process does not dismiss the fact that, in the end, it takes real effort from the student to do the coursework. But those who support lose nothing by helping. To those who did pass, you have my sincerest congratulations. You show mettle and perseverance from which each of us should learn.

Like a phoenix, next year will be the rebirth of another chance, but don't wait for the calendar to change. Start now to get ahead of your expectations (and set your standard to your own personal best, not the level of others). Procrastination is the devil lurking on our shoulder, distracting us from any kind of meaningful work.

In the Japanese culture, there is a technique for overcoming laziness or mastering new abilities. Simply, it is to work on whatever you are passionate about for exactly one minute, and only one minute, each day. This may seem menial, but like the journey of a thousand miles, it starts with a commitment of taking a small first step.

2017 no doubt brought many losses of life and horrors at each turn, all too many to name or dwell upon. But like the bad, there was also good. And the focus is always our choice. So when the first of January bestows upon us another year, let us all remember not to be quickly swayed by propaganda or other attempts to steal our focus or make money off of others' suffering by casting the spotlight on the wrong issue. Stay focused, stay positive. Persevere!

God Bless, Happy Holidays, and Happy New Year!

Regards,
Alam Khan
Editor-in-Chief
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Sharing, Caring

Tamarack Staff



Professor Kathy Leblanc poses with Human Services student, Kelly Regan, in the new NVCC Food Pantry, located on the 3rd floor of Ekstrom Hall. The pantry, set to open in the spring semester, will offer grab-and-go food options, as well as staple foods to prepare at home, to NVCC students in need. Currently, the pantry is being set up—a recent addition is an industrial cooler to keep perishables—and the shelves are being stocked. Hours and other details will be available soon, but Leblanc is encouraging the NVCC community to get involved by donating food, volunteering to staff the pantry, and spreading the word to students. The Tamarack will publish a follow-up article in the spring semester when further details are available.

PTK Coats for Coffee
Spreading Warmth

Austin Toscano



On November 15, Phi Theta Kappa society branch, Alpha Theta Epsilon (ATE), held its annual Coats for Coffee donation event in Kinney Hall. Coats for Coffee accepts lightly used coats in exchange for cups of coffee. A bake sale was also run alongside the event, with baked goods also exchanged for coats or monetary donations. The provider of coffee this year, a delicate light roast blend, was Panera Bread located on 100 Main St. in Southbury. Among other treats available, the most popular were pumpkin spice cookies and apple cider

muffins. Several customers came back to have just one more!

By the end of the event, ATE had collected more than one hundred coats, far exceeding expectations. All coats donated from Coats for Coffee are later delivered to Acts 4 Ministry. A4M is a non-profit organization located in Waterbury. Acts has served the Greater Waterbury and Litchfield communities since 2005, providing furniture, clothing, and other necessities to those in need. To date, they have provided over 200,000 articles of clothing to the needy. In addition, all funds collected during the Coats for Coffee event will go towards local food pantries.

For anyone interested in finding out more about Phi Theta Kappa, please visit the official society website. For more information about joining Alpha Theta Epsilon, contact Prof. John Harding at JHarding@nvcc.comnet.edu or call 203-596-8763.

Sources: Acts 4 Ministry <http://acts4.net/about/>

documents related to the case. The first batch of files were released this July, but the second batch, released in October were more eagerly awaited.

A major topic of the files was CIA surveillance of Oswald about five years before the Kennedy assassination as he traveled between the Soviet Union and the US, as well as his connection to Cuba's communist government. Newly released documents show the CIA monitoring the Soviet and Cuba embassies in Mexico City and discovering Oswald's attempt to secure travel visas.

Some theories have maintained Oswald was not the killer and couldn't have shot JFK from so far away and so high, but about forty-five minutes later, he shot and killed Dallas Police Officer J.D. Tippit on the street. Many believe the CIA plotted to kill JFK; others think it was JFK's successor, Lyndon B. Johnson. Even with the new files, these theories remain unsubstantiated.

While the assassination happened over fifty years ago, documents were initially sealed in 1967. After opening them in 1992, President George H.W. Bush revealed them under the Pres. John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992, requiring all documents in part of the investigation to remain sealed

until twenty-five years later.

In total there are 2,891 files related to JFK's Assassination. Out of those released, 676 were censored to maintain the secrecy of sources who are still alive. Following the assassination, the government wanted documents pertaining to who killed Kennedy to stay sealed for 100 years to ensure no witnesses to the event or government officials at the time were still alive. Not all the files focus on the assassination itself, but also on the years after.

Bizarre details include information about a \$100,000 reward to kill Fidel Castro, and a claim that assassinating JFK was "not worth it" for Cuba. There are also unsubstantiated claims that Lyndon B. Johnson had once been a KKK member. Other files reference the infamous Hollywood blacklist, and multiple files focus on Martin Luther King Jr., showing FBI efforts to discredit him, questioning his moral character and alleging he fathered a love child. There is even an FBI letter urging King to commit suicide.

Currently censored files will remain so, perhaps for another twenty-five or fifty years. One thing is certain, the recent release, rather than offering definitive answers, will likely fuel further questions about one of America's darkest periods.

SGA PRESIDENT



Joy and Success

In the month of holly and cheer, the bells on reindeer are not the only joys we

hear. No, with the sweet sound of finals singing, "The end is near!" To all the hard-working students out there, you made it! Congratulations on being another semester closer to success!

The SGA meetings have come to a close for the semester; with our final meeting November 29th, they'll start back up in February. A huge thank you to all who came every Wednesday, represented their clubs, and worked with us on events and various volunteer opportunities. Every helping hand has been thoroughly appreciated. When we all work together and depend on each other, we make the best of so many wonderful opportunities. As the semester ends, I want to make sure the SGA's gratitude is voiced.

Student Government is always looking for enthusiastic students to get more involved in the school. If this idea interests you, more information and Senator petitions are available in the SGA office, room S516. There you can learn what you need to do in order to be voted in as a senator for next semester. Whether this is your first semester or your last, your support of the SGA is considered no less than gold.

We only have a few events left in this closing month. On December 4th, the CAPSS office and the Library are hosting a Health and Wellness Fair in room L501 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. All are welcome! There will be a Campus Conversation on December 7th titled, "Men and Masculinity." The ACE is also hosting their Annual Final Exam Cram on December 12th, from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, and once again they'll be serving waffles for success! Later in the evening, various snacks will be provided to keep eager studiers energized. Don't miss it!

Thanks again to all those who have supported the students and the SGA this semester. Our hearts are full as we wish everyone a blessed holiday season and joy and success in the new year!

Emily Verdosci

PTK Pledge to Complete

Greg Harding



Last month in PTK's chapter activities:

Alpha Theta Epsilon spearheaded the local edition of a regional effort to coordinate more than 20 community college chapters of Phi Theta Kappa in a graduation pledge drive. The drive is sponsored by the Community College Completion Corps in affiliation with Phi Theta Kappa international and focuses on supporting and seeking commitment to degree completion by community college students.

The Northeast regional drive ran during the week of October 16-20. Our chapter coordinated efforts with the ACE, CAPSS, Library, and Records Office to provide information, instruction, and guidance toward graduation—including presentations on using DegreeWorks, connecting with advisors, registering for classes, finding research opportunities, and registering for graduation. We recorded hundreds of pledges and collected hundreds of signatures on our banner to be displayed at a ceremony in the spring at the State House in Hartford.

This was just one example of the good work being done by PTK members. For details about another powerful event in November, see the article by PTK member, Austin Toscano, on our successful Coats for Coffee Drive. And contact me at jharding@nv.edu for information on how to apply to become part of PTK.

The JFK Files
Government Secrets?

Bethany Dvilinskas



Photo Courtesy of John Halperin. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston

President John F. Kennedy was assassinated November 22, 1963, in Dallas, TX, when Lee Harvey Oswald fired from the 6th floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building. The assassination changed America, with the FBI and CIA quickly distancing themselves from Oswald. For years, speculation and conspiracy theories have surrounded this American tragedy, in part because of the sealing of

The Tamarack

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

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EDITORIAL

You're Fired!

Well, the state budget has passed, and it almost feels like NO ONE was considered when slashing budgets. That's the way it always feels when governments are in charge of purse strings, so removed from the actual work of progress, that people are left behind. I used to be one of those people. I was once left behind. But I was picked up and carried; then I was taught to run. It turns out I am a sprinter.

So I will run to catch the pieces you have carelessly discarded, and I will not consider you at all, because you are not worth considering. You have no clue what it means to run a state effectively. It's time for Mommy and Daddy to take away the checkbook; you clearly have played with it long enough. It's time to get back to actual business.

The alarm is sounding. Stop hitting the snooze button! It's time to WAKE UP! We have every right to an education! We have a voice; it is loud, and we will not be ignored. You might have the money, but we have the numbers. You might have the seat at the table, but we are the VOICE you are to speak with. Your personal opinions, your voice, is merely one of many, and you will no longer act as if, because we allow you to represent us, that means you also control us.

We control you, and you are pissing off your bosses. When bosses get pissed off, incompetent employees get fired. You can try to keep us quiet, but it won't last. The more you take away educational opportunities, the more angry bosses you create. You are in a no-win scenario. Give us an education and lose the illusion of control, or deny us an education and create a behemoth you will never have the actual power to control. Face it, you are the losers.

“Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud.”

— Maya Angelou

Light Up the Town

Bethany Dvilinskas



Photo Courtesy of Bethany Dvilinskas

Light Up the Town is an annual event in Thomaston that takes place the Saturday after Thanksgiving. It began in 1994 when a group of Christmas-loving townspeople decided to brighten downtown with holiday lights. In total, sixty-four buildings are lit up along the Main Street. Over the past couple years, it's grown much bigger, with the entire town illuminated. They've even added a parade.

Also included is an auction of miniature Christmas trees, a magician, a petting zoo, a horse drawn carriage ride—and within the last two years—the Northern Lights Express Train.

The whole downtown area is closed off as festivities are celebrated in the street. The event kicks off with a parade bringing Santa Claus and his village through downtown. As he passes by, lights on the buildings turn on, and stay on 24/7 until the beginning of February.

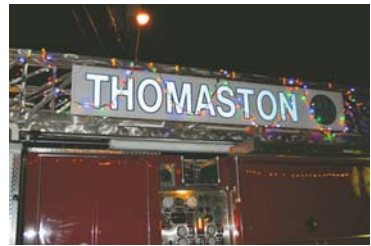
Each business along Main Street decorates their windows, and prizes are awarded for best decorations. It is usually themed and some businesses go all out, with employees dressing up as characters during the celebration. The Thomaston Opera house, home of Landmark Community Theatre, will put on a play as part of the celebration. The cast may even take breaks and visit with townspeople in the street as well.

Thomaston Volunteer Fire Department builds a bonfire for people to warm up quickly on cold nights, and they hand out hot chocolate. Businesses along Main St. hand out popcorn, candy canes, water, popcorn balls, and other festive foods to promote their businesses. Restaurants along Main St. even have special food and drink offers that bring in families

after they walk around enjoying the town. Longtime Thomaston residents start thinking about the event months beforehand.

I remember when I first attended Light Up the Town it was so small. At the time, there was only a horse-drawn carriage ride and Santa Claus sitting on my aunt's giant yellow chair, which once belonged to Lilly Tomlin herself. As I grew older, the yellow chair was retired because it was so old, and more out-of-towners and people from out-of-state started coming, and more kid-friendly activities were introduced.

Light Up the Town, Thomaston has become a beloved tradition. This year, this one-of-a-kind event promises to be bigger and better than ever. It's a great way to jumpstart the Christmas season! For information, go to: <http://www.thomastonct.org/content/165/266/default.aspx>



With Open Hearts

Dean Sarah Gager

A number of years ago, a tourism commercial promoting Puerto Rico went something like: Welcome, fellow Americans; welcome to Puerto Rico! While Connecticut may not have palm trees or white sandy beaches (though they may be whitened soon with snow) we do have a community filled with passion and dedication towards helping others. We all have an opportunity to open our hearts and homes by saying “Welcome, fellow Americans—welcome, everyone—welcome to Connecticut!” But we must show it with action, not just words.

Facing the devastation from Hurricane Maria (and earlier hurricanes this season) has been traumatic enough, but the disruption of moving more than 1,000 miles on top of those great losses, adds another level of stress. With the onset of winter, relocating to a colder climate only makes the situation more difficult. However, working together, we can help make the transition a bit easier for our new neighbors from Puerto Rico.

While our SGA has already held one successful fundraiser to help those in need, planning efforts are underway by students to collect and assemble holiday “care packages” for several young children who have recently relocated to CT following Hurricane Maria. To help, please reach out to an SGA Officer or stop by their office in the Prism Lounge to learn how to participate.

In addition, below is a quick list of resources to support those relocating to CT. Please share this information with those who may benefit from these resources.

United Way: Hurricane Maria help: Dial 21-1 and press option 5 (for English) or option 7 (for Spanish) Services available: Housing

and shelter, food, clothing/household goods, healthcare and more

FEMA Assistance Line: To register with FEMA and file a claim for damage to property in Puerto Rico, individuals may call 1-800-621-3362 or register online at: www.disasterassistance.gov

Unemployment Insurance: Residents of Puerto Rico relocating to CT, who wish to file for Unemployment Insurance (UI) may do so online at: www.trabajo.pr.gov

Health insurance: Access Health CT: www.accesshealthct.com or 1-(855)-805-4325

Puerto Ricans seeking to access a copy of their birth certificate: Puerto Rico Department of Health: 1-866-842-6765 or online at: www.vitalchek.com/vital-records/puerto-rico

Tax records: To reconstruct tax records, individuals may request a free copy of their tax return by calling the IRS at: 1-800-908-9946 or request online at: www.irs.gov/individuals/get-transcript

Legal services: For low-income individuals - Civil Matters: 1-800-453-3320 or online at: <http://apply/slsc.org>. Legal services for children/youth: Center for Children's Advocacy: 1-860-570-5327

Disability Services (for adults): Department of Developmental Services:

Northern Region: Help Line 1-877-437-4577 Southern Region: Help Line 1-877-437-4567 Western Region: Help Line 1-877-491-2720

Department of Children and Families Child Abuse and Neglect Careline: 1-800-842-2288

This holiday season, let us continue to give thanks for what we have. As importantly, let us give help to others facing devastation. Working together, we can make a positive difference.

Cheers to the Circle!

Tamarack Staff



November 10th, a President's Circle Induction Ceremony was held in Tech Hall Dining Room to welcome the latest cohort into this elite group of high achievers. President De Filippis instituted the Circle shortly after coming to NVCC, and since then, dozens of exemplary students have taken part—and given back to NVCC—as College ambassadors. Pictured with keynote speaker, Darlene Stromstad (far left), is the latest group of students. Left to right: Danielle Eitapene, Domenic Frasca, Natalia Hryn, Christopher Gordon, Aurelia Fountain, and Donna Crane.

The event once again featured wonderful refreshments prepared by students from the Hospitality Program, as well as inspirational words from keynote speaker Darlene Stromstad and President De Filippis. Hosted by Susan Houlihan and Beth Monchun, the event was enjoyed by faculty, family members, and friends in attendance.

Happenings @ Other Colleges

Alyssa Katz



University of Hartford

UHART is getting into

the holiday spirit with its 6th annual production of *The Nutcracker Ballet* from December 8 - 10, and the 15 - 17. Since its 2011 UHART debut, the ballet has become a huge hit and tradition among the school community, and the Greater Hartford area. Each year's production spices things up with new choreography, costumes, and/or set designs. Ballet students of the Hart School Community Division's Dance Dept. work extensively to ensure quality performance. The ballet school also includes programs for children and teens bringing everyone together for the big production.



Yale University

The film series, *The Greek Seas: Ithacas (Re)Discovered Through the Lens: Journey*, will take people through the

origins of Greece, through history, archeology, mythology, and so on. Taking place December 14, The two short films will cover themes of exploration, refuge, journey, and protection. The first, "Journey: Aegean Cargo Sailing," focuses on Greek trading industry. The other film, "Little Land," is a documentary about a man trying to find a new life as he escapes the economic turmoil in Athens. The 2nd film will be discussed by its director, Nikos Dayandas.



Southern Connecticut State University

Political Science Professor Dr. Jennifer Hopper will lead a discussion, *What's in a Name? Taking Back 'Obamacare'*, Thursday, Dec. 7 at 4:30 in the Buley Library. With threats to eliminate Obamacare, many people may lose health insurance, as it will be too astronomically priced with new legislation. The talk is SCSU's December First Thursday offering, the latest "interdisciplinary forum for Southern faculty in the arts, humanities, and social sciences to present and discuss new scholarship, with special emphasis on emerging topics, methodologies, and areas of research in the 21st century." October's topic was the Canon Wars of the 1980s, and November's forum was titled *Aristotle and the Possibility for Non-Human Animal Flourishing*.



University of Connecticut, Storrs

UConn has a jam-packed short month in December before students and faculty

prepare for final exams and winter break. One event in particular, on Dec. 7, from 6:00 - 8:00 pm, focuses on LGBTQ women, and is a culmination of related events throughout the semester. This is the last in a semester series entitled "Between Women". Other days had consisted of "Intros and Identities", "Coming Out", "Breaking the Binary", "LGBTQ+ and Ability (Physical and Mental)", and others. The series is hosted by the Women's Center and also the Rainbow Center. The discussion will take place in the Women's Center Program Room, SU, 421G.

Silent No More

Mitchell W. Maknis



2017 has brought much shocking news. Recently, reports of sexual assault and harassment by men in power positions have exploded. Beginning with allegations against Hollywood producer and former executive, Harvey Weinstein, the list has expanded, exposing heroes and idols, including political leaders. With people becoming less afraid to speak out, finally, the pedestals of powerful abusers are being torn down. On social media, #metoo, begun October 15 by actress Alyssa Milano—but echoing a 2007 movement created by Black activist, Tarana Burke—opened the door, offering society an inkling of the magnitude of a problem affecting millions. People can now have open conversations and begin to heal.

However, sexual harassment and assault by the powerful is nothing new, and was revealed in Hollywood decades before the newest allegations. For instance, *Glamour.com* recently published an article on Maureen O'Hara, star of Oscar-winning films including *How Green Was My Valley* (1941), and *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947). The article included excerpts of an original 1945 *Mirror* interview, in which O'Hara said producers and directors called her a "cold potato without sex appeal" because she refused to sleep with them. The Irish film star stated advances got so aggressive she was ready to quit. O'Hara stated, "I guess Hollywood won't consider me anything except a cold hunk of marble until I divorce my husband [and] give my baby away... If that's Hollywood's idea of being a woman, I'm ready to quit now."

Gaining attention amid the already heart-breaking subject is abuse suffered by child stars. Actor Corey Feldman, *The Lost Boys* (1987), *Gremlins* (1984), *The Goonies* (1985), has been open about abuse he and his co-star Corey Haim, suffered as children, yet only now are people taking him seriously. In 2016, Feldman told *Hollywood Reporter* "[With California's statute of limitations, if I were to [name] names...I'm the one that would be sued." Elijah Wood, child star of *Radio Flyer* (1992) and *Flipper* (1996), who transitioned into fame as an adult actor in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001-2003), said in a *NYTimes* article that, while he never experienced harassment or assault, he was very aware of its presence. Wood stated, "The victims can't speak as loudly as people in power. That's the tragedy of attempting to reveal what is happening."

Comedian Louis C.K. has been accused by five female comedians of sexual misconduct on

multiple occasions. C.K. admitted claims were true, but offered little apology. The women stated if they spoke up when it happened, he would have ruined their careers. Men have also opened up on the subject. Because of people like Anthony Rapp, James Van Der Beek, and Terry Crews, men are less ashamed to share their experiences of sexual harassment and assault.

Sexual improprieties aren't limited to Hollywood but have plagued our government, with many politicians exposed. Presidents Donald Trump, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton have all been accused of sexual misconduct, and former White House intern, Mimi Alford, revealed in her 2013 book, *Once Upon a Secret: My Affair with John F. Kennedy and its Aftermath*, that President Kennedy took advantage of her when she was just nineteen.

Recent allegations have come to light against Republican Roy Moore, a former Alabama judge, currently campaigning for U.S. Senate in a special December 12th election. After an *LATIMES* report accused Moore of sexual abuse that happened almost 40 years prior, four more women detailed experiences with Moore ranging from sexual harassment to sexual abuse. Most victims were in their teens or early twenties at the time of the alleged abuse, while Moore was in his thirties—and a district attorney.

Minnesota Democrat, Senator Al Franken, recently faced accusations—including the release of an incriminating photo—by radio host, Leeann Tweeden, that he had subjected her to unwanted advances during a 2006 USO trip to the Middle East. Moore has vehemently denied all accusations, calling himself a Christian and questioning his accusers' motives. Franken has apologized. President Trump has come out along party lines, supporting Moore and implying the allegations are fabricated, while attacking Franken on Twitter.

One can only hope voters will base their decisions on available facts, and that—considering research shows the prevalence of false claims to be extremely low—there will be a cultural shift toward taking abuse claims seriously. Sexual assault and harassment are pervasive, and the fact that only now people feel safe coming forward is due to the mishandling of sexual assault claims—particularly the persistent culture of disbelieving and even blaming victims. With heinous acts committed by once-renowned figures coming to light every day, the message is clear: victims have found a voice, and their stories will be heard. Hopefully, these brave individuals can spark a change and justice will prevail.

Sexual assault is a crime. If you or anyone you know has experienced sexual assault there is help. The Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence can be reached at 1-888-999-5545 ENGLISH & 1-888-568-8332 ESPANOL. Contact Safe Help Room at www.safehelpline.org or 877-995-5247. Or call the National Sexual Assault Telephone Hotline at 800-656-HOPE.

Honoring Adjuncts

A Triumphant Return

Nancy Alexander



Photo Courtesy of Katie Gardner

I started teaching Chemistry 111 at NVCC in Spring 2007. I recall how excited I was to teach at the same place where I started my college career. When I first started taking classes here, it was called Mattatuck Community College and only had Kinney Hall on campus.

The reason I started at MCC was to take chemistry because I'd only earned a D at the high school level, and Danbury Hospital rejected my application for their respiratory therapy program. I remember how sad I was the day I got that rejection letter, but I decided I was going to make things right.

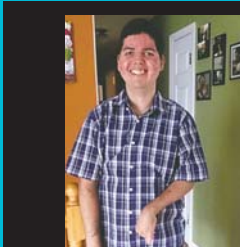
I started at MCC in Fall 1977. I was quick to adapt and created a small study group with my chemistry classmates. After one semester, I fell in love with math and science and was ranked as one of the top two students at the end of my freshman year. For that, I received the Governor's Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement in 1978.

I transferred to UConn where I earned my BS in Chemistry with a minor in Math in 1982. Upon graduation, I worked in manufacturing as a plant and environmental chemist. After living five years in San Francisco, California, I returned to CT and took a job with Abbott Labs as a hospital representative in their pharmaceutical division. My career was satisfying, but I always missed how much I enjoyed my study groups and teaching my classmates what came so natural to me...Chemistry.

In 1996, I started graduate school at Southern Connecticut State University. I earned my teaching degree there and a Masters in Environmental Education. I was hired in Waterbury as a chemistry teacher where I enjoyed teaching for 16 years at Crosby HS and then moved to New Milford HS where I currently teach. I'm proud of what I do and have accomplished. I am even the Diabetes Awareness advisor at NMHS. But what I am most proud of is teaching the course I had taken at MCC years ago. It's a great story I share with my NVCC students every semester.

When I'm not teaching, I love to exercise at F.A.T.E. in Middlebury; I also enjoy gardening, crocheting, and knitting, along with spending time with my sister, Jessica, and my two nieces, Bethany—an NVCC student and Tamarack staff member—and Kristina. Life is good.

alumni SHOWCASE



Michael A. Stoerzinger

Hi, my name is Michael, and I'm an NVCC graduate. I live with my parents temporarily. Along with my parents, I have a brother and

Defying the Odds

sister, niece and nephew, and Ben, my sister's husband. My brother's wife's name is Steph. I also have a girlfriend of three years, named Sam.

I am also a twenty-year brain cancer survivor. I battled the worst cancer as a child, where doctors still cannot figure out how I had gotten my cancer. They don't even know how I survived through the brain surgery to even be speaking about my battle. I was diagnosed with cancer in 1997 when I was only six years old. Due to the cancer surgery, I have weakness on my whole left side. When I was six years, I was put into a wheelchair for many years.

After my brain surgery, I had to learn how to walk and talk all over again, due to the brain trauma. I had to learn how to balance myself while walking again. I am currently walking on my own two feet and I also have my driver's license.

At NVCC, I earned a spot on the Dean's list for four semesters, and I graduated with

a Hotel Management degree in 2014. It took me six years to graduate with an Associate degree from NVCC. While at NVCC, I was involved in the Newman Club, HSU, and the Multicultural Club. The best thing I could remember from NVCC was that I was proving every single person wrong, including some professors who thought that I wouldn't be able to succeed in a certain class because I'm disabled.

I am telling everyone to please never give up on your dreams and goals in life. The reason why I am saying this is because the truth is that I was supposed to be dead twenty years ago. All of my medical records were pointing to death, but I always fought for my life, and I also have never given up on life. If someday you feel like meeting me, please tell Prof. Steve Parlo, and we will find a way for me to speak in your classes at NVCC.



CAPSS CORNER

Just Do Your Best

Many people don't realize some stress can be beneficial. Called "eustress," it literally translates to "good stress". It can be either psychological, physical or biochemical. It is designed to fortify you to reach higher levels of human potential. If you seek opportunities for eustress, resistance is an indicator you've struck gold. Stress and challenge will always be part of life, and sometimes we fail. If you can look back at each big life chapter with humility and laugh—as you will when receiving your award on graduation day—you are doing the right thing.

Life on the outside is an endless search for perfection. At most, we can hope to do our best. Trust me, it's about living in your humility. It's allowed you to get this far, and that's pretty damn good. When you reassure others you're doing your best, you make a commitment to continue growing. And resistance will show up eventually to present a new challenge.

You won't need to look very far for challenges. Just remember, when tough times happen, it's because you are the perfect person for the job. No one's more qualified to live your life than you, but your best will come when you identify areas where you need help. Then, hit the ACE, go to your professors' office hours, overcome your fears. This approach is key to personal growth. Fail and fail again. Crash and burn. Ask for help. Do your best.

Every person you interact with—professor, coworker, loved one or friend—presents you with challenges and opportunities to grow. In meditation, particularly through mindful breathing, you'll align yourself with these opportunities to be successful—especially with academics.

Just promise yourself one thing: Don't listen to your ego. It's telling you to be comfortable. The ego attaches the word "tomorrow" to everything. If you find yourself saying life is short, it's time to get uncomfortable again. Face your resistance. Work through it—ride the wave, look back, laugh at yourself, and move on. Tell yourself at least three things you've accomplished every night before you go to sleep. Surround yourself with people who believe in you, your sounding boards who will stick with you during the hardest times. And when the bottom has seemingly dropped out on you, do the following:

- Ask if what's causing you stress is a thought or a feeling.
- Take a deep breath in through the nose. Hold it. Take in a bit more breath. Hold it for five seconds.
- Let the air out. Empty your lungs entirely. Allow yourself to free up space for fresh, new air.
- Then allow your mind to be free to think whatever it wants. Give it a chance to do what it wants to do.

Fresh oxygen for the blood—and a mind that's freed space to welcome something useful like the quadratic formula or the golden mean—will help reduce stress significantly.

Achievement unlocked. You've reached the next level. Smile, laugh and repeat.

In happiness,
William Carleton

Such an Honor

Christopher Gordon

Have you heard of the Honors Institute? It is a program on campus that promotes independent study and academic excellence. Unfortunately some people are confused between the Honors Institute and the Honors Society, Phi Theta Kappa. These two excellent programs are not the same. PTK is a national honors society. The Honors Institute is specific to NVCC.

Application to the institute requires students to have good academic standing (a GPA of at least 3.0). Once accepted into the Honors

Good Show!

Tamarack Staff



A large color print by Amanda Label, Assistant Professor of Art. Photos Courtesy of Steve Parlato

There's no doubt NVCC faculty are skilled when it comes to teaching within their disciplines, but a quick trip to Founders Hall Community Room reveals a wealth of other talents. Now through December 15th, the walls are alive with a range of beautiful works encompassing photography, painting,

print-making, and mixed media. Some of the artwork was created by faculty who teach art, but other pieces span academic divisions across campus. The impressive show gives viewers an opportunity to see how professors spend their time outside the classroom.



One wall features a range of works from collage to acrylic painting.

Institute, students have the opportunity to work with professors on an Honors Project. Students are given the chance to go above and beyond the regular semester work, creating a project under the guidance of an instructor that totals and extra 20 hours of work in the semester. That equates to something like .7% of your time over the semester, or 1.12 hours a week extra. If you just checked on my math then you are probably the kind of student who would benefit from this program.

The honors project is developed throughout the semester in close collaboration with a faculty member. It's a wonderful way to forge a deep academic relationship with a professor, which, can, of course, lead naturally to a terrific letter of recommendation (provided

the students follows through with the rigors of the project). For students who intend to pursue a four-year degree, the experience can prepare them for independent studies—or even spark a deeper interest in a particular topic, leading to decisions about future fields of study.

Completion of honors credit earns students an honors designation at graduation. On top of having a diploma forever marked with honors status, students will also develop the kinds of study habits that will benefit them in the future. An honors project is an excellent way of showing expertise in a chosen field. Don't forget, a student who digs deeper is what every college looks for when it comes time for applications.

Center For Teaching 21st Century Resources for the Writing Classroom

Lou Lombard and Chris Rempfer

Assistant Professor Louis Lombard currently teaches developmental composition, literature and composition, and First Year Experience at the Waterbury campus and British Literature at the Danbury campus. He is also co-coordinator of the First Year Experience discipline.

A full time Instructor of English at NVCC, Chris Rempfer is also Coordinator for the Liberal Arts & Sciences Degree Program. He teaches all levels of Composition, as well as Dramatic Literature and Creative Writing.

As Center for Teaching members, we're energized by the possibilities digital technologies provide for not only delivering content, but also for offering platforms to respond as college writers. Below is an example of each we've found to be successful in our classes.

PROF. LOMBARD: One of the most creative 21st century technology tools I've successfully utilized in a classroom setting is the Prezi. Unlike PowerPoint, Prezi doesn't restrict the display to one slide at a time, and its frames allow the presenter to zoom out to capture the whole picture and zoom in to examine supporting details. Its value lies in presenting pictures rather than simply words, and it's designed to increase a student's retention of the material by concentrating on the visual contextually. Learning how to use Prezi and incorporating it in college courses is a simple and engaging way to engender student participation and understanding today.

PROF. REMPFER: An effective way to add variety to the writing classroom is to offer a sequence of shorter writing responses in the form of BLOG postings. This is an opportunity to provide concentrated learning/response techniques while taking advantage of the chance to expand class discussion beyond the traditional classroom setting. It's also an opportunity to teach students Best Practices for navigating the online world. In a set of 3-4 focused, 200-300 word postings, students can practice precise writing techniques like use of high-level vocabulary choices to more clearly articulate ideas. Also, the nature of a well-constructed BLOG posting demands creation of tightly organized and edited sentences that pay closer attention to the relationship between grammar and syntax.

Mostly everyone posts to the internet—whether it's for college, business, or social interaction, so why not give it your best by thinking of digital best practices? For instance: (1) Don't post directly to an internet field. Create a Word document allowing you to edit and revise your post until it reflects your credible best. (2) If writing in an academic setting, make sure you attempt 200-300 words (about a page of double-spaced prose), so you're writing completely. (3) Integrate and respond to others' writing. It's a great way to practice documentation and citation. (4) And finally, BLOG writing allows you to engage in digital academic discourse without raising your hand. It's where everyone, including the shy among us, can participate and feel empowered.

In spring 2018, Professors Lombard and Rempfer will lead a CFT workshop with more detailed exploration of 21st Century sources, tools, and strategies.

SPEAK UP

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

FACE IN THE CROWD Who Me?

Imani Stewart

When writing about oneself it's hard not to be biased, but come on, who knows you better than you? Let's start from the very beginning then, yes? As a child I simply loved entertaining people. Making people smile and laugh was something I enjoyed very much. So my sister and I joined a little musical company called Whimsicality. I loved it. It gave me my personality; it gave me a sense of purpose.

Now I know what you're thinking, Why, writing if you love to perform? Well, I always was the one who was good at multiple things, and later in life, I will still hope to be able to dabble. My mother is actually the one who sparked me into writing. You see, she always wrote poems. They were sweet, sometimes sad, and a lot were love letters to my dad.

So, I wrote my first poem, and it was about a crush I had on a boy in middle school. He was my best friend at the time, and he had no idea how I felt, so I poured it out on paper. My mother (as any nosy mother) looked through my journal and told me it was good. So I kept doing it for a while.

Before this, I had just recovered from having ovarian cancer, so as my mother a lot of my poems were a relief. Fast forwarding to High School I realized I loved reading tremendously, I would read a whole book in one day and have no regrets afterwards. I took very well to writing about things people



Photo Courtesy of Imani Stewart

loved. My English teacher spotted that and she recommended me write for the school's newspaper. Though The Emerald wasn't quite as organized as the Tamarack it was still fun to do. As an over achiever it was nice getting a pat on the back from teachers, from what I thought about everything. Then it hit me. I want this. I want this kind of feedback, this kind of writing and this kind of intellect. I wanted to inform people, in an interesting way, and when I was giving my opinion, I wanted people to feel something when they read my material. My dream job is to work at BuzzFeed, because they make silly content, but they are not afraid to get real and serious. I want a little bit of both. Can you blame me? Right now, I'm a girl, who loves her family and friends, and who loves the school she goes to. A girl who's working very hard to get where she wants to go. A girl, whose dreams are not too hard to reach. A girl, with an ambitious heart. I love writing and if anyone wants to know more about me let me know in suggestions.

Winter Band Concert

Mary Kate Halmose

Naugatuck Valley Community College's own Connecticut Pops will be playing a free band concert packed full of holiday tunes on Sunday, December 10th at 3:00 pm in the Mainstage. Pieces include classics like "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" as well as the more obscure "Bashana Haba 'Ah". But don't worry, if holiday tunes aren't your thing, the band will also play some non-holiday selections, such as "South Pacific" and "Hands Across the Sea". So there's something for everyone!

The conductor of the Connecticut Pops is

Allan Dabkowski. You may recognize him from his role as the piano accompanist for NVCC choir classes. But that's not the only familiar face you'll find in the band. ECE teacher, Patricia Reinhardt, plays flute, and there are also a few students you may notice from around campus. Though the band may only have roughly 30 members, they sure do produce a large sound. So come join us for what's sure to be another great concert!

Note: Pieces played at the concert are subject to change.

The Naugatuck Valley Community College Student Government Association & the Arts and Humanities Division Presents...

CONNECTICUT POPS!

for the Holidays

A Family Concert For All Ages
Allan Dabkowski Music Director
Singers, Dancers and Raffle

NVCC Mainstage Theater
Sunday, December 10th
3:00 PM

A Free Concert!

Naugatuck Valley Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, age, sex, marital status, mental status, ancestry present or past, history of marital dissolution, gender identity and expression of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression of gender, national origin, and ethnicity. In addition, the College does not discriminate in employment on the additional basis of veteran status or criminal record. The following individual has been designated to handle nondiscrimination policies regarding disability policies: Robert Dwyer, Director of Facilities, Room 304, A-10, Coordinator, Room C216, Naugatuck Valley Community College, 721 Colossus Parkway, Waterbury, CT 06702-2035-8225. The following individual has been designated to handle nondiscrimination policies regarding sexual discrimination as well as other forms of prohibited discrimination: Jacqui Swanson, Associate Director of Human Resources, Title IX Coordinator, Room 1304, Naugatuck Valley Community College, 721 Colossus Parkway, Waterbury, CT 06702-2035-8045, OCM.

Healing Verse



Photo Courtesy of Newstime.com

Editor's Note: In this series of poems, a companion to her front-page story, Alyssa Katz explores a range of poetic forms, from sonnet and pantoum to haiku and syllabics. In the end, her work is a powerful reminder of the solace that can be found in art.

Able to Bloom Again

Alyssa Katz

A thievery of souls not yet ready to depart. A town split in two, cracked like gashes in pavement from bitter winter's storm. Tremors of disbelief; broken hearts, shattered like littered glass.

Flickering flame, forever flourish, honor thy child and thy spirit. Kindness rained down from strangers across the world, all trying to give courage to help bring us back into the light.

Darkness spread by evil shall not win. Resilience, Newtown strong, blue blazing fury seeking peace. Evil is easy to choose, but strength is found in goodness

The Lion Weeps

Alyssa Katz

A town forever changed
What once was normal became a tragedy
Welcome, Mister President, to our broken town
Our minds clouded by a gloomy haze

Normalcy plagued by tragedy
Bombardment by the paparazzi
A gloomy haze bleaches the horizon,
overtaken by a majestic sadness.

The paparazzi continuously bombarded us
Sandy Hook, Newtown, Connecticut
Majestic sadness forever fills our hearts
A town forever changed.

A Candle for Every Soul

Alyssa Katz

Black spiral of perpetual sorrow,
completely blindsided by tomorrow.

Forever changed like the flip of a page,
on full display like monkeys in a cage.
Monotone spilled across the damaged town,
robbing it of color, making it drown.
Documented in the full public eye,
all we wanted was privacy to cry.
"Light the Candles" throughout that "Silent Night",
we will come back with ten times as much might.

Kindness from strangers, a world of support,
grieving with us the lives that were cut short.
Through all the turmoil we will rise above,
because we are Newtown, and we choose love.

December 14th, 2012

Alyssa Katz

It starts out normal
Unexpected occurrence
Evil down the street.

Clock strikes half past nine
Confusion, annoyance, fear
"This is not a drill."

Quivering panic
Cramped bubbles of helplessness
Everything changes.

After the Storm

Alyssa Katz

Changed forever by tragedy,
with evil as its pilot.
Why here? Why us?
We are Newtown.

Our quiet town interrupted,
by a monster quite familiar,
26 angels ascended to heaven.
We are Newtown.

Strength like a lion, green and white pride,
with hands joined in unity,
we endured the world.
We are Newtown.

We did not wash away with the tidal wave.
Like flowers we blossomed.
Like a phoenix we rose.

We are Newtown.



CT Cult Classics

Mitchell W. Makins



The Strand, a historic movie theater on Main Street in Seymour, is enjoying new popularity due to the efforts of CT Cult Classics and its founder Larry Dwyer. CT Cult Classics provides horror genre fans with the opportunity to have a terrifyingly good time watching scary movies. Mr. Dwyer defines these events as “a way to share the experiences he had while watching horror films when he was growing up.” Dwyer often provides giveaways like movie-themed goodies and unique movie posters from artist Matt Wilson.

I recently sat down with Mr. Dwyer and asked him how CT Cult Classics came to be. He disclosed that the very first showing was a means to promote the first CT Horrorfest Convention by showing a double feature fittingly entitled, “Bite Night”. This screening ran two vampire classics, *The Lost Boys* (1987) and *Fright Night* (1985). Dwyer said the turnout was greater than he ever expected; since then, he’s booked the Strand Theater for all his double-features. Past horror-themed examples include a “Stephen King Night” and a “John Carpenter Night”.

His reasoning to hold these movies at the Strand Theater instead of the more publicly known Seymour Cinemas 12 was because “It just wouldn’t have the same charm the Strand is able to provide.” Mr. Dwyer told me he loves the marquee, and coupled with the fact that the cinema houses only a single screen, he feels it gives an old-school vibe harkening back to its

opening in the 1940s. Attendees have stated that coming to this theater makes them feel like they’re reliving their childhoods.

When not working to obtain film rights for Cult Classic films, Dwyer spends his time writing for www.horrornewsnetwork.net and organizing CT HorrorFest. Larry’s love for the horror genre is evident in his passion for revisiting old macabre films and sharing them with others. He couldn’t be happier with the popularity of his double features which prove there are like-minded people in CT he didn’t know existed. Dwyer says, “It’s great to see them come out and have a good time.”

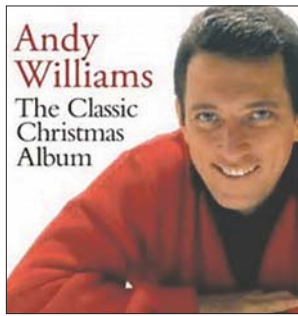
To learn more about CT Cult Classics, visit their website: www.connecticutcultclassics.com and don’t be afraid to check out A Christmas Terror December 16th, featuring *Silent Night* *Deadly Night* (1984) and *Black Christmas* (1974). It’s a perfect break from the hectic pace of the holiday season. See you there!



Photos Courtesy of Larry Dwyer

Revolutionary Rhythms

Mr. Christmas



In celebration of the birth of Jesus, Christmas is meant to evoke peace, harmony, and joy, but the music of the season invaded radio stations (and retail stores) well before Thanksgiving. Some get sick of it after a while; others love every minute of it. Whichever camp you’re in, some of the best Christmas songs come from some of the greatest artists of all time.

It’s just not Christmas without Bing Crosby’s “White Christmas,” Nat King Cole’s “The Christmas Song,” pretty much anything by Elvis, especially his “Silent Night” and “Blue Christmas”. There are plenty of other hits from various artists, like Johnny Mathis, Dean Martin, and Mariah Carey. But the title “Mr. Christmas” would have to be given to Andy Williams, whose most famous yuletide hit would have to be “It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year”.

As a young boy, Andy and his older brothers formed a singing group that often appeared on local radio stations. After his brothers left

show business, Andy moved to New York, where he made multiple television appearances, which led to him starring on television.

A crooner, typically a male performer with a low, soothing voice, Williams’s most popular song would have to be “Moon River,” which appeared in the 1961 movie, *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*. His music was most popular in the 60s, and his television series, *The Andy Williams Show*, aired for about a decade (1962-1971) with many guests on his show who were up-and-coming at the time. Elton John and The Osmonds were among these acts mentored by Williams.

Adding to his popularity were Andy’s Christmas specials, featuring his entire family and regular guest appearances by the Osmonds and others. They would sing Christmas carols, wear holiday sweaters, and just have a jolly

...the title “Mr. Christmas” would have to be given to Andy Williams, whose most famous yuletide hit would have to be “It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year”

good time. His catchy Christmas hits sparked a string of Christmas albums, his first released in 1963. With his immense seasonal popularity, Williams was crowned with the title “Mr. Christmas”.

Over his career, his music earned 18 gold and three platinum albums. Though nominated for several Grammy awards, he never received one, but he did win multiple Emmys for his TV variety show. In addition to his music, Williams was also an art collector and the host of a namesake golf tournament for twenty years.

Williams died in 2012 after a long battle with bladder cancer. He was a true entertainer with his soothing clear voice and charming stage presence. His legacy will continue to shine for generations to come, making him a true Christmas star.



Alyssa Katz

The November Fresh Flash Winner is...



Untitled by Lyman T. Gilbert, III

The old man had been driving through Georgia for hours when he finally saw the vacancy sign without the preceding “no” on a motel sign. He pulled in and walked up to the front desk, looking for the clerk so that he could rest his weary bones, and he began to get irritated. He rang the bell a few times and still no clerk showed up, the old man sighed and found a chair to sit in and wait. Just as he was about to fall asleep, a sharply dressed, gaunt young man walked in from the front door, and walked around the counter to sit in the clerk’s chair. The old man drew in a big breath and lifted himself out of the chair to walk up to the counter.

“Hello.” The old man’s voice was a little rusty from lack of use, so he cleared his voice. “Uhm, I’d like to rent a room for the night.” The clerk had been staring at the old man since he had stood up. He continued to stare at the old man, almost through him, as he shuffled around the desk for something. Finally, the clerk brought a pair of dark glasses up and placed them in front of his eyes.

“Sorry, but we don’t give rooms to those like you.” Several thoughts flew through the old man’s mind, none of them pleasant, and he started to sweat.

“What do you mean, ‘those like me?’”

The clerk gave an obviously fake smile and reached off to his left, and brought back what looked like a blank piece of paper in front of him. He started to run his fingers across the paper, as if he were reading, all the while looking at the old man.

“Seventy-two years of age, Michael Jacoby. Petty theft, grand theft auto, two unsuccessful bank robberies, seven very successful bank robberies.” The old man’s blood ran cold, and he started to back away, but he found that he couldn’t move, no matter how hard he tried. “Six counts of sexual assault, three rapes, attempted murder of your ex-wife and her lover, first degree murder of your ex-wife, her husband, and their two children, and then the seventy counts of first degree murder afterwards during your time as a hitman.”

Finally the clerk stopped running his fingers across the page, and Michael Jacoby was shaking so hard he couldn’t see straight, the police only knew of his attempted murder, the sexual assaults, and the two failed bank robberies, the rest had never come back to him, until now.

“How?”

“Because, Mr. Jacoby, you deserve justice, and,” the clerk pointed a finger at the sunglasses, “true justice is blind.”

It was then that Michael knew he would not be getting a room here. As he stared Justice in the face, he felt the absolute helplessness as Justice dragged him to a door behind the counter he hadn’t noticed before, and he could hear the screams of the damned coming from behind it.

Special thanks goes to Guest Evaluator Assoc. Prof. Greg Harding, *Fresh Ink* Faculty Advisor 2006-2016 and Facilitator of the NVCC Creative Writing Club.

The Fresh Flash! Dec.15 2017!



Flash Fiction/Poetry Prompt

I saw her every morning standing next to me at the mirror in the 3rd floor bathroom. She combed her hair, brushed her teeth, adjusted an auburn wig under which swirled tendrils of ash blond. Then, like clockwork, she would adjust her cell phone to selfie, look one last time at her reflection, and pose with a flashing smile, crowing, “Say Cheese”. I would know then our work day had begun....

Start to finish = 250 words max.

Send to Freshink@nvcc.commnet.edu by Dec. 15.

Winning entry published in February’s *Tamarack*, and entered for Grand Prize for Fresh Flash Fiction April 2018

A Culinary Odyssey

Elena Frey



Yiasas! That's hello in Greek! I recently attended a Greek Food Fair at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Waterbury. The event was Saturday, November 18th, and it seemed like a big turnout based on all the cars that showed up.

They had gyros, spanakopita, which is spinach in phyllo pie. There was also tiropita, the cheese version of spanakopita. Another highlight were some delicious pastries like baklava and powdered sugar cookies called kourabiedes.

For Greeks, lamb is a very traditional meat, served at many functions and holidays. At the fair, there was Greek music playing; the main instrument was called a bouzouki, a type of stringed instrument in the guitar family. One of my favorite desserts is called galaktoboureko (gala-to-pou-riko). This dessert consists of milk custard with phyllo. It's served warm, and it melts in your mouth—really delicious!

I spoke with the parish priest who was very young, and he enthusiastically welcomed us to come to this weekend event. He also invited us to attend Sunday service. We were happy to hear a club sponsoring the event would take the proceeds and do community service work. Many of the people we met were of Greek heritage, but there were others representing a variety of cultures.

The fair was a fun time, and the authentic Greek delicacies were amazing. I look forward to attending next year. I shared a tray with my fellow *Tamarack* staff members, and I have a hunch I'll be seeing them there too.

FACE IN THE CROWD A Fresh Perspective

Donna Crane

Hello, everyone! My name is Donna Crane, and I'm a very non-traditional student in my second year at NVCC. After being out of school for twenty-something years, and receiving two previous degrees, I made the decision to return to school for nursing. Along the way, I have been accepted into the Honors Institute, PTK Honor Society and most recently the President's Circle.

At first, the most challenging thing about returning to school after so long was my anxiety about being accepted by you, considering that most NVCC students are the age of my children. After being here for about a month, that anxiety seemed silly; it had no basis. The NVCC student body is one of the most accepting I have ever experienced. Everyone I have attended class with, as well as worked on projects with, has looked past our age differences and accepted me wholeheartedly.

At first I was not involved in our NVCC community because I was trying to acclimate to coming back to school. Once I realized I had the ability and intelligence to do this, I applied to the Honors Institute last spring and was accepted. This was something new to me. With my first degree I didn't apply myself or achieve the grades that I was capable of earning. Next, I was offered a place in the PTK Honor Society this fall, discovering what I never

Help Needed

Christian Cruz



Hello there, wonderful students of Naugatuck Valley Community College! I am a student just like you with plenty of responsibility on my plate. Though I ordinarily hate to ask this of you, the school—and the Waterbury community—needs your help!

We are currently lacking volunteers at the St. Vincent De Paul Soup Kitchen. Every Sunday, NVCC volunteers staff the kitchen from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm. Prior to NVCC's commitment, St. Vincent's used to be closed on Sundays. We owe it to those in need to keep the doors open and the plates filled with food.

As someone who has volunteered there, I have to tell you it is a fun and rewarding experience. This place will truly humble you by seeing all those people in need; plus, by giving back to your community, it will help strengthen not only your resume, but your interpersonal skills as well. I know some of you will look at this article and think, I just do not have the time to invest in this service, but any time you can put in would help tremendously, even if it is only an hour or two!

As an SGA Senator, I feel it's my duty not only to help my campus community, but also those great charities that reside outside of campus as well. The soup kitchen really helps put many things in perspective for us students because it reminds us why we are going to school, why we have those late-night study sessions, why we are staying up till 2:00 am. When our coffee fails to kick in until we've hit the bed to go to sleep, we should think about how fortunate we are—and the fact that others can use our help.

Volunteering is a good reminder to keep working hard to improve our own lives and those of our families. We come to school to make sure our futures are secure. So why not spend some time at the soup kitchen providing some security for those struggling to even survive at all?



Photo Courtesy of Donna Crane

dreamed possible was: I just may graduate with honors designation! After applying to become a member of the President's Circle, Friday, November 10th I was honored to become part of this year's team!

After graduation, I hope to pass my NECLEX test and receive my RN license. My goal is to work in an ICU or a palliative care division. These are lofty goals for someone who two years ago was in an ICU after experiencing a stroke. It was the scariest experience of my life, but I thank God for my recovery and am hoping to help others through what could be the scariest experience of their lives.

The best advice I can give fellow NVCC students is to work hard and reach your potential. I understand it's sometimes difficult with all the pressures on most of you, but put your mind to it and make your studies here at NVCC a priority. It will pay off tenfold.

Let's Definitely Not Talk

Joe Steele

Let's talk about gun reform! I'm so excited to engage in a productive conversation as fellow citizens about how to solve the recent epidemic of gun violence plaguing our country! Aren't you? In addition to being everybody's favorite topic of conversation; gun reform is also the perfect ice-breaker for parties, family gatherings, or any potential date you want to scare off faster than a bullet from an AK—okay you get the point.

Obvious statement of the year: gun reform is hard to talk about, and it's easy to see why. As far as America's current problems go, gun violence is arguably the single issue that divides us the deepest as a nation. It's the gaping wound we'd rather cover up with Band-aids than work together to sew shut. We'd rather not talk about it. We'd rather pretend like it isn't there, but if we do... we'll only continue to bleed out. What we need is a solution, or at least, a start.

So how do we talk about the elephant in the room? Or rather, how do we talk about the high-caliber assault rifle capable of killing the elephant in the room? Well, we could yell at each other and demand complete surrender from people with whom we disagree. One side could yell, "Ban all guns!" while the other yells, "Citizens should have rocket launchers!" We could always guilt trip each other. "You're enabling terrorists!" "You're politicizing a tragedy!" Here's the thing: demanding complete surrender and guilt-tripping doesn't solve problems in a relationship. As tempting as it

might be to rail on the other side when you're feeling righteous; that only serves to further widen the gap, not facilitate any actual change (whatever your idea of that is). Therefore, as an unofficial bipartisan couples-therapist, I propose trying these new tactics next time you're awkwardly thrust into a conversation about everybody's favorite topic this Thanksgiving.

Firstly, try to empathize with the other side. Listen to their concerns. If you're not a gun-owner, gently state it's not about an all-out ban on guns, but more about incremental steps. Focus on practical legislation that doesn't cause gun-owners to panic, but establishes protective measures any reasonable person can get behind. If you are a gun owner; try to explain your fears surrounding gun reform. With what reasonable gun restrictions would you be on board?

The American marriage of left and right-wing politics isn't smooth to say the least. We've got some serious communication issues, but in the end we are one nation indivisible. We can solve any problem, but only together, and only by having these uncomfortable conversations. Sometimes that means sacrificing ego, or having to forfeit smaller freedoms for the greater good, or having to compromise and not get exactly the result you want; but that's how relationships work. That's how progress is made... so if that sounds like something you wouldn't be interested in, let's definitely not talk about gun reform.

Calling All Assassins

Elena Frey



For all you Assassin's Creed lovers out there—Assassin's Creed Origins came out on October 27th and from what I've heard, it's already considered to provide one of the best Assassin's Creed experiences of all time. This game changes the perspective of history, bringing players into Ancient Egypt during the Ptolemaic period (48 BC).

Many felt the previous game, Unity, didn't have much of a story and was very repetitive. Origins, in comparison, is a refreshing game where players can explore the open world to their hearts' content. Some of the changes in this game involve how players loot and fight. For instance, instead of holding down the button in order to loot, (and waiting for what feels

like two minutes) it takes only one click. The style of fighting has also changed drastically; timing is now everything. The fighting is more complex, including equipping shields and weapons, while also trying to balance offense and defense.

I've been told the main story and side missions actually have more of a storyline compared to past games in the series. Origins is classified as an RPG where players can customize their characters' dress and accessories they carry throughout the game. There are even rare weapons, easily obtainable by looting. Like most Assassin's games, synchronization allows players to open more of the map and see the world from a birds-eye view. Characters can also jump into bodies of water like they could with the hay wagon in Unity.

Additionally, there are a few deleted scenes throughout the game—and maybe even a few glitches here and there—to provide laughs. With the great reviews I've heard and read, I hope to get this game for either PC or PlayStation and experience all it has to offer.

True Gamer

Elena Frey

The famous Tomb Raider game, which has been around since 1996, now reappears for Playstation 4. The action-adventure gaming franchise stars Lara Croft, an archaeologist who travels the world in search of forgotten artifacts in remote locations often connected to supernatural powers. I have bought both *Tomb Raider Definitive Edition* and *Rise of the Tomb Raider*; both are hands-down two amazing games with which I have now become obsessed.

The earlier, *TR Definitive Edition* gameplay takes you on a journey to the Dragons Triangle, where there are unnatural weather patterns. Anyone who visits this island can never leave because, if they try, they will be struck by some type of storm. Endurance, a team of archaeologists and cameramen, are hit with a massive storm, stranding them with people that pose a threat. During this adventure, Lara's friend, Sam, the reincarnation of the Sun Queen Himiko, is held captive for a ritual. Lara faces life and death decisions to save herself and her friends—all the while, finding relics, documents, GPSs, and completing other challenges

throughout the game. The only way to get 100% completion is by finding all the documents, relics, GPSs and tombs on the map while progressing through the main story. Gamers will encounter emotion, assassins, insurmountable challenges, frustration from constantly dying, and lots of gunfire. All in all, this is a very graphic game that makes the experience feel like you're there.

The other game, *Rise of the Tomb Raider*, has Croft looking through her father's old files and discovering the "Divine Source," a stone that can grant immortality. She finds out more about it while journeying to Syria and encountering a new threat, Trinity, that wants the same thing that she seeks. This later leads her to the Lost City of Kitezh. The game has the same concepts of finding relics scattered throughout. There are a few additional features to spice up things. One is Blood Ties, where you can explore Croft Manor and unlock the hidden secrets of Lara's family. There are also challenges that allow gameplay with friends, that require certain cards given to you throughout the game. Quality graphics make everything very beautiful down to the strands of Lara's hair. I recommend buying these games and any other Tomb Raider games and experiencing for yourself the amazing story as it unravels.

Historic Hoofbeats

Alyssa Katz



Photo Courtesy of newstimes.com

Because cavalry horse guards aren't often seen, they seem to be a thing of the past. While not many remain, they're not entirely lost to history; a few are still active in the country. Connecticut, in particular, has two active locations: Avon and Newtown.

In Avon, the First Company Governor's Horse Guard has existed since 1788. It's the oldest active horse guard in the country. In fact, they've not only served the governor, they've served presidents, military generals, and other dignitaries, including George Washington, James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, Commodore Thomas McDonough, and Lafayette. This regiment went through many changes in the early 1900s when it was federalized to accompany both world wars and border patrols along with its usual escorting duties. Today, the cavalry unit continues to serve the National Guard and act as escort at parades and events. They keep in tip-top shape with drills and weapons training, and participate in drug prevention programs.

In Newtown, the Second Company Governor's Horse Guard has been active since the early 1800s. Since 1808, they've served the governor and the State of CT, as well as the National Guard. In addition, they serve the community, participating in several programs, including offering riding lessons for special needs children. They also host Pony Rides for Jessica Rekos, part of a foundation honoring the love of horses of this little girl killed in the Sandy Hook tragedy. While they have open houses a few times a year and public demonstrations, the horse guard is a full-fledged military operation.

Unfortunately, Newtown's horse guard is in jeopardy due to budget cuts. This has happened more than once, with petitions and fundraisers saving the cavalry unit. The problem is costs to stable and care for the horses typically exceeds the horse guard's annual fundraising income. Avon's horse guard is in the same position. Both organizations are important links to CT history and continue to enrich their communities. It would be a shame to see a tradition nearly as old as the country ride into the sunset.

Tamarack Edit Meetings

Tuesdays 2:00 - 3:00, \$519
ALL WELCOME!!

Art (In-)Equality

Halit Basuljevic

As an NVCC student, and citizen of the United States, it's hard to avoid the infuriating spectacle sweeping the theatre of politics. In this post-truth, postmodern world, instead of actual substantial discourse leading to a converging point, where both sides can make 'progress,' most magazines and journals have littered their publications and headlines about Trump the same way gossip columns and TMZ have raved about celebrities' personal lives. And we're not better for it.

But my actual qualm has to do with liberals' sensibilities—which I share. I laud the fact that many liberals are willing to confront the questions concerning multiculturalism and gender inequality from the predisposition that we are living in a new world that is only going to get more complex with change. No doubt confidence in these stances has been reinforced ever since Trump was pledged into office. But why has liberal elitism amongst college campuses replaced a wholehearted openness to reform and change? And for that matter, why has art suffered for it?

To those uninformed, art at any time or place reflects its society's temperaments and ideological commitments through an honest and often thought-provoking lens. Through its widespread devotion to what journalism is supposed to do, that is, through its distortion of truth, art reveals it. However, harmony through diversity reared an ugly head only a couple of years ago. Back in 2015, the Hugo Awards for Science Fiction and Fantasy were dominated by right-wing nominations basing votes on the authors' political beliefs. This controversial commitment to politics has met with backlash amongst the community and has, even worse, caused the artistic merit of a novel to be completely dismissed.

If this sounds familiar, it's only so because it happens within the universities' humanities departments. Students are taught not to elaborate how they feel about an artwork, but how to evaluate the multicultural or feminist contexts they most surely will encounter. This by no means suggests art can't be a relevant voice for social commentary, but if political art is the only art that matters, then it is akin to brainwashing, not education.

For everything to be involved in some political activity is very tedious and harmful, I think. It leads to neglect an important part of essentialism when discussing almost anything, which in this case is the nature of art itself and the role of an author's wishes within it.

This brings me to my last point. The ideologies professed by liberalism, or anyone for that matter, need to be seriously challenged due to their substantial harm when it comes to genuine discourse. Liberals' crusade against inequality is to miss a crucial facet of American capitalism, which is to create something from nothing, and to realize the potential of greatness an individual can attain when thrown into intense competition. Need I also mention hierarchies are inherent within humans? Who knows who'll listen. But that's just politics.

Veteran's Voice

Shayne Pratte



Hello, everyone; my name is Shayne Pratte. I've been an NVCC student for the last year-and-a-half, and I am also a veteran of the United States Air Force. Throughout my six years in the Air Force I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to travel the world, visiting countries like: Germany, Ireland, Kuwait, Qatar, as well as spending time moving round the United States. I completed my basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, then moved on to Sheppard AFB in Wichita Falls, TX.

I was a 2W0 or Munitions Systems Specialist, trained to handle, evaluate, build, and test munitions ranging from small arms to 2000 lb. bombs and everything in between. My focus was in counter measures used to help our pilots evade enemy attacks of all sorts. I spent the bulk of my career at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst which houses all five branches of our armed forces. Working closely with Army and Marine units to ensure the proper storage and handling of munitions, I was able to get some minor insight into how branches outside the Air Force conduct business as well.

Upon completion of my contract, I returned home to Connecticut with my now wife, Brittany, to start the next chapter of my life as a college student. It was a culture shock to go from a high-stress, structured environment to one as open as NVCC, but I have had tremendous support from the people at this school. We have a Veterans Oasis, located in S411 where our vets can go and enjoy some down time, study, or swap stories about their time in the service. Everyone here at NVCC, at least in my experience, is very open and supportive of vets.

With Veterans' Day just passed, we all have the efforts and sacrifices of those who have served fresh on our minds. I'd like to use the last bit of this column to continue to raise awareness and support, as many here have already done, for our service members both currently serving and those returning home. Far too often these women and men return home with physical and mental trauma to a country that's forgotten them. I understand that, as a country, we're taking the right steps towards properly caring for our veterans, but a rate of nearly 20 veteran suicides per day is absolutely unacceptable.

Please, if you are, or if you know, a veteran who is struggling, contact the Veterans' Crisis Line. They are available at 1-800-273-8255 or via text at 838255 to provide confidential support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. And if you see me around campus, feel free to ask me anything. I'm always willing to lend an ear or just have a friendly conversation.

Earth Matters

Wastewater Worries



In early October, Waterbury's Naugatuck River was tainted by five million gallons of raw sewage from a waste treatment plant. The spill was marked by a massive fish kill

across several towns. Kevin Zak, founder of the non-profit organization, Naugatuck River Revival Group, saw the devastation and posted pictures online. People responded with outrage, questioning how this could happen.

Waterbury Mayor Neil O'Leary stated a contractor accidentally cut a power cable, causing a surge that shorted out generators. However, O'Leary was accused of a cover up and criticized for not immediately informing the public, instead, merely posting warning signs along the river.

Just weeks after this disaster, another sewage spillage occurred. More details were discovered about the initial spill when the mayor ordered an investigation following the second. Apparently, when the contractor cut the cable, an explosion resulted, causing damage. Consequently, with the facility not yet fully operational, heavy rains flooded it, allowing tainted runoff to enter the river. Most upsetting, the October spill wasn't the first; another spill occurred in April. O'Leary's claim for each instance was electrical failure at the plant. While sewage is a fact of life, it's one most people refuse to consider, but let's.

Sewage, or wastewater, comes in black and gray varieties. Black water contains whatever gets flushed down the toilet. Gray water comes from bathing, washing dishes, and doing laundry. Not all wastewater is bad; in fact, some is reusable. Treated properly, it may be used to produce energy. And, in more rural areas, sunlight, soil, and bacteria dissolve waste naturally in small amounts.

In urban areas, however, too much waste is generated to dispose of naturally; it must be responsibly treated. Otherwise, as in the Naugatuck River spills, fish die, and fresh water is contaminated. It's no longer safe to swim or fish, and such water is undrinkable. Contaminated water spreads diseases such as E. coli, typhoid, cholera, and hepatitis. In many developing countries, wastewater is dumped directly into rivers and oceans with no effort to treat it. We should do better—both in effectively treating wastewater, and in making efforts to reduce or recycle it.

Reducing wastewater is achievable through conservation. Safely recycling wastewater can be effective and beneficial, and can be done by households, power plants, and industries. Everything depends on water, but our water supply depends on us to keep it clean.

FINISH WHAT YOU STARTED!



BAYPATH.EDU

Transfer Information Session Dates

Sunday, December 10, 2017, 10:30 am - 3:00 pm

Tuesday, February 20, 2018, 8:00 am - 2:30 pm

Wednesday, April 18, 2018, 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm



RECENTLY
READ

The Book Thief,
by Markus Zusak



The Book Was Better

"When Death has a story to tell, you listen." Markus Zusak takes a completely different approach to literature than the standard first-person or third-person narrative. He instead chooses to incorporate a first and third person narrative, with (spoiler alert) Death as the narrator. An award-winning best-seller, *The Book Thief* follows Liesel Meminger, a young girl in Nazi Germany during WWII, who takes to a life of crime...stealing books.

A movie adaptation hit theatres in 2013. While there are many similarities between the text and the big-screen adaptation, there are many differences as well. Because the scope of the book—at 584 pages—is so large, it's hardly possible to incorporate every single detail into a two-hour-plus running time. For instance, Death only really appears at the beginning and end of the movie, whereas in the book his presence is constant throughout.

Having read the book, it's easy to nitpick all the details that were either cut or altered for the film—such as Liesel's eye color; the use of chalk instead of paint, the object Rosa places in Liesel's hands when Max wakes up, or the books Liesel stole. Out of all the characters, I wanted Max to survive most. By hiding Max, Liesel's guardians, the Hubermanns, put their own lives in jeopardy. Given the mass genocide of the Holocaust, I couldn't help but hope that maybe, just maybe, this one Jew would live.

One scene altered in the movie was when Liesel tells her friend Rudy about Max. In the book this happens after Max is gone, and after Liesel and Rudy have been beaten by soldiers for interrupting a march of Jews to the Dachau Concentration Camp. In the movie, Rudy reads the journal Max had given Liesel and thinks Max is her boyfriend. Another instance, perhaps one of the biggest, is the relationship between Ilsa Hermann, the mayor's wife, and Liesel. In the book, while Ilsa invites Liesel to read in her library, she is very cold, never smiling—due to her heartbreak over her son's death. In the movie, Ilsa appears more kind and friendly towards Liesel.

Zusak also takes a unique approach in the novel with Death referring to everything via colors. All of the five senses are described in such a marvelous way it's like a masterpiece in print. One example is the "dripping sun". Sadly, considering it's a paramount symbol in the book, it makes only a cameo appearance in the movie.

Inspired by his own family stories, Zusak was able to create a brilliant novel detailing impending loss, a troubled reaper, and a girl who went through far more than most of us might face in a lifetime. While the movie is definitely worth watching, Liesel's story—and its focus on the power of words—is best experienced in the pages of the book.

Alyssa Katz

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.

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Corporate
Presence in
Game Design

Bradley Edwards

As gaming and console technology have progressed and adapted, so has the technology used for gameplay. From the days of a single button and a control stick, to the streamlined, four right hand button designs of today, controllers and consoles have slowly progressed. However, we seldom see such innovation continue, outside of Nintendo's efforts. What happened?

Around the era of PlayStation 2 and the GameCube, the basic iterations of what would later evolve to be today's common controllers were published. The next generation would introduce the first regular iterations of high-end consoles. Microsoft and Sony's models wouldn't change much from generation to generation, aside from basic tweaks, such as removing some of their more unique buttons and limiting the inputs available on the controller. While this made them quite third-party friendly, it also limited the availability for innovation.

Even today, successive consoles of the established brands are simply higher performance upgrades of their predecessors. The increasing demand for over-the-top visual graphics, while novel and innovative in its own way, is a rite that takes away from the interactive medium at which video games excel most.

The lack of focus in bigger industries to dare and allocate their funds to more creative endeavors, and to properly deliver entertainment to their players in more efficient and transparent ways, largely only serves to keep the situation messy. It serves to syphon the life out of the console development scene. Yet, gaming flourishes still amongst most platforms, especially the computer, for people's desire to create freely, even at their own expense, still blooms within a fleeting breeze of occasional, raw pushes of effort.

From the push of safe, corporate and investor-approved tactics towards making profitable games, to the overall mindset that games as an art form cater so strictly to one medium of artistic expression, all these corporate design decisions give innovation beyond their own common paths a raw deal.

Media Misrepresentation

Alyssa Katz

Unless one is an expert on a topic, or has done extensive research, much of our knowledge comes from what we see on TV, in movies, or in literature. When it comes to neurological and psychological disorders, television is guilty of false representation. Psychologists can discern the difference between fact and fiction, but most people aren't psychologists, so if they have no personal experience with a disorder, they may believe these portrayals to be true. Some of the most commonly misrepresented disorders are schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder, and autism.

Those creating characters tend to skim over details, portraying a disorder through stereotypes, often negative ones. Because of this, viewers develop a false understanding of disorders, often seeing them in a bad light. One concern is that viewers, though relatively uninformed, will consider themselves experts. Based on their familiarity with one fictional character, they may think: *Everyone with this disorder must act this way.*

A prime example is the new TV drama *The Good Doctor*. Its protagonist, Dr. Shaun Murphy, is identified as autistic, so viewers may automatically accept it as an accurate portrayal. However, according to the DSM-5 on autism, while Murphy exhibits some traits—delayed responses, lack of eye contact, sensitivity to loud sounds, attachment to a familiar object—he does not meet minimum diagnostic factors for autism spectrum disorder. The series, however, dramatizes these behaviors while utilizing flashbacks showcasing Murphy's atypical child development. His

One and Done

Elena Frey

At the start of the fall semester, I introduced myself and shared my thoughts on the transition from high school to college. In that article, I mentioned how different it was walking through the doors at NVCC for the first time. Being unsure what to expect, I found the new experience a little scary. Now that the semester is coming to a close, I wanted to share my new perspective.

There were definitely challenging moments, but throughout the time I have spent working hard for every class, I've thought about one thing, I have support. Going to the ACE to get help on Math or English has shown me there are people who can and will help me. Participating in the different events at the College gives me more insight on what I can be in the future. There's nothing I can't do if I put my mind to it.

Participating in the different events at the College gives me more insight on what I can be in the future. There's nothing I can't do if I put my mind to it.

I've made a few friends I know will help me if I need it, and I will do the same for them. Being a part of The Tamarack has also given me an idea of what I may want to be in the future. It's given me the freedom to be who I want to be and talk about my interests.

There have been a few times when I was working on my homework that I have felt overwhelmed with what the teachers are giving me. I took my time, made a schedule on what I had to do, and for what day the paper needed to be done. This helped me to persevere through any challenge I faced. I've learned that being organized is very important for college—now more than ever. On the weekends I would write down all the homework I needed to do and have everything ready.

Having developed better organizational skills has helped me in handling my homework and assignments. Creating a network of supportive friends has made me feel more comfortable and confident. The resources I've found at NVCC—and within myself—have enabled me to achieve the success I needed to pass my classes and face next semester with excitement rather than dread.

most amplified adult behavior, intense concentration (portrayed through holographic images to illustrate his thought process) resorts to the "Magical Other" trope to portray the disorder.

The Big Bang Theory's Sheldon Cooper also exhibits symptoms of autism according to DSM-5. He could even be classified as having the related Social (Pragmatic) Communication Disorder. Sheldon's difficulties include an inability to catch subtleties like sarcasm; he's very particular about routine, is upset by small changes, and is unable to adjust his behavior to certain social contexts. These traits were more evident in the sitcom's early seasons. Sheldon has since evolved, while still exhibiting certain quirks.

According to NVCC psychology professor, Dr. Kim O'Donnell, media often oversimplifies characters—giving distorted impressions—or over-sensationalizes, sparking curiosity through exaggerated details. O'Donnell points out that main characters are most susceptible to being over-glorified to attract viewers. Minor characters, such as Parenthood's Max, often provide a more accurate representation of a neuro-atypical individual.

Symptoms of mental health issues and neurological disorders are diverse and complex; this is something TV often misses, using dramatic exaggeration to gain ratings. The truth is those with neurological differences are people like everyone else. They just happen to have unique ways of functioning that can make gaining acceptance a challenge. It's unfortunate that, for the sake of entertainment, media sometimes causes those challenges to be magnified.

That's What She Said



Jessica Ney

Keep Church
out of
Contraception

In early October, the Trump Administration announced rollbacks on birth control, limiting women's access. The new mandate states insurance companies and businesses need not cover birth control if it contradicts their religious beliefs. According to some, this is a giant step for religious freedom; many believe it is unfair to require companies to cover contraception if their faith considers it immoral. Mark Rienzi, senior counsel at Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, stated, "The new administration isn't going to force Catholic nuns to provide contraceptives." I realize some consider allowing women access to reproductive health is a sin, but I was unaware nuns everywhere had been forced to the streets to deliver the pill to women.

The issue at hand is not religiosity. Fourteen percent of women use contraceptives for general health, such as managing menstrual symptoms. Debilitating cramps, anemia, and endometriosis are just a few of the reasons a woman may be taking the pill. The issue is that our president and his conservative administration do not care about the health and safety of women, LGBTQ individuals, and other minority groups. These rollbacks are the beginning of the end.

Without copays, cost for contraceptive pills could top \$100 monthly. Financial stress already affects women across the nation, and if they must choose between food or rent and contraception, they will be at an even higher risk of unplanned pregnancy. This could lead to more abortions, and eventually more people in need of support like WIC and food stamps. But abortion and contraception are considered evil forces ruining the world. Trump has stated he won't allow people of faith to be bullied and silenced, but he has no problem ignoring—or even targeting—the wellness of those most in need. This can't only be about protecting those fictional pill-dispensing nuns. It seems the Administration doesn't support separation of church and state.

Simultaneously, Attorney General Sessions made a big change to the interpretation of the Civil Rights Act and The Religious Freedom Restoration Act. These changes will allow religious organizations to hire and fire how they please, free of discrimination lawsuits. That means gay couples may not be able to foster children, a pregnant, unmarried woman could lose her job, and a transgender person could get passed over for a position regardless of qualification. Sessions defended these changes by interpreting what a "compelling" reason to interfere in "free exercise of religion" actually is.

In other words, our president interprets separation church and state as allowing conservative religious groups to do as they please, with no ramifications. Sadly, in Trump's America, charity, equality, respect, and understanding are no longer virtues of the spirit. Apparently, it is moral to fire good workers, destroy happy families, and debilitate women. Merry Christmas, ladies. I hope there's an IUD in your stocking.

☞ The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched—they must be felt with the heart. ☞

—Helen Keller

Thank You All



The Little Things

Have you ever been walking NVCC's hallways here and randomly decided to check out an extracurricular

event? Or helped decorate a holiday tree? Or have you made a snap decision to take advantage of a bus trip to New York or Boston for a great low price?

Many events are held around campus, supported by the Student Activities Office. Dean of Student Services Sarah Gager, with Directors Karen Blake, Rita Ostrander, the SGA Officers, and SGA Senators put in an enormous amount of effort to make these experiences possible.

Just recently, a student randomly came into the SGA office simply to say thanks. He explained that a friend of his who is not a student, but who was in the process of deciding to apply, was impressed with our campus because of our Halloween party. Most people only see the results but don't ever witness the hard work required to make our campus come to life, so words of thanks can be few and far between. That student taking time out to show his appreciation reminded me of the very important reason I continue to write this column.

With the end of the semester fast approaching, stressful moments have multiplied. In demanding times, it is easy to slip into a foul mood. Instead, I want to encourage everyone to notice the little things that make you smile, and then seek out the people who make those little things possible. Remember, a small gesture of thanks can have a large and lasting impact.

Readers Respond

Dear Editor,

I completely agree with Alyssa Katz's article, "Voice Beats Text". Technology has many beneficial perks for communicating, but it also comes with a wide range of problems. Some people do portray themselves as something they're not on the internet, and humiliate others for entertainment, which is wrong on so many levels. Misinterpretation in texting also has led to social problems. I've had incidents where I've explained something in great detail and the person has a hard time understanding because they lack the ability to hear and comprehend. Katz writes, "Technology continues to expand, and yes it's very convenient, but do we run the risk of turning into zombies so dependent on these devices we're shutting out basic communication skills?" (1) Sad to say, face-to-face communication is slowly working its way to be a thing of the past.

~ Sincerely, Hupert Simms.

Dear Editor,

My mom would always tell me if I ate too many sweets then I would get sick. After reading your article, "Invisible Illness," by Bethany Dvilinskis, I learned that diabetes is a genetic disease, not something that might happen after a sugar overdose. Informing the reader of what occurs in your body is a good way to portray the seriousness of this issue. Dvilinskis writes, "... my speech gets slurred, and all I want to do is sleep- which I can't" (1). She also mentions that to maintain her health, she has to constantly check her blood sugar throughout the day. Is this for all forms of diabetes or just type one? Please continue to inform people of the symptoms, and how it may affect everyday life.

~ Sincerely, Michelle Moales

Dear Editor,

In the article, "Inside the Outsider," I appreciate that Blaise Russo wrote about

his life ambitions, but also the hardships. Russo stated, "As my final NVCC moments wound down I once again found myself asking, What's next?...I was scared" (4). Many people are scared where life can take them. However, they rarely talk about it. There is an ideal perception that, once we graduate from high school or college, we must know where we are headed in life. That is a very hard decision to make no matter what age you are. I applaud Russo for stating, "I am scared" (4). That was very brave. Life gets scary, and now I do not feel alone with sharing that thought. If more people [admit] they feel scared about what's next, we can build a support system. Knowing I'm not the only one who feels this way teaches me not to get discouraged because [completing] goals takes time.

~ Sincerely, Crystal Verostek

Dear Editor,

In his article, "In Memoriam," Trevor Lilly states, "I would like to start by extending my sincerest regards to all those lost, injured, or otherwise affected by the mass shooting in Las Vegas on October 1st"(1). The shooting at the Las Vegas concert was a tremendous tragedy. I cannot imagine how hard it must have been for all the family members finding out that their loved ones are never coming back home. To read this article and see that there was no reason for someone to do something like this, and that it is assumed he just wanted fame, is just disgusting. His actions killed and injured a lot of people and hurt a lot of families. People are going to even rethink whether or not they want to attend public events like this. I hope that the United States can change the laws regarding firearms to prevent events like this from happening again or as much as possible.

~ Sincerely, Alysa Oquendo

Dear Editor,

The article, "Spoken Words," by Mitchell Maknis, was extremely interesting, and brought me a higher desire to read The Tamarack. I did not know small events like

this were held, where you can come and speak your mind on something. Prof. William H. Foster III, stated, "Words go from one person to another, and it's magic" (5). This is extremely important and opening up your mind on a biased controversial topic, with an unbiased mindset can [create] common grounds with someone, and even a crowd of people. This can stop the threat of hatred towards one another. All minds think differently, but working around a controversy, and opening up new thoughts and unbiased viewpoints can be a great value to spread peace, love, and prosperity of a happy lifestyle.

~ Sincerely, Admin Otajagic

Dear Editor,

After reading John McDonald's article, "Anime Club," I was very surprised a club like this exists at NVCC. Normally, I would hide my love for anime, but if I joined, I'd be more open to talking to people about my love for certain anime. In a slice of life anime, Otaku Club is very popular and something I've always wanted to do, but I am shy. A very true and realistic thing about anime is, as McDonald states, "It can provide insight in regards to handling different social situations" (6). There are some anime that are so close to real life they feel accurate. Then, there are a few that feel more out of reach, but still just as magical when looked at through daily life.

~ Sincerely, Jennifer K.

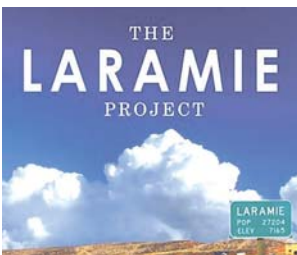
Dear Editor,

In this month's edition of The Tamarack, I read the article titled, "Harbor Yard Plans," by Alyssa Katz. In it, Katz states, "If an outdoor amphitheater comes to Harbor Yard, sporting events will have to find a new home" (5). This is sad because they are taking something that is making money and changing it and driving that business out of that area. Also, this is upsetting because it's driving Connecticut's minor league team out of the state, which in the long term will cause us to lose money.

~ Sincerely, Alex Miller

Illuminating the Stage

Christopher Gordon



Fall 2017 semester has been a busy one NVCC's Theater Department. Thankfully, following the departure of Professor Burton Tedesco in May, we got to welcome Professor Sasha Brätt—and the show(s) went on. In typical brilliant fashion, the actors, musicians, stage crew, and everyone else behind the scenes gave life to two more brilliant works.

Late October brought to the Playbox *The Laramie Project*, written by a troupe of New York actors and playwrights using interviews with residents of Laramie, Wisconsin about the murder of Matthew Shepard. The piece highlighted cognitive dissonance faced by the townspeople following the crime as they tried to explain their town is not a bad place. *Laramie* illustrates that ignoring a problem (like homophobia) does not cause it to go away, but merely lets it slowly build with tragedy as a result. Laramie might not have been a town given over to hate, but it also wasn't a town given to stopping hate when it presented itself.

All the actors deserve praise for the raw emotion they expressed. Their skillful performances kept alive the spirit of Matthew Shepard, as well as countless others taken by the hands of hatred and ignorance. Edmund Burke says it best, "The only thing necessary

for the triumph of evil is for good [people] to do nothing."

The second show of the semester, *Next to Normal* is a modern musical depicting a family's experience with Bipolar I comorbid with hallucinations. Performances were spot on, and the work that went into producing this play was great. The intense vocal rehearsals paid off in performances that met the challenges of a complex score, and the work that went into creating the commanding set design was also clear. Being a psychology major, I cannot praise so heartily the content of the drama itself. This has nothing to do with the actors or the work the NVCC Stage Society invested.

It revolves around presentation of symptomology as written by the authors. Granted, this is merely a two-hour play, and some choices were obviously implemented simply for time. A quick glimpse of mania was presented by throwing bread on the floor to make peanut butter sandwiches. This is supposed to represent a manic episode, but does not reach clinical levels one would see in a real episode. These are not pretty, funny (I object to making symptoms simply humorous and not heartbreaking), or easily handled without professional aid. Generally, a manic person will not realize their actions are disruptive and often won't stop and seek help without force. I won't further critique the play's portrayal of mental illness, but I encourage readers to research symptoms on www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.

To all who brought *Next to Normal* to life, you truly did a wonderful job, and I hope this play does spark interest in learning more about Bipolar I Disorder. Sadly, modern depictions of mental health issues can be easily misrepresented. I would be doing a disservice if I didn't speak up to advocate for more education concerning subject content of modern art.

Starving Artist?

Amber Ajro



Photo Courtesy of Chaz Well

Art is everywhere. It's in movies; it's your favorite coffee mug; it's all over this newspaper. Still, being a college art major has often had a bad reputation. Some say we have it easier than everyone else. But if that were true, there would be no such thing as a "starving artist." And many challenges are specific to majoring in art. On top of taking just as many academic prerequisites as other majors, plus our three-hour art classes, we have to live with everyone telling us we won't get a job after college.

Local artist Chaz Well has proved that mindset wrong. Well said, "Since I graduated with a B.F.A in Painting, I got a job right away in an art store." An art store doesn't seem like the type of job worthy of a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, but this is where Chaz learned one of the most valuable skills of any profession:

networking. Whether you're an art major or an English major, your first job out of college may not be related to your studies—unless you network and get involved with a community corresponding to what you just spent all that time and money studying.

It can take about five to seven years after college for an art career to start picking up, which just gives an artist more time to work on craft and generate ideas. From the art store and his use of networking, Chaz Well took up substitute teaching. He called it: "Easy work, you learn how to teach

little undeveloped humans skills which can make you better at describing/teaching to others what your art is about. And if you're really lucky, you can teach at an arts magnet school where the kids are most likely into art, and then you all learn off each other."

This is how I met Chaz; I was his student. He now publishes his own magazine, *Phat Lip Mag* (@phatlipmag), which features art and culture from around New England. He also continues to make art, particularly "infinity paintings," pieces of art physically moving on a continual loop. But this isn't just about Chaz. It's about all of our fellow artists who've stuck by their work and pursued their professions. That's true success: refusing to listen to the masses telling us it's impossible to make money doing what we love.



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