

The Tamarack

Our college. Our news. Our voice.

Naugatuck Valley Community College

February 1, 2020

Waterbury, Connecticut

Vol. 64, Iss. 5

One Small Act

Kathleen Chesto



If you examine aerial pictures of Waterbury, you will be amazed at the amount of wooded land dotting the city. What the photos will not reveal, what can only be seen on a closer walk through those woods, is the large number of tents and makeshift huts, hidden under trees and bridges. These are Waterbury's hidden, experiencing homelessness, just beyond view.

Unable or unwilling to live in the shelters, they seek refuge in empty factories and the woods. Rick Povilaitis is director of an organization called the Brian Gibbons Homeless Outreach. Gibbons, its founder, wanted to reach out to those not in shelters, without having to wade through government red tape. He founded a non-profit to accept donations and use the money to help directly, often spending it on necessities: tents, propane heaters, bus

passes to get to work, socks, hats and gloves, food. When Gibbons died, Povilaitis continued the work.

The organization's mission is stated clearly on the Brian Gibbons Homelessness Outreach website: "We provide case management and support services to people living outside or those recently housed. Visits are made to campsites, factories, and abandoned buildings several times a week and even in the bitter cold and snowy days of the winter months. We provide food, warm clothing, hygiene products, camping equipment, and most importantly, HOPE."

This particular group of homeless are often young people who've been thrown out of their homes for multiple reasons, often drug addiction. These were not necessarily troubled

youth; many were good students in happy homes who became addicted to opioids after sports injuries. Many of their parents supported them as long as they could. Homeless Outreach judges neither the young person nor the family. Brian, and now Rick, would seek first to develop a relationship, providing simple necessities, then try to help them get back on their feet.

Rick shared their stories, changing names for privacy. "Tom," living in an abandoned factory filled with asbestos, was HIV-positive; with no meds, he was using drugs and scavenging for salvage. His first need was food, then help negotiating the red tape to get required medication. Most of those experiencing homelessness are single, but one couple Rick found needed a tent. The woman was pregnant, so Outreach provided a bus pass for her to get to prenatal care, eventually arranging her stay with a family until she gave birth. "Mark" a working carpenter, got splinters in his eye. He needed surgery, help managing workman's compensation and the healthcare system, and a clean, safe place to recover. Homeless Outreach has an apartment for such emergencies and housed him for several weeks.

"John" grew up in Atlanta, living with a grandfather. On the gentleman's death, he returned to CT and was living in an abandoned car in his grandmother's yard. When she sold her house and moved to New York for a job, John went to the woods. Homeless Outreach found him there, gave him a tent, a heater, helped him find a job at Target, gave him bus passes for work and McDonald's gift cards, both for food and access to restrooms. Because only paying customers are allowed to use McDonald's restrooms in Waterbury, a gift card can mean not only food, but the opportunity to make oneself presentable for a job. Someone from Outreach checked up on

him periodically, offering friendship and support. John saved his money, bought a ticket back to Atlanta, and eventually let Rick know he'd gotten an insurance job and now had the opportunity and studio access to fulfill a life-long dream of recording music.

Many of Waterbury's homeless do manage to hold down jobs—in spite of the obstacles—getting their lives and finances in order, and getting back on their feet. But many do not. Homeless Outreach continues to help, one person at a time. Rick begins by providing necessities and a listening ear. Only after a trust relationship has been established is any attempt made to help the person sort out life, contact support agencies, find an income source, and, eventually, secure housing. As a retired social worker, Rick occasionally will have social work students fulfill internships with him; he also has a few, infrequent volunteers. For the most part, he works alone, not by choice, but because there are so few people with the time, the freedom, and the awareness, to help.

If you would like to be of assistance, the agency is always in need of "goody bags" with a ski hat, toothbrush and paste, razors, soap, warm gloves, McDonald's gift cards etc. Donations can be brought to the Tamarack office, S519, and we'll make sure they get to Homeless Outreach. You can also check out www.briangibbonshomelessoutreach.com.

It's easy to become overwhelmed by the magnitude of the homelessness problem. Many may feel we're not in a position to make much of a difference on a global level. But Homeless Outreach shows how one man, with the simple desire to make things a little better, was able to change the lives of a few people, and make life more livable for many others. It is possible for each of us to help, one act at a time, one person at a time.

Black Women Lead

Nicole Hayes

2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, "guaranteeing" women the right to vote. Though Black women's contributions to the Women's Suffrage Movement are not largely recognized in celebrations of the enactment of the 19th Amendment, Black women have long played a part in major policy changes and social movements. Black women are often drivers of lasting societal change because they advocate for civil and political rights for ALL Americans, even as Black men and White women have often prevented them from being at the forefront.

During the Women's Suffrage Movement, Black women believed in coalition building as an effective tool to bring about the most change. Black women were involved in partnerships and organizations that endorsed women's and men's right to vote, such as the American Equal Rights Association (AERA) founded by former abolitionists and women's rights activists. Others argued for interracial coalitions. For example, Nannie Helen Burroughs, a Black suffragist who founded her own school, The National Training School for Women and Girls (radical for its time because it taught women and girls non-domestic skills), argued for "the need for Black and white women to cooperate to achieve the right to vote." Burroughs' involvement in the suffrage movement was driven by her passion to educate Black women. She believed gaining the right to vote would better women's circumstances in a society that did not value them.

Although organizations with similar missions to AERA advocated for women and men's equal rights, many overlooked Black women's concerns and silenced them when they attempted to dismantle negative stereotypes, for example, that Black women were more promiscuous than others. Black women historically have supported Black men's causes while ignoring their own specific gender issues. Black women's concerns are unique because they must battle sexism and racism, "the double burden". One prominent Black suffragist, Anna Julia Cooper, once stated, "Only the BLACK WOMAN can say when and where I enter in the quiet undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence or special patronage; then and there the whole Negro race enters with me." Once Black women are free, then all Black people are free.

Tensions rose in the interracial and mixed-gender coalition organizations after passage of the 15th Amendment gave Black men the right to vote. Prominent white women's suffragists, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, discontinued their relationships with AERA and created their own organization, National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), out of anger, "insisting that Black men should not receive the vote before white women." White supremacist ideology remained at the core of the mainstream Women's Suffrage Movement to foster support from White Southerners. As a result, Black women often did not attend conventions and other events

hosted by the mainstream Women's Suffrage Movement, but instead were involved in much needed racial equity work inside African Methodist Episcopal (AME) churches. Black women used their intersectional identities to create more inclusive organizations.

Black women's activism did not stop after ratification of the 19th Amendment because forms of discrimination continued to evolve. Due to racist practices using fraud, intimidation, citizenship laws, and other disenfranchisement methods, Black, Indigenous, Latina, and Asian American women faced unnecessary barriers to casting their votes. Although the 19th Amendment states, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex," non-White women were not guaranteed the right to vote until passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Many Black women were involved in the Civil Rights Movement that eventually led to passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which guaranteed every American citizen could vote. Black women have failed to receive proper recognition for their contributions in American history because of biases held by those writing our histories.

In 2013, the 1965 Voting Rights Act was struck down by the Supreme Court, and negative effects of this decision can be witnessed in the rise of 21st-century voter suppression efforts—purging voters, new voter ID laws, insufficient voting places, elimination of early voting, and even refashioned poll taxes—that make it more difficult for marginalized people to actively exercise their right to vote. Black women continue to fight for voting rights,



Photo Courtesy of Yanker Poster Collection, Library of Congress

largely through grassroots movements. According to research conducted by AAPI Civic Engagement Fund, the large midterm turnout in 2018 was driven by women's grassroots activism; "Black women led the way with 84% mobilizing friends and family." This demonstrates that Black women are still doing necessary work, carrying on their legacy of activism to improve equality for all Americans.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



A New Attitude

Happy New Year, everyone! A warm welcome to any new students, and welcome back to those who are returning. Let's make this semester a good one, shall we? Sometimes the key to a good anything is having a good attitude towards it. If you start a day in a bad mood, you're going to end up focusing on all the bad things for the rest of the day. Here we are now, not only in the start of a new year, but the start of a new decade as well, so coming into it with a good attitude is key to making it a good one.

Over break, on one of my rare ventures onto Facebook, I found a video a former friend had reposted. In it, a guy parked inches away from the driver's side of a woman's car as a "lesson" to her for parking over the line. A lot of people might find that funny, I suppose, and there were several comments like "Serves her right," or "That'll teach 'em."

Personally, I was horrified. How does our society assess such pettiness and anger as commendable? I suppose it's been like that for hundreds of years, but that's no excuse. This anger and frustration cause a cycle that is doomed to repeat. Could that woman have done a better job parking? Of course, she could've, but does that automatically make her a bad person who needs punishment? No. It does not.

Of course, human nature often makes it hard to approach things with a positive perspective; something I've noticed is people always seem to view situations in the worst possible way and make attribution errors to no end. An attribution error, simply put, is when an assumption is made about something or someone without considering external influences.

An example would be assuming a driver is a bad person because they cut you off. But truth be told, they just may have not been paying attention, because: *they're human*. I've been in cars with people who have cut others off but didn't realize it until I said something. Obviously, this doesn't give people an excuse to do bad things, but you don't know what the other person is going through.

You just don't know, and you shouldn't assume they were doing it just because they're a jerk, because in the end that mindset could turn you into an even bigger jerk (Example: the man in the video). I mean, I bet there are a lot of people who have parked over the line and said, "Good enough." Do they all deserve to be blocked from getting in their cars because of it? If you say yes, then you've got some attitude work to do. Of course, we all do.

All I'm trying to say is we can do better. We're all going to make attribution errors from time to time because we're human. However, maybe by attempting to see past the assumptions we make about people we can make the future better for everyone—including ourselves.

Wishing you a positive semester!
Gwendydd Miller
Editor-in-Chief
tamarack@nv.edu

Tamarack
EDIT MEETINGS

Tuesdays 2:30 pm, S519
ALL WELCOME!!

Public Safety
Department

Routine Number, Ext. 58113.

Emergency Number Ext. 58112

The department is staffed:

24 hours per day • 365 days per year

New Charges

Mike Granville



Photo Courtesy of jdulos_CNN.com Wire

January 8th, CT media outlets revealed important developments in the case of Jennifer Farber Dulos, missing from her New Canaan home since May 24, 2019. Her mother, Gloria Farber, became concerned while watching her grandchildren after learning her daughter failed to show up at medical appointments, and could not be reached by cell phone. Farber Dulos' vehicle was found abandoned in New Canaan's Waveny Park later that day; police also found signs of struggle and significant bloodshed—as well as a cleanup attempt—in her garage. Eminent Forensic Scientist, Dr. Henry Lee, concluded the amount of blood observed at the residence would not have been survivable without immediate critical care.

At the time of her disappearance, Jennifer Farber Dulos was locked in contentious divorce and custody proceedings with her estranged husband, luxury home builder, Fotis Dulos. A couple resembling Dulos and his girlfriend/coworker, Michelle Troconis, were seen on surveillance video disposing of trash bags in various receptacles along Hartford's Albany Avenue shortly after Farber Dulos' disappearance. Items recovered from trash cans were found to contain her blood.

Farber Dulos' blood was also found on the seats of a vehicle borrowed from a coworker by Fotis Dulos the morning of May 24th. Dulos insisted the vehicle's owner swap the seats because of a coffee stain; days later Dulos took the vehicle to be detailed without the owner's knowledge or permission. The coworker eventually removed the seats, but instead of disposing of them, as Dulos demanded, gave them to authorities. Sharp police work via municipal and highway cameras placed the borrowed vehicle in a round trip from Fotis Dulos' Farmington home to New Canaan the morning of May 24, 2019—aligned with the time of the alleged abduction and murder.

Initial media coverage of Farber Dulos' disappearance was rife with theories from Fotis Dulos' Defense Attorney Norm Pattis, even drawing ire from popular *Gone, Girl* author Gillian Flynn, who demanded the plot device

from her work of fiction—in which a woman fakes her own death to exact revenge on her husband—not be used by Pattis to describe the tragic real-life disappearance of the New Canaan mother of five. In September, Superior Court Judge John Blawie issued a gag order in the case to tamp down broadcast of sensational theories that could interfere with securing an impartial jury and a fair trial.

Among revelations from new arrest warrants are stunning details of zip ties with traces of Farber Dulos' blood, and an axe recovered from Fotis Dulos' garage, as well as the surprise arrest of South Windsor attorney and Dulos confidante, Kent Mawhinney, who represented Dulos in civil trials. Mawhinney, himself charged with spousal rape and violating a protective order, was found in an apparent attempt to flee over state lines into Massachusetts to avoid arrest. As details emerged, evidence—including Dulos' repeated attempts to meet alone with Mawhinney's estranged wife days before Farber Dulos' disappearance—strongly suggests Mawhinney and Dulos had plotted to murder both wives. Charged with conspiracy to commit murder, Mawhinney's name appears on two lists of timelines compiled by Dulos and Troconis that investigators call the "Alibi Scripts".

The arrest warrant states Mawhinney, founder of East Granby's Windsor Rod and Gun Club, gained access to a restricted area in the month prior to Farber Dulos' disappearance. In June, two authorized members stumbled upon what seemed a makeshift grave: a dirt pit—covered with twigs and barbecue grates—containing two unopened bags of lime, traditionally used to facilitate the chemical breakdown of flesh. Following this, when Mawhinney's name surfaced in the media in connection to Farber Dulos' disappearance, the men returned to the pit. Finding it "expertly" covered up, the bags of lime no longer present, they reported their discovery to authorities.

At the writing of this article, the body of Jennifer Farber Dulos has not been found. Though unusual, it is not without precedent for a suspect to be convicted without recovery of a body. In 1986, Richard Crafts was found guilty of murdering his wife, Helle, in Newtown, despite disposing of her body using a wood chipper.

As of mid-January, Mawhinney remained jailed on \$2 million bond for conspiracy to commit murder. Fotis Dulos and Michelle Troconis posted bond January 8th. Dulos must continue to wear an ankle monitor. His next court date is slated for late February.

Social Justice Series Continues

Kathy Taylor and Nikki McGary

Starting in 2017, Professors Nikki McGary and Kathy Taylor came together and knew the timing was perfect to have courageous conversations around highly politically charged issues; hence the creation of the Social Justice Series (SJS). The SJS addresses the complexities of historically and systematically rooted inequalities linked to power and oppression. By providing a brave space for respectful dialogue, we raise awareness and cultivate critical thinking about issues that cause some to squirm and others to avoid. But not here and not us!

This year's theme, "The Stories We Tell," addresses the narratives about our individual and collective pasts. We know stories can be empowering, instructive, oppressive, or silenced. They also shape our perceptions, thoughts, and actions. Please join us as we facilitate respectful discussions about "The Stories We Tell," their impact, their purpose, and how they shape and inform our world. Make sure to mark your calendars (and share with students, classmates, friends, and colleagues!). All are welcome (including classes)!

The spring 2020 event schedule is as follows

MARCH: Wednesday 3/25 @ 12:45 PM in L501, the SJS joins the Center For Teaching (CFT) to host Robin McHaelen, Executive Director of **True Colors, Inc.**, for an LGBTQ+ awareness and skill-building training focused on intentionally creating an inclusive, safe, and welcoming college community. The stories we tell, and the words we use, make a difference (and the vocabulary is quickly evolving!). Students, educators, staff, and administrators all have a unique role in shaping our inclusive community. All are welcome. Pizza will be served.

APRIL: Thursday 4/23 @ 11:10 AM, in L501, join the SJS for "Framing the Narrative." Analyzing both written and video segments, we'll examine how various news outlets "frame" issues, shape narratives, and create impressions. More importantly, we'll discuss the impact on us, the issues we care about, and our world. All are welcome. Pizza will be served.

For information, email: ktaylor1@nv.edu or nmcgary@nv.edu.

SGA PRESIDENT



New Opportunities

Welcome back to a brand-new year and a fresh new semester! I hope everyone's first couple of weeks back have been great. I don't know about you, but I'll be making the most of this school year. I'm going to be studying hard and going to every event!

If you didn't get to join last year, you still have an opportunity to join the Student Government Association this year. The SGA is a great way to meet new people and make lots of new friends along the way. There are so many ways you can get involved with the SGA. You can join one of the 30 clubs on campus, or maybe get involved as a senator.

Don't see a club you like? You could always start a new one! All it takes is the names of ten interested students—and a faculty advisor—to begin the process. Come to the SGA office (S516) for more information, and we can help you get started.

The SGA is also a great way to get in touch with your community and give back. We have several regular activities planned that positively impact the Greater Waterbury area. For example, we're always looking for volunteers to help on Sundays, preparing and serving meals at St. Vincent De Paul Soup Kitchen. To get more information about the SGA, you can check out the school website, or stop by S516 in the Prism Lounge. Finally, SGA meetings are held weekly in room L501 on Wednesdays at 4:00 PM. So stop in, say hi, and who knows—maybe you'll make a difference on our campus.

If you have any questions, about the SGA or anything at all, feel free to email me at nv-sga-president@nvcc.commnet.edu or stop by S516. We're always happy to meet and help answer questions students in the SGA office!

Regards,

Tabitha Cruz, SGA President

Run (or Walk)
for a Cause

Prof. Christine Cocchiola



Photo Courtesy of Neustock Images

Next month, Naugatuck Valley Community College invites the community to join in making a difference as the College hosts the 3rd Annual NVCC Food Pantry 5K. The event will take place on campus on Sunday, March 29th, beginning at 10:00 AM.

This event begins and ends at Founders Hall. Participants can choose to walk or run 2.5 K (1.55 miles) or complete the loop twice for a full 5K! Proceeds from entry fees for the 5K—\$5.00 for students, and \$25.00 for non-students—will benefit NVCC's Food Pantry. Money raised will have a direct impact on student hunger, giving students an improved chance at academic success.

Walkers and runners are invited and there will be medals presented for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place finishers. Well-behaved pets on leashes are also welcome. With the success of the first two 5Ks, we look forward to year three, which is certain to be great. For more info—or to sign up—visit this link: <https://runsignup.com/Race/CT/Waterbury/NVCCFoodPantryFundRaisingRunWalk>. Further information is also available by contacting ccochiola@nv.edu.

The Tamarack

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EDITORIAL

Peace, Might, Impeachment

This fall I was privileged to take a course in non-violent and violent conflict resolution, exploring differences between how conflicts are started, how they're resolved, and the consequences of using either strategy. The major course focus was on two methods of peace: positive peace and negative peace. Both include an end to war and violence, but they are not the same.

Positive peace means everyone is free and has an equal voice in how the world will work. Negative peace entails one side using overwhelming force to keep opposing sides so weakened they cannot fight back without doing more harm to themselves. If this does not paint the picture for you, I'll be more blunt. The United States has the largest military in the world, larger than the next five nations combined, and over winter break, our impeached leader authorized a strike on an Iranian military leader.

Based on historical fact, using military force to create conditions of peace is *predominantly* more prone to backfiring tragically in most cases. Using peaceful diplomacy, non-violent conflict resolution, has the very best chance of success, while violent methods have a long, well-documented history of failure. This means Trump is using a known bad strategy to try to weasel out of trouble once again.

Sadly, this is a typical political strategy used by politicians seeking reelection. Unconcerned that their decisions risk destabilizing the entire world, they care only about appearing to be strong leaders in the moment. Trump is writing more bad checks (figuratively, as opposed to his literal bad business dealings) that we the people eventually will have to pay for. Since this is an opinion piece, I won't claim to speak for all the people. I'll let Congress and the Senate do that as impeachment proceedings continue against the current resident of the White House.

What does the military strike on Iran's Soleimani mean for our nation? It means we may have initiated another costly, ineffective war. Remember when the Twin Towers were attacked in 2001? We're still fighting two wars concerning that; no lasting peace was accomplished. Judging from almost two decades of war on two separate nations, our military's size and technological superiority doesn't faze our adversaries, yet we keep throwing money at problems, only making them worse. Worst of all are the lives damaged and lost to maintain a "peace strategy" known to have worse consequences than merely ignoring problems in the first place.

Trump backers claim he supports the troops, but that is objectively false. Military funding isn't spent to help wounded soldiers recover. Instead, it's used to kill people in new ways, giving adversaries who already hate U.S. leadership more reason to strike back. I created that last sentence carefully because, according to the Iranian people over the past few weeks, they do not hate the U.S. or its citizens, only Trump and people like him who think of peace merely as a means to claim more control and power for themselves.

Advocating for diplomatic solutions to create true peace and reallocating money spent on military hardware toward health and welfare are the best ways to support the troops. A confirmed liar and foolhardy bully, Trump is getting his long overdue comeuppance, though the impeachment articles do not address some of his most egregious behavior.

My wish: that his supporters will open their minds to new ideas, to see what a great country America could become, rather than remaining fixed on the blighted remains of an era long past that was not great, but deeply flawed by racism, sexism, and classism. Supporters of the MAGA slogan are fond of screaming, "If you don't love the country, go ahead and leave." I don't want anyone to leave the U.S. I want more people to be free to make it their permanent home. I want people everywhere to stop thinking only about themselves and their immediate fears and help create the future we all want, one of positive peace.

A Continent Ablaze

Imani Stewart



A dehydrated and injured koala receives treatment at Port Macquarie Koala Hospital in November 2019. Photo Courtesy of Saeed Khan, AFP via Getty Images

Just when it seemed the climate crisis couldn't get any worse, a whole continent catches fire. Beginning in early September, the Australia bush fires have emerged as a catastrophic threat to the land down under. Blamed on various sources, such as, human actions, bonfires, and arson, according to BBC News, "Much of the severe heat was accompanied by brisk winds across much of Australia, which exacerbates risk and spreads blazes."

The fires couldn't have come at a worse time, as Australia's summer months are here, and the lack of rain during this traditionally dry season certainly doesn't help. *National Geographic Magazine* states, "December to February is Australia's summer seasons"; this means the fires are expected to last for several months as the hot, dry weather continues.

While this may seem like a natural occurrence, most of the catastrophes we call "natural disasters" are made far worse due to climate change. A *USA Today* story explains it this way: "Human-caused climate change lengthens the fire season, decreases precipitation and increases temperature, fueling the blazes, according to the Australian Bureau of Meteorology. Last year was both the hottest and driest year ever measured in Australia, the bureau said. December was one of the top two hottest months on record for the

nation."

So far, more than 20 million acres have burned, and at least 28 people are dead. Entire towns have been forced to evacuate, and over 2,000 homes have been destroyed. The impact on Australia's wildlife has been especially devastating; with an estimated 1 billion animals killed, several species—including the iconic koala and kangaroo—could face a serious threat of extinction.

With the fires unlikely to stop any time soon, Australians have had little help from their leader. Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who rang in the New Year in Hawaii as the continent burned. As Australians continue to face tragedy, there are ways we can help. Donations can be made to redcross.org.au, donate.greenpeace.org, wildlifewarriors.org.au, and givit.org/disasters.



Portrait of Devastation: A lone kangaroo against a backdrop of flame. Photo Courtesy of Matthew Abbot, NYT

Scholarship Opportunities

Kathleen Chesto



Check your school email! There may be money lying in wait for you!

Many of you have been working feverishly over winter break to get college transfer applications finished before the new semester begins. With transfer comes the worry over how to finance this next step on your academic journey. Help is available and applying for it can be far less complicated than the college search and application process.

Thousands of dollars in scholarship money are available to graduates and transferring students of NVCC. The College offers President to President scholarships for students transferring to: Western Connecticut State University, Eastern Connecticut State University, Central Connecticut State University, the University of Connecticut, and the University of Hartford. The NVCC Foundation also offers numerous scholarships, many broad-based, some in specific areas of study, some to specific population groups.

Academic eligibility for these scholarships is determined in January, and students are normally notified through college email of opportunities. Since mass emails are not always reviewed properly, the Foundation Scholarships are also posted online. Binders with printed versions and scholarship requirements are also available in each of the following offices:

- Financial Aid
- CAPPs
- AH/Nursing Administrative Office F105
- Danbury Campus
- Student Services
- Development Office

Information and applications are also available at NV.edu.com/scholarships. The application deadline for Foundation Scholarships is Friday, February 21, 2020. The deadline for President to President Scholarships is Friday, February 28, 2020. President to President applications should be delivered to the Development Office, Kinney Hall Room 720.

In past years, scholarship money has been left on the table because no eligible students applied for the funds. Don't assume you couldn't possibly qualify, or that you don't have a chance at an award. Check them all out. A few hours of work could result in thousands in financial aid.

Women's Center

Call to Action!

Nicole Hayes



Every year, NVCC's Women's Center participates in the global movement to end violence against women and girls (including violence against transgender and gender-queer people) by presenting a production of *The Vagina Monologues (V-Day)*, written by Eve Ensler.

V-Day is an award-winning play that consists of short speeches, women's stories exploring consensual and nonconsensual sexual experiences. It covers topics ranging from sex work, to body image, genital mutilation, menstrual periods, and other topics relating to women.

In order to have a successful production and to encourage women's empowerment, the Center is actively looking for women to volunteer as actresses, stage managers, and in other crucial roles. Those interested should email nhayes@nvcc.commnet.edu or jpetitfrere@nvcc.commnet.edu.

V-Day will be held Wednesday, February 26th from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm in NVCC's Founders Hall Community Room. We hope to see you there!

Happenings @ Other Colleges

Anjelika Rodis



Western Connecticut State University

WCSU's Theatre Department will

present *Hand to God*, by playwright Robert Askins, February 28th, 8:00–10:00 pm, and February 29th 2:00–4:00 pm and 8:00–10:00 pm. Featuring cheeky puppet commentary, *Hand to God* explores a fictional, religiously devout community in Cyprus, Texas where the Fundamentalist Christian congregation has decided to engage teens in religious scripture through the use of puppets. Events go amiss when one man's puppet becomes possessed, claiming to be Satan himself, and begins teaching the children how sin fits as easily as a glove. The play will take place in the Studio Theatre of the Visual and Performing Arts Center, 43 Lake Ave. Extension in Danbury. Tickets are \$20 for general admission on Eventbrite, or can be purchased at the door (cash only).

For more information: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/hand-to-god-tickets-70833453767>



Eastern Connecticut State University

Throughout the month of February (and through March 12th), ECSU's art gallery will

feature *Creating Dangerously: 3 Generations of Haitian Artists*. The exhibit will include artwork that draws historical inspiration from the country's relationship to imperialism and its spiritual practices, which were often influenced by, and pay homage to, African tradition. In this way, the Haitian artwork exhibited here will explore how "reality and mythology are inextricably intertwined." The gallery will be open to the public from 12:00 am – 11:30 pm. Admission and parking is free, and the gallery is easily accessible. Student groups are encouraged to visit.

For more information contact Gallery Director Yulia Tikhonova at (860) 465-4625 or via email at tikhonovay@easternct.edu.



Post University

Post University Men's Hockey will

face the Ravens of Franklin Pierce University in a game to raise cerebral palsy awareness to be held in The Rinks Sports Center in Shelton on February 8th at 4:00 pm. The event is open to the public. The Sports Center, home to Post University's men's and women's hockey teams, is a state-of-the-art, 15-acre facility located in Shelton boasting the only double decker NHL ice arena in the world, featuring one rink stacked atop the other.



New York University

Taking Shape: Abstraction from the Arab World, 1950s–1980s is an art exhibit featuring various sculptures and paintings that follow the emergence and development of

abstract art in the Arab world. Ninety works are on display from various artists of the Arab diaspora. *Taking Shape* will be open until April 4th at the Grey Art Gallery at 100 Washington Square E, New York, NY 10003, with a \$5 suggested donation.

For information: <https://greyartgallery.nyu.edu/exhibition/taking-shape-arab-abstraction-1950s-1980s-barjeel-january-14-april-4-2020/>

Honoring Adjuncts

Transformative Bonds

Douglas Goodrich



Photo Courtesy of Douglas Goodrich

Trust and reciprocity of that trust are emulsifiers of the bonds tantamount to establishing a vibrant, responsive learning community. Fifty years ago, I was fortunate to join such a learning community at Mattatuck Community College (MCC), now known as Naugatuck Valley Community College. As a U.S. Navy veteran who'd served our country in the Vietnam War and been recently discharged, I was a reluctant scholar. From inception, my professors' expertise, integrity, and ability to bond with their students, especially with me, were readily apparent. My reluctance steadily dissipated as I became immersed in this learning community, eventually becoming the lifelong learner I am today. This transformative experience left a lasting impression on me; to this day it is at the heart of my pedagogy.

In our learning community trust is established when a teacher exhibits expertise by delivering pertinent and creative content, leveraging the latest technology and incorporating fair as well as dynamic assessments. These can only be accomplished through rigorous preparation and the willingness to evolve as one's students do. Combining preparation and planning with a responsive praxis cultivates a

new exemplar of integrity my students and colleagues can depend on. In a learning community, integrity is bountiful only if our syllabi are created and observed as a social contract designed to deliver new and better competencies in the classroom and in our lives. As an instructor, standing and delivering what I've promised is easier with the proper comportment: collegial and demanding—but never tiresome. In my experience, students may be wary or reluctant as I once was, but as I did, our students seize the opportunity to bond with instructors if the bonding process is a principled effluxion of sincerity and honesty in every class with every student.

Bonding with my students is how I maintain an atmosphere of trust. Throughout my career, this relationship has been integral to providing responsive solutions to students with varying degrees of ability. I've also engaged with veterans who might need to make adjustments as they integrate back into civilian life through personal conferences and referring them to a counselor or an academic dean to facilitate a remedy for their concerns. I recently attended an event at NVCC's Veterans Oasis and attempted to bring a program called the Theater of War to our learning community. A public health program created by Bryan Doerries, the Theatre of War strategically deploys the themes of ancient Greek tragedies to assist war veterans with their suffering and to spur healing from the emotional and psychological wounds of war with which I am so familiar. Ultimately, using different media to communicate with students enables me to listen to their concerns, opinions, and yes, their suggestions.

My teaching journey began in a learning community immersed in an atmosphere of trust. Fifty years ago, as a student, I experienced the expertise, integrity and bonding behavior emanated by my professors at MCC. As an instructor, I am thriving in our learning community, led by competent administrators and colleagues who continue to emanate that same philosophy of trust, so students can continue to thrive in our learning community at NVCC.

Center for Teaching

"One True Calling?"

Lou Lombard

Louis Lombard, Associate Professor of English, teaches at both the Waterbury and Danbury campuses. Co-coordinator of First Year Experience, he is a longtime CFT committee member.

There is a question, I believe, each one of us was asked when we were a child: What do you want to be when you grow up? Do you remember your answer? A doctor? A weather forecaster? A hairdresser? A teacher? Since that time, many have considered the answer. In childhood, the response usually brimmed with excitement as we lived in dreams and possibilities the future might hold. As adults, making that choice is often filled with a certain amount of fear and anxiety. This doesn't result from a lack of possible career choices, but from the overwhelming multitude of them.

In her TED Talk, "Why Some of Us Don't Have One True Calling," Emilie Wapnick suggests that, "While this question inspires kids to dream about what they could be, it does not inspire them to dream about *all* they could be." In other words, when children are asked, they can't answer with "20 different things." This made me realize the belief that we all were born with "one true calling" and charged to find it and fulfill it to the best of our abilities is a non-sensical one. This is an important message faculty and students can share—that it's not only okay if you don't have one true calling, but it can also be a great advantage.

At the same time, Wapnick acknowledges a lack of one true calling is likely to make life

a bit more difficult than if you did have one. At the very least, it will present different challenges, including the following: "1) guilt and shame, 2) the discomfort of being a beginner over and over, 3) the fear of not being the best and brightest, 4) the fear of being an impostor, and 5) having to listen to external critics." However, not everyone fits into the framework of a singular focus. Some may express interest in many different subjects and have several things they would like to do with their lives. Since this puts them out of the mainstream, they may feel their life lacks purpose. It doesn't. In fact, they fit into an exciting new category: the "multipotentialite".

A multipotentialite is one who enjoys several interests and creative pursuits. For those who relate to this group, being well-rounded, good at multiple things, every single thing, or mastering several things, they can spell success. It challenges those to choose and develop the depth of their own achievable goals, whether financial, social, or personal. They must avoid the traps of trying to be the best at everything and remind themselves what is most important. By not assuming the goals of others, they will learn to model themselves by their own standards and keep both success and failure in a healthy perspective. Your destiny need not reflect "one true calling". Empowering yourself with your potential will lead to a true sense of happiness.

Death by Broken Heart?

Kathleen Chesto

When an elderly woman dies days after the death of her longtime spouse, or a parent dies abruptly after the death of a child, people often say they died from a broken heart. Valentine's Day leads us to reflect on our love relationships, both past and present, the lasting ones, and those that "broke our hearts." But can that break really be fatal?

"Broken Heart Syndrome," a diagnosed medical reality, can, in rare circumstances, lead to death. However, it's not what most think of as "heart-breaking." It's not romantic disillusionment, not loneliness or sadness, perhaps not even grief that kills.

Takotsobuto cardiomyopathy or apical ballooning (the correct medical terms) is a temporary heart condition brought on by stress. It occurs when an emotionally shocking, stressful event triggers the release of a hormone firestorm (cortisol, adrenaline, dopamine), "stunning" the heart and shutting down arteries in one ventricle, causing it to swell abruptly. First diagnosed and named in 1990 by Japanese doctors, knowledge spread worldwide with radiology clearly depicting the swelling of one ventricle. The swollen heart's resemblance to a Japanese octopus trap gave the disease its name.

Patients experience severe chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness or fainting, and erratic heartbeat. Most, believing they're experiencing a heart attack, seek medical help. Once cardiovascular disease is ruled out, an echocardiogram or cardiac MRI can diagnose "stress heart attack." The hospitalized patient is given ACE inhibitors and diuretics to reduce swelling. If treated within hours, the heart is undamaged; the person usually recovers within a month. Pulmonary edema or arrhythmia sometimes occur, but death rarely happens if treated promptly. Since symptoms sometimes mimic a panic attack, persons at risk should always be checked in an ER.

Common risk factors include: age, over 61; gender, female; pre-existing neurological illnesses. Triggers are usually sudden, emotionally traumatic events: an unexpected death, a violent argument, an automobile accident. They can be happy events, too, like winning the lottery, or a surprise party. Doctors do not understand why these events cause the hormone firestorm or how hormones damage the heart, but one thing is clear: they all possess an element of shock.

Watching an elderly spouse die slowly will not induce takotsobuto; waking to find a healthy spouse dead beside you, could. A person in an ongoing toxic relationship isn't likely to experience takotsobuto from abuse; one in a warm, loving relationship whose partner suddenly becomes inexplicably enraged and violent, is at risk. So, yes, a person can die from a broken heart. But they won't have died from romantic disappointment, sadness or loneliness. It would be far more accurate to say they were "scared to death."

While most of us are aware of heart attack symptoms, a person experiencing takotsobuto is, by definition, in a state of shock, and not thinking clearly. It's time to educate the public on this issue, in the same manner as with stroke and the Heimlich maneuver. And it's crucial to be attentive to older friends, family members, or colleagues, who receive a serious shock and may be at risk. It's often within our power to prevent people from suffering permanent cardiac damage or death from takotsobuto.

For information, consult Medicalnewstoday.com or Broken Heart Syndrome 101: healthprep.com



CAPSS CORNER

Prep for the Journey

While I'd never consider winter my favorite season, I do love the serene feeling of fresh, falling snow. However, my admiration for snow does not extend to traveling in it. Finding traction on icy Connecticut roads can be challenging, but if you're prepared and use your resources, you can continue to move forward and successfully reach your destination. I always have an ice scraper, a blanket and a flashlight in my trunk, in case I get stranded. Since I don't have four-wheel drive, I also make sure 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 forward safely.

As spring semester begins, being prepared and using resources can also help support your academic momentum, allowing you to reach your educational destination. NVCC has many resources to help prepare for the semester and provide assistance if you're slipping into difficulties. The library, accessible seven days a week, provides not only quiet study space, but also a fabulous crew of librarians dedicated to assisting your research.

The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) is also ready to serve seven days a week with free 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 out of those academic tailspins. The Center for Academic Planning and Student Success (CAPSS) can be a valuable resource as well. Our advisors will help map out your educational path, ensuring you stay on track with the correct classes. We also provide guidance when you feel overwhelmed by life's stressors.

For winter driving, sand provides grit, building traction to keep you steady and in contact with the road. In higher education, emotional grit can be just as useful. Studies show that students with grit—the ability to persevere despite setbacks and continue moving towards their goals—are more successful in school. So, if you find yourself slipping or losing your way, tap into those resources and grit. Dig deep, stay connected, and continue moving forward. Persevering and keeping your long-term goals in sight, without giving up, will serve you not only in school. It will keep you on track throughout the rest of your life as well.

Regards,
Bonnie Goulet
Director of Student Development Services

New Beginnings

Tamarack Staff



Students and families listen to presenters in Café West. A sense of excitement filled the air Monday, January 13th, as NVCC's pre-semester Open House kicked off spring 2020 in style. New students and their families gathered in Café West for an engaging information session, featuring refreshments, giveaways, campus tours, and words of wisdom from President De Filippis, and other administrators, staff, and faculty.

Representatives from NVCC's Student Government Association were also on hand to share their insights with—and present raffle prizes to—new students. According to those in attendance, the biggest takeaways were to come to class prepared, to ask questions, and to recognize NVCC is truly a community made up of people invested in every student's success.

On the Field

NFL Wild Card Weekend

John Williams



It's been an exciting NFL season, and post-season is finally here. Congratulations to the twelve teams who competed for a chance at the Super Bowl title. The San Francisco 49ers, Green Bay Packers, New Orleans Saints, Philadelphia Eagles, Minnesota Vikings, and Seattle Seahawks represent the National Conference. The Baltimore Ravens, Kansas City Chiefs, New England Patriots, Houston Texans, Buffalo Bills and Tennessee Titans represent the American Conference. The league started the post-season with exciting Wild Card Round games.

A pair of NFC games on Saturday and two AFC games on Sunday were featured on Wild Card weekend. Josh Allen and the Buffalo Bills traveled to Houston to face the Deshaun Watson-led Texans at NRG stadium. The Texans were in the post-season for the fourth time in six seasons. Deshaun Watson looked to get his first playoff win in his third season. Watson came off a great 2019 regular season with 3,852 passing yards, 26 touchdowns and 12 interceptions. He looked to bounce back from his early round loss to the Indianapolis Colts last year. The Texans hoped to get a playoff boost from the return of three-time NFL defensive player of the year J.J. Watt, re-activated from the injured reserve list after suffering a torn pectoral muscle in late October.

The Bills, seeking their first playoff win since December 1995, were in the post-season for the second time in three seasons. They looked to lean on their third-ranked total defense to contain Watson and the Texans' offense. Second-year Buffalo quarterback Josh Allen improved this season as a dual-threat QB, with nine rushing touchdowns during the regular season. The Bills have taken strides in the last two years under head coach Sean McDermott.

The second game of the night featured the New England Patriots versus the

Tennessee Titans. The Patriots found themselves playing on Wild Card Weekend for the first time in a decade. In a stunner, the Titans shocked the Patriots, defeating them at Gillette Stadium.

On Sunday, the Vikings sailed to the Mercedes Superdome to battle the New Orleans Saints. These two teams will long be remembered for the iconic sequence that ended their playoff matchup two years ago, when Case Keenum threw a game-winning touchdown pass to Stefon Diggs in the closing seconds of their divisional-round matchup in a moment dubbed "The Minneapolis Miracle." Saints' quarterback Drew Brees had been on a tear in recent weeks, throwing 16 touchdowns and no interceptions over the past five games, including a 29 for 30 performance against the Colts on Dec. 16. The Vikings defense looked to limit All Pro receiver Michael Thomas and the New Orleans' offense. The Vikings wanted to control the clock with their Pro Bowl running back Dalvin Cook.

The weekend capped off with the Seahawks at Eagles. Both teams overcame significant injuries to limp into the post-season. Seattle looked to get a boost in their run game by signing their former starting running back Marshawn Lynch. The Eagles were unsure how available Zach Ertz would be with fractured ribs. The Seahawks entered the playoffs as a wild card, losers of three out of their last four games, including two at home. The Eagles, however, had gone 4-1, won a division title, and quarterback Carson Wentz hadn't thrown an interception since Week 13.

Super Bowl LIV, the 54th Super Bowl and 50th modern-era National Football League championship game, will decide the champion for the NFL's 100th season. After all the excitement, the game, scheduled for February 2, 2020, at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami, pits the 49ers against the Chiefs. Who's your favorite to win the Lombardi Trophy?

Face from the ACE

Familiar Face

Cait Martello



Hi! I'm Cait Martello, Science Tutor Captain in the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE). For the past decade, I've been a student and then an employee at NVCC.

I started taking one course per semester after a long career in retail and retail management. I originally had the idea that switching to a career in Allied Health would offer further growth and stability. While taking Anatomy & Physiology, a make-or-break course for Allied Health, I was encouraged to visit the ACE.

In the ACE, I found camaraderie with other students also trying to get into Allied Health programs. I found a network of people willing to share what they knew, so I could navigate the prerequisite process. I found a place where it seemed "everyone knew my name." I also found a place where I could study because I couldn't hear the laundry whisper, "Just one more load," or couldn't notice morning dishes sitting in the sink. At the ACE, I was just a student; my other responsibilities took a backseat.

The ACE has been a constant through many changes over the last decade, both for me personally and for the ACE itself. I began the X-ray Tech Program—and I failed out of the

X-ray Tech Program. People of the ACE were there to give me a much-needed hug and support as I figured out what was next. When I graduated from NVCC and decided to go to WCSU for a bachelor's degree in chemistry, ACE promoted me from Student Peer Tutor to Educational Assistant.

While I was at WCSU, the ACE staff and students were always curious to hear about my classes and research projects. The ACE changed Directors and grew to include Supplemental Instruction and the Pass Program. I became Tutor Captain for the Science Department while I went on to CCSU to earn a Master's degree in Biomolecular Sciences. Through all the twists and turns—and many, many students—the spirit of the ACE has always remained the same.

For me, the ACE is a magical place where students arrive uncertain and fearful. They want to succeed, but they're not sure of their abilities, or if they even know how to succeed. We reassure them that others, even ourselves, have felt what they're feeling and made it through to the other side victoriously. We listen, coach, nag, and model the skills and behaviors they need to be successful. Along the way, we laugh and learn. We set high expectations and give students every tool we can, so they can not only meet those expectations but exceed them.

Between the Bookends

News from the NVCC Library

By Jaime Hammond



Photo Courtesy of Max Raul Egusquiza

Jaime Hammond is the Director of Library Services.

You know that feeling when you just want to get something done, but you don't have what you need to do it? It's incredibly frustrating, right? Well, the Max R. Traurig Library staff thinks about this all the time, and we use student feedback to improve our services to help you as much as possible. Here are some things we have to help you:

- **TEXTBOOKS:** The library buys all the textbooks, and you can borrow them for four hours at a time. This is helpful if you don't have the money for your book, but it's also a lifesaver if you forget your book at home! All you have to do to borrow a textbook is visit the Check Out desk and leave an ID or keys. Textbooks can be used anywhere on campus.
- **LAPTOPS and CHROMEBOOKS:** The library has two different kinds of computers that you can borrow: Windows laptops and Chromebooks. (The difference is that Chromebooks only go on the internet, so if you have Access homework for CSA 105, you'll need a laptop.) Some can be taken home for a week, and others are for on-campus use for four hours at a time.
- **GRAPHING CALCULATORS:** You know those really expensive graphing calculators for math class? We've got them, and they go out for four hours at a time.
- **GUITARS AND DRUMS:** We don't want to offer only school supplies, we also want to enrich your life. Borrow a guitar or drum for a week!
- **SPORTS EQUIPMENT:** It's cold now, but it will be nice out soon. Borrow bocce, volleyball, and badminton equipment and challenge some friends to a match in the Faryniarz Quad, by Founders Hall!
- **UMBRELLA STROLLER:** If you have a little one with you on campus, we've got you covered! Borrow our umbrella stroller to corral a runner, or stop by for crayons or a children's book. There's even a small children's area on the 4th floor.
- **And new for spring 2020... HOTSPOTS!** This semester, we're rolling out a new item—WiFi hotspots! They will go out for a week and can be taken home. If you like them, let us know!

Is there something missing from this list? Let us know! You can talk to the librarians in person, email us at library@nv.edu, DM us on Instagram (we're @nvcclibrary), text us at (203) 951-8189, call us at (203) 575-8024, or chat with us on our website at nv.edu/library.

Have a great semester, and see you in the library!

Join

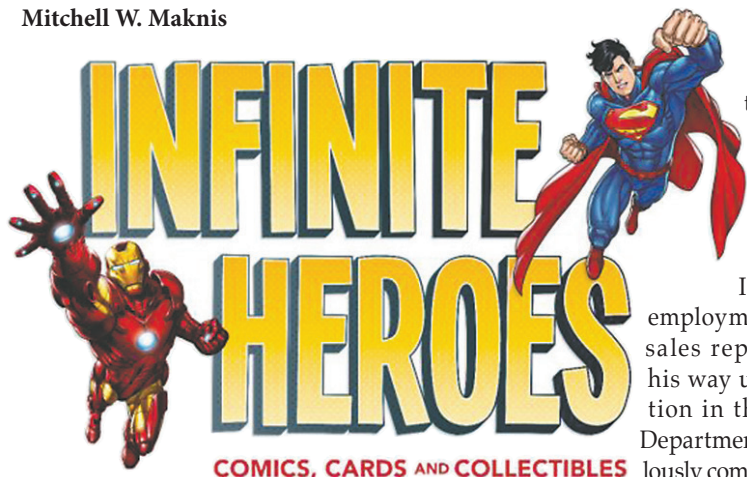
The Tamarack

We're looking for: photographers, cartoonists, illustrators, video producers, ad sales reps, bloggers, publicists, marketers, event planners, graphic designers, on-camera reporters, photo editors, video editors, sound specialists, writers, editors, visual artists, and much more!

tamarack@nv.edu

Paul Santos: Infinite Heroes

Mitchell W. Maknis



Courtesy Paul Santos

Throughout the digital age, preference for consumer formatting has fluctuated for books and other literary media. However, consumers of the comic industry, which has been around for over eighty years, are different. Paul Santos, proprietor of Connecticut's newest comic shop, Infinite Heroes, stated "ninety percent" of the comics community continues to purchase and collect physical copies of their favorite series. Having worked in the industry since 1997, Santos said, "While the medium is entertainment, there is a nostalgic feeling to its collectability that continues to drive the industry forward."

Santos has been an avid reader of comics since 1991, stating he was "practically living in the comic store" up the street from his Waterbury home. There, he became fond of the multitude of heroes within the DC Universe. Santos considers his time spent in that comic shop to be a major influence on his life; he decided to pursue an English degree at UCONN, intending to work in comics. During his time at the college, serendipity struck and, by utilizing his resources through UCONN's intern program, Santos obtained an internship at DC Comics in New York.

Upon graduating, Santos was disheartened to learn no paid positions were available at DC Comics. However, he was able to secure a position at Warner Brothers Television Syndication in New York, as a data integration clerk. This work gave Santos insight into the entertainment world, as well as the opportunity to rub elbows with iconic television personalities such as Ellen DeGeneres, Regis Philbin, and Tyra Banks.

After his two-year tenure at the station, Santos returned to his childhood comic shop, Legends of Superheroes, working as store manager.

In 2011, Santos gained employment at DC Comics as a sales representative, working his way up to an editorial position in the Collected Editions Department. Here, Santos meticulously compiled single issue comics in chronological order for a collected release. Santos said, "A lot of research [is] involved" to make sure everything's put together correctly. Depending on the book, it can be a very long and arduous process to ensure the ideal product is put on the market.

After a year compiling issues of contemporary properties into graphic novel formatting, Santos pitched the innovative concept of collecting the original *Golden Age Batman* series and restoring them for a modern release. While the studio was hesitant—expressing doubts regarding money and time—Santos was able to push his *Batman* project forward, spearheading the entire endeavor. The project's paved the way for other iconic DC characters, such as *Superman* and *Green Arrow*, to receive the same treatment under Santos's care. Working on two to three copies a week, Santos continued assembling collected editions such as the *Injustice* franchise. When DC Comics relocated to LA, everything changed. Modifications in the corporate climate and increased living expenses made it too difficult to stay at DC, compelling Santos to leave.

Returning to his roots, Infinite Heroes opened its doors in April 2019. Santos admits missing the creative aspects of his job at DC Comics, but he's been enjoying interacting with CT's comic enthusiasts. Whether it be monthly issues, graphic novels, or collectables, Santos feels "there is a comic for everyone," and he's more than willing to help his patrons find what they need. To keep up with the store's events and new releases, follow them on FB and IG @infiniteheroescomics and be sure to visit Infinite Heroes, 1098 Main Street, Watertown, CT 06795.

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RECENTLY READ

The Last Unicorn, by Peter S. Beagle



In the lilac wood, all alone, the very last unicorn lives. But, for a while she is unaware she is, in fact, the last. A group of hunters one day tell her she should stay in her woods and protect those who live there because there hasn't been a unicorn seen in ages. They also say to beware the red bull. This sparks her adventure into her world, one she knows of but doesn't know entirely, to learn if she truly is the last.

The Last Unicorn, a fantasy novel by Peter S. Beagle, was published in 1968. While it's rather old, it still holds the hearts of many fans. It even got an animated movie adaptation in 1982, directed by Arthur Rankin, Jr. and Jules Bass. Beagle worked on the screenplay.

But why has the simple fantasy story stayed so relevant? For me, it's the expansive world Beagle creates. There are settings, ideas and stories interwoven within the piece that make it feel this place has always existed. Yet it's magical enough to transport readers somewhere new while reading. Little details—assumed to be common knowledge of the characters—are shared, and you never get much more information; this helps the immersion.

It could also be the characters, each playing off the other. The protagonist, known only as the Unicorn, is regal and elegant, but her immortality causes her to look at the world as beneath her, creating an interesting perspective to take in this new information. To counteract this hoity look on the world, one of her companions is Schmendrick, a wizard who cannot control or understand his own magic. Close to a jester, he provides comedic ideas and looks. He is naive despite being older than he seems.

While these two represent different ways of magic within the world Beagle crafted, the other companion, Molly Grue, showcases reality. She fell in love with a bandit for the idea of adventure, and ended up being stuck with the fate of taking care of them. She wishes to escape, and upon meeting the Unicorn and Schmendrick, she leaves. Even the antagonist, King Lir, and his selfish desire for happiness—his willingness to do anything, including capture the world's beauty, to achieve it—feels unique.

Another appeal of the story is the chemistry between characters and how their life experiences play into the perception of certain events. They all feel real because of the subtle things they do, from Molly Grue crying when she sees the Unicorn, telling her she's "too late," to the magician Schmendrick apologizing every time his magic fails. It's even in the unnamed characters mistaking the Unicorn for a mare and her own reaction to people not seeing her for who she really is.

At the very end, these characters do not simply stop existing, like in most stories. Instead, Beagle offers possibility by ending the story with "[They] went away together, out of this story and into another."

Heather Ruskowski

Mystery Within Mystery

Jason Hesse

Taoism is perhaps not the first thing that comes to mind when mention is made of Eastern religion, but it is no less present in the western cultural consciousness than Hinduism or Buddhism. Almost anyone will recognize the traditional *taijitu*, or 'yin and yang' symbol associated with many Chinese philosophies and religions, including Taoism. It represents a state of absolute potential, of oneness before duality.

Taoism as a philosophy echoes the dualistic balance of the *taijitu*. Its most influential text, the *Tao Te Ching*, traditionally credited to 6th-century BC sage Laozi, emphasizes this aspect with its simultaneously poetic yet seemingly antithetical statements; it attempts to teach a way of living concerned with balance and peace of mind. In truth, it is difficult to describe the effect of reading the *Tao Te Ching*—it truly requires first-hand experience.

Among its various contradictory ideas is the concept of *wu wei*, literally translating as "inexertion" or "inaction." However, this is misleading if taken literally—a recurring thread within the *Tao Te Ching*. One of the versions I have translates it more precisely as "unattached action." It is not that *wu wei* is no action, but rather, action without intent. Psychologically speaking, it is divorcing oneself from one's ego, not letting assumption or expectation take control of behavior; as Yi-Ping Ong notes, "to act in a way that shows attachment to the action is to have a definite aim in mind" (Lao Tzu 165). This definite aim is exemplary of a desire to do something the "right" way, which is not in line with other fundamentals of Taoism.

The Tao is described not as God or gods, not as Heaven, but as the essence of all things, the "origin of heaven and earth," to which all things eventually return, ever continuous and inexhaustible. However, through the lens of desire, all material things—that is, all that exists in this physical world—are referred to as "myriad things" and "manifestations," separated from the mystery of the Tao by our division of what we either want or do not want.

This is the key to understanding *wu wei*, or action without attachment. It is not that any one thing or person in itself creates problems—we are all formed of the Tao. Instead, it is exercising one's will over things that becomes problematic; only by ridding oneself of desire can one achieve true harmony with the universe.

What follows is the first chapter of the *Tao Te Ching* (at <http://www.acmuller.net/condao/daodejing.html>, it is the same translation used in my physical copy). I highly recommend reading it all the way through, ideally multiple times, to grasp it in its entirety.

"The Way that can be followed is not the eternal Way.

The name that can be named is not the eternal name.

The nameless is the origin of heaven and earth

While naming is the origin of the myriad things.

Therefore, always desireless, you see the mystery

Ever desiring, you see the manifestations.

These two are the same—

When they appear they are named differently.

This sameness is the mystery, Mystery within mystery;

The door to all marvels."

Lao Tzu. *Tao Te Ching*. Translated by Charles Muller, with Introduction and Notes by Yi-Ping Ong. 1991. Barnes & Noble Classics, 2005.

JOIN THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT
TO STOP VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

V-DAY NVCC 2020 THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES

WRITTEN BY EVE ENSLER
AND PRESENTED BY
NVCC'S WOMEN'S CENTER

February 26, 2020

NVCC Founders Hall Community Room

From 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Admission: Donation of Cash or Feminine Products

For tickets, email nhayes@nv.edu or jpetitfrere@nv.edu
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Tamarack EDIT MEETINGS

Tuesdays 2:30 pm, S519
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Send us your letters in response to articles, features, and profiles in The Tamarack. Limit them to 200 words and email them to tamarack@nv.edu with the subject line **READERS RESPOND**. Letters may be edited for length and grammar.

Red Nose Revels

Robert Pinto



Photo Courtesy of Kirkmarsh Photography

I had the pleasure of interviewing Julia Bothun, a former Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus clown. Actually, a 2nd-generation Ringling clown, she followed in the footsteps of her mother, from 2013-2017, travelling the United States as a clown. Bothun stated, "My mom, a Ringling Bros. clown, started the clown school, Mooseburger Camp. When I was three years old, she was performing, and that's implanted in my memory."

Encouraged by her parents to perform from a young age, Bothun sang "God Bless America" in front of a crowd of people at five years old, and she never missed a high school play; earning one of the leads in high school, she "absolutely loves theater." Comedienne she looks up to are Carol Burnett and Lucille Ball.

When I asked about circus life, Bothun said, "Travelling was easy. We traveled by train, which was a mile long. We all slept on the train. In the morning we'd go from the train to a bus and then to the arena where we were performing. A typical Saturday we'd do three shows. Wake up at 8:00, make the bus by

8:30, put makeup on at 9:00. They'd give us one hour to do makeup. The show would start at 11:00. Performers would come out, including acrobats and lion tamers. Their mission was to create a spectacle. They wanted to bring something to your town...tigers and elephants...a show like no other show on earth, truly a one-of-a-kind experience."

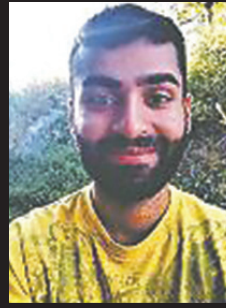
Asked her biggest inspirations, Bothun replied, "My mom inspires me; I've followed in her footsteps through her guidance and mentorship. My dad has inspired me musically. He's so talented, he can listen to a song on the radio and play it back on the piano by ear."

Bothun also shared memories of her time traveling with the show. "On my 19th birthday, we were in Miami. Seeing the ocean for the first time at 19, I cried, it was such an emotional experience. It made me feel so small. My clown companions could have made fun of me, but they let me just live in the moment. It was an experience I'll never forget."

She continued, "Another moment that's always stayed with me is performing at the United Center in Chicago, in front of 10,000 people, my biggest show to date. I remember running out and looking at all those people. This flurry of emotions came over me, an absolute emotional rollercoaster. This may sound unusual, but the feeling was so powerful, it was animalistic, like when you feel moments of joy and nirvana in your life. If I could compare it to anything, it's like when a rabbit runs into a field and jumps high in the air, kicking its legs up, an emotional paradise of joy."

I asked about the possibility of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's Circus resuming shows in the future, and whether Bothun would get involved. She replied, "If they didn't sell the train components, they might put on shows with a limited run. If they asked me to come back, I certainly would for a couple of years. I fell in love with my job in the circus. Right now, I'm involved in local Minnesota shows. Performing is something that's always guided my life."

alumni SHOWCASE



Alam Khan

Life Demands Change

A lot has happened since this time last year. I graduated from Naugatuck Valley Community College with an associate degree, applied and was accepted to the University of Connecticut for a pre-med program, and found a job in Torrington that lets me support myself! In hindsight and from a distance, everything looks copacetic, but this transition hasn't been without its difficulty.

New journeys can be alienating from what is considered routine. Adjusting to a different tempo of life takes time. Building new networks to foster a good social lifestyle is tedious and demanding. Among all this change, sometimes it becomes hard to focus. The desire to binge Netflix and turn away from our own life is tempting; familiarity, after all, can be pleasing. It becomes hard to focus on what you're trying to accomplish; it also becomes hard to maintain the identity you molded from your previous endeavors once you reach a certain stage that demands change.

At some point, it all becomes too much.

The need to stop yourself from going towards something new is transformed from a shallow whisper within to an ugly cry moaning at each attempt to move in another direction. So, what do you do when you need to refresh

"New journeys can be alienating from what is considered routine. ... It becomes hard to focus on what you're trying to accomplish; it also becomes hard to maintain the identity you molded from your previous endeavors"

yourself—between semesters or life events—in order to prepare for the next phase? You go back.

You go back to where it all began. Amongst the friends, and peers, to the places that echo why it mattered to go the distance, whether for good reasons or bad. This isn't to say reconnection is all about revitalizing yourself because your goals matter and it's all about you. Relationships are sacred, and so we—and I, specifically—must make sure to show those people who have played such big roles in each of our lives that they are loved and matter.

I miss a lot of the faculty and students from Naugatuck Valley and hope to one day stop by, play a few games of ping pong, and laugh about the joys of present experiences and yesterday.

I would wish good luck on all of you to do well this upcoming semester, but luck doesn't exist, you don't need it, and it sounds tacky to sign off that way.

So, in tradition of what I used to do as Editor-in-Chief, I will first remind you that, as you read this, you are now breathing manually. And, also, I will leave you with an African proverb, "The frown on the face of the goat will not stop it from being taken to the market."

Peace, Khan

Welcome to the Sims U!

Gwenydd Miller

One of my favorite games growing up was Sims (2 and 3). I always loved building and watching my Sims tell stories with their actions. As soon as I saw Sims 4 University, I instantly knew I wanted it (no clue why).

There are two choices: Foxbury U, specializing in math and sciences, and Britechester, focused more on liberal arts and behavioral sciences. Both universities offer all degrees, but distinguished degrees are different for each. To enroll in a university, you click on either a computer, phone, or the mailbox. It's pretty self-explanatory from there.

Also, unless your Sim has lots of simoleons to spare, I recommend applying

for scholarships, too, found under the same tab. The scholarships, as well as the programs your Sim gets into, are awarded based on skill levels. You'll have to wait a few Sim days before you get an acceptance letter, at which point you can choose a university and degree program.

You can look up what skill levels you need online on the Sims forum (not in the game). You can either build up those skills by having your Sim perform certain tasks, or hit Ctrl + Shift + C, type "testingcheats true," and type in a cheat code for instant results. All cheat codes can be found online as well. Remember, cheats were designed as part of the

game and are meant to be used. They save lots of time when fixing glitches. The code "reset-sim Firstname Lastname" is a literal lifesaver, if your Sims freeze in place like mine, and you don't want them to starve to death.

When you enroll in a university you get to pick where you want to live. There's an option to commute, or live on campus. You can even transfer funds; just type in the amount you want transferred and hit the arrow. One annoying thing about on-campus-living is you're once moved in, there's no build mode, so if you want to change anything you have to do it BEFORE your Sim moves in. However, one upside is that all the new furniture and decorations are able to be placed in your Sim's inventory. You can purchase everything you need (including school memorabilia) at a kiosk outside next to the school green.

Classes don't start until a few days after enrollment; however, homework starts right away. It's very similar to how teenage Sims have homework; only it takes longer, and you get to pick which subject you want to work on. In addition, on the computer, you can now email your professor about homework progress, study, or cheat on homework. I haven't had any of my Sims cheat on homework, but I assume that just like in real life there are consequences.

There are plenty of other activities around campus, including going to a soccer match, joining a club, having a keg party, and so much more. Sims University also adds in new career paths such as Education, Law and Engineering. I personally think it's a wonderful expansion with lots of awesome new stuff and fun activities to do with your Sim.

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Creative Gems

Steve Parlato's Students

During fall 2019, I had the privilege of working with a courageous, committed group of creative writers in ENG281. Met with a semester's worth of challenging prompts—some focused on societal issues, others deeply personal—they continuously exceeded expectations, creating thoughtful, moving prose and poetry. In the spirit of Valentine gifting, it's my pleasure to share some of their work. For the full collection, *The Fine Print Hides (tiny seeds)*, stop by NVCC's library; it's available for checkout. Enjoy!

Mortality's Mark

Actions bear consequences.
Complications have causation.
It all happens for a reason, I'm reassured.
Yet, confusion lingers.
Why them? Why now?
Always gone too soon.
Taken before their lives were lived.
Death doesn't play by our rules,
doesn't obey our timelines.
We all carry Mortality's Mark.
We fear what we do not know,
theorize and calculate the possibilities.
Could it be? Life after death?
We find comfort in Gods and Goddesses,
karma and reincarnation.

~ Meg Bourn

Art Show Musings

Blue isn't your mood.
It's your color.
Blue is your eyes wide open
as you see what's in front of you.
It's still the color of the sky
even as clouds obscure,
Blue is crisp, cool ice
and ethereal flame.
Blue is your shoes
carrying you away in circles,
or off a cliff.

~ Victoria DiAngelis

they remind me of you

you came to every school show,
and it made me so glad
i could always see you in the crowd
you'd always smile, bright like the moon
but as time went on, you had to stop
you had to slow down

when you go i'll be so sad
i hope it's no time soon
i'll miss you. i'll miss your smile
the butterflies in the sides of your glasses
i've always loved that about you
every pair was the same everytime i see a
butterfly
my mind goes to you.

~ Kyra Dunbar

Cloud

It's that swirl of cotton candy,
The one that tastes like a cloud
That feeling of love you never let go,
Like your face touched by snow,
Or the time you go swimming with no
clothes.
Euphoria happening when your dog sees
you're home.
Bliss is the never-ending chase for peace.

~ Traxla Ellis

Ocean Mist

What about the gull
with a wayward splash?
Or the balanced blend
of cirrus and ash?
Foghorns throw,
whipping wave,
sightseers straggle,
and bonny boats
earn their keep.
As the waves are soaring,
with white handkerchiefs
the people weep.

~ Michaela Kaklamanos

Her hue is green—

but not just any kind of green.
Most days it's warm and bright, similar to the
way bam-
boo leaves are caressed by a humid breeze.
Sometimes when
she's sad, she's kissed with grey and turns
celadon. Other days
it's lime, if she's blissful and beaming. And
in a few
spurring moments, she's jade, inflamed with
agitation.
When in love, she's mint. Her heart so light
and airy, filled
with butterflies. Occasionally, she dresses
up—
lipstick and heels, her ambience bold, she's
chartreuse.
Her hue is green, but not just any kind of
green.

~ Andreeana Jones

Last Call

As the clouds rolled over the sky above,
wind pushed against the cheeks of the friends
and family who came to witness. Propped up
on the beautiful stage, the men spoke in turn,
they savored the moment. Some cried, some
laughed, and some remembered. The
anticipation
grew, second by second, time seemed frozen.
Then, all of a sudden, Krrrr-CRACK!
The audience was stuck in time, not one
sound could be heard. Everything learned
everything experienced, and everything
spoken, was gone. Three men
hung there, one killed
on impact, one struggling
for breath, and the last
one smiling.

~ James Keller

From Boston to Seattle.

Everybody knows his name,
Doctor Frasier Crane.

He left the warmth of Boston's Cheers
And everything he knew
For Seattle and his family
and Café Nervosa's caffeinated brew.

He traded his beer for sherry
and got a fresh, new start.
From the psychiatrist's chair to the radio
waves
He touched so many hearts.

Eleven years in Seattle
doling out advice and laughs.
His life was filled with snobbery
and amusing social gaffes.
From Seattle to Chicago.
Everybody still knows his name,
Doctor Frasier Crane.

~ Mitchell W. Maknis

Terroir

A sea of gold dances in the fields,
protected by the mountains beyond.
Rows of trellis supporting bushy vines.
As the season closes in tired
hands prepare for steady work.
While crops are similar it's the terroir
that defines these human spoils.
Old trucks roar to life
pattering down familiar roads.

~ Stephen Price

Lady Liberty

New Nazis?
Old
without question.
She preaches the importance of history,
"We must learn from our past!"
She slyly chuckles under her breath.
Indigenous tribes,
German-American,
Japanese-American, and now
Latin American immigrants.
She is a fascist,
a hypocrite.
Preaching equality,
opportunity for all,
Preaching sanctuary,
yet She spits in their faces.
She preaches empty promises,
She delivers adversity,
and She provides friable refuge.
again She cackles at the bewildered People.
She knows what she is doing,
She's done it before.

~ Amelia McGee

Rock Collecting

Cool water, runs through
childlike fingers- outstretched
attempt to catch a skittering
pebble- swept by the current.
The rocks slimy- smooth,
create an unknown path
to a place we once knew.
Wet sneakers hop across,
to not get soaked. Socks
cling to wrinkly toes,
as laughter mixes with the babbling
brook. The voices of springtime.

The memory is blurry at times,
nostalgic vague colors swirling
up at certain moments and then-
Gone.

The feeling of our old naivety-
an abstraction of shapes that from afar
bear no connections to the actual subject.
Blues and cyans and turquoise and green
make it feel more raw than we remember.
Looking closer, there we are,
wading over rocks to catch pebbles in
Spring clear cold water.

~ Heath Ruszkowski

"Read My Lips"

You tear my lips open
and read the encryption
buried by fear.
You, the translator,
the interpreter,
the magnifying glass.

The fine print
hides behind Cupid's bow.
He has tied it onto me.
like a gift, a sick joke,
a prank,
no laughter escaping my mouth.

Prophecy the truth
behind these lips
with yours.
Read them, like a
bedtime story.

Show me my mask
through this chapped skin,
my layers hiding the crimson
that oozes what is real,
what is true, and
what is not.

~ Mahmue Sahn

Two, Four, Six, Eight...

The date on the calendar is approaching
The suitcase is packed near the door,
Ready to move fast like a cheetah.

My legs are swollen
My shell is cracked
I hope I can swim.

I can't pity myself, but
Have passion to conquer the sea,
So, I don't end up in isolation.

~ Sabrina Washburn

Two Lines

Little boy, you're in the wrong line!
an adult spat at me. Five years old and
forced into a cookie-cutter binary.
Girls and boys, stand side by side!
Already divided in two little lines.

Gender norms strengthened
by the uniform policy:
Girls in skirts, boys in shorts,
Boys in pants-- but I wore pants,
and shaved my head,

Fought with boys,
Played in dirt,
Chased girls,
And cursed.

~ Madeeha Sheikh

The Fall Season

Autumn Surprise and Wet
Riverbanks frost the pumpkin
Spice donut. Pale
Cordovan expresses
The smell of coffee.

~ Courtney Wabno

Trust

It's hard to give to someone
It's presented with love
Don't give it away, too
soon. It must be earned
Some deceive to receive
it, when betrayed, it hurts
Like a knife to the heart.
It's worth more than gold.
Bonds can form, that last long.
In your life, you might meet
a few. Beware of whom
you get close to. Evil
Comes in my faces.
Jealousy, envy, hate, lust and greed
Deadly sins that tempt you
and me. Stay woke, eyes wide
Trust.

~ John Williams

Roach,

You were five feet
And four inches tall
You slivered and slumped
Through places you shouldn't be
Only to find you under my feet.
I screamed and tried to squish you like a
Disgusting septic bug, you are
But you scurried away
Only to sneak under the
Parking Garage Cars

~ Morgan McSherry

Ogre

Written by Bob Salley
Illustrated by Shawn Daley

Mitchell Walter Maknis



“An emotionally riveting tale, *Ogre* has ingeniously reinvigorated how a story can be told.”

There are countless ways to tell a story and while many literary properties rely heavily on formulaic execution, *Ogre* creators Bob Salley and Shawn Daley have provided comic enthusiasts with a refreshing perspective on the medium. In this Source Point Press title, readers are introduced to the titular Ogre who finds himself incarcerated with a group of spiteful human outlaws. The prisoners form a troubled alliance in order to escape their bleak fate, which propels them into this captivating and deadly fantasy realm that vividly conveys the grim tone of this war-torn world.

In the story's opening moments, writer Bob Salley establishes an air of unease between his ensemble as the reader witnesses the hostility in their interactions. It was easy to become invested in the tribulations plaguing these characters on their hazardous journey. While the group's dynamic is commendably portrayed, the psyche of the reclusive Ogre remains most intriguing. Salley's depiction delivers a distinctive and poignant look into the Ogre's consciousness as he struggles to cope with his bigoted allies, whilst also dealing with an intrusive ghostly companion bound to him by a tethered corpse. It is his private conversations with the knightly specter, ranging from comedic to melancholic, that enable the reader to become privy to his world views and unique perspective. These palpable tensions were faultlessly interlaced throughout the narrative, keeping me anticipating how the plot would progress.

These moments were richly brought to life with the incomparable art style of Shawn Daley. Admittedly, I was initially surprised by Daley's warm and inviting illustrations, considering the darkly graphic nature of the story. However, as I became engrossed in this tale, I found they brought the piece a truly inimitable aesthetic, in turn complementing the varying other characters scattered throughout this fabled world. Daley's designs particularly radiated in the antagonistic forces of the bounty hunting Trolls. It was a genuine delight to see how Daley approached their malevolent, deceitful personalities, as well as their interactions with the Ogre and his comrades.

The results of this collaborative pairing prove Salley and Daley are a tour-de-force in the industry. An emotionally riveting tale, *Ogre* has ingeniously reinvigorated how a story can be told. I look forward to immersing myself in this enchantingly dark world once again in their spinoff series *Ogres*. You can purchase *Ogre*—The Complete Vol. 1, along with their four-issue spinoff series, *Ogres*, at your local comic shop, or order online at www.SourcePointPress.com.

FACE IN THE CROWD Inspired Art

Shyanne Caporuscio

Hello, I'm Shyanne Caporuscio, a visual arts major here at NVCC. I have been attending Naugatuck Valley Community College since the fall semester of 2016. While I hope to live a life in which I never stop learning new things, I don't currently know what life after NVCC will look like for me. I'm still figuring out what I want my future to look like, and trying to find my place in the world.

Growing up, I didn't imagine myself going to college; in fact, I never envisioned myself graduating high school. I never enjoyed school, and wasn't very confident in myself. As my journey at NVCC continues to unfold, I can't help but look at the last couple years, and recognize the substantial growth I have made both personally and academically as a student, artist, and an individual.

My passion for art was discovered during my first semester at NVCC, in Printmaking. I had never taken a college class before, let alone an art class, and had no idea what to expect. As someone who tends to be a rather anxious and introverted individual, I didn't



Photo Courtesy of Shyanne Caporuscio

“While the choice is never easy, and the work is pretty hard, the outcome of allowing yourself to grow in all aspects of life will always be rewarding.”

think my college experience was going to be all that great. I surely never thought an art class would be the beginning of a whole new

world for me. In one class, I discovered a talent I didn't know I had, a love for learning, and a little bit of confidence. That was when I decided, even though I didn't know exactly where it would get me, I was going to switch my major to visual arts.

Now, years later, I can say art was the beginning of me figuring out who I was, who I am, and who I will become. I went from someone who always stayed quiet, kept her head down, and dreaded classes because of anxiety, to someone who takes pride in her schoolwork, artwork, social interactions, and everything in between. One of the most positive choices I made as a student was joining the Art Club here at NVCC. Being a part of Art Club has been a great experience, and one of my favorite parts of being a student altogether.

As a student, some other things I enjoy are writing, reading, and reflecting. While art is my ultimate passion, writing takes a close second. I have to say, out of all the things I have learned, one of the most important things has been that no matter who you are, or where you come from, you get to choose where you go next. While the choice is never easy, and the work is pretty hard, the outcome of allowing yourself to grow in all aspects of life will always be rewarding.

The Power of Words

Name Withheld

My first thought at Confluencia was: What am I doing here? My second thought was, How close to the wall do I have to stand to become completely invisible? I'm not one for crowds of people, or small areas, or anything social. Totally out of my element, I stood in a cool little area outside the Playbox Theatre, listening to a really interesting group of people get all pumped up about singing some choir songs. They did it beautifully, might I add. They did their thing for a while, and I awkwardly made eye contact with some people in the room and clapped after every song.

When we moved into the Playbox, I awkwardly sat in the last row with my good friend and reminded myself a couple dozen times that being in a room full of strangers is totally chill. The event started as a friendly face, Professor Parlato, stood at the podium talking about how he enjoyed being moderator, and that it was his second year doing so. The president of

the college spoke of the importance of poetry in everyday life, and the SGA president also recited a poem by Robert Frost. Many pieces of literature were shared by students and two published speakers, Dr. Kathleen O'Connell Chesto, and Dr. José B. González.

As I sat and listened, I realized two things. No one in that room was completely in their element, and I was exactly in the place I needed to be. I listened as people recited poetry displaying emotions of perspective, pain, adversity, struggle, and loss. I sat and watched the power of poetry change a room full of people. There are moments in everyone's life where something clicks, and sitting, listening, at Confluencia, I had one of those moments. As I resonated with the words spoken, I came to understand that in literature, in poetry, everyone is welcomed. There is no right or wrong way to be; you just have to simply exist.

Kathleen Chesto's pieces extracted really

strong emotions from me. She read a piece of her work that said, “The body I had thought was mine was powerless in the hands of the intruder.” Hearing those words, words I could relate to so strongly, coming from someone older whom I didn't know, both hurt and healed something inside me. It hurt to know someone else has felt no control at the hands of another, it hurt to remember what that feels like. But it helped. It hit that part inside of me and something said, “You're not alone.”

As I sat in that room and listened to people speak, I realized again, I was not alone, nor are we ever really alone. In the words of others, we can find little lost pieces of ourselves. For the first time, sitting quietly in the back of the room was the only thing I needed to do to be fully included. Confluencia is an event that comes with gaining a profound new understanding of the power of words, and for that, I am grateful.

Revolutionary Rhythms

John Frusciante: RHCP's Important Link

Matthew O. Spence



In December 2019, Red Hot Chili Pepper fans got an announcement that was an unexpected dream come true: the return of guitarist John Frusciante, coming back to the band for the 3rd time, to take the place of his replacement, Josh Klinghoffer. In the band's 30+ year career, John has remained their signature guitarist, and truth be told, Frusciante has become an important piece to the band's puzzle.

Joining the band in the late 80s, following the death of the Chili Peppers' former guitarist, Hillel Slovak, he would work with the band on five studio albums, offering new musical creativity for each new era of the

band. His first run ended in 1992, when he left due to tensions between him and front man, Anthony Kiedis, as well as personal issues and not enjoying the major-rock-band lifestyle.

Sadly, during this era, Frusciante's drug addiction exacerbated and his mental and physical health deteriorated. With him gone, RHCP carried on with guitarist Dave Navarro of Jane's Addiction to release *One Hot Minute*, but the band's standing began to slip after the progress they'd made to get their previous level of success. *One Hot Minute* didn't match the commercial and critical success of their previous album, *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*. Though it went platinum, it didn't do the numbers the predecessor did.

In his autobiography, *Scar Tissue*, Kiedis discusses the making of the album and highlights Frusciante's chemistry that couldn't be recaptured in the band saying, “John had been a true anomaly when it came to songwriting. He made it even easier than Hillel Slovak to create music, even though I'd known Hillel for years...I just figured that was how all guitar players were—that you showed them your lyrics and sang a little bit and the next thing you knew you had a song.”

However, after a few years, John thankfully kicked his heroin addiction, picked

himself back up, and rejoined the band in 1998, after friend and bassist Flea asked if he'd like to rejoin. They would then make a comeback with 1999's successful *Californication* album. In a *Rolling Stone* interview from 2000, Kiedis explained what it was like working with John again and the first rehearsal for the album. “When John gets excited, he's like 8 billion volts of electricity. He was knocking things over—it was absolutely chaotic, like a little kid trying to set up a Christmas tree. And when he hit that first chord, it was so perfect—this blend of sounds from these people who I hadn't heard play together in so long.”

With Frusciante back, they would release three more commercially and critically acclaimed albums: *Californication*, *By the Way*, and *Stadium Arcadium*, cranking out hit's like: “Dani California” and “Can't Stop”. In 2009, Frusciante left amicably, leaving longtime touring member and friend, Josh Klinghoffer, to take his place. While the band has had several guitarists, Frusciante has become the guitarist who completes the lineup in everyone's eyes. Is it his funky Hendrix inspired riffs and licks? Many reasons come into play, but with him returning, it'll be interesting to see what RHCP comes up with next.

Earth Matters

Maritime Conservation



Alyssa Katz

In late November my boyfriend and I took a trip to Norwalk's Maritime Aquarium. It had been many years since either of us had been there, so there were some new animals to see, such as birds and meerkats; I was most excited by the sea turtles. But what I hadn't known before going there, was that the aquarium's major focus is conservation.

One of the first things we noticed, after checking out a shark dive, as we came in, was a display of coral and the remains of hatched turtle eggs. A nearby associate explained that the aquarium took in some sea turtle eggs, and when they hatched,



they were released into the wild, so the display paid homage to their efforts in protecting the eggs from being eaten by predators.

As for the coral, it was in the regenerative process to eventually be reintroduced to its reef. What we noticed more of as we walked around, was that there was a plentiful amount of information regarding various environmental impacts—one that sticks out in my mind was a huge wall of plastics with information about how harmful plastic is when it ends up in our oceans.

One of the aquarium's biggest conservation activities is aiding in the restoration of coral reefs. According to their website, elkhorn coral (*Acropora palmata*) and staghorn coral (*Acropora cervicornis*)—two major reef builders in the Caribbean Sea—have nearly become extinct. Colombia's coral reefs, in particular, have taken a huge hit with little resources for scientific research and/or restoration efforts. What the aquarium does is work with local institutions to provide those resources to aid in reproduction and restoration of both *Acropora* species.

In addition, the IMAX movie we saw, *Journey to the South Pacific*, dealt with restoring coral reefs in Western Papua, New Guinea. The reefs in the area had depleted due to overfishing and the use of dynamite. They were able to learn more efficient and less aggressive ways to fish and, with time, the reefs were able to flourish again.

The aquarium also puts effort into protecting horseshoe crabs and tests water quality in Long Island Sound. Additionally, according to their website, as part of a study with Southern Connecticut State University, "The aquarium collects microplastics from surface waters and monitors ingestion of microplastics in fishes." Also, the aquarium studies biodiversity in Long Island Sound, as well as tracking the effects of climate change.

The Maritime Aquarium is not the only aquarium to take on conservation efforts. While I've never visited, Mystic Aquarium in New London also has its own programming dedicated to conservation efforts (They also have African Penguins!). Their many programs include marine animal rescues and protection of our oceans. Additionally, they conduct research on animal health and safety of endangered species such as the beluga whale.

If you're interested in learning more about The Norwalk Maritime Aquarium's conservation efforts, visit their website: <https://www.maritimeaquarium.org/conservation-projects>. For Mystic Aquarium, visit their website: <https://www.mystic-aquarium.org/conservation-impact/>.

Out of the Cocoon

Heather Ruszkowski



Photo Courtesy of Heather Ruszkowski

A caterpillar creates a cocoon in order to grow and transform into something entirely new. This change can be slow, gradual, and sometimes breaking out of that self-made shell can be a bit of a hassle. The shell is comforting, because the outside world can be cold. I personally had grown a shell for myself here in Connecticut, never really travelling much and never-ever alone, despite how badly I wanted to leave when I was younger.

That was until I flew all the way to California by myself. It was to visit my best friend and partner, and do something new, something fun. But dread was all I felt the week prior because of all the things that could go wrong. Having only flown twice prior, this was going to be a completely different experience. And it was!

Half asleep, the trip there was just nerves upon nerves, but once I finally relaxed, I was able to take in how beautiful it all was, from the snow-covered peaks of mountains to the flat plains and farmland of the Bible Belt. It became less of the dropping feeling of crashing and more about how stunning the clouds looked as they pooled out like another ocean. Then I landed.

I won't go into all the details of being shocked at seeing so many palm trees or the strange Burger King I freaked out about because "That's so weird!" Or the fact that their Target was the size of a mall and sold hard liquor (I had to send a picture to my mom).

What really got me was on the second day there I decided to go on a walk to a park. It was sunny and warm and 60 degrees out despite it being December. I was on my own for the moment, just taking in each of the plants and the different architecture. Most houses were single story, and had influences clearly different from Connecticut architecture.

That's when it sunk in: people can get stuck in the monotony of life, in their routines. I know I did. School Monday through Thursday, work Friday through Sunday. Repeat. Nothing new. I would go home and sit there, do my homework (maybe), eat dinner, and then go to bed. Over and over again.

Being in a new place broke that routine and forced me to do new things and see new things. Now, I'm not saying to uproot yourself and fly to the other side of the country all alone because that sure isn't for everyone, but treating yourself and trying new things is the key to breaking up some of the routines in life.

Go on a walk to a place you never went. Try something new at the restaurant you like. Go see that movie you don't know if you'll like because it's a genre you never watch. Break out of your self-made cocoon; it might be scary at first, but everything new is scary. Life is meant to be explored, and even in the place you've always known, there are hidden treasures everywhere.

Love and Chocolate

Gwenydd Miller

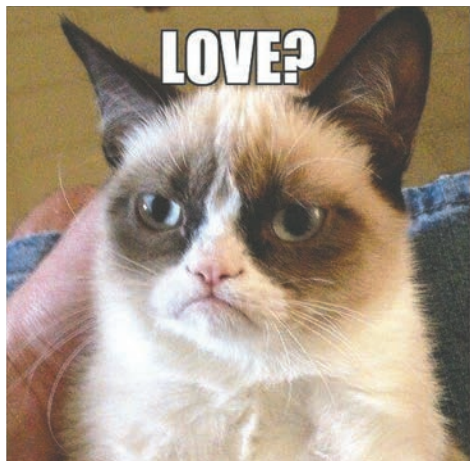


Photo Courtesy of Facebook

Valentine's Day is approaching; can't you smell it? Love is in the air, and it smells of roses and chocolate, and overpriced heart-shaped pieces of paper that are supposed to mean something other than "I'm just giving this to you to be nice." Truth be told, Valentine's Day is one of the most commercial holidays out there. I mean, at least Christmas has a good meaning behind it, however buried it may be. But Valentine's Day is about something that really should be expressed on more than one day a year.

I used to love Valentine's Day (no joke intended). One of my first memories of it, is my parents giving me sweet-smelling cinnamon buns in bed, and my dad getting roses for my mom, which brightened the mood in the entire house. I had no clue what was going on, but it was nice, so I just went with it. When I was a little older it was nice getting a piece of paper from my crush saying, "Happy Valentine's Day," but less so when I realized he'd given them to pretty much everyone else as well.

Now, as a college student I wonder what

even is the point? Is it to make single people feel alone and depressed? Or maybe it's to put pressure on couples to amp up the romance. Side note: it's totally sexist to think guys should be the only ones giving gifts, not to mention heteronormative.

The primary function of the "holiday" really is consumerism. There's hardly any romance left in it, just expectations and disappointment. Now, before I get accused of being biased because of bad experience, last year my Valentine's Day was truly wonderful, but, in all honesty, it just felt like a date with some presents. We could do that any day, so what makes February 14th better than any other?

From a different point of view, I suppose it does have some merit. Some people, I guess, just need an excuse to do something special on that one day, so they don't exhaust themselves doing it every day. Of course, that's also wrong because expressing love and affection shouldn't be exhausting.

This year I've seen Valentine's Day decorations up right after Christmas; you must admit, that's getting kind of ridiculous. It's a holiday that markets love, but really when it comes down to it, it cheapens love. One thing I dislike most is it's just so fake. There are people who go out on dates with people they barely know, just so they don't have to be alone on the 14th. That isn't love.

Real, authentic love doesn't last for one night only and include lots of pretty and delicious gifts (although, I admit, they are nice). Sure, it's a cute holiday for kids and long-term couples, but it's also Singles Awareness Day. Seriously, who needs that fake love anyway? So many people also forget love can be platonic. So, if you're single, maybe spend that day with good friends or family. Now that's love.

Thank You All

Let It Snow!

Kathleen Chesto

December 2, 2019, brought our first snow day of the fall semester. There is something joyful about a sudden, unexpected day of freedom from the usual work of a normal Monday. This time that joy was dampened by the fact it was only days before exams and we were missing a last chance to review and check in with our professors. The tempered delight turned to panic when we awoke the second day to a mixture of snow and ice and a string of closures. A promised opening of 11:00 AM was greeted with a sigh of relief, instead of the usual groans.

A second snowstorm came close on the heels of the first. Exams had begun, so this meant a reprieve and a few extra hours of study, but we all knew exams had to be folded into the time left before Christmas break. Again, we were basically relieved to know we could get into school a little late and finish up those tests.

We are all familiar with the amount of work it takes to keep our roads clear. We've met snow plows on the highway in the middle of the night trying to keep ahead of a storm. We've watched snow banks rise along city streets with tunnels marking crosswalks. Our state, cities, and towns do a great job with our roads for the most part. Sidewalks are often left to homemakers and shop owners, depending on the municipality, and frequently present obstacle courses of snow and ice patches.

But the miles of sidewalks and staircases crisscrossing our campus must all be cleaned, ice free, and deemed safe—or cordoned off—before school can reopen. Many, if not most, must be laboriously shoveled. Angela Maggi and her amazing crew were up all night for the duration of both storms, working against the weather to keep NVCC open, or to reopen as soon as possible.

College does not offer the luxury of snow days being made up at the end of the year. A snow day represents lost knowledge, lost tuition money, lost course elements that cannot be simply "made up" with an extra day in June. We all owe tremendous thanks to Angela and the crew for working so tirelessly for all of us, for making our education their responsibility.

Thanks are also due to the professors who offered extra work, lectures, and online assignments, to minimize the disruption in our courses. These teachers deserve tremendous respect for making the effort to fulfill promises made on the syllabi we were given at the beginning of their courses.

To our hardworking, overtime maintenance crews, and our hardworking, overtime faculty, thank you from all of us who were Christmas shopping, sledding, or just sleeping late.



Photo Public Domain

"Don't follow the path. Go where there is no path and begin the trail. When you start a new trail equipped with courage, strength and conviction, the only thing that can stop you is you!"

~ Ruby Bridges, who, became the first African American child to integrate a white Southern elementary school on November 14, 1960

What's in Your Mouth?

Jessica Morgan



Here we are, college students, facing rigorous schedules and—for most of us—more responsibility than ever. One new obligation may be feeding ourselves. I know, why did no one ever mention this? Up until now, it's most likely the groceries in your home were bought by a parent, and lunch was prepared by your school. There really was no freedom of choice; it was, basically, eat what you're served.

Obviously, there are exceptions; some students have supported themselves for years. However, the question remains: "Do we know what we're putting in your mouths?" With busy schedules and usually low funds, it's normal to just grab anything that's quick and easy. But should this really be the norm? No. What we feed ourselves now builds the cells in our bodies we'll have to live with in the future. C'mon, we're college students; we should know this!

So, what are we eating? Well, there's a lot to choose from, but one of the biggest overlooked problems with food is that it's been coated in chemicals. Can't we just wash those off? No.

Think about it. These chemicals were literally made to withstand weather crops were exposed to. If three months of normal rainfall and watering wasn't going to budge them, why do we think a quick rinse in the sink will?

One of the most common chemicals in food is glyphosate; it is the most commonly used weed killer and desiccant. Sure, we all know what a weed killer is. As for a "desiccant," that's a dehydrating agent. It causes insects to dehydrate and die. According to BeyondCeliac.Org, farmers spray crops with glyphosate to "speed the drying of grain."

That's not all; this chemical can affect us, too! The website continues to explain some of these affects: "Characteristics include deficiencies in some nutrients, an overgrowth of pathogens in the intestine, coupled with a decrease in beneficial biota, impaired serotonin signaling, and an increased synthesis of metabolites. Reproductive issues [...] such as infertility, miscarriages, and birth defects, can also be explained by glyphosate."

Wow, let that sink in! Our bodies can't absorb nutrients from the food we're eating—literally to gain those nutrients. According to Healthline.Com, "The gut microbiome plays a very important role in your health by helping control digestion and benefiting your immune system and many other aspects of health." Glyphosate results in impaired serotonin? MedicalNewsToday.Com states, "Called the happy chemical, because it contributes to well-being" and "...the precursor for melatonin, [serotonin] helps regulate the body's sleep-wake cycles and the internal clock."

Reproductive issues and birth defects? Enough said; this is a downward spiral! Maybe this is the first time you're hearing this; maybe it's vaguely familiar. Maybe you're very aware of the landmark case won this year against Monsanto-Bayer. PBS.Org reported, "Non-Hodgkin lymphoma, a potentially fatal cancer of the immune system" was caused by glyphosate according to a federal jury who "ordered Monsanto, the maker of Roundup, to pay \$80 million to a 70-year-old man with cancer who had used it for three decades." CNN.Com stated, "Glyphosate [...] raises the cancer risk of those exposed to it by 41%."

So, the answer to the question, "What's in your mouth?" is a bit scary. The solution? Educate yourself, and whenever possible, choose organic foods. Your cells will thank you.

Queer Code More Affirmative Care

Alexander Wilson



I just had my first gender affirmation surgery, with two more to come, barring any complications that might arise. In the trans community, what I had is called top surgery; in medical speak it's a "bilateral mastectomy with masculine contouring." Fun way of saying I finally got my breasts removed. I'm one of the lucky ones: it was covered by insurance. The cost of this one surgery ranges from \$7,000-12,000, depending on hospital. Only two hospitals in the entire state of Connecticut offer this surgery, one being Yale. Without insurance coverage, I would've had to pay \$10,300 out of pocket, effectively making my chances of surgery slim to none. More complex surgeries often cost upwards of \$50,000.

That's a problem trans people often face. Gender affirmation surgeries are difficult to get for many reasons, finances being the main barrier for many. Even some people with insurance aren't allowed these surgeries—which are often lifesaving. Not every trans person has enough dysphoria to feel the need for surgical intervention, but enough of us do that these surgeries should be covered by insurance. We can't all produce tens of thousands of dollars for multiple surgeries just to not hate our bodies when we look in the mirror.

Every day on multiple different social media accounts, I see people posting GoFundMe campaigns for contributions to their surgeries, or hormones, or other basic trans-related healthcare. We can't compare sex reassignment surgery to a nose job; it's not some cosmetic endeavor. It's something that, for some, there's no choice but to do. I've always been terrified of surgery. But there came a point where I had to

suck up my fears and go under the knife. The alternative was to wear a binder forever and have medical issues related to that. I know I'm not alone in feeling that way about surgery.

These surgeries matter because they give us a chance to live freely. I was forced to wear tee shirts to the beach, unable to swim because I wasn't allowed to exercise in my binder. I'd shower in the dark, trying to avoid touching certain parts of my body because they felt wrong, like they didn't belong to me. I'd sleep on my back, instead of on my stomach like I wanted to, because something was in the way that, in my mind, wasn't supposed to be there.

In the future, I plan to get sex reassignment surgery. That, to me, is vital to my satisfaction in my body. There are others who see no issue with what's "in their pants," so long as they are perceived as the correct gender on the outside. Each person is different. I still feel like the option should be there for every trans person to get coverage if they need it. I'm not going to go into any more detail about the different kinds of surgeries. Google it. Wikipedia's an okay source for this stuff.

Through this column, you, reader, have gotten to know me intimately: my opinions, my words, all I've chosen to reveal about myself. Maybe you know me in the halls, maybe you know my face, maybe you know me as a whole person. Regardless, I have the right to privacy, as do other trans people. It's still highly inappropriate to ask someone's assigned gender at birth, or what's "in their pants", or if they've had The Surgery. If you wouldn't ask it of a cis person, don't ask it of a trans person; it's none of your damn business. Appreciate the fact you don't have to pay to achieve the body you belong in, because to some, there's a price tag for happiness, and it's in the thousands.

Alexander, who is still recovering.

Downtown Blues Small Businesses Fall

Heather Ruszkowski



Photo Courtesy of Tamarack Staff

Every town, city, suburb, has their own version of the downtown shopping center. A strip of businesses, normally locally-owned, housing unique and niche interests. The economic center of their towns, at one point they were bustling hubs. Nowadays, across America, downtowns are dying, especially here in our own backyard.

For example, take Watertown's downtown, a long strip of businesses that can't seem to keep their doors open. Split into two sections—the Oakville and Watertown Main Streets—it's rather hard to walk to both parts. Actually, it's a parade route! So, if you wanted to march over busy streets to visit both ends, I guess that's one way to spend an afternoon. But most people don't have the time for that, and without customers, small businesses cannot survive.

Many factors contribute to the fall of these once brimming-with-life shopping destinations. First, online shopping. It's so easy to get our shopping done from the comfort of home. For unique items there's Etsy, and even Amazon, as the mega corporation has literally everything and more. This decline in in-person shopping has not only sapped the foot traffic from downtown shoppers but also has slowly drained the life out of shopping centers like malls.

Secondly, using Watertown as an example, there isn't easy accessibility. Busy streets are hard to cross, with oncoming traffic moving fast and few designated crosswalks. The sidewalks are cramped, normally with cars parked up on them. Parking is another issue. Shoppers are forced either to park down near Depot Square Mall and walk up, or attempt to park on-street. There are a few other places to park, but for those trying to get to one of the restaurants, parking can be a major deterrent.

Finally, there's no real reason for tourists or out-of-towners to visit. I remember going on a road trip with my mom and my sisters, and stopping in this little town in Massachusetts. The draw? It's home to the Bridge of Flowers, a stunning garden right next to their downtown. There were other things to find, like artwork and music, and easy-to-walk sidewalks and streets.

So what's the solution? Well, many things need to be changed with the structure and appeal of Watertown's downtown/main street. Better sidewalks, building renovations, and plantings would all make a difference. Utilizing Oakville's Pin Shop fully, cleaning up the existing rivers and water features, and really highlighting our green spaces would be a big help. This town could be beautiful, and be full of so much life, but so many things have been neglected.

Each small town also needs a draw, something to bring visitors downtown. When considering what Watertown has that the mall, online retailers, or some other town doesn't have, there's not much. This creates a huge challenge for those trying to make a living in small-town CT by offering something truly unique.

What could really help is an Economic Development Committee, people who actually understand the economy a bit better than a college psychology major. One was used to rejuvenate Naugatuck, and it really helped. These are all hypotheticals that could one day bring back life and love to our area downtowns. After all, thriving town centers create a greater sense of community pride. In this day and age, that's truly important.

News Should Be Free

Robert Pinto

It is my strong belief that news should be free for everyone, and that news media should be accessible to as many people as possible. Over the past few years, there has been a trend of news media moving further away from print and appearing exclusively online. There are positives to online access. It is better for the environment, and more people can easily access online news material. But this is not always the case. Along with moving online, there has been a trend of news media being available only by paid subscription. I believe if people want to access news articles online, it should be completely free.

Many media companies maintain sources of revenue by providing space for advertisers. These advertisers and media companies profit well by putting their advertisements between paragraphs and on margins of pages. It is fair to say the *Washington Post* would do just fine on advertisements alone. Speaking of the *Washington Post*, this publication is owned by the wealthiest man in the world, none other than Amazon CEO, Jeff Bezos. With the large sum of money Bezos has, he could easily self-fund his own newspaper without having to worry about consumers paying for a monthly subscription.

Looking at these recent trends, brings me back to an opportunity I had to see Arianna Huffington speak at Manhattanville College in 2015. I remember her words clearly. "We are facing a crisis right now because people are drowning in information." I completely disagree with her statement. I believe not enough people are getting the right amount of valuable information. Information is being restricted because of monopolistic and deceptive business practices. It's wrong for news media oligarchs like Rupert Murdoch to make statements that consumers should be "paying for information." There's freedom in obtaining valuable information; as such, information should be free.

This brings us to constitutional rights as American citizens. Protected by the First Amendment is the "Freedom of the Press". Shouldn't that mean information should be free and accessible to the people whom the First Amendment protects? Certainly, information should not be restricted on any level. Let's consider the revenue the top media companies have. According to a 2016 *Business Insider* article, by Lara O'Reilly, "The top 30 biggest media companies made billions of dollars in revenue, with Google taking the top spot at nearly \$60 billion dollars of revenue. Time Inc. came in last place with just shy of \$3 billion dollars' worth of revenue." It's safe to say these media companies are doing just fine.

People need information. We need to know the conditions of roads, the weather, and other factors impacting our local communities. Community-driven news is very valuable; bringing people together through community discussions can substantially improve people's lives. This can only be achieved if news is free and accessible to as many as possible. Restricting readers through paid subscriptions only discourages them from obtaining valuable information. For an active and involved society, one key is bringing information to the people, without putting a price on that information.

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast, and is as necessary to life as the act of breathing."

~ Lewis Howard Latimer



Ask Nicole

Dear Nicole,

People think college should be easy for students, and that everybody should be getting good grades. However, a lot of individuals also do not realize that sometimes students have many struggles in their home lives that get in the way of their school lives. My question is, despite the personal struggles, how do you push through them and complete your studies without a struggle? Is there any advice that can be provided to not let people's home lives and personal struggles get in the way of their studies? Thank you in advance for your reply.

~ Sincerely, S.F.

Dear S.F.,

I'll admit, college is great, but it's certainly not how it's portrayed on television or in movies. It's definitely not all parties, fun, and games. To be honest, throughout all my own personal college adventures, I've never been to a college party. And you know what? That's okay!

I understand your struggle in your home life; I've been there, and I'm still working on it, too. In answer to your question, I find ways to alleviate stress. For example, I read a lot. I'm currently addicted to James Patterson. In addition to my reading, I write and listen to music.

Another key is to develop a support system. After my break-up in fall 2012, I took that as a sign there were better things to come. I used that time to reflect on myself and that I could do it. In summer 2013, I met my husband. I talk to him a lot; it's always good to have someone to talk to whom you trust. So I really encourage you to find that one person who is willing to listen without judgment, someone who can understand the very real challenges that come with balancing school and family.

As for that good balance for school and personal lives, it helps to plan out a schedule. I live by my calendar. An example is my litigation class. I knew assignments were due on Tuesday nights by 11:59 p.m., so I would study during the weekend and then complete assignments by Monday afternoon. Always planning out your schedule makes the tasks feel more in control—even when life isn't quite.

Most important, believe in yourself. Be your own biggest fan. I hope that helps.

Sincerely,
Nicole Zappone

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

The columnist's personal opinions and views offer an individual perspective on topics submitted. They are not intended to treat or diagnose; nor are they meant to replace treatment or care from a licensed professional, physician, or mental health professional.

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Democrats After Iowa

Kathleen Chesto



Up to this point, it's been difficult to differentiate between policies and platforms, with an overlarge Democratic field. But the limited size of the Iowa debate: four frontrunners—Biden, Sanders, Warren, Buttigieg—plus Klobuchar and Steyer, allowed contrasting policies to be distinguished.

A principle issue was electability, not which platform, but which person might convince Americans to unseat an incumbent president. Steyer, a billionaire entrepreneur and philanthropist funding his own campaign, insisted his economic experience positions him well against a "businessman turned president." His lackluster debate performance left that in question.

The murder of Iranian General Soleimani, and the possibility it could precipitate war, brought the Middle East into sharp focus. Who is most qualified to restore equilibrium and maintain a fragile Middle Eastern peace? As former vice president, Biden claims the greatest foreign policy experience, but, as Sanders stressed, Biden, as a senator, voted for the Iraq War, which Sanders opposed. Acknowledging it was a mistake, Biden refocused on the number of service personnel he helped bring home under Obama. While the other four lack foreign relations experience, presidents tend to rely heavily on advisors, particularly the Secretary of State, in foreign affairs.

Regarding the North American Free Trade Agreement, before Senate for ratification, Sanders and Warren, progressives who've traditionally agreed on trade policies, differed sharply. Warren acknowledges the NAFTA reworking isn't perfect, but believes it's urgently needed, particularly by Middle America, farmers, and the trades. Sanders acknowledges the need, but dislikes this plan and wants more attention on environmental concerns and worker protection.

Healthcare demonstrated sharper differences. Warren's "Medicare for All" has hurt her in recent polls. Buttigieg's and Klobuchar's more moderate plans offer Medicare to all who want it, allowing others to keep their present insurers. Buttigieg questioned the financial feasibility of Warren's plan, while Klobuchar insisted we must direct attention to the astronomical drug prices pharmaceutical companies charge. In Minnesota, she's successfully passed bills curbing these companies' power.

Education made everyone's agenda. Warren and Sanders advocate two years' free college and four years' "debt-free" college for all, along with forgiveness of trillions in student loans. Biden backstepped his advocacy of debt forgiveness, referencing current law providing loan forgiveness in return for service to underserved communities. With that law so bogged down in administration, 99% of requests are refused; Biden believes the policy requires careful regulation. Rather than offer the last two years of college free,

Biden favors free community college, expansion of Pell grants for the remainder, large loans and lower interest rates.

Buttigieg favors similar conservative plans for fiscal reasons. Klobuchar would adopt a more conservative plan, but believes we need a new focus; advocating more federal money put into trades and apprenticeship programs, she believes the country will have more than enough MBAs but suffer a desperate need of plumbers.

Climate change and environmental concerns claimed little debate time, perhaps because these topics represent common ground. Sanders had no opportunity to articulate his Social Security policies, his opposition to raising the retirement age and taxing poorer people's benefits. These views differentiate him from others and could score points with older voters.

Warren's answer to whether a woman could be elected president was strongly affirmative, referencing her successful election records and Klobuchar's. While hopefully true, this remains to be seen. Warren believes so strongly in her stands on issues, her integrity is clear, but not her ability to compromise. Klobuchar's moderate, sensible policies and communication are appealing, yet she may simply be too inexperienced on the national stage. Interestingly, in an unprecedented move, The New York Times endorsed both women for the nomination in a January 20th op-ed.

While an excellent orator, Buttigieg's moderate stance on so many issues leaves him devoid of youthful passion. That can be tempered by good advisors; it can't be created. His failure to attract the vote of people of color is most troubling.

Riding his lead, Biden appears tentative on issues that might alienate voters. Playing it safe may grow less attractive if Sanders takes a more aggressive stance to distinguish himself as a "more moderate progressive" than Warren, but a "more progressive moderate" than Biden.

Only Andrew Yang shows any chance of emerging from the remaining field, polling well in some states and demographics. He exhibits the passion missing in Buttigieg, but lacks the South Bend politician's moderate wisdom. It's too early to discount Bloomberg; the former NYC mayor has more name recognition than Steyer, and Trump's proven the billionaire businessman turned politician is a force.

While Iowa showed the contenders' strengths and weaknesses, each inspired confidence any of them could lead, handling the presidency with dedication and dignity. Hopefully, the potential candidates will soon discern who's the best Democratic choice, pooling their ideas into a cohesive, achievable platform, offering a strong alternative to Trump. A balanced two-party election will serve our democracy best.

punch whenever it comes around because it represents something that I know I can't have. I've told some people what happened, but only one of them is in my life today, and that's because he had a similar situation. No one else understood or knew what to do. The truth is they didn't have to do anything other than listen.

For years, I've had these walls around myself, and I'm happy to drop them for the right person, but there have been too many wrong people and missed connections for me to ever believe it possible. I've dated people; I just can't make that deeper connection without feeling like I'm hiding something. If I tell someone I love them I want to mean it, I want it to be real, with nothing in between us. I suppose that level of intimacy scares people away. It even scares me. Really, I've just been complaining about my problems, but I hope it helps someone else with a secret note feel a little less alone.

That's What She Said



Jessica Ney

Hindsight Is 2020

In our culture, we are collectively taught to swallow our past, and everything that comes with it, especially the "lows": our embarrassment, our shame, our trauma, and so on. We are constantly reminded to "live in the moment", count our blessings, and be present in the here and now. But I don't think anyone considers the ramifications of that lifestyle and what it could do to our mental health.

As conscious beings with memory, thoughts, and emotions, we are a tapestry of complex and gorgeous threads. Every moment—the big and small, the good and bad—work together to make the pattern of our lives. Since we are always changing, the foundation of who we are becomes more and more important as we grow into individuals. So, what happens when these forgotten or ignored threads begin to fray, or when the darkness we're pushing down begins to seep into the new bright hues we've worked so hard to curate?

What I'm getting at with this complicated word picture is that, regardless of what people tell us, our past is part of who we are. We cannot change it, we cannot take it back or make it "prettier". So, you may be asking, what can we do? I'm definitely not telling you to stop progressing and moving forward; however, sometimes our past is haunting, and allowing more than a single thought to lean its way is enough to crumble us.

That's not healthy, and we can't exist that way. As we continue on our journey to self-fulfillment, it is important to recognize our growth and acknowledge where we came from. It is crucial that we take a look inside ourselves and consider how our past makes us feel. By acknowledging the emotions behind certain events that motivated us at that time, we can take steps to stop ourselves from falling into the same toxic patterns we always end up regretting.

It's important to define the types of trauma I'm talking about. It doesn't always have to be a life-threatening situation, but if there is any fear, intimidation, shame, or doubt attached to an event, it can come back and deeply change us if not processed fully. Any form of abuse, be it sexual, verbal, physical—and at any age—can thoroughly affect a person's psyche. Accidents, deaths of loved ones, divorce, loss of employment, and many other circumstances can all grow into big mental health issues if we don't acknowledge our feelings, open up to ourselves and others, and seek proper help.

Some steps toward healing can include talking to friends and family, starting therapy, and, if deemed necessary by a doctor, taking medication. In this new year, it's time to celebrate mental health and self-care. There is no shame in seeking help. You are more than what has happened to you, and every facet of you should be celebrated and uplifted—even if that means facing and learning from the lows.

Missed Connections

Imagine a party. At the door, you're given a note with a word on it. You're told not to tell anyone what it says. You don't know if anyone else has gotten a note, but if you ask them, it might pique their interest. So, you don't say anything. You talk to friends, but eventually it weighs on your mind. You have one thing you can never tell them, and your relationships will eventually suffer. Sometimes it can feel like you're alone in a crowd and you can't breathe. Obviously, that's more drama than is necessary over a piece of paper, but it was the first thing that came to mind when describing how it feels.

My first article, "Love/Hate," from last April referred to an emotionally devastating time in my life, one which I would rather not share with anyone. I don't want my friends pitying me because I was molested as a kid. I don't want them judging me, or even trying to

make me feel better—but ultimately reminding me of what happened. Not like I could forget it anyway.

On the road to recovery, the hardest thing for me to do was connect to people. It was like I had something ripped away from me that no one could ever understand unless they went through it too. Which I wouldn't wish on anyone. The man who used to...touch me...told me he loved me, and it made me feel hollow. It has since been my life goal to fill that void with the real thing, but the connection just isn't there. I have this secret weighing down on me, that I know shouldn't matter anymore, but it does. It burns my tongue every time it isn't spoken and chokes me whenever I try to push it down.

Holidays like Valentine's Day are the worst. I know it's only a greeting card holiday and doesn't mean much, but it packs a

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.