

The Tamarack

Our college. Our news. Our voice.

Naugatuck Valley Community College

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Waterbury, Connecticut

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A Presidential Farewell

Various Contributors

Note: Some content courtesy the NVCC website

Last month, NVCC President Daisy Cocco De Filippis announced her retirement as President effective August 1, 2020. Calling it "...a difficult decision," President De Filippis noted, "it is time for us to move back to New York to be closer to family, and for me to accept with gratitude an invitation to return to my CUNY family."

Reaction was immediate throughout the CSCU system and here at home. Praising De Filippis, CSCU President Mark Ojakian stated, "Over the past 12 years, Dr. De Filippis has presided over an important period in the College's history...It is clear NVCC is a better and stronger institution because of Daisy's service." He described the President as a "brilliant and compassionate leader...who... has always gone out of her way to make sure the needs of her students are met."

SGA President Tabitha Cruz commented, "The news has come as a shock. President De Filippis...has really made our community flourish, made every student feel welcome and included. [Though we] will miss her

warm presence, we wish her the best on her new adventures, and may she bring poetry everywhere she goes."

Faculty Senate President Ron Picard called President De Filippis "a major force in the Greater Waterbury and Danbury communities," adding, "Through her transformative leadership, the College has won national awards and hosted international Fulbright Scholars-in-Residence, prominent literary figures, and business leaders. Her passion... will certainly be missed. We congratulate and thank her as she returns to her other home, Hostos Community College."

Professor Kathy Taylor shared the following message:

Reflecting upon your leadership, your guidance, your encouragement, your mentorship, your urging, and your support, I pause to thank you!

For more than twelve years, you have been our President and a steady example of a visionary leader who knows your own mind and values. I have watched you speak with authority, confidence, and passion, and I have never seen you play small.

Your constant calling to our higher, better selves yielded great fruit—we became better! Your frequent poetic references reminded us of our humanity, our connectedness, and our purpose!

In my mind's eye, when I look around campus, I see you. From the study spaces lining the fifth floor, to the ACE, to the gardens, to the art and sculptures, all the way to the beauty of Founders Hall, there you are! Everywhere, you communicated to students that they belong, they are deserving, and they are worthy of new spaces, new buildings, new books, and new imaginings. You called us all to imagine new possibilities.

Despite this time of uncertainty, I know we are equipped for what lies ahead for we have watched and learned from you. And that too is a part of your legacy. For legacy is not merely what you leave behind FOR people, it is also leaving something WITHIN people.

And to see how New York is welcoming you, my heart leaps for joy. You deserve it! Every article, every email, every piece



President Daisy Cocco De Filippis being honored as Dominican Mayor of Waterbury.

about you returning to New York and CUNY—both places that nurtured and developed you. It is a beautiful thing to witness, and it speaks to your impact, your heart, your influence, and your legacy of love for students. Well done!

The Tamarack staff, past and present, join
Continued on page 3

'Damned if you do, damned if you don't.'

Nicole Hayes

As the saying goes, "When White folks catch a cold, Black people get pneumonia." Though COVID-19 spares no race, age, or ethnicity in its global attack, in the United States Black and Brown communities are being disproportionately affected by this deadly disease. Many people are asking: Why? Some experts believe several factors are contributing to high infection and mortality rates, such as high rates of co-morbidities — heart disease, cancer, asthma, and other illnesses that are prevalent in Black and Brown communities.

The most obvious yet unspeakable answer to why America's most disadvantaged communities are impacted by this virus is structural racism. According to Dr. Angela M. Odoms-Young, structural racism, "refers to the totality of ways, in which societies foster racial discrimination, via mutually reinforcing inequitable systems (e.g. housing, employment, earnings, benefits, credit, media, health care, criminal justice, etc.)." Public health officials tracking racial disparities in COVID-19 case outcomes are shining a light on the endurance of structural racism in the U.S.

Many people living in densely populated neighborhoods are still negatively impacted by the legacy of redlining. This discriminatory practice promoted racial segregation and contributes to overcrowding and poor living conditions in urban neighborhoods. Cities are reporting high numbers of deaths associated with COVID-19 located in predominantly Black and Brown neighborhoods where families often reside in multigenerational homes and face unique challenges while sheltering in

place. COVID-19 has a high infection rate and social distancing inside these homes is nearly impossible.

It is also important to note that many of these densely populated neighborhoods are food deserts, lack proper healthcare access, and are more likely to rely on public transportation. Pew Research concluded, "Among urban residents, 34% of Blacks and 27% of Hispanics report taking public transit daily or weekly, compared with only 14% of Whites. Foreign-born urban residents are more likely than urban dwellers born in the U.S. to regularly use public transportation (38% vs. 18%)." Additionally, this urban-dwelling demographic is more likely to be employed at jobs considered "essential businesses"; often in the service sector, exposing them to frequent public contact, thereby increasing their chances of infection.

Black and Brown people are more likely to succumb to this deadly disease because these communities have high rates of co-morbidities. Dealing with prejudice and discrimination leads to higher levels of certain illnesses, such as high blood pressure and chronic stress for those being targeted. Environmental factors also contribute to poorer health outcomes for minorities. Air pollution is a major environmental issue impacting every race and ethnicity, but certain areas in this nation have higher levels of air pollutants because of toxic chemicals from factories.

For example, Louisiana has one of the

most toxic air qualities in the U.S., and residents who live along the lower Mississippi River are 50 times more likely to have cancer and develop asthma. Many Black Americans live along the lower Mississippi Delta region tracing back to slavery when they escaped and created maroon communities.

One of New York's most unhealthy counties, the Bronx, has a neighborhood known as "asthma alley" because of its high levels of air pollutants. The Bronx has the highest COVID-19 death rate of all boroughs. Black and Brown people account for 51 percent of NYC's population, but 62 percent of the city's coronavirus deaths come from these communities.



Uncovering why Black and Brown people are disproportionately affected by this pandemic does not require special investigative

task forces—a bit of historical background will connect the dots. The American healthcare system has historically dismissed the concerns of Black people, especially Black women, resorting to pseudoscience that Black people have higher pain tolerances and are immune to certain illnesses because they are "Magical Negroes." With COVID-19, ignoring early symptoms has consequences as this disease proves to be deadly, especially for those whose immune systems are vulnerable.

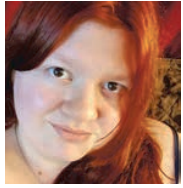
According to biotech data firm Rubix Life Sciences, a review of recent billing information reveals ongoing racial disparities in the American healthcare system. Black Amer-

icans, even when showing symptoms of COVID-19, were less likely to receive tests. Black and Brown Americans are at greater risk of being uninsured. A 2010-2018 analysis from Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation displays the rates of uninsured individuals categorized by race and ethnicity. At the top of the list for most uninsured are America's indigenous people 21.8%, Hispanics 19.0%, and Black 11.5%. Many uninsured American workers, especially immigrants of varying immigration statuses, are employed at businesses where working from home is not an option, increasing their chances of being exposed to the virus. Once infected, they are reluctant to turn to a healthcare system that is inaccessible to most.

As the system works to avoid being overrun, there is an emphasis on personal responsibility. Recent guidelines from the CDC suggest — and now some cities and states mandate — that people should wear nonsurgical face masks while out in public. The masks are intended to prevent asymptomatic people from unknowingly transmitting the virus to others. However, despite the potential health benefits, many people of color are resistant to wearing masks in public as they can also create problems.

In March, two Black men wearing surgical masks inside a Walmart in Wood River, IL recorded themselves being followed by a police officer who wrongly told them wearing masks was against the city ordinance. Even during a pandemic, Black and Brown bodies are still perceived as dangerous—even when trying to protect themselves against a deadly disease. Many Black and Brown people feel unsafe wearing masks in our racialized society, as it increases their odds of being racially profiled. Hence a "Damned if you do, damned if you don't" attitude. Navigating a society that criminalizes Blackness has emphasized another deadly disease that has yet to be eradicated.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



Burning Bridges

When I first started at NVCC almost four and a half years ago, I was 17 and had no idea what I wanted to do. As far as I was concerned, I didn't want to do anything. I was struggling with depression; content with my toxic group of friends, I had no motivation or confidence in myself. This is why I tackled each semester only two classes at a time.

Almost three years ago I lost one of my best friends to suicide, and the recovery period changed my life. From fall 2017 to spring 2018, I lost most of my old "friends" due to my newfound voice, but during the second half of the spring semester I built new relationships. I changed my major, and attended clubs such as the Creative Writing Club, Safe Space (now Pride Alliance), and *The Tamarack*.

NVCC became my home away from home; most of the time I didn't even want to go home. (Don't get me wrong, my family is great, but with new additions to the household there have been growing pains.) Here, I've found some amazing professors who have changed my life, such as Nikki McGary (the spark that lit a fire in me on my academic journey), Steve Parlato, Chris Rempfer, and Kate Pelletier. I can't thank them enough for the role they've played as advisors, as role models, and as just generally wonderful people.

I admit, the past two semesters I've been stalling a little when it comes to leaving. It's just hard to let go of the familiar and move on to the unknown. There was something in me, like a tightness in my chest, and I just knew I wasn't ready to leave. But going into this semester, my chest was light; there was a feeling of completion. I know now, I am ready. I've gotten enough nourishment that I'm ready to spread my wings.

My professor and advisor Nikki McGary once told me she thinks I need to go out and fly on my own, because she knows I can. I feel it too. I will always remember what this institution has done for me, and I look forward to the future, wherever that may take me.

I've made a lot of friends here, and I'm sad that, with the COVID-19 virus, we will not get to experience all the events of our last semester in full. I would've liked some time to say a proper goodbye to the school and all the connections I've made. So, I'll just say it now.

Goodbye, familiar faculty and staff. Goodbye to all the people I've passed in the halls whose names I've never learned. Goodbye to the room where I met my first love. Goodbye to all you readers. It has been a privilege to write for *The Tamarack*. And finally, goodbye to all my friends. NVCC, it's been a pleasure, and I wish you all the best.

Gwenydd Miller
Editor-in-Chief
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Signing Off

Steve Parlato, Faculty Advisor

Editing May content, I'm verklempt; see, I hate end-of-an-era stuff. I sobbed through final episodes of *The Carol Burnett Show*, *M*A*S*H**, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. This feels similar, for the sense of loss and the choice to end on a high note, as those shows did. I didn't embrace that attitude as a young viewer, but I appreciate it now. Leave while still proud of the quality. And proud I am — of my staff, our vision, our good, hard work.

Inheriting this gig from Juleyka Lantigua-Williams in late May 2015, I was

equally excited and trepidatious (okay, more trepidatious, imagining public failure). I was fortunate to have the support of Professor Ray Leite at the start. Still, the steep learning curve involved sleepless nights and an expanding vocabulary of curse words. Thankfully, the blessing of incredible people has continued. While thanking every contributor would add several pages, I must acknowledge a few.

My original partner, Chelsea (Clow) Wells, was a brilliant Editor-in-Chief, chasing work, providing wise counsel, shepherding our troops on a Manhattan field trip. Christopher Gordon, a most reliable leader, brought his own brand of excellence. My two years with Alam Khan, whose humble, compassionate spirit, and military bearing, kept edit meetings on track, were a gift. My current right hand, Gwenydd Miller, tackles the role with courage and compassion. Friends, I am eternally grateful.

Several writers exceeded occasional contributions, earning the title, Senior Staff Writer. Rich Bosco and Nicole Hayes came first; their commitment to social justice set a new standard for *The Tamarack*. Alexander Wilson eagerly accepted that baton, continuing to enlighten readers about vital issues. The prolific Mitchell Maknis has enriched us with engaging cultural content. Kathleen Chesto brought exemplary writing, gentle guidance, generosity of spirit. Most recently, Shyanne Caporuscio has been wonderful, a caring, insightful force even pre-pandemic.

Our monthly columnists (former and

current) turned personal passion into informative, entertaining—often prize-winning—content. Alexander, Alyssa, Anjelika, Bonnie, Chelsea, Chris, Emily, Gwen, Irisa, Jaime, Jess, Joan, John, Katherine, Kathy, Keila, Khan, Nicole, Nicole Z., Rick, Shayne, Shyanne, Steve, and Tabitha, words cannot express my gratitude for your steady stream of thoughtful, inspiring work. I also appreciate my CFT colleagues for generously providing engaging, teaching-themed content.

Three unsung heroes deserve recognition: Mads Sheikh, 2020 Class Salutatorian and Managing Editor, as campus liaison, helped fill our pages with awesome stuff. Those pages have been artfully created, since before my tenure, by Janice Biel-



awa, her designer's eye matched by her gracious manner. Special thanks to my wife, Janet, for assuring me "You'll love working with students on something creative"; as usual, she was right. At times, we regretted my decision: when I received a letter from the KKK, got blowback for calling out white privilege, and panicked over

lack of content. In retrospect, it's the joy I'll most remember (and the curse words).

Since my start, each semester—heck, sometimes each week—has brought *Tamarack* goodbyes and hellos. This made the experience both especially challenging and deeply rewarding. As my final article celebrates all those I've known, I also welcome Professor Chris Rempfer, next up to fill this spot. I look forward to witnessing how Chris's deeply creative nature and boundless enthusiasm guide the newspaper into a bright new era.

T.S. Eliot wrote, "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons." These past five years — ten semesters, forty issues, who-knows-how-many words — I've measured life by deadlines and publication dates, editorials and invoices. At the start, I was uncertain but deeply committed to the task. I won't deny it's sometimes been overwhelming, but at its finish, I am satisfied. My role with *The Tamarack* sometimes forced me into discomfort, but that process helped me to find my voice, transforming me into a better ally, a better teacher, a more invested person. As I leave behind some of the richest, most enriching work of my life, I can only say, "I'm so glad we had this time together."

SGA PRESIDENT

No Regrets
(Well, maybe a couple)

This is my last SGA column and my last month as SGA President. It's a position I've held since 2018, and it feels weird to leave it behind. I've loved every moment of being president, even the moments I've hated. There have been ups and downs, and I've been stressed, but it all feels worth it in the end. As I look toward my future, I begin to reminisce over all the moments that got me where I am. I think of all the people in my life who've helped me on my journey, and I thank them all. It's unfortunate I won't be able to thank them and say goodbye in person.

Realistically, this is not how I imagined spending my last months at NVCC. I imagined happy tears and that warm summer feeling you get right before school's about to end. I'm finally the cool, older, graduating student, and I don't even get to bask in the coolness. Without a graduation, I feel like I'm missing out on some form of closure. I had an awful time at my high school graduation, so I was looking forward to this one being different.

I wanted to take pictures with friends and favorite professors—something I didn't do at my high school graduation. I wanted a Leadership Banquet to get all dressed up for and to celebrate my peers' achievements. I knew saying goodbye would be difficult, but I don't feel like I'm getting a chance to say goodbye. When I move on, there will always be something in the back of my mind that will reflect that my time at NVCC suddenly just ended.

And it's not just the grand things I'll miss; I'll miss the less obvious things: going to the cafe to buy a sandwich, rushing to class when I'm late. I'll miss sitting in my office early in the morning or late at night while no one's on campus. I'll miss my boyfriend surprising me with coffee at the library while I'm working. These are the little things you can only appreciate when you know it'll be your last time doing them. As I reflect, I realize I took little moments for granted, and there's nothing I can do but acknowledge them. As cliché as it sounds, I realize I have to appreciate the little moments while I have them.

I know. I've made this sound all sad, but it isn't all sad. I am actually incredibly excited to move on and get my degree, even if it isn't how I anticipated I'd be doing it. I'm grateful for all the opportunities NVCC has provided me, and I'm grateful for everyone who's been in my life because of NVCC. I'm happy to be opening a new chapter in my life and to be growing up. I can't thank all of you enough. I wish my graduating and continuing peers the best of luck. I love you all dearly, but I think I'm ready to be just Tabitha Cruz for a while and not Tabitha Cruz, SGA President.

Regards,
Tabitha Cruz

Gold-Medal Skate

Christian Soto

Decades ago, a unique sport came into being. Every sport has its ups and downs, but the beauty of this one would be the way in which it was created. It started off so simple, with people attaching roller skates to surfboards. This idea definitely made an impact and has been an ultimate push for this entertaining, yet challenging sport called skateboarding. Unfortunately, society at the time frowned upon it, mainly because they thought teenagers were degenerates.

Sadly, this led to a chaotic state where the government started banning skateboarding around the world. Essentially, police were arresting people who insisted on skateboarding in banned areas. In addition, the sport was seen as very dangerous, even with skate-

boarders wearing helmets, knee and elbow pads.

As the sport progressed, it became popular with a range of people. Many were into it, regardless of age or of the bans going on. It led people to realize kids, teens, and even adults were skating to have a fun experience with a board. Eventually, people started accepting it more and more, and recognizing the many key elements and skills it took to be a good skater.

I truly appreciate this sport, and I'm not alone. For example, sport events like

X-Games were created and started popularizing the extreme sport more than ever before.

The main athletes for this particular sport are Tony Hawk and Rodney Mullen, who made

vert and street skating very popular. Moreover, Tony Hawk was featured in his own video game, known as, "Tony Hawk's Pro Skater."

His popularity introduced a good many people to the general scene of skateboarding. This game also involved many

other skateboard professionals, showcasing their own style of skating, which is unique.



This showed an audience the reality of skateboarding.

Some may still see it as simple, but it is a very involved sport with many aesthetics, along with a variety of styles that can be open to all people interested in it. Skateboarding has definitely come a long way. Proof of that is the fact that skateboarding will be included for the first time in the upcoming Summer Olympics.

Once it's featured in the Olympics, more people are sure to appreciate the skill it takes to excel at skateboarding. Just like any other Olympic sport, this will encourage people to learn about it and to grasp the overall quality of this fun-loving sport. History is continually being made, and I look forward to skateboarding gaining worldwide love and acceptance.

The Tamarack

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

Editorial

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EDITORIAL

Plague of Stupidity

Empirical data shows that, through a shared dilemma, people who dislike each other will forget petty issues and band together to solve a problem. Apparently, the real world doesn't care for scientific conclusions. Or at least Trump and the morons with their noses stuck up his hind end don't. But we already knew the braindead lump of orange wasn't a man for science. Or facts. The world's in global crisis, and we're on our own. This president and his lackies are a joke, refusing to do their part, while criticizing governors for not doing more.

There is a federal surplus of medical resources 45 won't send out to states in most need as a GLOBAL PANDEMIC overtakes us. According to Jared Kushner, an advisor whose job is based on nepotism not actual intelligence, the surplus is for federal emergencies. Clearly, U.S. governors forced to beg for medical supplies in states running low due to a pandemic doesn't qualify. Heaven forbid some businesses stay closed for a few more weeks. Aren't the stores in danger of running out of money the same ones who pay workers crap?

If I remember my Republican bullshit propaganda, only one reason exists for not being able to stay solvent when bad times hit, and that is laziness. So, by Republican logic, all these insolvent businesses are simply lazy, and laziness shouldn't be bankrolled. It's against Republican logic to support that which provides nothing in return. Yet here we are.

From the start of this pandemic, the response seemed wrong; it's obvious why: Trump failed back in January by not taking COVID-19 seriously. Now he divides the country and prompts his equally stupid followers to attack individuals who have ZERO fault for this pandemic. His latest great idea? Instigating idiotic protests against social distancing shutdowns.

As the death toll rises due to his malignant narcissism, Trump continues to congratulate himself. This is not a wartime president. This not a Pearl Harbor Moment. This is a plague of stupidity masquerading as legitimate governance.



December 2019 Confluencia with, from left, reader, Kathleen Chesto; moderator, Steve Parlato, and SGA President Tabitha Cruz.

President *Continued from page 1*

in expressing deep appreciation and best wishes as our campus leader embarks on her next phase. President De Filippis, with sincerest gratitude we reflect on your constant support and pride in our efforts. Our collective vision—to shed light on social inequity, to speak for the voiceless, and to work locally

and globally for a better, more just world—is one you have shared, appreciated, and always supported. For being an example of these ideals, we thank you. ~ The Tamarack Staff and Steve Parlato, Faculty Advisor

Madam President, your NVCC Family joins in gratitude to wish you continued success!

Congratulations to NVCC Graduating Class of 2020!

Faculty Senate

Dear Class of 2020:

On behalf of all Naugatuck Valley Community College faculty, we would like to commend and congratulate you on your remarkable achievement! You are the first—and hopefully only—class ever in the 50+ year history of our college to complete your degrees remotely. We recognize and applaud the powerful level of commitment, persistence, and self-discipline it has taken to reach your goal. You have not only demonstrated the knowledge and skills required for your degrees but have also exemplified a rare level of resilience that ensures future success regardless of any obstacles or challenges that may come your way.

We have been proud of every quiz you have aced, every project you have completed, every club you have run, and every event you have planned. We have been proud of those of you who have stumbled,

picked yourselves up, and made it to the finish line semester by semester. We will miss standing on the stage at the Palace cheering as you receive your degrees, but you should know that we have been cheering for you every day since you first stepped foot on campus, and while you may only be able to hear us remotely, we will be applauding throughout the next phase of your life's journey. You have made us, your friends, and families incredibly proud. Congratulations!

Naugatuck Valley Community College Faculty Senate

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Between the Bookends News from the NVCC Library

A Digital Resource for Faculty

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

In light of our continued remote work, I wanted to remind everyone the NVCC Library subscribes to Swank Digital Campus! What this means is that faculty can request the purchase of streaming feature films and documentaries for your classes and clubs! Once we purchase a title, we'll have access to it for one year. Faculty can post it in Blackboard, and you and your students will be able to watch it from your own devices.

Here's how to get started:

1. Visit Swank at <http://nvcc.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://digitalcampus.swankmp.net/naugatuckvalley364150>
2. Create an Instructor account using whatever email address you'd like (it doesn't have to be your college email).
3. Check your email for the confirmation and click on the verification link.
4. Search for titles or click on Advanced Search to search by category (you can also just click on the Search button on that page to show all titles).
5. If you find something you like, click the Request button and complete the request form.
6. When your title is confirmed, we'll email you the link for sharing and embedding

in Blackboard.

(Note: visit <https://swankmp.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/SP/pages/129905976/Instructor+User+Accounts> for more detailed directions with videos and screenshots)

Titles we already own will show on the homepage. Feel free to use them, too! We now have the following videos available:

- 12 Angry Men (1957)
- Arrival (2016)
- A Beautiful Mind (2001)
- The Company Men (2010)
- Concussion (2015)
- Fences (2016)
- Frida (2002)
- Life is Beautiful (1997)
- The Motorcycle Diaries (2004)

Please let us know if you have any questions, contact us if you have other digital needs. We're here (in virtual form, anyway) to help. Thank you for your support!

Jaime Hammond

The Weakest Link Cybersecurity Series Part 3

Steven Jones

In this final installment of this series I'll leave you with a ray of hope, that you're not a hapless victim of some hacker or cyber-clown who wants to rip you off.



**UPDATES,
UPDATES,
UPDATES**

Most vulnerabilities in both computers and mobile devices result from outdated software, both system and application. This should be your first step in getting your cyber-house in order. If you're not the type to check regularly if you have the latest versions, you can set your device to automatically look for and download the latest upgrades. Most newer apps, both Android and iPhone, do this.

SECURITY APPS

Just like your PC, you'll want to consider native or third-party apps to inform you of potential threats, as well as handle actual threats that attempt to glom onto your device. The following two sites—one Android, one iPhone—are a good start to begin your search:

<https://www.tomsguide.com/best-picks/best-android-antivirus>

Tom's Guide lists several anti-virus apps to consider. What I like about this site is it gives you pluses and minuses about each recommendation. There are a number of video tutorials to educate you on the different choices presented. It also tells what you get for free versus, how much the paid version gives you, so you can decide if it's worth the investment. Remember, hackers are spending lots of time and money looking for you; don't cheap out on one hand and end up getting hacked. That is always more expensive.

<https://top8antivirus.com/ios-antivirus-comparison/>

This site gives a comparison of eight competing products for the iPhone. It lists whether they offer free trials (all of them do) as well as what you'd pay for the protection it offers. The yearly cost for the paid versions runs \$19.95 to \$129.99. All offer more than just anti-virus; some offer personal firewalls, advanced parental controls, anti-phishing, etc.

All in One Security:

Many mobile providers have security suites as well. I have AT&T, which offers their *AT&T Mobile Security* product. Features include:

- Device security: checks if you have the latest upgrades to your phone's operating system.

- Breach reports: Input information about services you use, such as shopping establishments (Macy's, Walmart), and they inform you of reports of data breaches from these businesses.

- Wi-Fi Security: checks whether a Wi-Fi connection looks safe. If not, it automatically turns on its VPN (Virtual Private Network) to protect your communication of your current wireless access point.

- Safe Browsing: Evaluates any URLs (websites) you visit to make sure they aren't rogue sites, one way hackers infect the unsuspecting consumer.

For this service I pay \$3.99/mo which annualizes to \$47.88 (taxes not included). The safe browsing sometimes is too restrictive, and sites which you normally visit and know to be safe may not load. In that case, I recommend turning this off and on. When I'm traveling, though, all the services are on. That's my best advice to avoid becoming...the weakest link!



Women's Center The Other PPE

Nicole Hayes/Julia Petitfrere

Inadequate access to menstrual products is an ongoing global struggle, and, with many losing jobs due to this pandemic, an increase in period poverty is certain. Disposable menstrual products, considered luxury items, are often subject to gender-based taxes (sometimes called a pink tax). Gender-based discrimination costs the average woman an extra \$1,351 yearly through taxes on everyday objects and services, such as home health items, personal care, and menstrual products. People surviving check-to-check, most vulnerable to these taxes, must often choose between food and menstrual products. This shortage will likely force desperate people to resort to unhygienic methods.

Organizations like Dana Marlowe's "I Support Girls" work to provide greater access to menstrual products across America. This non-profit organization distributes essential items—bras, underwear, and menstrual products—to women experiencing financial hardships, homelessness, and other forms of distress. Marlowe emphasized, "Periods don't stop for pandemics. And in times of disasters, like global pandemics, it's easy to overlook basic essentials folks need for their dignity." Menstrual hygiene is a human rights issue.

As a result of stay-at-home orders implemented to tackle the pandemic, many who can afford to do so have resorted to bulk purchase of menstrual products, leaving most shelves empty or scattered with high-priced name brand goods. Individuals who cannot afford bulk purchases are often left with no real sanitary options. Some hardest hit by the shortage are those who recently lost their jobs indefinitely.

The need is great. Receiving over 600 emails asking for donations of menstrual

products from across America, Marlowe's organization donated 900,000 menstrual products in March alone—an increase of 700,000 compared to March 2019 donations. The increase in requests correlates with the fact that many organizations offering free menstrual products, such as shelters and schools, have closed in efforts to help stop COVID-19's spread. These necessary closures negatively impact an already vulnerable population.

There is, too, the issue of price gouging. Some businesses take advantage of closures and lack of accessibility to essential items by drastically raising prices, including price gouging menstrual products. Price gouging laws differ state to state, and some companies have implemented their own policies to combat this problem. eBay recently implemented a policy temporarily prohibiting sales of certain products in high demand, including tampons, over concerns about price gouging.

It is not only challenging to find menstrual products locally, but also online. Amazon issued a statement March 17th that they will prioritize essential items, temporarily halting non-Amazon packages, and suspending third-party delivery services. That means packages coming from Amazon are less likely to arrive in the usual Prime two-day shipping window. Most popular menstrual product brands on Amazon's website can take anywhere from four to six days to arrive.

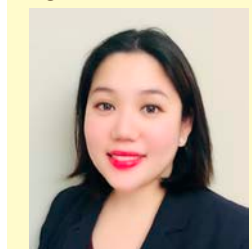
When searching for menstrual products online, Tampax offers a tool to locate products closest to the consumer. In some densely-populated areas, people are directed out of state. For menstruating people, the uterine lining decides when the need begins, challenging Amazon's notion of "essential items" and timeliness. In desperate times, people who menstruate will use toilet paper, rags, cloths, and adult diapers to contain their flow. During a pandemic, menstrual hygiene is a human rights issue. In regular times, menstrual hygiene is a human rights issue. All the time, menstrual hygiene is a human rights issue.

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE IS A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE.

Face from the ACE Associate Director

Aimee Tiu Wu

Hi, everyone! My name is Aimee Tiu Wu. I joined the ACE last February, and it has been a journey of growth and learning since. Because of this unprecedented



global crisis, we have moved our services at the ACE online. Aside from supporting the daily activities at the ACE, I am charged with the mSI (Modified Supplemental Instruction) program. With the sudden shift to online instruction, I am very proud to be part of such a dynamic and compassionate team of educators and tutors who deeply care about reaching our students during these challenging times. My team and I communicate daily via Microsoft Teams, and I'm very grateful that

we have this platform to continue serving our students.

I came from a multicultural background. I was born in Manila, Philippines and moved to Vancouver, Canada when I was 10. After college, I decided to travel and ended up living in Beijing, China for three years studying Chinese while teaching English. That was how I discovered my passion for teaching. I started out as an ESL instructor and later on went for my Masters in TESOL at New York University. Shortly after that, I pursued a doctorate in Adult Education and Leadership at Teachers College Columbia University.

I love being an educator and have always worked in the higher education space. The knowledge and perspective on adult learning have strengthened my teaching skills as well as my ability to reflect in and on action as Donald Schön describes it. As an adult educator, I am deeply passionate in the areas of collaborative and appreciative inquiry, women's leadership, mentoring, and diversity.

I am also a mom of three kids, so multitasking and managing multiple balls in the

Alumni Showcase A Transformed Man

Richard Bosco

Hello, NVCC! My name is Richard Bosco. Some of you may recognize my name as a sometime contributor to *The Tamarack*. Many of you may not know that I'm also an alumnus of NVCC, having graduated in



spring 2015. I have since gone on to UConn Waterbury and will be graduating with my long-pursued bachelor's degree this month. Academically, I plan on attending graduate school at SCSU this fall to pursue a master's degree in history. But this is just a small part of Richard Bosco.

NVCC has been a part of my life on and off since 1974, when I took my first class at Mattatuck Community College. I have taken classes here at NVCC from basic academics to aviation science, finally culminating in an associate degree in General Studies in 2015. But when I returned to NVCC in 2012 to earnestly work on a degree is when I truly realized what a gem of an academic institution NVCC had become. I cannot say enough how proud I am to be an alumnus of NVCC.

Since my 2012 return, I've been in awe of the quality of the professors, staff, and administration of this college. It is the professors I've had, the staff in our library, the advisors in CAPSS, and the tutors in the ACE, as well as our Deans and President who have transformed me into a man who is determined, in the twilight of my life, to become a scholar and educator.

Since entering work life, I've sought to improve the lot of humanity, first, as a para-professional healthcare worker, and then as a professional working for over 45 years as a caregiver, EMT, firefighter, and as a manager in state government.

Now, with the experiences and drive NVCC has reignited in me, I foresee my future work continuing well into the last years of my lifetime. I intend to work to help students, as an educator and scholar. As a writer, my goal is to expose societal injustices and improve the quality of life for all. Thanks to Naugatuck Valley Community College and all the fine people who work here, and those I have met here, I believe my life to be fuller and more rewarding than at any other time. Thank you, NVCC!

Advisor's Note: In Rich Bosco, I found not only a dedicated and enthusiastic student, but a peer and colleague. While he's too humble to say so, during his tenure with The Tamarack, Rich, our first Senior Staff Writer, worked tirelessly to contribute excellent content. However, his impact goes beyond the work he did for this newspaper. He has enriched my life with his creativity, loyalty, and friendship; I'm proud to call him brother.

~ Prof. Steve Parlato

air is my daily thing—more so now that many parents have become overnight homeschoolers. In order for me to stay organized, I do careful planning on weekends, look through the week's schedule every morning, and remain open to handling different tasks ahead of time or accept the fact that plans fall through. Amidst all of this, I learned I can be flexible and I'm ok with things not being what I had envisioned. This newfound flexibility (aka kindness to myself) has helped me as a parent, as well as an instructor in the classroom, where there are many different personalities and learning styles. For fun, I love to bake and cook. My kids love my homemade sushi and Filipino spaghetti.

We, at the ACE, miss seeing you all—your smiling faces and your energy. We are here for you and look forward to serving you. To connect with us, go to nv.edu, then go to Student Virtual Supports, and click Tutoring Services. Fill out the form called ACE Online Tutoring, and a tutor will be in touch with you via Microsoft Teams.

Community Care and Congratulations!

With NVCC's closure, students are missing interactions and celebrations that typically mark the end of spring semester. Here are messages of support and congratulations from faculty and staff, clearly missing these traditions—and their students—as well.

To all my current and past students ~

I've missed your in-person smiles and our hallway and classroom conversation these past weeks. But I've also been amazed and sustained by your continued willingness to learn and to engage in thinking about psychology even while you worry and wait. If you're leaving NVCC for new adventures, please let me know where your new plans take you. I hope you move into the summer making time for self-care and moments of joy. ~ With love, Dr. Kim O'Donnell

Congratulations to all the Accounting Majors! I am honored to have been part of your journey. Whatever your future path, I know you will build on the very strong foundation you created at NVCC.

~ Professor Elma Solomon

Dear Students,

The preciousness of your presence cannot be overstated. I miss you so much and am praying for you and your families to be protected, healthy, and safe.

~ Assoc. Professor Kate Pelletier

Congratulations! I am very proud of our NVCC graduates this year. Please take the chances life offers entering your next chapter. You have worked very hard to earn a degree, so enjoy your accomplishment; it is well deserved. Finally, I leave you with advice from Harvey Mackay: "Life is too short to wake up in the morning with regrets, so love the people who treat you right, forget about the ones who don't, and believe that everything happens for a reason. If you get a chance, take it. If it changes your life, let it. Nobody said life would be easy, they just promised it would be worth it."

~ Professor Sandra Eddy

Congratulations to the graduating members of the Black Student Union: Jyrel Hawk, Elijah Jones, Shakera Jones, Elizabeth Ortiz, and Jonathan Small. Whatever the next step...we know you will shine.

~ Professors Elma Solomon and Julia Pettifre, B.S.U. Co-Advisors

Having taught in our community college system since 2003, mostly at NVCC, it is very hard not to be holding regular class meetings. Over the years, assisting students with education and career planning in Criminal Justice has been an honor. Former students are now working in the Waterbury Police Department, the Connecticut State Police, and elsewhere including the United States Secret Service. My permanent email is geraldhikel@hotmail.com if I can be of assistance in any way. ~ Jerry Hikel

Dear Students,

While I've missed sharing a classroom

with you, I'm impressed so many of you continue to do excellent work despite this major disruption. For those graduating, though I'll miss seeing you at the Palace, I'll be cheering your accomplishments, beaming with pride from home. ~ Parlato

Dear Students,

I have missed our shared time in the studio together, but the work you are doing at home is spectacular! I'm proud of how you're handling your schoolwork, families, and jobs through these difficult times, and I recognize each of you is having a different experience. I hope those graduating are able to take time to celebrate your accomplishments. Congratulations, Class of 2020!

~ Wishing you all the best, Professor Amanda Lebel

To our amazing students!

I have missed seeing all of you in the classroom, in our busy hallways and in wonderful events that we all share together! Your ability to thrive and transition in these unprecedented times has been remarkable and a testament to your resilience! Continue to forge ahead in all you do, whether graduating or looking forward to upcoming semesters. I am proud of each one of you! Remember to reach out and stay connected!

~ My best, always! Prof. Donna DeLieto Marotti

Maya Angelou wrote, "God puts rainbows in the clouds so that each of us—in the dreariest and most dreaded moments—can see a possibility of hope." I miss seeing the smiling faces of both students and colleagues. The thought of missing all those big NVCC spring events where we get to celebrate the accomplishments of our students—especially graduation and those special moments when we get to hug and cheer for so many of you—it makes me sad for all of us.

Now that a little over a month has passed, and I've had the opportunity to see and talk to so many of you and hear about your successes in this new normal, I realize how strong the NVCC family is and that we will not only still be able to celebrate each other, but that we will also be OK. Congratulations to all our graduates; I'm sitting here at home cheering for you and sending virtual hugs! ~ Sue Houlihan

Dear Graduates,

The purpose of a good education is to provide you with roots and wings. Roots to help you stay grounded, and wings to help you soar. Look at how far you have come. Now continue to fly toward your dreams! May you achieve your goals and overcome challenges along the way. It's not always easy, but never forget the roots and wings you already have. As Sufi poet Rumi wrote, "Your legs will get heavy and tired. And then comes the moment of feeling the wings you've grown, lifting." Keep in touch so we can hear about your journey! ~ Warmly, Dr. Nikki McGary

My belief is that we all must rely on HOPE. As Emily Dickinson expressed so well, "Hope

is the thing with feathers/That perches in the soul". With hope, we will all get through these difficult times. To all our NVCC community, Don't ever give it up! ~ Prof. Lou Lombard

Dear Students,

I hope this message finds you all well and settling into your online classes. Until we're all back on campus, be well, stay healthy, and enjoy the remainder of the semester. ~ Dean Gager

Just this morning, as I clicked through the channels, I stopped on QVC and heard the most apropos message, "Life is not easy. Life is not perfect. Life is good!" The simplicity of the message, on a tee shirt no less, caused me to reflect upon all I've learned since March 13th. Despite Webex freezing and my continued speaking while on mute, I've marveled at how many of my students have persevered, stayed engaged, supported each other, checked on me, and answered each other's questions. It's a precious gift to see how kind and generous you are with yourself and others. I miss you all! Yet, my heart smiles, for in my mind's eye, we are still together—learning, smiling and laughing with each other! ~ Professor Kathy Taylor

AMTC Students

I so miss seeing you all in person! So many of you are graduating this semester...I applaud all you have done to stay engaged during this time to get yourselves to your goal of certification. A summer celebration for sure! ~ Deirdre D'Amore

Dear Students,

Just a note to let you know I am thinking of you and wishing we could be interacting as we always have, in person. Know I am cheering for you and here to support your success in any way I can! For those graduating, Congratulations! You should be proud! For those who have more coursework to complete, I look forward to seeing you soon in the halls and in our classrooms.

*"You're braver than you believe,
Stronger than you seem,
And Smarter than you think."*

Winnie the Pooh

~ Professor Christine Cocchiola

Congratulations to you, NVCC Class of 2020! Over the last several years we have watched you studying in ACE, the library, in groups along the fifth-floor corridor; we've seen you help one another, volunteer in the community, showcase your extraordinary talents and skills through artistic performances, blood drives, STEM events, and in many other ways. Your perseverance—especially through these last couple of months—demonstrates to us that whatever you choose to do next, you will do well. We hope we have enriched your lives as much as you have enriched ours. Good luck as you take the next step in your life's adventures, and know you will always be part of the NVCC family. ~ Best wishes to you, from Lisa Dresdner (Dr. Dre), Dean of Academic Affairs.



Success Come What May

As we usher in the month of May, which is typically a beautiful time of spring flowers, sunshine, warm days, and the end of another academic year, I'm struck not only by the stark contrast of prior Mays, but also the amazing similarities, too. We are all faced with a new reality, that no one could have imagined; an extended time of home confinement, continued online learning, working remotely or working in the face of a constant threat of exposure. But we are also faced with the beauty of blossoming flowers, the warmth of sunny days, pending graduation and celebration, albeit different from prior years. May is still a time of rebirth and celebration, maybe even more so in light of all we are currently facing.

I've been amazed by the strength, perseverance, and caring I've witnessed throughout the past month. From students, faculty, and staff, to my community, the state, and across the nation, people have risen above the heartache and fear to band together and combat this disease with care, compassion and connection. I'm in awe of the power of the human spirit and the ability for so many to weather this difficult storm, especially the students of NVCC. If I had to come up with one word to describe what I've witnessed through this pandemic, it would be resilience.

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), resilience is described as "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress." Many of you never asked for online learning, yet here you are, rising to the challenge, to master (or at least use) new technology, communicate in new modalities, learn new material, and ultimately, complete the semester. And you're doing this while also adapting to changes in family responsibilities, overcoming financial challenges, and dealing with personal and physical stressors.

If a pandemic doesn't meet the definition of adversity and trauma, I'm not sure what would. Yet here you are, at the end of the semester, and for many, the end of your academic career at NVCC. This may not be the end you envisioned; the celebrations may be smaller or held on a screen, but you should be extremely proud of what you've accomplished. Whether it's a degree, a certificate, or your first semester of classes, you made it, despite a pandemic!

Your resilience, strength, and maybe some love and care from others, got you through. We may not be able to witness the end of the semester in the same way this May, but know that the love, congratulations, and pride are still there, tenfold this time, for all that you've overcome in the process. Best of luck to the Class of 2020, and I look forward to seeing everyone else back on campus soon!

Regards,

Bonnie Goulet,

Director of Student Development Services, and the CAPSS Office Staff

Hostage to Profits

Name Withheld

Like countless suddenly essential employees, I've been thinking about how the gravity of the coronavirus pandemic is irrelevant in the face of profit margins. We've been granted sick time, as well as paid time off, and encouraged to use it as we wish, especially following a positive case of COVID-19 at my store. However, when a co-worker requested a week off, they were asked why exactly they needed it.

Perhaps because we're in the midst of a global pandemic? Because customers are showing up to buy thousands of dollars of paint and related nonessential merchandise,

instead of staying the fuck home? Because social distancing isn't enforced? Because the state said no more than 100 people in one confined space, and the company said 150? Because we're short-staffed and exhausted? And maybe because so many workplace violations and a toxic workplace environment exist 365 days a year?

Workers must stand close to one another to complete orders and help idiots who can afford useless crap right

now. There aren't even three feet between employees and customers behind a desk. Customers are another level of reprehensible, berating employees for not having masks in stock, when masks aren't even provided for

our fucking selves! They're supposedly being sent to hospitals instead of the store. Yes, I believe doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals need them because of all they do. The point is we shouldn't be open to the public



On the Field

Brady to Tampa Bay

John Williams

After spending his first 20 NFL seasons in the AFC, former New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady officially joined the Tampa Bay Buccaneers March 20, 2020, signing a two-year contract. The move surprised many. Switching from the AFC to the NFC, Brady joins a Bucs roster ready to compete for a Lombardi Trophy. His weapons on offense provide the quarterback the best receiver duo the signal-caller's had in years.



On Instagram, Brady wrote, "Excited, humble and hungry...if there is one thing I have learned about football, it's that nobody cares what you did last year or the year before that...you earn trust and respect...through your commitment every single day. I'm starting a new football journey and thankful for the @buccaneers for giving me an opportunity to do what I love."

In recent years, Brady repeated his goal to play until age 45, but he and the Patriots couldn't agree on a contract extension. That created a path for Brady to explore free-agent options. The Bucs jumped quickly, offering one of the most talented young receiving tandems in the league in Pro Bowlers Mike Evans and Chris Godwin, who both eclipsed 1,100 yards last year despite playing partial seasons, along with two 6' 5" tight ends, Cameron Brate and O.J. Howard.

Brady's move to Tampa likely spells the end for current No. 1 quarterback Jameis Winston, winner of the 2013 Heisman Trophy. Winston, the No. 1 overall pick in the 2015 NFL draft, led the Bucs to a 7-9 record last season. He also became the first player in NFL history to throw 30 or more touchdowns and 30 interceptions in a season. The Buccaneers lost patience with Winston, an unrestricted free agent.

Head coach, Bruce Arians, considered an offensive mastermind, having led high-powered offenses in Pittsburgh and Arizona, was also Peyton Manning's quarterback coach in Indianapolis. Last season, Arians' first with Tampa Bay, the Buccaneers had the third-best offense in the NFL, averaging nearly 400 yards per game. Wide receiver Chris Godwin averaged 95 receiving yards per game, the league's second highest. Regardless how Brady performs in a new uniform, his legacy is established. In addition to six championships, nine Super Bowl appearances and 17 division titles, Brady has thrown for 74,571 yards and 541 touchdowns, trailing only Drew Brees of the New Orleans Saints in both categories.

Attention will be heaped on Tampa Bay, which hosts the Super Bowl next February. With only one winning season in the past decade, the Buccaneers haven't qualified for postseason since 2007 and haven't won a playoff game since 2002, when claiming their only Super Bowl championship. Hopefully, Brady's presence gets Tampa back in the playoffs. Will the Buccaneers win the NFC South division title? I can't wait to watch Brady and Brees battle for division dominance. At press time, I learned Rob Gronkowski is joining Brady. As a Bucs fan, I'm overjoyed they're joining my favorite team!



Vaya Con Dios, President De Filippis

Karlene Ball, HSU Advisor

The Hispanic Student (HSU) would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to

Dr. Daisy Cocco De Filippis for her mentoring and support of the members of our club during her time here at NVCC. We salute her because she is proud of her Hispanic heritage and in being so, she allows us the space to acknowledge our roots and celebrate the richness of our culture.

We stood in proud ovation of her at the many events in which she was recognized as a community treasure. We gained confidence every time she started a meeting in English and Spanish and ended with bendiciones. Over the

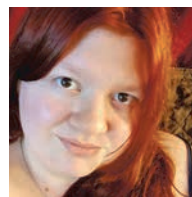
last few years especially, we've enjoyed meeting with her over the drinking of coffee, the sharing of poetry, and the singing of traditional songs from across Latin America.

We learned to recite Neruda and discuss her translation of Julia Alvarez' *A Cafecito Story, El cuento del Cafecito* in English and Spanish because some of us, though Hispanic, are learning Spanish from each other. We modeled her efforts as a club to celebrate together and educate each other about the vibrant and diverse culture that we are. There are not enough words to express our deep appreciation for her. What we most want to say to her is simply *Mil gracias y bendiciones*.

Most Important Meal

Gwenydd Miller

When I was a kid, my family had a weekly tradition. We'd go over my grandma's for dinner. My aunts and uncles were there. Some of my earliest memories are playing with my three older cousins, Chris, Kate, and Pat. We'd storm the house with imagination while the grown-ups talked. But first, we always had our big, sit-down dinner, a special meal: broccoli rabe. The full meal included Italian sausage, garlic, chicken broth, a bundle of broccoli rabe, and white beans. Cooked to perfection it was served over pasta, usually with some sort of dessert. It was Grandma's recipe (which she apparently got from an Olive Garden). It quickly became my favorite meal, which we had almost every week.



When my uncle married and moved into his new house, broccoli rabe night moved with him. My cousins, my sister, and would watch his big flat-screen on the screened-in porch, *SpongeBob* and *Teen Titans*, mostly. I remember, when I was seven, my first little cousin was born. I met her for the first time with the smell of broccoli rabe cooking on the stove. I remember scribbling with a green crayon at the table after dinner, trying to make grass in my picture. Grandma saw me and, in her British accent (to me, just her voice), said, "That's not how you're sup-

posed to draw!" But it was my picture, what did she know?

As time went on, my uncle got a new, bigger house, and I got two new cousins from my aunt in California. When they came to CT, we convened over broccoli rabe. I watched *Hannah Montana* with Cousin Kate, and we sang songs in her room. As I entered my teen years, there was such a gap between me and my cousins I felt we were drifting. But we always had dinner, an overfilled table with mix iced tea and enough food to go around. I started playing more with little cousin Lauren (I call her Cheese-puff); suddenly I was the role model, just like her brothers and sister were for me.

When I started college, it all stopped. We were so busy, broccoli rabe nights faded to memory. Then, two years ago, my grandma died due to an infection after surgery. A couple months later, we all got together again for broccoli rabe; it was like nothing had changed...aside from the gaping hole she left in our lives. Broccoli rabe, mix iced tea, raspberry cheese Danish, and lots of memories.

I learned to make this very important meal as a teenager. At the time, I just wanted my favorite meal. But now, during this time of uncertainty...making it is something special. Not only is it my favorite, it's the most important meal of my life. It connects me to the ones I love, and nothing can change that. Not time, not distance, not COVID-19, not even death. It's more than just a meal, it's a memory.

My Mom (very creative title)

Gwenydd Miller

May is a very big month for me. This year, on the 17th, not only will I have finished my last semester at NVCC, but I'll also officially be 22. It's sort of ironic that my birthday falls just a week away from Mothers' Day, because it celebrates the same thing from different perspectives. The 17th celebrates both the day I was brought into this world, and my mom becoming a mother of two. I'm not a huge fan of greeting card holidays, but Mothers' (and Fathers') Day are two I never miss—mostly because I'm scared, I'll be disowned if I do (kidding...sort of).

Looking back, my mom has done a lot for me, aside from just being my mom. Born in South Africa, she came to CT when she was 8. After my sister and I were born, she decided she would go through the process of homeschooling us. NVCC is the first academic institution I've attended, and thanks to my mom, I was able to flourish. She did all this while simultaneously earning her Bachelor's through Charter Oak. She now works in the New Haven school system as a paraprofessional. The way I grew up, and her current career both highlight the dedicated, caring woman she is. I'm proud to be her daughter. Happy Mothers' Day to all the moms!

Honoring Adjuncts

Dream Job

Danielle Dumont

Hello, NVCC Community! My name is Danielle Dumont, and I have been an Adjunct Professor here at NVCC for 22 years, which I realize is longer than many of you have been alive. It seems hard to believe it has been that long, since, in my head, I'm still 25 years old myself... though my grey hair tells me otherwise. I started teaching here right out of grad school in 1997. It was a dream come true.



I have always loved learning and always knew I wanted to be a teacher. When I was a child, I used to spend my weekends and summers "playing school" in my basement. I would teach my cat, my dolls, my sister, the neighborhood kids, basically anyone who would listen. I often tell my younger sister I directly contributed to her above average intelligence with my summer book reports and math tests. I may have exploited the lengths a child will go through to play with her older sister, but I know she enjoyed it.

So, to now have the opportunity to teach actual students and to help inspire a passion for learning truly is a dream come true for me. It's been 22 years, but I have not lost a bit of the passion I have for teaching; if anything, it has grown stronger. I teach Psychology (Intro / Lifespan/ Child Development) and IDS101 / FYE, and I absolutely love it.

Psychology is such a powerful subject to understand because it is the study of ourselves. The better we understand ourselves and why we do the things we do and think the things we think, the more fulfilled our life is and the more successful our interactions can be. I especially love teaching Introduction to Psychology because it is often a student's first experience with Psychology, and many are there only because it is a college requirement. I feel it is my mission to make them love Psychology and realize how beneficial it is to their life. I equate it to going to a new restaurant for the first time. If your first experience is good, and you like what you had, then you're more likely to go back again for more and tell your friends to try it out as well.

Once a student sees how much they can take away from Psychology to use in their own life and optimize their own personal outcomes, they are hooked. Someone once asked me what my favorite word was, and without a doubt, I would have to say "passion." I truly have a passion for teaching and shaping the minds and lives of my students. I have an eternal passion for learning. Every semester I say I learn as much from my students as they learn from me.

I have a deep passion for my family. I have been happily married for 18 years, and I have two amazing children. I have a strong passion for my faith as well. Not a day goes by that I do not thank God for all of the blessings he has bestowed upon me. Most of all, I have an immense passion for life. I truly believe life is a gift, and we must live each day to the fullest. I take nothing for granted, and I am so grateful for the blessing of each new day.

For Information On Clubs

SGA OFFICE, S519
Prism Lounge

Tamarack
EDIT MEETINGS

Tuesdays 2:30 pm, S519
ALL WELCOME!!

Face in the Crowd A Caring Creative

Jillian DeVirgilio

My name is Jillian. and I am a first-year student here at NVCC. I'm a Psychology major and hope to serve others as a therapist one day. Originally planning on attending an art school for photography, I switched majors and schools two days before my high school graduation. I believe that NVCC is an incredibly good school to start at, and I've met the kindest students and professors, more welcoming and friendly than those I've met at other schools.

When I am not working or doing school-work, I spend my free time doing photography. I have been doing photography for about four years, starting at age 14. I've done many shoots of others, animals, and myself. I focus mainly on portrait photography, but thoroughly enjoy nature and animal photography as well. I love to plan out photoshoots and create photos with a story-telling aspect to them. I have used absurd amounts of fire, glitter, and plants in my photos!

One of my favorite series I love to work on is a Halloween photo series where I try to incorporate darker themes into my photography. If anyone is interested in checking out my photography, I have an Instagram dedicated to it (@the.devo) along with a link to my official portfolio.

One of my other favorite hobbies is calligraphy, which I like to incorporate into a bullet



journal. When I am not doing photography or bullet journaling, I love to spend time with my three loving dogs and with friends and family. Although photography is a huge part of my life, I am beyond excited to be able to help others as a therapist.

My best advice for fellow students is to get your work done as soon as possible! We've all experienced procrastination, but getting your work done when it is assigned and not waiting helps take a few items off your plate. It's a perfect time to keep up with work with the quarantine going on. If you are stressed, remember to do something for yourself and tackle each assignment one at a time!

Typing Through Tears

Steve Parlato

We'd give anything not to include this last-minute addition in our May 2020 issue. However, our mission includes informing readers of campus news, even when that news is tragic, as is the case with the unexpected death of our *Tamarack* colleague, Janice Bielawa. You may not recognize her name—which has graced our masthead for years, but rarely appeared in a byline—but if you've even casually thumbed through our paper, you have literally been touched by Janice's work.

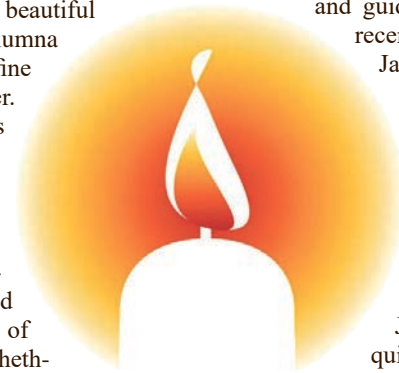
With each issue, our staff joined readers in enthusiastic anticipation of Janice's visual interpretation of that month's content; she never disappointed. Winner of multiple SPJ Awards for her beautiful layouts, this NVCC alumna was also a talented fine artist and jewelry maker. We knew Janice best as unflappable Creative Director, working design magic four times a semester.

Her impact, however, extended far beyond artful arrangement of journalistic content. Wheth-

er creating original graphics, tackling last-minute revisions, or transporting a special guest to an event, she was a consummate team player. Her calming, can-do nature has been a steady, quiet presence in our lives these past five years. In fact, Janice's *Tamarack* tenure precedes mine; she began work on the paper alongside Juleyka Lanti-gua-Williams.

As Chelsea (Clow) Wells and I accepted the intimidating task of running this newspaper in fall 2015, our efforts were made less daunting by Janice's knowledge and guidance. As Chelsea put it recently, "When we started,

Janice was the only who knew what she was doing." As we mourn our dear friend, we offer her family our deepest condolences and our gratitude for sharing this special soul with us all. We wish you rest, Janice. *The Tam* won't be quite the same without you.



Musical Soulmates



Mitchell W. Maknis

Music is often defined by genre and time period. Together, musicians Kathleen Parks and Brad Bensko chose to experiment with some of the inherent molds of songwriting. Their album, *Kat & Brad*, features compositions best described as a harmonious marriage of vintage pop and traditional string.

These musical soulmates realized their affinity for the arts early in life, both learning to play classical instruments throughout their formative years. Parks, who grew up with a professional trumpet player father, frequently attended Polka festivals and loved listening to recordings of Irish music. From the structured notes of violin, she expanded her talents, studying the more spirited Irish fiddle. In contrast, Bensko found himself tuning into Oldies radio stations after being introduced to his father's Abbey Road album. He then shifted his preference from piano to guitar, aspiring to sing and play rock. Separately, the pair honed their respective writing and musical inclinations, until their paths entwined at Boston's Berklee College of Music.

There, they both studied under the tutelage of country blues duo, Paul Rishell and Annie Raines. Bensko and Parks never met on campus, but fate interceded when their mutual mentors invited them both to perform at The Cantab Lounge in Cambridge, MA. After a brief introduction, they spent the next couple weeks performing together. While carpooling home one night, they realized their shared overlap of musical interests. Immediately after this revelation the two decided to collaborate. Parks had some songs saved for just this opportunity and expressed how happy she was "working with someone who understands" her love of this music and sees "the potential to freshen up that time period."

However, before they could start recording, life intervened. Parks' band, *Twisted Pine*, began to book more shows, and the production of Bensko's first full-length album was underway. They kept in touch, reuniting over time, using their joint affection for 50s-60s pop music "as a foundation for the songs [they] wanted to do."

The album, *Kat & Brad*, is comprised of Parks and Bensko's respective tracks, as well as two songs they cowrote, "Someday Soon" and "Lost on You." Parks and Bensko said they were able "to hash most of [the album] out in one night," fondly recalling sitting on the kitchen floor carving out ideas and musical arrangements. Since they'd never done a combination of guitar and fiddle before, they were unsure of this unique blend. Their distinct sound is a melding of Bensko's "rock tendencies" along with Parks' "Bluegrass" background forming a "hodge-podge" of innovative rhythms, remaining faithful to the spirit of their inspirations.

They describe their collaborative process as an "almost unspoken" procedure, elaborating how it's "gotten to the point where [they're] able to read each other's minds and have a similar reaction" to sounds they create. Since their fateful meeting, their influence on one another has changed how they listen to music. Bensko confessed how Parks has inspired him to tune his ears, to more "melodic parts" in music as she continuously pushes him "to be a better musician." Parks reveals Bensko "has taught [her] to listen to music from an engineering standpoint" by teaching her how famous producers, like Brian Wilson, found that historic sound "current engineers" aren't accustomed to.

With Parks' commitments to *Twisted Pine's* national tours and duties producing music for clients under his Bearded Cat label, "[they] can't always play together." However, as part of the creative journey, they gain insight on new melodies, so when able to perform together, they have new perspectives and can "incorporate more into [their] sounds." They intend to "produce as a duo" and "to create music together for a very long time." Find the works of *Kat & Brad* on Bandcamp, iTunes, Spotify, YouTube Music, and other platforms. Physical copies are located at Mystic's Vault of Coffee, and other CT-area stores. Follow Kathleen Parks & Brad Bensko on social media, and learn about upcoming events at www.katbradband.com.

Comic review

The New Zodiac

Created by Joe St. Pierre

Mitchell Walter Maknis

Artist/illustrator Joe St. Pierre has brought many iconic characters to life, including: *The Amazing Spiderman*, *Wolverine*, *Batman* and *Green Lantern*. Now, this veteran comic creator brings his vast knowledge and industry experience to crafting his own unique brand of heroes. St. Pierre has fashioned twelve individuals who can channel the cosmic powers of the zodiac in his original series, fittingly titled, *The New Zodiac*. His graphic novel collects the first issues of his stunning series, introducing four of *The New Zodiac*, known as The Liberator, Cricket, Multaa, and Lion.

These introductory tales are laudably executed. St. Pierre makes every development exciting and nuanced, while also familiarizing the reader with each protagonist's personal motives and individual quirks. For instance, The Liberator, who represents the Zodiac sign Aquarius, is a troubled hacker dwelling in a grimy hi-tech society run by the dictatorial Dinosaur Inc. To prove his Liberator persona worthy, he embarks on a personal crusade, infiltrating the pixelated cyberspace. His mission: to unearth hidden conspiracies riddled within this multilayered world.

St. Pierre's inventiveness is showcased further as he seamlessly melds varying genres into his characters' respective storylines. Cricket, for example, is a paranormal psychologist representing the Zodiac sign, Pisces. Her zodiac power allows her to commune with otherworldly specters plaguing this universe. As she confronts these eerie and disturbed apparitions, Cricket must also navigate the skeletons hidden in her own closet. I really enjoyed how St. Pierre entwined the essence of psychological horror within this science fiction reality.

I also applaud St. Pierre for his artistic approach to each character's narrative. Although each character's story is a stand-alone, they remain linked by his world-building and iconic art. The level of detail, from Multaa's interstellar exploits to Lion's feats in the gritty catacombs, proves the



creator's passion and versatility.

It's also noteworthy how St. Pierre went the extra mile in characterizing his world by wittily incorporating the identity of podcaster Herb Cloutier into the interconnected storylines. Not only was this integration organic and comically clever, it served as the perfect conduit for the antagonistic forces of the Dregs. These malevolent militants steal the show with their crass, unnerving banter, as well as the individualistic detail included in each of their designs. I relished the artistry skillfully representing their differing, yet conjoined personalities. One of the highlights for me was how candidly these derelicts discussed their affinity for pop-culture as well as their grotesque affection for mutilation. It brought a genuine smile to this critic's face.

The New Zodiac has proven to be an intelligent, refreshing take on superhero fiction. Joe St. Pierre's vast graphic universe brims with creative potential for the *Zodiac* to come. You can purchase *The New Zodiac* graphic novel at www.astronautink.com. Be sure to follow Joe St. Pierre on his social media platforms.

Nurse Jess

Jessica Ney

I am a newly graduated nurse, greener than a sapling tree. I have been working in a hospital for only six months, and most days I finish my day unsure of how I made it through my shift. I did not expect to be thrown into a pandemic. I was not prepared for what came my way. I remember hearing about the first cases of COVID-19, chalking the rapid spread up to nothing more than the overpopulation in China. Even when the first few cases crossed into the west, I was still traveling and making plans, not even a bit worried over what could happen in our country, and in our health systems.

I think, as Americans, we live our lives in a constant state of “That won’t happen to me”, and I feel that many hospitals and their staff felt the same. It won’t be here; it couldn’t spread to my area. Even two weeks before “you know what” hit the proverbial fan, I was forced by managers to do bedside reports in flu positive patient rooms, wasting masks that we’re all coveting right now.

I write this article as I wear a week old N95 respirator, as my coworkers and I balance an ever-increasing number of

COVID-positive patients. I wish I could tell you I have handled the whole situation with grace, but more often than not, I feel failed by my management and by our governing bodies. That being said, I chose this job for my patients, and I will continue to choose my job for them. Every day I come to work, I put on a mask I cannot fully trust, and I do my very best. I hold hands, I reassure, and I encourage fluids until I can’t take a full breath and my ears are screaming red.

I am nowhere near the “frontlines” of this virus. I am not in an area that cannot handle the load and the acuity of our patients. My hospital is juggling, as we all are, but we are managing. I feel I am in the middle, maintaining health, encouraging healing, and being present for patients who are lonely, afraid, and sick in a way they know nothing about. My hospital has PPE, probably not enough, but we are all making the necessary sacrifices. Each day we grow and adjust, and while I may not agree with everything that’s happening, I am still showing up for the people I made a promise to.

I admit that in the adjustment period I forgot what I was doing this all for. I have become so frustrated and focused on clustering care and not forgetting anything I need to bring into the rooms, that I often rush through my tasks. I have sometimes forgotten the point.

My heart breaks for families affected by this virus. Those who have lost loved ones and could not see them at the end, those who fear for their children at home, those who are unsure if their first responder, front-line worker is safe, and those who cannot afford to live in this situation. I am lucky to have a job. And I am lucky to have people who are thankful for my work. But I am luckier still to be one of the people asked to stand and face this head on, with nothing more than a week-old mask.

My job has inherent risks; I knew that when I started this path. Sure, I did not ask to go into it unsupported, as we so often feel. But I am lucky to be the person who keeps families together and informed. I am able to bring peace to patients and their loved ones, and I have nurses and PCTs and a slew of other hospital workers doing their best every day; we’re working hand-in-hand, going the distance for each other. We may be forgotten by those who are supposed to protect us, but we’re not alone.

From a health care worker, I hope you are doing your part. I hope you take next year’s flu season seriously, and I hope you never take what you have for granted. And for my fellow healthcare workers, don’t forget to wash your hands and brush your teeth. These masks are quite unforgiving.

The ... Journey

Life in its entirety has felt increasingly overwhelming lately for many reasons. Due to the pandemic we have been living through, everything in our daily lives has changed. Change is unpredictable and uncomfortable in many circumstances but even more unsettling when we have no control over it. Life has drastically changed over the last few weeks. When we are faced with circumstances beyond our control it’s important to remember that it’s okay to feel whatever feelings come up.

One of the greatest things of being human is that our feelings are our own. Over the last few weeks our routines have been flipped upside down, and the expectations of daily life have changed. Not that long ago, distancing yourself from friends and family would have been considered a negative way to deal with the world’s occurrences. We’re now being told that is exactly what needs to be done. Some people have accepted their current circumstances and others are anxious about them. A lot of people are feeling sad over things they no longer get to experience, and some are even a little angry. The point however, is, your feelings are valid.

Many are feeling a little lonely living in this social divide, and everyone is feeling the effects of all the chaos in the world. Acknowledging that it’s okay to struggle during times of uncertainty is important, but so is recognizing that while our feelings and experiences are our own, none of us are alone in this. Most of us rely on the normalcy of everyday life to keep ourselves functioning smoothly. I, myself, have been trying to add parts of my “normal” routine into my “new” routine which originally sounded helpful. The truth is the experiences we’re currently facing are not normal. For most of us, this is the first time something like this has happened. Our bodies and minds are now reacting in ways that feel foreign to some and unsettlingly familiar to others. Some are getting used to the disconnect and taking control by “shutting out” the world, while being “shut in”. Others are eagerly waiting for the okay to go back to living their lives. But we are all craving that familiarity of life before being “shut in”.

Facing the fact that our lives are forever changed by this experience is difficult. We want to believe the discontentment most of us are experiencing will dissipate when we go back to life as we knew it before social distancing and distance learning. A lot of us are caught between both ends of extremities such as, “Everything will go back to normal soon” or “Nothing will ever be the same”. It’s hard to find the median of the infinite number of outcomes we’re all imagining. The reality is, some parts of our lives will return to our ideals of normal, while other parts will never be the same.

Despite the complexities that come with the anxiety and discontentment we are facing as a society, it’s important to recognize that although things will be different and it’s hard to see how, together we will overcome. We cannot change the challenging situations we have encountered or the outcome of whether our worlds change or remain the same. However, we can remind ourselves we have a choice in how we react to the outcomes of our experiences. We can choose to focus on what is within our control by making choices that support our growth and healing both during and after hard times. We can choose to do our best and allow that to be enough. Even if right now our best is less than the “normal” standards of achievement we hold ourselves to, remember, the circumstances are no longer “normal” either. Like all things in life, this too is temporary. We’re all figuring out how this works, and how it’s going to work moving forward. Most of us are struggling in that process. That struggle does not define who we are. How well we adapt to the occurrences we face in our lives; does not measure the amount of success we can reach or our worth as individuals.



Musical Mayhem Postponed

Tamarack Staff

With the COVID-19 closure, rehearsals and set construction on the spring production of *Carrie: The Musical* screeched to a halt. According to Production Designer, Professor Bill Cone, “My Theater Practicum students, my carpenter, Will Jeffries, and I are sad all our hard work may not be seen by the public. However, we hope to get some version of the play onstage in the fall—though maybe not a full production.” In the meantime, Cone shared an exclusive preview. Pictured are a few set pieces for the climactic prom scene completed before quarantine began.



Looking for Something to Do?

Kathleen Chesto

I am a reader, not a movie-goer or a TV person. Fourteen years ago, the cable company changed the box on our television, and I have never bothered turning it on since. I will watch when my husband finds a good show or movie to share.

But these are different times and there is only so much reading, and so much piano practicing one can do. And it is lonely. Finding new movie adaptations of books I have loved currently streaming on my unused TV, has been a happy consequence of a horrible crisis. It is an opportunity to revisit and share stories I have loved. Perhaps some of them will be among your old favorites.

Book: *The Outsider*, by Stephen King (Available: HBO)

This is a police procedural, but, being Stephen King, it turns into a supernatural mystery and a horror story. It starts with a boy's corpse and an unlikely suspect, an English teacher, Little League coach, and all-around nice guy.

Book: *Little Women*, by Louisa May Alcott (Available: On Demand, Amazon Prime)

This is the new movie, Greta Gerwig's adaptation, that adds revolutionary feminist undertones to the well-loved story of the March girls growing up in Civil War-era New England. If you haven't seen it in the movies yet, now is the time.

Book: *Little Fires Everywhere*, by Celeste Ng (Available: Hulu)

The story of an eclectic mother and daughter duo who disturb the quiet life in the conservative community of Shaker Heights. Reese Witherspoon loved the story and turned it into a TV show.

Book: *Dracula*, by Bram Stoker (Available: Netflix)

This is a new version of the old movie, purported to have a much higher dose of horror, if that's what you need right now to escape from the real-world horror. An unconventional nun helps to give the old vampire a new lease on life.

Book: *The Stranger*, by Harlan Coben (Available: Netflix)

A stranger cracks the facade of Adam Price's perfect life and it all begins to fall apart. This Netflix adaptation is centered in Britain, bringing a slightly different dimension to a wonderful mystery.

Book: *I Heard You Paint Houses*, by Charles Brandt / Movie: *The Irishman* (Available: Netflix)

The Irishman, Frank Sheeran, was a notorious mobster whose dealings extend far beyond the mafia to have far-reaching impacts on US history. This is a true story with a long running time, 3 hours and 30 minutes. Make popcorn.

Book: *Anne of Green Gables*, by Lucy Maude Montgomery / Series: *Anne with an E* (Available: Netflix)

This is an adaptation for television now in its third season. For those unfamiliar with Anne Shirley, she is a delightful, unpredictable orphan being raised on a small farm on Prince Edward Island by Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert, elderly siblings, who had been looking for a boy to help on the farm.

Book: *Emma*, by Jane Austen (Available: On Demand, Amazon Prime)

This rendition of a well-loved novel focuses on the hilarious aspects of matchmaker Emma Woodhouse's meddlesome behavior and conscientious misgivings about her role.

Mother's Day 2020

Kathleen Chesto

In 1977, I sought admission for a ten-day, silent retreat at a Gloucester, MA Jesuit retreat house. The registrar, Sister Sebastian, called me. Gently and apologetically she explained spaces were limited and normally reserved for priests and sisters in "active ministry" in the church. These were our pastors, our teachers, our missionaries, who were so essential to the life of the church. They had never admitted a married woman.

I asked to be sent the application anyway. A fulltime, stay-at-home mother, by choice, I had grown accustomed to my role being dismissed as unimportant. The application included a whole page of questions about my "ministry" and its "critical nature" in the church. I filled one line: "I am a fulltime mother. It is my ministry to nurture the future of the church and the Earth itself." I was accepted.

Mother's Day, in its origins, was an attempt to acknowledge the importance of a role often simply taken for granted. We mothers have always been expected to wear many hats and to change seamlessly as our particular world makes its demands known. A mother can easily be teacher, arbitrator, coach, and counsellor, all while driving the carpool. COVID-19 has magnified a job that was already life-consuming, pandemic adding another layer of being.

In many cases, we are now the only counsellor, arbitrator, teacher, coach, and even playmate. There are no carpools, no lessons, no sports; while that eases hectic schedules, it also removes a whole world of being, leaving young children bereft and dependent on parents to fill the void. Mothers have been asked to take on the responsibility of fulfilling school curriculum while many are

also expected to work eight-hour jobs from home. Through it all, with free-floating anxiety prevalent as the air we breathe, mothers struggle to provide an oasis of security, protecting their children from fear they themselves can't avoid.

When I was five, my older sister convinced my mother, after much whining, to take us both on a carnival Ferris wheel. When we reached the very top, the wheel stopped to let out someone at the bottom. It didn't start again. Firetrucks came eventually, and some people were removed from lower seats. We at the top were left, perhaps too high to be taken down safely.

I was paralyzed with fear, plus a terrible sense of isolation from others on the wheel and the people below. There were no cell phones, no way to make sense of turmoil on the ground. My mother rocked the seat, got us to sing funny songs, pointed out weird people far below, created games, told stories, made us laugh. I don't know how long we were stuck. It grew dark before we eventually moved again. When we finally disembarked, my mother turned it all into a great adventure. It was years before I learned my mother was terrified of heights.

This Mother's Day, I suspect many mothers will feel as if they're stuck at the top of a Ferris wheel, isolated, confined to a small space, holding family close, filling time with laughter and encouragement. All the while knowing there is no earth beneath their feet, they'll hang suspended in a fragile moment of time. If the children get off that wheel, as I once did, free of nightmares, happily telling stories of the Great Pandemic Adventure, and walking unafraid into the future, it will be because of the mothers.

Happy Mother's Day!

Benefits of Religion

Gwenydd Miller

When considering the vast universe, there's no proof a deity exists; this is no reason to lose faith. I, personally, don't believe in God, but I occasionally feel there is a force that can influence this world in miraculous ways, that can be prayed to, and worshipped. Of course, it doesn't much matter what I believe; there's a whole planet of people with a vast array of different beliefs.

There are so many different religions, that I'd like to say there's a hot debate over who's

right, but in all honesty, there is no debate at all. Every religion is made up of people who assume they're correct. I'm not going to make any claims over what is or isn't true, and I'm not going to

promote one faith over another, not even my own. I've come to a startling conclusion: it doesn't matter who's right. All that matters is that people believe.

Belief in a divine entity actually improves a person's mental health, no matter their faith. Granted, cults do not fall into this category. Please, say no to cults. Religion and spirituality can be keys to happiness; these tools have been used to make horrible lives worth living for millennia. While Karl Marx referred to religion as "the opium of the people," faith clearly builds a sense of purpose in people's lives.

Houses of worship serve a vital societal role. Religious teachings and anecdotes can promote morals and build a society everyone

wants to live in. A sense of higher purpose can even help with depression, the aftermath of death, and other struggles. With all the good religion gives us, I honestly don't think it matters if it's true, because it works. Of course, in order for it to work, a person must believe it.

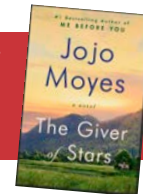
The flip side, however, can't be denied: religion has been exploited to do horrible things, and there's no excuse for that. Doing something terrible in the name of God still means doing something terrible. It should

be noted religious exploitation can easily turn faith into a weapon or a danger. Recently, as non-essential businesses were closed due to the pandemic, some churches refused to

close. This put a lot of people in contact with COVID-19. The claim was "church is essential." This is problematic, because people can worship from home. Then again, most of my practices are done in my backyard. I therefore cannot relate.

Whatever your religion, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Pagan, you name it... during this time of isolation it's important to stay connected. Religion is probably more important now than ever to keep hope alive. When it comes to beliefs, it doesn't really matter how different they are; what matters are their similarities. One common religious thread is that, through prayer, things get better. Even if that results only in improved attitudes, I'd say that's what really matters.

RECENTLY READ



The Giver of Stars

By JoJo Moyes

"You know the worst thing about a man hitting you?" Margery says finally. "Ain't the hurt. It's that in that instant you realize the truth of what it is to be a woman." In her novel, *The Giver of Stars*, Jojo Moyes explores what it means to be a woman in Depression-era rural Kentucky.

While Franklin D. Roosevelt focused his attention on rebuilding the economy of the 1930s, First Lady Eleanor turned her attention to the lack of education among America's rural population. The traveling library, women on horseback paid to carry books to outlying families in the poorest areas of Appalachia, was a concrete result of those efforts.

This is the story of five of these women, known as the Packhorse Librarians of Baileyville, Kentucky. Central character, Alice White, has fled from the suffocating society of her life in England by marrying an American, only to find life in small-town Kentucky even more stifling. Her rebellion against her unhappy marriage finds voice in the rebellion inherent in the library's subtle stance against "acceptable social norms" for women.

Her ally is Margery, who's never allowed a man to dominate her life. Living alone in the hills, supporting herself, dressing like a man, she is a pariah to the townspeople. Margery and Alice, the heart of the new endeavor, are joined by two young women. One, disabled by polio, discovers new abilities in her work; one, dominated by her father and five brothers, begins to taste independence. They're eventually joined by Sophie, an educated, wise Black woman,

This unlikely group bring education, a love of literature, and a sense of community to the poorest, most neglected area families. Moyes' beautiful character development brings alive not only the five women, but the families and their struggles to survive. Quiet attention to historical detail brings the time period alive without burdening the reader with information not pertinent to the characters' lives.

There are two love stories woven through the tale, but the real story is of the friendship that develops among the women, and its power to heal and unite. The weakest parts of the novel are a complicated crisis at the end that threatens the library, and a very contrived resolution. Until then, the story is fresh and different, but at this point, becomes formulaic, predictable.

Moyes' characters are strong enough to hold the reader's attention and concern, despite the prosaic solution. The book is reminiscent of *The Help*, dominated by women and the amazing strength of friendship.

Kathleen Chesto

Information for Students

Dean Sarah Gager

For those of you who are finishing your final semester, if you have not submitted your graduation application, please do so as soon as possible. While we won't be hosting our traditional commencement at the Palace Theater, we congratulate you on your achievement.

For continuing students, registration for summer and fall classes began April 7th. If you have not yet registered, I encourage you to do so very soon, for new and transfer students begin registering toward the end of April.

We look forward to seeing you all again soon. Until then, be safe!

Cindy Simeti: Artist, Cosplayer, Proprietor

Mitchell W. Maknis

“The point of a business, regardless of what it is, is meeting someone’s needs, providing a service.” Through her company BMD, artist/entrepreneur Cindy Simeti, has filled a gap in the consumer market. Her niche: designing original fabric and wallpaper materials she calls “bubbly, colorful, something that cheers you up.”

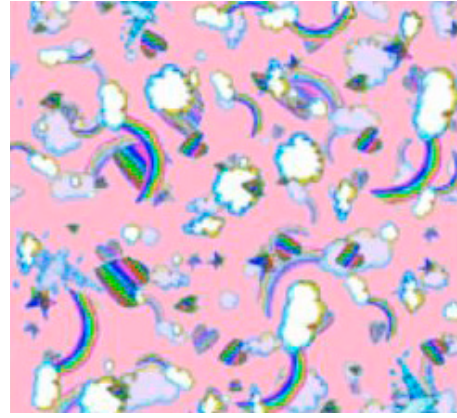
Simeti’s fondness for the arts began at an early age. She vividly recalls drawing bright, colorful animal illustrations in her Lisa Frank notepad. As life progressed, so did Simeti’s artistic motivations. She became fascinated by the lure of videogames, specifically, the art involved: the amalgamation of music, colors, and the subtle details ingrained within characters, monsters, and the environments they inhabited.

These virtual worlds influenced her creative ventures. A notable example was during high school. Wanting to “do something different” for a Halloween party, Simeti rejected standard store-bought costumes. Instead, she channeled inspiration from the videogame “Final Fantasy IX”, crafting her own original Vivi cosplay. She humorously stated, “There’s nothing wrong with [grabbing] a pair of big, poofy pants and a huge hat.” Her cosplay a success, Simeti, spellbound by the creative process, found she wasn’t content designing apparel once a year for Halloween.



BMD logo

This experience planted seeds of inspiration for Simeti’s fabric and wallpaper supply business, BMD. Asked what her company name stood for, Simeti answered, “Black Mage Dark,” an ode to her longtime gamertag and her favorite class in videogames. This passion led her to develop new sewing skills as she ventured into creating “armor works and weapon builds” out of foam and cardboard. This work evolved into fabric design and she progressed to fashioning cosplay attire for iconic gaming characters, such as Mei from Overwatch and Mitsuru Kirijo from



‘98 Kid Doodles: Scanned from the artist’s original Lisa Frank notebook illustrations. Photos Courtesy of Cindy Simeti

Persona 3: Dancing Moonlight.

Simeti “always liked making things” and continued honing her craft while enrolled at LIU Post in Brookville, NY, graduating with a Bachelor’s in Graphic Design, and later garnering a Master’s in Game Design. Selling her print work at conventions in Artist Alley’s throughout college, Simeti realized she wanted to be “more than an artist, but a supplier,” gravitating to the more “tangible craft of fabric design.”

The past few years, Simeti “scope[d] down on her niche,” focusing on gamer-themed de-

signs. She designs products that aren’t sold in the mainstream marketplace. Understanding people want to create, but lack certain materials, Simeti realized how BMD could fill that need. She takes pride in BMD, comforted that her company has provided gaming and pop culture fans unique materials to make products that aren’t otherwise available.

Simeti confides at times her vocation faces outside conflict. Like “most people in the creative arts” she faces corporate interference. For example, she was asked to cease production on her popular Overwatch inspired products. However, even with these bumps in the road, Simeti isn’t disheartened; she’s determined to provide a service corporations won’t invest in.

While her work has a “geeky gamer focus,” Simeti stated she’s open to exploring other artistic avenues. She’s even taken to reinventing articles of clothing, recreating nostalgic, childhood designs and patterns that aren’t made anymore. Simeti elaborated on BMD’s next phase: “to experiment on more original works.” If interested in purchasing her one-of-a-kind fabrics, you’ll find Simeti’s work at <https://www.spoonflower.com/profiles/bmdstudios>. She’s also converting her designs into products such as leggings, clocks, and phone cases. Her clothing and accessories line is available at: <https://www.redbubble.com/people/blackmagedark/shop?asc=u>. For commission inquiries, contact Simeti directly via Instagram: @BMDartstuff.

Macabre Media

Gwenydd Miller

As kids, it’s hard to comprehend what death really is. It’s a scary thing, to both children and adults alike, but to kids, it isn’t the absolute end. I remember, as a child, I would play with dolls, but my games were never for the faint of heart, because my characters kept getting killed. Of course, they never stayed dead. In a child’s world there is no room for finality.

Even when we “grow up” we still want to believe life continues. This is reflected in our pop culture, and ancient beliefs. I doubt there are any religions out there that do not have some sort of afterlife, or a way in

which life keeps going. From heaven and the underworld, to ghosts and reincarnation, people always find some way to keep the dead from completely dying.

It is quite funny how, considering we find death so scary, we surround ourselves with it. Some of the most popular movies and TV shows are about reanimated corpses, such as *The Walking Dead*, *iZombie*, *Vampire Diaries*, *Twilight*, and countless other zombie, vampire, or ghost stories out there. Scary stories force us to face our fears head-on, and death is a biggest boogeyman of all. Gallows humor, or dark comedy—jokes about unpleasantness such as death—are a coping mechanism. Making light of heavy situations makes them easier to process. By showing our fears through

entertainment, we gain exposure to them and perhaps adjust more easily.

However, death isn’t always feared. Some cultures express death in a celebratory way, honoring the dead instead of fearing them. My favorite example is probably *Día de los Muertos*, the Mexican Day of the Dead. Centered around family, it celebrates the lost as living among us for a day. These beliefs are expressed in the Disney movie, *Coco*; extremely heartwarming, I recommend it to people of all ages. Many East Asian religions refer to the ancestors as guardians, praying to them and leaving offerings. In South America, ancient civilizations built necropolises to house the spirits of the dead. The way they saw it, they were not truly gone, sim-

ply moved on to a different existence. Of course, we’re all too familiar with the concept of heaven and hell.

Yet it seems, in America, and some other places, our fascination with death is a lot more morbid and frightening. In a way it seems we’re also obsessed with feeling scared, as so many people enter haunted houses of their own volition, just looking for a thrill. Paranormal investigators go into such places for research purposes. There are many reasons people go looking for the dead, but I wonder how much would change if we decided to paint a different picture of those who have passed away. If there were more movies like *Coco*, to show honor for the deceased rather than fear, maybe death wouldn’t be as scary.

Art Isn’t Easy

Amanda Lebel/Steve Parlato

“Art isn’t easy. Every minor detail is a major decision.” That lyric, from Stephen Sondheim’s Tony Award-winning Broadway musical, *Sunday in the Park with George*, rings all the truer during a global pandemic. While the shift to online learning presented cross-disciplinary challenges, studio art classes faced a unique hurdle: how to translate the inherently kinesthetic creative

process, one that thrives with close student/teacher proximity, to an online format.

Fortunately, faculty teaching these classes ably focused their natural creativity on retooling courses for an online experience. New pedagogical methods have ranged from Rosanne Shea’s drone-aided filming of instructional videos, to liberal use of YouTube tutorials, to professors “doing the homework” to provide step-by-step exemplars for students.

These tactics seem to be paying off, judg-

ing by the successful output of NVCC’s virtual, remote art classes. Here is a small sample of the excellent work being created



Professor Amanda Lebel calls Visual Art major Scott Wright, “an amazing artist.” His gouache-on-paper palindrome piece, from the Two-Dimensional Design class, is based on balance and symmetry.



According to Parlato, “Bethany Synott, a General Studies major, continues to do fantastic work from home, like this beautiful drawing, using white and black charcoal on gray paper.”

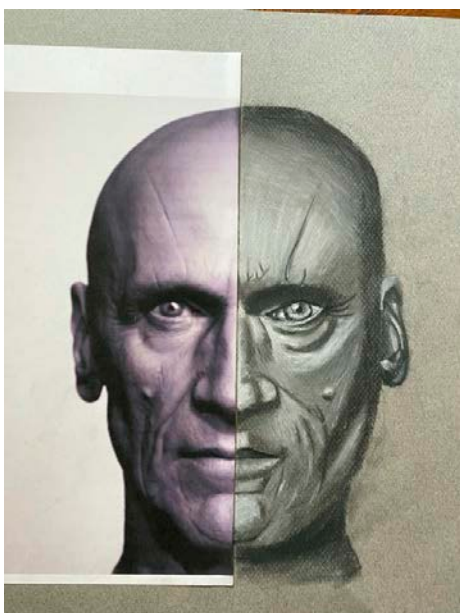
at kitchen tables, on bedroom floors and back porches, by motivated, resourceful NVCC art students.



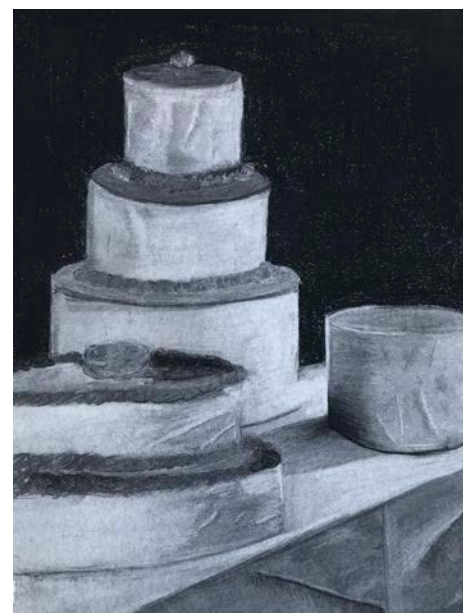
Parlato calls Telly Zachariadis, an Allied Health student, “a naturally gifted artist, and one of my most motivated student artists.” Telly’s reductive charcoal drawing was completed from home during week three of online coursework.



NVCC alum and Loyola grad Samantha Capaldo took Steve Parlato’s Drawing I to reignite the creative spark. Happily, the flame burns brightly at home. Parlato praised Sam’s gray paper drawing’s “excellent blend of white and black charcoal and great highlights.”



General Studies major Tatiana Ramos, from Parlato’s class called this portrait exercise her “favorite piece I’ve drawn in this class. Some of the proportions can be fixed a bit [but] the use of highlights and the gray paper really help bring the face to life.”



“Jess Martin, a General Studies major, has done some phenomenal drawings this semester in Drawing I,” according to Lebel. This charcoal-on-paper cake drawing was started in class and finished at home during our first week of online instruction.

Fresh Ink Forecast: Fall

Jeannie Evans-Boniecki

To: The NVCC Creative Community
From: *The Fresh Ink 2020* Advisor
Re: Publication Status Report - Don't worry.... It's coming....

Like so many other events, the publication of *Fresh Ink 2020*, NVCC's Art and Literature journal, is on hold, maybe until fall 2020, due to Covid-19 closures. Understandably, our annual gala event celebrating the published authors and artists has been postponed as well until social distancing mandates are lifted.

No to worry, though – NVCC DAT student Madeeha Sheikh and I are steadily working toward an online publication by the end of May with print copies following, hopefully, by the end of June. Copies will be made available to all published authors and artists at that time, even if they have graduated! Despite a number of obstacles and issues, it promises to be a lovely edition.

This year's editorial board consisted of *Fresh Ink* advisor, Jeannie Evans-Boniecki; NVCC student, Yelizaveta Tolstokoraya; NVCC alumni Joe Adomovici, Kristen Marciano and Alyssa Katz; NVCC faculty J. Greg Harding and Wade Tarzia; and NVCC Emeritus faculty Sandra Newton and Joe Sainz, along with guest author, Jayanne Sindt.

Overall, the team was impressed by the quality of student submissions, and although

we regret we cannot publish them all, we would like to congratulate the following students for having their works selected for publication in this year's journal:

Poetry: First Place — Autumn Dempsey — “The Real Heroes”

Second Place — Mitchell Maknis — “Predatory Property”

Third Place (tied) — Jennifer Jones — “Bag Lady” and “Good Bye,” and Jenny Butterfield “My Sweet Boy”

Short Fiction: First Place — Jason Hesse — “Aurora”

Second Place — Emily Smith — “Block”

Third Place - Heather Ruskowski — “Swan Song”

Art: First Place — Charlotte Silver — “A Crow in Sycamore”

Second Place — Vismel Marquez — “Low Poly Landscape”

Third Place — Charlotte Silver — “A Fox with Green Eyes”

Cover:Front — Heather Ruskowski — “Cat in a Fish Pond”

Additional NVCC students whose works have been selected for publication for this year's *Fresh Ink* are: In the genre of Short Fiction — Anthony C. Brown, Jalon Copeland, and Erica Sturges; in Art — Iysha Robertson, Madeeha Sheikh, Salma Akter, Jane Linnel, and Stacy Staple; and in Poetry — Yelizaveta



Tolstokoraya, Elizabeth Schneider, Christian Rodriguez, Dylawnie Woods, Nick Cardinal, Shyanne Caporuscio, Olivia Danielson, Danielle Minicucci, and Nathan Fitzgerald.

In addition to the aforementioned NVCC students, we would like to applaud the community authors and artists — many of whom are NVCC alumni or faculty or are students at our sister CSU institutions—whose work has also been selected for publication in *Fresh Ink 2020*: Julian Hogan, Adele Annesi,

Kerry Heverling, Jeannie Evans-Boniecki, Joe Sainz, Sandra Eddy, Sarah Kushwara, ShawnaLee W. Kwashnak, J. Greg Hardling, Kenneth DiMaggio, Lynette Melendez, Gary Rushworth, Mary C Verdosci, Ivan de Monbrison, Jayanne Sindt, Kristen Marciano, Natalie Schriefer, Mary Tetreault, Joseph R. Adomavicia, Kimberly Dyer, Susan Bush, Roberta Whitman Hoff, Sevastian Volkov, and Pd Lyons.

Congratulations to all!

Revolutionary Rhythms

Where It All Began: Led Zeppelin

Alyssa Katz

In 2018, Led Zeppelin marked the 50th anniversary of the release of their self-titled debut album. The remarkable thing was, having hardly known each other, the newly-formed band recorded the album in just nine days. On it, they created such raw, powerful energy, unlike anything anyone had heard before—it was heavy metal.

Jimmy Page on guitar; John Paul Jones on bass/keyboard; Robert Plant on vocals; and John Bonham on drums. Having just left the Yardbirds in 1968, Page wanted full creative control; he certainly delivered with experimental tones and sounds that mystified and spookified on their albums. Plant explained: “It wasn't supposed to be a pretty thing. It was just an unleashing of energy.”

In response to *Led Zeppelin*, *Rolling Stone* wrote: “There's a miasmic psyche-

delic blues trip (“Dazed and Confused”), high-def Fifties revisionism (“Communication Breakdown”), shifts from tender ballad to metal body slam (“Babe, I'm Gonna Leave You”), and rips-cum-retooling of folk, blues and even classical...Bach-bitten organ intro to “Your Time Is Gonna Come”—all unified by the band's undeniable brute force.” Even in the opening to “Good Times, Bad Times,” you know exactly what they're about.

The following year, their second album, *Led Zeppelin II*, released (2019 marked the 50th anniversary). It was known as one of the “greatest, heaviest and raunchiest albums ever.” On the road a lot, touring, they had to write and record whenever and wherever they could—from hotel rooms to hallways—using whatever time they had. By the time they finished, Page was fed up and had even lost confidence in it, but it all paid off.



Photo Courtesy of Jim Summaria

Jimmy Page, also considered as a musical genius, is one of rock's most influential guitarists and songwriters. While Zeppelin were known as a heavy metal band, Page didn't want to be tied down to one genre; he intertwined the blues, folk, psychedelia, country, classical, and so on. His guitar skills were mostly self-taught; he liked conducting experiments in studio with synthesizers and theremins—even violin bows—not to mention the

crazy guitar riffs often heard on tracks, such as “Heartbreaker,” “Kashmir,” and perhaps most especially, “Whole Lotta Love”.

Their time cut short by Bonham's death in 1980, the band split, but surviving members went on to do their own things—Plant and Page in particular had successful solo careers. In 1995, Led Zeppelin was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (the Yardbirds were inducted in 1993, so Page is a double-inductee). In 2006, Led Zeppelin was inducted into the UK Music Hall of Fame, and they were honored at the Kennedy Center Honors by President Obama in 2012.

Though limited to a short run, and perhaps ahead of their time—most hard rock and heavy metal bands didn't catch fire until the 80s—Led Zeppelin made a lasting impact with their revolutionary rhythms.

Note: This is my last column. While I have such an appreciation for oldies music, I didn't know a lot about the artists themselves. Writing this column, I've learned so much about their lives—and what made them legendary. I hope you've enjoyed it as much as I have.

Center for Teaching

“CFT in the Time of COVID-19”

—a message from Nikki McGary and Chris Rempfer

As co-chairs of NVCC's Center for Teaching, we like to take writing duties for our May column for *The Tamarack*, so we can look back at the year that was—and look forward to the year that is yet to be.

Well, as the creators of *Batman* would say, “KAPOW!” “WHAM!” “ZOINKS!” “BAM” “BOOM!”

Over the course of one day, in an evolving reality that changed practically hourly, NVCC sent its students, faculty, and staff home, and closed its doors. As the dangers of COVID-19 became increasingly apparent and the nation's governors and mayors began to swiftly respond with the order to socially distance, our nation's schools, colleges, and universities lost one of the most important elements of delivering education: *being socially present*.

Chris is fond of sharing with Nikki something an acting teacher shared with him when he was an actor in New York City. The teach-

er said, “You need only three things to create theater: a play, an actor, and an audience. Falling chandeliers are just window dressing.” Chris likes to say that a similar thing is true for delivering education. You need three things: a student, a teacher, and a classroom. Yet, on that fateful ‘one day,’ in the blink of an eye, the classroom was gone.

Except, of course, it wasn't.

Concurrent with the nationwide decision to close our schools was a decision to move all education in the United States *online*. Take a moment to think about how audacious this move was. How audacious and unprecedented the assumption was that faculty and staff could do such a thing. And yet, we *did* it. And we cannot let this moment pass, and future moments pass, without recognizing that we did do it. And continue to do it. While our nation prayed that it could flatten the curve of the vicious virus that attacked us, educators at NVCC and around the country were *bend-*

ing the learning curve of online instruction with a pragmatism, dedication, and innovative spirit that amazes and awes.

We are surely aware of our missteps and our misgivings. We know that our students did not sign up for this. And before we write, “...and neither did we”—we catch ourselves and remember that we *did* sign up for this. This is why we teach. Because we will, literally, do *anything* to help our students realize their dream of a college education.

As the historic spring 2020 semester draws to a close, CFT has turned its attention to facilitating and supporting our faculty with tools to teach in the time of trauma—to reestablish connection, safety, and hope for our students and our teachers. And to remind everyone that in this turbulent time of social distancing, when our students' lives have been upended, one thing did not change: their teachers were there for them. Virtually, yes. But there, where we will always be. Waiting for them to un-

mute their audio. Waiting for them to read our e-mails and our Blackboard announcements. Waiting for them to roll their eyes at our jokes. And again, waiting for them to unmute their audio. Waiting for them to download their free version of Microsoft Office to up to 5 of their devices so we can actually read the homework they send us. Waiting for them to ask, “Can I ask you about something not to do with our class?” Waiting to see how they are doing and how their families are holding up. And of course, waiting for them to unmute their audio.

Between now and whenever it is that we go back to normal, the Center for Teaching will be addressing the fact that delivery of education has forever changed. Ever the optimists, we see opportunity. Our hunch is that America will rediscover its love affair with the physical classroom and the in-person relationships that support and drive educational success. We shall see.

In the meantime, we got sucker-punched, but we punched back, punched up, and stayed standing. Sure, we got “KAPOWED!” Yes, we got WHAMMED!”

But we didn't go “SPLAT!”

The Center for Teaching Celebrates All Who Teach at NVCC!

Native Music

Gwenydd Miller

The Institute for American Indian Studies (IAIS), a museum located in Washington, CT, has been a fond memory of mine since childhood; however, I've only recently learned about the events they have there. At just \$10 per person, they're worth every penny.

For example, on February 15th, Native American flute maker, Allan Madahbee, gave a lecture on his craft. For almost three hours, the audience listened to stories about flute making with some entertaining sidetracks. The first thing we learned was the legend of the origin of flutes. Madahbee said they were invented by woodpeckers. They pecked holes in branches, and when the wind blew, it made music. People listened and then learned to make the instruments for themselves. Madahbee noted that he doesn't know how truthful the story is, but it certainly is intriguing.

We were educated that day on the different types of flutes: there are the droll flutes that play through a single tube; then there are flutes with two or more. Most of the flutes were made from woods such as cedar or maple, but there was one he played made from PVC pipe. It sounded just as wonderful. He showed us how the length plays a role, the shorter the flute, the higher the pitch, and vice versa. Some of his flutes had carvings called fetishes, which helped direct the air. One flute he played had a fetish carved in the shape of a woodpecker as a tribute to the old story.

He also pointed out a special feature of Native American flutes: inside the flute are two distinct chambers the air funnels through, bottlenecking in the center. He said no one knows how the two chambers came about, only that it makes them some of the easiest flutes to play. This is because, with the unique construction, you don't have to worry about how to position the flute. Regardless, the sound still comes out the same.

In the old days, Native American flute makers would hollow out the flute by burning away the wood, similar to how they made their canoes. Madahbee's flutes are made by cutting a piece of wood in half and hollowing out the inside before gluing it back together. He passed an in-progress flute around to show the different chambers.

Seeing how the flutes were made added a special dimension to the experience, although the music itself was amazing. Whenever Madahbee played a flute, everyone grew silent. It was some of the most beautiful sound I've heard, yet simultaneously so simple. You can find more information on his Facebook page, Madahbee Native American Flutes. I guarantee, you won't be disappointed.

Sorry to Bother

Audrey Winter

Excuse me, but if you have a minute, I'd like to tell you something... It's okay if you don't want to hear it. I'm used to that by now. It's occurred to me how much I put myself down just to avoid being a burden on people. There are so many things going on in my life, and I don't always feel like I can express them. Then, of course, other people complain to me about similar—but less extreme—things they're going through.

I'm happy to be a shoulder to cry on; I just wish there were some reciprocation. And I'm well aware "it's my own fault." Sure, I could just speak and people would listen, right? So simple! I can't believe I never thought of that. I'll have to remember next time people glare at me for interrupting after they've been talking for ten minutes straight. I'll have to remember next time someone responds to me before I finish, even though I was only talking for ten seconds. So simple. So simple, I should have realized sooner.

I've spent too long asking permission to speak up. I think I've actually lost the point in all of it. I've realized I'll never be

Team Tamarack MVP**

Nicole Hayes

I remember Professor Parlato asking me if I was interested in joining *The Tamarack*. I did not see myself as a writer and turned down his offer. Still, he persisted! Eventually, I found myself at a *Tamarack* meeting and volunteered to write my first article. Parlato asked if I was interested in writing for the "Recently Read" column. Though he did not know this at the time, I was not a reader, but I remembered a book from high school that moved me. I asked if it was appropriate to write about "*Nigger: An Autobiography*" by Dick Gregory. Parlato turned, smiled, and reassured me it was an excellent idea.

Over that weekend, I re-read the book and wrote a reflective article that inspired the BSU to order that book and organize a book discussion. I have written/continue to write articles on topics most steer away from. I choose these topics because I believe it is important for once-silenced voices to be heard. Parlato gave me guidance and encouraged my exploration, even when

I received backlash for reporting facts. I've been fortunate to be a member of *The Tamarack* for the past four years.

The Tamarack has played a major role in helping develop the person I am today. Parlato is also a supportive member of my inner circle, who inspired my decision to obtain a bachelor's degree from his alma mater (Wesleyan University), and always celebrates my successes. I am grateful for his friendship and will certainly cherish the memories I've made as a member of Team *Tamarack*. Congratulations on a job well done, Mr. Steve (Inside joke)! Enjoy this upcoming, well-deserved sabbatical.

***Advisor's Note: I came up with this title; Nicole underplays her role as Senior Staff Writer. From her earliest days with our newspaper, she hasn't merely exemplified the ideals of social equity, she's inspired our deepened commitment to those ideals. Many of our most meaningful articles would not have been written without her. I thank you, Doctor Hayes (Inside joke) and celebrate you always! ~ Parlato*

Farewell, Tamarack

Alyssa Katz

In fall 2015, I made a decision that would impact my life for the next five years. Never having participated in any extracurriculars, I was hesitant to join something such as the school newspaper. But, after taking Steve Parlato's Young Adult Fiction class, I learned he'd just taken on the role of *Tamarack* faculty advisor. Being acquainted with Editor Chelsea Clow—and changing my major and having an interest in publishing—it seemed like a good opportunity. I almost backed out, but I'm glad I didn't.

That November was my debut. I wrote a piece on something I'd never heard of: NaNoWriMo. It was cool to see my name in the newspaper, and to know people were actually reading my work. Having been satisfied with that little stepping stone, I wanted to do more. And I did. As the months went on, I did more, and more, and more.

The following year, I even started two columns: Earth Matters because I wanted to spread awareness of the environment; and Revolutionary Rhythms because of my appreciation for oldies music. My duties grew more, as I gravitated from simple writer to columnist to fact checker and then copy ed-

itor; then after graduation, with skills from my current job, I transitioned to proofreader. I enjoyed being part of the editing process, seeing articles through production from idea to publication.

One of my biggest accomplishments was when I won third place for a piece on Sandy Hook that was very personal to me. I went on to win more awards for my work, and each time it came as a shock. I was actually being recognized for my journalism, for my written work, and it was such an achievement!

I once told myself I would leave *The Tamarack* when Steve left, so, when he told me he was going to "retire" from *The Tamarack*, I knew God had heard me. My life is so busy now, it's been difficult to produce the same quality and quantity of material I used to, so this has come at the right time. I'm proud at all that I've accomplished while being part of this newspaper, and it's with mixed feelings that I'm leaving, but it's time to move on.

I want to thank Steve again for believing in me and encouraging me and being there for me every step of the way. Farewell, *Tamarack*. I am truly appreciative for all you've given me.

Advisor's Note: I'm deeply indebted to—and equally proud of—Alyssa's years of *Tamarack* dedication. Thanks, friend, for sticking with me 'til the end.

heard if I have to ask permission to speak. Of course, that's easier said than done, as illustrated above.

Have I cut someone off before they were done speaking? Obviously. Did I mean to? No, but I've realized if I don't, I won't get to say anything. It is the most horrible feeling not to have a voice; just ask any minority group. I'm not in a minority group, but my vocal cords are still cut by anxiety and depression.

I hate to think I have to change just to be heard. That's pretty much the same as victim blaming. However, a paradox comes into play: How can we ask people to let us speak, without first speaking? The answer is: we can't. I mean, maybe we could work out some sort of signal with friends, but we have to talk about it first. There's no way to com-

municate without communicating.

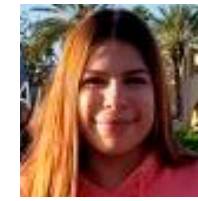
Many times, I've put myself in a corner, tried to become invisible and not take up space. I've heard friends express this as well. Just so you know: THIS IS NOT OKAY. People take up space; we are physical entities with mass. And we matter. The same is true of a person's voice. Voices take up room in a conversation, and sometimes there isn't enough space for everyone. Sorry, that's just a fact.

Before we can be heard, we must realize we deserve to be heard and try to distribute a conversation more evenly by taking our share. If we're still not heard after that, I recommend finding a new group of people. Because we deserve to be heard. So actually, when it comes to being a bother, I'm not sorry at all.

Face in the Crowd On the Bright Side

Dominique Casillas

Hi, my name is Dominique Casillas. I'm 21 years old, and currently, a Human Services Pre-Social Work major here at NVCC. I will be attending Central Connecticut State University this fall to finish up my bachelor's in Social Work. After Central, I plan to obtain my degree in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), which involves working with children who are on the Autism Spectrum. Yes, I know it may seem like I have a lot of schooling still left, but I am actually about halfway there. One semester at a time.



Being stuck inside all day due to what's going on out in the world today really sucks. But I take it with a grain of salt. I'm taking this time to read my word and get closer to God. Before this apocalypse happened, I went to church three times a week. Now it's down to zero. Yes, I'm bummed out that I can't go to church, but I think about what it says in the Bible: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" Philippians 4:13. This verse will always be one of my favorites. It brings me peace of mind when I think about what's going on in the world today.

NVCC has honestly treated me so well the past three years I've been here, and I can't believe my journey is coming to an end this semester. It's going to be so hard leaving all my favorite professors behind as I continue my college adventure. There are a few professors here who have really had an impact on my life. I think it's only right to give them a shout-out.

Professor Steve Parlato has helped me tremendously in a lot of different ways, and I cannot thank him enough. Honestly, I'm not sure where I would be if it wasn't for him believing in me. Also, Professor Larry Venuk has helped me a great deal with answering all of my annoying questions about the ABA field. Oh, so I thought they were annoying, but he took it as me being very interested in the field, he he. Finally, Professor Kathy Leblanc also had a big impact on me as a teacher and a boss when I was the student worker for the Human Services Program. These are just a few of the professors who have touched my life.

Naugatuck Valley Community College will forever hold a place in my heart, but now it's time to depart. To the class of 2020, congratulations; this virus might have stopped graduation, but it will not stop our determination.

Hope Blooms

Gwenydd Miller

This is a Star of Bethlehem flower, scientific name, *Ornithogalum umbellatum*. It generally blooms in late April or early May. At first glance, before it blooms, it looks like a thick tuft of tall grass, and can be easily missed. It is a common lawn plant that can be considered a weed since it is actually poisonous and can cause problems if ingested.

It was given the name Star of Bethlehem because of its six-point petals, and since it blooms in the spring, and is incredibly resilient, it is a symbol of hope, strength, and rebirth. Every year when it blooms, it reminds me of nature's cycle. Seasons change, and no hardship can last forever. It is a promise that things will get better; it should be in bloom right about now.



Earth Matters

Shutdown Decreases Pollution Levels

Alyssa Katz

With only essential businesses open due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and with broad travel restrictions, a significant drop in pollution levels has occurred globally. Because large smoke stacks and car tailpipes are not constantly churning out gas and smoke as they did before, nitrogen dioxide (NO2) levels have decreased around the world, most notably around large cities and industrialized areas, according to the European Space Agency.

While not a greenhouse gas, NO2 is derived from car engines, power plants, and other industrial processing machinery; it is responsible for airborne respiratory illnesses such as asthma, and contributes to carbon emissions that cause warming. High levels of pollution can lower immunity and have effects on agriculture as they can stunt plant growth. Some scientists have said the COVID-19 outbreak could be related to nature reacting to the critical levels of climate change. The World Health Organization is investigating if airborne pollution particles are a vector for COVID-19.

As noted in March, one of the largest drops in pollution levels came from Central China, especially around Wuhan. A highly industrialized, transportation-oriented city with a cluster of factories, NO2 levels had dropped noticeably, between 10–30%. Changes have also been recorded in South Korea, which, bordering China, houses several coal-powered plants. Also, in Northern Italy, the more industrialized part of the country, pollution levels decreased by 40%.

As for the U.S., NASA determined that NO2 levels in the Northeast have decreased by 30%; major cities such as L.A., Seattle and Chicago also saw decreases. Additionally, in New York City, America’s most heavily-populated, traffic-congested area, carbon monoxide levels declined by 50%. If interested in getting a visual of current global air quality levels, check out the Air Quality Index: <https://aqicn.org/map/world/>. Here, it is visible, and aligned with information from the sources mentioned, that air pollution has dropped significantly compared to this time last year. A global health crisis is no way to go about reducing pollution levels, but this has been like a world-scale experiment to show what the Earth could be like with less pollution.

While pollution levels will unfortunately increase once countries come out of lockdown, current levels give us an idea of a world with less smoke and fewer emissions tainting our air. If large businesses would commit to reducing the use of fossil fuels, this temporary benefit could become a long-term reality. Scientists warn, though, that the pandemic’s detrimental impact on the global economy threatens any progress being made in reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Without future global investments in clean energy, the pandemic’s one positive effect will likely be fleeting.

Note: This is my last column. It’s been an honor spreading awareness of important environmental topics, and I hope Earth Matters will continue with a successor.

Public Safety Department 

Routine Number
Ext. 58113

Emergency Number
Ext. 58112

The department is staffed:
24 hours per day • 365 days per year

THANK YOU ALL

In Appreciation

Amid all the losses we are experiencing as a college community this semester, one of the more poignant, for several of us, will be the loss of our Tamarack faculty advisor, Steve Parlato. We, the staff, have known and worked with Steve for varying amounts of time, but he has inspired a profound respect and admiration in all of us. It has always felt like he worked tirelessly for us, but the truth is, we exhausted him! His sabbatical is well deserved. Because we experienced different gifts from him, we wanted to express our thanks individually.

Referring to Steve as faculty advisor for *The Tamarack* doesn’t really do justice to the time and dedication he has put into helping us make every issue the best we could make it. I never imagined myself writing for the school paper, let alone writing my own column! But here I am, thoroughly enjoying every moment. Without Steve’s support and encouragement, I don’t think I would have allowed myself to find my voice as a writer or a person. “Thank you” is so inadequate for expressing the gratefulness I feel.

- Shyanne Caporuscio

Steve has been a great advisor and has always made me feel welcome, even before my becoming a permanent member of *The Tamarack*. In this past year, Steve has encouraged me to be a better writer and has always supported my ideas for articles. Under Steve’s advising, I’ve become a stronger and much more confident writer. For that, thank you Steve.

- Tabitha Cruz

Every so often, I encounter a warm, smiling soul who inspires me to be a better person. Steve Parlato is one of those people. In short, he made *The Tamarack* fun. It was always clear he cared not just for *The Tamarack* or printing a good paper every month, but also for all of us who were there to help him put it together.

- Jason Hesse

Steve, you introduced yourself one night in the Printmaking studio during a break from your Drawing I class in the studio next door, while I was carving a linoleum block print. You showed me the scar from your first block print. One year and several block prints later, I have not yet obtained such a scar. I have not had an easy academic (or life) journey, but the year I have known you has been, well, not easy given current events and all, but certainly more enjoyable when spent in your company. And I think what’s happening in the world notwithstanding, it was the better year of the two (and a half) I spent at Naugatuck Valley Community College. Thank you, Steve.

- Madeeha Sheikh

I have enjoyed the respect Steve has shown toward me, especially since I’m way older than he. It isn’t always easy to be kind and understanding, but people like Steve shoot from the heart. Thank you, Steve – God bless.

- Rick Bellagamba

Steve, there’s nothing I can say to express the entirety of my gratitude. When I first came to *The Tamarack*, I was a mess of social anxiety, but, in two years, much has changed. This growth is due in large part to the encouragement you have given me. Thank you for seeing and helping to retrieve the confidence and capability in me that I didn’t even know were there.

- Gwenydd Miller

All my life, I have been gifted with wonderful teachers and mentors who believed in me, and believed I could be so much more, if I just tried. So I kept trying. Maybe I got better; I know I got exhausted. Steve, you helped me to believe I am good enough, just the way I am. Working without expectations has been one of the most freeing experiences of my life. Thank you for your confidence, your trust, and your courage.

- Kathy Chesto

Journalism was new to me, but Steve encouraged me and helped me along the way—the ideas, the notes on how to improve, or simply just checking on how I was doing. I will miss working with him on *The Tamarack*, but this is just the end of one chapter. Thank you for everything, Steve!

- Alyssa Katz

I’ll never forget the moment Steve agreed to take on the role as Faculty Advisor for *The Tamarack*. I was entering into the role of Editor, both nervous and excited about the opportunity.

That year on *The Tam* was incredible! From learning how to build budgets, organizing a trip to the Harvard Club in NYC and creating a memorable event for Days of Remembrance of Holocaust survivors, I had so many wonderful, unforgettable and deeply meaningful experiences with Steve and *The Tamarack* crew.

- Chelsea (Clow) Wells

Steve, throughout our time together, you have instructed me to use less verbose language when writing. So, it’s difficult to write only a few words of thanks. Your influence on my work these past few years has given me new perspective and direction that would have been impossible for me without your tutelage. I wish you well on the next chapter of your life and hope you look back fondly at your time in *The Tamarack* newsroom.

- Mitchell Walter Maknis

Thank you, Steve, for giving me the confidence to be myself, and for believing in me when I couldn’t. Thank you for being my teacher, my mentor, and most importantly, my friend.

- Alexander Wilson

*Have an amazing sabbatical!
The Staff of The Tamarack*

THANK YOU, 2019-2020 OFFICERS!

Thank You, Everyone!

Karen Blake

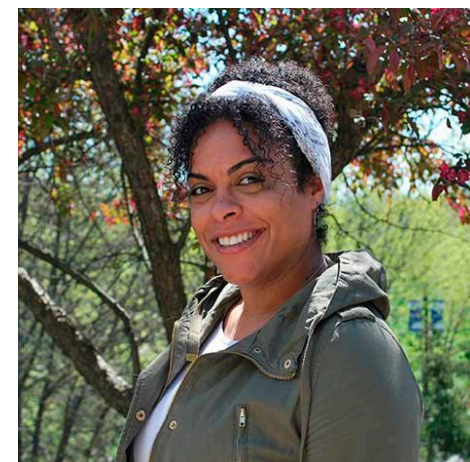
Even though this year’s Student Leadership Banquet has been canceled, I wanted to take the time to thank all the students and staff (advisors) who make Student Activities so successful. Your commitment and dedication have not gone unnoticed. Even though we cannot celebrate in our usual fashion, with awards and recognition, I would like to take the time to thank each and every one of you for your hard work throughout this past year. The events sponsored by Student Activities, SGA and our 35 clubs have made a difference, not only to students on campus, but in the community at large.

I would also like to recognize our Student Government Officers for their dedication by upholding their positions as the voice of the students. Student engagement is a critical part of every student’s success, and as a team in collaboration with Student Activities and student clubs these four officers have provided the best opportunities for our students to engage in activities. This year’s officers will all be graduating, and I would like to personally wish them great success in their future endeavors. I will miss you all and please keep in touch!

Stay Safe,
Karen Blake
Director of Student Activities



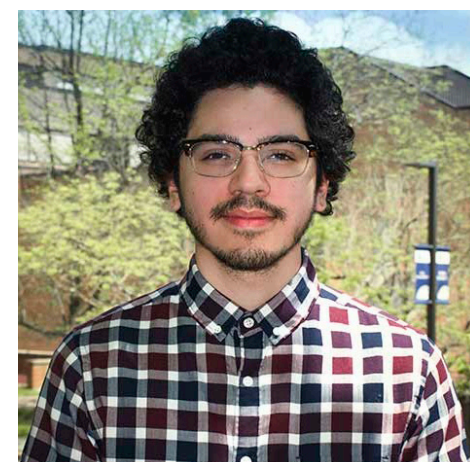
SGA President Tabitha Cruz



SGA Vice President Elizabeth Ortiz



SGA Treasurer Trajada Jackson



SGA Secretary Christian Soto

Veteran's Voice

Veterans Take Notes

LifeWaters, a non-profit, improves the lives of disabled Veterans by offering scuba diving and scuba certifications as part of recreational water therapy. This dedicated staff of volunteers, including spinal cord injury therapists, doctors, nurses, veterans and civilians, provide different services depending on needs, desires, and skill level. They have amputee scuba diving, disabled veteran scuba diving and other scuba programs available.

In memory of those lost during the 9/11 terrorist attack, and in honor of brave Americans who served in its wake to root out evil, *The Mission Continues* has organized *United in Service*, a month-long volunteer campaign. Veteran-led service platoons nationwide will call upon the veteran community to help in their mission to aid under-resourced schools, disaster recovery zones, and more.

Did you know the *National Resource Directory* has more than 14,000 vetted resources available to veterans right now? (Resource: *Justice For Vets*) The majority of our veterans return home strengthened by their military service, but many struggle with trauma, mental illness and substance use disorders. These issues can be exacerbated by the loss of military structure and camaraderie. Veterans treatment courts provide treatment, accountability, and mentoring.

COVID-19 safety is a top priority, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said at the American Legion Winter Conference, March 10 in Washington, D.C. With Coronavirus dominating national news, Wilkie addressed VA's response to the situation, including prevention steps at VA medical centers. He said, "We are making sure that those who come to us are screened." Wilkie also said VA is limiting visitors to its community living centers, or nursing homes.

Vets planning health care visits should stop and call first, or send a secure message via *MyHealthVet*—even if they have an appointment. They may be able to get diagnosed and receive care through VA *Telehealth* without having to leave home. If visiting, they should plan to get there earlier than usual to answer simple screening questions. These guidelines are for everyone's safety, so pay attention!

The internet is a powerful tool for veterans. It allows them to keep up with friends, access their hard-earned benefits, and shop for items they need. Unfortunately, former service members are more likely than civilians to be targeted by scammers while online. Veterans are twice as likely to lose money to fraud because of identity theft, phishing, impostor scams, and investment, loan, or donation deceptions.

Many scammers target veterans to alter or access their government-provided aid, swindling them out of money or benefits they've earned. This is a widespread issue. Nearly 80% of veterans say they've been targeted by scams due to their service, according to an AARP survey. Scams are diverse, ranging from phishing attempts to solicitations for fraudulent veteran-focused charities. Now more than ever, it's vital for veterans to take notes and be careful.

Stay safe!

Rick Bellagamba
(US Army, 1971 – 1974)



My Time with *The Tamarack*

Richard Bosco

I joined *The Tamarack* during late summer 2015. I'd considered joining the paper during the spring 2015 semester. What sealed the deal was when Professor Steve Parlato took on the advisor role. Steve, by this time, had been my English professor, mentor, and friend, so when he took over, I wanted to assist him by writing for the paper. Never did I foresee such a long and rewarding experience as I've had with *The Tamarack*.

I still remember that first issue, September 2015. Most of the previous staff had graduated or moved on to other endeavors. The staff and leadership on that first issue was pretty much Chelsea Clow as Editor-in-Chief, me as staff writer and Steve as advisor. I remember thinking I would write maybe an article or two for each issue. Well, those first couple issues ended up being much more than just one article. Chelsea and I wrote four and five articles and or columns each. We each had a front-page article. For the first time ever, I was conducting interviews.

Like I said, my time with *The Tamarack* has been extremely rewarding. I met many very nice, very talented people; all went on to leadership roles with *The Tamarack*. These people—Chelsea, Chris Gordon, Nicole Hayes and Alam Khan, to name a few—ended up being friends as well as colleagues. I also got to write several articles enhancing *The Tamarack's* growing role as a paper devoted to the social consciousness of the NVCC community as well as the state, nation and the world. For that experience, I will be eternally grateful.

Lastly, I'd like to say how pleased I am that my experiences also brought the opportunity to meet and associate with many professors, educators, and staff, including President Daisy Cocco De Filippis. President Daisy, since I first met her, has been one of *The Tamarack's* strongest supporters. I know I speak for all past and present members of *The Tamarack* when I say we're eternally grateful for her friendship and support. I will always treasure my *Tamarack* experience.

Readers Respond

Excerpt of a student email submitted by Prof. Karen Rotella with permission

Life is so crazy right now! I miss coming to school so much, which I can say surprises me a little. I work at Shoprite, and grocery stores are considered essential, so we must stay open. I can honestly say it has not been enjoyable.

I'm sure you've seen the panic buying of toilet paper and everything else that has caused us to put a limit on things. Then [we're] met with angry responses from customers. We got cursed out by a customer because we didn't allow her to get four dozen eggs; the limit is two. Every day we get calls about when shipments will come in, which we don't know; it's whenever they can get them to us. [There are also] calls complaining about why we have no cleaning products.

I think what is tiring me most is that no

one has consideration for anyone else; it's only self-preservation. I think about the reasons we're limiting: to protect low-income people and provide for them as well, while I'm being screamed at by a lady when I tell her she cannot have 10 packages of chicken. I think about mothers on W.I.C who can only receive certain items but are failing to do so with everyone's panic buying.

There are those moments when customers take time to thank us for being open, but I wish these were in surplus compared to the selfish comments. I'm hanging in there when I look upon the positives!

School has been okay so far as the adjustment happens. It's been funny to see some of my teachers figure out online video and recording lectures for Youtube. The assignments are pretty standard, but I do miss being in the classroom. I'm not much for online learning, just as I'm not one for online reading. I prefer to have a physical book as I prefer to be in a classroom. Thanks for asking about us during this time and reading this insanely long email!

Your Student

Queer Code

Being Okay in a Changing World

Alexander Wilson



As the school year comes to a close, many of us are graduating, and graduating means moving on. You could be transferring to a four-year school or starting a job. You might be taking a break. Whatever you are doing, it's okay. We don't all have the same paths in life. I know this year hasn't exactly gone how any of us expected. Nothing has been consistent, and every day there's some new horror on the news. However, that doesn't mean all hope is lost.

It's important to recognize not everyone is in a safe environment right now. Some of you may be stuck at home with others who don't understand you, or hate some aspect of you, even if they don't realize it. If you're stuck closeted at home, I'm sorry, and I sympathize. Remember, this is only a temporary bump in the road, even if it doesn't feel so temporary right now. Better days are coming.

If you can't be yourself at home, there are things you can do to help that. Go online and search for LGBT support groups. So many people out there are in similar situations. See if you can find some LGBT literature or TV, preferably happier books and shows. If you're stuck hearing your dead name all the time, keep in contact with friends you can

ask to use your name and proper pronouns in conversations. Always practice acts of self-care. Do the basics like shower, eat, and take your medications, but also get some fresh air, keep a clean environment, and if you have a pet, keep it close.

This is such a difficult time, and we're all feeling more than a little depressed. Please remember you are still loved. You matter. If you're really struggling, The Trevor Project has a national suicide hotline at 1-866-488-7386. If you're not in an environment where you can make a phone call, you can also text START to 678678 for the TrevorText Suicide Helpline.

We never could have expected this. Our world had changed rapidly in the last two months, so quickly we can hardly keep up. We are all ill-prepared for the realities of 2020. It's okay if you're feeling overwhelmed. The world still needs you. You are important. You do matter.

I've written this column for two years now, and I've consistently been open about a lot of topics. I'll be open now, too. I'm scared. This is a scary time. I'm in a bad physical place and a bad mental place. If I could fix all this, I would. All I can do is offer kindness and advice and hope that tomorrow doesn't suck as badly. I hope by the fall, things are better. I hope you are in better places, at school or at work. I hope you have the freedom to be yourself. I hope we can all survive this.

I don't know what else to say, besides stay safe. Do what you can. Love yourself. Just try your best. This will all be over, hopefully, soon.

Sincerely,
Alexander, who just wants a better world

That's What She Said

The Last One

Jessica Ney

Lately, I have felt like a tired feminist. I began my journey of writing "That's What She Said" with a burning heart and hungry mind. I look back on the articles I have put out and I mourn for that fiery and idealistic voice. I think I have aged into a quieter, slow-moving, small-change feminist. More days than not it feels I am lost in my own world, and I fear I've done a disservice to the population I claim to care so much about.



I have allowed myself to step back from the media and the news, and it feels like I'm not doing my part. Sometimes, while writing my articles, I felt ignorant, as if I was leaning into my privilege in a way I have been fighting against for years. I felt like a fake, calling out people for activities I, too, take part in. But "That's What She Said," I have realized, was just as much for me as it was for all of you. I will never be the ideal I strive for. I will always have the excuses, but I won't ever have all the time and energy and resources to elicit huge, lasting change.

I've realized I can be a feminist to be proud of, a person to rely on, on a small scale—and there's nothing wrong with that. My worth as a warrior of equality is not based on the number of people I reach (though I imagine it's way more than I'll ever know, thanks to those who read this!) but rather the quality of the effect I bring. Working in our communities, directly with the people we interact with every day is enough.

We all have our own responsibilities, and sometimes adding "Be a great feminist" feels too daunting an addition to our to-do list. I recently finished nursing school and began my career, and I'm truly exhausted. But each day I interact with men and women of all creeds and races and cultures, and I'm able to care for them, and support them, and listen to their unique struggles. I have the capacity to uplift other young women in my field; I can also interact with people of other generations in a meaningful way. I can take a stand when something isn't right, so in a way, I'm still very much an active feminist, just not in the way I always pictured.

So, in my last piece as *The Tamarack's* voice of feminism, I am, as always, calling you to action, but in a way that feels close to your heart. There is no wrong way to be a feminist. Comparison will only take down our community. It doesn't matter what someone else is doing; their effect on people is unique to what they bring to the table. We need to recognize each person can bring color, action, and beauty to our world in a million different ways.

It's time for us to recognize and point out people's ignorance and hate. It's time to take part in our communities, and work better with those you may not like. Take time to look at your life. What are you doing to uplift others? How are you taking care of yourself? Are you living out the image of your life you always imagined? And if not, why?

Now more than ever, it's time to live without fear, take chances and make significant changes, even if they feel small. Even if you feel like a drop in a bucket, a million raindrops can make a storm. It has been a pleasure and a gift to have written this column. I am so lucky. I hope my simple words have made a difference in some way or another. Being able to share my heart in this way has given me more than I can ever say. I celebrate you all. Together, we can.

Thank you, Jess.

Ask Nicole

Last Column as a College Student

These last few weeks have certainly been strange, and life has turned in a way I did not expect. I'm sure everyone else is saying the same thing. As for me, this is my last-ever college newspaper article, as I will be graduating next month! It's not what I expected, due to the coronavirus, but that virus cannot stop me from completing my coursework and getting my diploma.

College has been quite weird these last weeks, as now I only see my classmates through Webex, but I'm thankful we still have a class. Probate class I'm currently taking has been quite the turn of events. I've learned and stressed over things I did not know even existed. I was told by a former classmate probate is the toughest class; of course, everyone has their own opinions.

I think anything in the legal profession can be tricky if you don't know what you are doing. But I can certainly say I've learned so much in my probate class. I have learned about how to draft a will, so when I have mine professionally done someday, I know what to expect. There are some things we should all know about in life, especially during a time like this dealing with COVID-19.

Life can change so easily in a matter of moments. You should always know how to protect yourself and have a plan in case things go wrong. During this time of crisis, I've certainly bonded more with my family and spent more time with my husband. Before COVID-19, I was back and forth between two jobs, college, grocery shopping, homework and many other things. Life can catch up when you least expect it. When I was doing all of this, I was missing my husband, and someday, I felt like I never got to see him.

The positive in all of this is every day we wake up together and spend more time together. We even share meals together now! The little things in life can really make a difference. My advice to everyone is to treasure the little moments, as they can make the biggest impact.

Don't lose hope, try something new, and trust your instincts. You may not agree with everything on the news, but don't let that discourage you. Sometimes reading news sites can be rather overwhelming and depressing. It got to the point for me that I had to delete all news apps from my phone. Who wants to read about the daily death toll? It's quite simple: continue social distancing, keep yourself healthy, and keep in touch with your family. The telephone still exists! With social media, you can still keep in touch with friends, and video chats can almost feel like you're leaving the house, even when you're not.

To beat this virus, we need to stick together and stay safe. Before we know it, we'll be looking back on this and, though things will be different, they may be better. I think people will think twice now about taking better care of themselves. One final note: I wish you a safe and happy life. Don't worry, be happy, and this too, shall pass.

All the best, Nicole Zappone

Long-distance Appreciation

Shyanne Caporuscio

Honestly, for most of the spring semester, while still on campus, I found myself wanting to be anywhere but in class. There was so much to do and not enough time to do it. Counting down the days until I didn't have to go to school became a habit. Once we were forced to start distance learning I realized how little I'd appreciated my experiences. Personally, I never understood how much of an impact the on-campus experiences of my everyday college life meant. While I'm grateful for the opportunity to continue my studies, online classes just aren't the same.

When I first came to NVCC, the plan was just to take some classes, to buy myself time to figure out where I wanted to be. A lot of people think of community college as a steppingstone; for a while, I thought that, too. Speaking from experiences, I couldn't have been more wrong. NVCC is not a steppingstone in my college career; it's the foundation. The truth is, we all take classes, earn credits, and think about our futures every day. What we do at NVCC is the beginning of our futures, and what we're learning here goes beyond the classroom.

In the classroom, we're given the opportunity to learn, engage, and observe ourselves and others as we embark on our academic journeys. As students, we're given every chance to succeed, but the freedom of making that choice is our own. Our professors provide course content, and the information we need to succeed in learning the material, but they also teach us so much more. That's one reason distance learning has been hard. Obtaining information and learning are two totally different concepts, if you ask me. I've felt a huge disconnect getting in the way of the actual learning experience.

However, during these trying times, I believe the faculty and staff (at least those I've engaged with) have been doing everything they can to continue supporting and encouraging students. There's no "How to Guide" for living through a pandemic, and there's definitely no "How to Guide" for how to teach through one either.

Despite the disconnect and unfamiliarity of virtual classes, I've learned a lot about the importance of understanding, empathy, support, and resilience over the last few weeks by engaging with faculty. I've learned how powerful authenticity and encouragement can be and how even the smallest amount of understanding and support can make a difference. This reinforces my original statement that what we're learning goes beyond the classroom.

While I still strongly believe the impact of on-campus encounters at NVCC is an important factor in why I appreciate the college experience, I've also come to understand it's not just the place that's special. It's the people in this place who make it so special. To NVCC's faculty and staff, you are appreciated.

ministrators, faculty, staff, and hardworking students themselves played major roles—the president encouraged hard work above all. Rewards for excellent performance, and a gentle but firm reminder of the importance of education, awaited students who took time to meet with her

One of the most difficult eras in American history began during President De Filippis's term, with the election of the 45th US President. Our president took a stand against casual racism masquerading as a "return to greatness," declaring our campus a safe haven for all who sought education to improve themselves and their communities.

Forever Grateful

Chelsea (Clow) Wells

Naugatuck Valley Community College and *The Tamarack* will always have a special place in my heart. I started my *Tamarack* journey in 2014 as a quiet, nervous staff writer, completely new to journalism and fairly new to being a college student again. In fall 2015, I was offered the role of Editor and Steve Parlato accepted the role of Faculty Advisor. We had a whirlwind



first year!

I remember feeling overwhelmed at times as I wanted to carry on the traditions of *The Tamarack* and continue to provide the college with a well-written, informative, and noteworthy newspaper. I do recall having a sense of peace, however, because I knew Steve was at the helm. Ever since taking his English 102 class, I had such confidence in his abilities and so much respect for his approach to new ideas and concepts.

I remember my first assignment for the newspaper was to interview NVCC President Daisy Cocco De Filippis on an upcoming, on-campus event honoring Julia de Burgos. I had no way of knowing in that moment, how in love I would fall with working for the college newspaper. I so enjoyed gathering info from college staff and faculty, conducting interviews, and discussing the findings with my fellow *Tamarack* staff. In that moment, I was also not aware of what an impact and influence President De Filippis would also have on me.

I learned so much from my experiences with *The Tamarack*; more than I ever would have anticipated. I gained so many valuable skills that have translated into real life skills, and I have learned so much from working with so many talented writers and artists.

And while I credit my good experiences and learned skills to the amazing staff and experience with *The Tamarack*, one person in particular made the entire experience incredible: Steve Parlato. Steve taught me so much about writing, about the creative process, about trusting my intuition and my own artistry, and to do it all with humility, grace, and a sense of humor. Steve is someone I feel so fortunate to call my friend, and I am forever grateful for the impact he has had on my life.

While I graduated from NVCC two years ago, I still stay informed of events and happenings at the college, and I continue to read *The Tamarack*. I am always so proud of the dedication and commitment that is tangible among those working for this newspaper. I look forward to the continued success of *The Tam* and am forever grateful to have been a part of its journey.

Coming Full Circle

Christopher Gordon

These past weeks, I've been working to organize the end of the semester for WCSU's Psych Alliance Club. A major duty is transfer of leadership to someone new, as I will soon graduate. One student has stood out, her work ethic and reliability prompting me to suggest she might be my successor. Within her is a good leader; she just needs to be given that chance. In this way, my time as an undergraduate student comes full circle.



Four years ago, I was selected to serve as Editor-in-Chief of *The Tamarack*. Since then, I've gone on to be part of NVCC's SGA, President's Circle, and to graduate Summa Cum Laude with a nice scholarship to boot. At my next stop, WCSU, I've continued as a "busybody," leading another club, being a leader in my major's honors society, and serving as student representative. How all those activities, and a few others, fit into three sentences when they took four years to accomplish is easily explained: I was taught how to be brief in my writing by being an editor with tight deadlines to fill. All of this was with guidance from Professor Steven Parlato.

This issue marks the end of an age as Professor Parlato steps down as advisor to our award-winning school newspaper. I can empathize and understand how stressful it can be stepping away from something you love, but sometimes to grow you must move past that which is comfortable. Professor Parlato helped teach me that as he supported me throughout my time at NVCC and WCSU. It was this support and recognition of my talents that taught me how to become a good leader. Because of him, I know how to offer support to others during tough times, without sounding degrading or condescending. Admittedly, I still turn to him for guidance, though I ceased being his student years ago.

If it wasn't for Steve's relaxed and open nature, I wouldn't have even made it past one full *Tamarack* meeting. To be fair, Editor-in-Chief Chelsea Wells (nee Clow) was a major supporter of her club's writers as well. Because of them, I got to encourage a wonderful writer to succeed me as leader of this motley crew, Corporal Alam Khan. Through his influence, I got to see a fantastic writer transform from an introvert worried about joining any clubs to being elected to serve as leader of two at the same time: Gwenydd Miller. And in my final act as club leader at a different institution I get to encourage a new leader one last time.

Filling the shoes of this great professor and writer and advisor will not be easy, but I know the new advisor will continue to guide *The Tamarack* brilliantly in his own way. Writers and editors of *The Tamarack* will continue to shine. I speak from experience as I had to take over for a brilliant leader, and *The Tamarack* continued to be the strong voice of compassion for our campus it always was.

Thank you, Steve, for creating a great environment where students felt safe to express themselves without judgment—even during times when small-minded judgmentalism tried to invade our campus.

In the spirit of cross-cultural communication, President De Filippis also created NVCC's Confluencia. This celebration of poetry hosted renowned international writers to inspire students and faculty whose poetry was also shared. Confluencia offered a blend of new and established voices reminding our community we are all equal, regardless of nationality or gender, sexuality or age.

Our May 2020 edition marks the final issue published with De Filippis as our president, so I want to share my happiness at attending one of the top community colleges thanks to her vision for our school. NVCC will always be indebted to the steady lead-

ership and educational drive President De Filippis infused into our lives.

As she embarks on her new journey, I wish her all the best, yet I'm sad to see her go. She will always be one of the people who saw something inside me I never noticed myself. She and the President's Circle advisors welcomed me, expecting me to live up to my capabilities. I believe I've met their expectations, alongside other amazing President's Circle students. I will continue to do so, not just in gratitude for what I was given, but out of loyalty to the dream realized at the community college Dr. De Filippis has nurtured so well.

Hail to the Chief

Christopher Gordon

This is a time of change. With the global pandemic, we've found ourselves home alone, studying by computer screen. Another major change: NVCC President Daisy Cocco De Filippis has announced her retirement.

For twelve years, Dr. De Filippis has been a steady presence, guiding our wonderful community to achievements for the college and for countless individuals. The rise in graduation rates alone is a major benefit of her presence. While not her doing alone—ad-

Isolation and Depression

Audrey Winter

It is no secret social interaction and depression correlate. When someone has depression, their relationships tend to suffer; similarly, though, when there is no connection to other people depression tends to worsen. We need human interaction; we've all seen *Castaway* where Tom Hanks' character starts talking to "Wilson," a volleyball. Of course, this is an extreme case, but it is in our genes to be social. Back before humans were human, our survival as a species depended on connection.

Now, we have tools to cheat the distance, but they can't replace in-person communication. It's different. I know we're all

feeling it with COVID-19. I'm sure I don't have to tell you online learning is not ideal; it makes us miss out on so much. We must deal with the situation as it is, and right now, the best thing to do is stay home and self-quarantine. Of course, this doesn't make it any easier. Many who struggle with depression rely on social interactions to keep moving—myself, and many of my friends, included.

Given the noted correlation earlier, what happens when someone with depression can't socialize? It stands to reason the depression will worsen. I've heard from so many people who have had their sleep schedules thrown off or have stopped contacting their friends. They've fallen into this black pit and

climbing out alone is tough.

Another important consideration is that with depression, sadly, also comes higher risk of suicide. With suicide rates so high before COVID-19, it's scary to think about. A lot of my friends are, or have been, suicide risks. Thankfully they've all sought help. I have, in the past, also experienced these thoughts, and I can say from experience it can get better.

Thankfully, there is help if you need it, as I know I did. CAPSS has counselors open for virtual appointments, and they can connect you with available resources, such as 211 and other links you can follow. Last month, the SGA started sending out a newsletter featuring exercises, healthy recipes, fun activities, and fun challenges you can get involved in. It's a great way to stay connected with the

NVCC community. I know the semester is just about over, and we've almost reached the finish line, but that's even more reason to stay involved now, before we get to summer break.

This may seem obvious, but being so physically distant, it's more important than ever to keep up with each other, not just for the sake of those you're reaching, but for your own sake. That said, when it comes to depression, it's hard to be the one to reach out. It gets easier once some momentum gets built, but taking that first step can be the biggest hurdle. Until something gives you a push, you're going to remain an object at rest. Let this article be that push. And remember, the widely known saying, "This too shall pass." Stay healthy, everyone.

One Last Time

Alam Khan, Editor-in-Chief Emeritus

As I sit here writing this in the wee hours of the morning, it would be inconceivable not to come back and critically reflect on the quality of contribution I made in my time with *The*



Tamarack. I hope I have done enough. Most often, it was my goal to pass on impactful knowledge I had acquired that others might, perhaps, find useful; this became a consistent trope in most of the writing. In reality, the stoicism—or other forms of perspective on mentality to overcome the too-good-to-be-true highs and unshakable lows—that were gilded here and there within my editor's column, for the most part, are something I still need to this

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day to keep going.

I wrote for the little Alam in me I could relate to most closely, who so desperately craved nourishment in the past with the mantras and quotes of those who righteously overcame their own ordeals. In trying to help myself with positive affirmation, my goal and hope was to hopefully reach others who could benefit from my recurring column. For the most part, it helped. Heck, I graduated! That means it did something to keep me going. But where it couldn't, I had the real heroes of my life who cared and loved in their

ways to see me back on my path. Heroes the likes of Professors Julia Petitfrere and Steve Parlato; my predecessor, Chris Gordon; and others from *The Tamarack* family who provided a revitalizing energy that still electrifies and surges within me to this moment.

It really is an end of an era with so many changes occurring, in the leadership at NVCC—many thanks and continued blessings, President De Filippis—and also on *The Tamarack*. And rather than taking this as a quick opportunity to provoke a bittersweet emotion, I charge it forth fully to be a cel-

ebration of joys in passing the baton to the next group of leaders in the community. You got this! We got this! It will be exciting to see what the future holds for all of us.

It never felt right to end my column without a quote, but seeing how it is a special occasion how about a few? A few to keep you going—and to keep me going!

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever." —Mahatma Gandhi

"Do or do not. There is no try." —Yoda

"The strongest among you is the one who controls his anger." —Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W)

"First say to yourself what you would be; and then do what you have to do." —Epictetus

"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment." —Ralph Waldo Emerson

Feel as if you started here.

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