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THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1977

Chaos At The Counter

ALEX KLAVERNS
NEWS EDITOR

The Connecticut College Post Office operated in crisis mode at the beginning of this semester. After a decrease in staff that came with no technological upgrades, just a few mailroom employees struggled to manually process a record number of packages while also manning a counter that opened for just three hours a day.

While the student body received thousands of delivery notifications from carriers such as UPS, FedEx, and the U.S. Postal Service, nearly all packages went unsorted



Photo courtesy of Nikolas Severino

for days after their initial delivery. Even when packages were processed, mailroom staff and volunteers sometimes struggled to locate items.

On multiple occasions, Vice President of Finance and Administration Richard Madonna could be seen working the counter. Multiple people familiar with the College Post Office said they have never seen a senior college administrator working in the mailroom.

Suzie Austin-Lesick, the only

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Kavanaugh and Reproductive Rights

ANONYMOUS
CONTRIBUTOR

EDITOR'S NOTE: To protect the privacy of this contributor, we are running the piece anonymously

For the past several weeks, I have struggled with whether or not to write about Brett Kavanaugh. Any topic that is so politically contentious is, of course, challenging to write about. My indecision stems not from my political beliefs but from my personal ones. I delayed writing this piece with the hope that Kavanaugh would not be appointed to the Supreme Court. But the FBI investigation of Kavanaugh has officially ended.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Review of *We are Proud to Present*

SAADYA CHEVAN
ARTS EDITOR

By some measures, including mine, Jackie Sibblies Drury's humorous lengthily titled one act play *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation About the Herero of Namibia, Formerly Known as Southwest Africa, From the German Südwestafrika, Between the Years 1884-1915* begins as a light take on microaggressions, racism and sexism. The production follows six idealistic young American actors, three black and three white, who attempt to create a hybrid lecture-play about the Herero, a tribe indigenous to modern Namibia that was the victim of the first genocide of the 20th Century from 1904-1908 in the colony of German South West Africa.

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NEWS

Phillip Kuhel discusses the dirty truth about washing your clothes on page 5.

OPINIONS

Cameryn Lesko-Jelley considers the social divide between athletes and non athletes on page 10.

OPINIONS

Will Canellakis satirizes Trump and Stormy Daniels on page 9.

ARTS

Elizabeth Berry reviews the latest OnStage performance by the Dance Theater of Harlem on page 15

From the Editor

Last Saturday, following bitterly partisan hearings, Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh was confirmed to the Supreme Court by one of the slimmest margins in American history. The Senate failed by every metric to learn from its missteps in the 1991 Clarence Thomas hearings during which Anita Hill's testimony was met by senators with at best a lack of understanding and at worse by outright hostility. The confirmation process for Justice Kavanaugh served as an opportunity to reset the nation's sensitivity to sexual politics. Instead, most Republican senators chose to grudgingly acknowledge Dr. Christine Blasey Ford's credibility while simultaneously pressing forward undeterred with the nomination. The Republican's relentless drive to change the ideological balance of our highest court was a gift to partisan interest groups at the expense of our faith in democratic goals of our great political institutions as well as our society's empathy and respect for assault survivors.

The Kavanaugh confirmation process parallels the 1991 hearings for then-Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas. Party makeup in Congress, however, emerges as one key difference. Although the Democratic Party controlled both the House and Senate by large margins in 1991, its leaders proved themselves to be more interested in political maneuvering than with discovering the truth. Judiciary chairman Senator Joseph Biden had the power to set the rules for additional hearings, but fully accommodated requests of the Republican minority by: 1) agreeing to time constraints allowing only 4 days between the first day of hearings and the floor vote (with only two days to investigate Professor Hill's charges); 2) agreeing that the Judiciary Committee would not take another vote even if new evidence emerged during the hearings; and 3) agreeing to an investigation of limited scope that excluded general questions about Thomas' sexual conduct and his interest in pornography. In a similar vein, the Senate and White House significantly reduced the scope of investigation into claims levied against Justice Kavanaugh by capping the number of witnesses interviewed by the FBI, limiting the investigation to one week, and failing to fully investigate the claims of Debbie Ramirez. Senator Susan Collins, likewise, followed Senator Nancy Kassenbaum's 1991 playbook in voting for a nominee facing credible accusations of sexual assault. Considered a moderate Republican, and only one of two women serving in the Senate, Kassenbaum initially appeared to be a swing vote. She, too, however, buckled under intense party pressure.

As upsetting as Saturday's vote was to many Americans, voters still have reason for hope. Following the Thomas hearings, an unprecedented number of women ran for public office and won. The upcoming midterm elections could provide a platform for a repeat performance. Thenmozhi Soundararajan, executive director of Equality Labs, eloquently captures the triumphs of survivors despite the Kavanaugh setback. Writing for the *Huffington Post*, she notes that, "[Republicans] think that they're winning, but they have basically ignited a movement that's never going to go away."

Participation in this movement can take many forms—whether it's calling your senators, protesting outside the Supreme Court, or sharing your personal stories and experiences. I am proud that *The Voice* can support this movement by serving as a medium for students to share their experiences. In this issue, you will find opinions articles that detail the personal reactions of two Conn students to the Kavanaugh hearings. To all the survivors of sexual assault and their allies, thank you for having the courage to speak up and share your truth.

For all of us, we need to use our voices effectively on November 6 to show this president and Congress that you believe that survivors deserve our support and that you will stand up against a culture that excuses perpetrators.

-Dana

THE COLLEGE VOICE

The views and opinions expressed in *The College Voice* are strictly those of student authors, and not of Connecticut College. All content and editorial decisions remain in the hands of the students; neither the College's administration nor its faculty exercise control over the content.

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Community Bulletin

Connecticut Receives \$30 Million for Water Projects

Connecticut has received more than \$30 million in federal funding to be put towards community-based water infrastructure projects involving drinking water and municipal sewage. This year, CT created its first State Water Plan, attempting to balance the needs of the public, economic development, and ecological health.

Connecticut Teams Up with Group to Combat School Violence

The state is partnering with nonprofit group Sandy Hook Promise to help train educators, school administrators, and students on how to protect against school violence. Governor Dannel P. Malloy says the state is expected to train more than 116,000 students on how to identify and get help for those showing at-risk behaviors.

Costs Skyrocket for New London Fuel Tank Removal

Costs associated with the removal of an underground fuel tank near the fire department headquarters off bank street have been raised from an estimated \$13,000 to over \$160,000. The 60-year-old tank has since been removed, but soil contamination surrounding the tank is cause for new cost estimates. “It’s pretty clear it’s gasoline residue,” said Paul Gills, the city Risk Manager. “The gas tanks were removed but the pollution remains in the ground.”

Sports Spotlight

By PRICE DAY

Men’s Results

Soccer wins 2-0 vs. Eastern Conn,
2-0 vs. Bates

Water Polo loses 5-20 vs. Whittier,
10-15 vs. Occidental

Cross Country places 2nd at Bowdo-
in invitational

Sailing places 11th at NEISA

Women’s Results

Volleyball win 3-0 vs Eastern Conn,
3-0 vs. Castleton

Soccer wins 6-0 vs. Eastern Conn,
2-0 vs. Bates

Field Hockey lose 1-2 vs. Bates, 1-3
vs. Amherst

Sailing places 12th at Nelson Regatta

Upcoming Events

October 9th, Men’s & Women’s Soccer vs. Amherst

October 12th Volleyball vs. Bates

October 13th, Men’s & Women’s Cross Country Connecticut College
Invitational; Men’s and Women’s Soccer vs. Tufts; Men’s Water Polo @
Johns Hopkins; Field Hockey vs. Tufts; Volleyball vs. Colby

Staff Recs

Media and journalism recommendations from the staff of *The College Voice*

Dana Gallagher:

“DC Circuit Sent Complaints about Kavanaugh’s testimony to Chief Justice Roberts,” *The Washington Post*. This article highlights that, for the first time, a Supreme Court nominee poised to join the court has faced calls by a fellow judge for misconduct claims to receive review.

“Driven by the South’s Past, Black Women Seek Votes and a New Future,” *The New York Times*. This article reveals that black women, mobilized by the nation’s divisions on race and Donald Trump’s presidency, are using networks forged in segregation to get out the vote this fall.

Alex Klavens:

“Turkey concludes Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi killed by ‘murder’ team, sources say,” *The Washington Post*. Turkey has concluded that Jamal Khashoggi, a prominent Saudi journalist. was captured, tortured, and killed inside Saudi Arabia’s consulate in Istanbul. Khashoggi frequently criticized the Saudi government, opting to leave that country in 2017. “I have left my home, my family and my job, and I am raising my voice. To do otherwise would betray those who languish in prison. I can speak when so many cannot.”

Saadya Chevan:

“A Smith College Employee Called the Police on Me for Eating Lunch While Black,” *ACLU*. Oumou Kanoute, a sophomore at Smith College, has penned an open letter on the ACLU’s website detailing her experience of an incident of racial profiling against her that occurred on the college’s campus this past summer and made national headlines. Kanoute writes: “A few humiliating minutes later, the questioning was over. But the pain certainly wasn’t. As I write this, I still feel overwhelmed with anxiety and sadness over what happened. I still struggle to leave my room. Walking into the dining hall to grab a meal fills me with dread.”

The college has issued several statements acknowledging the racial bias in the incident, and apologizing to Kanoute, in addition to implementing mandatory bias training for all employees. However, she has not yet decided whether she intends to pursue legal action. Tracey A. Putnam Culver, a longtime employee in the college’s facilities management department has written a letter to President Kathleen McCartney and senior administrators criticizing the college’s decision to put the employee at fault for the incident on leave and other aspects of the College’s statements responding to it.

Jacee Cox:

“Puppy Cuteness Is Perfectly Timed to Manipulate Humans,” *The Atlantic*. A short and sweet article about the scientific effect of puppies on the human mind--what more could you want?

Grace Amato:

“The Myth of the Lazy Non-Voter,” *The New York Times*. This opinion article from the New York Times talks about the voter suppression in many states in the US. The authors debunk the idea that there are people dissatisfied with the current state of the nation but are too lazy to vote- they want to vote but photo ID laws, registration restrictions, absentee ballots and other policies restrict their rights.

Laundry: Not Clean Enough Yet

PHILLIP KUHSEL
CONTRIBUTOR

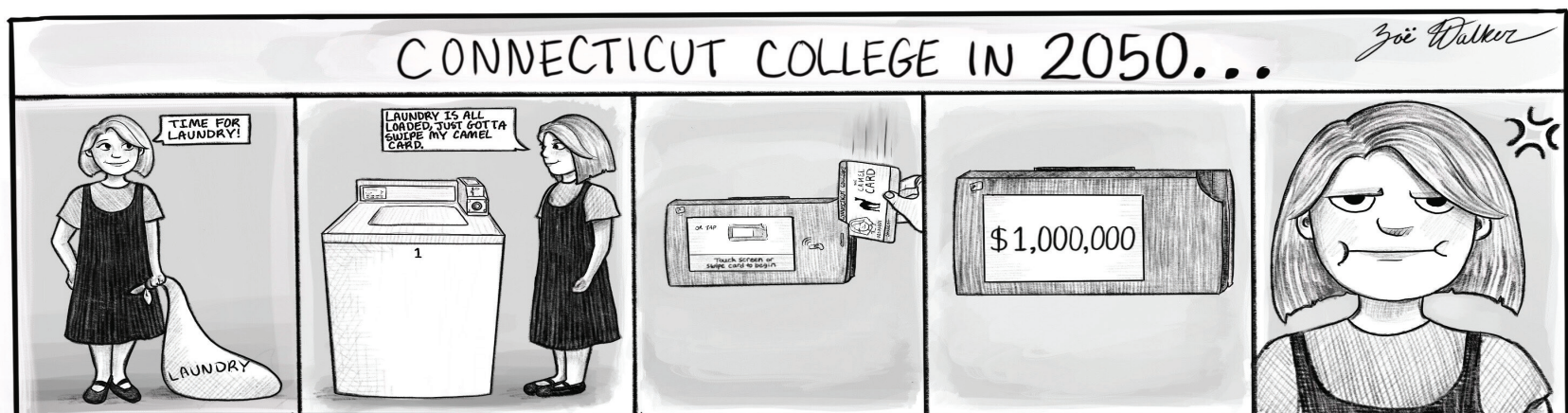
One of the most common appliances in any household is the laundry machine and dryer. An average household of four uses about 15-40% of their water consumption on laundry. Furthermore, the average American family does about 400 loads of laundry a year. However, despite being such a common home appliance, what may not be known is the truly unsustainable fashion in which many laundry machines operate. A standard washer typically consumes between 40 and 45 gallons of water per load whereas today's best washers still consume around 9 gallons per load. The water efficiency of laundry machines can be measured using the Water Factor which is the quantity of the water (in gallons) used to wash each cubic feet of the laundry.

The unsustainability of laundry machines is two-fold: the inefficiency of the machines themselves as well as the plastics present in the clothing that are ultimately washed away into the ocean. Around 60% of the material in our clothing is plastic due to its durability as well as it being relatively cheap. Simply by running a washing machine cycle, hundreds of thousands of plastic fibers ultimately will reach the ocean through the water supply. Microplastics are one of the most lethal threats to the oceanic environment today due to marine life mistaking it for food, ultimately leading to widespread death. Once consumed, the plastic gets passed on to other organisms as it moves along the food chain leading

to a widespread effect. It was found that 73% of fish caught in the North Atlantic had microplastics present in their stomachs.

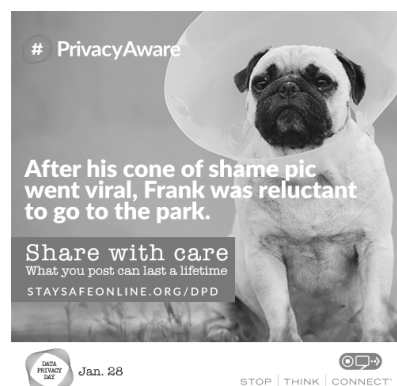
A study was conducted in 2016 by the Marine Pollution Bulletin looking at the release of synthetic microplastics from domestic washing machines and found that an average wash load of 6 kg yielded a release of 700,000 fibers per wash. The danger of microplastics is their ability for some to find their way through multiple barriers such as sewage treatment scree, making it virtually impossible to stop them from reaching the ocean. Moreover, the plastics take thousands of years to degrade, increasing the longstanding impact on the ocean.

An issue that often arises in relation to scientific discoveries is the ability of a scientist to properly synthesize the scientific information to the layman. The question that ultimately arises from this issue is what the average person can do to minimize the number of plastics reaching the ocean. Living in a world dominated by the consumer, however, it's hard to tell someone not to buy more clothing. It's even harder to convince people to buy clothing made of natural fibers. In other words, a solution needs to apply to the everyday person and make the everyday person a consumer that is environmentally conscious. Eventually, the technology needed to reduce the number of fibers being released will be designed but the two most immediate things we can do are cutting clothing consumption and running washing machines only when necessary and/or with a full load of clothing. •



Comic courtesy of Zoë Walker

October is CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS MONTH



The next time you're online, think about what you share with others. Do you forward pictures or videos of your friends from your phone? Do you have a profile on a social network, or a blog? Before you share, keep in mind:

Your online actions can have real-world consequences. Think before you post and share.

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0033a-share-care>

Chaos At The Counter

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

current mailroom employee to have worked in that office for more than four months, says that the mailroom “should never get this out of hand.” She said she could not recall a time during her five years at the College when mailroom staff could not process a package within a day of its delivery.

Austin-Lesick blames the increase in volume on the popularity of services like Amazon Prime, a paid subscription service that offers two-day shipping for many purchases. “Students want things instantly, so Amazon has really picked up their game.”

Director of Auxiliary Operations Merrill Collins, who oversees the Post Office, says the numbers “suggest an increase in packages this semester over other years.”

But further contributing to the Post Office’s backlog is an outdated processing system that relies on the manual identification of package recipients and the creation of paper notification slips.

Packages without box numbers on their shipping labels add minutes to processing time. A staff member must walk to an office computer and find a recipient’s box number by manually reading a shipping label and typing the recipient’s name into the Camel-Web campus directory.

They must then “code” both the package and a carrier-specific paper slip. This requires hand-writing a matching identifier on both items. Finally, mailroom staff distribute paper slips to individual mailboxes while organizing packages throughout the room.

The ritual is tedious and requires an understanding of the coding and package organization systems. Austin-Lesick says that with only a handful of staff members to do this job, human error could result in slowdowns or even misplaced items. “When there’s too much stuff going on, when you’re multitasking...you make mistakes.”

The College has yet to invest in any mailroom automation technology. Austin-Lesick says she has heard the idea men-

tioned before, but that people “weren’t as open to change.” Collins, who assumed the role of Auxiliary Operations director at the end of last semester, says she is not familiar with specific past efforts to implement new technology.

Many other colleges and universities use some form of the technology. At least eight out of the eleven NESCAC member schools send electronic delivery notifications to students living on campus.

Automation services can scan barcodes to identify the recipient from a package’s label. Kristin Ruth, a sales director at SqBx, a Phoenix-based company that sells package-scanning software, says scanning technology can “accommodate different barcode systems” used by carriers such as UPS, FedEx, and USPS. She says that organizations can link tracking information to institutional directories, making possible email or text notifications.

Collins says her office is now researching possible solutions, acknowledging that the Post Office’s current operation is “difficult with no automated system.” She has met with officials from other colleges and universities, including some from Rhode Island School of Design which she says has gone digital and eliminated mailboxes. Collins says she intends to implement a tracking and notification system. “The trend now is to get rid of boxes...that’s our question mark.”

Efforts by a frustrated student body and Student Government Association resulted in some students helping out at the mailroom counter. Collins confirmed that those students would be paid for their time.

By the end of September, the Post Office expanded its hours and hired more professional staff. Collins noted that student workers are now formal employees, saying they “give us more flexibility.”

But recent moves to increase hours and staffing come as the processing needs of an early-semester rush have largely vanished. In a late-September email to students, staff,

and faculty, Collins noted that daily package counts have shrunk close to 200 packages. That’s just 20% of peak days during the first weeks of the semester.

Austin-Lesick says it’s unlikely for package counts to reach the late-August peaks again this academic year. “We don’t see the textbooks, the other stuff coming in anymore. Maybe we’ll get a lot on Halloween. You’d be surprised.” •

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Dear Dr. Ford

MAX WHISNANT
CONTRIBUTOR

I'm currently a sophomore at Connecticut College in New London, CT. I come from Washington, DC, and I went to St. Albans School (STA), so I know Georgetown Prep well. I owe so much to STA for how its teachers shaped me as a person and taught me how to learn. The moment I started St. Albans in A Form (sixth grade), I was aware of the culture of masculinity that, not unfairly, stereotyped prep schools like mine. I write to you because I know STA, and I know how toxic an environment a school like STA can be at times. Most importantly, however, I write to you because I believe your story.

Yes, there were times at STA where "boys were boys," but there were other times where self-reflection was the very least we could do. When I was a sophomore, students at our sister school National Cathedral School (NCS) compiled a Google Doc of various stories of the "unwanted sexual advances" of my classmates and brothers at parties. *The Washington Post* ran an article that included the letters from both heads of school at STA and NCS addressing the issue. We then ran into further trouble that same year when yearbook pages of seniors at STA were found to be sexist and overall not representative of the values that institutions like St. Albans want to espouse. More letters from our respective school heads followed, but nothing more.

"Nothing more" seems to be the theme of the #MeToo movement. Survivors are silenced because apparently there is a statute of limitations on traumatic experiences, but only when it comes to women

who are the ones telling the stories. When we finally decide to listen, those who come forward to relive what I can only imagine being the worst moment of their lives, we label them as "emotionally unstable," "forgetful," "that wom-

This is where you come in, Dr. Ford. Your testimony on October 4 gave me hope that we would change the attitude that surrounds those with stories like yours. You did this even more so than any of the other survivors that spoke out in the

said it best, "your brilliance shining light onto this, speaking your truth is nothing short of heroic."

At the time of writing, Susan Collins has declared that she will vote "yes" on Kavanaugh's confirmation, all but ensuring he will be the tie-breaking vote on countless issues that affect women and survivors across the nation. You are the last person that needs to be told this, but every vote to confirm him tomorrow is bigger than just a Supreme Court Nomination. It's an affirmation that we as a country do not take sexual assault survivors seriously. You made a personal sacrifice that put you and your family in the spotlight and we as a nation let you and all other survivors across the nation down.

Our problem, one that extends throughout the nation, and not just on the Cathedral Close, is one of passivity and apathy. We too often think that stories like yours do

not affect us and that they never will. This breeds a culture of Americans, especially men, who turn their backs on survivors. This cannot continue. It's time for the young men at St. Albans, Georgetown Prep, Landon, Woodrow Wilson HS, and Connecticut College to let their female peers take the lead on this issue. You did your part in trying to change the narrative that silences survivors Dr. Ford, and we thank you for that. Your testimony was a masterclass in poise, and it exemplified everything we need to teach the young people of our country. You had the courage to stand up for more than just yourself. I can only hope going forward that we have the courage to listen. •



Photo courtesy of Win McNamee/Getty Images

an." Anything to discredit their story and ignore the real problem.

Over the past few months, I have thought about my time at STA. Personally, I owe the world to the school. I credit my teachers with shaping me as a student, something no one else could do. I still love St. Albans. But there still is a culture of machismo that pervades the school. I can't fault them for that. It is an all-boys school. But there is a line that is, on occasion, crossed. Something has to change. How can we, one of the top private prep schools in the nation, claim some sort of misguided and entitled superiority over others when we ourselves do almost nothing to address sexual misconduct allegations?

height of the #MeToo era. Perhaps it was because of my proximity to the schools involved and old memories from sophomore year that got dredged up. I thought that you speaking out would help. I was sadly mistaken. The Senate Judiciary Committee's Republican members couldn't even face you themselves. They hired a prosecutor because apparently our elected officials now can't respectfully ask questions to a woman. They went through the motions, for optics. And yet, in the face of it all, you kept your head held high, stood firm and spoke your truth. Nothing more can, nor should, we ask of you. You did everything to remain composed and more. I believe that Senator Booker

Kavanaugh and Reproductive Rights

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

But the FBI investigation of Kavanaugh has officially ended and he has been confirmed as a justice. I guess this means it's time for me to speak up.

I'm a survivor of sexual assault, but then again, 1 in 5 female college students are. I've been raped, but so have 1 out of every 6 American women. Of course, I don't want someone who has been accused of sexual assault to be a justice on the Supreme Court. But as sexual assault is a prevalent crime, I don't doubt that our government officials have committed sexual assault. For me, what is a more pressing and a less discussed issue is what Kavanaugh's appointment means for the future of the *Roe v. Wade* (1973) Supreme Court decision.

The escalation of the Kavanaugh "drama" aligned with the start of the new school year. I was concerned, of course, but I was also swept up in my transition back to college. I was stuck in my little college "bubble." Although when I did reflect on the hearing, I would think "wow, this sucks for our country," but I still felt personally removed from the actual effects of Kavanaugh's appointment.

All of this changed during my fourth week back at school when I realized that my period was a full week late after having had unprotected sex. I had to walk half a mile to the nearest gas station to buy a pregnancy test, which was 5 years expired. Waiting for the results was perhaps the longest 2 minutes of my life. Time stood still as I wondered what would happen if I *was* pregnant. Deciding whether or not to get an abortion would probably be the hardest decision of my life, but I was also grappling with a second question, one that I never thought I would even *have* to ask. What if I decided to get an abortion but *couldn't*? What if *Roe v. Wade* was reversed in the upcoming months? Thankfully, the pregnancy test came back negative. Deciding whether or not to keep the baby would have torn me apart inside and going through that while *also* struggling to find access to an abortion center? That would just destroy me.

My test may have come back negative, but many other women and girls do not have a similar experience if a later test had come back pregnant, I would have had the privilege to follow through with secondary options. If I chose to get an abortion, my mom would drive me to Canada herself or buy me a plane ticket to Europe to make sure that it happened. But this is not a reality for most people in our country. Even with abortions being semi-legal, many women do not have access to this service. Women of color, members of the LGBTQIA community, people in lower socio-economic brackets will be disproportionately affected by the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*. Thus, the reversal of *Roe v. Wade* would be detrimental in numerous different ways for many Americans. The case specifically

acknowledged women's reproductive rights, but it also helped to establish solidify civil liberties such as privacy against government interference. For these reasons, *Roe v. Wade* was intersectional in impact and provided newfound protections to historically marginalized groups.

October 3 was the 40th anniversary of the death of Rosie Jimenez, the first woman documented to have died from an illegal abortion after the passage of the Hyde Amendment. This law, which is still in effect, denies abortion coverage to low-income Medicaid recipients. The number of women like Rosie dying from easily-preventable deaths due to a lack of access to abortive care will grow exponentially if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned.

In a memo Kavanaugh authored in 2003, he acknowledged that the Supreme Court "can always overrule" *Roe v. Wade*. He wrote, "I am not sure that all legal scholars refer to *Roe* as the settled law of the land at the Supreme Court level since Court can always overrule its precedent." He added that some conservative justices then on the court "would do so."

I delayed writing this because my privilege has allowed me to stay silent. Deep inside I've known that, even if *Roe v. Wade* is repealed, in the end my life would hardly change. But this is fucked up. If I don't use my privilege to take a stand, to say something, then what kind of person does that make me? If I stay silent because I have the privilege to do so, then I am a rich asshole and a white supremacist.

Macklemore and Ryan Lewis aptly capture the many facets of

the privilege from which I benefit. In their album, "White Privilege II," they reveal:

*"White supremacy isn't just a white dude in Idaho
White supremacy protects the privilege I hold*

*White supremacy is the soil, the foundation, the cement
and the flag that flies outside of my home*

White supremacy is our country's lineage, designed for us to be indifferent"

As an upper class, white, cis woman, it is my duty to society to stand up and say something. The reversal of *Roe v. Wade* would have devastating effects for all American women, but especially for women of color, members of the LGBTQIA community, and people in lower socio-economic brackets.

My privilege allows me to stay silent, but doing nothing makes me an accomplice. What women like myself have to remember is that *injustice anywhere is still injustice everywhere*. What are *you* willing to risk, to sacrifice, in order to create a more just society?•

*"White supremacy isn't just a white dude in Idaho
White supremacy protects the privilege I hold
White supremacy is the soil, the foundation, the cement
and the flag that flies outside of my home
White supremacy is our country's lineage, designed for
us to be indifferent"*

CT Renaissance Faire in Photos

MAX AMAR-OLKUS
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Last weekend, I made the 25 minute trek north to Lebanon, Connecticut for the 20th annual Connecticut Renaissance Faire. I know you're thinking, "that sounds so weird," but please, don't rush to judgement. When I was little I went to the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire every year, and nothing makes me yearn for a massive roasted turkey leg more than the changing of the seasons from summer into autumn.

For weeks I had begged my friends to make the journey with me to the Faire,

talking up all of the great, family-friendly events such as "Jousting to the Death" or "Birds of Prey on Display" or the absurd game called "Smite the Knight." To my surprise, my friends actually agreed to join me.

What I saw at the Renaissance Faire was cause for instant jubilation. People dressed in costumes from every different era, and (for the most part) were all extremely friendly and accepting of those different from themselves. The Renaissance Faire was, perhaps, one of the most inclusive and open communities I've witnessed in my four years living in Connecticut. Storm

troopers mingled with knights. Dr. Who fans, dressed in full garb, shared drinks and laughter with steampunk-clad drag queens. Those whose interests and hobbies are deemed "too strange" for polite society, those who are ignored by the powers that be, and all of society's outcasts were given a space of their own, every weekend from Sept. 1 to Oct. 14, in nearby Lebanon, CT. If you're curious about it but aren't sure if the Renaissance Faire is your scene, my advice would be to take a step out of your comfort zone and go for it. Get me a turkey leg while you're there. •



Photos Courtesy of Max Amar-Olkus

Tempest the Stormy Squirrel

WILL CANELLAKIS
CONTRIBUTOR

Once upon a time, in a land far far away, there was a squirrel named Tempest. This squirrel was very popular amongst the other squirrels in their tree-top village, as she was very beautiful, among other things. Her professional life consisted of odd jobs at illicit film and magazine companies, combined with high end escort work she did on the side.

She was a favorite of Donald Duck, a high ranking, albeit small flippered, official in the United Quackers of Duckmerica. At his request, Tempest also made discreet visits to the icy shores of St. Polarsburg, to entertain Vladabear Polartin. However, Donald Duck told her to keep those visits secret because he didn't want the rest of the Ducks in Duckmerica to discover his secret relationship with the Polar Bears.

As Donald's favorite Squirrel, she was privy to schemes that he was planning for the future of Duckmerica. After one of her many visits with Donald, where he started the session by grabbing her by the tail, Tempest asked him why he was building a dam on the South Border of Duckmerica.

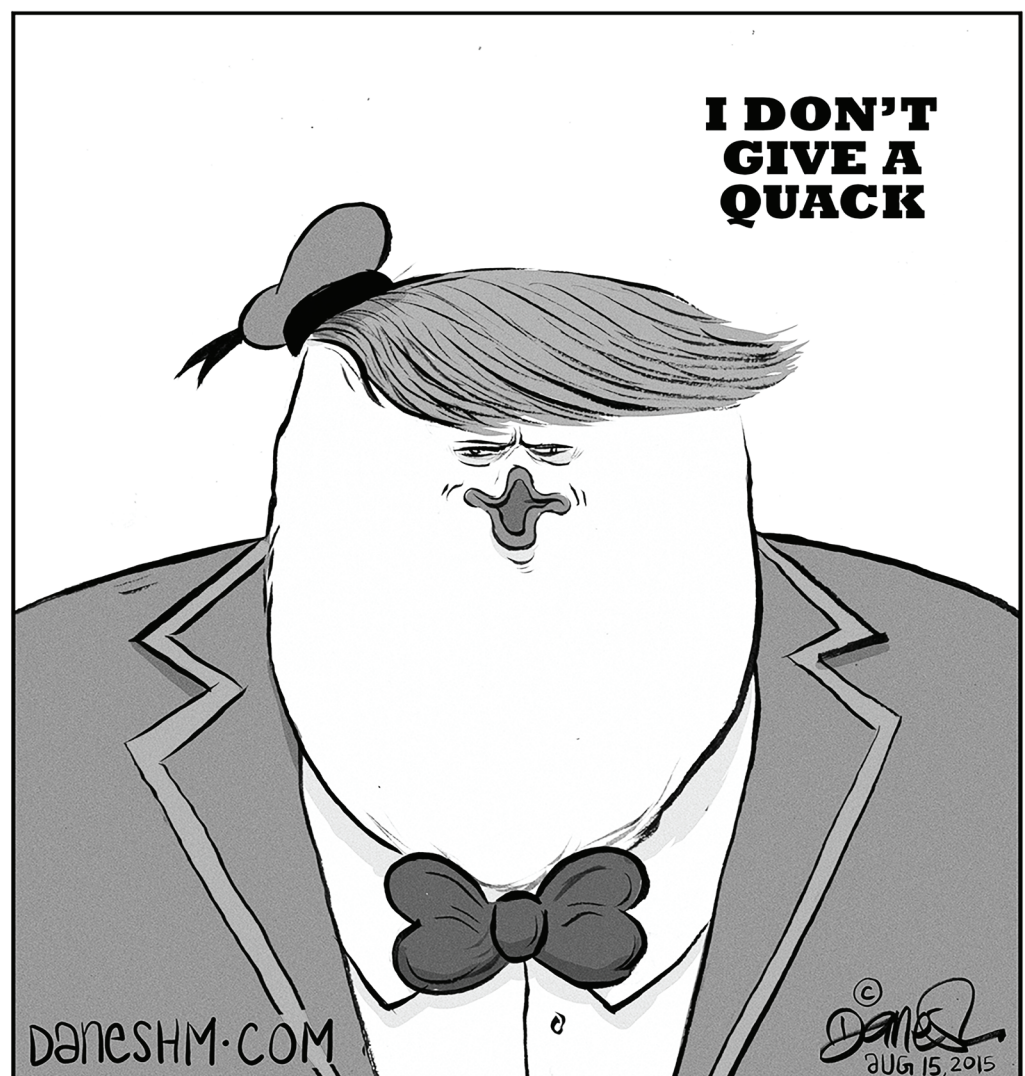
"We can't have the Sloths come into Duckmerica—Sloths are criminals and rapists—and what's worse is that they're lazy," Donald told her. "They try to take jobs from the average Duck, depriving our very own pure-blooded Ducks of their livelihood."

"Don't worry Tempest," said Donald, misreading the horrified look on her face. "I'm going to force the Sloths to build their own dam. No Duck will be building it."

"What about the Sloth families? This dam will forcibly separate them, Tempest said. "Imagine not being able to see your wife, Duckania, or your other daughter/wife IvancDuck."

"Tempest, I'll ignore your ignorance for the moment, as you're both a woman and a Squirrel, but you must understand the incontrovertible difference between Ducks and Sloths. Ducks aren't from shithole countries."

Donald stood up from the bed, his blonde hairpiece fluttering slightly as he did so. "It is my solemn duty as King Duck to make Duckmerica great again- and I will speak for the common duck when I say: Sloths will never have a place in this beautiful country. I will see to it personally that those animals never enter this beautiful Duck nation. Make Duckmerica Great Again!" •



Donald 'The Trump' Duck

Image courtesy of Danesh Mohiuddin

The Sports Divide

CAMERYN LESKO-JELLEY
CONTRIBUTOR

Before I arrived at Conn, I had my own expectations about what the social scene here would be like. I expected an exuberant group of theater kids, a group of potential Ivy League grad school candidates studying in Shain until 2am every night, a group of people living vicariously through their continuously growing number of Instagram followers, and a group of “daddy money Chads” who spend their parents’ money on obnoxiously low quality drugs. However, I never quite realized just how intertwined athletics would be with the social scene here at Conn. From as early on as the first couple days of college, I noticed the infamous cafeteria divide, as well as the packs of athletes moving from building to building, and became quite intrigued by this dominant aspect of social life. Being a three-sport varsity athlete in high school, I was aware of the ins and outs of team life, but throughout my years in high school I never experienced such a stark divide between athletes and non-athletes.

KK Patterson ‘21 claims that “the social scene at Conn revolves around sports to a point where it makes it feel like high school 2.0.” Patterson goes on to say that “since small schools like NESCAC schools have such a big proportion of varsity athletes per class, many people who aren’t on a sports team can feel lost and not know what to do with themselves.” Patterson is a student who felt somewhat lost when she originally arrived at Conn and started toying with the idea of walking onto the track team, fully aware of the possibility that it would help find her people. But, instead she chose to join ultimate frisbee, a club sport that served as a vehicle for her to discover many of her close friends.

The prominence of club sports and the common practice of people deciding to walk-on to varsity sports teams, most likely surpasses many Conn students’ desire to play a sport and suggests an inclination to be a part of a bigger community that will provide a sense of family at the College. It also depicts a slight inability of our overall student body to overcome the barrier of sports and find a family aside from using athletics as a shortcut.

Logan Kilfoyle ‘22 on the field hockey team describes how her “entire social life at college is my team, and aside from seeing my roommates go in and out of our dorm, I am just around people from field hockey.” Although for Kilfoyle being a part of a sport has the benefit of feeling part of a group bigger than herself, she notes that “field hockey has limited my ability to meet new people, because my entire life revolves around field hockey and I barely have time to get my work done, let alone meet new people or join other clubs.”

Although many athletes like Kilfoyle would be interested in meeting people outside of their sport, because of how consuming playing a collegiate sport can be; it is easy and comfortable for athletes to stay within their circle. By being merely exposed to your teammates for hours every day, it isn’t unusual that most athletes prefer spending their free time with their teammates because these are the people they are most familiar with.

However, there are many non-athletes and athletes who feel unaffected and apathetic toward the intersection of athletics and social life. Melanie Fournier ‘22 has noticed the preeminent presence of athletes on campus but claims she is “very used to not being a part of a sports team,” and that this “isn’t something new for [her] nor something that bothers [her].” Fournier believes that because sports teams are a group of people with a common interest, she understands why they want to hang out with each other and spend most of their time together.

Due to the amount of time athletes spend together--from practicing together, eating together, partying together and possibly even living together-- it isn’t a mystery why teammates are usually very close to one another. However, although sports can help many people form their identity, find friends, feel a sense of belonging, and fit into a role; it’s important for athletes and non-athletes alike to break their routine and challenge themselves once in a while to meet new people outside of their preexisting circle.

Personally, after joining ultimate frisbee in the first week or so of college, I have definitely felt as if I was just another player in a game perpetuating the athlete-dominated social scene here at Conn. However, I also felt that many of my teammates truly brought me joy; cognitive dissonance at its finest. Even if I may be seen as another compliant participant in the system, hopefully we all will continue to search for friendships that are rooted in something of more depth than just the passing of a ball or puck. Although it is quite normal and in no way bad to develop strong relationships over superficial things like athletics, it should be your connection with each individual person that prevails over the ability to just relate to one another over one single common interest, such as a sport. •

Russian Interference

ALEXIS HOWARD
CONTRIBUTOR

A number of US national security officials, including Dan Coats, the Director of National Intelligence, agree that Russia worked to interfere in the 2016 American Presidential election through social media ads in order to promote the election of Donald Trump. The ongoing competition between the United States and Russia goes back to the days of the Soviet Union and the Atomic Age. The still tense nature of the relationship has caused Putin to pursue a personal vendetta against the United States and to reestablish Russia’s hegemony as a world power. The influence of social media has become increasingly present in the United States, ads and marketing project negative images in order to influence the consumer, or in this case the voter. The combination of the competition between Russia and the U.S along with the influence that social media has on voters aided Donald Trump in his 2016 election victory.

Historically the U.S and Russia have been in a competition for political power since the Cold War, when Russia was still the Soviet Union. There were many competitions for geopolitical dominance and the acceptance of political ideas, such as communism, as demonstrated through the Arms Race and the Space Race. The tension between the wartime allies was increasingly high in the aftermath of WWII with the detonation of the first Soviet nuclear weapon in 1949. The perceived threat that communism posed to the United States’ democratic system and the rapid spread of Communism to smaller, newly independent countries intensified the tension. The formation of NATO in 1949 was another spite to the Soviet Union that was countered by the Warsaw Pact in 1955. Other events during the 50s and 60s like the Space Race and the Cuban Missile Crisis signified the height of tension between the nations. In 1991 Mikhail Gorbachev announced the dissolution of the Soviet Union and resigned as Soviet premier leaving Boris Yeltsin as the leader of a newly independent Russia.

Since the dissolution of the USSR, relations between Russia and the United States have been generally good. In the 70s, the nations worked

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to ban intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), yet tensions increased once again in the 1990's after discovery of NATO's eastern expansion plan. The poor relationship continued under Vladimir Putin in 1999. Putin rose through the ranks of the KGB and eventually left to join politics in Saint Petersburg. He joined Yeltsin's administration and was eventually elected after Yeltsin's resignation in December 1999.

Although it is said that Putin and George W. Bush had good personal relationships, there were many disagreements over the US missile defense plan, the invasion of Iraq and the expansion of NATO into the eastern bloc. These plans resulted in tense relations under the Bush administration, but improved under Obama after a G2 summit prompting the "reset" of Russian-US relations. This reset didn't last long, in December 2011 Putin accused the US of interference in their elections, indicating that no real "reset" had ever been achieved. The contrasting ideas of government used by the US and Russia were still in competition with each other as Russia moved away from a democratic system.

The historically tense relations between the US and Russia still poses the question of why did Putin interfere in the 2016 elections. According to a *New York Times* article, Russian operatives were sent to collect intelligence about swing states, and used social media ads, posing as American activists in order to poorly portray Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Interestingly enough Putin has been dissatisfied with Clinton as she allegedly attempted to incite unrest during the 2009 elections. This could be one of the driving factors for Russian interference, coupled with Putin's desire to gain status as a world power over the US.

The various ads created by Russian agents were accompanied by hashtags bashing Hillary Clinton, like #HillaryforPrison, while also promoting Trump. The question is why was there such a large push for Trump from the Kremlin and what does Russia gain from his election. Theoretically there

is a lot for Russia to gain from the election of Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton. If Putin wanted to make the US look weaker in order for the ascension of Russia on the world stage, electing an outspoken almost unhinged person like Trump would foster the desired opinion of the US. Similarly Putin attempts to portray himself as a very intimidating and powerful person, and it would theoretically be easier to manipulate Donald Trump in order to attain Russian demands in agreements. Putin's personal vendetta against Secretary Clinton coupled with the desire to heighten Russian influence and power led to Facebook ads promoting Trump while demoting Clinton.

The 2016 election was less about choosing the better candidates and was generally perceived to be a choice between "the lesser of two evils". In this way any kind of negative image of either candidate would help to sway indecisive voters. This idea can be best expressed by the example: when someone points out something that they find annoying about another person, we as human beings start to notice that thing and be subconsciously annoyed by it. Social media has risen to be a staple in everyday American life and along with it thousands of ads. The marketing tactics used on social media can be very deceptive in portraying what the user "needs". People tend to be more susceptible to false information presented on the internet, especially if it looks legitimate. These ads target susceptible users with the negative images associated with Hillary Clinton in order to portray Trump in a more positive light and swing votes for him. The more that people see the same information the more likely they are to believe it and therefore the ads no matter the scale did have an impact on American voters.

Decades of tense Russian-US relations has led to Putin's push for the election of Donald Trump as someone to be manipulated for Russian gain. The Russian interference in the 2016 election did influence voters no matter the scale and could threaten future elections because of the susceptibility of social media users to being bombarded with ads. Because of this it is imperative that voters research candidates and make up their own minds, instead of listening to the voices of advertisers and show up to vote. •

Friends Fans Celebrate Show's 24th Anniversary

FIONA NOONAN
CONTRIBUTOR

!!!Spoiler Alert!!! Yes, you read that correctly. The ever popular tv show *Friends* celebrated the 24th anniversary of its series premiere on Sept. 22, 2018. As one of its millions of fans, I have found it amazing to see its continued role in pop culture. Not only did it last ten seasons spanning 236 episodes, but its fan base bridges generations. I bet many of you reading this have parents who also watched it, maybe even religiously years prior to the invention of binge watching.

I will be the first to admit I was not interested in watching *Friends*, despite its apparent cult following, until last year. I thought I could do better by not watching the same show as seemingly everyone else. Individuality, or whatever, was the excuse I told myself. Personally I didn't see the appeal of yet another sitcom, especially one from years ago. However, once I began to binge watch it with friends at Conn my first year, I began to understand the hype. (To those friends: you know who you are, and I am eternally grateful that you embarked on this significant endeavor with me.) Although I love a good drama like *The Crown* or docu-series like *United Shades of America*, sometimes a sitcom like *Friends* really hits the spot. Not only is it relatable, it is also perfect for vegging-out. It's entertainment without pulling on your heart strings like some of the previously mentioned shows.

I would recommend pairing *Friends* with Mallomars (if you don't know what those are, you must try them), dried fruit, herbal tea, face masks, and, of course, friends. If you are watching on your own, I strongly suggest doing so while cozying up in bed, a window seat, or a comfortable chair wrapped in a fuzzy blanket (after a long day of working hard...or hardly working). Treat yourself!

The number of *Friends*-themed BuzzFeed quizzes in existence indicate that it has maintained its long-held cultural position at least for now. One of the many reasons *Friends* is so popular is quite possibly Ross and Rachel's on-again, off-again relationship. A common question among viewers is whether they'll end up together in the end. Hint: they do! Excuse me while I thank the television gods and goddesses for this predictable ending. I would have been furious otherwise as I admittedly love a good romantic cliché. Another draw is the fact that this group of friends is lucky enough to have such a spacious Manhattan apartment even though Monica and Rachel- its inhabitants- tend to have low-paying jobs including as a waitress, a singer, and a self-employed caterer. However, this miracle is made possible by Monica and Ross's deceased grandmother from whom Monica inherited the apartment. Many viewers, myself included, dream of one day living in an apartment much like that with close friends in New

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Friends Anniversary

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York or another city.

Additionally, who doesn't love a good underdog story? Chandler, who seems unlucky in love for so long, eventually ends up marrying Monica, who many would argue is out of his league. Chandler is so underrated and often thought of as Joey's wingman, yet he is quite charming, dorky, sweet, handsome, and funny. Plus, there is a character well-suited for every viewer. The characters are generally very likable. And how can you not love Phoebe's truly iconic song "Smelly Cat" ("smelly cat, smelly cat what are they feeding you?" with an odd pause between "smell" and "y" on the second "smelly"). It is simultaneously the GOAT and WOAT because it is so ridiculously amazing. And vibrant discussions on who is the best character can ensue among viewers. Rachel is my favorite as I love her style and watching her messy love life unfold, while Ross is my least favorite because he's rather childish, egotistical, and stubborn. Please don't fight me on this, okay? I'm kidding...by all means, please share your opinion with me on this extremely important yet divisive matter if you see my around Camp Conn.

I realize this article has turned into me persuading y'all to watch *Friends*. Whoops. But the reasons to watch and its long held relevance are rather intertwined. ANOTHER reason is the inside jokes and/or well-known quotes including but not limited to "we were on a break," "Regina Phalange," "how you doin'?", "oh. My. GOD!," and "lobster." An extensive list can be found on good 'ole Buzzfeed. "The One With Phoebe's Uterus" may be my all-time favorite solely because of the scene in which Monica helps Chandler improve his sex life, which is of course ironic given the later seasons. All I can say is I hope Chandler applied what he learned to Monica, too. She discussed the seven erogenous zones. You ladies know what I'm talking about (winks). Okay, maybe you don't, but you SHOULD. My friends and I cracked up watching this scene and after the episode ended, an intense debate over what the seven spots ensued. Don't worry; you can educate yourself with a quick Google search as we of course did. Chandler's then-girlfriend even thanks Monica in person for the lesson. So yeah...ummmm...if nothing else, watch *Friends* instead of reading Cosmo if you know what I mean. •

Mac Miller Dead at 26

AMANDA SANDERS
CONTRIBUTOR

On Sept 7, at 11:51 am, Mac Miller was pronounced dead in his Los Angeles home from an apparent drug overdose. Minutes after the news of Miller's death spread through the news, internet trolls swarmed Ariana Grande's Instagram page and left hateful comments accusing her of contributing to the 26 year old rapper's death. Less than ten minutes after these comments began appearing on her page, Grande closed the comment section on her Instagram account, but not after dozens of users posted cruel and hateful messages such as "This is your fault" and "You did this to him." These comments only served to wrongly accuse Grande for the overdose of Miller, with whom she had ended her engagement in May. In June, she became engaged to comedian Pete Davidson.

TMZ first hinted at Grande's culpability when it broke the news of his death. "Miller has had trouble recently with substance abuse...in the wake of his breakup with Ariana Grande." It later changed this statement to say, "Miller has battled substance abuse issues for years...something that came up again in the wake of his breakup with Ariana Grande." The original statement is half true. Mac Miller did have issues with substance abuse, but those issues existed long before his relationship with Grande ended. The 26-year-old rapper had been open about his drug use that started when he was fifteen and alluded to it in many of his songs. But this is not the first time that Ariana Grande has been indicted for Miller's issues. After a 2016 hit and run car accident by Miller, the pop singer faced similar harassment on Twitter. Eventually she responded, releasing a statement that said "I am not a babysitter nor a mother and no woman should feel that they need to be." She never described him as anything other than someone she cared for but who had a disease he couldn't control.

Addiction is a never ending battle and it is one that is represented all over the covers of magazines, but is not something people want to talk about. People may believe that drug addiction can end through sheer willpower, but it is, in fact, a disease and quitting takes much more than willpower. Drugs change the brain in ways that make quitting hard, even for those who want to. The National Institute of Drug Addiction website

states that repetitive drug use can also change the user's brain in ways that challenge self control and interfere with a person's ability to resist the urge to take drugs. This is the nature of addiction. Recent drug relapse statistics from the American Addiction Center show that more than 85% of individuals discharged from treatment return to drug use within the following year.

It is safe to say that no one caused Mac Miller's death except for himself. Ariana Grande did not buy him his drugs. Maybe their breakup worsened his depression, but it alone did not cause the overdose. Mac Miller certainly needed help, but Grande did not have to be the one to give it to him. To burden a woman for the choices her ex-boyfriend makes perpetuates the idea that women must care for men while men are free to do as they like. When was the last time a man was criticized for his girlfriend's behavior? No woman can be a 12-step sobriety program. You do not have to look too far to find a woman unfairly cast with responsibility for her male companion. When Kurt Cobain was discovered dead on April 8, 1994 after committing suicide three days prior, grieving fans and even investigators looked into the possibility of foul play in his death, with the most popular suspect being Cobain's wife, Courtney Love. This accusation was based on nothing except a general dislike of Love and a need to blame someone for Cobain's death. Cobain also suffered from drug addiction and depression. Like Miller, some responsibility for Cobain's death was transferred to his wife.

Miller's death is a tragedy for the music industry, and for his family, friends and fans. In our society, it seems easier to ignore the ugly complications of addiction and find a scapegoat to blame for his death. We blame women for what happens to their exes because we see them as their partners' caretakers and not their equals, while we tell men with troubled exes that they "dodged a bullet." It is a sign of society's outdated ideas that a woman is expected to be a caretaker and a mother to wayward men. Not until the court of public opinion stops trying women for the behaviors of their male companions will we ever move forward and evolve into a world with more equal treatment of the sexes. •

Yet Another Hot Spot in Mystic, CT

ELIZABETH BERRY
STAFF WRITER

In order to escape from the overwhelming thralls of students and their families congregated on campus, my family and I hopped in our car and travelled to Mystic, a fifteen minute drive from Conn's campus. Prior to Fall Weekend, I had made a reservation for an early dinner at Bravo Bravo. My mom and I arrived on the dot, and I realized that perhaps the reservation was not necessary as there were only three other parties in the restaurant (granted it was only five o'clock). On the other hand, in a matter of minutes the restaurant began to fill up with Conn students and their families, along with other patrons.

Upon entering, I was soothed by the simple wood tables and chairs and small mirrors along all of the walls around the space accompanied with three small lit candles on top of each mirror. We settled down at a table in the back corner by the windows, a perfect view of the hap-

penings of a busy town. Our waitress came by and poured us water, without a smile I might add. She introduced the specials for that night and after an intense debate, my mom and I decided on the ricotta tartine, angel hair pasta with shrimp, and the grilled salmon. We were promptly served warm, soft yet crispy bread with dipping oil, a spicy bean spread, and various olives. The bread and platter were so good we realized we perhaps did not need to order an appetizer. Ashley Drummey '21 who went to Bravo Bravo with her family as well, also enjoyed the bread and bean dip.

Our taste buds were relieved, however, when the tartine arrived. A single piece of toasted bread topped with whipped ricotta cheese, arugula, prosciutto, figs, and honey was the perfect appetizer to split between two people. The ingredients went perfect together, although perhaps a fig spread would have been better because when I bit into a large chunk of fig its sweet flavor distracted from the other delicious tastes within this dish. Although my mom and I did not order a salad, a few members of Drummey's party did and said that it was their favorite part of their meal.

Not too long afterwards, our entrees arrived. The angel hair pasta with shrimp, feta cheese, scallions, and marinara was placed in front of me while the grilled salmon in front of my mom. I hungrily slurped some pasta into my mouth and bit into one of the shrimp. While I enjoyed the sauce and unique addition of feta cheese, the texture of the shrimp was not for me, so my mom dutifully switched with me. I took my first bite of salmon and immediately a smile appeared on my face. The salmon was cooked perfectly and the squash below was equally delicious. In addition, this dish was garnished with caramelized brussel sprouts and yellow raisins. While these are some of my favorite foods, the sweetness of the sauce it was cooked in was just a bit too overwhelming, and by the time I had finished my taste buds were in a frenzy. Drummey ordered the pasta bolognese which she explained had a rich and creamy sauce. She enjoyed her meal, but said that "the pasta was good, but nothing amazing."

Based off that description you might have assumed we would not indulge in a dessert, but you would be mistaken. My mom and I decided to split a light dessert, which resulted in the selection of affogato. We had originally planned to order the pumpkin gelato (a perfect fall treat), but our waitress, who at this point in the evening began to smile and talk with us in a welcoming tone, advised us against this choice as it was not the usual concoction by the chef. A perfect amount of time after finishing our entree, our dessert arrived and we promptly took pictures of the dish's beautiful presentation. Malted ice cream, with espresso cream, cocoa nibs, and florentines overwhelmed our taste buds as we scooped the delicious combination into our mouths under five minutes. While I enjoyed the florentines, I felt that they were a bit too nutty. Perhaps, the addition of espresso or cocoa within the mix would have improved the overall flavor.

Overall, our meal was delicious and certainly a real retreat from Harris. I would definitely come back for the bread and fresh fish, but Bravo Bravo did not have an everlasting effect on me. It is certainly a happening place in Mystic, but while the dishes were fabulous in presentation and (for the most part) taste, it was not completely revolutionary. While Drummey stated that she would go back again, I am not positive I would follow suit. Then again, I will be eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and boring salads once again, which aren't revolutionary in themselves either. •



Top: Ricotta tartine with whipped ricotta cheese, arugula, prosciutto, figs, and honey; Bottom: Grilled salmon, angel hair pasta with shrimp. Images courtesy of Elizabeth Berry



Conn Hosts *Exit West* Author

HOLLY JAMES
CONTRIBUTOR

Pakistani-born Mohsin Hamid tells the harrowing story of two refugees in his fourth novel, *Exit West*. The novel, selected as one of The New York Times Book Review's Top 10 books of 2017, follows a young couple forced to flee from an unnamed country in conflict as they make their way through various "magical doors" in search of a better life. Raising themes that may be difficult to swallow, the journey of Nadia and Saeed reflects that of the 65 million refugees around the world today. Although written in a time before Donald Trump and the UK's exit from the European Union brought ideas of border control to the forefront of international news, themes that Hamid raises through *Exit West* are even more poignant today. Hamid succeeds in reminding us of the current refugee crisis and in some ways helps to put the trivial tasks that we may face into perspective.

We may question precisely why *Exit West* was chosen as this year's summer reading for the Connecticut College Class of 2022. Although I felt as though I could connect with themes of relocation throughout, it would be almost superficial to compare my journey from England to America with that

of Nadia and Saeed. Despite moving to a new country for university, there is one difference that I cannot ignore. I have chosen to leave home and move to somewhere new, while Nadia and Saeed were left with little to no choice. I believe that *Exit West* was a favorable choice for summer reading as the novel prompts us as a student body to reflect on our freedom and appreciate the opportunities that we are lucky enough to take advantage of; a freedom that the two characters, along with millions of people

to highlight the trials and tribulations that they face upon arrival. While the media tends to focus on the hardships experienced by refugees as they travel from one country to another, Hamid chooses to take the attention away from their physical journey and emphasize the psychological repercussions that occur in the aftermath. We are encouraged to empathize with the challenges that Nadia and Saeed face once they have reached their destination having left family, friends and the only life that they knew.

As well as current circumstances, Hamid encourages us to consider the future. While the refugee crisis continues to worsen, the future of immigration remains uncertain. As Nadia and Saeed spent a lot of time in London, I found myself reflecting upon the current migrant situation in my home country of England. The

descriptions of a London filled with hatred and intolerance contrast significantly with the London that I know; a city that I associate with acceptance and freedom. This prompted me to wonder whether the minority that exists to promote hatred and intolerance will ever really win. Will London ever really be this way? Describing the ending of his novel as a 'blueprint for humanity,' Hamid provides us with an air of hope that global political conflicts may one day subside and fail to reach the height of intolerance that he depicts in *Exit West*. •



Photo Courtesy of Jillian Edelstein

around the world, are not fortunate enough to possess.

As the couple make their way from their home country to Greece, to England, and finally to the US through various fictitious doors, Hamid's use of "magical" portals may appear to contradict the severity of the issue at hand and undermine the true turmoil that refugees endure as they flee war or poverty or persecution. In reality, Hamid omits details of Nadia and Saeed's journey

OnStage Wins the Audience Again with Dance Theater of Harlem

ELIZABETH BERRY
STAFF WRITER

Those who ventured into Palmer auditorium on Saturday night during Fall Weekend were, perhaps unknowingly, in for a breathtaking treat that aimed to change their perspective of traditional ballet. This past weekend the legendary Dance Theater of Harlem, co-founded by Arthur Mitchell and Karel Shook, took the stage as part of OnStage, Connecticut College's guest artist series. Mitchell and Shook's decision in 1969 to open a predominately black school and company was unheard of in this era of white ballerinas. Virginia Johnson, the current artistic director of Dance Theater of Harlem, currently leads the company, as they met the theater's 50th anniversary. Impressively they last took the stage in Palmer in 1973. The Dance Theater of Harlem had the audience on their feet -- as a dancer myself, I wanted to get up onto the stage and dance with these elite ballerinas.

Broken up into four different pieces, with pauses in between each, the performance opened with a strong ballet foundation in "Valse Fantaisie" choreographed by George Balanchine. This piece began with four dancers on stage wearing classic green velvet leotards with an attached long, flowy skirt, designed by Larae Theige Hascall. A similar blue-green backdrop matched the dancers. The four dancers--Alicia Mae Holloway, Daphne Lee, Amanda Smith and Alexandra Hutchinson--seamlessly carried out the choreography, consistently in time with each other. This part of "Valse Fantaisie" reminded me of the "Four Little Swans" piece within Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake. Even the music was evocative of this traditional ballet.

Suddenly Crystal Serrano and Dylan Santos entered the stage and carried out a pas de deux alone and among the four other dancers. Although both were talented dancers, I felt that perhaps it was not their night. Santos did not jump as high or turn for as long as I imagine he could have. Additionally, Serrano seemed to struggle to complete a triple pirouette --which is difficult, I know -- but there were other moments where she had difficulty, such as falling out of another turn on pointe and completing several leaps in a row -- a difficult feat yet again. However, her beautiful lines, battements, and attitudes scattered throughout the piece made up for some small mistakes. Ellie Goudie-Averill, a professor of ballet at Conn, went to the company's rehearsal for the show. She felt that the neo-classical piece, Valse Fantaisie, spoke to the history of Dance Theater of Harlem. Arthur Mitchell implemented these renditions of Balanchine, such as in Valse Fantaisie, into the company's repertoire. Goudie-Averill felt that the classical qualities of this piece "set the tone for everything else...you were able to see the differences" between classical ballet and more contemporary works.

Gradually, as the show continued, the dances became more contemporary, modern, and jazz-like. These changes evoke the Dance Theater of Harlem's tradition of combining ballet classics with "innovative contemporary works that use the language of ballet to celebrate African American culture," according to Conn's website. The second piece, "The Bitter Earth," choreographed by Christopher Wheeldon, was a breathtaking pas de deux with Yinet Fernandez and Da'von Doane. In contrast to the previous piece, the music, composed by Clyde Otis, was not entirely instrumental; it also used operatically sung lyrics. Similar to the music, the choreography took ballet to a modern level and questioned how traditional movement can be revolutionized. Sara Abbazia '21 studies dance at Conn and participated in the master class and lecture provided by members of Dance Theater of Harlem. She shared my reaction to the

show, expressing that "Dance Theatre of Harlem [knows] how to resurrect an ancient art form back to life."

After the intermission, Lindsey Croop, Daphne Lee and Ingrid Silva performed "Change." Choreographed by Dianne McIntyre, this piece was definitely my favorite of the show. The dancers began the piece wearing black, sheer robes, with a hint of gold beneath that was later revealed to be shiny gold geometric patterned leotards, designed by Oran Bumroongchart. A fun fact about these leotards included in the program: "the women in this ballet wear leotards constructed of a creative patchwork of tights worn by former dancers with Dance Theatre of Harlem." The lighting, by Alex Fabozzi, was also a favorite. In the beginning, the lights were dim and the figures of the dancers were blurred. However, as the dance continued the lights brightened and a light pink and orange background was lit up, catching shadows of the dancers as they carried out the choreography. This piece was strong physically with fierce kicks, jumps, and group work, but also with its message about female power. Recent political scandals, such as the abuse allegations within the NYC Ballet, have belittled minority groups and women. This piece reminds us of how powerful women are and how they can achieve great feats unimaginable to many. The dancers used their diaphragms to release startling screams and yells. Dance Theater of Harlem prides itself on breaking from the norm and accepting all talented dancers regardless of their ethnicity or background. Within this particular traveling company, dancers were from various states, cities, and countries including New Orleans, California, Harlem, Brazil and South Korea. Dance Theater of Harlem "tackles the racism and elitism of ballet head-on," according to Abbazia. Goudie-Averill even felt that some of the arms in this piece "were ruances of African dance, within the contemporary vocabulary."

The final piece of the performance was "Harlem on My Mind" choreographed by Darrell Grand Moultrie, was broken up into five separate mini dances. The first piece, "Out and About," introduced the company of dancers. Each man and woman was partnered together as their introduced their talents to jazzy, circus-like music. And this group of dancers is for sure a circus to come see. Women wore striped pink and purple short, flowy dresses and the men sported tight, red shorts and mesh tank tops with red in the back. After this introduction, Christopher McDaniel performed an impressive solo completing complicated movements, but also dance moves familiar to most, for example the Bernie. Following McDaniel's performance was "Duo de Jazin" performed by Amanda Smith and Da'von Doane and "Soul of the Hood" by Ingrid Silva. Silva's dance was in particular captivating; it ended with a light design in which a spotlight was put on her at the end of the piece and then quickly diminished as the piece came to an end. Similar to the beginning, all ten dancers came out onto the stage one more time in "We Rise" for a final farewell. This final piece was one of Goudie-Averill's favorites because she felt it fused the sheer love of dance the company dancers, and her students at Conn, possess.

The piece met a boisterous applause from the audience at its close. By the end, I felt inspired and uplifted, eager to get back on stage to dance. Goudie-Averill stated that Dance Theater of Harlem is "a model of the of a traditional ballet company, and yet some things about it are different and progressive and so refreshing." For this reason, whether you are a dancer, like me, or not Dance Theater of Harlem's performance exceeds standard expectations and it does not take a person with ballet experience, to appreciate the magnificent fine art that is dance. •

Theater Department Dazzles with *We are Proud to Present*

SAADYA CHEVAN
ARTS EDITOR

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

However, the play becomes darker as the actors move from rehearsing, acting and lecturing about the lives of the German and Herero inhabitants of South West Africa to attempting to reenact the violence that was inflicted on the Herero. In the final tableaux, a reenactment of the enslavement in concentration camps that the surviving Herero were forced into quickly degrades to one of a Southern chain gang and lynch mob.

Director Jude Sandy, an adjunct professor in the theater department, assembled an excellent cast that all worked very well together and had clearly put in the effort to develop their characters. The performers were Shay Borden '21, Declan Rockett '20, Andre "A.T." Thomas '20, Julia Hutton '19, Jermaine Doris '19 and Truly Siskind-Weiss '19. I particularly appreciated how Sandy and the ensemble highlighted a trio of relationships between pairs of characters. A quasi-love scene between Borden and Thomas seemed to be further highlighted by his character's constant interest in hers. In fact, in several scenes where they were not featured, they tended to be on stage together. There also appeared to be some sort of companionship between Doris and Siskind-Weiss' characters, particularly in the later half of the play. The German soldiers that Rockett's and Hutton's characters were attempting to portray seemed to have an intentionally poorly conceived relationship that worked well to close out the trio.

One of the things I liked about the costuming for the ensemble, by Carly Sponzo '21, was how the characters initially were overdressed, with everyone wearing some sort of jacket. However, as the play progressed, most characters shed their jackets for something more personal. This change was particularly noticeable in Borden's character, the "kind of the artistic director" of the ensemble, who initially appeared in a grey suit jacket and jeans, but later changed into a dress from an "African-style" print.

In individual performances, Thomas led the cast well in a set of rhythmically tricky passages in 7/8 time near the play's conclusion. He also deserves a great deal of praise for his bravery and fortitude in taking on the role of the character who is nearly lynched. I also enjoyed the development that Hutton, Doris and Siskind-Weiss brought to their characters. Hutton's character was originally a male role, but was transformed very well into the role of a fe-

male playing a male part. She brought out a dimension of acting like she wanted to be artistic director, which created an interesting contrast with Borden.

Doris' and Siskind-Weiss' individual portrayals both seemed to stem from the relationship between their characters. Doris seemed conflicted between his relationship with Borden and Thomas and his relationship with Siskind-Weiss. He sought to offer a stereotypical but unrealistic portrayal of a savage untamed African man in the presentation. Siskind-Weiss' portrayal perhaps stemmed from a strong belief of her character's that her act-

What I find disturbing about this view is that it leads to the conclusion that it is much easier to portray a believable version of outright disgust and hatred at someone's existence than to attempt to show the everyday problems of interacting with and accepting the Other. One of the points Sandy mentioned in the post-show talkback is that Drury was able to work with an ensemble of actors while writing the play and wrote it based on her experiences and impressions from that work. I feel like this forces actors who are not members of the original ensemble into a very difficult position as they have to portray a human whose traits are almost perfectly defined; there's little room for their own nuance that they can put into their roles.

In this way, the more broad strokes in the closing scenes of the play allow for a great deal more interpretation and use of space. In one scene, Thomas, portraying a Herero man, wore a grey hoodie, meant to evoke Trayvon Martin, while Rockett, portraying a German soldier, shot him repeatedly. This reference to Martin is not in the original script as the play was written prior to Martin's death; the script calls for evocation of historical racism by directing Thomas and Rockett characters to speak with southern accents in their dialogue.

Another liberty was taken in the final scene; the script calls for no actual words to be verbalized as the characters attempt to come to grips with the violence they've witnessed and inflicted. However, the script

does not state how long the various physical actions are supposed to take. The ensemble spent 5-10 minutes working through this routine, until finally, after the last actor, Doris, walked off stage, they allowed the audience to sit in silence and reflect for a few more minutes before dramaturg Rachel Haines '20 thanked everyone for coming. I did not see these sorts of liberties taken at most other points in the production because of how precise Drury is in her scripting. In many ways, the production is much more reflective of Drury's play than Sandy's or any of the casts' work.

As a closing note, since this is the last Fall Weekend production I will be viewing as a student, I would like to praise the Theater Department for consistently deciding these past four years to produce a play that touches on hot-button topics during Fall Weekend. Specifically: animal rights (*Elephant's Graveyard*, 2015), women's rights and history (*Hedda Gabler*, 2016 and *Uncommon Women and Others*, 2017) and this year, black rights and history. These are topics easy to avoid on parents and alumni weekends for fear of causing offense. I hope that the theater department will keep producing shocking and compelling works that continue to touch on more and different underrepresented issues of today during future Fall Weekends. •

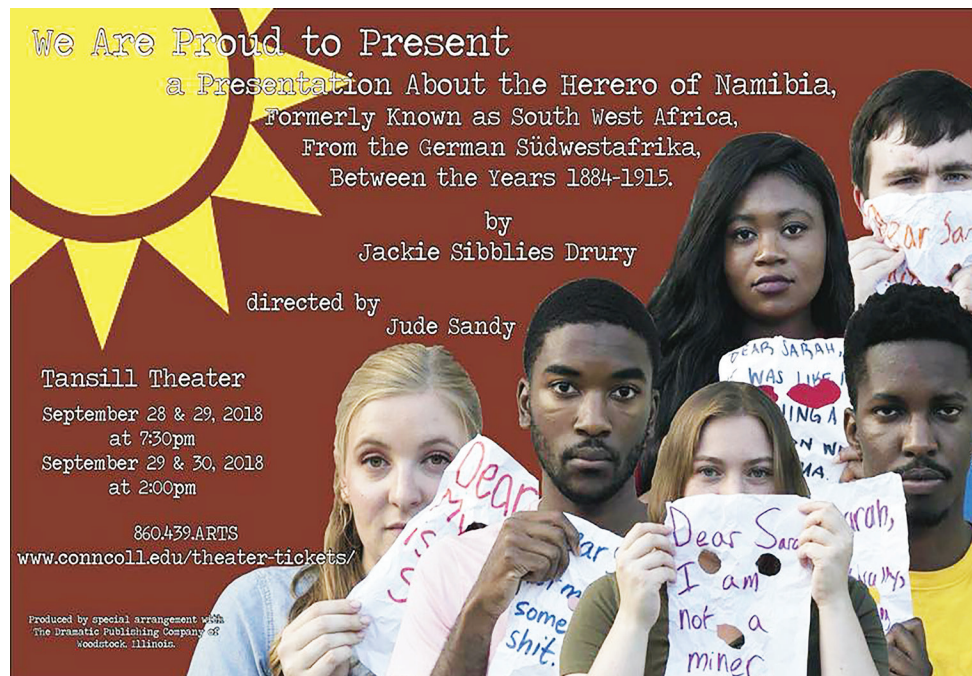


Photo Courtesy of Grace Mennell

ing could bring racial harmony, and it was interesting to see her beliefs shattered at the end of the play.

The play is rather complex in that it touches on a lot of different tropes in theater and society; a notable trope is the play-within-a-play element that serves to break down process and really makes it an actor's play. However, I found it difficult to relate to the characters until the final third of the play, which contains the most severe forms of racism portrayed in the play including two scenes with actual violence rather than the scenes portraying the actors themselves. I felt that the actors' portrayals of their actor-characters were a bit muddled up until the play's abrupt transition from poor attempts to depict the Herero's and German colonists' lives to depiction of the genocide and violence inflicted on the Herero in Namibia and blacks in America. Understanding these characters' motives—who they are was clearer. The character trajectories of the final third of the play are better written than in the preceding two thirds; it's easier to see how the characters interactions feed off each other to foster the brutality of hate.