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THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1977

An Update on the Palmer Renovation

JACEE COX
NEWS EDITOR

A planned renovation to Palmer Auditorium and Castle Court remains in its preliminary stages while the anticipated completion date has been pushed from 2020 to Fall 2021. According to Vice President of Finance and Administration Richard Madonna, “no final decisions have been made” regarding facility and construction details of the expected 18 month project. He says to get to that point, the College will conduct a full programming study to gain an understanding of how a renovation could best accommodate faculty, staff, and students.

The College first announced renovation plans in Spring 2018 after receiving two separate \$10 million gifts towards the improvement of the Palmer and Castle Court spaces. At the time, the College released renderings of what it envisioned the space to look like, but Madonna says these were conceptual, not final.

Palmer will likely remain open until January 2020 when heavy construction is expected to begin. At that point, Madonna says the College will need to utilize a “swing space” for activities that Palmer normally hosts. Madonna says it is unlikely that parts of Palmer would remain open during the construction phase.

It is unclear exactly what Palmer will house in its new and improved state in 2021. The specifications of this are “still up in the air,” according to Madonna. The building is advertised to house the dance, theater, and music departments after the renovation. Currently, these departments are spread across multiple locations on campus. Madonna notes that dance, for instance, “has some great space in Cro with sprung floors” right now. This is something the College is thinking about as it also ponders a Cro renovation-- how will these newly renovated buildings fit together? How will spaces be distributed efficiently and equitably to departments and student needs? This is largely

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Finalist in Prestigious Fellowship: Brandy Darling

JOSZETTE MOSES
OPINIONS EDITOR



Image courtesy of Brandy Darling/Connecticut College

If you had asked a 13-year-old Brandy Darling '19 what she would like to be when she grew up, she would have named a series of ambitious career choices, such as pastor or professional ice skater. By the end of the first semester of her final year at Conn, she has set herself on a detailed and stringent pathway toward a career in diplomacy-- specifically as US Ambassador to China. As a finalist for the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship this year, Darling will benefit from

education and networking opportunities that will put her career on firm footing once she graduates this spring.

In mid-June of 2018, Darling applied to the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship. Named after Thomas R. Pickering, a former U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation, India, Israel, Nigeria, El Salvador, Jordan and former U.S. Ambassador and representative to the United Nations, the fellowship nurtures individuals interested in careers serving U.S. interests abroad. The fellowship is managed through Howard University and seeks to mentor underrepresented members of various ethnicities, genders, and social and geographic backgrounds for positions within Foreign Services. At the completion of foreign service entry requirements and a two-year master's degree program at a partnering member school, which include the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy at the University of Virginia, participating individuals have the opportunity to work as a Foreign Ser-

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OPINIONS

Price Day mulls over the Honor Code's Failure to Act policy on page 12.

ARTS

Drew Chapman reviews Ox, the debut album from rap prodigy Matt Ox on page 15.

From the Editor

On November 30, George H.W. Bush passed away after suffering from poor health for years. His death has prompted a flood of laudatory obituaries from news outlets across the political spectrum. *The New York Times*, in the first of its many obituaries, portrayed Mr. Bush as “steady and prudent and able.” The National Review, likewise, published a list of his greatest accomplishments.

Deceased world leaders and high-profile public figures typically leave behind complicated legacies. Media coverage of the deceased President Bush--however--has skewed sharply toward the complimentary while overlooking essential flaws in his legacy. Uncritical coverage of any topic, even an obituary, ultimately does a disservice to the public. The news helps shape history. Among Americans born after the 90s, recent press coverage sways their opinion of Bush's one term presidency. Newspapers further serve as historical archives, and one-sided tributes to the Bush presidency only distort political realities of the period for future generations. Americans and the rest of the world need critical but respectful coverage of our leaders to give truth to power.

President Bush, while deserving credit for easing our transition to a post-Cold War world, committed a number of domestic missteps that the media have chosen largely to ignore in their obituaries. *The New York Times* failed to highlight President Bush's decidedly mixed record on civil rights. The racial stereotyping that President Bush brought to the forefront of political conversations through his Willie Horton ad has found its more recent incarnation in the divisive campaign rhetoric and post-election tweet storms of President Trump. And one should not overlook Bush's opposition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, President Johnson's hard-fought and historic legislation, expressed during his campaign for a U.S. Senate seat.

Further troubling, *The Times* failed to disclose President Bush's stance on the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Bush served as President during a period that witnessed the death of more than seventy thousand people due to HIV/AIDS-related complications. Despite the high death toll, he did not publically address the crisis until a year after taking office and essentially blamed the victims by urging a “change in behavior” by people at risk to avoid contracting the disease. Visibility is the starting point of politics, and for that reason aids activists have consistently demanded that the war on the disease be open and not hidden from the public. In separating Mr. Bush's legacy from his statements on AIDS, *The Times* continues to deprive victims of recognition and awareness of their continuing struggle.

President Bush has a respectable public record, and legitimate reportage of his failures does not detract from his hefty accomplishments—which include securing the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 and committing the United States to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992. His strong personal attributes and fundamental decency have been recognized by public officials, close friends, and even comedians like Dana Carvey, who satirized him on *SNL* for years. But for respected news outlets to serve as reliable sources of informed and objective truth, they must not allow the public's hunger for heroes to diminish their obligation to provide comprehensive and balanced reporting.

We are guided by these standards as we produce each issue of the *Voice*. While we are not always perfect, we strive to provide a platform for all voices to be heard through truthful, fair and balanced coverage. In keeping with this spirit, we are proud to present our first “Room for Debate” offering, which features the views of Connecticut College Republicans and Democrats. In this issue, members of each club provide their perspectives on the recently passed tax cut legislation promoted and signed into law by President Trump. We hope these columns will help spur meaningful conversations among the diverse members of the Conn community.

As we wrap up this final issue of the semester, we would like to thank our readers, writers and staff. We look forward to producing another six issues during the upcoming semester featuring topics relevant to you. Please reach out to us about anything you would like to see--we will be here working through our late night copy editing and InDesign formatting sessions to compose the best paper possible.

-Dana

THE COLLEGE VOICE

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Community Bulletin

DeVos Wants to Change How Colleges Handle Sexual Harassment Allegations, and Many in Connecticut are Concerned

Across the state, coordinators, victim advocates and students are trying to understand the proposed Title IX changes that the U.S. Department of Education released last month. Some in favor of the changes are supportive because they would strengthen due-process rights for the accused; others have expressed concern that cross-examination would give an unfair advantage to a wealthy student able to hire an attorney. The Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence strongly opposes the proposal.

Grant to Help Opioid Action Team Expand Services to Norwich

Armed with a new \$262,500 federal grant, the Opioid Action Team of Southeastern Connecticut is expanding its recovery navigator program to Norwich. “The navigator program is rooted in harm reduction,” said Jennifer Muggeo, supervisor of administration, finance and special projects for Ledge Light Health District, which oversees the federal grant. Muggeo says the grant money will go largely toward marketing the recovery navigator phone line.

Nearly 60 detained in New England immigration raids

Dozens of people suspected of living in the country illegally were apprehended in a series of sweeps in New England last week, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said Friday. Agents arrested 58 people in raids in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Connecticut, officials said. The arrests happened over five days and ended Dec. 4.

Sports Spotlight

BY PRICE DAY

Men’s Results

Ice Hockey loses 2-5 to Hamilton, 0-8 to Colby

Basketball wins 78-68 vs. Roger Williams, lose to Coast Guard 72-101

Squash wins vs. Wesleyan 7-2, Bard 9-0, lose to Colby 0-9

Women’s Results

Ice Hockey wins vs. Manhattanville 3-0, lose to Norwich 0-2

Basketball wins vs. Roger Williams 65-53, lose to Trinity 66-77

Squash wins vs. Bard 9-0, lose vs. Wesleyan 3-6

Upcoming Events

December 10th, Women’s Basketball vs. Nichols
December 29th Men’s Basketball vs. Wells
Dec. 30th, Men’s Basketball vs. Luther, Women’s Basketball @ Army
West Point, Men’s Ice Hockey vs. Nichols
January 4th Men’s Ice Hockey @ Plattsburgh

Staff Recs

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

Dana Gallagher:

“America’s Red-Blue Split isn’t About Ideology or Culture. It’s Economics,” *The Washington Post*. Red and blue America are separated by sharp differences in how their economies have developed over the past half-century. These geographically separate economies have produced very different ways of living — and, crucially, very different personal identities. The changing dynamics of the older industrial economy and the newer ideas economy explain how the current U.S. electoral map came to be.

“What the Ebbs and Flows of the KKK Can Tell Us About White Supremacy Today,” *NPR*. With the rise of racist mass violence in recent years, it’s helpful to consider past waves of white supremacist activity in the United States and the conditions that caused those surges.

Saadya Chevan:

“George Bush and the Obituary Wars,” *The New York Times*. Frank Bruni analyzes criticism of a Tweet from TV writer Bryan Behar expressing admiration for the late President Bush as an example of why we need greater complexity and nuance in speaking our political preferences today.

Max Amar-Olkus:

“French Protests: Footage of Students ‘Humiliated’ by Police,” *BBC*. In recent weeks, France has experienced waves of protests on scales unseen since the late 1960s in response to President Emmanuel Macron’s controversial proposal to increase taxes on fuel. Thousands of riot police have been deployed around the country to keep the peace and prevent the “yellow vest” protesters from causing more property damage. While those protesting fuel price increases have dominated the media coverage, students across France have also been protesting against plans to reform the University entrance exam, which they say will stifle opportunity and breed increased inequalities. In a demonstration at a school outside of Paris, non-violent student protesters were forced by riot police to kneel with their hands behind their heads, a move many have called “humiliating” and “unacceptable.”

Jacee Cox:

“The Strongest Evidence Yet for a Highly Controversial Addiction Treatment,” *The Atlantic*. As addiction crises ravage communities around the country and overdose deaths climb, the need for effective treatment and prevention is more urgent than ever. A particularly controversial treatment method, “heroin-assisted treatment,” has been the subject of conversation in the field. This method allows for patients to continue to inject a medical-grade version of the drug under supervision. There is ongoing debate as to whether this provides an efficient and morally acceptable form of treatment for those suffering from severe addiction.

An Update on the Palmer Renovation

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

where the input of faculty, staff, and students is valuable for the College. By spring break, Madonna hopes to have a clearer picture of how the new Palmer will be utilized. This also includes how the renovations may impact the use of space in Cummings.

Overseeing the Palmer renovation is a “core project team,” as worded by Madonna. This team consists of Madonna himself, Trina Learned, the Associate Vice President of Facilities Management and Campus Learning, David Jaffe, professor of Theater, Jeffrey Cole, Dean of Faculty, as well as President Bergeron. Additionally, Rob Richter and the team who operates the Palmer space will have heavy involvement in the project, along with other faculty, staff, and students. The Core Project Team communicates and works with the architecture firm in charge of the renovation, Ennead, as well as members of the campus community. Madonna reports that the team will dedicate around two hours worth of their work time in bi-weekly meetings to discuss the project. As the project advances, these meetings will likely become weekly-- a transition that was similarly made with the creation of the Walter Commons last academic year.

Choosing Ennead as the firm to handle this project was a long process, but Madonna believes the College has found “that synergy” through working with Ennead thus far. The College published a request for proposal (RFP), to which various firms responded. The project’s Core Team conducted interviews and eventually chose Ennead as the firm to tackle the project. Madonna noted that the Core Project Team heavily took into consideration both the resume of the firm as well as how the firm was going to relate to the campus and contribute to the environment. The firm is responsible for many other structures on college campuses, including academic buildings at Vassar College, Stanford University, University of Oregon, and Yale University. Ennead is responsible for Carnegie Hall as well.

The College is also working with Colliers, an international real estate services and investment management company, whose employees are serving as the project managers and will handle logistics of the Palmer project. In regards to finances, there is almost always a “wish list,” according to Madonna, that goes into these types of projects. There are features and changes faculty, staff and students often wish to see, but applying these is not always attainable or necessarily beneficial to the renovation of a space. These processes require comprise in the planning stages. This being said, Madonna is “confident that we will live within that \$20 million budget and have a terrific project at the end.” This reportedly remains an important priority for the College. It is difficult to say now as to what these comprises might be because the project is still in preliminary planning and design stages.

The Sherman Fairchild Foundation provided a \$10 million grant to the College, and a gift of \$10 million was received from Nancy Marshall Athey ‘72 and Preston Athey. Neither donors have a say in the specifications for how this money is used. However, the \$20 million is restricted money in that it cannot be used for something else at the College.

In addition to the use of the Palmer space, there are hopes to reconstruct Palmer with long-term energy efficiency and sustainability in mind. The College is looking into how to implement sustainable heating and cooling solutions, potentially using geothermal wells, including expand-

ing the geothermal wells that currently exist outside of New London hall. Says Madonna, “we are really concerned about the environmental impact and future energy use of the space.” In talks about energy projects regarding the new center for the arts, the Office of Sustainability is at the table and an active participant in discussion.

The progress on the Palmer renovation is happening as the College continues to work on other long-term projects highlighted in the master plan, including Cro, Bill Hall, Athletics facilities, and residence halls and dining spaces. These additional projects will all be ones the school fundraises for. Madonna expects each of these projects to cost an estimated \$10-\$25 million. The College is also planning to announce plans for a new career center located on the main campus this Wednesday.

Madonna is excited for the Palmer renovations to continue to progress towards the final product because Palmer “brings students together,” and he wants to “see that space activated more regularly.”•



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¹ Program offered on campus, online and hybrid ² Program offered online only
³ Program offered on campus or online

SAC, Students Frustrated With Low Attendance at Events

JOZETTE MOSES
OPINIONS EDITOR

At the beginning of the semester, Conn's Student Activity Council (SAC) promoted a live performance of Dreezy. The Chicago-born rapper has worked with mainstream artists such as 6LACK, T-Pain, and Jeremih and boasts over one million followers on Spotify with an additional 64 million listeners on her hit song, "Body." Dreezy seemed to have the type of clout Conn students have critiqued previous performers for lacking. She was well-known in the mainstream music world, was popular among relevant celebrities, and produced an R&B sound that booms in residence halls on a Saturday night; yet on the night of her performance in the 1962 room, two weeks into school at the height of student excitement about the recent arrival on Conn's campus, there were officially less than 20 students in the 1962 space. "It was so sad. We didn't value her," says Fiona Noonan '21 who did attend the concert but left after five minutes of being one of five people in the cavernous room. While the lack of attendance left students discouraged, this is far from a new occurrence at Conn.

At times, the misconception behind why Conn students don't attend events is because we don't hear about them. A concert, activity, or event could be advertised weeks in advance, but there is always someone who learns about the event the day of. Poor communication between SAC and the student body seems to be a good excuse, given that information is consistently being chucked at students in the form of emails, posters, Instagram posts, and Facebook events. Through advertisements, SAC constantly attempts to acquire the attention of Conn students.

However, a recent survey I conducted at Shain among Conn students disproves this theory. 20 students were asked whether they had heard about the Dreezy concert and if they attended. Four out of 20 did not hear about the concert, so they did not attend. Four out of 20 heard about the concert and did attend, but 12 out of 20 heard about the concert and still did not attend. While there are various personal reasons behind absences and communication about events can always be better, the results from the survey moved the conversation away from inconsistencies in communication and into the structural enablers cultivating a lack of attendance.

Being a small liberal arts college sometimes means there are less options, less spaces, and no Greek life, which is the backbone for good parties at larger universities. However, we have formed our own variations of a lit get-together in the the Ridges and Winchesters. These options have a particular appeal. The Ridges and Winchesters are isolated spaces, separate from academic environments on campus. Headed by various friend groups and sports teams, getting into a house produces a level of exclusivity a Greek house might and diminishes the supervision that occupies dances in the 1962 Room. "They (Administration) pretend we're not

college kids, who don't do the things we do," says Noonan.

Jeanette Williams, Director of Student Engagement, attributes attraction to the Ridges and Winchesters to the allure of risk it poses. The potential that a Ridge party could be dismantled or that a friend group could be turned away begged questioning by Williams: "Why risk attending a party where you could potentially be turned away when there are parties on campus where you would be welcomed?"

Noonan agrees that risk does attract students to the Ridges and Winchesters. She also recognizes that, while perhaps counterintuitive, the preconception that no one will attend a SAC event discourages students from attending and has become a given in Conn culture. The Ridges and Winchesters continue to be more relevant than Cro dances because each weekend we have decided people will be there because we will be there.

Events at Houses on the other side of Route 32 are also advertised unlike orchestrated events; instead of an accumulation of posters and dinging notifications, students utilize a tried and true method: word of mouth. Word of mouth gives the impression that everyone's talking about the Ridge on Saturday. While that might not be true, communication within friend groups about an upcoming event might just be the fix for the poor communication we've assumed we're missing. Word of mouth also produces an inflated hype that no poster can match. Word of mouth circulates traditional events at Conn such as Fall Ball (Tent Dance), Festivus, and Floralia which needn't be plastered along the walls of Cro because students are aware these are happening. There is a natural hype that resonates behind these events through years of verbal advertising.

SGA President Jamila Ezbidi '19 reflected on her personal experience of Conn culture while working on the SGA administered Stay-at-Conn weekend initiative. During her freshman year, she recalled that she attended Cro dances every other weekend and was often met with a full house. "It was a place where you could meet people," she remarks. As years have advanced, however, she has noticed decreasing attendance at SAC events. The Stay-at-Conn weekend, which occurred during the second week of November, was proposed to revitalize attendance at events by encouraging students to stay on campus and participate in the functioning events. While the Thursday event, Decorating Succulents, received an overwhelming turnout, the Wednesday event, Taste of Conn, and Friday night Wicked Peach concert was less attended.

Chair of Student Activities Council Alicia Muir '19, who advised Ezbidi during SGA's work on the weekend initiative, recognized a similar decline as Ezbidi during her years at Conn. She joined SAC her freshman year in hopes of positively affecting experiences at Conn and has continued to do so through her current position as SAC chair. Like many Conn students, she is duped by the lack of attendance commenting, "I don't understand why

people don't stay." She does, nonetheless, recognize multiple inhibitors to full attendance at events.

Amidst current conversations of renovations in Cro, Muir credits poor locations as a discouragement to attend activities. "Even physical spaces on campus affect the social life... you could have a wedding reception (in Cro) one night and a college party other night." The failure to create discrepancies between spaces alters the predetermined assumptions of what those spaces are. As certain spaces have multiple uses, we have refused to associate the 1962 room as solely a DJ space because it acts as a fitness room, presentation environment, and a space to host elegant dinners. Muir advocates for new spaces, but at times presenting new locations can be fraught with logistical issues including permits for noise and size and equipment compatibility.

When advertising, SAC carries out several steps in hopes that students will be aware of an upcoming event. Initially, the event is posted to Connquest and thereafter follows a series of social media postings and posters. However during an interview, Muir pointed out a potential area in which posters, a current advertising tool, could replace. The entrance wall of Cro displaying upcoming events and information is overwhelming, and instead she has proposed the installation of a large digital screen displaying events. While one may have to wait for a full rotation before seeing a missed event, the screen would eliminate the mass confusion of posters and become increasingly sustainable. As our attention can never be simultaneously focused on multiple posters, the hope would be that a full focus on one poster would mean a guaranteed attendance by that individual.

Going forward, there are several goals pertaining to the structure of SAC that Muir hopes to change. Muir, who currently fulfills three positions in addition to her own which include positions in finance, film and co-sponsorship, wants to motivate more students to apply for open positions on the council. "We're being overworked, we need more people," she says. The addition of committees focusing on school spirit and multiculturalism has left little room for position flexibility. More students applying for these positions will disperse workloads equally, while also introducing more diverse voices into SAC discussions. She acknowledges that divisions between the council resonate "in the sense that there is a specific group of people who plan specific things." New or rotating voices will help bring new ideas to conversations. She also encourages students-at-large to attend meetings on Sundays at 3 in the Ernst Room.

However, lack of attendance remains largely an issue that can be fixed with a swift solidarity among students. Williams remarks that "students need to be proactive, we can't force feed you," and says that students should, "trust the students planning the events— they know how you feel." As with anything there is only so much they can do, without the help of Conn students, we might have to meet them halfway. •

In Confusing Election, Student Body Approves Constitution and Sustainability Measures

ALEX KLAUVENS
NEWS EDITOR

Two referendums held in November regarding SGA's constitution and Sustainable Projects Fund have passed successfully, according to SGA communications chief Nadia Bednarczuk '19. The constitutional amendments included updates about elected position definitions and stipulated that certain SGA rule-creation power should be controlled by their bylaws, rather than the constitution. The SPF renewal continues a sustainability fund voted on by the student body every three years that draws \$25 from every student's tuition.

While both ballot questions passed by an overwhelming majority of those who voted, just over 20% of the student body actually participated in the election. That barely met the participation threshold of 20% applied by SGA to this election, which was extended at one point because less than 20% of the student body had cast ballots.

The SGA constitution itself requires a constitutional amendment referendum to be "well publicized in advance by the Chief of Communications." But SGA did not send any official all-campus communications about the referendums in advance of the election going live. SGA Parliamentarian Morgan Fowle '19 noted that SGA house senators, who represent dorms and independent living communities on campus, mentioned these elections in emails prior to ballot distribution. Fowle also said SGA had multiple tabling sessions where people could ask questions about the measures.

The election had actually been live for at least two days before SGA even sent its first official communication of the election -- which was a link to the digital ballot itself. The email contained information about the SPF election, but did not refer to specifics on the constitutional amendment question. When voters arrived at the constitutional amendment question on the ballot, specific changes were not outlined. Rather, the ballot displayed the entire text of SGA's revised constitution.

Fowle said that the biggest goal was making the constitution consistent with existing bylaws. Amended sections included those focusing on executive board positions and the constitution's relationship to SGA's bylaw document.

One amendment altered the list of executive board positions to reflect a resolution passed by the assembly in Spring 2018 that removed the position of Student Activities Council chair from SGA's executive board. The document also now defers succession processes for positions like SGA President to the assembly's bylaws. Changes to bylaws require a vote in the assembly, while constitutional amendments require campus-wide referendums.

Fowle, who is responsible for facilitating SGA meetings and helping to maintain SGA documents like the constitution or bylaws, says the executive board is planning to introduce updated bylaws early next semester. That means that procedures such as the succession of a SGA President following resignation or impeachment would be decided upon by the assembly itself through an approval of new bylaws.

While the constitutional ballot question did reflect these changes, the ballot did not make clear what was a change and what had been there before.

That question caused more confusion among some students because the constitutional amendment question allowed students to vote both for and against the measure. "Yes" and "No" response options were displayed with "checkboxes," a digital form question type that allows multiple answers.

Image courtesy of Alex Klavens

Bednarczuk says four students' votes were deemed invalid because they responded with both answers. SGA's constitution and bylaws do not cover ballot design errors, but they do reference the possibility of an invalid election. Fowle said that the four students' votes being disqualified didn't change the result, but that the checkbox mistake might warrant more serious consideration if it "had come to impact the election in any way."

The SPF ballot question did not have the same issue. It had "radio" buttons, a digital form question type that allows a respondent to provide only one answer. There is no constitutional requirement to publicize the SPF referendum in advance, but house senator emails indicate a higher level of detail regarding this measure. The ballot distribution email from SGA also provided specific notes on the SPF and what changes were made from the SPF last approved in 2015.

SGA sustainability chair Maggie Newell '19 says the two questions were unrelated, but were packaged together for convenience. The renewed SPF will now support a roll-over fund, and also provides more oversight over recurring SPF-funded projects.

The SPF renewal ensures a critical source of SGA-funded projects remains active. In recent years, the SGA has passed SPF-related resolutions to fund waste disposal, food service, Floralia preparation, conference attendance, and more. Newell says upcoming SPF-related efforts will focus on composting, recycling signage and more. •

Finalist in Prestigious Fellowship: Brandy Darling

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

vices Officer in either a domestic capacity in Washington, DC or an international capacity in a U.S. embassy or consulate. In addition, the fellowship grants financial coverage for the two-year master's degree program and \$16,000 stipend each academic year.

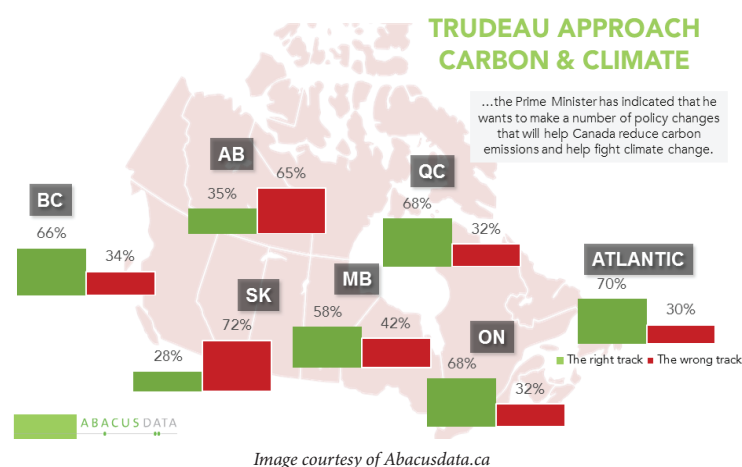
While the responsibilities of Pickering fellows are demanding, Darling's impressive background compliments Pickering expectations well, and she remarks that her entire college career has been centered around becoming a Pickering fellow. Darling majors in economics and East Asian studies with a concentration on China and a minor in applied statistics. Additionally, she is a CISLA scholar. During her CISLA internship, she studied abroad in China while interning at the African Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai, but her experience abroad is not limited to this single stay. Darling has made global learning an indispensable aspect of her learning experience, having participated in two other learning programs in China: APSA (Americans Promoting Study Abroad) during her junior year of high school and CLS (Critical Language Scholarship Program) during the summer before her sophomore year at Conn. It was during her first experiences abroad that she learned about the Pickering Fellowship. While participating in APSA, Darling was introduced to a Foreign Services Officer who ingrained the potential of becoming a Pickering fellow in her future. The second time she encountered a Foreign Services Officer, the acting diplomat in residence was less uplifting saying, "Don't worry. They only accept 10%" when she told him of her interest in the Pickering Fellowship. She remarked that the advice was discouraging, but says, "When people doubt me, I have to do it."

This mindset would prove extremely valuable during her application which she recalls as "nerve racking." The 600 word personal statement was daunting as she was forced to confine her experiences to a word count, but the assistance and guidance she received from current Foreign Services Officers and Connecticut College Deans was invaluable to the application's success. Additionally, throughout the process, her motivation derived from the representation of black individuals within previous programs and currently within Pickering. "I was very lucky black people were leaders of all the programs I did," she says. The fellowship's connection with Howard University is a reflection of attempts to diversify the State Department. Within the State Department, 5.4% of Foreign Services Specialists are African-American, 6.7% are Asian, and 5% are Hispanic. This demand for representation which reflects U.S. demographics has influenced Darling's specific aspirations to change the international definition of what it means to be an African-American, specifically focusing on the perception of African-American women. She acknowledges the task is ambitious but states, "I can't do it by myself of course, but being in a high position, especially being an ambassador, that's a good start."

As a current finalist for the Pickering Fellowship, Darling has advanced to the security clearance process which will be administered throughout the upcoming months. The security clearance process will determine the suitability of finalists and is done through three separate reviews. While this particular aspect of the application has instilled slight anxiety, Darling has reflected on the admirable future ahead of her. She listed Princeton, Georgetown, UC Berkeley, Columbia, and UT Austin as potential options for graduate school in her pursuit of a Masters in data services and recognized South Korea, India, Italy, and the Dominican Republic as countries she would like to be stationed. During her time in graduate school, she plans to learn French in hopes of diversifying the multicultural experiences she is able to understand and in anticipation of research opportunities in West Africa. While she is hesitant about returning to China soon, becoming the Ambassador to China continues to be her dream job. Darling provided two points of advice to individuals interested in pursuing similar pathways. "Number one: Stay out of trouble [in light of government security reviews]. Number two: Learn a language to understand people." •

Canadians Remain Divided Over Carbon Tax

LEELAH KLAUBER
LAYOUT COORDINATOR



In 2008, British Columbia created North America's first carbon tax applying to the purchase and use of fossil fuels. The economy reacted well to this and the real GDP grew more than 17%, while net emissions declined by 4.7%. More recently in 2016, Justin Trudeau, the 23rd and current Prime Minister of Canada, signed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Trudeau was welcomed into office in 2015 with all the Canadian citizens knowing his desire to fight climate change. However, as of April 1, 2018, there are changes to the original carbon tax plan and Trudeau is facing backlash on all sides of the climate change argument.

The implementation of the carbon tax has not made more significant changes in Canada's emission profile and people who are anti-carbon tax say that all it truly does is "pinch household budgets and enrich governments." Many workers in the oil industry see Trudeau's plan as a "cash grab" that allows the government to gain more money while the people lose it. Buy a number of Canadians remain very wary of climate change and believe that the carbon tax has played an essential role in lowering emissions.

At his talk at Humber College, Trudeau stated, "Starting next year, it will no longer be free to pollute anywhere in Canada." Going even further, he declared that putting a price on pollution provides an incentive not only for individuals, but also for businesses to be proactive in finding ways to reduce their emissions. There are rebates in place to make certain that families do not struggle financially from a tax that's intended simply to help the environment. Whether or not Trudeau remains in power come the next election cycle is certainly a way Canadian citizens will be able to see what the majority opinion is on this tax. •

Room for Debate

Note from the Editors: It's been approximately one year since the passing of the Republican-backed tax plan championed by Mitch McConnell and Donald Trump. As with most pieces of legislation—especially those that affect Americans financially—opinion is divided on whether the new tax plan helps or hurts families across the country. Seeking to foster more bi-partisan dialogue on campus, the Voice has partnered with Connecticut College Democrats (CCDems) and Connecticut College Republicans and Conservatives Club (CCRCC) to help educate readers on the stances held by both sides of the political spectrum. The pieces below reflect the unofficial positions of both clubs. Finn Boed '21 penned the response for CCDems. The CCRCC respondent has requested anonymity.

CCRCC

When the government taxes, it is taking money from individuals to spend on government programs that are not as efficient as the free market. Corporations are composed of individuals that have allowed for a large increase in the level of wealth, comfort, material goods, and necessities available to all Americans. Trump's tax bill has reduced the tax corporations are required to give to the government. This decision was made in part because of the corporate tax rate abroad, relative to ours. Corporations have relocated headquarters or taken on debt to avoid paying high corporate taxes. When the rate is lowered, there is less of an incentive to undertake cost reduction measures. Fewer taxes levied on companies will allow them to undertake more capital expenditure. Furthermore, it is inefficient for companies to buyback stock when the stock is not cheap because they will be spending less on more efficient expenditures. This means their fundamentals will be weaker and lead to lower stock growth. CEOs do not benefit from a temporary, rapid increase in share price when they are still captaining the ship in a worse long-run position.

Larger executive salaries are often critiqued. In our current tax structure, the more one earns, the greater the percent of income one is taxed. This disproportionate taxation system benefits the poor. Trump has not undone our fundamental tax structure but has reduced the rate uniformly for all Americans. Therefore, it is an even percentage tax cut, not solely a tax break for the poor when their rate changes from 15 percent to 12 percent. It is also not solely a tax break for the rich when their rates change from 39.6 percent to 37 percent. To characterize this bill as a tax break for the rich is to misrepresent its complexities.

Additionally, those who are earning the top marginal rate are not static; they are dynamic. Evidence shows significant income mobility in the US – 73% of Americans were in the 'top 20%' for at least a year. Those who are earning the top marginal rate are not born into it. 54 percent of Americans will experience poverty or near poverty at least once between the ages of 25 and 60. Although 12 percent of the population will experience a year in which they find themselves in the top 1 percent of the income distribution, a mere 0.6 percent will do so in 10 consecutive years. We must provide an incentive to reward the highest skilled people who are providing products and services that lift the standard of living of all Americans.

Finally, as for "trickle down economics," conservatives do not believe in giving a tax break solely to the top tier because "they spend it better." When the wealthy or anyone 'gets money back,' that money will be spent or invested in the economy directly, leaving the rest to be saved in a bank that will loan it out to various income earners. It is fallacious to claim the wealthy spend approximately 30 percent on consumption of their income, and thus we should not consider investment and savings. In our finance system, savings and investment are beneficial. Ultimately, the tax cuts enable the free market to do the most good for the greatest number of people, rather than the less efficient alternative. •

CCDems

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 has been and continues to be harmful to the people of the United States and was passed under disgraceful conditions. Many legislators were given minimal time to read the lengthy bill and amendments to it were still being written on the night of the vote by lobbyists and legislators alike.

Luckily the deficit-hawks in Congress didn't seem to read the debt-heavy bill they voted to pass. Republicans have long cried for fiscal responsibility and balancing the budget, yet voted strictly on party lines in the Senate to pass a bill that bores a \$2.3 trillion hole in the budget over ten years, as announced by the Treasury Department. Where are those hawks' cries now?

Isn't it funny how our government works? Lobbyists hired by entities connected to the wealthiest Americans helped write this bill. It wasn't altruism. Their job was done in the interest of those who hired them. Considering that 62 percent of the tax benefits go to the top one percent of the country, it is no wonder they hired lobbyists to help its passage. An example of the unequal nature of the cuts is reflected in the reduced number of estates responsible for paying the Estate Tax, which is a burden that now impacts the wealthiest 0.2 percent.

By 2025, when all individual tax cuts are set to expire, a large number of Americans will see little change in their tax bill or perhaps a slight uptick even as corporate tax cuts remain. Clearly, the bill had a group it was designed to benefit. Corporate tax cuts gave breaks to companies that have largely done little good with it.

Jeffrey Bartash reported in *MarketWatch* that actual investment spending is "not nearly enough to show the tax cuts are achieving Republican goals." The drop in corporate tax revenue the government has received as a result of the slashed corporate tax rate will not be made up by spending in the economy by businesses.

Since the tax cuts became law, CEOs across America have been selling their shares at record rates following buyback announcements from their companies. Patrick Temple-West and Victoria Guida report in *Politico* that public companies "have announced more than \$600 billion in buybacks in the first half of this year [2018]." A growing stock market helps many Americans, yes. However, the lion's share of benefits from these buybacks fueled by corporate tax windfall go to the wealthiest Americans. As Ryan Vlastelica writes in *MarketWatch*, the wealthiest 10 percent of Americans "own nearly 90% of stocks." •

Ditch The Slip: Conn Takes Action to Become More Sustainable

PHILLIP KUHEL
CONTRIBUTOR

Connecticut College strives to be one of the leading colleges in the United States for promoting sustainability. The school defines sustainability as: “a framework by which long-lasting solutions to local and global challenges are developed through understanding the connections among social equity, environmental stewardship and economic wellbeing and including all three within all decision-making and strategic planning processes.” The school and its students have continued to prioritize environmental sustainability through recent initiatives across campus.

For one, plastic straws at all the coffee shops across campus have been switched with paper or metal straws. Anna Laprise '20 and Avatar Simpson '20, who were researching straws usage on campus, found that the College's three coffee shops used over 100,000 straws every year. A straw, which seems like a harmless, everyday item, is just another example of the overuse of plastic in today's world. Plastic straws contribute to large amounts of plastic pollution, and they almost always make their way in the oceans. Moreover, plastic cannot be recycled and takes millions of years, if ever, to biodegrade. It is estimated that the United States uses around 500 million straws a day, and with the staggering amount of plastic ending up in the oceans, it is projected that by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean. “It's become something consumers do mindlessly,” said Laprise, a government major. “Except in cases where straws are necessary for medical reasons, we don't really need them. It's very easy to just not take the straw.” Just this small change from plastic to paper straws has a massive impact on the health of the ocean which is already dealing with issues stemming from climate change. The College has also removed plastic water bottles that were distributed at Grab and Go. Grab and Go has also taken part in incorporating paper straws during its service on weekdays.

In attempts to minimize the issue of wasting paper, the College has swapped the paper slips at Oasis in Crozier-Williams with lam-



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

inated slips, making them reusable. Just on a Saturday night alone, the amount of slips used by people coming from the Ridges and Winches to Oasis are likely staggering. This new method, despite what some might view as being slightly more time-consuming, is a great move made by the College to work on reducing paper waste. Despite plastic often being viewed as being more environmentally harmful than paper, twice the amount of energy is needed to produce paper than to produce a plastic bag. The use of the paper slips that are really only used for a couple seconds by the cooking staff in retrospect really didn't make any sense. Simply reciting your order to the staff seems the most logical scenario, but if the amount of orders coming in becomes too hectic, the new reusable slips is for sure the best solution to the problem. I did notice, however, that there are times where the paper slips still exist next to the reusable slips. Paper slips circulate during busy nights as a means of fulfilling incoming orders. While the presence of paper slips does offset attempts to use laminated slips, the weekly use of reusable slips continues to be a positive change. If this next direction is to be successful, there needs to be a full removal of the paper slips from Oasis.

Ultimately, the College has made a few good strides towards increasing the school's sustainability and today more than ever, these initiatives must be made in order to ensure a healthier planet. Small actions like using a paper straw or taking a few more seconds to use a reusable slip to write your order have exponential impacts on a threatened world that desperately needs help from those living in it. •



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Toxic: The Word Of The Year

ELIZABETH BERRY
STAFF WRITER

I am going to bring you back in time to the early 2000s (audible cringe, I know) and remind you of Britney Spears' jarring music video for her song "Toxic" released in 2003. Personally, I had never seen the music video before now and sure was in for a dramatic narrative. "Toxic" tells the story of an unhealthy relationship. In the music video, Spears switches between being costumed as a flight attendant, female motorcyclist, and special agent as she delivers the lyrics. We could spend the rest of this article dissecting the crazy costumes, makeup, hair, special effects, edits, and music within this video, but instead I suggest focusing on the song's title: "Toxic."

Each year's Oxford Dictionary releases a word or expression that captures the mood of the year and has potential to maintain cultural significance. The word of 2018 is 'toxic.' First appearing in English in the mid 17th century from the Latin word 'toxicus,' toxic means 'poisonous.' 'Toxic's' deadly history of meanings in medieval Latin and Greek continues to its present connotations. Its' malleability to describe various topics including the environment, hypermasculinity, relationships, politics, and culture makes 'toxic' an ideal choice for 2018's word of the year. Other words which made the shortlist for 2018 included gaslighting, techlash, cakeism, and orbiting. If some of these words appear to be in another language, I can assure you that you are not alone as upon reading these I felt part of an older generation.

Spears' song incorporates several of toxic's meanings, while simultaneously commenting on current culturally relevant themes. Most obvious is the toxic love and relationship the singer finds herself in. The year 2018 has resulted in various toxic relationships within and outside of couples. Toxic relationships can also exist in the workplace, among parents, and even politicians. In Jamie Ducharme's article for *Time* magazine published on June 5, 2018 titled "How To Tell If You're In a Toxic Relationship - And What To Do About It," she describes a toxic relationship. She quotes Dr. Lillian Glass, a California-based communication and psychology expert, who defines a toxic relationship as "any relationship [between people who] don't support each other, where there's conflict and one seeks to undermine the other, where there's competition, where's disrespect and a lack of cohesiveness." Glass goes on to state that a toxic

relationship is consistently unpleasant so that the negatives of the relationship outweigh the positives. Additionally, toxic relationships are mentally, emotionally, and sometimes unfortunately physically damaging to both people in the relationship. The unfortunate new trend of seeing ourselves in toxic relationships with lovers, friends, and family members, has swept across our nation; people often tell their friends that they are in a 'toxic' relationship with someone and need to leave that person or, in the wake of a friend-break up, a people reflect on aspects of their friendship that were toxic. For Spears, she describes a toxic relationship with a partner who "should wear a warning" and whom she is addicted to. But, rather than leaving him, she declares at the end her song with the stanza: "Intoxicate me now / With your lovin' now / I think I'm ready now." These lines have sexual connotations and spread the message that rather than leaving a toxic relationship, one should head full force into it - unless Spears means 'toxic' as a compliment (which is a strange compliment, if you ask me).

Attributing a man to being 'toxic' gives him power and dominance, reflecting another popular phrase: "toxic masculinity," which refers to stereotypical male gender roles that restrict males from expressing certain or strong emotions. In recent political events, toxic masculinity is referred to within the context of #MeToo movement and the Brett Kavanaugh Senate judiciary committee hearing, not to mention the many other unfortunate political scandals placing toxic masculinity and sexual assault at the forefront of America's current culture. Fifteen years ago, toxic masculinity does not seem to have been on the forefront of Spears' mind, yet she perhaps unconsciously alludes to this modern theme in her lyrics. While the male figures mentioned in her song have control over her, she also is portrayed as having control over them in the music video: making the first move with a man in the airplane and poisoning a different man.

"Toxic" is also used to describe the environment in terms of toxic nuclear chemicals, toxic waste, and toxic air. While this is not a prominent theme in Spears' song, she is riding a motorcycle in the video, releasing fossil fuels and fumes into the environment. I know, this is a stretch, but just hear me out. The rise of global warming, natural disasters such as hurricanes, and toxic gases is another reason why 'toxic' was chosen as the 2018 word of the year. Contrary to what you may think, motorcycles and scooters are actually not more environmentally

friendly than cars. In the *Los Angeles Times* article "'MythBusters' ask: Are motorcycles greener than cars?" explains why this is a myth. The article quotes the Discovery Channel's show 'MythBusters' which states that "the logic is because motorcycles are generally more fuel-efficient than cars, they burn less gas and thus they must be better for the environment." However, after conducting an experiment it was found that while motorcycles are "more fuel-efficient than and [emit] less of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide...they emitted far more smog-forming hydrocarbons," making them just as bad as for the environment as cars or possibly worse. In her song, Spears sings "It's in the air and it's all around;" so perhaps her motorcycle was an allusion to the future of pollution and toxic air which society continues to experience in 2018. Just last week, *The New York Times* reported that scientists are describing the quickening rate of greenhouse gas emissions in the starkest terms, comparing it to a "speeding freight train."

As I have outlined, Spears' song foreshadows multiple meanings of the word 'toxic,' but there are some popular idioms which are not as obvious, such as a toxic work environment. A greater stretch than my motorcycle argument would be that Spears does foreshadow to this idiom, as well. The beginning and end of the music video shows Spears as a flight attendant in a plane (the workspace). When I typed in "toxic environment 2018" into Google, with the intention of finding a source on global warming for this article, the majority of articles which popped up were about a toxic office culture. Perhaps, I should have specified what kind of environment I meant. Regardless, I find this search result significant as it emphasizes how the workplace has become another environment that can be affected by toxicity. In fact, the Oxford Dictionary explains that 'toxic environment' is more frequently used to refer to harmful workplace environments. The article, "The 5 Warning Signs of a Toxic Work Environment," published by *Psychology Today*, describes characteristics of a toxic workplace. According to the article, a toxic workplace is one which has a punitive environment, contains bullies who belittle other colleagues, lacks support and encouragement, doesn't recognize good performance, and has a singular focus on money. Toxic workplaces have led to another trend of companies providing various amenities for their employees.

Britney asks us an important question all those years ago that some now have to face: "Don't you know that you're toxic?" •

Tell Us A Story

MAX WHISNANT
STAFF WRITER

November 8, 2016: America chose its next President. January 20, 2017: Donald Trump took the Oath of Office on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. November 6, 2018: America chose a new Congress. January 21, 2019: The most diverse group of first-term Democratic members of Congress will take the Oath of Office.

Out of the 110 newly elected members of Congress, 66 Democrats and 44 Republicans will join Congress. 42 new women will join Congress, raising the total number of women to nearly 100 in both houses of Congress. Of those same 42, 38 are Democrats and 4 are Republicans. The Democratic members-elect are diverse and more representative of our country's demographic. Republicans be represented by only one person of color: Representative-elect Anthony Gonzalez.

This new makeup of the Democratic party pushes the proportion of white men in the House of Representatives down from 41% to 38%.



All Images Courtesy of NPR/Getty Images

While hardly perfect, the Republican proportion will grow from 86% to 90% white men. Not all of this is fully within the control of the Republican party as they had a higher than usual rate of female members retiring this year. Many political pundits and commentators think that the "Blue Wave" took down some of the more moderate and diverse candidates running under the GOP platform such as women and other minority groups. Nevertheless, the Democrats have reaffirmed themselves as the party of diversity. Perhaps the most well-known of all incoming representatives is the new Democratic Socialist poster child: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. She will take the Oath of Office in January of next year as the youngest woman ever elected to the United States Congress. She defeated long-term incumbent Joseph Crowley, the soon-to-be former number four Democrat in the House, in their New York district's primary. She ran an unabashedly progressive campaign, aligning herself closely with the political ideologies of Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT). She's already established herself as a firebrand, something conservative outlets have gleefully pounced on. Eddie Scarry, a commentator for the *Washington Examiner*, stoked controversy when, in a now-deleted Tweet, he posted a picture of Ocasio-Cortez from behind wearing a jacket and commented that she "don't look like a girl who struggles." Scarry was criticized almost universally. Ocasio-Cortez's Twitter and Instagram accounts have almost 2 million combined followers, which gives her supporters incredible access to her campaign and to respond to tweets as asinine as Scarry's.

Sharice Davids, the Democratic member-elect for Kansas's third district, has the most colorful resume of any incoming member of this Congressional class. She is a Cornell-educated lawyer who had a brief Mixed Martial Arts career in 2010. As is the case with many of the Democratic candidates elected to Congress this year, her election made history in more ways than one. She didn't just defeat Republican incumbent Kevin Yoder, she did so decisively, winning by a comfortable 9 points. Ms. Da-

vids made history as the first openly gay Native American in Congress as well as the first openly LGBTQ member elected in Kansas's congressional delegation and the first openly gay person representing Kansas on the federal level. She, along with member-elect Deb Haaland, will be the first two Native American women elected to Congress. Like Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, Ms. Davids was the target of unnecessary homophobic and racist attacks by Michael Kalny. He wrote in a Facebook message that contained the sentence, "Your radical socialist kickboxing lesbian Indian will be sent back packing to the reservation!"

Ilhan Omar (D-MN) and Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), both incoming congresswomen are the first two Muslim women ever elected to Congress. Omar won

her election with 78% of the vote against Jennifer Zielinski, the largest percentage of the vote of any female candidate for U.S. House in state history. Ms. Omar is the first Somali American elected to the U.S. Congress, the first Muslim former refugee to be elected to the House, and the first woman of color to serve as a U.S. Representative from Minnesota. As she enters Congress in January of next year, she will be met with open arms and quite possibly the abolition of the 181-year rule that bans the wearing of any type of headwear rule on the House floor.

Despite these steps toward a more representative Democracy, we have work to do. Far too many of our leaders today are so caught up in getting reelected that they vote for measures that go against their principals. Those that do stand for what they believe in often refuse to run for reelection, lest they suffer an embarrassing defeat to a younger, more principled upstart. Believing in something greater than yourself is the greatest thing you can do. It leaves a lasting impact on the world around you. Politicians need that little bit of fearlessness. They found that greater purpose in fighting for their values without fear.

We tend to, at the same time, demonize and place our politicians atop a pedestal. We forget that they are people just the same. They are fallible just as we are. This leads to worse representation that becomes a zero-sum game, which breeds a culture of me versus you. It pits us against neighbors, friends, family. We lose faith in elected offices because why wouldn't we? Cynicism spreads and we lose interest because it all feels like too damn much.

To the current and future politicians: simplify and tell us a story. Who are you? Where do you come from? Why are you the one to lead us? Give us a reason to care. Make us feel something. The passion has dimmed but is far from gone and the 2018 midterms proved that. These new Democrats did just that. They gave it everything they had and it paid off. They were fearlessly vulnerable and it paid off.

Although the election was almost a month ago, the incoming Democratic class is just getting started. They're stepping right into a whirlwind of a political climate. Prepared for a fight along party-lines, members-elect also must find a voice within their own party if they wish to gather power within the caucus. This shouldn't be a problem as these new Democrats have shown an innate ability to tell their story. They embrace what makes them unique rather than hide from it. They're as fearless as anyone, ready to fight for what they believe in. This is just their next chapter. •



Failure to Act

PRICE DAY
OPINIONS EDITOR

The Honor Code. Often cited by the administration as what makes Connecticut College unique and by tour guides as a reason to come to Conn, most students do not come into close contact with the tenets of the honor code unless they are self-scheduling exams or being read its clauses in an Honor Council hearing. This is likely due to the length, and at times the tediousness of the Honor Code, a long rainy-day read to say the least. However, there is one clause of the Honor Code that I personally have noticed crop up frequently this semester: the citation of Failure to Act in the form of campus safety write ups. The Failure to Act clause reads as follows:

“Complicity with or failure of any student or organized group to address appropriately known or obvious violations of the Honor Code or Student Code of Conduct. If a student is made aware that a member of the Connecticut College community is in imminent harm or danger, s/he is expected to immediately inform an appropriate College staff person. The Honor Code includes an expectation that students will encourage individual(s) responsible for violations to report these incidents.”

Now this clause does not seem unusual at a glance, and in theory it is a reasonable and well-founded expectation for students to follow. In practice, however, it has been used in a different way.

Students have been cited for Failure to Act in scenarios where students in large settings are written for Honor Code violations by Campus Safety. These violations may include commonly illicit drug use or underage drinking. Campus Safety then proceeds to cite students present at the time of the write-up who have not participated in said activities with Failure to Act. Simply, the idea is that students are breaking the Honor Code by not reporting their peers for breaking the Honor Code.

The first issue I have with this procedure is that in these scenarios, the students in question are among friends or acquaintances, and are thus extremely unlikely to report their friends for activities that are, let's be honest, very common on this campus. It is unfair and borderline mean-spirited to give students the ultimatum of either reporting their friends, who would most likely cease to be friendly, or face disciplinary consequences. When I spoke with Dean Cardwell on the matter, she made it clear that “we do not incentivize reporting,” speaking on behalf of the Honor Council



Image Courtesy of Max Amar-Olkus

and campus safety, but it seems that this policy is being used to do just that. In addition, Cardwell noted that this is not a new policy and that she has not noticed an uptick in Failure to Act citations presented to the Honor Council.

Cardwell also stated that “the scenarios where Failure to Act occurs the most is in the village or with smoking pot,” which brings up another issue with the use of Failure to Act. Students cited with Failure to Act are being caught “in the act”, so to speak, and this means in order to avoid a citation, they are expected to preemptively or immediately report the students they’re with before being caught by campo. This also undermines the 24-hour window provided by the Honor Code for self-reporting. It is also an impossible standard to hold as it expects students to report their friends and colleagues before or during the time an infraction occurs.

While I’m not trying to make a big deal out of this, as indeed Cardwell states “people aren’t getting Disciplinary Probation for Failure to Act,” (which is true, although other disciplinary action might occur, such as Honor Council meetings or fines), the premise that you can be written up for not reporting your friends does not sit well with me, and I see this policy as just another practice campus safety uses, in their power-trip fueled quest to destroy Saturday nights on Conn’s campus and to get college kids in trouble for doing college kid things. Furthermore, no similar policy or ruling exists in criminal law, adding to the “Big campo is watching” Orwellian feel that this campus nightlife has had in recent months.

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State of the Arts

SAADYA CHEVAN
ARTS EDITOR

This semester's closure of the Barn to performances by MOBROC has been detrimental to Connecticut College's student arts culture by depriving student bands of a space to perform on campus. It is clear that the decision was intended to allow the club to continue to perform essential functions while also disciplining it. But it is undeniable that no MOBROC-affiliated band consisting of current members has performed in a MOBROC-sponsored event since the Barn was closed. According to Lauren Emerson '20, the club's president, this is due to a variety of factors, but is mainly attributable to the unique atmosphere the space provides members; it is a space where they can express themselves freely. Emerson also noted that the club stores much of its amplification equipment in the Barn, and that organizing logistics even for transporting that equipment to other campus venues can be challenging. She noted that the club's recent alumni concert used the 1962 Room in Crozier-Williams in part due to its proximity to the Barn allowing equipment to easily be walked between the two locations.

Space availability seems to be a distinct concern for many performing arts clubs on campus. For some clubs, there are concerns over whether to perform in an adapted large lecture hall (Olin 014, Oliva Hall), or a small performance space (Palmer 202, the Barn, Coffee Grounds). The difference between performing in the 400+ person capacities of Harkness Chapel and a smaller venue is akin to flying in a single-aisle jet versus a Boeing 747 (which aptly have similar seating capacities). These halls hold more than twice the capacity of their smaller counterparts. Max Amar-Olkus



*Images courtesy of Saadya Chevan
Pictured above: Evans Hall*

'19 of N2O (who is also one of the *Voice's* editors-in-chief) reports that his troupe, which performs in Olin 014, has to turn away spectators who arrive close to the beginning of the performance because of the popularity of their shows. Alison Joyce '19, N2O's president, echoed this sentiment saying, "Olin auditorium is the best location for our performances.... While we sometimes wish we could perform in a space a little larger, but not as big as Evans, there aren't any intermediate spaces. We also like the closeness of Olin." Joyce's concern about Evans is not difficult to understand for anyone who has ever attended a less than at capacity performance there; even at around half capacity, the generous combination of width and depth present in the hall's architecture makes the event feel sparsely attended.

It is not worth it for clubs to perform in Evans solely because it is the best option for fitting a middle of the market audience. N2O and similar popular groups that are drawing 150+ attendees to their performances should not be moving into Evans or Harkness just because of their capacity problems. They really need a middle of the market space to perform in. Unfortunately, there are only two spaces on campus that have capacities between 150 and 400 persons: the 1941 Room and entire 1962 Room in Crozier-Williams (CRO). Neither of these spaces appears designed with formal performances in mind although they are effective as lecture halls; additionally, although they have distinct uses the rooms share similar capacity limits and floor plans, it makes no sense for two rooms this similar to be in the same building. The 1962 Room typically has a movable dais erected on its west side, but this is not conducive given the terrible aesthetics of the room and the addition of temporary seating it requires for performances. The upcoming renovation of Cro could likely adapt one of these rooms to better suit the needs of performing arts clubs serving middle of



*Images courtesy of Saadya Chevan
Pictured above: Olin Hall*

No Laughs At This Year's White House Correspondents' Dinner

MAX AMAR-OLKUS
EDITOR IN CHIEF

A few weeks ago, it was announced that the decades-old tradition of featuring a comedian at the White House Correspondents' Dinner was coming to an end. Instead of the typical roast-style jokes that are served up by professional comedians to journalists, members of Congress, and administration staffers every year at the April event, biographer and historian Ron Chernow will be the featured speaker. In a recent press release, Olivier Knox, President of the White House Correspondents Association, said, "I'm delighted that Ron will share his lively, deeply researched perspectives on American politics and history at the 2019 White House Correspondents' Dinner."

The hiring of Chernow for this upcoming Correspondents' Dinner is likely a response to the controversy stirred up by last year's featured comedian, Michelle Wolf. Wolf's biting punchlines about Sarah Huckabee Sanders, the White House press secretary who attended the event in place of President Trump (who skipped the event for the second year in a row), were polarizing and incredibly funny. Wolf likened the press secretary to an "Uncle Tom, but for white women who disappoint other white women," and took shots at the frequent distortion of factual information the secretary is now known for. "She burns facts and then she uses that ash to create a perfect smoky eye," Wolf joked.

Even though he didn't attend the event, Trump still took to Twitter to decry the jokes made by Wolf. "The so-called comedian really 'bombed,'" he tweeted, likely enraged at the jokes made on his

behalf. Had he attended, he would have had a chance to respond directly to Wolf and other speakers in his own joke-laden stand-up act.

But, as we know, this would never happen.

Even though Lindsey Graham claims that the president is "funny as hell" in private, I'm inclined to believe the opposite. Publicly, Trump has almost no sense of humor. At a dinner for Al Smith in 2016, Trump turned an occasion for good-mannered jokes into an all-out verbal assault on Hillary Clinton. Trump's jokes are often cruel and demeaning— they're intended to wound people and prop up his sense of superiority. As Bret Stephens says in *The New York Times*, "Good jokes highlight the ridiculous. Trump's jokes merely ridicule."



Image Courtesy of Getty Images

The President, who seems to thrive on positive media coverage, is often filled with rage when he doesn't receive it. He has often railed against his critics both online and in person because he lacks any ability for self-reflection or depreciation. Threatening to jail a rival candidate or journalist is undoubtedly undemocratic. But so is silencing comedians at the White House Correspondents' Dinner. Comedians have long been on the front lines of the battle over freedom of speech

and, in my opinion, the decision not to feature one this year is unbelievably

disheartening as both a journalist and comedian.

Republicans often rant about how PC culture has ruined comedy, and they perceive an inability among the "snowflake leftists" to take jokes. However, the decision to avoid featuring a comedian at this year's Correspondents' Dinner has shown one thing: Republicans are the ones with the real thin skin. •

State of the Arts

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the market audiences while improving the banquet hall aesthetic of the other room.

However, current messaging from administrators presents an unclear picture of whether the projects prioritized by this year's campus master plan will be able to solve capacity issues for arts events on campus. The upcoming renovations of Cro and Palmer Auditorium are the two projects in the master plan with the most promise for arts expansion because the two buildings can be partially utilized or are purposed solely for the

arts respectively. The Barn may also undergo much needed renovations as part of the Cro renovation; members of MOBROC met with the architects for that project as part of their data gathering regarding student clubs during a campus visit earlier this semester. It remains unclear whether any useful development for the arts will occur as neither project has been developed to a stage where Vice-President for Finance and Administration Rich Madonna was willing to share any information about what the architects are planning with the *Voice*. Predicting what the future of development for the arts will be at Connecticut College would be rather naive until the College announces the exact goals of either of these renovations. •

The Ballad of Buster Scruggs: An Adventure Worth the Netflix Subscription?

JONATHAN BROWN
CONTRIBUTOR

I reckon y'all have heard of the Coen Brothers right? Directors of films you may have seen such as *No Country for Old Men* and *The Big Lebowski*? Yeah, well the good ole boys are at it again, with their new Netflix original movie, *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*. This near two and a half hour Western is an anthology of short stories ranging from gorey to downright depressing. But the real question is "Does the latest Coen Brothers feature warrant your time and attention?" In short, you're darn tootin'! (Sorry in advance, for all the puns and cowboy slang incoming. I've been playing a ton of *Red Dead Redemption 2*, so for the time being, I reckon you can call me a cowboy now) Anyway, let's mosey on up to the review.

First and foremost, this film is visually stunning. Maybe it's the fact that I had the privilege of watching it on a projector, but for a film released on a streaming service that's likely to be watched either on a computer or a phone, each frame is pretty darn sexy to look at. One of the usual characteristics of the Western genre includes an extreme emphasis on the beauty that is Mother Nature, and *Buster Scruggs* is indeed no exception. Each shot feels like an appreciation for a long forgotten time before industrialism and busy city landscapes.

Whether you end up paying attention to the plot or not, I can't deny how mesmerizing the cinematography is from top to bottom.

The Ballad of Buster Scruggs expands to 6 unrelated short stories that contains a wide array of strange and eccentric characters. Now, to be completely honest here, other than *The Big Lebowski*, I am not really a fan of how the Coen Brothers write and direct their films. I feel as though the stories they write contain way too many convenient situations, and most of the time, don't really have any resolutions for the main characters. But when it comes to the narrative structure of this film, I feel that the writing and direction of the Coen Brothers fits perfectly in the anthology format. Rather than drag out the plot with silent moments where characters do nothing meaningful to the story in a span of a two hour narrative, these short stories range from 10 to 30 minutes each and provide most of the protagonists with a convincing and compelling story arc that doesn't feel like a waste of time at all. I can't say for certain which one of the short stories were my favorite, but I will say that each one delivers a different tone that will cleanse the palate for those who enjoy both comedic and downright morbid storytelling.

Overall, I would say *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs* is a cinematic experience worth logging onto for two and a half hours. I give it four Horseshoes out of five! Yee-haw! •

The Vibe is Alive and Well on *Ox*

DREW CHAPMAN
CONTRIBUTOR

It's easy to hate on thirteen year old rapper Matt Ox. After all, in the past year, the hip

hop world has been subjected to a torrent of juvenile 'artists,' (a term to be loosely applied here,) who have capitalized on internet fame to launch their rap careers. From Lil Tay to Bhad Bhabie, these teenagers, pre-teens and children have experienced a myriad of successes and failures. But regardless of their record sales or lack thereof, each has done their part in establishing the youth as an annoying voice in the modern rap game. But let it be said here and now that Matt Ox is not to be lumped into this group of memes and talk show tyrants. In his debut album titled, "*Ox*," Matt Ox proves his worth, showing that there is far more to him than the fame derived from his fidget- spinning viral video, "*Overwhelming*."

Over atmospheric beats produced by North Philadelphia's *Working On Dying* production collective, Matt Ox experiments with a variety of styles. From sing-song melodic hooks to choppy rap chanting, Ox's execution is far beyond his years. And yet, it is his very adolescence that makes this album enticing. The perfect example of this youthful experimentation is my favorite song off the album titled "Ya Dig." Here, Ox chants, "Got a hunnid racks no deal, made it out the mud, dirty Phil," then sings "Pull up I'm ballin your shoes getting creased, I'm what your lil bro wanted to be." There is something particularly enjoyable about this blend of heat and juvenility, as one can laugh at his lyrics yet can't help nodding along.

Matt Ox still has a ways to go in finding his voice. But this album certainly proves that his come-up is worth following. If there were any question of his capability, Ox silences that doubt. The very idea that *Working on Dying* has taken him under their wing says more than enough about his talent, as their approval places Ox with the likes of Drake and Lil Uzi Vert (WOD produced Drake's "I'm Upset," and are producing the upcoming Lil Uzi Vert album). Likewise, Ox not only garnered features from Chief Keef and Valee, but held his own on the muddy and persistent beats they share. This speaks volumes to what Ox could become once he's found his stride.

For now, I'm a fan. Sure, there are moments in the album that aren't great, but his charisma quickly overrides those faults. His lyrical development has a long way to go but his ability to find his own groove on the beat is a far more important indicator of his potential. Besides, HE'S THIRTEEN! Are we really to expect the wordsmithing of a seasoned rapper? Furthermore, since when, in the modern rap era, did the lyrics really matter? It's all about the vibe, and with Matt Ox, the vibe is alive and well. •



Image courtesy of Netflix

Memory, Pride and Love: the AIDS Memorial Quilt Comes to Conn

GRACE AMATO
ARTS EDITOR

Two weeks ago, pieces of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt were put on display at Connecticut College's Tansill Theater. These patchwork quilts were only a fraction of the 489,000+ panels collected over the years to honor victims of the AIDS pandemic.

The AIDS memorial quilt began at the height of the United States' AIDS crisis in the 1980s as a response both to it and the lack of government action due to homophobic administrations. In 1985, gay rights activist Cleve Jones, while planning the annual candlelight march for the assassinations of San Francisco politicians Harvey Milk and George Moscone, asked his fellow marchers to write down the names of someone they lost to AIDS on a placard. At the end of the march, they hung these placards on the walls of the San Francisco Federal Building. To observers, it looked like a patchwork quilt. Inspired by this, Jones and other gay activists began planning a larger project-- an AIDS memorial quilt put together by friends, family and lovers of AIDS victims. In 1987, Jones teamed up with Mike Smith and others to officially begin the NAMES Project Foundation. The quilt, from its beginning, has grown to be the largest community art project in the world. It serves as a reminder of the AIDS pandemic that has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives in the United States since 1979 and preserves a history that gay rights activists feared would be erased.

Upon walking into Tansill Theater, I saw a television set up in the lobby playing *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt* (1989), a documentary about the story of the NAMES Project Memorial Quilt and the lives of those affected by the AIDS crisis in the United States. The film even won an Oscar for Best Documentary, among other awards. Playing the documentary set the atmosphere of the exhibition, even though it was upstairs in the Black Box Theater, as it brought the story of the Quilt and the AIDS pandemic to life, especially to those who weren't alive to experience it.

In Tansill's Black Box theater, the 70+ panels of the quilt hung on the dark walls with harsh stage lighting illuminating the names of victims. This lighting was un-

favorable to the higher panels, especially when photographing it. When I visited, it was almost silent in the theater despite a few people also observing, with only the squeak of shoes to break silence. The mood, of course, was somber, but the quilt said something different. Although heartbreaking, the panels speak of resistance, love, pride, and, most importantly, hope.

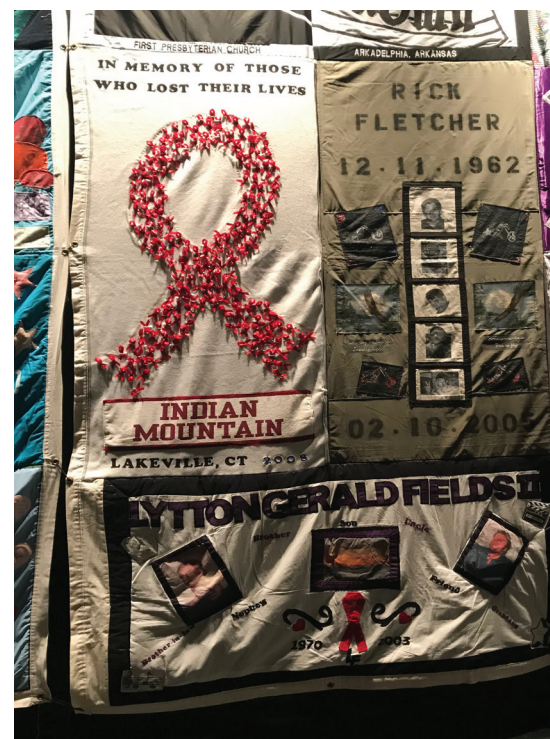
Although the sections represent the entire country, some of the panels on display were local, including ones from Stamford, Bristol, Danbury, Lakeville, and even New London.

What intrigued me the most were the designs on the panels and how they differed from one another. Some were simple while others had more intricate compositions. In the selection at Conn, there was a balanced mix between panels that used gay pride imagery including the rainbow, the triangle, and the red AIDS ribbon and others that refrained. The triangle seemed to be a very popular symbol for the time, but since then the rainbow has become a more mainstream symbol of gay pride. The triangle, though, is an homage to and adopted from the symbol used for gay men during the Holocaust--a pink triangle. Others used more religious imagery including doves, crosses, and prayers. On the one hand, the layout and elements of each panel depended on the creators of the panel, information not easily available to the viewer. Some may have felt that their sexual orientation was not necessary to highlight due to the stigma around HIV/AIDS as a "gay disease" while others may have felt more inclined to celebrate their loved one's sexual orientation due to the United States' inaction to the HIV/AIDS pandemic since it mainly affected the male gay community.

One notable panel at Conn was Roy Cohn's. Cohn helped McCarthy lead the Red Scare in exposing communists in America and the Lavender Scare, which tried to expose gay, lesbian, bi+ and queer citizens during a time when homosexuality was illegal. Ironically, many people suggested that Cohn himself was gay, and he had several sexual relationships with other men but did not identify as queer. He died in 1986

due to AIDS complications, further adding to the suspicions around his sexuality. His panel was simple. His name was displayed in large lettering while underneath it read: Bully (in red, an allusion to the Red Scare), Coward (in a pink triangle, as a reference to him never accepting his queerness) and Victim (in gray, to remember his struggle with AIDS).

Having it here on campus is an important tribute to and display of solidarity with the LGBTQIA community. •



Images Courtesy of Grace Amato

