Fire and Ice

“Some say the world will end in fire, Some say in ice.” This quote by Robert Frost, displayed prominently on the back wall of the gallery in Cummings Art Center, neatly encapsulates the essence of the exhibition, Fire and Ice. It is an expression of the dire nature of the climate crisis as well as an indictment of the unmitigated growth championed under capitalism that threatens nature and our very way of life. Curated by Timothy McDowell and Barbara Zabel, a professor and professor emeritus at Connecticut College, respectively, Fire and Ice features work by a variety of different artists in multiple mediums, including painting, drawing, sculpture, recordings, and audio-visual presentations.

Upon entering the gallery, one of the first pieces the viewer is exposed to is Mina de Ferro de Carajás (2019), an oil and charcoal on linen by Bob Nugent, an abstract piece stylistically reminiscent of Cubism. It is meant to depict the destruction of the Amazon River Basin because of irresponsible mining practices and its consequences for indigenous tribes. Lydia Nugent also depicts the destruction of the Amazon region with Honey to Ashes (2019), a collection of watercolors on yupo illustrating the burning of the forest with haunting simplicity and serenity.

One of the highlights of the exhibition includes an oil on wood panel by Timothy McDowell, titled Daily Concerns (2019). Serving as a representation of the ways we recklessly exploit natural resources, it distorts the boundaries between sea, land, and sky, as oil pours from the end of a pipe, the moon rests on the ocean, and a group appearing to be drilling for oil approaches from the distance. A seemingly random sketch of a bug is affixed overlaying the drillers. With a lot of dense imagery and symbolism, McDowell presents a rich and deeply unsettling vignette of humanity’s will to extract everything possible from nature to sustain our way of life.

Similarly, Pamela Marks thoughtfully depicts the interconnected nature and precariousness of our world with Living Earth Series (2018–2021), a collection of acrylics on paper that innovatively contrast organic gesture and imposed geometry – and, thereby, nature with man-made systems. Christopher Volpe’s Any Human Thing… (2017) expands on this theme with images reminiscent of dark curtains of smoke, evocative of both the apocalypse and industrialization. His use of tar in addition to oil paints further suggests a psychic connection between the promise of the Industrial Revolution and the imminent

Finding Common Ground

If you live in Burdick, Freeman, Hamilton, Katherine Blunt, Knowlton, Lazrus, Smith or Windham, the common rooms that you once took for granted when you needed a space to study or hang out with friends have been turned into temporary dorm rooms. The loss of common rooms this year was done in order to accommodate the unusually large number of students on campus this semester. In an email, Dean Rothenberger, the Assistant Dean for Residential Education and Living, explained, “In a typical fall semester we would see about 150 students studying away in the fall, however this fall there are 30 students studying away which led to a greater number of students needing to be housed on campus.” Additionally, significantly less students applied to live off campus this semester (only about 40 compared with approximately 170 last year). The houses with converted common rooms were specifically chosen based on size and level of privacy. According to Dean Rothenberger, the rooms were originally set up to house three to six students each, but now many have only two to four students.
Letter From the Editor

Welcome back. Pull up a chair, get comfortable. Treat yourself to a drink from Coffee Grounds, Blue Camel, or the Coffee Closet to enjoy along with your newspaper today. It’s been a long week, you deserve a break. We’re excited to be back with you in print for the first time since early 2020. It’s long overdue.

All across our campus as I walk to my morning class in Fanning, eat at my favorite table at Harris on Street Taco Tuesday (the fresh jalapenos are a game changer), and chat with my friends on the first floor of Shain Library, I’ve been hearing murmurs of normalcy, moments that suggest that we’re getting closer to a form of normal life, of pre-pandemic college life (and I hope that this doesn’t jinx that). This second issue of The College Voice for the fall 2021 semester is representative of that tentative normalcy.

Opinions Editor Lucie Englehardt brings us a fascinating take on America’s political binaries and how our lack of critical thinking when it comes to “north versus south,” put us at a disadvantage. I cannot recommend it enough if you’re looking for a quick read before your Gov. class starts.

If you’ve been wondering about the sports scene at Conn and what games are coming up, sports writer Marc Stern informs readers of the changes to the sports season at Conn and what that means for athletes and spectators alike.

While you put off that textbook reading on Moodle, may we suggest instead reading about the latest art exhibition in Cummings titled Fire and Ice which, according to The College Voice contributor Sophia Raffel, “thoughtfully depicts an expansive, nuanced point of view on the climate crisis.” Stop by the exhibit and see it for yourself before it closes on Oct. 15.

Or while you scroll through your photos from Tent Dance/Fall Ball, whatever you call it, looking for the perfect one to post to suggest you’re having the time of your life, take a glance at our coverage of the event’s return to Tempel Green for the first time since 2019.

Looking for a news fix while you walk to class? Arts Editor Caoimhe Markey interviewed campus band Freshly Squeezed Please on our latest episode of “The Voice” found on Spotify. Give it a listen! New episodes are being released every week and we at The College Voice are thrilled to bring our journalism to a new and exciting platform.

Life on campus feels almost normal. It’s evident in the packed dining hall in Harris, the buzzing coffee shops and in our ability to print a physical newspaper once more for you to hold in your hands, bring back to the dorms with you, and even share with a friend.

As always, The College Voice is looking for writers. Our meetings are every other Sunday at 8 pm in the 1941 room in Crozier Williams. Come listen to our editors pitch some stories or suggest your own ideas. We hope to see you there. For more information on The College Voice, follow us on Instagram and join our page on Conquest.

Amanda Sanders ’22
Editor-in-Chief

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.

Amanda Sanders ’22
Editor-in-Chief

EDITORIAL BOARD

Sam Maidenberg ’23
Managing Editors

Elora Roy ’23
News Editors

Kerin Krasnoff ’24

Eli Christopher ’22
Opinions Editors

Caoimhe Markey ’23
Arts Editors

Johnny Alexandre ’22
Sports Editor

MANAGING STAFF

Leelah Klauber ’22
Head Layout Designer

Robbie Lynch ’24
Layout Team Member

Lindsay Gilton ’24
Marketing Team

Sohan Mewada ’22
Business Manager

CONTACT US
cic@thecollegevoice.org
270 Mohegan Avenue
New London, CT 06320
thecollegevoice.org
The College Voice on Facebook@thecollegevoice on Twitter
Catja the Camel Abroad

Catja Christensen  Staff Writer

**Major(s), and pathways**: English and Dance double major; Media, Rhetoric, and Communication Pathway

What program are you enrolled in and why did you choose it?

King’s College London. KCL is known for its English Literature Department, which is one of the oldest and largest in the UK. They offered classes that were so specific and fascinating. I am interested in studying postcolonial and multicultural literature, and I thought, where better to talk about imperialism and colonialism than in England?

How have you adjusted to life in England?

This is my first time ever traveling abroad, and flying over alone during Covid-19 was a bit nerve-wracking. Nonetheless, after getting over jetlag and motion sickness relatively quickly, I am absolutely loving it here. I truly wasn’t expecting to love it so much! I have it easier because it is an English-speaking country, but since many people speak different languages here, I’ve been inspired to pick up French again to not be that monolingual American. The Tube and public transportation is wonderful, and I spent my first two weeks before classes started traveling all around central London with my new international friends. This is also my first time living in such a big city. I am from the DC area, but London is just on another level in every way. There is always something to do or somewhere to go, and we made a massive KCL study abroad group chat where anyone can write where and when they’re going somewhere, and people will tag along.

Were there any clichés that were proven true or false?

People do actually drink a ton of tea here. And I love it. The Twinings Flagship store which, at 300 years old, is the oldest in London, is on Strand Campus, so I have stocked up on quite a bit of tea. It’s also funny how no one really knows which way to look for cars since they drive on the other side of the road. Some sidewalks have “Look Right” or “Look Both Ways” painted by the curb, but my friends and I all usually look really quickly in every direction then sprint across, hoping for the best. It also hasn’t rained nearly as much as I expected. Rain storms usually come in short bursts, so I’ve learned the hard way to always keep an umbrella on me, but we rarely have days of constant rain. Knock on wood.

What is a typical day like?

My typical day is very different from Conn. My classes are all on Strand Campus, which is a general area of the city that includes buildings spread out from each other. At Conn, nothing is more than a 10 minute walk away, but here, my closest class is 15-20 minutes away. Luckily, I don’t have to rely on public transportation, so I save money and don’t worry about delays, but it was a bit of a challenge at first to figure out how to find all of the buildings and navigate the maze of rooms inside. Google Maps has been a lifesaver.

I have four pre-recorded or online lectures and four in-person seminars each week, each an hour long. It is weird having so little synchronous class time, but it is amazing to be in a classroom again. My seminars range from being at 9am to being at 5pm, so my days feel weirdly spaced out.

How has the pandemic affected your program? Did it affect your choices when applying?

The pandemic made everything so uncertain for the entire application process beginning in January. I kept telling my friends that I would only believe I was really studying abroad when I stepped off the plane at Heathrow. Shirley Parson, Director of Study Away, was so patient with me as I panicked with every new Travel Advisory or

---

Tent Dance Returns to Tempel Green

Amanda Sanders  Editor-in-Chief

Tent Dance, or Fall Ball depending on who you ask, is a Connecticut College tradition that’s been previously plagued by eastern equine encephalitis (otherwise known as EEE), and Covid-19 has finally returned to campus, tent and all, as announced by Dean Norbert in an email on Sept. 29.

“We are excited to announce the return of the annual tradition of Fall Ball, our all campus party under the tent on Tempel Green,” his email stated, prompting a flood of questions from sophomores and first-year students who had never attended such an event. Yik Yak was flooded with posts about dress codes, dates, and what the difference between “Tent Dance” and “Fall Ball” really was. For those wondering, the answer to the latter question is that they are the same.

Traditionally Fall Ball is held on the Saturday night of Fall Weekend and is open to students and alumni. To limit the number of people attending this year, it was held on Oct. 9, the Saturday after Fall Weekend, and was only open to current students.

In order to attend, Conn students were required to follow new safety measures to ensure that the party would not be a superspreader event for Covid-19. Students were asked to fill out an RSVP form through Google Forms and take a Covid-19 Binax rapid test on the day of the event between 10 am and 5 pm. According to Dean Norbert, over 1300 students RSVP’d for the celebration. After receiving the results of their tests, students got wristbands that allowed them to enter the Fall Ball tent. Students that did not have a wristband were not allowed to attend the event. The Office of Student Engagement also brought complimentary food trucks to the top of the green, featuring favorites such as Munchies, Greekin’ Out and Waffle Wagon.

Camels descended onto Tempel Green a little after 11 pm to a space warmer than the 63 degrees promised in that day’s weather report to dance to music played by D.J. GetRight and revel under the purple lights with hundreds of other students.

For seniors, the last class year to have been able to attend Fall Ball in the traditional tent space, the promise of the event is exciting, while some of the rules bring confusion.

“I am glad that Fall Ball is going ahead, and I think that all of the security and safety measures are good,” stated Aquib Akhtar ‘22. “I wonder why guests wouldn’t be allowed when surely they could also get rapid tests. It’s the same level of safety. I do understand that there is probably more to it than that but if that was what was conveyed it is a bit confusing. Surely if this is a one-day event it could be possible. However, I’d rather it go ahead though than not at all.”

Julia Graham ‘22 concurred, saying “I don’t have super strong feelings about any of [the Covid-19 policies], but I am excited that it’s getting to happen, especially since it’s senior year and I feel like the stuff they’re doing with the rapid tests seems pretty smart.”

For freshmen there was a range of opinions for the highly discussed event.

“I don’t really know what I expected Fall Ball to be like because the only things I heard were from seniors, but it was definitely not what I expected. The tightly packed tent, really cold weather, and slow-moving food truck lines made the experience not the most enjoyable. All my friends and I could think about was putting on sweatpants and eating our waffles inside,” said Daviel Schulman ‘25.

“[I] wasn’t really going in with high hopes since it’s been so long since I have been to a dance pre-Covid but I had a great time dancing with my teammates,” said Caitlin Horgan ‘25 on her own experience.

Tent Dance’s return to campus was a long-awaited moment that suggested our campus could truly bring back events in the safest possible way given the circumstances.
Finding Common Ground

students because people found other places to live. While some upperclass students filled out a form over the summer and chose to live in common rooms, most students were assigned to the rooms based on lower lottery numbers and many first-years or transfer students were randomly assigned to them. The College incentivized living in common rooms by offering a 200 point reduction for students’ lottery numbers next year.

When students found out they would be living in common rooms this year, their initial reactions were a mixture of surprise, confusion, and curiosity. Their online housing assignments simply read “CR,” so it took some students a while to figure out that stood for “Common Room.” Because there are not many photos of the inside of residence houses on the Connecticut College website, students assigned to common rooms were not sure what to expect. David Neelappa ’24, who lives in the Katherine Blunt common room, wondered how five people would be able to fit in a single common room. He had lived in Katherine Blunt House during his first year at Conn but did not remember how big the room was. Calvin Bates ’25, who lives in the Hamilton second floor common room with two other roommates was “relieved to see it was more spacious than [he] anticipated.” Claire Himmel ’25, who also lives in a Hamilton common room on the third floor shared, “it was really funny when we first got to the room because the beds were lined up three in a row like summer camp bunks. We did a bit of rearranging though which allowed everyone to have their own areas within the room.”

The KB and Windham house common rooms, among others, were supposed to have five students living in them but ended up only having three people each, making them even more spacious (except for the three extra sets of furniture). It can be difficult for anyone to adjust to living with other students. Neither Neelappa nor Hannah Stoever ’24, who lives in the Windham common room, knew his roommates prior to moving in. They got their first choices of dorm, but did not expect to be placed in the common rooms. Neelappa expressed that at first, “being in a common room added to that level of awkwardness [between roommates].” Now, he and his roommates have gotten used to checking in with each other and keeping track of each other’s schedules. Himmel also said she and her roommates are “all respectful of each other and have open communication.”

Common rooms have features that are uncommon to most typical dorm rooms. Bates, Himmel, Stoever, and Neelappa all have televisions that came with their rooms. Although they are not all connected to cable, most of them support TV streaming services. Bates and Himmel have sinks and countertops in their Hamilton common rooms, which they noted as big advantages. Stoever and Neelappa’s rooms came with chalkboards and (boarded up) fireplaces. Neelappa’s common room even included a wooden podium, which one of his roommates uses for sketching. While some of these features have been beneficial to students living in certain common rooms, others have served as slight inconveniences. The KB common room has ground-level windows on Cro Boulevard, so it can be noisy and harder to have privacy if Neelappa and his roommates do not keep them closed. Stoever’s Windham common room is also a bit noisy. Bates and Neelappa noted that their common rooms are sort of hidden or isolated from the rest of the dorms on their floor. The KB common room is adjacent to Coffee Grounds, whereas the rest of the KB dorm rooms are past the main entrance and down the hallway. The only first floor bathroom is also down the hall, which is inconvenient for Neelappa and his roommates.

Stoever considers herself lucky to have a private bathroom in her Windham common room, but it has been difficult for her to obtain paper towels and soap unless she and her roommates buy those products themselves. The only entrance to their bathroom is inside their common room, so it is not regularly restocked by janitorial staff. Another one of the possible issues with students living in common rooms is not having spaces for house/floor events. Dean Rothenberger explained, “Fortunately many of the houses that have common rooms occupied as student rooms right now have alternatives to gather - for example - KB has Coffee Grounds as a programming space and Smith/Burdick has the game room. Hamilton has the first floor common room as well as the large Lambdin common room right down the second floor hallway.”

These common room dorms should not be permanent. Dean Rothenberger explained, “We do hope that we are able to relocate students out of these spaces next semester as we forecast more students studying away next semester as well as some students who will graduate in December.” However, Bates, Himmel, Neelappa, and Stoever are all happy with their current dorm situations and said they would most likely prefer to stay in their common rooms if given the chance to move. Bates thinks he would regret moving somewhere else because it would make him realize how lucky he was to have the luxuries that come with living in a common room. Stoever was hoping to live in Windham this year and likes the group of people in her house. Neelappa remarked, “While you can say living in a common room is an isolating space, it’s definitely unique...I’m one of the three people who can say they lived in the KB common room.” •
New College Procedures Leave Camels With Covid-19 on Campus

Amanda Sanders
Editor-in-Chief

After three weeks in Modified Alert-Level Green (and with no plan, it seems, of going into a non-modified level), on Oct. 8, Camels across campus received a news alert from Dean of Students Victor Arcelus informing them of new changes regarding Covid-19 and Connecticut College. As the Northeast enters a period of cooler temperatures, a drop in cases is expected due to the cyclical nature of Covid-19 regarding periods of two-month spikes and then declines.

Booster shots are also now being made available to students at Conn as per new CDC guidelines which state that "adults aged 18–64 years who work or reside in certain settings (e.g., health care, schools, correctional facilities, homeless shelters) may be at increased risk of being exposed to Covid-19, which could be spreading where they work or reside. Since that risk can vary across settings and based on how much Covid-19 is spreading in a community, people aged 18–64 years who are at increased risk for Covid-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting may get a booster shot after considering their individual risks and benefits."

The College currently plans to hold a clinic for vaccine booster shots in early November, but students are welcome to get them off-campus. They also encourage students to get flu shots this year, and plan to host a clinic on Oct. 13 at Student Health Services from 12pm to 3pm, to prevent a flu outbreak on campus.

As the College looks forward to this anticipated drop in cases, they plan to increase gathering sizes in the River Ridges and Winch apartments from 15 to 25. Students will soon be able to get Social Host Training, run by CC Curtiss, director for Wellbeing and Health Promotion, allowing students with this form of housing to to host gatherings where students of age can drink alcohol.

While students earlier in the semester were banished to hotels in the surrounding area after testing positive for Covid-19, they will now stay on campus. "Moving forward, since we have fewer hotel spaces available to us than we did in early November, we will begin to transition to having students isolate in place whenever possible rather than moving to a different location on campus or off. This enables students to be in their own room, with their own belongings, with access to College WiFi, and easier access to College food, medical staff, etc," Arcelus stated. If students who test positive live in a single, they will remain there. One bathroom on their floor will be converted into an isolation bathroom and other students who live there will have to use another bathroom. If the student has roommates they will be taken to open isolation housing on campus, and if none are available, they will be moved to a hotel. If their roommate subsequently tests positive, they will be moved back into the dorms. For those students living in apartments "if the positive student is isolating within the apartment in a single or if two students in a double are positive, as noted above, the students will isolate in the apartment and the group will share the single occupancy bathroom."

While the student is still able to spread Covid-19 they will only be allowed to leave their room to use the bathroom, pick up meals from a designated counter at Harris, or go for a walk by themselves. The current policy on campus regarding not having to wear a mask outdoors does not apply to students who test positive.

Jenna Whelan '22 views the situation with mixed emotions. "I feel like they took the first outbreak very seriously and went through a lot of work to get everyone with Covid-19 off campus for the safety of the rest of the students. I think it's almost contradictory that they're now allowing positive students to stay on campus, walk around in dorms and outside, etc."

She went on to say that "I do think it's important that positive students are comfortable for the 10 days that they have to isolate, but I feel like it's a little odd to allow them to stay on campus based on how the first breakout was handled. I do think that it is a good decision in a way because it definitely takes pressure off of dining staff to have to prepare meals and deliver them. There are definitely positives and negatives to the decision, no pun intended."

Other students view the situation as a positive way to deal with the many stressors that can come with being a college student during a pandemic.

"I feel relieved to not have to worry about being taken off campus because of others' bad decisions," said Cam Angliss '22.

"With regard to the college's new isolation protocol, I think this a move in the right direction in following Covid-19 guidelines while minimizing the stress associated with having to completely reorganize one's circumstances when testing positive," said Sneh Shah '22. "Up until now, it felt as if students cared less about getting sick from the virus and more about having to move to an isolation facility, losing the ability to do at least some of their normal activities, and being subject to meals (which are just plain terrible) at untimely hours. Allowing students to isolate in their rooms (provided they live in singles) lets them continue to engage with the campus on some level. We are finally at a point where the protocol for isolation on campus resembles what it would be if we were not."

As the year continues and as our attitudes and methods for dealing with the pandemic evolve, it is likely that the College's protocols for dealing with the virus will also change as we all work to return to a form of semi-normalcy. •

TCV HAS A PODCAST

Find Us On Spotify!
Catja the Camel Abroad

The class of 2024 was dealt a particularly difficult hand by the Covid-19 pandemic. The pinnacle of their high school experience, the spring semester of their senior year, was cancelled and their first year of college was far from typical. Ten members of the sophomore class were anonymously surveyed to learn about their academic experience in the midst of a pandemic. There were several common sentiments, but also different perspectives about how the semester is going and how Conn is operating.

All of the sophomores surveyed stated they were nervous, disappointed and overwhelmed entering their first year of college. They felt unprepared without a formal conclusion to high school. Most came to Conn with an open mind, but ultimately did not have the best year, “It was certainly rough to say the least. Adjusting to college life and the increased workload was a lot more difficult under the pandemic conditions,” said one student. No one stated that they had enjoyed online classes and several expressed frustration over the fact that clubs had to meet over Zoom. The most challenging part of the first year experience was making friends. One sophomore said that it was “very difficult to meet new people, [and] people cling to whoever they knew as a safety net.” Classes that were in-person aided the students in forging friendships.

All students surveyed are having a better experience this year compared to last year. In-person classes and activities, eating in the dining hall and not having to wear masks outside are largely to credit. Aside from the Covid-19 outbreak earlier this semester which pushed the college into a cautionary quarantine, the students surveyed are pleased with less restrictions and, for the most part, have been able to make new friends. A few expressed that making friends and meeting new people is still difficult, saying, “it is still hard to meet new people.”

A “normal college experience” is a phrase that has been used a lot over the course of the pandemic, for lack thereof and the hope for. The answers to the question, “Do you feel like you are as close as you can to having a normal college experience this year?” were a mixed bag. Three students answered a flat out no, three said yes and the rest had more depth to their answers. One student said, “yes, but it is hard sometimes to see hometown friends at other institutions having a completely normal experience.” Another student said a return to normal will come when we ditch the masks, and another did not know how to answer because, “I still have no experience in college under normal conditions. It does definitely feel closer [to normal].”

The sophomores surveyed shared different perspectives of the pandemic. A student responded, “I don’t like how people act like the pandemic is over and that people aren’t still dying” and another similarly said, “I don’t like how some people have been acting like we’re not still in the middle of a pandemic. The student response to the shutdown...was disappointing.” Other students surveyed stated that Covid-19 is not going away anytime soon, and they are worried about the snitching culture from last year that has carried over into the fall as they try to return to normalcy in a 99% vaccinated community, “I am very afraid of disciplinary action should I find myself in a position that does not align with the college's Covid-19 protocols.” Another student expressed, “I feel like there is a snitching culture that is rolling over from last year; in some way, I am more afraid of the disciplinary action than getting Covid-19 itself.” There was also discontentment for some of the protocols, such as capacity limits, “I am not a big fan of the rule on the amount of people who are allowed to be in other dorms and apartments.”

The class of 2024 appears to be adjusting well, “I really like it, it feels like I’m really in college and not just getting bits and parts of it.” Thanks to a return to a certain degree of normalcy, sophomores have been able to experience the Conn community, “I like feeling the college community around me in a way that I didn’t experience last year.” Hopefully, the sophomore class will soon be able to enjoy the Conn community and college experience in full.
American Political Binaries Derail Progress

Lucie Englehart  
Opinions Editor

My coming-of-age in Texas was focalized around one goal: escaping to the Northeast for college. I fixated my eye and Common App on liberal arts institutions above, and only above, the Mason-Dixon Line as I desperately sought refuge from the antiquated minds of my hometown.

But after reflecting, ruminating, and reminiscing on my last few years in Connecticut, I began to believe that I fabricated in my mind this enormous distance between the political mindset from where I come and where I stand now. Though I credit a great chunk of my disillusionment to my own naivete as I entered what I believed to be a sort of progressive refuge, I found a different kind of close-mindedness up north that imbued in me a constant fear of coming across as an archetype of my perceived-to-be-incompetent homestate. Part of it was overthinking, but part of it was a very legitimate reaction to the perpetuation of the North versus South political binary. It was only recently that I began to lean into the inherent learning curve that comes with civic knowledge, which was the only way I could give myself the grace to learn and grow.

We don't wake up with the vocabulary and praxis of an intersectional feminist; rather, we experience a nonlinear emotional and intellectual journey that leads us to intersectional thinking.

It runs counterintuitive to progress to create an ideal of the American north that casts away our southern states as degenerate. Electoral politics aside, there's a lack of critical thinking when it comes to who we include in our circles of activism when we create hierarchies through such. The binary of the American South being “bad” and North being “good” places them in a narrowly-defined taxonomy and constructs them as monoliths.

I am continuously left broken by my state; it is a truth widely-acknowledged that Texas has some deeply-entrenched problems. To say the least. Much of the damage I have seen done by the world in which I was raised is inexcusable and irreversible. The latest news of our abortion ban left me unsurprised but disappointed and in a pool of my own emotions. I've struggled for years to create emotional space for nearly-impossible conversations with my friends and family down south, and I need to do better in creating the change that starts in our homes. But to categorize our southern states as disposable is also invalidating years of meaningful grassroots work that has often fruitfully created internal change. Within the red state that banned abortion after six weeks of gestation are also cities with dozens of community-oriented organizations fighting to gain visibility and traction in reproductive care.

Judgement is a facade we hide behind to avoid critical thinking, and I'll admit it’s incredibly easy to judge a state that actively reverses equitable legislation by virtue of a politician who flew to Cancun during a winter storm that left nearly every Texan in disarray.

I came to this school feared by my lack of civic knowledge next to my Massachusetts peers, but it is my own enormous responsibility to defamiliarize myself with what have been instilled in me as essential virtues that are truly corrupt. I find myself wondering: how do we move through the culture of political correctness in an empathetic way that also doesn't erase the trauma that this lack of education has inflicted upon these communities? How do we begin to open dialogues that recognize the multiplicity of our individual educational experiences? The question isn't mine to answer when my privilege is undeniable and I cannot, in so many regards, speak the language of the oppressed. There are nuances, however, that become obscured when we so reductively place blame and enforce binaries within America's political landscape. True forward-thinking must find a way to be more inclusive that works beyond the colors that appear on the electoral college map.

I have a research paper and I don’t know where to start! Librarians can help.

We ❤️ research. Make an appointment for research help today. refdesk@conncoll.edu
This week, I had the opportunity to sit down with Erika Smith, the new Dean of the College. We talked about the community here at Connecticut College, the state of education in the Covid pandemic, and what general advice she has for students. Some responses have been edited for clarity.

Sofia Raffel (SR): How has your experience been so far being a part of the Connecticut College community?

Erika Smith (ES): So, I first started contemplating coming to Conn in April, and sort of learned about the college and the direction that Connecticut College was going and about Connections, the curriculum, and I was really excited about the way that the community here was described. There was a line in the job profile that was like: “its this eclectic mix of scientists and activists and artists and…” and it was just sort of like this beautiful picture of a community that just kept getting reflected, too, throughout my introduction here. Everybody I talked to was just reflecting back what a great community it is and how well-connected people are and how shared governance really includes everybody. So those pieces were all beautiful, and so when I got here and saw how physically beautiful it was…it was incredible. So, it has been wonderful.

SR: What was it like onboarding in the midst of a global pandemic?

ES: It actually wasn’t very daunting, I think, for two reasons. One is, my remote experience of the pandemic ended when I got to Conn. So, I had been working remotely – and pretty seamlessly. I hear that that was the experience here as well for this team, that that pivot was pretty seamless. You know, I think, jarring for everybody in March 2020. But then once you kind of settled into whatever it was, or figured out whatever the landscape was, it was pretty seamless. I arrived here at the beginning of August, and we were in person at that point. So it was, I think, very nice to be onboarding in person. And then the other piece that I’ll say is that the other reason Conn was appealing to me was how well the college has done around Covid-19 in the year prior. That it felt like a safe place to be coming to, and a team and student life that was really handling the pandemic well. And we see that again after our move to orange, but then our quick, quick move back to green, that was amazing. I continue to be impressed by my colleagues here.

SR: Given the precariousness of in-person learning, how do you see the pandemic impacting academics, and how would you respond to these challenges?

ES: I don’t consider in-person learning to be precarious at this point. I think that we’re here, we had our moment, everyone in the community seems really committed to being in person and very excited to be in person. So, I don’t know that I would position that as a challenge. We’re learning how to do it in this moment, in this global pandemic. It’s been several iterations coming up to this point, it will be different, it will continue to change and evolve. We’re learning things along the way that will make us better equipped to do a much wider range of things when all is said and done.

SR: How has your experience helping to overhaul Brandeis’s core curriculum influenced your perspective on what is important for undergraduate academics?

ES: Like Conn, Brandeis had gotten to the point where there were some elements of the curriculum that needed to be updated to be resonant with the people who are going to be leading us in the future: you and your peers. So, things like a social justice requirement in the curriculum here is Social Difference and Power. So, I think that, again, you and your peers are leading us in the world. It made complete sense that it needed to be included in the curriculum. So, I think that there’s some resonance there. Your previous question about the global pandemic, I think, also nods to how the world is getting smaller, and people are getting more interconnected…Thinking about your education and your experience and how you move out into the world in a global way, and with more skills to do that and more opportunities to do that. I saw that I was working on the Brandeis curriculum, and I see that here as well, with Global and Local Engagement, so I think that there are ways in which it is about the leaders that we see coming up in the world.

SR: What are some of your goals for the College?

ES: I’ve been in higher education for twenty-two years. I have witnessed a lot of senior leaders come and a lot of senior leaders go. I think that those who I’ve seen, those who take the time to get to know the place first before taking a claim -- immediately setting goals, deciding that this thing is the way that things need to be changed -- are the people who have actually been able to effect change that more people can see themselves reflected in. I’ve been asked multiple times since I arrived here, but [I arrived] only two months ago. In the first couple of weeks, folks were asking “what’s your vision?” And I don’t know yet, because I don’t know the place yet, and I don’t think it’s fair for me to come in and say “this is what we need to do” when there are people here, when there are students who have been here longer than I have [laughs]. So rather than giving you a list of goals right now, what I’ll say is: I’m taking the time to get to know the place and to get to know the students. And since this is going in The College Voice, I’ll say, I’m excited to get to know more students. I don’t see as many students as I would like to. People should know that I am pretty intentional about wanting to have connections and build connections and hear students and have student input. So, if anybody has ideas or has things that they want to forge a connection around, I am open to that. I have met with a number of students since I started, as well as faculty and staff, and in those conversations, I always ask people what advice they have for me. And that one I will ask you; I would love your advice.

SR: I think that there is a lot that we have learned over the past year that could be implemented going forward. I would say to consider some of the things that we’ve learned from last year’s challenges and how those lessons could be relevant in the future. So, on that note, I ask: what do you think can be learned from our collective experience with remote and hybrid learning, and how do you think those lessons can continue to be implemented?

ES: All through the pandemic last year, I was leading a team similar to this team. We went remote, maybe March 16th. I was saying to all of them, “what are we learning from this? So, we’ve had to make this abrupt pivot, where it’s going to be messy for a while, we’re gonna have to figure some things out, but enter it with the spirit of ‘what are going to our takeaways? What are the things that we’re going to get rid of, because they don’t work anymore?’ And, out of that, both there and here, there were things like paper processes that were moved online, things like quick drop-in appointments that were moved online. There were these smaller interventions and changes that were made that made, I think, kind of a big change in the end. And then there are some of the things that we’ll continue to grapple with around what modes deliver the highest quality of teaching and learning. I think, most will agree that hybrid is particularly difficult because you’re having to tend to in-person and remote people. But I think it continues to be something both where educators have had this – I will call it an opportunity, other people might not use that word [laughs] – opportunity to make this rapid shift. One of the other things I say about this is that the pace of change is very slow, I would say in many things, in many sectors, in many fields, education being among them. The types of changes that were made just in the last year would have taken decades to make. Everybody was forced, and I think it worked well in some cases, I think in other cases it really clarified that an in-person experience is what is paramount here. On the learning side, students learned a lot, I hope, about themselves as learners. One of the things that I heard both from students and from instructors was that when you use Zoom, it changes participation. So, you get your introverts who are far.
more likely to use the chat and participate. And I've heard time and time again, “definitely my pedagogy should be delivered in person. But how do I draw on that and learn from that to ensure that my introverts continue to stay engaged?” And I think that, on the student side, students should also feel like you're in this self-evaluative moment. The education landscape changed, but your learning experience also changed. So, if there are things that worked well for you that these are things that you wouldn't have done either. So, I think that it really has created an open door and an opportunity for the entire system to move forward.

SR: How do you plan on expanding Connections to reach full participation?

ES: As Dean of the College, I oversee the academic resource center, the Hale Career Center, the class deans, study away, the registrar's office, and sort of partner to manage fellowships. So, Connections is present across all of those areas in some way, shape, or form, and there's more. I think my aim would be to be looking at each piece, including Connections, with an eye towards “how do we get to full participation.” And it means, I think, different things in different areas. There are different components of the student experience, the student academic and co-curricular experience, where full participation would be manifested in different ways. And I think that this is part of my learning and my onramp is, what are the groups of students that could use greater access to any of these experiences.

The one that's at the top of my mind right now is the Gilman Scholarship, which supports students for study abroad, and students just don't know about it. So, I think that raising the profile on some of these things, building bridges, I know that one of the most effective ways of making that kind of connection, especially at a small place like Conn is to walk with someone to the next resource that you want to have them take advantage of, and have everybody feel an equal sense of comfort. Somebody that I was talking to recently said “we want every student to have a consistently joyful experience”. I think that should be the aspiration, and I think you can get that that when people are feeling like the full breadth of the experience is accessible to them and attainable for them and that they can invite other people in.

SR: What advice would you give to students at Connecticut College as they strive to get the most out of their education and college experience?

ES: One is, figure out your self care go-to. Your routine. What can shift your mood, what can put you in a good place, what can position you to be most successful, and make sure that you do it with some consistency. Another one that I share with students is, the most important time to reach out for help is when it's hardest to reach out for help. So, I have seen many, many students have -- and I say this with love and respect -- hiding behavior when something gets hard. And I get it, that when you hit a difficult point you just don't want to confront it, that is exactly the moment that you need somebody. You need to reach out and get somebody in there so that you don't get into a space where the distance between you and your success gets wider and wider and wider and wider out of the fear of reaching out. I would say, as somebody who was very narrowly focused on a path undergrad, it's okay to change your path and change your mind. I didn't change it during undergrad, but I did change it post-undergrad, and everything turned out just fine.... And actually, I'm doing things that are important to me, things that matter... And then the last: don't let noise, like, environmental noise, distract you from why you made the choice to be at Conn. We both made the choice to be at Conn. We looked at the academics, we looked at the environment, we looked at the location. And then we went to [Alert-Level] Orange... It was an uncomfortable moment. It was a moment of uncertainty... and I think that people can be undone by those moments, I think people can be really knocked off balance by those moments, I think people can really lose focus in those moments. The decision to be here, and all of the great, great reasons to be here are so much bigger than that moment. And that's what I would end with: don't be distracted by your... growth opportunities. They're hard. They're uncomfortable. That's what growth is. But the reasons that we're all here together in this community are so much bigger than them...
JOHNNY ALEXANDRE  
SPORTS EDITOR

October 10 is international World Mental Health Day. A day devoted to “global mental health education, awareness, and advocacy against social stigma,” according to the World Health Organization. Connecticut College’s chapter of The Hidden Opponent (THO), a non-profit mental health advocacy group for student-athletes, had events every day of the week leading up to, and including on this day, aimed at raising awareness for student-athlete mental health and addressing the stigma of mental health within sports culture.

There is arguably nothing more important than our mental health. It is what allows us to feel happy, healthy, and safe. For many young people, sports are a crucial part of feeling mentally sound, affording us opportunities to spend time with friends, compete and exercise.

Professional athletes act as important role models for many people, myself included. It can be a huge perspective shifter to see a famous athlete who seemingly dominates everyone in their path on the outside, admitting that they don’t feel quite as mighty on the inside. Star athletes shedding their invincible image and allowing themselves to be vulnerable can be a huge spark for conversations around well-being, reminding people that they don’t have to be so tough, especially in a pandemic when it is more important than ever to be well.

Earlier in 2021, top Women’s tennis player Naomi Osaka put mental health first by withdrawing from two major tournaments, The French Open and Wimbledon. The decision was in wake of feelings of doubt when facing the media, which sparked a conversation all across the world of sports regarding the role of media and their treatment of athletes. She was welcomed with almost unilateral support from fellow athletes.

Similarly, when star gymnast Simone Biles withdrew from multiple Olympic events this summer in Tokyo because she wasn’t in the right headspace, most people understood. When hockey player Stephen Johns rollerbladed across the country to raise awareness for mental health, people felt less alone. And most recently, Montreal Canadiens’ long-time goalkeeper Carey Price decided to step away from the game and seek help through the NHLPA’s assistance program, which “helps players and their families with mental health.” Most importantly these athletes have reinforced what should already be known: it is okay to not be okay.

Unfortunately, athletes like these who were brave enough to speak out about their struggles weren’t immune to facing the negativity that came with their willingness to open up. Simone Biles received a lot of hate for her decision to back out of her events, with people labeling her as “selfish” and “weak” in the media. Naomi Osaka was fined $15,000 and threatened with expulsion from the French Open for skipping her press conference in favor of her mental health. The French Open even posted a now-deleted tweet following Osaka’s withdrawal with pictures of other athletes participating in press conferences captioned “they understood the assignment.” These all show classic reactions and stigmas discouraging the important conversations surrounding mental health that need to be changed.

Mental health is especially important for college athletes who balance academics, athletics, and all the other aspects of college life on ultra-busy schedules. Victoria Garrick, the founder of The Hidden Opponent, highlighted this in a TED Talk she gave, explaining the sometimes unbearable stress she went through balancing a schedule with practically zero free time as a division one volleyball player at the University of Southern California.

Additionally, Garrick explained the issue as clear as day when she noted that an injury like a sprained ankle is visible and easy to understand and see. If somebody misses practice for a physical injury nobody doubts their toughness or willingness to compete. Everybody understands that it is an injury that is common and needs time to rest and heal. When the issue, or “injury”, if you will, is invisible, or “hidden,” the meaning behind the name of The Hidden Opponent, that hurt is impossible to see and therefore harder to understand. As a result, physical ailments receive much more understanding and respect than mental ones but it takes that much more courage to speak out to address a mental illness that only that person themselves is aware of.

Connecticut College is one of 35 colleges and universities with its own The Hidden Opponent chapter. Abigail King ’23, the co-president of the club, has many ideas and events planned aimed at completing their goal of destigmatizing mental health in student-athlete culture. The club will use its Instagram account for “Motivation Mondays” and “Feature Fridays.” Motivation Mondays will celebrate club members with an image of them and a quote to be posted on THO’s Instagram story. Feature Fridays will introduce club members and the reason they chose to join THO. Every club meeting will have different pro-mental health themes like self-love, mental toughness, and creating safe spaces on campus. Club members also work in groups to come up with ideas of their own like hosting a therapy-dog event on campus and further exploring sports-centric mental health-related issues like balancing a social life and being rested ahead of athletic contests. The club will also host guest speakers like Emily Mauro, a sport and exercise psychology professor and track and field coach here on campus.

Last and maybe most importantly, THO at Conn will have coach-nominated team representatives from each sports team on campus. These team representatives will act as liaisons between THO and their sports teams, responsible for taking time at practice to share THO’s focus for that week and checking in on teammates to make sure all are in a good place, and sharing the on-campus mental-health resources with them if they aren’t.

While Connecticut College doesn’t have the ideal combination of a clinical sports psychologist and registered dietitian on staff to serve the athletes the way a division one school might, the counseling center offers all students, not just athletes, the ability to be treated at no cost. This includes individual and group counseling as well as other treatments like light therapy. Right now Colby College is the only NESCAC school with a clinical sports psychologist and dietitian on staff, something that might be worth considering in the future for Conn, along with potentially having a mental performance coach to help athletes be in the best possible mindset ahead of competitions.

The conversation around mental health is one that isn’t discussed enough. Maybe this article can be just a drop in the bucket for change.
Winter Sports Start An Earlier Season

While almost every other conference in the NCAA, regardless of division, are allowed to hold year-round practices with their coach on the field, court, or deck, the NESCAC has a long-standing tradition of setting up hard start and end dates to the fall, winter and spring seasons so that their student-athletes are able to spend enough time focusing on academics. In previous years, this date for winter sports has been Nov. 1. However, due to the pandemic, which led to the cancelation of almost all Division 3 seasons during the 2020-2021 academic year, a vote was held at the recurring meeting involving all 11 schools’ presidents and athletic directors. They came to the decision that to make sure their athletes were able to compete at the same level of competition as other non-conference schools, they would test moving up the arbitrary start date of Nov. 1. up to Oct. 15.

Although this change might have little effect on some sports such as cross country and track and field, whose season spans from the fall through the spring, meaning that they don’t have an official start date for the winter season, this decision is sure to have an impact on other sports this coming season. Team sports, such as basketball and squash, will now be allowed to hold training with their coaches at an earlier date, which could prove vital in the ongoing progression of a given team, and in preparing for the season ahead.

Women’s Basketball Guard/Forward Jaycie Rojik ’23 is getting ready for her season starting up next week rather than next month “because we will be able to work out with our coach for more time. [We were] definitely at a disadvantage in previous years because we would start our season playing out of league teams who have practice and sometimes a couple of games under their belt.”

Coaches are also looking forward to this earlier start. Marc Benvenuti, head coach of both the men’s and women’s swimming and diving team, has faith that his athletes are in shape regardless of when the season starts, but says that being able to be on pool deck earlier in the fall semester “allows us to pay more attention to the rate at which we’re ramping up training. Now we can control that better and offer a safer and better experience overall.” Despite all the positives that come with moving up the start date, some are getting worried about the season starting early, as Rojik “knows people are getting nervous about (their) fitness testing day getting moved up,” especially considering that all sports and practices were shut down for ten days following the Covid-19 outbreak that took place at the beginning of the semester.

While sports like basketball and swimming are using this time to hit the ground running, other sports like squash are planning on using these extra two weeks to “either serve as an adjustment period entering the season or a chance to make improvements in our game before the season starts” according to Tyler Maguire ’23. Regardless of what teams might use their extra time for both over fall break as well as the rest of October, one thing is for certain: after not having a season last year, the potential for injury is a lot higher, but having your coach overlooking practice can only help in the long term as we move into a new era of NESCAC athletics.

Conn winter sports are ready for a banner season; Go Camels! •

---

**Sports Spotlight**

### Featured Team: Men's Cross Country

- **10/1** @ Paul Short Run, 6th/41
- **10/8** vs. Mitchell College W, 15-50

**Upcoming Events:**
- Oct. 16 @ Connecticut College Invite (Harkness Park)

**Coaching Staff:**
- Luke Maher, Head Coach
- Sam Alexander, Volunteer Assistant

---

### Featured Team: Women's Cross Country

- **10/1** @ Paul Short Run, 23rd/39
- **10/8** vs. Mitchell College W, 16-49

**Upcoming Events:**
- Oct. 16 @ Connecticut College Invite (Harkness Park)

**Coaching Staff:**
- Ned Bishop, Head Coach
- Emily Mauro, Assistant Coach

---

### Featured Team: Women's Field Hockey

- **10/3** vs. Williams L, 2-7
- **10/6** vs. Rodger Williams L, 1-3

**Upcoming Events:**
- Oct. 12 vs. Trinity 6:00 pm
- Oct. 16 vs. Bowdoin 12:00 pm

**Coaching Staff:**
- Chrissy Chappell, Head Coach
- Jess Walsh, Assistant Coach

---

### Featured Team: Men's Soccer

- **10/3** vs. Williams W, 1-0
- **10/6** @ Eastern Connecticut State W, 2-0

**Upcoming Events:**
- Oct. 16 @ Bowdoin 12:00 pm
- Oct. 20 @ Mitchell 3:00 pm

**Coaching Staff:**
- Ruben Burk, Head Coach
- Andrew Storton

---

### Featured Team: Women's Soccer

- **10/6** vs. Eastern Connecticut State W, 3-0
- **10/7** vs. Mitchell W, 4-0

**Upcoming Events:**
- Oct. 16 @ Bowdoin 12:00 pm
- Oct. 17 @ Trinity 6:00 pm

**Coaching Staff:**
- Norm Riker, Head Coach
- Analisse Rios, Assistant Coach

---

### Featured Team: Women's Volleyball

- **10/9** @ Middlebury L, 0-3

**Upcoming Events:**
- Oct. 16 @ Williams 2:00 pm
- Oct. 21 @ Coast Guard 6:00 pm

**Coaching Staff:**
- Josh Edmed, Head Coach
- Nicole Fellers, Assistant Coach
Wang Mansheng: A Journey Through Art

Grace Mattaliano
Contributor

If—or more probably, when—you are walking into the Shain library this fall and look to your right once you pass the glass doors, you will see the Charles Chu room. There is an air of calm serenity once you enter this room, and the atmosphere is lighter: it is as if you have walked into another place altogether. On display is the source of this transitional feeling: the exhibition titled Wang Mansheng: From the Silk Road to the Hudson River. The exhibition features sketches, calligraphy, ink paintings, photography, and prints by the renowned artist Wang Mansheng, who has held exhibitions in China, Hong Kong, Japan, Europe, and the United States, and whose works are in collections at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Yale Art Museum, Brooklyn Museum, and more. Wang's art pieces in the Charles Chu room are lit with a warm glow so that the dark ink, light brushstrokes, and intricate details stand out on the scrolls and paper.

Wang Mansheng's earliest pieces included in the exhibition, Studies of Qiuci Mural Figures (1986), Studies of Tang (1986), and Postage Stamp of Dunhuang Mural 1, 2 (1994) are all drawn from his visits to the caves along the Silk Road. In Wang's own words, his art is "a response to the natural environment" in which he lives, and these studies, done in precise, swooping strokes of ink on paper, show his thought process as he took in the mural with his own eyes. Also on the Silk Road in Dunhuang, Wang came across preserved slips of inscribed wood that ranged from revered treatises to medical prescriptions and military notes. He features them in his piece Studies of Inscribed Wooden Slips from Dunhuang (2013). The writers and artists of these wooden slips were anonymous, and differed greatly in age, class, and style of writing; but despite this, there was a link between the art, as Wang Mansheng says. The people, no matter what age or class, shared the same culture: "—they lived in the same area, they drank the same wine, they spoke with the same accent." The variety and similarity of the wooden slips show that no matter where you are, there are things about your homeland that tie you, and everyone else who lives and lived there, together always.

In my first-year seminar class—Chinese Art Comes to America—with Professor Yibing Huang, who is also the curator of this exhibition, I learned about Wang Mansheng's roots in both the Silk Road and the Hudson River and how he successfully connected both of them and made roots in both continents. Wang's journey continued from China across countries to Connecticut. Here, he painted his series of bamboo paintings—my personal favorite pieces of his—called Rock and Bamboo (2011), In the Rain (2012), In the Mist (2012), and In the Wind (2012). These pieces show a bamboo tree that Wang planted in his own backyard for the purpose of doing traditional ink and walnut ink painting studies. The same bamboo tree is shown throughout the seasons and weather: in the rain, mist, and wind, just as the titles suggest. In the Rain depicts leaves of the bamboo drooping under the weight of the rain droplets. In the Mist shows the bamboo shrouded in mist by strokes of light gray ink in the background. And finally, In the Wind shows the leaves sharply slanted to the right side of the paper, as if the wind is real and blowing forcefully from the left side of the paper. In all of these paintings, there are clear, bold, and black brushstrokes for the bamboo in focus, and lighter gray brushstrokes for the bamboo in the background, successfully portraying depth and character in these serene, beautiful works. Wang Mansheng's act of growing bamboo in his backyard on the Hudson River meshes both of his cultures and origins into one, thus creating an art piece that is infinitely more wholesome and meaningful. Wang Mansheng has found his roots across both continents, and these roots ignite passion and belonging to fuel his art. In Professor Huang's own words: "once he is rooted, he becomes winged and free."

Like many things, Wang's exhibition was halted by the start of the pandemic. The original exhibition was intended to run from Feb. 5 to April 8, 2020, and drew many viewers until the pandemic hit in March of 2020. It has been reinstalled in the Charles Chu Room and is running from Aug. 24 to Oct. 31, 2021, and includes four pieces recently purchased by the College for the Chu-Griffis Asian Art Collection. I encourage you to take a step into this exhibition and absorb the work of an artist whose collection mirrors his journey across continents, and most importantly, portrays the true meaning of home.

Fire and Ice

Article continued from front page.

destruction of climate change.

Another exhibition highlight includes Chris Barnard's Deepwater Horizon (2015), an oil on canvas. An abstract depiction of the eponymous 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, Barnard's piece is a haunting portrait of environmental degradation in service of corporate interests that also challenges viewers to consider the racial injustice that the negligence of corporations towards the environment perpetuates. The question of how systemic racism pervades climate inaction is further explored in Under the Weather (patience study: sagittal, echo, coronal) (2021), a triptych of archival pigment prints by Amanda Russell Wallace, a professor at Connecticut College. Wallace's piece examines the relationship "between environmental disruptors and biological weathering", and how the latter permeates interactions with the unremarkable, suggesting that antiblackness is an omnipresent environmental factor. The piece is a fascinating meditation on the weather as a culmination of our environments, the cyclical nature of life and death, and their implications for the intersection of the climate crisis with racial violence.

However, the exhibition also leaves the suggestion of hope for a collective redemption open with Gregory Bailey's Rain Collecting Water Cistern (2018), a large sculpture made of various recycled materials featured prominently in the center of the gallery. The sculpture is both aesthetic and practical, as it can be used to collect water that can be used to grow trees. According to Bailey, the carbon sequestered by the trees will eventually surpass the carbon used to make the sculpture. The piece suggests that art has a moral imperative not only to comment on society, but to be a part of the solution, standing in contrast to the pessimism of the rest of the exhibit.

Fire and Ice, while featuring some incredible works, is more than merely the sum of its parts. The combination of the industrial with the idyllic, the bright with the nightmarish, and the systematic with the chaotic creates an experience that compels the viewer to contend with their place in nature and ponder questions ranging from political to metaphysical. The thematic and stylistic variety of the exhibition, while seemingly incongruous on its face, follows a certain internal logic and addresses the same theme from multiple lenses. In so doing, Fire and Ice thoughtfully depicts an expansive, nuanced point of view on the climate crisis.

Fire and Ice is on display through Oct. 15th.
Exploring the Nightmare

Professor Ross Morin, Associate Professor and the Chair of the Department of Film Studies at Connecticut College, has a new short film out titled ¡Comé! (Eat!). The short film was purchased by HBO and released by the streaming service over the summer. According to The Day, who spoke to Morin in late September, shooting for the film took place in 2019 over the course of two days in Lakeland, FL. The ten-minute film follows the story of a young Puerto Rican girl who brings a native Spanish dish into her class. The aftermath of bringing in the dish leads her on a journey of self-discovery. I spoke with Professor Morin who is currently on sabbatical about his short film and how it reflects his position at Conn.

Has the process of HBO Max acquiring “¡Comé! (Eat!)” affected your perspective on filmmaking?

“I’m so used to screening at festivals...but I have never had my movie seen by this wide of an audience. I have been getting emails from people I have never met or never heard of from around the world, asking about the movie or engaging with me about it and that’s tremendously exciting to see. It’s almost like my work can have greater resonance than I have ever expected so I think that’s one thing that I have learned. President Bergeron has always been really good to me and she always says that we all need to think bigger, and this is a great example of how I’ve never thought to think this big. It’s really cool to see that my work can be out there like this—it has changed my perspective on that. I have learned a lot more about how the industry and independent filmmaking works in general about representation, even having sales representation and how they work in studios to get work distributed so I have just learned so much in this process.”

I’ve noticed that compared to your past work, there is sort of a horror theme that you’ve been exploring, what made you switch your usual genre of horror? Or, is there more of a similarity between your past work and this work?

“I’ve been interested in horror as a way of exploring what it means to be an outsider and then what it means to be normal. I think my films are always very interested thematically in what it means to be normal, part of the mainstream, part of the dominant ideology, or to be in some way some sort of an outsider. ¡Comé! (Eat!) is very much about those exact same themes even though the genre is different; it’s still exploring something that is very important to me about what it means to be an outsider versus normal... This “normal” thing is super dangerous, one of the most dangerous things that there is, I think. Just the idea of normal and what’s normal is natural in some way and the way that [normalcy is used] to oppress people is a huge part of my work as a teacher, an activist and a filmmaker. So the film is actually very much in line with my work, it’s just a different genre.”

Have there been any past films or filmmakers that inspired you to reconstruct normalcy and what that means?

“There are so many. The filmmaker who right now is doing what I always wished I was doing is Jordan Peele and what he does with his horror movies, which are horror movies, but they are also political theory and forms of social justice activism. They look like entertaining movies, but they are really doing the hard work, so he is somebody that I really admire right now. Then there are actually some TV shows that are inspiring me a lot, even more than straightforward cinema, like Sex Education. Sex Education is an amazing show that is both entertaining, but also really important politically. Then there is this other show called Love, Victor that’s just doing this incredible work that affects me, affects my heart and gut on a visceral level, but also what they are doing politically and what they are doing with their messages and themes is so powerful too and that really inspires me. I think earlier, maybe 5 or 6 years ago, the Wachowskis did this show called Sense 8 and that was one of the first times where I thought, this is what I want to be doing. I never thought that HBO would happen so I guess I don’t know where my career is going. I tend to think of myself as just doing more small things, but these are the people who really inspire me and I want to be playing in their playground anyway, although I don’t expect that I will ever have the means that they do, but you never know.”

Did you have any inspirations growing up when you were thinking about becoming a filmmaker? Or was your inspiration more to shift the narrative of what filmmakers back then were doing?

“It was certainly more rudimentary, at least as far as I understood my ambitions when I was a kid. I started making movies when I was 13 and they were just sort of derivative horror movies of like Scream or Halloween, so I was really into slasher flicks at that time, but even then what I think really inspired me was sort of the feminist angle that those films were dealing with, certainly there was the racial representation which was all white— it was a very white genre so I can’t speak for the way that Jordan Peele influences so many people now, but what horror was sometimes doing in a really complicated way as a certain type of feminism and a certain type of empowering of women that I was really drawn to. So I think my early films were infused with (even though I was really young to understand what I was doing) the sense of trying to show strong women protagonists and then later on my work was more about queer male protagonists, but it was always sort of queering of the mainstream ideology and what it means to be a hero. If my protagonist is of the dominant ideology and the dominant norms they are usually pretty hardcore interrogated versus somebody who is an outsider like a person of color, queer person, woman, somebody who falls into any number of underrepresented categories, they always triumph in the end. So I think I was sort of drawn to that when I was a kid. I connected to the way that horror movies seemed to be empowering people who were outside of the mainstream.”

I never thought of horror movies as a genre not having enough representation.

“Horror is traditionally a very conservative genre. I think in some way as a queer teenager in southern Maine where I grew up, I was thinking about why can’t this genre be something else? Why can’t it be more? Why does it always involve so much torturing? For example, for people to learn and improve in some ways, why does this genre have to be so conservative? What other nightmares could be explored rather than exploring the nightmare of the other, what about exploring the nightmare of the mainstream? I’ve always been flipping it even though I didn’t know that I was doing it which is what has drawn me also to the medium.”

Does that idea inspire you as a professor of Film Studies as well?

“Absolutely. When I was in grad school, I found the teachings to be pretty conservative as well and so I thought to be subversive in my teaching. I thought, what are the ways that I can teach filmmaking from a different lens? How can I queer the lens through which we teach filmmaking? The term queering, I’ve sort of used rather inquisitively for a bunch of different things whether it’s gender or sex...
singing through the pandemic

Ellie Wagner

A musical ensemble seems like something that would be very challenging to continue remotely. However, the pandemic has brought out the creativity within many music educators, as they continue their ensemble work remotely in new and interesting ways. One of these especially creative educators is professor Rachel Feldman, who runs the choirs on campus. Chorale and Camerata have both faced challenges and had to adapt to remote and socially-distanced learning, but prof. Feldman created a productive environment for everyone to make music together. One of the most important parts of being in a choir is the social aspect. Many students were feeling deprived of social interaction when we could only see each other behind masks and through computer screens. Prof. Feldman made Chorale a fun place where students could come and see their friends and be social, while also being productive. By utilizing breakout rooms where the only instructions were for students to talk and get to know each other, Chorale remained a place for social interaction even when on Zoom.

In preparation for the fall 2020 semester, professor Feldman thought a lot about the choir experience as a whole. Students don't necessarily join the choir just to learn, they also join for the social aspect, which is something just feeling things out and I can let go of that side of my mind, but when that's done I have to start submitting to festivals, thinking about marketing, work on the website, funding, PR, so you always have to have that organized sensibility when you're a filmmaker.

What are your long term goals for teaching and filmmaking?

“I think this HBO deal has provided me an opportunity to expand my imagination for what that might look like. Again, I grew up in rural Maine, my dad was a firefighter; I’m not used to any of this world of academia, art, or filmmaking, which is all new to me. I think my worldview is very limited. I grew up being very practical so I always like making sure I can pay my bills and finding a place to live. Now with [my] job [at] Connecticut College and with everything happening around me, and being involved within this very intellectual space. My best friends are philosophers, psychologists, and nuclear physicists. I don’t see bounds with what I can do and that’s a little scary to see how much openness there really is. It kind of reminds me of when I was in college about what I wanted to be when I grow up. I’m still asking myself that question.”

Is there any advice for viewers that are interested filmmakers about what they should take away from ¡Come! (Eat!) about their own art and understanding?

“I’m always nervous to guide anybody’s interpretation too much. To me, the thing that I connect most to about ¡Come! (Eat!) is the importance of the relationship between the student and the teacher, particularly amongst the student who feels like an outsider in some way. The role of the teacher and helping them feel accepted and proud of themselves is something that I’ve been connected to my whole life—it’s the reason that I am a teacher. The reason that I do what I do is because I have had teachers who made me feel safe and who have made me feel like my life was worthwhile, and I think ¡Come! (Eat!) is about that—a teacher who helps this girl find acceptance and self-love, love for her family, and love for who she is—I think that is the most powerful.” •

exploring the nightmare

Article continued from page 13.

or gender identity, or also race—I think is adjacent enough to that as well. I still wonder how can I, as a professor, continue to interrogate the mainstream and the idea of what is normal. It’s all sort of tied together, the work that I am trying to do is all the same, whether it’s teaching or filmmaking, and it all sort of has that same overall goal.”

In the article published by the New London Paper The Day, you explained the nexus of becoming a business person and an artist. Do these two ideas contradict one another?

“I could talk for hours about this. I’m very nervous about calling myself an artist because I think that there is this sort of stereotype that an artist just kind of goes towards what feels right and maybe doesn’t think all that much, and maybe doesn’t plan all that much and doesn’t have to be all that organized. I know most people who are artists reject that as well, but I am always very skeptical about that and to be a filmmaker in particular because you are managing these crews of twenty to seventy to one hundred people, and you have to have every day planned. You have to have a business sense, you have to be super structured and all artists do in their own way, but I think especially in film and theater and dance where you have big companies and a lot of different parts, if you don’t know how to use spreadsheets, calculate overtime pay for your gaffer in the 11.1 hour, you will not be able to do your job, because you just over budget and if you over budget you can’t continue making your movie. So absolutely, you have to have a financial sense, a practical sense, you have to have sort of this science-oriented mind. I often think that film fits into this beautiful nexus of arts, humanities, and the sciences. It’s budgeting, organizing crews, it’s organizing minute to minute film shoots which is like organizing a massively long event. Even for a short film, every minute is planned, every meal is planned, the lodgings and transportation is planned. It’s a very logical-oriented sensibility that one has to have in order to be this type of filmmaker. I have also made movies where it’s just me and the camera where it’s very organic and I’m just feeling things out and I can let go of that side of my mind, but when that’s done I have to start submitting to festivals, thinking about marketing, work on the website, funding, PR, so you always have to have that organized sensibility when you’re a filmmaker.”

What are your long term goals for teaching and filmmaking?

“I think this HBO deal has provided me an opportunity to expand my imagination for what that might look like. Again, I grew up in rural Maine, my dad was a firefighter; I’m not used to any of this world of academia, art, or filmmaking, which is all new to me. I think my worldview is very limited. I grew up being very practical so I always like making sure I can pay my bills and finding a place to live. Now with [my] job [at] Connecticut College and with everything happening around me, and being involved within this very intellectual space. My best friends are philosophers, psychologists, and nuclear physicists. I don’t see bounds with what I can do and that’s a little scary to see how much openness there really is. It kind of reminds me of when I was in college about what I wanted to be when I grow up. I’m still asking myself that question.”

Is there any advice for viewers that are interested filmmakers about what they should take away from ¡Come! (Eat!) about their own art and understanding?

“I’m always nervous to guide anybody’s interpretation too much. To me, the thing that I connect most to about ¡Come! (Eat!) is the importance of the relationship between the student and the teacher, particularly amongst the student who feels like an outsider in some way. The role of the teacher and helping them feel accepted and proud of themselves is something that I’ve been connected to my whole life—it’s the reason that I am a teacher. The reason that I do what I do is because I have had teachers who made me feel safe and who have made me feel like my life was worthwhile, and I think ¡Come! (Eat!) is about that—a teacher who helps this girl find acceptance and self-love, love for her family, and love for who she is—I think that is the most powerful.” •

Article continued on page 15.
It was hilarious. The time flew by,” Miles was one of two students who were remote in the second half of the academic year. “Hybrid choir was less than ideal for me, but being able to have sectionals over Facetime was nice”, he added. He says of Prof. Feldman’s teaching, “I like how she gives the students space to talk about the issues going on in our lives and she lets us talk as a group for a few minutes for support. She is very supportive of people’s problems. She seems to be able to relate to us in a way that other professors can’t.” Erin Flanagan ’24 stated that she initially thought Zoom choir was going to be “terrible”, but she actually ended up having a lot of fun. “I laughed so much. It simply brought me so much joy and it was the highlight of my week.” Erin said about Prof. Feldman, “She’s the greatest. She has a good balance of trying to teach us theory and letting us sing. She is very fair and very passionate about what she does. She does a good job of letting us be ourselves.” Evan Strouse ’24 noted Prof. Feldman’s choice to teach things other than singing, such as music history and theory, saying, “She really made the best use of our class time by teaching other important things that a choral group should know besides just singing together.”

Although teaching music is tricky during a pandemic, Professor Feldman has handled it wonderfully. After a tough year, the choirs are now meeting fully in-person twice a week. Any students interested in auditioning for the spring semester should email Professor Feldman at rfeldman@conncoll.edu •

Gray Area: A Clean Slate for Fashion

A nother year, another trend! Fashion trends come and go, but what is never going to go is the desire to make the fashion industry more reflective of modern society. Controversies such as racism, cultural appropriation, environmental harm, child labor, and use of fur have surrounded this particular industry for a long time and even though these have not been addressed until recently, the world might be moving in the right direction. An example of this change is Gray Area, Connecticut College’s newest fashion and lifestyle magazine. In the past, former magazines theLook and Bespoke have been the subjects of backlash and controversy due to lack of inclusivity and appropriation of another student’s ideas. However, Co-Editors-in-Chief Carly Denora ’22 and Kendrick Hawkins ’23 have made it clear that while they respect the work of the past magazines, Gray Area is not affiliated with them, despite having many of their past members on their board. To differentiate the work of the current magazine from its predecessors, the Gray Area’s Director of Equity and Inclusion has sent an email to affinity groups on campus expressing interest in having them write articles and participate in the photoshoots, and thus acknowledging that there needs to be more diversity in a club where the majority of the members are white.

Fall 2021 brings a hopeful future for fashion addicts on campus. Last year, Bespoke faced several obstacles due to COVID-19 restrictions, and they did not release an issue until the spring of 2021; nevertheless, Gray Area hopes to bring bigger and better things this year, and onward. According to their newly created Instagram page, @grayareamag, a gray area is “a sphere of interest not readily conforming to a category or to an existing set of rules.” Although this is a somewhat cryptic message, the real meaning behind this lies in their purpose, which is to represent the individual expressions of everyone at Connecticut College. Fashion can be subjective, yet very meaningful, so the new magazine seeks to welcome all styles of expression. This also means that readers of Gray Area should expect the unexpected.

Despite the fact that this is a brand new organization, some students have shown hesitance to join due to the troubled past of its predecessors. Looking back at old issues of theLook, most of the models would wear the same preppy and monotonous looks, which were selected by an executive board composed of a friend group that would not welcome any new ideas. Some members of the Executive Board have had experience working with the previous magazines, and collaboration was not encouraged as communication was minimal. There were hierarchies within both former magazines, ultimately deterring members from contributing. Participation was inherently discouraged as most decisions were made by a select few people. Bespoke tried to resolve this clique issue by rebranding the magazine and welcoming criticism in order to improve the experience of all members, then they saw themselves involved in another scandal. Denora and Hawkins are aware that last year’s efforts did not fully come to fruition; therefore, Gray Area already faces a huge challenge: fulfilling the inclusivity goal that had been promised before.

As for the efforts being done to make the magazine more inclusive, they said “Gray Area Magazine’s Executive Board is made up of eleven new members and four returning members. We have added additional positions to encourage more participation within the organization. We decided to add a Director of Equity and Inclusion position to ensure that every voice is heard and represented in this process of rebranding, as we fully acknowledge the exclusivity of past magazines. We are establishing an initiative to move our magazine in a different direction than all past publications. This is why we welcome feedback from the community on how to improve.” New members are highly encouraged to suggest ideas or changes that they consider necessary to make the magazine run smoothly.

The Executive Board agreed that a feasible goal for this year filled with uncertainty is to have 4 to 5 issues released. Furthermore, they have planned a fashion show and a few fundraisers - Harvestfest was a success and the money is going to help support the magazine and create more opportunities. The first issue is scheduled to be published before Halloween, but the exact date is still to be determined. The first photoshoot took place on Oct. 10 at the MBM Fun Center Arcade at Ocean Beach Park. The overall goal was to create some outfits that pop and scream color. In addition to the photoshoot, there will be some interesting articles highlighting the personalized interior design of a chosen Conn student’s dorm room, outfits handcrafted by students in the Corsets and Crinolines class, a sponsorship with Beads of Wisdom Co. created by Amelia Kirby ’23, and more. Additionally, the Board has decided to create two original sections that will be featured in every publication: the first one will focus on different New London businesses that have gone unnoticed in order to support our greater community. The second section will feature an article discussing the controversies of the fashion industry.

The magazine might be under scrutiny, but both Co-Editors-in-Chief want students to know that anyone and everyone is welcome to join. In fact, they are actively looking for models. Gray Area’s top priority moving forward is to create a safe space for inclusion as well as to maintain and boost participation in the organization by having as many members as possible. All of the Conn community is welcome on the magazine’s journey towards improvement and see for themselves that real change is approaching. •
A List of Essential Halloween Films for the Holiday

When it comes to Halloween-themed films that aren't specifically horror movies, the chances of finding good movies are pretty limited. While I thought that Chris Pratt being cast as the voice of Mario in a new untitled Mario film would be the scariest thing this season, there are surprisingly spookier cinematic alternatives. All of the films on this list take place on or around Halloween. This means that there will be quite a few films that didn't make this list due to not having any relevance to the holiday itself (sorry Ghostbusters, The Haunted Mansion, Beetlejuice, etc.). In terms of the ranking of these films, I will be highlighting if they are “essential” or “not essential.” These are only opinions, and the choice is ultimately yours when it comes to creating an awesome Halloween movie lineup!

Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark, 2019 (not essential) - Personally, I was excited for this film when it came out, as I read all of the stories as a kid. They were some of my favorite books and one of the first introductions I had to the horror genre, aside from Goosebumps. When I first went to see it in theaters, my strongest opinion was on the monsters themselves. They definitely looked very similar to the illustrations that Steven Gammel had created for the collections, and for that I appreciated the visual aspects of the film. However, I felt that the characters lacked depth and the film really had to lean on its use of the monsters to keep the storyline going. Overall, I'd say this isn't an essential one, but maybe check it out if you liked the original books.

The Nightmare Before Christmas, 1993 (essential) - I may be biased because this is one of my favorite films, and I know that there is so much controversy on whether or not this is a Halloween or Christmas movie. Simple: It’s both. That probably won't satisfy anyone, but with an opening number that keeps chanting, “This is Halloween,” over and over again, how could I not include it on a list like this? I definitely would consider this an essential Halloween-themed film, if not just for the achievements in animation, and the incredibly catchy songs and score.

Hubie Halloween, 2020 (not essential) - It has Adam Sandler in it and it is not Uncut Gems (sorry Adam, you seem cool). I had watched Scary Movie before watching this film, so clearly the bar was high. Ironically, there's a ton of Ghost Face masks in this film. Personally I was not a fan of this film’s “sense of humor,” considering it was mainly gross-out and bathroom-related jokes, so I don’t really recommend this film for a Halloween line-up. There is a kind dedication at the end of this film to Cameron Boyce, who was originally going to be in the film but had passed away before filming.

Trick r’ Treat, 2007 (essential, especially if you’re a horror fan) - I just watched this film after being recommended to watch it. It is definitely a spooky film that emphasizes the spirit of Halloween in a variety of ways, as well as being a collection of several storylines in one plot. The movie also tends to have a couple surprises and subverting of expectations too, which I found to be pretty fun! If you’re a horror fan who’s looking for another film to add to your watchlist, this is a definite. If you’re not a horror fan, well, consider getting scared for the price of having another Halloween-themed movie in your marathon.

Halloween, 1978 (essential) - Once again another horror film, but just re-read the title. The majority of these films have “Halloween” in the title, but when is this film’s theme song not played in Halloween stores? Even though this franchise has been essentially worn out at this point with countless sequels (much like many other horror series), the 1978 original movie is still a necessary watch for the month of October. While of course this film does have valid criticisms in the present day, Halloween is a film that reminds you of the fun holiday tradition: staying awake thinking that some guy in a white mask and blue coveralls is watching you.

Halloweentown, 1998 (not essential) - Alright, probably my most controversial ranking. I have betrayed everyone by saying this is not an essential film to watch for Halloween. I wasn’t always evil, I believe there is an old video of me as a child getting really excited about receiving the Halloweentown DVD as a gift. However, that is the past, and we are in the present. I remember there being two movies, not a Halloweentown cinematic universe. Why are there four of these movies? In all seriousness, I put it as a non-essential film for two reasons: 1) I needed more “not essential” Halloween-themed movies for this list, and 2) when I think of Halloween and the movies that will be playing on TV counting down the days until the holiday, Halloweentown just isn't one of the first films that comes to my mind. What comes to mind are the ones like The Addams Family, IT, A Nightmare on Elm Street, all coming as thoughts before Halloweentown. I may just need to rewatch the film this year, but I do not think this is an essential film to watch during Halloween.

Hocus Pocus, 1993 (essential) - An obvious one right here. This is the family-friendly, nostalgic Halloween-themed film that mostly everyone seems to love. While of course the effects are a little bit dated, this film is definitely fun, a little emotional but more fun. I believe there is a sequel in the works and while I’m not going to open that door right now I will just say that as a film that revolves around Halloween itself, this is one of the best choices for a Halloween movie marathon. Also the witches had incredibly stylish costumes. I’m just putting that out there. Also there was a talking cat. Talking cats make everything better, except for Cats- that movie should have never existed. To conclude though, Hocus Pocus is a movie where I can still feel the magic and spirit of Halloween from, and with confidence I say that this film is a necessity.

Finding Halloween films was more difficult than I would have thought before taking this assignment. As with everything, there were some good and some not so good, but overall it was a fun experience exploring the spirit of Halloween through a variety of films. I hope that you all find the perfect selection for a Halloween movie marathon, and I wish you all an early Happy Halloween!