

Black History: Her Turn

Nicole Hayes



Maggie Lena Walker



Alice Coachman



Shirley Chisholm



Toni Morrison

Most often, Black History Month is associated with the Civil Rights Movement. However, American Black history has more aspects that still need to be uncovered. Along with male icons, like Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., there are several Black women who made major contributions throughout history. Their achievements shaped the fate of our nation. As part of February’s Black History Month, let’s focus on some American women who made history.

One woman’s pre-Civil War story was so powerful, it is still being told today. Born into slavery in 1834 on John Pollard Gaines’ plantation in Boone County, Kentucky, Margaret Garner and her husband and children fled across the Ohio River and sought shelter at a relative’s Cincinnati home. When slaveholders demanded the family surrender, Garner, fearing her children would return to a life of slavery—and believing death was preferable to the horrible condition of enslavement—took the life of her daughter and unsuccessfully attempted to kill her other children. A Hamilton County Grand Jury indicted Garner and her husband on murder charges. Soon after, the family was returned to the plantation. As her story spread through numerous newspapers, Garner’s desperate actions caused many to view slavery as inhumane. Abolitionists at the time blamed the inherent tragedy of slavery for Garner’s ultimate sacrifice.

Margaret Garner’s story inspired the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *Beloved*, by one of America’s greatest living authors, another astonishing Black woman, Toni Morrison. A prolific teller of African-American truth, writer of twenty-one books, including fiction and scholarly writing, Morrison, as educator and author, has chronicled the tragedies and triumphs of Black people. Her powerful feminist voice has enriched American letters—and the hearts and minds of her wide readership. With composer Richard Danielpour, Morrison even collaborated to create an opera, *Margaret Garner*, which made its world premiere in 2005.

Maggie Lena Walker was America’s first Black woman—indeed, the first woman of

any race—to become a bank president. Born in Richmond, VA in 1864 to former slave Elizabeth Draper, and to Irish-American, Eccles Cuthbert, Walker attended two educational institutions designed for Black students. She later joined the Independent Order of St. Luke, an organization committed to advancing Black Americans financially and socially. Later in life, she continued to work for the organization, becoming St. Luke’s Grand Secretary. Walker opened her own chapter in 1903 called St. Luke Penny Saving Bank and remained president until 1929. Under her leadership, she served 50,000 members and 1,500 local chapters.

Growing up, Alice Coachman didn’t have access to public sports facilities due to southern segregation laws. However, this did not stop her from achieving an athletic career. In 1939, Coachman competed and won her first Amateur

Athletic Union (AAU) national championship in high jump. She continued to win national titles in sprints and high jump while attending Tuskegee Institute, in Tuskegee, Alabama, where she graduated high school. She would’ve qualified for the 1940 and ‘44 Olympics, cancelled due to World War II. During the 1948 Olympics in London, she became the first Black woman to win an Olympic gold medal and first Black American woman to benefit from endorsements. With her success, she opened a nonprofit organization, Alice Coachman Track and Field Foundation, providing assistance to young athletes and former Olympic athletes to adjust to life after their careers. In 1966, she was honored as one of the 100 greatest Olympic Athletes in history and soon after inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame.

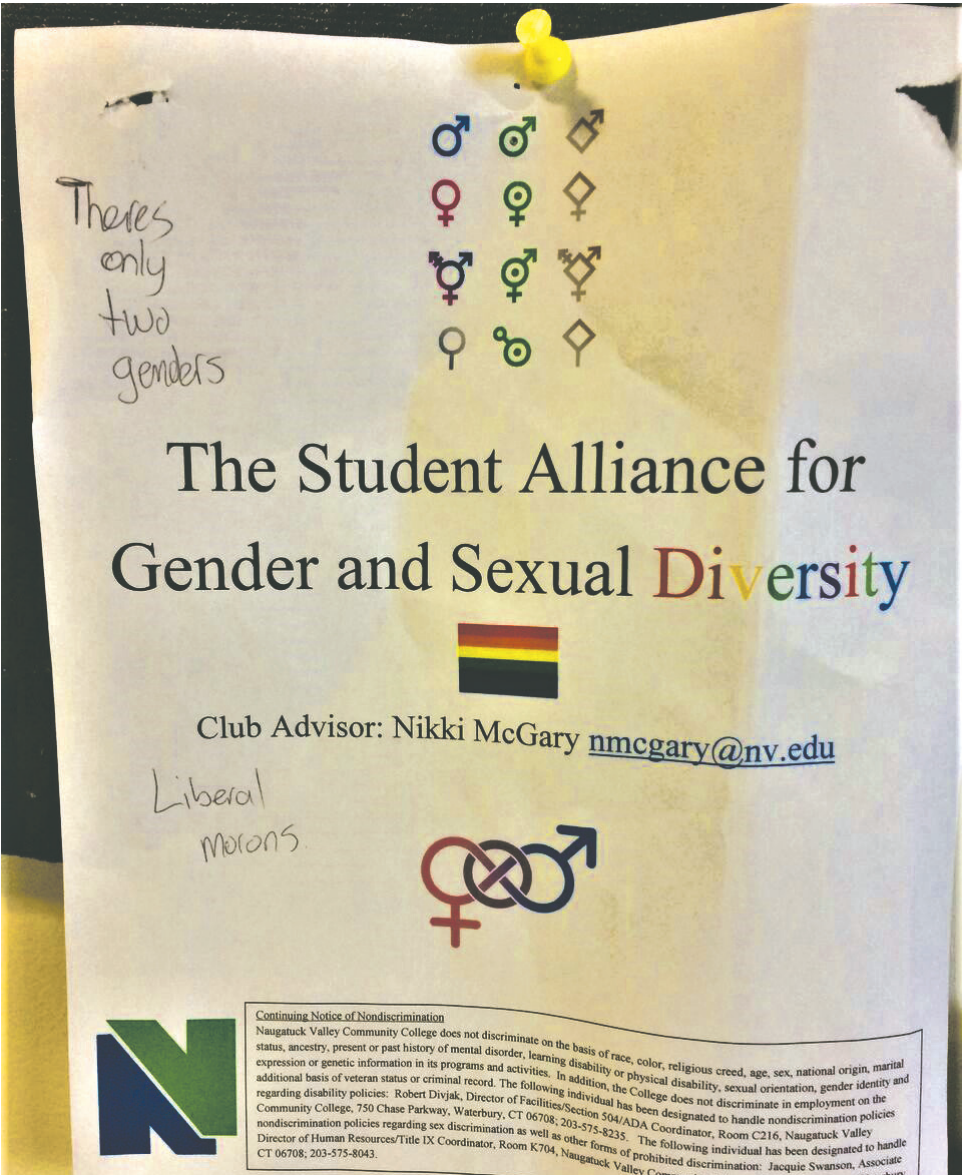
As U.S. Representative from 1969-1983,

Shirley Chisholm made history. Born in 1924 in Brooklyn, New York, Chisholm spent most of her childhood in Barbados with her grandmother, returning stateside to gain an education. In 1946, she graduated Brooklyn College with a teaching degree and worked for her Masters in Elementary Education from Columbia University. After serving as educational consultant for New York City’s Bureau of Child Welfare, 1959 - 1964, Chisholm began adventuring into politics, becoming the first Black congresswoman in 1968; in 1969, she became a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus. Chisholm represented New York State in the U.S. House of Representatives for seven terms. Additionally, she was the first major-party Black candidate to run for the Democratic nomination in 1972. She later said, “I ran because most people thought the country was not ready for a Black candidate, not ready for a woman candidate. Someday. It was time in 1972 to make that someday come.”

Celebrated just once a year, Black History Month honors those who have made great achievements. This year, we focus on women whose legacy enriches our everyday lives. From Garner’s tragedy to Coachman’s triumph, Black women have fought to forge pathways for others. These are just a few of countless Black women who struggled against racism and sexism to achieve great things. They take their place with the likes of poet, Maya Angelou; contralto, Marian Anderson; aviator, Bessie Coleman; Children’s Defense Fund Founder, Marian Wright Edelman; First Lady, Michelle Obama, and many more. As Shirley Chisholm stated, “In the end, anti-black, anti-female, and all forms of discrimination are equivalent to the same thing: anti-humanism.”

Unacceptable

The Tamarack Staff



The accompanying image illustrates a recent case of on-campus hate speech documented by a *Tamarack* staff member. The Student Alliance for Gender and Sexual Diversity, one of NVCC’s many clubs, has the goal of promoting inclusiveness and acceptance. To deface their flyer with the statement “Theres (sic) only two genders” and the phrase “Liberal Morons” exhibits the sort of small-mindedness that has no place at an institution of higher learning.

This offensive message is ironic considering it appears above NVCC’s non-discrimination statement, which reads in part, “Naugatuck Valley Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious creed, age, sex, national origin, marital status, present or past history of mental disorder, learning disability or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or genetic information...”

Incidents like this, on the rise since November, are unacceptable anywhere, and will not be tolerated at our college, declared a safe haven for all. Students come here seeking growth through education; this is achievable only with an open mind. Statements demeaning others—out of anger, fear, or ignorance—are wrong. Pretending such attacks, whether voiced aloud or scribbled anonymously, are okay makes us complicit in efforts to tear down others.

The Tamarack will not support bigotry, oppression—any form of hatred—through silence. We will continue to shine a light on ignorance, and we encourage you to do the same. If you or someone you know experiences, or witnesses, racist or sexist behavior, or any words or actions meant to intimidate, demean, or silence another at NVCC, we encourage you to report it to the Dean of Students. You can also share your story with us at tamarack@nv.edu. Together, let’s bring ignorance out of the shadows.

Correction:

A Sincere Apology

Response to our call for Unafraid Educators for the December issue was enthusiastic. Unfortunately, through editor error, we omitted one name. The Tamarack staff offers heartfelt apologies to Melanie Majeski, Professor of ESL. A staunch supporter of students from all corners of the world, Professor Majeski was actually one of the first people to respond to our invitation. Sorry, Melanie, for losing your name in the shuffle.

A Registry Rerun?

Nicole Hayes



After a photo emerged of Kris Kobach, Kansas’s Secretary of State, and President-elect, Donald Trump on Nov. 20, 2016, several civil rights organizations became concerned. The photo captured details of the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) strategic plan for the Trump Administration’s first 365 days.

The first recommendation was to deny potential terrorist entry into the U.S. It called for the update of a previous program referred to as the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS). After 9/11, NSEERS was created with the purpose of monitoring non-citizens and tracking individuals who were potential threats to the country. Due to its ineffectiveness, the program was terminated in 2011; Kobach was one of the chief architects of NSEERS, and there is speculation he will play a role in Trump’s inner circle.

Known as the most controversial immigration program, NSEERS was implemented on September 11, 2002 under the Bush Administration as part of Bush’s War on Terror. The program consisted of two components: domestic registration and port-of-entry registration.

Non-citizens and visitors from 25 select countries were required to follow the strict requirements of the program. Before entering or leaving the country, individuals were required to check in with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). They were then subjected to interrogation, as well as being required to have ID photos taken, which had to be displayed in order to enter or leave the country. If individuals did not follow the protocols—whether willfully, or through oversight—they were fined or even deported. The program was designed to monitor those who overstayed their visas as well.

While registration applied to non-citizens, non-residents, and visitors from 25 countries—mostly Muslim-majority nations—significantly, the program only applied to males over the age of 16, apparently in the belief that these individuals best fit a terrorist profile. Although many requirements were similar to the port-of-entry portion of NSEERS, domestic registration went a step further and gave little notice to those subjected to it.

After it was introduced in the government’s official newspaper, Federal Register, the program gave individuals a 30-day time period to follow all of the requirements implemented.

Additionally, it required individuals to notify officials within ten days of changing residence, obtaining new employment, or registering at a new educational institution. Those who missed registration times or chose not to register faced criminal and immigration penalties.

13,800 people were deported because of the strict requirements of the domestic registration. However, DHS was unable to trace criminal activity back to any of these individuals. Just over a year after its introduction, in December 2003, the domestic registration component of NSEERS was removed from the program. The port-of-entry requirement was suspended in 2011.

Not only did this program break families apart, it caused great inconvenience in the daily lives of targeted individuals. According to the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) and the council on American-Islamic Relations, because the program was merely suspended and not fully dismantled, it could easily be reinstated with the government’s approval and still affects individuals on a daily basis.

In an article in The Atlantic, Abed Ayoub, the ADC’s legal and policy director, said, “We have individuals still to this day who are unable to adjust their status.” For example, Ammar Khawam, a Syrian Muslim, entered the U.S. with a student visa in 2000. Each year he was required to travel to the nearest immigration office and register. It was not until two years ago Khawam became a citizen. Although NSEERS is not active, Khawan could have been denied citizenship, like many others, if he did not follow the requirements of the program.

Costing the government 10 million dollars to operate each year, NSEERS was proven to be ineffective. After it was suspended in 2011, the public questioned DHS on how they will handle the information collected from the 83,519 individuals who participated in special registration. Sadly, DHS declined to answer any questions pertaining to where and how the information is being used.

During his campaign, President Trump showed support for a Muslim registry, stating he supported “Total and complete shut-down of Muslims entering the U.S. until our country’s representatives can figure out what is going on.” With remnants of NSEERS still in place, many had worried that the program could be easily reinstated with Trump’s election.

However, on December 23, 2016, DHS released an official statement in the Federal Register, declaring “The regulatory structure pertaining to NSEERS no longer provides a discernable public benefit as the program has been rendered obsolete. Accordingly, DHS is removing the special registration program regulations.” While many immigrants and Muslim-Americans remain uncertain of the future, the framework of the most discriminatory immigration program has thankfully been removed.

S.T.E.A.M. Engines Go Choo-Choo

Alyssa Katz



Courtesy of Artistic Cliparts

While S.T.E.M. stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, S.T.E.A.M. applies those same core principles, but adds Arts to the mix. The Arts can apply to all of these subjects, which is why there’s so much debate in trying to change the program.

Some educators feel the arts are not as important as standardized testing, which is why across the country many art programs are in jeopardy of losing funding. When schools face budget cuts, school administrators often judge the arts as less important than academics. It’s not that they don’t appreciate art and music, but they feel academics are more important skills needed in adulthood. What they don’t seem to realize is that art and music greatly benefit cognitive skills including critical thinking. When arts programs are slashed, students lose one opportunity to obtain these beneficial skills.

The arts can apply to each of the S.T.E.M. categories. For example, graphic design is a combination of engineering and art. Creating logos takes a level of creativity that incorporates both logical and creative thinking. And the connection between music and math has long been acknowledged. The idea of officially adding art to the S.T.E.M. curriculum is not necessarily to teach students how to create art or how to play an instrument, since “art is in the eye of the beholder.” Rather, the goal is to look at problem solving in a more creative and innovative way.

In order for schools to incorporate this new principle of immersive arts, they need to cooperate. There need to be teachers versed in concepts of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and ARTS, so they are able to properly schedule and assemble lesson plans as well as school programs. Several S.T.E.A.M. programs have been created across the country. In certain areas, these new programs are thriving; others are still in developmental stages. However, many districts still feel that the arts do not belong. It takes dedication and cooperation to make anything happen.

It’s argued that, by limiting students to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, but not implementing art, schools are doing them a disservice. According to those at the forefront of the move to spread the arts, inclusion of an aesthetic component takes S.T.E.M. to the next level. In addition, including arts can boost motivation for many students. Converting S.T.E.M. to S.T.E.A.M. could give students and teachers an opportunity to explore curriculum in beautiful new ways.

EDITOR’S NOTEBOOK



Make America Great

Now that we are safely ensconced in the spring semester, with minds adapting to the arduous task of stretching to fit new ideas, I felt it’s time to bring up a difficult topic: Donald Trump.

The newly installed President of the United States has said some horribly insensitive things. That does not mean certain sound bites can’t have impact, though. “Make America Great Again,” is one such phrase. For many US citizens, this is an insult. Racism, sexism, bigotry of all sorts, have led many ask: What was so great about America to begin with?

Taken all together, it seems easier just to ignore things and carry on as we were. This is not a good strategy, as it will only widen a gap between two separate parties that, on paper, seem like oil and water. It seems like a preferable analogy to imagine our political differences as oil and vinegar. Both, separately, can do many things, but combined they can create a delicious dressing for our salad (salad being the USA in this analogy).

“Make America Great Again” doesn’t have to be the rallying cry to keep the status quo of times long gone. It should become a call to every American to continue bringing education back into our lives. Education leads to understanding, which brings acceptance. This leads to growth. We should work to educate ourselves to understand each other, in order to grow a better future.

Last semester, I attended all sorts of events celebrating American culture outside of my experience. Attending events such as HSU’s *Día de los Muertos*, and BSU’s Kwanzaa celebration, I did not lose anything by rejoicing in cultural diversity, nor could I have stopped anyone from their celebrations if I had instead decided to mock or belittle such events. And I certainly was not motivated to do any belittling after learning even the little bit that I have about such American festivities.

To “Make America Great Again,” we simply need to drop one word: *Again*. Let’s Make America Great. Don’t let closed-minded people cause anger to replace charity. Don’t work to continue segregating each other. I value the knowledge I’ve gained by working with people from different backgrounds who can safely express their concerns with me. I use that knowledge and understanding to work alongside everyone in creating a better life. One person’s ugly intent does not mean we cannot give those words truth or beauty. It’s better to take a powerful weapon and turn it into a tool of peace than it is to create even more powerful weapons with which to attack.

For better or worse we have a new Commander-in-Chief. He speaks as our voice on the global stage, and our collective voice should not become as arrogant or dismissive as Donald Trump’s personal voice. Never forget this one very important truth though: *We, ALL AMERICANS, are his boss.*

Regards,
Christopher Gordon
Editor-in-Chief
tamarack@nv.edu

New York Talks Free College

Chelsea Clow

Last month, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced an initiative to make a college education completely free for middle-class students residing in New York. Under Cuomo’s proposal, NY residents whose yearly income, or whose family’s yearly income, is \$125,000 or less will be able to attend any two-year state community college or any four-year state university tuition-free.

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders was present at Cuomo’s State of the State Address where Cuomo announced his agenda for 2017. Sanders, a long-time supporter of free college tuition initiatives, offered a prediction, stating, “If New York State does it this year, mark my words, state after state will follow.”

Cuomo’s “Excelsior Scholarships,” would be the first to allow tuition-free attendance at state universities. Currently, both Tennessee and Oregon have programs to cover the cost of community college tuition for state residents.

Approximately 940,000 people in New York State would be eligible to attend college for free under this plan. Cuomo stated, “A college education is not a luxury—it is an absolute necessity for any chance at economic mobility, and with these first-in-the-nation Excelsior Scholarships, we’re providing the opportunity for New Yorkers to succeed, no matter what zip code they come from and without the anchor of student debt weighing them down.”

Those who oppose the New York Governor’s plan—and some supporters as well—have expressed concern over how much money this will cost the state. Cuomo stated that the plan will roll out in a series of phases with the initial cap for yearly income at \$100,000 and will eventually increase to \$125,000 by the year 2019. Many worry that, if this plan unfolds, more students could plan to enroll in state schools, increasing the expense even more.

At the moment, full-time tuition to a four-year state college for New York residents costs

roughly \$6,470, currently one of the lowest tuition rates in the country. Acknowledging that many students carry upwards of \$30,000 in college debt upon graduation, Cuomo said, “It’s like starting a race with an anchor tied to your leg.”

The plan will need legislative approval before it can even be implemented. “If the United States is to succeed in a highly competitive global economy, we need the best educated workforce in the world,” said Senator Sanders. “With exploding technology, and with most of the good paying jobs requiring more and more education, we need to make certain that every New Yorker, every Vermonter and every American gets all the education they need regardless of family income. I urge New York legislators to pass this enormously important proposal, and become a model for the rest of the nation.” Time will tell if this exciting proposal will become a reality, and if it does, whether Connecticut will follow suit.

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.edum with the subject like READERS RESPOND. Letters may be edited for length and grammar.

The Tamarack

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

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Corrections:

Our December article on Prof. Ray Leite’s trip to SIGGRAPH 2016 contained a couple of inadvertent detours. Leite’s buffalo encounter took place in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, not Yellowstone, and he met NVCC alum, Arcy, while traveling through Indiana, not Idaho. Apologies!

Forgive Us, Webmaster!

It’s come to our attention that our masthead—the list of hardworking folks who make The Tamarack happen—has been out-of-date these last few issues. Daniella Cruz took over as Webmaster from Zhakelina Kacani back in the fall. We apologize and thank Daniella for her excellent (and unfortunately uncredited) work.

Welcome and Congratulations!

Tamarack Staff

The NVCC community gains some new members this spring. *The Tamarack* wishes a warm welcome and congratulations to these fresh faces:

- Registrar, Lourdes Cruz
- Associate Dean for Health Sciences / Director of Nursing, Dr. Carol Gabriele
- Director of Radiologic Degree Program, Mark Martone
- Criminal Justice Program Coordinator, Earl Ormond

We also offer sincere congratulations to Bonnie Goulet, who has accepted the position of Director of Student Development. We wish you all a productive and successful spring semester!

EDITORIAL

Inner Beauty, an Open Letter

Nature, psychology, bodily functions? These are theories that relate to why we judge people based on looks. Upon first glance, we rate someone on our personal scale, from bottom of the barrel to Greek god/goddess. But what about underneath? Is it okay to solely judge a person based on looks without getting to know them? This is mostly focused on physical attraction, and/or sexual desire.

Women are perhaps more targeted by this mentality than men. Magazines and other media showcase how women should look or dress. Why do guys get to be as natural as possible, while women need to look like a trophy with the hair, make-up, clothes? Some women say, “I wouldn’t be caught dead without my make-up.” Why? Are you so afraid of showing people the real you that, instead, you put on a face that may be potentially trying too hard, all to attract a mate? Do you not like yourself?

Maybe you’ve been torn down too many times with statements that you should wear make-up, or dress a certain way because that’s the only way to attract a guy. But to hear that from loved ones hurts. To hear a close loved one call you lazy for not wearing make-up is a self-esteem killer; to hear it over and over again feels even worse. It seems inner beauty is not as valued as it used to be.

But women aren’t the sole victims, because they do the same thing, judging a man on his hair or muscle tone. It’s not as easy as saying “This is wrong,” because it’s a natural function. But doing it in a way that implies, “I want to have sex with them,” and not, “I want to get to know them more,” is demoralizing. Those looking for a long-term relationship should find more to value than just looks.

Valentine’s Day is this month, a day when couples in love are celebrated, and singles are vilified just for being single. Day in and day out we hear stories of people who hate themselves because they feel unattractive. Some self-harm or develop eating disorders, striving for some fake level of perfection. People cave into peer pressure because they don’t want to feel left out. But altering your personality or appearance because of a fear you won’t be liked as you are is not only uncomfortable, it’s also untruthful.

Not everyone is that centerfold, fantasy man or woman. If we continue waiting for that perfect specimen to materialize—or trying to transform ourselves into physical perfection—we might actually miss “The One”. Mr. Perfect could be a total dud, or Ms. Perfect could be a complete jerk. Even worse, in our quest to look the part, we might lose touch with our real self.

To be comfortable showing people the real you builds character and honesty. By getting to know someone as he or she really is, we’ll find that person attractive regardless of looks. Here are some words for the women out there—if a guy can find you attractive with no make-up on, he’ll find you attractive no matter what. If you want to lose weight, or change your hairstyle or clothes, do it because you want to, not because someone tells you to. BE YOU!

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 emailSGA@nvcc.commnet.edu.

K-9 Heroes

Alyssa Katz

Service dogs are companions who help people with disabilities ranging from blindness or paralysis to epilepsy, autism, and others. Not just dogs can be service animals, but they are the most common guide animals. There are actually several types of service dogs for a variety of disabilities. Some assist people with physical limitations, including wheelchair users. They are known as Mobility Assistance Dogs, trained to retrieve fallen objects, close and open doors, and even turn lights on and off. Depending on weight and strength, some even wear harnesses in order to pull wheelchairs.

Signal Dogs are used by people who are deaf. These dogs are trained to alert their handlers to sounds, such as a ringing telephone or doorbell, and also more critical sounds such as smoke alarms. They are to be alert and react quickly to sounds—recognizing signals of potential danger for their handlers.

Medical Response Dogs assist people diagnosed with certain conditions, not necessarily epilepsy or specific psychiatric disorders, but more so, people who live with diabetes or seizures. These dogs are trained to know when their owners are to take medication, and to be alert if issues arise related to their owners’ current condition that may require a doctor’s care, or even hospitalization.

Guide Dogs are perhaps the most commonly known service dogs. They are also called “seeing eye dogs.” For people who are blind, these dogs are literal guides, steering their handlers in the right directions, helping them get safely from point A to point B. They can be a help, though the owner must still know where they’re going, because dogs are colorblind to traffic lights and obviously cannot decipher street signs. Though it may be tempting to engage with a guide dog while she’s on the job, this is not appropriate, as public interaction can distract the dog from its duty—and ultimately cause harm to the dog or handler.

Comfort dogs differ from service dogs because they are meant to be petted and hugged. Their presence is a form of therapy. Post-tragedy, these dogs provide the sort of contact a traumatized person may not want from another person. Following the Sandy Hook tragedy, comfort dogs—hailing from an Illinois ministry organization called Lutheran Church Charities—were present in Newtown schools daily for the remainder of the school year. Each wore a harness with his or her name sewn onto it, and handlers provided cards detailing the dog’s information. They brought warmth and, yes, comfort to a town struggling to heal. Follow the furry companions online at http://www.lutheranchurchcharities.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=458&Itemid=121.

Whether providing safety, sensory assistance, or simply a comforting presence, service dogs are truly four-legged heroes.

SGA PRESIDENT

A Hearty Welcome

This month, Levi Reynolds, SGA Secretary, steps in for SGA President Keila Franco who was away as we prepared this issue.

To my fellow returning students, it is with a warm heart that I welcome you back to the NVCC campus for another semester, and to our new students, welcome to your first semester here at NVCC! My grandmother once told me the greatest favor you can do for yourself in life is to surround yourself with good people who want you to succeed, who will reinforce your good habits, and push you to do better. I am pleased to inform you (if you don’t already know) that you are now on a campus surrounded by such people.

Here at NVCC, you are among peers and professors who want nothing more than to help you, challenge you, and guide you to achieve the success of which you are capable. I invite you to make good use of your professors, who will direct you in your education; your deans, who are at your service; your advisors, who will make sure you take the right steps forward; and your student government, who will not rest until your student experience here at NVCC is as fun as it is challenging. There are multitudinous resources at your fingertips. All you need to do is seek them out.

It is my belief that in this life nothing worth achieving comes easily, and that hard work is its own reward. A college experience is no different. There are challenges and trials ahead of you, and obstacles to be overcome. There will be confusion, frustration and hard work that only you, yourself, can do. I do not mean to alarm you, but know that it is not an easy task we, as students, have set for ourselves.

Just remember that you have come to a *Community* college, and it is just that, a community. A community of scholars and artists; of students and educators, all of whom have been on, or are currently on, the bumpy road to success on which you are travelling. So remember that you are not alone. You have the greatest advantage of being surrounded by good people, who are absolutely here to help. So welcome, or welcome back fellow students, it’s time to get together, and get to work!

Levi Reynolds

Find our full version online at:
OurSchoolNewspaper.com

From the Desk of Laurie Hornbecker, Director, Community and Economic Development

The Non-credit Lifelong Learning and the Community and Economic Development Division has moved to its new location in Founders Hall, Room F323. Staff are eager to aid students in the new offices, located on the third floor of the recently completed building. The phone number remains the same: 203-575-8029. Left to Right: Sandy Lee, Eilish Bell, Laurie Hornbecker (rear), and Andrea Petrario.

Public Safety Department

Routine Number, Ext. 8113.
Emergency Number Ext. 8112
The department is staffed: 24 hours per day • 365 days per year

Happenings @ Other Colleges

Nicole Hayes



University of Mary Washington Past and Present

Faculty, students, and community members of UMW will celebrate Black History Month focusing on parallels between past and present. UMW Organized fifteen events centered on American Black history. To begin the celebration is a discussion conducted by Dr. Wanda Simkins, titled, *Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel: Black Female Archetypes in Film & TV*. This event concentrates on how the portrayal of Black women in film and TV has affected the community. Keynote speaker, Maggie Anderson, who, with her family, carried out the Empowerment Experiment—living solely off Black business, buying only-Black-made products for a full year—will offer her knowledge of economic disparities within Black neighborhoods and Black-owned businesses. Anderson aims to educate students on how supporting Black businesses will improve America’s economy. For info on UMW’s month-long events, see <http://students.umw.edu/multicultural/programs/black-history-month-celebration/>



Mills College Our Voices Matter

Mills College, a private liberal arts institution in Oakland, California highly recognized for its LGBTQ-friendly learning environment, incorporated open discussions on the dysphoria of Black women who are cis, LGBTQ, and female identifying into its Black History Month celebration. Activists and organizers of Say Her Name and Black Lives Matter led a panel discussion on how systems have devalued bodies of Black women in America. Additionally, Mills focused on bringing black voices to the center of attention through arts. Nalini Ghuman, Faculty Lounge Scholar, explored the amazing life of Chevalier de Saint-Georges, the son of a slave, who became an elite violinist and composer during the Classical Music Era in Europe. He also led the first all-black regiment during the French Revolution. <https://www.mills.edu/academics/undergraduate/eths/blackhistorymonth.php>



Dupage Community College Expression Contest

Celebrating Black History Month through self-expression, DCC in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, is hosting a writing contest. Literature, a powerful instrument for social justice, will be a platform for this year’s celebration. Using the theme, “Educational Achievement and Success in the Black Community,” students will select a quote by an influential Black American. As a creative process, students will express insight on their chosen quote through essays, stories, poems, and other forms. Winners will receive a \$500 gift prize, recognition at a February 27 closing ceremony, and publication in the college newspaper. This contest teaches the importance of effectively communicating thoughts and feelings through literature.



Georgia State University Celebration of Black Culture

GSU celebrates Black History Month by hosting a range of free events, such as *Hot Wings/Hot Topics*, a bi-weekly conversation where faculty, staff, and students engage in open discussion of current events. Offering similar conversation, *Pop Talk* fights stereotypes attached to Black Masculinity and Black Femininity. “Taste of Black Diaspora,” will be the first event scheduled and offers several interactive activities: food-tasting, art, and different forms of self-expression. Students are encouraged to wear cultural attire; a DJ will perform. The last event, the State of Black Union will feature guest panelists, activists and politicians from the Atlanta community, sharing how current policies affect daily lives. <http://blackstudentachievement.gsu.edu/bhmcsl/>

State-of-the-Art (and Science)

Amber Penland



Founders Hall Main Entrance

As a new President’s Circle member, I had the pleasure of attending Naugatuck Valley Community College’s annual Leadership Breakfast on Thursday, January 12. Afterward, I among other leaders of NVCC’s student body, had the opportunity to take a tour of the new Founders Hall Center for Health Sciences. I’ll start off by saying I am envious of the current/future allied health and nursing students, because the building is magnificent. Happily,



2nd Floor Common Area



Clinical Nursing Patient Room

the building also contains several common spaces, such as group study rooms and lounge areas open to all.

The new building not only has a lecture hall that fits around 300 students, but it is packed with state-of-the-art technology, like cameras that record lectures for students to review at any time. On the first

floor, there are multiple classrooms and computer labs as well as an EMT classroom that has the back of an ambulance built into the foundation of the room.

The second floor has more computer labs and classrooms as well as simulation labs for students who are looking to obtain a degree in physical therapy. The third floor represents a mock hospital for nursing students to practice their skills, as well as a mock operating room that will be used by future surgical technician majors when NVCC develops a program for them.

So many aspects of the building left me in a state of amazement; however, I have to say that the X-ray generator in the radiology tech



Physical Therapy Assistant Simulation Room lab was the most captivating. Overall, it is easy to see the hard work and detail that went into developing the new home for allied health and nursing. The new Founders Hall is a great addition to NVCC’s campus, and it will provide the perfect space for future generations of nursing and allied health students to master their skills.

Farewell to the Big Top

Alyssa Katz

After over 140 years, Ringling Bros. and Barnum Bailey Circus, aka the “Greatest Show on Earth,” is closing shop—for good. When the circus opened, Ulysses S. Grant was President. In addition, Barnum and Bailey was the first to be a moving circus show, transporting acts and equipment to different venues via railway car.

P.T. Barnum had started his spectacular over 140 years ago; in 1881, he met James Bailey, also involved in circus entertainment. One of their biggest, best acts was Jumbo, billed as “The World’s Largest Elephant.” The Ringling Bros. were Barnum and Bailey’s competition, and it wasn’t until 1919, after Barnum’s death, that both circuses merged. For a time, Barnum was actually Mayor of Bridgeport. The city served as winter headquarters for the travelling circus for years, and was home to many performances as well, enthralling audiences with death-defying stunts, fearlessness, and exotic animals.

Current owner, Kenneth Feld stated this circus has survived many wars, and plenty of change. However, within the last few decades, movies, internet, and video games have taken away from the dream-like performances of Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey.

On their main website, Feld states the circus will close in May of this year. With declining ticket sales, high operating costs, and the loss of their beloved elephants, it was time to make the difficult decision to cease production. One of the biggest contributors to the end of this circus may have been animal rights activists, who sued over claims of abuse, focusing on elephants in particular. Activists sought to put an end to performances by the animals, which led to lawsuits and protests.

Elephants have always been a symbol of the circus, and the show hasn’t seemed the same since these majestic creatures were retired last year. The elephants were transported to a conservatory in Florida, which is where circus headquarters are stationed. Unfortunately, with elephants missing from the show, ticket sales declined even further.

With this American tradition ending, audiences have one final opportunity to see the circus in action before it closes forever. With two shows, “Circus Xtreme” and “Out of This World,” currently touring, there is still time to purchase tickets to see the show that has captivated audiences for over a century, and will always be known as the “Greatest Show on Earth.”

alumni SHOWCASE

Terry Laslo

Owner, Wingcat Web Design, LLC
Instructor, NVCC and WCSU

At 42, I registered for the first time at Naugatuck Valley Community College. Starting as a ‘non-traditional’ student in 2001, I took two classes to “try on” going to school. It was a hard start when the World Trade Center was hit on September 11th. In ENG101, one class assignment was to keep a diary. I still have it and can be brought to tears reading the entries, reliving those first weeks. By the end of that semester, I was hooked

Vision and Heart

and continued taking Gen Ed classes without a specific degree in mind. That is, until I took Intro to Digital Arts as an elective. It changed my life—I decided on a Digital Arts major. Upon graduation in 2004, I continued with school, attending Western Connecticut State University, earning a BA in Graphic Design in 2007. Today, 16 years after that first semester at NVCC, I’m one project away from earning an MA in Information Design at Central Connecticut State University. I’ve come full circle, teaching graphics and digital arts at both NVCC and WCSU, as well as running my own web, graphics, and marketing business, Wingcat Web Design. While I never intended to teach graphic design or digital arts, my NVCC Intro to Graphic Design instructor, Steve Parlato, recommended me to teach Intro to Graphic Design at NVCC. With no teaching experience, I was scared! Now, after 9 years in the classroom at NVCC and 6 at WCSU, where I teach Art (Web, Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign), it is one thing I find the most joy in. I love being in the classroom, learning from my students every day. Also, because technology changes so quickly—skills in my field are said to be outdated within 5 years—teaching keeps me up-to-date. Most of all, I love when students light up, discovering a talent they didn’t know they had. I started Wingcat Web Design, LLC in 2003 with a focus on creating websites. It’s since grown to include creating graphics, social media,

marketing, and email for individuals, artists, businesses, and non-profits. I love working with them to help get their message out. I also volunteer for organizations close to my heart, like the Newtown Parent Connection which helps parents and family members cope when a child is using and/or abusing drugs and alcohol. I connected with them while completing the final project towards my NVCC digital arts degree. I created their logo and website in 2003, and have revamped the site a couple times, most recently in 2016. Another favorite volunteer experience involved reopening the Hawleyville Post Office, my local post office for years. When notified it was closing, I joined a committee formed to save it. I contributed by setting up a website, creating petitions, graphics for events, and communicating with those on our mailing list. Another project where my digital arts skills made a difference was helping stop a waste transfer station from operating on our local aquifer. I’m very lucky to have a supportive husband, Jack, and son, Mark. Both were a huge help when I decided to go to school. I couldn’t have done it without their encouragement when I was tired or overwhelmed. I often share a favorite Eleanor Roosevelt quote with students: “Do one thing every day that scares you.” For me, that was attending school when I was 20 years older than most of my classmates. I am so thankful NVCC was there—a local college that was affordable, with an innovative program, and great, dedicated teachers to get me started.

Leadership is Elementary

Christopher Gordon



Courtesy of SGA

Friends, collegiates, countrymen, lend me your eyes. On Tuesday January 10, NVCC hosted a leadership event for local elementary schools. A few brave students, myself included, took on the challenge of overseeing games and helping guide future leaders in playing them.

The games were geared for communication without speaking. As many students who stayed awake in psych-oriented classes know, 97% of communication is non-verbal, but this was no easy task. It was further complicated by certain rules over which the big students (your college classmates) disagreed. There was also an impassioned plea from one elementary student to change a rule herself; she was dogged in her insistence that particular rule was useless and the game would be more fun without it. In the end she was not successful in her arguments, but she definitely rose to the occasion as a student leader by not simply giving in to a rule she deemed unfit. This is the sort of spirit that gives rise to our best leaders; with a bit more training and experience that young woman could one day rule the world.

Events such as this one are not new to NVCC; in fact, they're elementary. There was

once an event at a community college named Mattatuck, with a similar leadership focus. Students were given speeches and asked to perform challenges designed to promote leadership qualities. One activity included at both events was blindfolding one student while a second 10-year-old led him around. If you've never tried this task, I recommend it. It's both fun and educational; you really learn what it means to lead properly.

You may ask why I'm focusing on two events as if they're somehow linked, two events separated by over twenty years at different colleges. First, NVCC used to be Mattatuck way back when. Second, this college volunteer was once an elementary student. Yes, I was blindfolded and led around by a ten-year-old maniac who cared only for winning. We were young, so I hold no real grudge over his behavior. The point I'm making is these sorts of events have a lasting impact.

I will always remember how it felt not being able to see where I was going while being castigated for incompetence because my leader (who could see the whole time) wasn't giving proper directions.

Hopefully, the young woman who stood her ground will remember her moment as well, and never give up the strength to fight for what she believes, even if she doesn't win the argument. Leadership is having the ability to empathize with your followers, to understand what they need, and



Courtesy of SGA

to ascertain how to get what you need from them. There might be some people who are natural born leaders, but the skills needed for leadership also require time to practice. You, too, can become the next George Washington or Margaret Thatcher. Don't stop because of one failed attempt; learn from it and practice for next time.

FACES IN THE CROWD

Live on the Page

Alyssa Katz

In the beginning, going to NVCC seemed like the more sensible choice—financially, and because I didn't totally know what I wanted to do at the time. I've been going to NVCC for four years now, and will be graduating this spring. Originally, coming to NVCC fresh from high school, I was interested in becoming a radiologist. But once I learned the responsibilities of the job, I found that the medical field is just not for me. And so I was back at square one.

For as long as I can remember I've been writing. Diary entries, dream journals, and tons of short stories. The stories were more of a "he said, she said" banter, but my imagination certainly ran wild, and I enjoyed doing it, even if they were just for me and no one else. But as I got older, I wrote less and less, and even lost interest in reading books for a number of years from middle school through high school. I'd mostly spend my days watching TV and playing videogames (which I still do a fair amount of).

I always knew I was a good writer; proof of that was my consistent good grades on research papers. But my personal writing had been lacking. In English 101 with Kate Pelletier, I'd rewritten a story from creative writing my senior year in high school; a story I still think is one of the best things I've ever written. It let me revisit what had been most important to me... my love of writing. When Steve Parlato's Young Adult Fiction Class came along, it made me realize what I wanted to do; plus it got me back into reading books. And it only escalated from there.

Realizing that going into publishing was what I wanted to do, I figured it'd be a good opportunity to join *The Tamarack*. It worked



"For as long as I can remember I've been writing. Diary entries, dream journals, and tons of short stories"

better to my advantage that Professor Parlato had recently taken on the role of faculty advisor, and Chelsea Clow, editor at the time, was someone I knew from that same YA class. Being part of *The Tamarack* really immersed me in improving my writing skills, and also having a secure sense of community. Before joining the paper, I would just show up for classes, and go straight home. Not anymore.

Taking Parlato's Creative Writing class was just icing on the cake, since it brought me far outside my comfort zone—producing dark poetry and stories with no happy endings. That was new for me. And again, I'd written pieces that feel like some of the best work I've ever created. I also gathered more of an appreciation for poetry, even if I still don't understand it right away. Now, as copyeditor for *The Tamarack*, it's become clearer to me that I want to be an editor. Oh, and an author on the side. I will continue to write, always and forever.



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While winter is not my favorite season, I do love the serene feeling of fresh, falling snow. What I don't like about winter weather is traveling in it. Finding traction on icy New England roads can be a challenge, but if you're prepared and use your resources, you can continue to move forward and reach your destination. I always have a scraper, blanket and flashlight in my trunk, in case I get stranded. Since I don't have four-wheel drive, I also ensure I have a bag of sand to get me out of slippery spots. Sand may seem insignificant, but that grit can be very powerful when it comes to providing traction to keep you moving safely forward.

As we start the spring semester, being prepared and using resources can also help support your forward motion, allowing you to reach your educational destination. NVCC has many resources to help prepare you for the semester and provide assistance if you find yourself slipping into difficulties. The library, accessible seven days a week, provides not only a quiet place to study, but also a crew of fabulous librarians ready to assist with research.

The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) is also open and ready to serve seven days a week with tutoring in English, Math, Science, Computers, and Accounting. Along with a welcoming space for interactive study, the ACE is staffed with tutors dedicated to helping you pull through when you feel stuck. The Center for Academic Planning and Student Success (CAPSS) can be a valuable resource as well. Our advisors will help plan your education, ensuring you stay on track with the correct classes. We also provide guidance when you feel overwhelmed by life stressors.

When driving in winter, sand provides grit to build traction that keeps you steady and in contact with the road. In higher education, the idea of grit can be just as useful. Studies show that students with grit—the ability to persevere through setbacks and keep moving towards their goals—are more successful in school. So if you find yourself slipping or losing your balance, use your resources and grit, to dig deep, stay connected, and continue moving forward. This ability to persevere and keep your long-term goals in sight, without giving up, will serve you not only in school but also throughout the rest of your life.

Bonnie Goulet

Center For Teaching – Decisions, Decisions

Professor Kathy Taylor

Assistant Professor Kathy Taylor, of NVCC's Legal Studies Program, and a longtime CFT member, reminds students and faculty of the importance of everyday decisions.

Welcome back! By the way, it's less than 150 days until summer and less than 125 days until you take your last final of spring 2017.

What are you going to do between now and then? Between wearing snow boots and chila-laxin' in the sun? Certainly, you'll have papers to write, exams to take, study groups to attend, research to conduct, hours to work, places to go, Spring Break to enjoy, and projects to complete. Many of us have committed to resolutions, to changing something about ourselves, or simply trying something new. Research shows (and my own personal experience informs me) within six months, most people have given up on their New Year's resolutions. But I'm an eternal optimist, and that means 50% of people are still committed and working towards their goals. I want to be in the latter group; come May 2017, I want to have accomplished what I eagerly and enthusiastically set out to do in the beginning of the year.

Think about it. When the semester concludes, where do you want to be? Each day, between now and then, we all have an opportunity to get it right. Each day, we get to choose how we'll spend it, what will get our attention, and where we'll concentrate our efforts. Just as importantly, when we slip and mess up, tomorrow represents a new, fresh start. That's the exciting thing about a new year, and actually, each new day: we get a do-over. Make sure your semester is one where you're smiling at the end, patting yourself on the back for a job well done. Give it your all—prepare for class (and go to!) class, read your assignments, take advantage of your professors' office hours, ask for help, get involved by joining a student club. Take responsibility for each day and how you use it.

It's not necessarily going to be easy. There's no substitute for good ole-fashioned hard work. Believe me, people have searched long and wide for easy street (But enough about me)! Yet, this I know for sure—when you give it your ALL, and it ALL works out in your favor, you'll have tremendous satisfaction. No one will be able to wipe the smile off your face, as you relax in the shade and comfort provided by your hard work. Now, get going! You've got 125 days to make it happen!

Roots Deep

Nicole Hayes

According to the group, WE ACT for Environmental Justice “When it comes to beauty, there are no color lines. Every woman, in every culture, within any racial group, can agree that the desire to look and feel beautiful is universal amongst all women.” This desire is certainly present in Black women, who spend roughly \$7.5 billion annually on beauty products. While the quest for beauty may be natural, the Environmental Working Group, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, environmental research organization, states that one in twelve beauty and personal-care products marketed to Black women is hazardous.

This information was collected through an online cosmetic database created by Environmental Working Group (EWG Skin Deep). The organization compared the ingredients in 1,777 beauty and personal-care products to 60 toxicity and regulatory databases and scientific studies. EWG found over 75% of the products advertised to Black women contain potentially hazardous ingredients. Not only are these ingredients dangerous, there is a lack of healthier alternatives, as the Black cosmetics and hair market offers a limited number of products marketed as being natural.

Allergies, hormone disruption, developmental and reproductive damage, and even certain cancers are known effects linked to some ingredients marketed to Black women. On a scale with one meaning “limited exposure” and ten meaning the product contains the “most hazardous” ingredients, relaxers and texturizers have an average score of 8.1. Both styling techniques use ingredients that chemically alter the texture of one's hair.

In 2014, Black Women for Wellness (BWV) organized a focus group, Consumer Narratives, and conducted one-on-one interviews asking hair care professionals and consumers their thoughts on the right to know what is in consumer hair products. Janette Robinson Flint, executive director of Black Women for Wellness, stated, “Data are necessary for informed choice,

and serve as tools to improve our health and well-being, as well as guide policy.” One participant stated, “The power of knowledge is taken away when we don't know and are not told what is in our products.” As consumers began demanding the right to know what is in products they use, many became aware of the harmful ingredients, such as formaldehyde-releasing preservatives and parabens.

As a result, there has been a 40% drop in sales for many chemically-altering beauty products within the last eight years. Thus, more companies started providing natural lines, such as Shea Moisture. In fact, most of their products have scored very low on EWG's database for hazardous products. However, natural products still only make up about 35% of the market. Although “natural” products claim to have fewer toxic ingredients, studies conducted by EWG found high levels of a hormone-disrupting chemical, parabens, in the urine of Black Americans. This hormone is frequently used as a preservative in personal care products, pharmaceuticals, and food. Women's Voices for the Earth criticized the industry, saying, “This report makes clear the lack of safer alternatives for Black women. Demand for these products is increasing and the cosmetics industry needs to provide healthy beauty options for Black women.”

Federal standards governing the safety of personal care products have not been updated since the 1930s. As a result, many companies still use potentially hazardous ingredients, particularly in products marketed to Blacks, many of whom innocently place their health at risk. When BWV asked hair care professionals about known health issues pertaining to their line of work, one answered, “[After] 20 years in the industry, my friends don't have fingerprints... my friends can't go to the DMV and put their hand down and [get] fingerprints anymore.”

Though some companies are using safer ingredients in their products—such as Shea Moisture's natural line—these changes don't address the accountability of companies who knowingly continue to use hazardous ingredients. This progress also comes too late for those harmed after years of using products that put glamour ahead of customers' wellbeing.

FACES IN THE CROWD An Unexpected Path

Anna-Nicole Doucette

My name is Anna-Nicole, and I'm going to make my place in this world no matter what curveballs life throws my way. Born and raised in Waterbury, I have dreams to be a successful actress as well as gain my PhD in Dramatic Literature.

Currently in my second year at NVCC, I'm pursuing a dual degree in Theatre Arts and Liberal Arts and Sciences. In all honesty, NVCC wasn't my initial college destination. After graduating from Waterbury Arts Magnet School, I was set to attend Fairleigh Dickinson University's acting program. However, I realized FDU would not have been a wise financial investment even with the scholarships I'd received, so I withdrew. Before coming here, I dreaded the idea of attending NVCC. I'd fallen in love with FDU's program and worried I'd never fit into NVCC's theatre program. Luckily, I was mistaken.

The theatre department is full of warmth and support. When I first started, I was terrified of being alone, but the department made my transition smoother. I didn't just make friends, I found family. I was amazed at how involved everyone was in maintaining the department, and I quickly became just as involved. Currently, I'm Stage Society Secretary, acting leader of the Improv Troupe, and a consistent participant in department productions. Most recently, I played Fraulein Schneider in Cabaret, one of the best acting experiences of my life.

My experiences haven't been exclusive to theatre. For instance, I'm a work study student in the Financial Aid Office. This job allows me to interact with students as they begin their paths toward college success. Everyone has a goal, and with this job, I get to help them move forward. I'm also a member of Phi Theta



“Being a student at NVCC has made me realize something important: whether something is an opportunity or not depends on what you take from it.”

Kappa. This distinction has allowed me to apply for scholarships to further my education, as well as opened up invitations for me to further immerse myself in leadership roles. My most recent endeavor has been joining President's Circle. As a member, I serve as an ambassador for NVCC, along with helping make a difference in the future of the college. This has been a wonderful experience, and I'm excited to begin our leadership project, which will make a permanent and positive contribution to the college.

Being a student at NVCC has made me realize something important: whether something is an opportunity or not depends on what you take from it. Every instance in my academic career has been intertwined to bring me where I am today. Life is what you make of it, and I've turned my experience into a wonderland. NVCC has allowed me to thrive. I know after leaving, I'll be successful no matter what I do. That is a truly exciting thought.

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FICTION Feature



February Narrative

Jessica Ney

Note: This poetic dramatization, timely considering

February’s Valentine focus, explores how we sometimes hurt each other—and lose ourselves—in the name of love.

I remember how his voice used to tickle the skin on my neck when he whispered in my ear. I remember how I used to smile when we kissed, giddy with knowing I had his heart. And I remember hearing the twinkle of another girl’s laughter on the other end of the phone. How could I forget seeing a stranger’s legs peeking out of his bedsheets?

I had heard the horror stories before, but I never thought it could happen to me. I knew there were guys who would tell you they love you, who’d anything for you—until the condom breaks and you’ve skipped a period. They’re the ones who tell you how special you are, and seem to mean it, only because they’re comparing you to the other two girls on the side. They’re the guys who push, tug, hover and claim *She was asking for it*. The ones who pat you on the head and tell you, *It’s a good thing you’re pretty*.

Why would you ruin what we have? they demand, as if you were the one who spurred them to cheat. They point fingers, shirk the blame: *It’s your fault*; She changed her mind; She didn’t tell me no.

Giving in seems so simple.
He’ll turn around.
He said he’d change.
He’ll stop yelling; he’s not that bad.
Someone else has it worse.
Maybe I’m being unrealistic.
He said it was different with me.

Is this what dating has become? If we don’t ask for monogamy, we won’t get it? If we ask for respect, we get dumped? If we say no, we’re prudes? If we dress up, we’re asking for it? I don’t think I’m asking for too much.

Heart in my throat, I throw out his things. I take yoga classes, read a few books, go out with my friends. Suddenly, it’s not so hard to smile. Each day I grow stronger, I become a little bit more of myself. My real Self. I’ll no longer change for a man, but find someone who appreciates me. It scares me to take that risk again.

They say heartbreak is necessary. Maybe that’s true. Abuse is not.

Valentine’s Boycott

Trevor Lilly

February is upon us, and love is in the air, on our minds, and in every retail store in America. Valentine’s Day is a widely celebrated holiday where couples show how they feel about each other; elementary school kids are forced to hand out candy to classmates they barely even know; and single people are left to feel miserable.

But the real question is, why is this such a big holiday? And where did it all start? The Ancient Romans used to celebrate a holiday called the Feast of Lupercalia from February 13th to 15th. It was basically a giant, drunken brothel, complete with whippings and animal sacrifices. Really puts you in the spirit of love, doesn’t it?

In an unrelated events, still in Ancient Rome, Emperor Claudius II executed two men, both named Valentine, on February 14th of different years. This was later honored by the Catholic Church as St. Valentine’s Day. Later in the 5th century, in an attempt to convert those who celebrated both holidays, Pope Gelasius I combined both the Feast of Lupercalia and St. Valentine’s Day to make a much more watered down, Christian holiday.

Today, retail stores have done what they do best: completely wiped out any trace of religion, and in its place, put commercial goods for the sole purpose of making bushels of cash. Every year, Hallmark sells \$4.25 billion in holiday cards alone, a large portion of which are Valentine’s Day cards.

And I’m not just telling you all this because I will once again be spending Valentine’s Day alone. Even when you’re in a relationship on Valentine’s Day, everything feels forced. Maybe you exchange flowers and chocolate; maybe you go to a nice restaurant (after battling crowds and facing inflated prices). But with it all comes this overpowering feeling you’re doing it because you’re supposed to, not because you want to.

That’s why I encourage you to join me in boycotting Valentine’s Day. No more Hallmark cards, no more cliché heart-shaped candies, no more commercialism. If you want to do something special for your significant other, don’t wait until Valentine’s Day. Do it right away. Be spontaneous! Show you love them in ways other than buying material goods.

Once Valentine’s Day is out of the way, retail stores are put back in their place, and couples can celebrate each other instead of material possessions. We can also focus on the more important holidays, like February 15th, 50%-off Chocolate Day.

Virtual Reality: A New Dawn?

Mark Kacyrat

Imagine being transported to another place while physically staying where you actually are. This is the basis of “virtual reality” or VR. As a novel concept with huge potential implications, the dream of mainstream VR went bust in the ‘90s. Sidelined by the rise of the Internet, VR technology persisted in science and the military. A new window of opportunity has appeared for VR to go mainstream. In 2014 Facebook bought VR firm, Oculus, for two billion dollars. Other high-tech companies—HTC, Samsung, Sony, Google—are promoting their own VR systems. Modern VR has applications for everything from entertainment, to science, education, and social interaction. While greatly advanced and more accessible, VR is still possibly hamstrung by a chief issue. Do people want to be removed from the real world, to an artificial one?

The artificial worlds experienced in virtual reality usually involve 3D computer graphics. A VR headset fits the user, covering his or her eyes. This visually separates the user from the space being physically occupied. According to Johnathan Strickland of “How Stuff Works,” imagery viewed through the headset appears life-sized. 3D audio gives sound effects a sense of direction and proximity. Modern VR systems may also respond to and track motions of the users’ head, eyes, and other bodily movements. Handheld controllers allowing users to interact with objects in the virtual world further augment the experience. Fusion of interactivity and immersion results in a sensation called “telepresence,” which Johnathan Steuer defines as “the extent to which one feels present in the mediated environment, rather than the immediate physical environment.”

UK-based Virtual Reality Society says there are endless VR applications. The organization identifies medicine as one of the biggest VR beneficiaries through development of surgery simulation. As a training aid, it enables surgeons to perform operations on “virtual patients.” As a diagnostic tool, VR can provide a more detailed view of the human body than X-rays or scans. Aviation is another popular VR application. An aircraft designer can test prototypes using 3D computer models in a flight simulator, bypassing the cost and time needed to create multiple versions of a physical prototype.

Education is another area where VR has huge potential. VR can augment traditional

methods by allowing educators to take students on a virtual “magic school bus.” In science, VR can be used to explore inner workings of cells, perhaps going deeper into molecules and atoms that create them. History teachers could transport students to battlefields of the past, to observe the horrors proving the phrase “war is hell.” Though virtual battles allegedly occupy the realm of “fun and games,” the military uses VR and other gaming technologies to train soldiers for actual combat.

2016 saw mass market launches of several flagship VR systems, with gaming emphasized. Most notable is Oculus Rift, starting at \$599. Its primary competition is HTC’s Vive, starting at \$799. A cheaper alternative is Sony’s PlayStation VR (PSVR), starting at \$399. These prices show a big barrier to VR popularity. Along with expensive headsets and pricey hardware, Oculus Rift and HTC Vive require high-end PCs to provide the promised experience. This runs contrary to the affordability and accessibility of PC gaming over the last decade. While PSVR requires a PlayStation 4 console (\$299, baseline model), flagship VR systems are prohibitively expensive. Therefore, these devices logically should appeal to more tech-savvy, deep-pocketed consumers. Smartphones can provide a sample of what VR offers for less. Smartphone VR devices include Samsung VR at \$99 and the barebones Google Cardboard at just \$15.

This leads to the primary challenge to VR’s mainstream viability. Per John Walker from “Rock, Paper, Shotgun,” when you play a game, immersion is automatic, and the player’s imagination takes care of the rest. VR removes the role of imagination. While this can initially be a bonus, once unpleasant physiological phenomena—eyestrain, motion sickness, exhaustion from wearing VR headsets—are felt, VR can lose its appeal. Couple this with expense and lack of compelling software, and mainstream viability seems remote. Plus, high-profile game developers won’t create VR games without an audience to justify expenditures. These problems could simply represent technological growing pains. Mathew Schnipper of “The Verge” is more upbeat. “VR at its best shouldn’t replace real life, just modify it, giving us access to so much just out of reach.” Schnipper adds, “If you can dream it, VR can make it. It’s a medium for progress, not the progress itself.”

Revolutionary Rhythms

The 60s, Man

Part Two: British Invasion

Alyssa Katz



As mentioned in my December column, the Sixties was a grand decade of music from not just the American home front, but also a new wave from the British

Isle. The British talent were taking England by storm, but it wasn’t until the mid-60s that a tidal wave of rebellious anthems swept its way onto American soil.

When the Beatles arrived in New York City on February 7th, 1964, they were welcomed with adoring admiration and tons of screaming fans. Through their appearances and record-breaking box office sales, the term Beatlemania was more than just a craze. Already having three number one hits prior to their American arrival, the Beatles from then on had a mob of fans following them wherever they went. In April that same year, they occupied several slots on the top 100 list, and even held every spot in the top five. Unfortunately, the unbelievable fame was what ultimately led to the band breaking up in 1970. But they still remain at number one on various music top 100 lists as the best artists of all time.

Unlike the Beatles, with their boyish charm, the Rolling Stones were the complete opposites. Their music was edgy and angry, which honed

in to the rage over the Vietnam War. The Stones remain one of the most influential bands of all time, as well as one of the most popular bands associated with the British Invasion.

“(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction” remains one of those war cries that invited rebellion and chants demanding peace, love, and happiness. Another war-inspired song connected with the British Invasion was none other than the Beatles’ “Revolution,” though its 1968 release was technically a year after the British Invasion ended.

The British Invasion sparked in 1964, and had died down around 1967. But the most explosive years were in the very beginning; between ‘64 and ‘65, other British artists emerged on America’s radar. The Who, the Animals, and the Yardbirds were among the most popular. The Yardbirds’ Jimmy Page would later be part of the Led Zeppelin phenomenon.

Though the Invasion had ended in 1968, British artists had found a new home—and fervent fan base—in the States. The Who was just one British act to appear at Woodstock in 1969. The set they played began in the early morning on the second day, then ended just as the sun was rising.

The British Invasion remains a nostalgic hysteria for people who rave about it to this day. The Invasion makes it clear that both American and British bands alike paved the way with revolutionary rhythms, branding many renowned artists, and forever engraving their names in legendary stone.

What is the Touhou Project?

Bradley Edwards

When I write about literature or discuss my upbringing in it, I’ll often speak of the Touhou Project, but not have the opportunity to really explain what it is. Since the name doesn’t immediately give anything away, I’d like to take this opportunity to point out how artistic and literary expression flow from this rather niche, anime-esque setting, and inform people on the basics of what it really is.

The Touhou Project is, at its core, a series of “danmaku”, or bullet hell, style games. Not in the sense of Call of Duty, however. It might be better to think of Galaga but turned up to eleven. Danmaku essentially translates to “bullet curtain”. In these games, you play as one of a usually limited selection of—stay with me here—flying girls who shoot magical, non-lethal bullets at other flying girls. It is also set in feudal Japan, except there are a ton of inner intricacies to how the setting itself works as it does, which aren’t explored to great length in any of the games.

One can easily observe how it sounds “anime-esque” from just that simple summary alone. However, this is mostly from the community around the game, which has three to four very distinct branches. The most petite branch is probably the writers, who write fan-fiction based on the setting; this is something

quite enjoyable because it is very dynamic. There are artists, who usually do nothing but produce anime-esque art for the game. Then, there are the musicians, who very much appreciate the game designer’s musical scores and relentlessly make remixes, vocal covers, and such. The fourth category might be considered non-committal people who just follow related memes.

The games offer little except for basic plots and characterizations; the art itself is passable, but the music and gameplay are superb. The canon, first-party games are also all produced by one individual, who goes by the alias ZUN. Yet, the game’s setting has an entire wiki dedicated to it, which may be googled and searched. Also, despite it being very ‘anime,’ you won’t find lewd material unless you actually put in the effort to look for it.

Getting into reading and writing Touhou fiction seems like—and is—a project, but I cannot say I have any regrets delving into it, myself. The dynamic nature and flexibility of the setting allow for a variety of liberties to be taken when making stories. Interpretations and constructions of characters often, while vaguely similar, can vary extremely. The Touhou Project’s most valuable qualities are its flexibility and familiarity among participants. It makes for a very cozy community of sorts.

Thank You All



A World of Thanks

Christopher Gordon

Last November was of vital importance to many Americans. The result of the most controversial and contested election in US history has left many people stunned, and more than a little afraid. One NVCC student has stated, half-jokingly, she is now considering bleaching her skin. Another student has talked about being confronted for being an immigrant. This student was born in Puerto Rico, a territory of these United States whose citizenship status is NATURAL.

Students of all colors, backgrounds, and cultures, though, have at least one safe haven in this political mess in which we find ourselves. They can and should feel safe right here within the walls of Naugatuck Valley Community College. As I hope you saw on the cover of December's issue, professors, faculty, staff, and administrators have publicly declared their intention to continue to give everyone who comes here the best education possible, regardless of where they might happen to have been born. And to that I say an emphatic thank you.

Why does it matter where a person was born? They are here now, contributing to our society's enrichment, and we need to promote that, not threaten to ship their bright potential to another country. If we embrace students from all around the globe, when these students graduate they'll be willing to work with us, to strengthen America and the world in the process.

From a purely selfish viewpoint it can also be said we are poaching the world's best and brightest. They are coming to us for education, sharing their skills, even if it is for a few short years. Perhaps they will one day return to their native countries instilled with our values, ready to share them with others there. And there's no doubt that our country is culturally and intellectually enriched by their presence.

Education is supremely important to all persons, in all societies. Understanding what is happening around us, we can make the best decisions, for ourselves and to make society better. Without the viewpoints of students from elsewhere, we might not know how best to work with other nations. The perspective of students of all colors is essential to create a society that offers its best not just to some, but to all. Protecting this fundamental need for as much education for as many people as possible is a goal I wholeheartedly stand behind.

I'm aware not all who come here share my idealistic dreams, but to the educators who have pledged to make education of supreme importance regardless of birthplace...you are the ones who keep this dream alive, and I must say THANK YOU ALL!

Dangerous Behavior

Christopher Gordon

Recently someone on campus defaced a club flyer with a very intolerant statement. Worse, it was directed at people who simply want the freedom to express themselves, without hatred or judgement. Hidden from view, and beyond the reach of retribution, someone determined what he or she feels is more important than anyone expressing a different opinion. While the words themselves may not immediately be classed as hate speech, the intent, as seen in countless incidences before, elevates them to the realm of threat, or even terroristic activity.

Years ago, not as long as people might want to believe, it wasn't merely a grammatically atrocious message scrawled on an unassuming club flyer. People were dragged into public places, tortured and worse; the lucky ones were merely killed. Playing devil's advocate, I assume you didn't mean to overtly threaten "liberal morons", but take note, you have. The anonymous message you left for all to see amounts to a threat.

We can't categorize what you scrawled in obvious anger as anything other than an attack. It's happened too many times with tragic endings to assume it is anything less. You may not know what you've started. You clearly don't grasp the horrors endured by the segment of the population you've taunted, individuals who were targeted in the same manner, along with the Jews, in Germany before WWII. It started quietly then, too, with messages left anonymously on innocent people's doorsteps. Over 11 million lives were then silenced. What you've done in a moment of anger, against people who just want to be accepted as they are, is a warning sign. Just not the one you intended. You should be deeply ashamed that, instead of realizing people must be free to live their truth, you imagine it's your right to intimidate them back into the closet.

Who cares how many genders there are? 2, 4, 104, how does that matter AT ALL? If you identify as male or female, good for you. If these traditional gender labels just don't apply to someone else, why do you care? How does it affect you? Why does it bother you so much when others express themselves? More importantly, why do you feel the need to use a tactic that's ONLY led to violence and atrocities? If you choose to live a hetero-centric life, fine. But don't do it by lashing out at others.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said "The mind, once stretched by a new idea, never returns to its original dimensions." Our culture has millions of great new ideas that have irrevocably stretched minds the world over. If you can't personally accept them, at least refrain from going on the attack.

“The doorstep to the temple of wisdom is a knowledge of our own ignorance”

- Benjamin Franklin

Words of Empowerment

Special from the Women's Center

The Women's Center is now calling for volunteers to participate in our NVCC production of *The Vagina Monologues*. We need readers for the performance, alongside people to participate in the direction and crew, as well as to help with publicity for the show. Students, faculty, and staff—and all genders—are welcome to participate!

The first production of *The Vagina Monologues* was in 1998, and the play sparked a global movement. As the title suggests, the work is a radical series of monologues addressing a range of issues related to vaginas: sex, pleasure, pain, violence, love and war, etc.

Eve Ensler created *The Vagina Monologues*, and continues to share the work with the public

to raise awareness about women's lived realities. *The Vagina Monologues* is the foundation for V-Day, the global movement to end violence against women and girls. V-Day, celebrated on Valentine's Day, is an effort to honor the possibilities of peace, and to challenge the violence that still exists against women and girls around the world.

Performances are Thursday, Feb. 23 @3pm and Saturday, Feb. 25 @ 8pm (location and times to be finalized). Proceeds will be donated to Safe Haven of Waterbury. Please contact Prof. Karla Ekquist-Lechner kekquist-lechner@nv.edu to learn how to get involved. And if you would like to learn more about *The Vagina Monologues*, go to <http://www.evensler.org/plays/the-vagina-monologues/>. For more information about V-Day, go to <http://www.vday.org/>.

London Calling!

The Tamarack's Senior Staff Writer, Nicole Hayes, took a timeout from her constant studies over winter break. Hayes also took on the role of "Senior Staff Traveler," spending time on both the island of Aruba and in London, England.

While the warm breezes of the southern Caribbean were appealing, Nicole felt most at



House of Parliament and Big Ben, London's iconic clock. Courtesy of Nicole Hayes



British Museum's Gebelein Man, over 5500 years old with artifacts dating around 3500 BC. Courtesy of Nicole Hayes



Hayes calls in an urgent dispatch from a classic London phone booth. Courtesy of Yessenia Ortega

home on the British Isle, whose residents she praised for their warmth and inclusiveness. Here, Hayes shares some pictures from her London travels. Cheers!



Giant Ferris wheel, the London Eye was unfortunately closed for routine yearly maintenance. Courtesy of Nicole Hayes

BOOKSTORE NEWS

from George D. Yonan Memorial Bookstore @ NVCC



Follett offers **Rent-A-Text**, as one of our course materials choices.



FHEG bookstores offer new, used, digital, and rental titles in-store and online to respond to customer requests to reduce textbook pricing, while driving sales, increasing market share, and staying ahead of the competition. **Savings, Flexibility, and Convenience** represent the value that Rent-A-Text brings to our customers.

SAVINGS

- Provides substantial savings off the new book price

FLEXIBILITY

- Pay rental fee with any acceptable tender (cash, check, credit, debit, gift cards, or financial aid)
- Use financial aid to pay the rental fee
- Highlight and take notes
- Convert to purchase with no penalty

CONVENIENCE

- Rent in-store or online via your online storefront
- In-store pickup available for online orders
- Free shipping for online orders with in-store pickup
- Check-in at the store or initiate the check-in process online, if rented online as a registered user

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Visit the bookstore for emblematic clothing, supplies, snacks, electronics, giftware and much more!

That's What She Said



Jessica Ney

Relationships 101

We've all been there, bothered by that one thing a friend or significant other does that makes us uncomfortable, or insecure, or frustrated. Maybe you want to take a step back; you like this person, but you don't like the direction you're moving in. But you just don't know how to initiate a change without making it awkward, or ruining the good parts. Here are some steps to redefine borders in any and all relationships.

1) Figure Out What You Want: Take time to think about your emotions, and what specifically is making you feel uncomfortable or unhappy. Carefully formulate your thoughts, so you'll know exactly how to approach the person. Maybe your friend puts you down, but they're "just kidding" so it's okay, but you're tired of laughing it off when it hurts your feelings. Tell them so. This leads to the next step.

2) Talk to the Person: This will be the hardest part. It will feel like a lot is on the line, but remember, if this person really cares about you and your relationship, they will hear you out. If they don't, then they probably don't deserve to be in your life anyway. Sit your friend/partner down, explain that you need to talk, and say the things you've already laid out in your head. Make sure to keep the conversation balanced and open. Allow the other person to ask questions once you're finished, and avoid sentences that feel accusatory. Instead of a "You need to stop doing..." statement, try an "I feel this way..." approach.

3) Trust It's Going to Work: Your friend or partner will need time to think and adjust. He or she may need to do some processing if this is a big issue, or work on changing a habit, if it's a smaller one. Give the person time or space if it's requested; and respect that, especially because they will be adjusting for the benefit of you both.

These tactics can be used with anyone. That includes new relationships and long-term ones. The most important piece is to respect and love yourself enough to recognize there's an issue and be brave enough to tackle it. These steps can be applied to almost anything, growing pains in friendships, obstacles in relationships, and physical boundaries as well. Take charge of your life, your body, and your happiness. You should be surrounded by people who treat you with the respect you deserve.

"Free with a Fee" Games

Bradley Edwards

A common practice for online games is the premise that the game is free, but you may pay additional money to make in-game purchases for cosmetics or faster progression. This is nothing new to the medium and is pretty much exclusive to online games and mobile games, the latter of which is rather blatantly more dependent on revenue from micro-transactions.

This brings up some interesting ethical questions about how this affects gaming culture. On one hand, developers typically make what seems to be absurdly low profits from games, selling something that may have taken years to produce for twenty to sixty dollars. On the other hand, this is with the expectation they ultimately will sell in bulk. Micro-transactions for games presented for free may seem like a fair trade-off allowing gamers to enjoy a free game while offering the option to pay to those who wish to give back to the developer. However, the real debate is often how micro-transactions are presented.

More often than not, progression in an MMO (massive multiplayer online) game can be rather stunted by the amount of time-wasting content and tedious formatting. Such games can often objectively be seen more as money-makers or as repetitive, non-intensive tasks for easily entertained bored consumers. Some games limit things like inventory space, or space for rather critical aspects of one's inventory behind a paywall. By the time one figures out they'll need these things, they'll have already become invested. This is an attempt to make one feel obligated to shell out a few quick dollars to get the progression moving. Often, there are ways to get around these paywalls, but they are long, tedious, and require a commitment better spent elsewhere. The primary concern is these actions come off as dishonest attempts to directly grapple money from players, giving them a choice: time or money.

The next question is whether or not this works. The answer is *sometimes*. Craftier, more engaged players will undoubtedly put in time and effort to work around whatever economic situation is going on, if the creators allow an economy to bloom from their premium currency setup. At the same time, that's time-intensive, even if it does get them a little farther, if not just as far, as one who simply spends a few hundred hours grinding out what thirty dollars might get them. Also, if you take the quick route, it's like you spent thirty bucks on a game to begin with, except you run the risk of hitting another paywall. Why wouldn't one just buy a thirty dollar game, then?

Can America Survive Trump?

Richard J. Bosco

The simple answer is yes; we can and will survive this president. Will it be easy? No, it will take hard work. America is a great country; we've survived many crises—a Civil War, Jim Crow, two World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, Watergate, and 9/11, to name a few—in our short history as a nation.

We've been fortunate to have had many great presidents, including Washington, Lincoln, both Roosevelts, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Obama, to guide us in good times and bad. We've also had our share of very poor presidents. Historians have rated Johnson (Andrew), Pierce, Harding, Fillmore, Hoover, Nixon, and G.W. Bush as some of the worst. I have a strong suspicion Donald J. Trump will be added to the list of worst-ever US presidents.

After being sworn in January 20, 2017, Donald J. Trump will be 45th President of the United States of America. As I write this op-ed, on January 16, 2017, Martin Luther King Day, Trump has been attacking via Twitter, one of our last living civil rights icons of the 1960s, Congressman John Lewis. Why would Donald Trump want to denigrate a Freedom Rider, a man who marched with MLK, who nearly lost his life fighting for freedom and voting rights, an American icon?

Like Nixon, Trump is very thin-skinned, and Congressman Lewis voiced a negative personal opinion of Trump and his prospective presidency, announcing he would not attend Trump's inauguration because he feels Trump is not a legitimate president. Lewis said this mainly due to his view of the controversy surrounding Russia's hacking of our electoral process.

Unfortunately, we cannot tell exactly what impact Russia's hacking had on our election, but it does appear Russian hacking and Julian Assange's WikiLeaks campaign of misinformation and outright lies did have an impact, swaying voters away from Secretary Clinton. We'll probably never be able to quantify the electoral impact. It is for this reason, and Trump's continued "bromance" with Vladimir Putin, that Congressman Lewis calls Trump an illegitimate president. Regardless if his assessment of Trump's impending presidency is right or wrong, Lewis has a right to his opinion.

President-elect Trump just doesn't seem to understand some of America's most basic and fundamental rights, such as how all Americans, John Lewis included, have a right to free speech and a free, independent press. Trump demonstrated his lack of belief in a free press throughout his campaign and at his first and only press

conference since becoming President-elect.

Other factors influenced the 2016 presidential campaign, including F.B.I Director James Comey's decision, 11 days before the election, to send House Republicans a letter saying he was reopening the investigation of Hillary Clinton's emails. Then, just two days before the election, he released a statement saying nothing was found. Comey did this despite a long-standing F.B.I. policy to never comment on an ongoing investigation. This is another affront to our electoral process the impact of which cannot be adequately quantified.

But I digress. I started out saying, yes, America can withstand a Trump presidency. But it will take hard work, and we need to start now. We need to organize, to speak out loud and clear when this new president and his henchmen try to trample our rights. We American citizens and voters need to set the agenda, not Donald J. Trump. You may wonder what that means.

It means getting involved. If you're not registered to vote, you must register. If you're registered and picked a political party, participate in your party organization. We must build a coalition of citizens who want a free America, an America where we can all feel safe. Where we all—not just the rich and powerful—share in the American dream. We must all become patriots, not just Democrats or Republicans, but patriots, country first, party second.

If we're to be successful, we must participate in government. The struggle for a truly free and democratic America must continue all across our nation. We can't wait for President Trump to trample us. We need to organize, register, and shout out loud! Midterm elections in 2018 are our chance to make America a progressive, free, country where all are equal, where all have opportunity to move up, to be educated, to live a secure, happy life.

If we see abuse, bigotry, or racism, we must stand up to stop it. Each of us must fight for education, opportunity, jobs, and equality for all. All Americans must work diligently to finally overcome the lasting scars of slavery and Jim Crow and to combat the continued oppression of any American, regardless of color, sexual orientation, gender identity, faith, ability, or immigrant status. People who live in America have rights! We must fight for those sacred rights our ancestors sacrificed and even died to preserve.

Young people, and yeah, all you old hippies like me, I'm counting on you! Executives, factory workers, service workers, educators, health and human service workers, police officers, firefighters, moms, dads, brothers, sisters, it's up to us all. Don't let America down.

Developer Disconnect

Bradley Edwards

There have always been complaints from gamers concerning their favorite games—how they let certain design philosophies slip, or make decisions that misunderstand their audience. In some instances, creators can't really be blamed. They essentially do what they feel like doing and pray it works. Other times, it's the fault of the parent company taking control, making strictly strategic decisions with little regard to artistic design, evidenced by many triple-A titles.

Some developers and companies act in spite of the community; for example, *PAYDAY 2*'s development team, seemingly knowing their infamous skin market update would go poorly, slipped it in right after a community event. The backlash was enormous. They had to undo some changes, and it was later stated it was the fault of the producers, not their own.

A seemingly obvious remedy to this situation would be that companies assist communication between fans and developers. This is not the ideology of most companies, however, so the communication burden falls upon developers. The reason this is not an ideal situation is some developers aren't as connected to their audience, and some are restricted by language barriers with what, at times, is a large demographic of their audience.

When it comes down to it,

miscommunication—or complete lack of communication—occurs because companies often make little communicative effort. Opinions are not concrete numbers in many cases, or the way they translate information to the developer is too limited for the developer to be of use in making good decisions.

Even so, companies' major desire is to make money, even if they seemingly don't get how feedback between developers and consumers might be better optimized. In this way, the continuation of properties and genres of games among large companies depends entirely upon sales figures, which is why Duke Nukem Forever was likely the final nail in the coffin for old Duke, even if the style of the property was totally okay. The developers didn't understand what consumers wanted. None were able to look at the older game from a consumer's viewpoint, and in the end, sales figures were bad. To companies, this means parody FPS is a terrible idea; Duke Nukem is fated to be a dead property, and everything those games did was wrong. If we continue like that, we won't make money, end of story!

Companies these days are very focused solely on increasing profits, and not on creating innovative products people might not want outside of what has proven in the past to generate profit. There should be a way to circumvent this ideology, for the benefit of common consumers.

Celebrate Black History Month!!!!



Open Mic

When: Wednesday, February 8 @4pm-6pm
Location: E440

Lest We Forget Traveling Slavery Museum

When: Wednesday, February 15 @10am-7:30pm
Location: Leever Atrium

Lest We Forget Documentary

When: Wednesday, February 15 @11:15am-12:30pm & 6pm-7:30pm
Location: Mainstage

Black History Trivia

When: Wednesday, February 22 @12:30pm-2pm
Location: L501

Fashion & Talent Show

When: Friday, February 24 @6pm-8pm
Location: Mainstage



Earth Matters

Where’s all the rain?



Alyssa Katz

NOTE: Due to editorial error, this column was omitted from the December 2016 issue. With drought conditions still serious in CT and nationwide, the piece remains relevant.

It’s not raining, it’s not pouring, and, instead of snoring, we should all wake up and wonder, *Where the heck’s the rain?* With the current drought, many states have urged residents to limit water usage. The driest US area would have to be Southern California, in “exceptional drought,” the highest designation on the US Drought Monitor scale. California has many drought issues, which lead to frequent forest fires. According to the Drought Monitor, Connecticut is in severe and extreme drought, and water usage restrictions have been in place.

During times of drought, vegetation tends to die off due to lack of nutrients for plants to thrive. Lack of rainfall also dries out streams and lakes, including reservoirs, which supply cities with most of their water. In CT’s urban areas, water is supplied to residents by the city; rural residents often utilize wells for water.

Wells rely on an aquifer, essentially an underground pool that feeds through the well to the faucet when you turn on the water. If there’s less water, the aquifer has to work harder to pump it. And in the long term, it depletes the underground pool, which can cause land to sink. This is called land subsidence, and happens when the aquifer remains depleted for an extended period. As a result, a large sum of money is needed to have a new well dug in order to find a replacement water source. Hopefully, after having a couple winter months and snowfalls, the drought has subsided, or at least lessened a great deal. Until it does, and for future reference, here are some tips to conserve water.

Turn off the water while brushing your teeth or shaving. A family of four could save up to 200 gallons of water per week by not letting water run while doing so. Also, showers are preferred, since they use less water than filling a bathtub. Taking shorter showers will also reduce the amount of water used. If you use a dishwasher, only wash full loads of dishes; same goes with washing machines, only wash full loads of laundry. In addition, if you’ve got a leaky faucet, get it fixed! All those drops of water add up, which in the long run contributes to the diminished water supply.

These are just a few ways to conserve. With drought conditions so serious—and climate extremes becoming the norm—preserving the water we have is critical. What happens if we turn our faucet and...nothing? We all need to control our water usage before it gets to that point. And let’s hope tomorrow is that “some other day” when rain, rain comes again.

To check out the U.S. Drought Monitor, follow the link: <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Home.aspx>

What Obamacare Means to Me

Chelsea Clow

I don’t know if many people are concerned with the fate of their healthcare plan. The whole idea of insurance is essentially to protect you should an awful accident or unexpected illness occur, putting you in need of medical care. But there are some—many, actually—who rely on and must fight for their health insurance. They are people whose overall well-being depends on it.

I grew up knowing very little about the importance and necessity of health insurance, even though I’m one of those people who seriously needed it. I live with cystic fibrosis, a genetically-inherited illness that effects my breathing. I require several medications, special equipment, and routine doctor visits to stay healthy. One of my medications costs \$3,000 a month without insurance coverage. My breathing test that is mandated, repeated frequently, and performed by Yale New Haven Hospital costs \$750 without the help of insurance. And I am one of the lucky CF patients who does not require a feeding tube, overnight hospital stays, or long-term hospital care. I can only imagine what those life-sustaining necessities cost.

So, I’m sure you get my point—health insurance is vital to me. Due to the laws in place, I was able to remain on my parents’ health insurance until I turned 27. But then I was on my own. And this is the interesting part—I am a non-traditional college student. And I work a part time job. Therefore, I do not get health insurance through my employer. I am able to have healthcare appropriate to all my needs due to Obamacare. And yes, the Affordable Care Act is exactly that: affordable. With my part time job title and yearly income, I’m able to receive financial assistance for my monthly premium payments.

Some argue there shouldn’t be government assistance in regard to health insurance,

but while Obamacare may not be perfect, thanks to it, I can pursue my dream of working as a Physical Therapist Assistant by going back to school to attain my education. Without Obamacare, I could not afford to attend college to achieve this new career. Instead, I would likely have to find some sort of job offering health insurance—and not just any health insurance, but insurance covering emergency visits, hospital stays, the highest tier medications, breathing tests, frequent specialist visits, bone scans, chest x-rays, glucose tolerance tests, and routine bloodwork.

With the current healthcare laws in place, I’m able to work a part time job, pursue my education, and work towards a career that will sustain me and my loved ones, allowing me to follow the dream I’ve had for so long. I’m able to do this without spending an exorbitant amount of money each month on healthcare premiums.

So you see, I can’t understand the interest in appealing Obamacare. This law allows people like me the opportunity to afford their healthcare; it allows others who need basic coverage the chance to have that at a very reasonable rate. It even allows those who think they would never need health insurance the chance to have it for less than ever before. Due to my medical history, I kind of can’t conceive of life without health insurance. Wouldn’t everyone want to have a basic plan that would protect them in case of emergency? People like me have never had a choice.

I encourage all who rely on affordable health insurance to take action now. I intend to speak with my local legislators on the importance of this current healthcare system, and I encourage you all to get involved in any way you can.

Consider This

Christopher Gordon

With a commander-in-chief who cares little for common sense, thinks personal attacks via Twitter are more important than learning how to perform his new duties, and is unwilling to fully remove himself from the private sector, we have come to yet a new crisis that will, of course, wind up being fuel for angry “presidential” tweets. I won’t keep you in suspense too long, or you might go mad fretting over the 1,001 things I just might be referencing. I’m referring to Jefferson “Jeff” Sessions’ nomination as Attorney General of these United States.

Thirty years ago, Coretta Scott King, widow of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., opposed this very same man being appointed Federal District Court Judge. In 1986, Sen. Sessions was a U.S. Attorney when he brought forth a voter fraud case against several prominent southern Black leaders. This was seen as a tactic to silence Black votes, as the “fraud” the civil leaders were accused of was the same tactic used by white voters: absentee ballot voting. No white men or women were prosecuted during this time.

Absentee voting is a legal right. A voter who is unable to reach his or her designated voting station on election day is legally entitled to vote by mail. This comes in handy for, say...our servicemen and women, risking their lives to protect our right to vote. Elderly people who have difficulty traveling are also frequent users of this method. In fact, since its implementation, voter turnout has increased by significant margins with minimal cases of abuse.

In 1986, King’s widow wrote, “Mr. Sessions has used the awesome powers of his office in

a shabby attempt to intimidate and frighten elderly black voters. For this reprehensible conduct, he should not be rewarded with a federal judgeship.” The attempted manipulation of Black absentee votes was the reason the Alabama Senator was denied a position as a federal judge.

Thirty years is a long time, and as a psychology student, I understand people can and do change over time. But such change can only be assessed through actions. A staunch conservative, Sessions has fought against immigration reform and is in favor of restricting even further legal immigration. He was even opposed to the Senate halting the use of torture during the Iraq War in 2005. He is, however, a supporter of increasing benefits for veterans and their families.

There is much more to learn about Senator Jeff Sessions, and you may find my personal views on him irrelevant. So I encourage you to do your own research, as I have, and familiarize yourself with a man our new president deems leadership material. From what I’ve learned, I don’t consider Senator Jeff Sessions a man I would vote for, and though I am just one voter, I feel confident with Coretta Scott King’s assessment that Sessions “lacks the temperament, fairness and judgment” to hold one of our nation’s most important offices.

To read Coretta Scott King’s full letter, go here: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2017/01/10/read-the-letter-coretta-scott-king-wrote-opposing-sessions-1986-federal-nomination/?utm_term=.5623c4c19f07

RECENTLY READ

Wheels of Life, by Anodea Judith

Wheels of Life is an informative text on the yogic philosophy concept of the chakras. Chakras are essentially energies within the body that regulate and help connect mind, body, and spirit. The book goes in depth with detail about each of the seven chakras, and how they relate to our everyday functions. In addition, there are a number of exercises and yoga poses that can be done in order to help regulate/open these chakras. Each chapter also starts and ends with a meditation to clear the mind and invite good energies.

The first chakra, the Root Chakra, acts as the foundation for our entire systems. The concept is to remain grounded in order to feel a sense of stability and independence—to have a grip on reality and not be lost in a fantasy world.

The Sacral Chakra focuses on sexuality and pleasure. Our emotions are also very connected with this chakra. As Sigmund Freud states in the Pleasure Principle: we don’t like pain, so we gravitate towards pleasure.

The Solar Plexus focuses on one’s inner power and self-esteem. If we don’t love ourselves, we can develop a sense of being self-critical—perhaps being withdrawn or angry. Judith writes, “The third chakra is power of life, vitality, and connection. NOT the coldness of control and domination.” We all have power within us, and if we love ourselves, we are able to grow.

The Heart Chakra is the center of the chakra system, and the idea behind this is not just about love, but also having compassion, connection, and understanding. Judith explains an interesting concept behind this, as she gives an example of being overly attached to someone as like cutting off their air supply. She says being too attached to someone prohibits us from letting go and giving them space to breathe.

The Throat Chakra focuses on communication. The book states that vibrations are evident in communication, and we may respond to a person’s tone of voice rather than really hearing what’s being said.

The Third Eye Chakra, also known as the sixth sense, focuses on intuition and awareness. This speaks to perception, and how we view things because of color, shape, and association.

Lastly, the Crown Chakra deals with consciousness. It’s amazing how our minds can instantly go from reality to fantasy. Meditation is a good way to open this chakra because it clears the mind of so-called “clutter” that fogs up our lives.

The chakras are one of many topics covered in Professor Kate Pelletier’s Philosophy of Yoga (HUMS130) class. As someone who didn’t even know yogic philosophy was a thing, and never did yoga in my life, I found the class very engaging and informative. The books used in class also provided lots of interesting concepts and examples that really made me think about myself and life in general. If you find these concepts inviting, and are a spiritual person, consider this class. With Kate’s guidance, it can indeed be enjoyable and rewarding.

Alyssa Katz

Readers Respond

Please see our website, <http://www.nv.edu/Student-Life/The-Tamarack>.

Don’t Miss!

- SGA Meetings** – Every Weds. 4:00 - 5:00 PM L501. **All are welcome! Starting February 1st!**
- Campus Conversation Series** - CAPSS - Weds. Feb. 1st 12:45 - 2:30 PM L501
- Safe Haven Visit** - Thurs. Feb 2nd 2:00 - 4:00 PM Tech Hall Atrium,

- Feb. 8th, Feb. 14th, Feb. 16th & Feb. 28th 2:00 - 4:00 PM, S5WW
- Feb. 9th & Feb 23rd 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM S5WW
- FAFSA Workshop** - Mon. Feb. 6th & Feb 27th 12:00 - 1:00 PM E533E
- Thurs. Feb 16th 5:00 – 7:00 PM E533E
- Sat. Feb 25th 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM T511

- CJCPO Workshop** - Tues. Feb. 7th 12:45 - 2:00 PM L501
- Campus Conversation - Financial Aid Workshop** - Thurs. Feb. 9th 12:45 - 1:45 PM L501
- SGA - Valentine’s Day Party** - Tues. Feb. 14th 11:30 AM - 2:30 PM Cafe West

- BSU Documentary** - Weds. Feb. 15th 11:15 AM – 12:30 PM & 6:00 - 7:30 PM Main Stage
- SGA Campus Conversation Series - Safe Haven** – Weds. Feb. 15th 12:00 - 1:45 PM L501
- BSU Fashion/Talent Show** - Fri. Feb. 24th 6:00 - 8:00 PM Main Stage

Tamarack Edit Meetings

Fridays, 11:30 - 12:30, S519 ALL WELCOME!!



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Catherine Young '17
Psychology



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