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THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER, SINCE 1977

NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2023

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Connecticut College Alum Gabrielle Riker '89 Leaves Behind a Great Legacy

LILLA KATE TUCKER
SPORTS EDITOR

Norman Riker has served as Connecticut College's Head Women's Soccer Coach for the past 12 years. In that time, Riker has cultivated a culture of players, coaches, and loved ones that has developed into one collective family affectionately known as COCOWOSO. He has also created a reputation as a competitive force in the world of NESCAC women's soccer, a conference that he describes as "the best, most unforgiving league in the country." Assistant Coach and former player, Mia Hernandez, credits Riker with pushing his players to be the best they can while recognizing that "we are not just a team, we are a family."

Recently, the program and Coach Riker experienced a loss that had nothing to do with being outscored or outplayed. Riker's beloved wife, Gabrielle Riker '89, lost her battle with cancer just as this past season ended, and the impact of that loss is being felt deeply across campus.

Gabrielle Riker's connection with Connecticut College goes much deeper than simply being the wife of a coach; she was an alum of the Class of 1989. She graduated with a degree in French, and during her time at Conn

she participated in the study abroad program, spending two summers in France. According to Riker, "She majored in French, more as a metaphor for what those experiences provided her, rather than a career choice. Those summers empowered her to get out of her comfort zone, listen to her soul, ... and enjoy the simple pleasures of being outside."

After earning a degree, Gabrielle put her talent for writing and her love for the outdoors to work as a freelance writer for organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund, and the Environmental Defense Fund, among others, and her connection to Connecticut College remained a constant throughout her life. This connection, stated Riker, "had such a natural intersection and brought together so many parts of both our lives and experiences."

The Rikers met on Block Island, Rhode Island, and they were married there on July 19, 1997. Norm and Gabrielle raised two daughters, Isabelle and Sofia, in New York and Ohio before settling right down the road from Conn in Niantic, Connecticut in 2011. According to Coach Dave Lynch, "[Gabrielle] and Norm moved their family from Ohio so that Norm could take

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Courtesy of Analisse Rios

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Courtesy of Maude Frederique Lavoie

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When thinking about college laundry, there are two types of people: those lucky enough to find both the washer and dryer empty and those who just missed their shot, forced to give up until the next day. Even the lucky ones aren't out of the...

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"He is a very, very smart bastard": Yevgenia Albats's Lecture on Putin's War in Ukraine

EMMA DINKELSPIEL
ARTS EDITOR

On Tuesday, Nov. 14, Yevgenia Albats, a renowned journalist, political scientist, and dissident, arrived at Connecticut College to speak about her career in journalism and how it has shaped her perspective on Putin's war in Ukraine. Albats gave presentations in both Russian and English, and engaged with students on both contemporary politics and Russian history.

Albats began the day by attending RUS304: "Advanced Russian: Cultures of Dissent" taught by Prof. Laura Little. The class focuses on dissident art, music, and media during the Soviet period, so speaking with Albats gave students the opportunity to bring their class to life. In Russian, Albats discussed literature, nation-

ality, and the future of the Russian Federation with students. She also spoke about the importance of using reliable news sources when doing research, particularly when looking into the Russian Federation.

"Growing up in a Russian-speaking household, my grandfather listened to Albats's radio show every week like clockwork," said Andrew Kupovich '27, a student in RUS304 and Slavic Studies major. "To have her in our class, discussing everything from her journey as a journalist to the KGB to current events in Dagestan was cool beyond words."

Later that day, in an event sponsored by the Slavic Studies Department, English Department, and Walter Commons, Albats brought her expertise on the War in Ukraine to a larger group of students in the Charles Chu Asian Art Read-

Article continued on page 3.

Letter From the Editor

It's hard to believe that this is the last fall edition of The College Voice, but here we are. It's the last fall edition ever for the seniors on our staff, which means me, Robbie Lynch, Jocey Lewis, Wade Anthony, and Keri Krasnoff. I've been thinking about these milestones a lot as this semester winds down. I assume that this is true for most other seniors as it starts to hit us that we only have one semester left in our college experience.

Sentimentality aside, I'm super excited for this edition. As somebody who came up through the Sports Section of TCV, I feel like a proud parent seeing seven sports articles getting published in this edition. That's more than we've ever had published in Sports in my time with TCV! I'd like to give a shoutout to Lilla Kate Tucker and Evan Young, our Sports Editors. They killed it. Lilla Kate wrote an excellent remembrance piece on Gabrielle Riker, the wife of her Women's Soccer Team Head Coach Norm Riker, who tragically passed away recently. Along with the whole Conn community, TCV is sending our love to Coach Riker, his family, and the Women's Soccer Team.

Lilla Kate also wrote a piece on Conn's thrilling 6-5 victory over Coast Guard in the annual Club Hockey matchup, which her, Evan, Kevin Lieue, and I were able to attend and cover. Evan and Kevin wrote a piece on the Women's Cross Country Team's national championship appearance, and Kevin also wrote a feature piece on Annalise Rios '08, Conn's Strength and Conditioning Coach, who will be leaving the school for a full time strength and conditioning role with the Connecticut Sun up Route 32. Wade Anthony, one of our Opinions Editors, wrote a piece where he interviews two of the seniors from the Men's Soccer Team on their recent run to the Elite Eight. I personally rounded out the Sports section with a strongly opinionated piece on the A's leaving Oakland, which I felt compelled to write as a Bay Area native, even though I'm a San Francisco Giants fan.

In the News Section, Emma Dinkelspiel writes about a talk from Yevgenia Ablats on the Russia/Ukraine war, and Ellis Iurilli-Hough '27 highlights John Triandafillou, who works in Harris. In Opinions, Lily Tobin '27 writes on the experiences of being a Housefellow, and Luke Corless '27 tackles the challenges of doing laundry at Conn.

In Arts, Emma wrote an excellent piece reviewing the Bridgeport Symphony, Madeline Motes '27 wrote a piece reviewing a MOBROC open mic night at Coffee Grounds, and I wrote my first ever arts piece(!!!), reviewing a recent country music album that I loved.

I'm super proud of our staff for the work that they put in for this edition, and I think that it's our best one yet. We're going to be reshuffling some of our staff somewhat for the spring, as some members are going abroad. We hope to see as many people as possible at our pitch meetings next semester. Hopefully, by the time this edition of the paper is out, the Niners will have beaten the Eagles and I will be farther ahead on my final papers. Good luck with finals everyone! We hope you enjoy this last fall edition of The College Voice.

Until the spring,
Fritz Baldauf
Co-Editor in Chief

THE COLLEGE VOICE

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thecollegevoice@conncoll.edu
270 Mohegan Avenue
New London, CT 06320
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“He is a very, very smart bastard”: Yevgenia Albats’s Lecture on Putin’s War in Ukraine

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Room. In the lecture, entitled “Putin’s Wars and their Outcomes,” Albats traced Putin’s rise to power, beginning with the fall of the Soviet Union and leading up to the present day.

Prof. Petko Ivanov introduced Albats before her lecture, highlighting her roles working as the editor of the russophone magazine, *The New Times*, and the host of the radio show, *Absolute Albats*.

Albats began her presentation by asking, “How did it happen?” Looking back to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Albats contemplated why the Russian Federation turned away from the democracy that many had anticipated. She continued, “All these promises about the stability of Russia’s government were always just promises.”

“It didn’t happen overnight,” Albats said as she described Putin’s responsibility for the deinstitutionalization of democracy in the Russian Federation. She argued that in the late 1990s Russia was still not a successful democracy, but it was an oligarchy which, at the very least, allowed for a multiplicity of opinions. Putin leveraged his power in order to ban elections in many cities while simultaneously manipulating laws in order to allow himself to maintain power despite limits on terms.

“He is a very, very smart bastard,” Albats lamented when consider-

ing how his deliberate rise to power facilitated the circumstances that led to his War in Ukraine. “Democracy is a regime where the party in power loses elections and steps down. It doesn’t always happen even in the best democracies.” When Putin staged his self-coup in 2020 he enacted a legal dictatorship without checks and balances, an independent judicial branch, or self governance.

Albats’s work as an independent journalist in the Russian Feder-

ation has led her to face a lot of governmental backlash. At the beginning of the war in 2022, Albats was declared a foreign agent in the Russian Federation after attempting to bring attention to Russian war crimes committed in Ukraine. Those considered foreign agents lose the ability to teach, work as journalists, and be on TV networks. Because she was accused of spreading disinformation about the Russian Army five times, many of her works have since been censored and *Absolute Albats* has been removed from the Russian air. Currently, Albats’s works are only available to Russian citizens through the use of private networks. She has since moved to the United States to continue her work as a journalist and political activist. Albats’s role in documenting contemporary

events in the Russian Federation has been essential to a global understanding of the War in Ukraine, and she continues this work through her online reportage with *Absolute Albats*. •



Photo Courtesy of Ben Masora

John Triandafillou: Harris Hero

ELLIS IURILLI-HOUGH
STAFF WRITER

A college student is fueled by three things: determination, ambition, and dining hall food. The latter is the most essential of the trio, but without good staff to serve the food, the hungry bodies and minds of students across the world would starve. John Triandafillou, a fan-favorite member of the Harris Refectory team, is the friendly man who greets you at the entrance for dinner every night. He moved all the way from Greece to start a new life here in the United States. Triandafillou brought with him dreams of living the American life he saw in magazines and movies, and eventually, he got what he had always wanted. He hopes that the students here will get to live as happily as he has, and he concluded our interview with some words of wisdom we can take through life.

John, can you give me a bit of your backstory? Who are you? Where are you from? Why did you come here?

Well, I’m originally from Greece. I came to America many years ago by myself because I just wanted to be here. As a kid I would read comics about Western culture that talked about cowboys and... I saw so many movies set in New York City and I just knew I wanted to be there. So I moved across the

world and came to Connecticut. We still go back to visit Greece all the time, but I like it here so much that I don’t think I ever want to move back there. Life changes and right now my life is here. I wouldn’t know what to do with myself if I lived there again.

How did you start working here at Connecticut College?

My job, originally, was a painter. Not a painter on campus, but I started my own small painting company and I had a few guys who worked with me. The way I was doing it, I was getting work from management companies. But eventually, there just wasn’t enough work for us, my painting van broke down and I couldn’t afford a new one, and the company ran out of money. After that, I stopped working completely for about a year. So I’m here, sitting around all day doing nothing for a year, when my daughter finally said, “You need to get a job!” She started searching and eventually found an open position here at the College. I said, “What am I going to do there? I don’t know anything about college!” She assured me that all I had to do was stand at the door and greet people.

Article continued from page 4.

John Triandafillou: Harris Hero

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Now that you are here, do you enjoy working in the dining hall?

I really didn't enjoy working here at first. But, over time, I started to like it more. The job is simply greeting people at the door and swiping them in, but that's my favorite part about it. Over the years I started becoming friends with some of the older students, and I would always greet them and say hello as they walked in.

What kinds of things do you enjoy doing when you're not at work? Do you have any hobbies?

Years ago I used to play soccer- it was and still is my favorite game. I'm old enough now that I can't really play anymore, but I still love to watch it when I can. I also have a daughter living in Florida, so three or four times a year my wife and I go visit her, her husband, and her two kids. I know there is a lot of educational controversy down there right now, and my wife is a teacher who doesn't really like a lot of what they're teaching. But my daughter likes it there and wanted to start her family there, so we like visiting her anyways.

Speaking of Florida, I noticed you're always wearing a Mickey Mouse hat. What's the story with that?

Actually, it's just the only hat that I have! My daughter got it for me be-

cause she said I should start wearing a hat, and I didn't care either way. Our family has been to the Disney resort in Florida five times now, so I like it for the most part.

What is your opinion of the food served at Harris?

It's pretty good. It's nothing special for me, but that's not the same for everyone here. Everywhere you go there will be people who like things and people who don't like things, and in every place there will always be different opinions of the food. Everybody has their own taste and it's a big place with a lot of mouths to feed. The staff has to cook a lot of food for a lot of different people. Not everyone is always going to like it.

Any final thoughts, advice, or words of wisdom you want to share with the readers of this interview?

I never was a student like you are, so I never got the formal education you all are so lucky to have. But whatever I know and whatever I've learned has come from my own teaching. You learn a lot of things from reading books, watching movies, or reading magazines about the world. Before I came to America, I had never even opened up a book! There were no computers to look things up on, so I had to get all of my knowledge as a kid from watching TV. Nowadays, young people have every piece of knowledge at the tip of their fingers. Use that to your advantage. •



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Conn Laundry: The School's Greatest Headache

LUKE CORLESS
STAFF WRITER

When thinking about college laundry, there are two types of people: those lucky enough to find both the washer and dryer empty and those who just missed their shot, forced to give up until the next day. Even the lucky ones aren't out of the clear yet because, behind them, there is a line of eager individuals ready to pounce the second that dryer dings double zeros. Laundry is a pain for everyone at Connecticut College, but there is reason to hold out hope.

The simple fact is that Conn is getting bigger. When the Class of 2024 was in its first year, Conn's population was 1,861. Today, it is 1,995. Conn has been above capacity for years, and the situation is only worsening as students are now housed in basements and common rooms. The lacking laundry system is a consequence of this student squeeze. The main campus is home to a grand total of 59 washing machines and 58 dryers, 54 of which are operational (according to the Laundry Connect website). Including the River Ridge and Winchester Apartments, those totals increase to 78 working washers and 72 working dryers out of 77. This data leads to an average of almost 26 students per washer and 28 per dryer. This statistic is outrageous. Outside of the fact that the dryers often take longer than one run to fully dry clothes, and people may have more than one load to do at a time, these averages make doing laundry throughout the week difficult at best.

Undoubtedly, averages can be misleading. Conn is overpopulated, so gathering a representation of the specific dorms is almost impossible. The numbers presented are more severe in reality. Assuming all amenities are functional, the most underserved dorm is Branford House, with two of each appliance for a capacity of 84 residents. While Branford does hold the crown for most students sharing a washing machine, Harkness takes the cake for most students sharing a dryer at a whopping 52. These examples only account for shared equipment; special recognition must go out to the buildings without working appliances at all. Winch 11 and Lazarus House don't have access to a working dryer within their walls.

The Office of Residential Life sent information early in the year about laundry concerns that had been communicated to them. The email essentially stated that the students are responsible for making Automatic Laundry aware of the required repairs. It is a fair request, although the inconsistency of service orders has resulted in few students following through. Automatic Laundry is the only entity that knows how many requests it gets for repairs, but the famous bystander effect is likely taking place: "Why should I send the request when 28 other people could do the same thing?" The only current solution is for us to fill out the form and hope for the best.

With this all being said, there is hope for the future. The same email recognized that the machines need to be replaced quicker than usual and that "all" will be replaced over winter break. Residential Life is counting the number of washers and dryers in "certain areas" to propose additional ones if they deem it necessary. The email concludes by saying, "If you feel your current area does not have adequate machines for the population please let housing know and we will assess." Someone, if not multiple people per floor of every building, should send an email to Residential Life requesting additional machines. While this could just be lip service to make everyone



Photo Courtesy of Maude Frederique Lavoie

feel like things will get better, there is a real possibility that they will take action if enough students speak up. While laundry isn't the most pressing issue on campus, it is a simple quality-of-life issue that has gone without any significant remedies. A simple email or a few could be the remedy we are all waiting for and have no negative consequence. Amenities like these are paid for with tuition, and I assume everyone would prefer getting their money's worth instead of dealing with a dysfunctional system of unwashed clothes and piles of dumped laundry. •

Conn's Floor Governors: An Inside Look

LILY TOBIN
STAFF WRITER

Conn is the only school to call floor leadership Floor Governors instead of RAs. Why did Conn choose to call them Floor Governors? Every floor is assigned a Floor Governor. At the beginning of orientation, I was introduced to my House Fellow and Floor Governor, as all other first-years were. Throughout orientation week, scheduled floor and building meetings served to inform us of general residential life rules; however, the specifics of what House Fellows and Floor Governors do were never clarified. I was left wondering what the difference between a House Fellow and Floor Governor was, and whether one was in charge of another. It was unclear whether we should treat them as an authority figure or peer. Yes, they were 'in charge' in some capacity, but how so?

The first Floor Governor I talked to was Ben Chin '26. Ben is the Floor Governor of Branford House's third floor. I first asked him why he wanted to be a Floor Governor. Ben quickly answered, "money." Following up, I asked him why he had such a definite answer, as I did not expect that response. He explained, "We don't get two credits... [and] we don't even get free housing;" for Ben, he saw no other point to being a Floor Governor. Surprised, I asked why he finds issue with solely receiving monetary compensation if that is the reason he wanted the job. He clarified, "At Tufts [where my sister goes, RAs] get free housing, some free meal swipes." There certainly is a disparity between Conn's and Tufts's compensation. Although the point of a job is compensation, for a job dealing directly with students, one would hope that House Fellows and Floor Governors are primarily there for the community.

I also spoke with Aaron Saporito '25, the Floor Governor of the Branford House basement. When I asked Aaron what his motivation was behind becoming a Floor Governor, he said, "Initially, I was looking for a consistent job on campus. Additionally, I had a handful of friends who were already on staff who recommended it to me". Weighing in on the compensation of the job, Aaron said, "Overall the amount of hours we work compared to the wage is sub-minimum wage. We are paid using a stipend, not hourly. Overall, I'm okay with it since it seems to be the best I can do on campus". Aaron is embarking on his second year on the job, however this year with a more refined goal. He explained, "When I reapplied, it was with the goal of helping to build a smaller community on campus." Ben shares Aaron's community sentiment, saying, "I genuinely care about every single person in our building, and that's important to me". Despite the obvious compensatory benefits of the job, it seems that Ben and Aaron speak for the masses of Floor Governors in their dedication to the community.

I also asked them what their job description entails. Ben said, "Floor Governors' hours are split up into a coordinated group calendar. As a Branford Floor Governor, Ben collaborates with Smith-Burdick House: "On weekdays (Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday) and Sunday, only one person is on call. Whereas, on weekends (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday), two people are on-call". According to Ben, what Floor Governors do on their rounds is "walk through floors, check in bathrooms for vomit, check for noise complaints, smell of marijuana, underage drinking". Aaron said, "The primary job is to keep an eye on the residential halls and generally look out for everyone around us."

Next, I asked them what their hours are. Are they 'on the clock' all the time, or do they have specific hours that they must be on their floor?

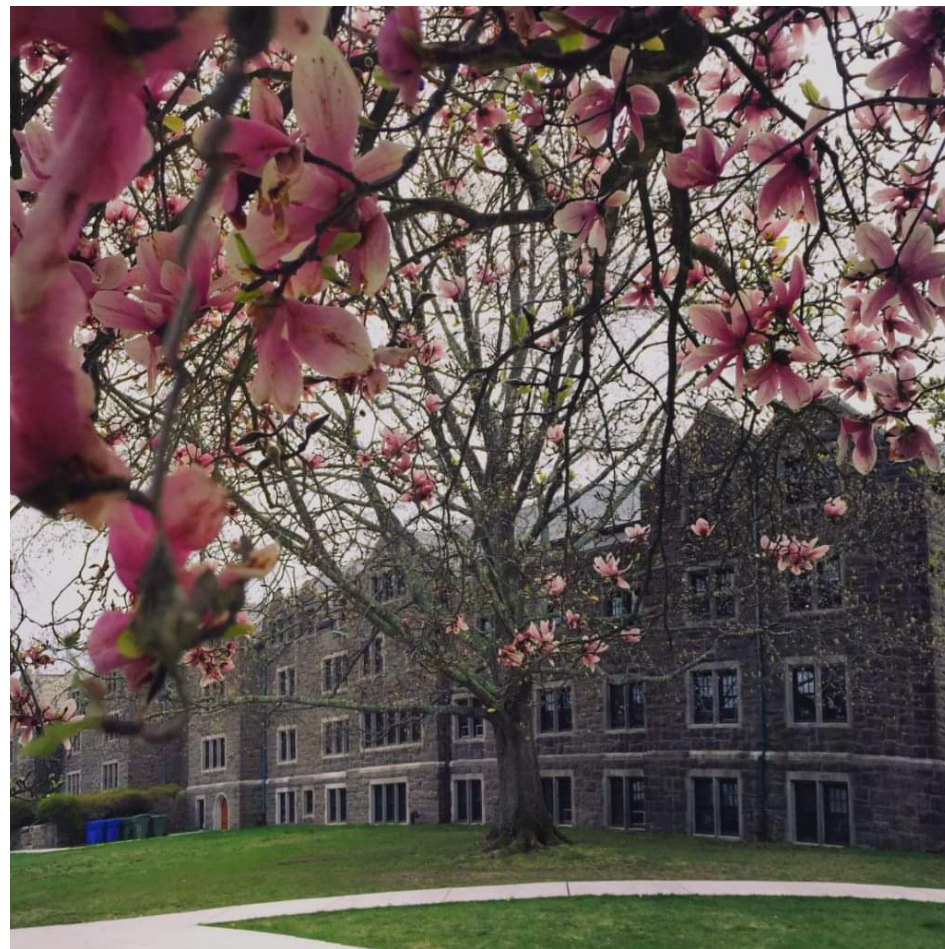


Photo Courtesy of Connecticut College

"Technically, our weekly hours are 12 hours per week," Ben said. "On non-weekends, you are supposed to do rounds at 8 p.m., 10 p.m., and midnight. On weekends, we have to do rounds at 10 p.m., midnight, and 2 a.m." In regard to hours, Aaron said, "I typically have one to three on call shifts a week, usually one weekend and one weekday. In our area we have consistent weekdays that we do, some buildings do it in a more random way. On Sunday through Wednesday, on-call is from 8-12 a.m. Thursday through Saturday, there are two of us on-call and we work from 8 p.m.-2 a.m." Their responses were consistent. Ben adds, "At the end of the night, you have to submit an on-call form". This on-call form is a detailed summary of their hours on duty. As mandated reporters, Floor Governors must report any illegalities that they witnessed while on duty.

The role requires great commitment. Ben said, "When I'm on call, I have to stay in my room or area. I can't go to the library, I can't go to the bar, I can't go to the carnival, anything. In terms of that, it's a little bit difficult." In addition to rounds, Floor Governors have other responsibilities including running and planning community events and making bulletin boards. All of these responsibilities add up, and it's clear that the job takes significant commitment. Despite this, in my conversations with Ben and Aaron, both displayed gratitude for the lessons about responsibility they've learned being Floor Governors. I'm thankful to have dedicated Floor Governors who both care for their residents and take their jobs seriously. While the role of Floor Governors may often be overlooked, or even criticized, the position is not only valuable to the individuals who undertake it—but to the campus as a whole. •

Connecticut College Alum Gabrielle Riker '89 Leaves Behind a Great Legacy

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take the head coaching position at Conn; though maybe not directly, [Gabrielle] felt she contributed and supported this program as much as anyone." Gabrielle encouraged her husband's passion to coach at her alma mater and was a staple on the sidelines from the very beginning. Lynch, a volunteer coach for the women's team, is also a close friend of the Riker family. He met Gabrielle in 2014 when his daughter joined the Southeast Soccer Club and played alongside Sofia Riker, Riker's daughter. The girls quickly hit it off, which encouraged their parents to form a lasting relationship. He notes that Gabrielle was a "very doting mom" who "was always on the sidelines or taking care of things behind the scenes to ensure the girls had a positive soccer and life experience." Involved and present from the get-go, Gabrielle maintained her commitment from the sidelines of a smaller club to the larger college field that is Tempel Green.

During her celebration of life service that was held at Harkness Chapel on November 11, 2023, Riker shared that "when Gabrielle was with us, she brought clarity to a difficult situation, provided the answer to the hard question, added the perfect spice to the recipe, selected the right word to close out the sentence, and helped us change the perspective by encouraging us to look up at the night sky."

The stability and comfort that Gabrielle provided her family at home translated to the Conn community. The loving woman who was the rock of her family became the backbone of the COCOWOSO program. Whether she was hosting team dinners or traveling to games all over New England, her presence on the team was felt by everyone. Coach Hernandez remembers those dinners in the Riker household as something to look forward to. According to Hernandez, Mrs. Riker took the time to get to know each of the players and to make them all feel at home.

Despite the challenges that she faced during her long illness, Gabrielle remained a supporter of Conn soccer for as long as she was able. Rob Brule, assistant coach and close friend of Norm's, identified Gabrielle as a

"rock and a beacon of light, emphasizing the importance of family – both her own with Norm and their two daughters, Isabelle and Sofia, and her extended soccer family at Conn – showcasing what truly matters in the world today: family." And that is the legacy that Gabrielle leaves behind. One infused with love for family and community. One defined by a passion for living and the acknowledgment that one's mere presence can have a lasting effect.

Although the COCOWOSO family will continue to grow and expand its reach throughout the NESCAC and beyond, there will always be something missing: Gabrielle Riker. "Words can never express the loss we all feel within the program, yet, how grateful we all are to have known

Gabrielle," shares Brule. Inevitably the players that were blessed to know her will move on, and newer players will only hear of her as someone who used to be on the sidelines. But she will always be in our hearts, and she will always be a Camel. "For Gabrielle," said Riker, "being a Camel was about instilled belief and community. The belief that she had the tools and confidence to create her own business while knowing that she has a history and place in our community." Riker went on to say that he hopes Gabrielle will be remembered as "a smart, kind, beautiful woman. She put energy into food, the outdoors, and her family. She loved her daughters and me, and she loved watching COCOWOSO play."

Next season and the ones that follow won't be the same for the women's soccer program here at Conn, but Gabrielle's memory will remain and her place on the sideline will never be filled. Luckily, Coach Brule reminds us that "Norm is an extension of Gabrielle.

A great person who truly cares about each and every player." The coaches and friends, players and parents that make up the COCOWOSO program, as well as the entire Connecticut College community send their love to Riker and his daughters. Know that your family is so much bigger than just the three of you, and we will work hard to carry Gabrielle's memory with us as we branch out into the world. Brule said it best: "When one Camel loses someone close, we all lose someone close." •



Photo Courtesy of Rob Brule

From the Andes Mountains to the Connecticut Sun: Reflecting on the Unique Journey of Analisse Ríos '08

KEVIN LIEUE
MANAGING EDITOR

For many students at Connecticut College, a familiar face has greeted, taught, and challenged them to be better athletes at the College's Ann and Lee Higdon Fitness Center during their time as Camels. Analisse Ríos '08, a graduate of the College and a former member of the women's soccer and track team, has served as the College's Director of Sports Performance and as the Fitness Center Manager for the past few years. In this role, she has created strength and conditioning programs for twelve varsity teams, led team lifts and fitness workouts, and overseen various renovations and improvements of the College's fitness center.

Recently Ríos announced that she would be vacating her position as Director of Sports Performance and Fitness Center Manager in order to take a full-time position for the WNBA's Connecticut Sun as Strength and Conditioning Coach.

To many, her journey from being a college athlete to strength and conditioning coach to becoming a strength and conditioning coach for a professional sports team may seem like a logical progression. However, Ríos never envisioned a career in strength and conditioning growing up and believed her true calling to be teaching.

Born and raised high in the Andes at over 11,000 feet in La Paz, Bolivia, Ríos grew up in a very active family as the middle child between two brothers. "I [grew up with] two brothers who were super active and parents who were super active," said Ríos. As an outlet for her activeness, Ríos turned to sports. "In high school and middle school I [played] everything," said Ríos. "I played gymnastics, soccer, volleyball, basketball, and ran track."

In the soccer-crazy Bolivia, Ríos felt drawn to the country's national sport and soon committed to playing it as her main sport. As a sophomore in high school, the 16 year-old Ríos experienced a life-changing experience when she was called up to play for the Bolivian senior women's soccer national team. "We were in the equivalent of the state championship and there was a coach there who was watching and told me I would be getting a phone call later," said Ríos. "The opportunity and experience was amazing because I was able to travel all of South America playing soccer and play against greats such as Marta."

With her time at high school winding down, Ríos looked towards America for the next phase of her life. "I knew I wanted to play soccer in college but I also wanted to be a teacher so I made the decision to go D3 and found Connecticut College randomly," said Ríos. "I emailed the coach [at the time], Ken Kline, and he was the nicest person even over email so I just had a good feeling [about Conn]." What appealed to Ríos the most was the possibility of joining more than just a team at Conn. "That first email with Ken Kline really sold me because he was so excited to talk to me and it felt like I would be joining a family instead of just a team," said Ríos. "It was something that I was looking for because I was so far from home." From a non-athletic perspective, Ríos also felt pulled to Conn. "I saw the pictures of the campus and it was beautiful and the honor code was also attractive [to me] because [it showed] there is a lot of trust and relationship building in Conn's community and I applied early decision."

At Conn, the women's soccer team soon became Ríos' family. "Coming from Bolivia I didn't have family around here," said Ríos. "For Thanksgiving, Christmas, or spring break different families would invite me to come over to their houses and because I couldn't go home on weekends, sometimes I would go home with one of [my teammates] for the weekend." Later, Ríos joined the track team and was in the cycling club for a

short period of time while recovering from compartment surgery. While at Conn, Ríos continued to be called up to play for the Bolivian national team. "Even while I was here for college they would fly me out to tournaments back home to play," said Ríos.

Academically, Ríos knew she wanted to pursue a career as an elementary school teacher. At the time, the College had a program for elementary education so she knew she would work towards completing the program and getting the certification. Though she initially planned to major in psychology, Ríos ended up changing her major in human development. "I took a class with professor [Sunil] Bhatia and it was so cool to learn about different communities and how as humans we connect with each other," said Ríos. "So I ended up majoring in human development and minoring in psychology." Ríos graduated as a part of the Class of 2008 with the elementary certification in education and as a human development major and psychology minor.

Upon completion of her degree, Ríos began teaching 5th and 6th grade in New London County at the C. B. Jennings International Elementary Magnet School in New London and the Dual Language and Arts Magnet Middle School in Waterford. However, she soon realized she missed something in her life. "I was teaching 5th and 6th grade in the area and I realized I missed sports," said Ríos. "I missed that sense of belonging in a team and a family." Reflecting on what she missed the most, Ríos reached out to her second family. "I reached out to the women's soccer coach, Norm Riker, and told him I wanted to be involved with the team and will do whatever you need me to do," said Ríos. "He was really open to the idea of sharing [the coaching responsibilities] with someone for the team, so I quickly progressed from [just] setting out cones to running more drills."

As her responsibilities on the team increased, Ríos sought to achieve more personal qualifications to help improve the women's soccer program. "I realized that the team didn't have summer workouts or even workouts in the offseason," said Ríos. "So I told [Coach Riker] I was interested in getting a personal trainer certification to be able to provide workouts in the offseason and also in season for the team." Once Ríos got her certification as a National Academy of Sports Medicine Certified Personal Trainer (NASM CPT), she began providing workouts for the women's soccer team. Other teams quickly realized that they also wanted workouts in and out of season so Ríos started pursuing certifications as an EXOS Performance Specialist (EXOS XPS) and a National Strength and Conditioning Association Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (NSCA CSCS) to be able to help plan workouts and lifts for other teams.

Soon, what started as a part-time assistant coach role for the women's soccer team transitioned into being much more. "I became the volunteer strength and conditioning coach for a while part-time while teaching," said Ríos. "When the full-time possibility was offered, I realized that this is what I wanted to do...to be able to do what I loved back at the school I graduated from." Eventually, Ríos became Director of Sports Performance at the College following the retirement of the previous weight room monitor. "After the old monitor retired, I was able to work with more teams and hire an assistant," said Ríos. Day by day, Ríos' responsibilities grew. "The role started off with me working with three teams and then it became me working closely with ten teams and writing programs for five other teams," said Ríos. "The position grew with the number of programs I had to write and ...

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... athletes I had to work with.”

In addition to her responsibilities as a strength and conditioning coach for the College's varsity teams, Ríos was also in charge of running the fitness center. “I also became in charge of running the fitness center and making sure the general population was taken care of,” said Ríos. “So [for example], during COVID, I would run 6 am, 7 am, and 8 am workouts for anyone who wanted to come in addition to body weight dorm workouts for [varsity] teams to make sure everyone was remaining sane.” During the pandemic, Ríos also realized there was potential for the creation of a varsity weight room. “During that time, the current varsity weight room was a yoga space,” said Ríos. “But I realized this was a spot where we could put in bars, racks, and weights and design a varsity weight room and so Josh Edmed and I proposed it and it is a space that has really benefited [the College] a lot.”

In 2020, Ríos experienced a life changing moment when she became head strength and conditioning coach for the WNBA's Connecticut Sun. Prior to her hiring by the Sun, Ríos herself had been a fan of the team as a season-ticket holder. “My wife and I were season ticket holders because we lived right down the street and [we] loved watching games,” said Ríos. The opportunity to work for the Sun really arose by chance. “I had a connection with someone who was interning with the Sun and through that connection one of the assistant coaches had come across my Instagram,” said Ríos. “So when the 2019 season ended, they were looking for a new strength coach and asked me if I wanted to apply which surprised me because I didn't even know of [the role].” Due to the job being a part-time role, Ríos was able to continue in her role at the College even after the Sun hired her.

While in season for the Sun, Ríos had a variety of duties which differed from her duties with the College's teams. “My duties [for the Sun] are daily warmups, stretching and cooling down, [helping] injured athletes return to play, working very closely with the athletic trainer, mitigating any injuries and making sure that any athletes that sustained an injury can return to play, lifting, conditioning for low minute players, and traveling with the team [for games],” said Ríos. “On the road, I do a lot of nutrition and I'm currently working on a sports nutrition certification so I can do that more carefully.” The daily aspect of her job with the Sun is the key difference between her work with the Sun and work with the College's teams. “At Conn with so many teams, in season sports I see twice a week and out of season teams I only see every other or every three weeks,” said Ríos. “With the Connecticut Sun it's daily...daily stretching activation because everyone [has] different minutes...some players may be lifting on certain days and playing on certain days, so during the season I would have a lift pretty much every day with one or two players.”

While working with both the Sun and at the College, Ríos began the chaotic struggle of trying to balance her work. With the Sun, Ríos worked with the team in-season from around April through October. At the College, Ríos had to work teams beginning with fall sports in August to spring sports which finished in April and May. This created a very busy time period for Ríos during late spring and early fall. “It definitely got really hectic every April and May when I was trying to wrap up with [the College's] teams and start with the Connecticut Sun and on the back-end of September and October when I was wrapping up my work with the Sun,” said



Courtesy of Analisee Ríos

Ríos. “Mo [White] was really supportive because there were times I was on the road [with the Sun] and still working with Conn teams.” Though she was able to focus more on working with the College's teams when the Sun's season ended, Ríos still had off-season work for the Sun. “Even in the off-season, I [would] have Facetimes at random times because some of my athletes would be in [countries such as] China and Spain,” said Ríos. “So I had to make sure my twelve-ish athletes scattered across the globe were taken care of along with my 10 teams [at Conn].” Additionally, Ríos had to work to have a balance between work and her own personal life. “My wife and I are also foster parents and I had [a few] long days sometimes which made it difficult for me as a parent,” said Ríos.

This summer, the opportunity to become a full-time strength and conditioning coach for the Sun arose for Ríos. “It was a conversation that started in summer and became more of a reality [over time],” said Ríos. The decision to accept the Sun's offer to become their full-time strength and conditioning coach was a difficult decision for Ríos, as it meant she would have to leave her role at the College. “It was tough because the connections and relationships that I've built with the people and Connecticut College was something I valued,” said Ríos. “Knowing that I won't [be able to] have the athlete's I get to see for their four years is tough because I have enjoyed that part too.”

Ultimately, Ríos' decision came down to the opportunity of achieving better work life balance. “I think a lot of it came down to talking to my wife and figuring out what was the best for our family because having a work life balance was huge in that decision,” said Ríos. “We're ready to open up our home to a baby and [this] would be a lot easier if I was home more.”

Ríos also views the opportunity to be a full-time strength and conditioning coach for the Sun as a step in the right direction for the WNBA and the strength and conditioning world. “All WNBA teams now have full-time strength and conditioning coaches,” said Ríos. “Four seasons ago, many WNBA teams had coaches like me or coaches who doubled in roles...but just the fact that all WNBA teams now want full time strength and conditioning coaches shows that the strength and conditioning industry has evolved and is [viewed] as important.”

Reflecting back on her time at the College, Ríos will truly miss it all - the experience of working with collegiate athletes, the lifelong friends she has made, and the community she has found. “I think you can hear how much I love the place...it was like a family when I came here from Bolivia, and a family when I transitioned into a coach,” said Ríos. “Luckily it's right down the street [from where I live] so I can still be in touch with coaches and do part time [work] with some in-season teams as they finish.”

While Ríos may be leaving the College as she departs for her full-time role with the Sun, she leaves behind a lasting legacy at the College. From developing and instituting the strength and conditioning program for varsity teams from scratch to creating and running early morning workouts for the College's student body during the dark times of the pandemic her presence will be missed.

As a parting word of advice for all students interested in seeking a career in sports and sports performance, Ríos emphasizes the importance of making connections. “I think connections are huge,” said Ríos. “Don't be scared to do the odd jobs...I started off with women's soccer [by] setting cones out for practice, so don't be scared to do the little things and make sure if it's something you want to do and are passionate about, pursue it, get involved do internships, ask to shadow people, and really be involved.” •

Rivals Meet Again: Thames River Classic Winter 2023

LILLA KATE TUCKER
SPORTS EDITOR

On November 28, Connecticut College's Men's Club Hockey team faced off against their Thames River rivals, the Coast Guard Academy Bears. This game marks a special tradition between the two, as Gavin Dowley '24 says. Students from both schools packed the stands in Dayton Arena, setting a rowdy environment for the soon to be physical, eventful game. Dowley described the atmosphere as "electric." He continued, stating that "everyone knows it's one of the largest sporting events that Conn has, and it is always a very well-attended game, so everyone is pretty stoked to go out and work their hardest to win."

Only 32 seconds into the first period, Coast Guard was able to put the puck in the back of the net, giving their team an early 1-0 lead. Despite the almost immediate Coast Guard edge, the Camels fought back, scoring the equalizer with 13:43 left in the period. Sophomore Atticus Roop's goal for Conn gave the team the necessary momentum to carry on with their Bear hunt. Slamming into the boards often, the two teams established this physical match-up. The first period continued with a series of icing calls and power plays for both sides. Around the 10 minute mark, Conn's goaltender, Evan Nilan '26, made an excellent save, keeping the game tied. After a series of attempts, the Camels were able to find the back of the net with a big hit on defense resulting in forward Atticus Roop's ability to steal the puck and slot it in with 6:12 remaining. However, the Bears did not let this decide the score at the end of the period. Only 12 seconds after the Camels' goal, Coast Guard's forward Kyle Jacobson slit in a rather easy goal that Conn could have prevented. The action-packed first period closed out with a series of passes, icing calls, and stops from both goaltenders. The score remained even at 2-2, and both teams were still hungry for more.

As the Zamboni cleared the rink, the Camels skated back out ready for the next 20 minutes. Both teams started out strong once more with numerous shots; however, both goaltenders were able to grab the puck and stop the play. An especially good save for the Camels came with 17:08 left, as Coast Guard rocketed the puck towards the net, forcing Nilan to block the shot to maintain the even scoreline. Shortly thereafter, Conn was able to pull ahead with 16-and-a-half minutes remaining in the period. Forward Atticus Roop applied pressure to the Bears' defense, allowing forward Charlie Kerrigan '27 to swoop in and net the puck, giving the Camels a 3-2 lead. Coast Guard quickly responded, tying the game back up with 14:39 remaining. Both teams continued to battle fairly evenly, skating up and

down the rink. Conn had a series of good chances but was unable to capitalize.

The fans grew rowdier, sensing that a goal was on the brink for the Camels. Sure enough, with 7:21 left, Conn's forward Cam Yee '25 received a puck off the wall and slotted it behind the goaltender to grow the Camels' lead. Following behind his teammate, forward and assistant captain Owen Stacey took a long range shot at the six-and-a-half minute mark and scored, increasing the Camels' lead to 5-2 over the Bears. Resulting from a two minute penalty against the Camels, Coast Guard took advantage of a power play edge. Finding

the puck right in front of the net, the Bears easily scored and closed the lead to only one point. The Camels were not done yet. At the 1:52 mark, forward Shane Jellison '26 demonstrated excellent stick work and found the back of the net, with an assist from defenseman Luke Begg '27. With the score now being 6-4, the Camels attempted to add another one to the scoreline, but Coast Guard's goaltender Stone Grant was able to prevent this, with a crazy save to close out the second period.

Conn started the third period with a strong power play with five on three for a few minutes, but nothing came to fruition as a result. The first five minutes of the period were fairly quiet. The physicality was ramped back up by forward Aidan Trainor '26 for the Camels, hitting a Bear and snapping his stick, reinstating the Camels' dominating presence in their home arena. The scoring silence was eventually broken by the Bears with 2:31 remaining, as forward Kyle Jacobson utilized his stickhandling and found the back of the net to bring Coast Guard within one of Connecticut College.

Despite a last ditch effort for a rally by pulling their goalie, the Bears ended up falling short, and the Camels became the

victors of the Thames River Classic once again.

The final whistle blew, and the crowd dressed in blue and white erupted in celebration. As the Coast Guard fans quickly exited Dayton Arena in disappointment, the PA systems played "We are the Champions," and the Camels celebrated their triumphant victory over their rivals from the nearby service academy. Dowley says that winning this game during his senior season was an "awesome feeling." "It really just comes down to who wants it more, a total battle, and this year I was happy we rose to the challenge and beat them." Once again, the Thames River Classic did not disappoint. Go Camels! Until next year! •



Photo Courtesy of Kevin Lieue

“Men’s Soccer Reflects on Valiant National Tournament Run”

WADE ANTHONY
OPINIONS EDITOR

As the whistle blew marking the end of 90 minutes of gritty and passionate play in Fredericksburg, VA, the Connecticut College Men’s Soccer team’s valiant NCAA National Tournament run came to an end. The Camels fell to Washington College (MD.) in their Elite Eight matchup on November 19th, giving up a goal to the Shoremen in the 28th minute. Despite battling gallantly for the remainder of the match, the team was unable to answer the first-half goal, ending in a final score of 1-0. The Camels finished the season with an impressive 12-2-7 record, and their trip to the Elite Eight marks the third in team history. While the squad came up short of their goal of a second national championship title (first achieved in 2021), the team’s remarkable season and tournament run will not soon be forgotten, particularly by senior members Matthew Scoffone ‘24 and Dylan Zane ‘24. We spoke with Scoffone and Zane about their experiences in the national championship tournament, and despite the season’s bittersweet conclusion, it is clear that they will be leaving a team with a bright future ahead of it.

How would you describe the overall experience of competing in the national tournament?

Matthew Scoffone (Class of 2024, Position: Forward, Team Captain, From: Thornton, PA): Competing in the NCAA tournament is unlike anything else. The goal of the regular season is to get you into the tournament. Once it actually starts, the energy is electric. Every game is win or go home, so they are super competitive, and winning is that much more enjoyable.

Dylan Zane (Class of 2024, Position: Forward, From: Montego Bay, Jamaica): You know, for the upperclassmen, it was our second time competing in the tournament, and in complete honesty both times around it almost feels normal...we know we belong there. The standard we set for the boys both in and out of season is extremely high and is meant to get us competing in the tournament each year so it’s just the reward for the hours of hard work we put into perfecting our craft.

What were some of the high points of the tournament? What were some of the challenges?

MS: The tournament was a roller coaster from the very start. The first three rounds all went into overtime, with both the round of 32 and Sweet 16 going into penalty shootouts. We faced challenges by giving up leads, but we were still able to get results which speaks to our team’s character.

DZ: Of course, throughout the tournament almost all the games we played we were first to grab the lead, which is always confidence enhancing. Taking the lead tends to build the team’s momentum but during the tournament a few times our opponent was able to even the score which was frustrating, causing us to go into overtime numerous times this year.

What do you believe were the team’s strengths that helped you in the season and tournament?

MS: I think the unity and resiliency of our team was a major factor in the successful season we had. The season was not always pretty. We went down many times. We gave up leads many times. However, it was the belief of our team that allowed us to continue to get results.



Photo Courtesy of Stephen Miller

DZ: Like previous years, it’s the depth we have on the bench! Numerous players can be put in and leave instant impacts on the pitch as well as keeping and even raising the level of the game. We also had a handful of first-years step up and claim a lot of minutes which helped propel us throughout the season. It is almost a staple of our game.

Were there any standout performances from your teammates during the tournament that you would like to highlight?

MS: I think most of our team played very well during the tournament, but I’d like to highlight Peter Silvester ‘25. In his career at Conn, we are 6-0 during penalty shootouts, and a huge reason is because of him. In both penalty shootouts during our tournament run this year, Peter saved at least one shot to help us move on.

DZ: Jack Creus ‘24, phenomenal season from the lad, consistently came in as a game-changing sub with impactful goals and assists to put the boys up many times in the season as well as in the tournament.

How do you think this tournament run will shape the team’s future?

MS: Making it far into the tournament gave the freshmen and sophomores experience that can help the team make another dangerous run next year. Also, after not making the tournament last season, it gives us more belief that we are a national championship-caliber team. The last time Conn lost in the Elite 8, we won the championship the following season.

DZ: Bittersweet ending for sure, but it will only be fuel for the boys this off-season leading into fall 24’ to leave their impact. Nothing but greatness for the future of this team.

What will you take away from this tournament run personally?

MS: This run has made me appreciate the hard work and sacrifice of so many guys on the team to get to where we ended up. Every person on the team had an impact whether they knew it or not, and I loved being part of a team with such selfless people. Shoutout to the coaching staff (Coach Burk, Storton, and Elliot). Without them, we couldn’t have made it as far as we did. •

Camel of the Edition: Abby Fernald '26

KEVIN LIEUE
MANAGING EDITOR

Camel of the Edition is a continuous series which seeks to highlight extraordinary Connecticut College athletes who have stood out for their recent performances.

Abby Fernald '26 recently was named to the All-NESCAC First-Team in women's cross-country for finishing fifth overall. The sophomore from Avon, Connecticut played a key role for the Camels as a scoring runner as they achieved program best finishes at the NESCAC Cross-Country Championships and at the NCAA Mideast Regional Championships and qualified for the NCAA DIII Cross-Country National Championships for the first team as a team in program history. Additionally, Fernald clocked the third-fastest 6K time of all-time (21:51) at the College's home cross-country course in the 2023 Connecticut College Invitational.

Recently, The College Voice caught up with Fernald to learn how she has improved her training to prevent injuries, how challenging herself in the classroom and in athletics helps her achieve balance, and how the team was able to handle stress and pressure to qualify for nationals.

Could you please introduce yourself?

I'm Abby Fernald, a member of the class of 2026. I'm a Psychology and Neuroscience major. I run mid-distance. Outside of the team I [am a part of] Caring Camels. We go to the TA school in Groton and work with people with intellectual disabilities who are transitioning between school and the world. I am also the One Love rep for the cross-country and track team and I'm also on SACC (Student Athletic Advisory Committee).

Talk me through your journey in sports and how and when did you decide to focus on running?

I played a lot of sports growing up. Anything from soccer, lacrosse, hockey, softball, and I wrestled for a year in high school. After I dealt with a hip injury my junior year of high school, it didn't make sense for me to keep playing hockey because I would've gotten injured again so I decided to focus on running and pursue that in college.

What was your recruitment process and how did you end up choosing Conn?

My recruitment process was definitely challenging because I dealt with a lot of injuries in high school so most of my [best] times were from early freshman year. It's a little difficult to convey yourself to coaches. Like, I promise I have potential but I just haven't gotten to run uninjured enough to show it. My times were definitely good enough to run in college but just nothing really impressive. Ultimately, I chose Conn because I thought it would be the best balance of academics and athletics. Also, Coach Ned [Bishop] is someone who believes a lot in potential and he wants anyone on the team who wants to be there and be dedicated to the team so having a coach like that where there is not a lot of pressure to perform was also really important to me. So I came to choose Conn because it had the best balance of rigorous academics and a supportive team environment where I could try to hopefully improve a lot.

How was your first cross-country season at Conn like?

My first cross-country season was definitely a big jump from high school to college. I definitely ran a lot more mileage in college than I did in high school. I was really not expecting to be anywhere near the top seven or top ten [on the team] so my big goal coming in was to make the Pre-Nationals Michigan trip which the top ten went on. I immediately went out on our first race and was number three on the team, which is the position I was able to hold on the team for a while. Unfortunately, the Thursday before a home meet I stepped off a curve wrong and fractured my ankle which ended my season but I was definitely proud of how my first season of cross-country went and I was happy with my choice of Conn as a school. It was a good break your leg test.

What did you do during this past summer to improve and prepare for the cross-country season?

I'd say I adhered more to the training plan than I did the previous summer. My schedule was a lot more flexible in terms of the amount of work I was doing and the time I had for training so it gave me a lot of freedom to focus on what my goals were for the fall. Some of the workouts towards the end of the summer were really rough and had me questioning if my summer training really paid off. But, I just kept in my mind summer miles equals October smiles and that ended up being true for me. Putting in the miles, putting in the work, and making sure I was listening to my body and cross training when I needed to was super important. Also focusing on what my goals are for this season [was important]. Even in the spring, I had in my mind that Nationals for cross country was a possibility for us as a team so just staying focused and having the commitment to other people helped me push through.

What have you done this season compared to in season's prior that have kept you more injury free?

I think for me a big thing is trusting myself to know what's right for my body. It took me a long time to learn what I can push through and what I shouldn't push through and being able to communicate this with Ned. We've definitely built a relationship of trust over the past year so he knows that when I tell him "Coach, I'm ending the workout here," it's not anything about me not wanting to finish it but just knowing that the rewards can be much greater if I'm healthy than if I injure myself in a workout because I've overworking myself.

How have you and the women's team improved so much over the past season, going from being 10th in the region last year to finishing 3rd this year, placing a program best 4th at NESCACs, and qualifying and competing at DIII Nationals?

I think a big thing is summer training. Ned's reminded us a few times that this is the best we've ever done with summer training. We're a group that really wants it. We were never supposed to be this good, because for the sophomore group, although Ned expected us to be good runners, he didn't expect us to be great runners. The amount of growth we've had in college has so far yielded results because everyone in this group is very dedicated to what they are doing and they are giving it all for their teammates. It comes down to having a mutual goal and supporting each other because nobody can do it by themselves so you have to have everyone on board. Also, we have 17 freshmen on the team so it was bound to make a positive impact on our ability to have some people score points. We have so much depth that we don't always need to have a consistent number one because someone else can pick up the slack. Encouraging everyone to be smart about their training and listening to their body was also important because we definitely had less injuries compared to last year.

Were you expecting to break 22 minutes in the 6k for the first time in your career at the home meet? What was this experience like?

I had no idea I was going to do that. My goal going into the season was to break 22:30, and when Ned and I talked about it he told me that this goal might be a little out of reach. I didn't have any idea during the race that I was running that fast because I've gotten in the mindset that the watch comes off when I get to the line. So having the mentality switch that I'm not running a certain pace like in a workout, I'm just running all out. I was just focused on moving up as much as I could during the race and focusing on picking people up in the race and powering up the last hill. Once I saw how close I was to breaking 22 minutes, it was a full out sprint. It is pretty incredible to be third on the all-time list at Harkness and I'm looking forward to running the course four more times and hopefully tak[ing] ...

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... down the school record.

How do you run in a cross-country race where it is a lot more chaotic than a track race? Do you have a plan going into races and does this vary depending on the course and who you are racing against?

I definitely think the plan varies depending on the course and the field of athletes running the race. I'm definitely aware of who else is racing and where I should be compared to other people. So if a certain person who I know is near me [in ability] I will try to move up and stay with them. For a lot of races, I'm more focused on starting conservatively and picking people off as I go because that gives me momentum that helps me keep going and gets in the heads of other [runners]. My focus has definitely been to try to run an even race and try to pick as many people off during races to get more points for the team. We set a lot of team goals for each meet where for certain meets we would want each person to be a net positive and pass at least one person in the last 1K. At regionals for example, passing one person in the last 1K determined whether or not we got third and definitely had a big impact on our ability to make nationals. That's who we are as a team, we're moving up the back and we don't quit.

How did your team prepare for the NESCAC Championships at Amherst knowing the course was a tough course with rolling hills and mud?

We are just a team that's going to crush it on the hills. I like to tell our team that we're tougher than all the other teams out there. On a day like that where it's hot, it's a super hilly tough course, and when we [have] falls on the start line it is going to come down to how bad we want it and how bad we are willing to push and what pain we're willing to endure. You have to be mentally prepared for the hills and not intimidated but just have the confidence of knowing this is going to hurt, but I've done this before, and I just need to get up this one hill. Trying to pass people on the hill was also something that was super important because getting passed on a hill is rough in a race so we're always focused on not just passing people on the hills but also running through the hill and pushing up the crest to create a gap.

Tell me about your experience racing at the NESCAC Championships on a tough course at Amherst where you placed 5th and claimed All-NESCAC First Team honors. Were you expecting to place this high and the team to finish a program best finish?

I think I was expecting to be on the brink of All-NESCAC's. I was thinking maybe I would be on the lower end of second team, although first team was always the goal. It was definitely a tough start to the race because as soon as the race started, I could see Alsacia [Timmerman '26] fall and I was like "shoot." But, I got out well and I was trying to tell Ned how everyone had fallen at the first corner. Someone stepped on the back of my shoe and I almost lost my shoe. From there it was just like stamp your foot down and get in a good position in the first K. Things definitely spread out a lot in my group because some people moved up and some people fell off the back. Right after the mile mark I could see Stephnie [Ager] from Wesleyan up a little ahead of me and I wasn't running with anyone so I told myself I need to maintain my position and stay focused in my position and see what I have left to give in the last K. It was definitely a grueling race because it was unseasonably warm so by the second loop I was getting a little dizzy. I kept telling myself I need to keep grinding and finish the race. Once you're in that position of just maintaining your position to finish first-team [All-NESCAC] you don't want to lose that so I was really focused on that. I was definitely [excited] for the high team place because I could tell very well where I was going to finish but it was really hard for me to know if the team was going to finish well because of how the race started. It was definitely impressive to finish fourth in the NESCAC because it is so competitive so it was definitely impressive beating so many historically strong teams.

How did your team deal with the expectations and stress of having to place high at regionals to be able to qualify for DIII Nationals as a team?

Lauren [Hino '24] had us watch a motivational video from before the race talking about how underdogs are hungry dogs which we used as a team slogan. We really wanted this for ourselves and for Ned because he had never gotten to bring a team to nationals. We were definitely a bubble team going in because nobody expected us to get third in the region. It's hard to see [media] say Conn is probably going to finish 6th in their region and not go to nationals. We weren't supposed to be 3rd in everyone else's opinion so being able to just go out, run our race, and be proud of where we finished no matter what relieved pressure. [After the race], being able to have that special experience of knowing almost immediately that we were going to nationals pretty much immediately was super special. I didn't have my best race at regionals which was a little disappointing but to be able to have five of us on the All-Region team and being able to celebrate and hug each other right in that moment was really awesome. [It was the] best post race feeling ever.

What was the experience competing at Nationals this year?

I think that the overwhelming goal was that this is just for fun. At regionals, the overwhelming goal was that we wanted to make nationals but we wanted the next one to just be for fun. We've obviously been working really hard all season but with a young team it's really hard to perform at nationals because none of us have competed that far into a season and you're already so tired when championship season starts so going an extra week is a new challenge. I think we finished right around where we were projected to, which is a little disappointing. I'd say personally I had expectations of doing a little better but I had been struggling with my iron levels towards the end of the season, which impacted my performance. But it was overall an incredible experience to be there with the team and hopefully we'll send one next year.

How has your sport helped you in your academic career and in life?

Sports are just such an important thing because it teaches you how to be committed to something, how to collaborate with people, and it is a team effort. Also, being able to have your two different times where you're focused on academics and athletics when you need to be is great. You get the endorphins which helps you to be more focused on your school work after practice. I think it's good to learn the time management [skills] of being a college athlete because it's definitely a huge time commitment. Being able to balance that with your school work and still be successful in both areas is really important for the future and joining the workforce. You want to be able to have the organizational skills and the time management skills that I think having to balance college athletics and academics creates. It can be a big factor to interact with others. As an employer, you know an athlete is going to be driven to achieve their goals. As long as you are working somewhere where you're aligned with the values, you're going to want to compete to do the best work you can do.

What are your hopes for the indoor and outdoor season ahead?

I definitely say on the team level for both seasons, placing higher than we did at New England's last season is a big team goal. Another big team goal is to try to get our DMR team to nationals in our indoor season. Personally, I have my eyes on setting some sort of school record. I definitely want to break 5 in the mile, see what I can [run] in the 3k, and go from there. For outdoor, I would love to maintain my spot on the 4x800 team and improve my school record. Last season we were ninth in the country for DIII so improving on that is a goal. I'll probably be focusing a lot on the 800 and the 1500 outdoors. An individual goal may be to try to make nationals as an individual which is dependent on my ability to stay uninjured.

Note: This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity. Please reach out to The College Voice (thecollegevoice@gmail.com or @the_collegevoice on Instagram) to nominate an athlete for the next edition! •

Oakland A's Fans Deserve Better Than John Fisher

FRITZ BALDAUF
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As a native of the San Francisco Bay Area, and a diehard sports fan, I feel compelled to write this. Several weeks ago the Oakland Athletics announced their intention to leave their home of the past 55 years on the east side of San Francisco Bay for Las Vegas, Nevada. This was the culmination of several years of speculation that the A's would look to greener pastures for their new stadium, leaving behind the admittedly outdated Oakland Coliseum. While a stadium upgrade certainly is in order, owner John Fisher's decision to abandon the city of Oakland and their loyal fans is an ugly stain on his already bad reputation and an ugly stain on Major League Baseball as a whole.

I am not an A's fan. I was born and raised across the bay in San Francisco as a lifelong fan of the San Francisco Giants. Although we certainly have a healthy and competitive rivalry with our green and gold clad cross-bay "rivals," I, like most Giants fans, have a soft spot for the A's. Our "rivalry" with them is far more about fun, regional bragging rights than it is about actual animosity (that's reserved for the Los Angeles Dodgers). The annual "Battle of the Bay" series between the Giants and A's are some of our most anticipated games every season. And now we're losing that because of one cheap, silver spooned millionaire's greed.

John Fisher, the A's owner, is notoriously cheap and—now that Daniel Snyder is out as the owner of the NFL's Washington Commanders—is almost without a doubt the number one choice for worst owner in professional sports. Since buying the A's in 2005, he has never spent the necessary money to make them into a winner. Although the famed sports movie "Moneyball" is based on an A's season several years before Fisher's purchase, the idea of a team that needed to be smarter than their competition to succeed due to their low spending has been an omnipresent theme for the A's since Fisher's purchase, and they have ranked in the bottom ten in MLB payroll every season since Fisher purchased them. Despite this ugly, penny-pinching form of ownership, the A's still managed to put together an incredible run of success. They were a playoff regular for most of the 2010s, winning the American League West multiple times. Stars such as Yoenis Cespedes, Josh Donaldson, Jon Lester, Matt Olson, Matt Chapman, Marcus Semien, Sonny Gray, and more came through Oakland, but none of them stayed. They were allowed to walk in free agency, or traded for pennies on the dollar before they reached free agency, all because Fisher was unwilling to open his pocket book and spend the money to keep them.

This is a far cry from the glory days of the A's. Under legendary owner Charlie Finley, the A's were the team of the 1970s. They won three straight World Series titles in the early 70's, regularly spent more than any other team in baseball, and boasted baseball legends such as Catfish Hunter, Rollie Fingers, Campy Campaneris, Sal Bando, Reggie Jackson, and Vida Blue. My mom grew up in the East Bay right around this time as an A's fan and has told me stories about going to A's World Series games as a young fan with her dad. Thankfully for the happiness of my childhood, my dad baptized me in the orange and black of the Giants (who have won three titles in my lifetime while the A's last title was in 1989).

The bigger issue over the past decade has been the A's stadium. Although it certainly has character, the Oakland Coliseum is widely regarded as one of the worst facilities in all of professional sports. I personally have a soft spot for it in the same way that I did for Candlestick Park (where I attended many 49ers games as a kid and where the Giants played before I was born), but it certainly is a stark contrast to the Giants' beautiful Oracle Park, or MLB's other newest venues, such as the Texas Rangers' Globe Life Park or

the Atlanta Braves' Truist Park.

Fisher and the A's have wanted a new stadium for years but have been unwilling to privately fund a new stadium. This is a big problem in California, where very few stadiums receive significant public funds, especially recently. Fisher was clearly looking for the city of Oakland to cover the costs of building a new stadium, but the city was understandably unwilling to do so. Oakland has plenty of other issues right now, and if you are rich enough to own a professional sports team (professional sports teams in America have appreciated in value significantly since Fisher bought the A's), you should be willing and able to fund your own new stadium. The city of Oakland negotiated with Fisher and the A's President (a Fisher puppet) Dave Kaval, offering up stadium sites at Howard Terminal, but it has become more and more apparent over the past few years that the A's were negotiating in poor faith.

What makes the whole situation even more sad is that the A's are the third team to leave Oakland in the last five years. The NBA's Golden State Warriors moved across the bay the San Francisco in 2019 (this is a bit different from Las Vegas because it's only a 15-minute drive across the Bay Bridge, and it's also worth noting that the Warriors' new arena, the Chase Center was completely privately funded by their ownership group; take notes, John) and the NFL's Raiders left for Vegas in 2020 for the brand new Allegiant Stadium.

Fisher has gotten approval for the move from MLB's owners and MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred. Not only is he screwing over a great fan base and a great city, but he's also bad for the sport. He doesn't spend to make his team better, would rather trade away the homegrown stars that they develop and win with than pay them and keep winning, and has essentially run the A's like a used car business for his entire tenure as owner.

A's fans are a rowdy, fun, loyal bunch who deserve better than Fisher. This has always been true, since they would always lose their favorite players after a few years of success due to his cheap ways, but it has never been more true in light of the recent relocation announcement. Oakland fans put together an incredible campaign over this past season as Fisher's intention to move the team to Vegas became apparent. Partnering with fans of every MLB team, "Sell the team!" chants rang out in the Coliseum at every game and at every stadium that the A's visited throughout the season. They rang out at the All Star Game in Seattle this past July. Slogans and posters were plastered all around the Coliseum but to no avail. A's fans also received significant support from Schools Over Stadiums, a group started by Nevada school teachers hoping to prevent the use of public funds from going to Fisher's new stadium in Las Vegas, which is itself another issue.

As for how the A's will do in Las Vegas from a fan base perspective, one only needs to look at their former (and now future) neighbors, the Raiders. When in Oakland, the Raiders had one of the most passionate, rowdy (sometimes scary) fanbases in the NFL. As a 49ers fan growing up, you would hear some Niners fans say that they wouldn't wear red and gold into the Coliseum when the Niners played the Raiders in Oakland. The Niners played the Raiders in Vegas last season, and the crowd was so red that it looked, felt and sounded like a 49ers home game. This would have never happened in Oakland, but this has been the case for the vast majority of Raiders games since they relocated, no matter who the opponent. Though they may have increased their revenue by leaving Oakland for Vegas, the Raiders abandoned an incredible fanbase who had always loved them and supported them despite their years of ineptitude on the field, selling their soul in the process. The A's are about to make the same, ugly mistake. From me to you, John Fisher, shame on you, you cheap, greedy scumbag. •

First Time in Program History: Women's Cross-Country Competes in NCAA DIII Championship

KEVIN LIEUE
MANAGING EDITOR
EVAN YOUNG
SPORTS EDITOR

For the first time in the team's history, Connecticut College's Varsity Women's Cross Country competed in the NCAA Division III National Championships. The team, led by co-captains Lauren Hino '24 and Emma Pyles '24, was able to qualify

for nationals on Saturday, November 18, in Newville, PA, following their team's third place finish at the Mideast Regionals.

Competing in the championship for her second time individually, Hino was very proud of the team's accomplishment. "It was a lot of fun," said Hino. "It was really great to finally go as a team, we've been working towards that for the past couple of decades and it was a really great weekend with a lot of great performances...I was really happy with how it turned out."

The Camels placed 28th out of 32 teams in their nationals debut, finishing ahead of Bates, Carnegie Mellon, UC Santa Cruz, and TCNJ. In a tough and hilly course, Carleton placed first in a very close call followed by NYU and the University of Chicago in second and third.

For the Camels, Alsacia Timmerman '26 crossed the finish at 22:48.4 at 141st place, followed by Edin Sisson '24 and Lauren Hino '24, who finished at 22:53.7, and 22:57.1, placing 160th and 171st. Abby Fernald '26 and Abigail Williams '27 had back-to-back finishes at 213th and 214th, rounding out the scoring for the Camels. Last, but certainly not least, Grace McDonough '26 and Alexa Estes '26 crossed the finish line at 222nd and 276th. Multiple Camel runners made up countless places in the race, with Timmerman passing 98 runners en route to her strong finish as the team's top scorer.

All five scoring runners at nationals were also recipients of All-Region honors after having placed in the top 35 of individual runners in the NCAA Mideast Regional on November 11. At regionals, the Camels came in third place, a program best finish. As a result of their phenomenal performance, the team was able to qualify for the NCAA Championship for the first time in program history, whereas only individual athletes such as Hino have qualified in the past. "It was nice being able to feel my toes this year since it wasn't freezing temperatures," said Hino about her second appearance. "I was definitely not as nervous as last year but it was nice having the team there and getting

around with the other girls."

The Women of the Desert enjoyed an impressive season from start to finish. The Camels opened their season with impressive results at the Bryant and UMass Dartmouth Invitationals, finishing seventh and third only behind NCAA Division I teams. In large meets against various nationally ranked teams, the team achieved impressive finishes. Despite their team bus breaking down the night before the Paul Short Invitational, the Camels finished nineteenth, behind only five other nationally-ranked DIII programs and in front of many DI and DII schools including the University of New Hampshire, American University, and Holy Cross. At the Connecticut College Invitational, the

home team placed sixth in a competitive field of 26 teams, only behind five teams ranked higher than them in the national rankings.

In the postseason, the team posted postseason best finishes of fourth and third respectively, at the NESCAC Championships and Mideast Regionals. At the NESCAC Championships, the team was led to a program high finish by Abby Fernald, who placed fifth and earned All-NESCAC honors despite a fall at the start line wiping out three of the Camels runners. A large part of the success was led by Fernald, who was the team's top runner in four of the team's meets, including

a 6K time of 21:51, ranking third best all-time in program history at the College's home meet. Additionally, the Camels enjoyed incredible consistency from Fernald, Sisson, and Williams, who finished in the scoring positions for the team at all seven meets which they competed in.

The women's cross-country team made a strong effort at nationals, making program history, and setting a higher bar for the team itself. Given the close bonds and competitive nature that the Camels under the tutelage of Head Coach Ned Bishop '84 have developed, it may very well be possible that they will be strong contenders in NCAA DIII Women's Cross Country for many more years to come. •



Mozart is Dead, but Classical Music Sure Isn't: A Night with the Greater Bridgeport Symphony

EMMA DINEKSPIEL
ARTS EDITOR

Inaccessible. Outdated. Pretentious. Is there even a space for classical music in our contemporary world? On November 11, the Greater Bridgeport Symphony (GBS) undoubtedly made a home for the classics in Connecticut while simultaneously disproving these negative stereotypes about the genre. The concert, entitled *Mingling with Mozart*, bridged the divide between past and present through an innovative program featuring some of Mozart's most renowned pieces along with Flo Menezes's "Mozart Trans-criations."

GBS hosts their concerts at the beautiful Klein Memorial Auditorium in Bridgeport, Connecticut. This historical theater boasts excellent acoustics and space for over 1400 audience members. For the November show, orange and yellow fall leaves were projected behind the orchestra which casted an autumnal glow onto the musicians.

Mingling with Mozart was the second of five concerts in GBS's 2023-2024 season, each of which strives to build and cultivate relationships with the local community. Because this concert coincided with Veteran's Day, the program began with a rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner." Members of the audience sang along with the ensemble's operatic soloists in order to honor veterans both in the building and in the greater community.

"GBS is an important cultural and educational instrument that exists to support this community's effort to bring not only music and entertainment to its audiences, but also to ensure that future audiences have access to and enjoy orchestral music," said conductor, Eduardo Leandro. Because of this, the first concert this season not only featured a very modern 20th century program, but it also highlighted multiple music students from the local area, including one 10-year-old percussionist. For *Mingling with Mozart*, the ensemble asked audience members to donate canned food and nonperishable items prior to the show in order to support the Bridgeport Rescue Mission which provides both pantry items and hot meals to local families.

The true program began with Mozart's Overture to "The Marriage of Figaro." This piece requires extreme precision within the string section, particularly with the carefully articulated bowing at the beginning. Despite this challenge, the orchestra truly sounded like one instrument working to create a beautiful mosaic of textures. The winds and brass brought volume and energy which gave life to the melody.

Next, the two soloists came to the stage to perform excerpts from some of Mozart's most notable operas: *Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, and *The Magic Flute*. Soprano, Jessica Rizzio, and baritone, Thomas Woodman, not only sang their solos, but also performed them. Despite the small space they had to perform, they provided a semi-staged rendition of their excerpts. This was successful in increasing accessibility to the music. One of the common problems with opera for audience members is that its language and tone can

stifle the plot and increase confusion. This was not true for *Mingling with Mozart*. Audience members laughed alongside performers when Leandro himself temporarily abandoned his role as conductor to sing an excerpt from *Figaro*.

On the excerpts, Leandro said, "The idea is to show the influence that opera had in his orchestral, and vice-versa, so that an aria or duet almost sounds like a symphonic movement, and his symphony sounds as alive as opera." The theme of building bridges between genre, time, and communities was essential to the performance, but Leandro also made a concerted effort to build bridges between audience and performer, musician and soloist, and conductor and artist.

Another highlight of the opera excerpts came in the last duet of *The Magic Flute*. Rizzio and Woodman entered the stage in comical costumes: Rizzio with a large feather boa and Woodman with a top hat adorned with colorful feathers. They performed this final, hilarious movement in

English as opposed to in its original German which allowed for the audience to pick up on the comical dialogue between the two soloists.

Following a brief intermission, a smaller orchestra returned to the stage to perform "Mozart Trans-Criations" by Flo Menezes. Composed in 1986, this 8-minute piece brought Mozart into the modern world. Beginning with a simple melody that Mozart originally composed on the keyboard, the piece became increasingly augmented as canons shifted keys and styles. Slow glissandos played beneath jarring harmonics to create a hauntingly beautiful atmosphere. "I didn't know I was at a jazz concert," I heard a man behind me joke at the end of the piece.

The concert concluded with Mozart's Symphony No. 41 in C Major ("Jupiter"). This was one of the last symphonies Mozart ever wrote, and it helped to bring the concert to a happy conclusion. "Jupiter" exists as a culmination of Mozart's works which gave inspiration to countless classical composers since. Thus, it serves as another kind of bridge between past and present. The highlight of the symphony was the second movement "Andante cantabile (F major)" which featured muted violins and melancholic melodies. The layers of instrumentation created an ethereal sound.

One of the most common taboos in classical music is that people are not supposed to clap between symphonic movements. Often any sound between movements is considered disrespectful and might result in harsh glares from fellow audience members. There was none of this pretension at *Mingling with Mozart*. When audience members were moved by the music, they conveyed it with applause even if it was between movements. Just as Leandro announced before "Jupiter," "This is still your orchestra, so use it as such."

The symphony will be performing their last show of 2023 on December 16. The program, entitled *Uniting at Yuletide*, will feature popular holiday music as well as singalongs and classical selections. •



Courtesy of Emma Dinkelspiel

Camels Abroad: Sarah Smith

EMMA DINKELSPIEL
ARTS EDITOR

Major(s), Minor(s), center or pathway:
Double Majoring in Environmental Studies and Anthropology, Minor in English

What program are you enrolled in:

Umbra Institute in Perugia, Italy

Why did you choose this program?

The Institute offers a pathway program called Food, Sustainability, and Environmental Studies. I was never involved in food studies prior to studying here, so I was excited at the chance to expand my Environmental knowledge through the new perspective of understanding global food systems and how this connects to my majors.

How have you adjusted to life abroad?

The days moved slowly at first as most orientations do, but I adjusted to life here much quicker than I thought. Umbra made sure of that. Because the institute is so small, the program took us all out for dinners, small events and city tours to help us adjust and become familiar with what's around us, something I found incredibly helpful.

What is your housing situation? What is that like?

I live with three roommates in our own apartment on a main street. Me and one other roommate have our own rooms, and two others share a double. We live below a small museum and most other apartments in our building are housed by other Umbra students. Personally, I love my situation because it has allowed me to get to know many students that I do not have classes with. It does, however, mean my interactions with locals are a bit more limited.

What is a typical day like? Is there anything similar to Conn? Is there anything very different?

Perugia and Conn are one and the same in my opinion. Both are small institutes with the majority of their students from the northeast, something I was absolutely not expecting going into this pro-

gram. Both have professors that are primarily interested in seeing their students succeed and getting to know them as much as they can. A typical day for me consists of two classes every morning, grabbing lunch with my friends, going to class again and then dinner plans which take up most of the night. There are a lot of program events on a weekly basis, especially for my food program. This entails cheese, olive oil, beer and wine tastings, along with trips to local businesses and restaurants to conduct ethnographic interviews.

Are you involved in anything outside of classes?

I initially came into the program with the intention to volunteer at the Perugia garden through the school, but what I didn't realize was that I can only do that during very specific hours, hours when I happen to have class. But there's so much to do it's hard to find the time!

What is the best part about being abroad?

I remember always joking about how people say they change and grow so much from being abroad, but it's absolutely true. I've gotten to travel to places I never thought possible and have met some incredible people along the way.

What is the biggest challenge?

Dealing with homesickness in a brand new place.

What advice would you give to people preparing to go away?

Slow down and enjoy where you are. At times it can feel like there's a rush to see everything and do everything for the short time that you are here, and also there's a sense of guilt when you want to rest. Everyone has different ways they want to travel, spend money, experience things and go about their lives, and it is almost never exactly the same. See what you can, but be present.

What is something you wish you had known that you know now?

I wish I had known that things are not going to go according to plan, and that that's okay. •

Cody Johnson's Album "Leather" Adds to Country Music's Incredible Year

FRITZ BALDAUF
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

2023 has been a massive year for country music, with lots of exciting album releases from the genre's biggest stars.

Country's two most popular stars at the moment, Luke Combs and Morgan Wallen, each released incredibly successful hit albums earlier this year. Combs' "Gettin' Old" album has the potential to be an all time classic, and Wallen's "One Thing at a Time" has dominated the charts for multiple months (although I personally found it to be a disappointing step in the wrong direction for the mercurial star). This year has also seen the continued rise of multiple exciting young artists with impressive album releases like Lainey Wilson (Bell Bottom Country), Megan Moroney (Lucky), and Riley Green (Ain't My Last Rodeo). Most notably, Zach Bryan has released two albums, a self titled album and Boys of Faith, which have added momentum to his meteoric rise of the past eighteen months.

One of the recent, and most exciting additions to this list of great country music to come out this year is "Leather," a twelve song release from Cody Johnson. The album was released in full on November 3 and has received positive reviews across the board. "Leather" is Johnson's seventh studio album. Johnson, a native of Texas, stays true to his

neo-traditional country roots, with a wide variety of topics covered in the twelve tracks. As with his prior six studio albums, the inspiration that he draws from country music legends such as George Strait and Brooks & Dunn is plain to see. Here is a quick review and rating of each of the twelve songs in "Leather."

Track 1: Work Boots

This song looks at an internal dialogue between the protagonist of the song and his boots as he tries to muster up the courage to go and ask a girl at the bar to dance with him. The writing is clever, and the tune and beat are catchy; it's reminiscent of Johnson's 2014 hit "Dance Her Home," and it takes a similar approach to a love song as Jake Owen's recent song "My Boots Miss Yours," albeit with much more effectiveness.

Rating: 8/10

Track 2: Double Down

Drinking to get over heartbreak is a common trope in country music, and this song fits that bill. Johnson uses the title to both emphasize how much his protagonist misses his old lover, but also to of course represent his dealing with this pain by "getting a double down." It's a decent...

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Cody Johnson's Album "Leather" Adds to Country Music's Incredible Year

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... song, but nothing new or special.

Rating: 6.5/10

Track 3: *Watching My Old Flame*

Another heartbreak song, but this one has the potential to be one of Johnson's best, not just in "Leather," but in his entire catalog. The slow melody and subtle fiddle in the background set the mood for dealing with seeing your ex. Again, Johnson masterfully uses the title as a double meaning, mournfully stating that "It's the hardest thing watching my old flame go out," representing the challenge of trying to move on but also seeing your old lover out and about. The emotion pours out of each chorus, and strikes a meaningful, relatable note for anyone who has gone through heartbreak.

Rating: 9.5/10

Track 4: *That's Texas*

An upbeat ode to his home state, "That's Texas" is a catchy song that sounds like it could've easily come out of the 90's country scene, and is especially reminiscent of Little Texas's 1993 hit, "God Blessed Texas." It glorifies the little things that Johnson loves about his home state, with references to Texas country music legends such as George Strait, Robert Earl Keen, and Alabama's 1984 hit song about the state "If You're Gonna Play in Texas (You Gotta Have a Fiddle in Your Band)." The song is catchy and fun, and is certain to be well played on road trips, but it isn't particularly memorable otherwise.

Rating: 7.5/10

Track 5: *Dirt Cheap*

This is country music at its sentimental best. Johnson tells the emotional story of a farmer who is asked to sell his farm to land developers, and slowly and emotionally explains why he won't. He refers to sentimental memories connected to his home, including but not limited to how he watched his daughter grow up there, how she still comes back home, and pointing to where his dog is buried. The song strikes a sentimental, "home is where the heart is" note, and drives home the point that there are some things that are worth more than money.

Rating: 10/10

Track 6: *Jesus Loves You*

When looking at the title of this song, you would think it would be just another generic song in the long list of country songs about faith, but it is anything but. It ominously tells the story of a criminal breaking into a protagonist's house, and his anger over it and the fear it causes his daughters. He speaks to the criminal directly in the song, conveying his anger, but stating that he can redeem himself by finding Jesus while in jail, and leaving an ominous threat that if he ever threatens his family again, he's going to "meet [Jesus] face to face." It's a haunting song, from the story, to the slow, ominous, almost evil sounding instrumentals, but it's incredibly well done, and a riveting, well told story. For an artist who predominantly sings about love gone right, love gone wrong, and rodeos, "Jesus Loves You" is a significant deviation from Johnson's normal style, but it is masterfully done.

Rating: 9.8/10

Track 7: *Whiskey Bent (feat. Jelly Roll)*

Struggling with alcohol is another common theme in country music, and Johnson addresses the challenges that people face in getting over alcoholism. His collaboration with Jelly Roll is an unlikely duo, but it

surprisingly works decently well. The song tackles a meaningful topic, and is reminiscent of Luke Combs' song "Joe" from earlier in the year, but is somewhat repetitive, and not as well done as that Combs track.

Rating: 6.8/10

Track 8: *Leather*

An ode to the American cowboy, the album's title track is everything that Cody Johnson is about as a country singer. A cowboy and former rodeo competitor himself, Johnson sings from the strength, character, and commitment it takes to be a cowboy, drawing a regular analogy that cowboys are made of leather because they are rough and imperfect, but similar to leather are resilient and have the ability to bend yet never break under pressure. The song ends up with a surprising yet fitting yodel from Johnson, and the slow melody only builds on the emotion and sentimentality he's clearly trying to convey.

Rating: 9.5/10

Track 9: *People in the Back*

This is clearly meant to be a concert crowd pleaser, shouting out fans sitting in the cheapest seats who came to see him live, specifically the blue collar communities that make up a huge portion of the country music fan base. The beat is quick, catchy, fun and relatable, and feels like the type of song that is good in general, but will be great live in concert.

Rating 8/10

Track 10: *Long Live Country Music (feat. Brooks & Dunn)*

In an ode to country music as a whole, there aren't many artists better to collaborate with than the legendary 90's country duo Brooks & Dunn. With Johnson and Ronnie Dunn trading off on the vocals, the song celebrates all of the country music themes that the genre is known, loved and (sometimes, unfortunately) mocked for. There are lots of subtle and not so subtle references to past country superstars, famous country single hits, and more. It's nothing out of the box in terms of creativity or memorability, but for any country fan it's an ode to everything that we love about country music, specifically the glory of 90's country music.

Rating: 8.8/10

Track 11: *The Painter*

For all of the songs on the album, this one has received the most acclaim since the album was released. Johnson even performed it at the recent CMA Awards. An ode to a lover who made the protagonist's life better, the song is reminiscent of some of Johnson's best love songs from his previous albums, such as "Diamond in my Pocket" and "With You I Am." The melody is beautiful, with a swift beat and great instrumentals.

Rating: 9.5/10

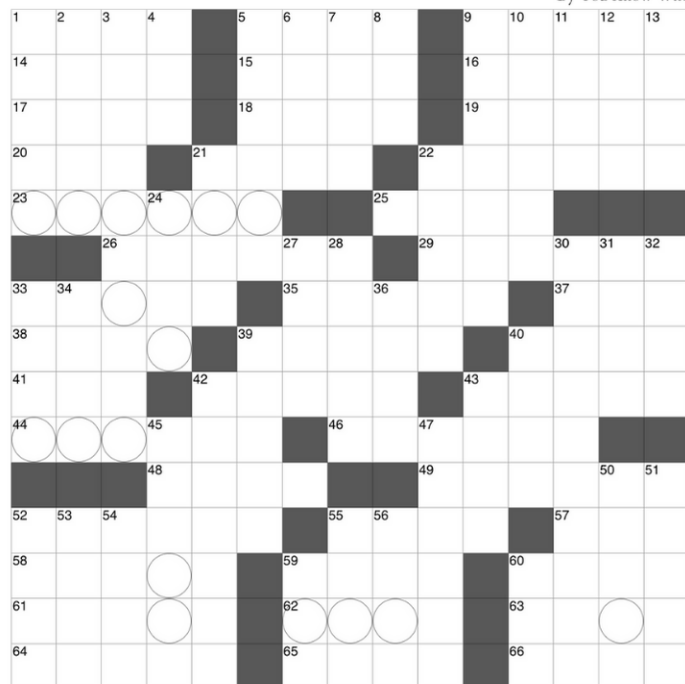
Track 12: *Make Me a Mop*

This is a slow, reflective end to the album, where Johnson reflects on how we all make mistakes and say things that we regret, and that nobody is perfect. The song slowly evolves into a message about how despite these mistakes and regrets, all that a person can do is try and be the best person that they can. It's a great message delivered over a slow, melancholy melody, with quiet, de-emphasized instrumentals. It's not a catchy, up tempo end to the album, but it feels appropriate given the general nature of the album, and the general nature of the songs that feel most prominent in "Leather."

Rating: 8/10

Overall Album Rating: 8.49/10 •

By You Know Who



Across

- 1. "Highway to Hell" band
- 5. Annoying small bug
- 9. Van de Van of Spurs
- 14. The "C" of LLC
- 15. '23 German Studies grad form England
- 16. Benjamins
- 17. Nicolas II, for example
- 18. Double Stuf cookie
- 19. Location for pin on a suit
- 20. Heading over text
- 21. Love in Sevilla
- 22. Steve of "The Office"
- 23. Someone you should all know
- 25. Corn syrup brand
- 26. Nureyev of ballet fame
- 29. New Jersey international airport
- 33. Female friend in Guadalajara
- 35. Constellation with three star belt
- 37. First word of Dante's "Inferno"
- 38. British boys

- 39. Mushroom stem
- 40. Becks former team
- 41. Meghan Markel's former blog, "The ____"
- 42. Denim portmanteau
- 43. Rugby tip off equivalent
- 44. Three strikes in baseball
- 46. Horoscope signs
- 48. Reed instrument that sounds like a duck
- 49. Common lung condition
- 52. Home of Pele
- 55. South Asian cultural term
- 57. Fleming, creator of James Bond
- 58. "Captain America: ____ War"
- 59. Michael of Superbad
- 60. Proof of purchase: Abbr.
- 61. Sinister old woman in folklore
- 62. Ugandan dictator
- 63. Ladies or girls
- 64. Lightly burn
- 65. Central points
- 66. Weaving tool

Down

- 1. Job of Ben Stiller, Brad Pitt, and Hugh Grant
- 2. Women's magazine
- 3. Overpass that moves for ships
- 4. Emergency lifesaving procedure
- 5. Juliet's garden lover in 2011 film
- 6. Robert De ____
- 7. Popular laptop brand
- 8. Boxing decision, for short
- 9. F1 team based in Surrey, England
- 10. Alignment of ducks
- 11. Deal with

- 12. Bus service in Greece
- 13. Shout
- 21. Verdi opera
- 22. Row boat
- 24. Multiple 5 across
- 27. J.R.R. Tolkien series, Abbr.
- 28. You're doing great sweetie!
- 30. Society without government
- 31. Contact lens solution brand
- 32. German supermodel, Heidi
- 33. Step below soprano
- 34. Primary
- 36. ____ facto
- 39. Yucca's cousin
- 40. Doctor exam
- 42. Silver London tube line
- 43. "yes, yes" en español
- 45. Verb for festering wound
- 47. Water brand
- 50. Acer saccharum, colloquially
- 51. Jittery
- 52. Hidden email recipients
- 53. Fenty creator nickname
- 54. Stratford-upon-____
- 55. Test track
- 56. Dubelier icon and patriarch
- 59. Half-____ (coffee order)
- 60. Some NFL linemen

*Use the circled letters to reveal a secret message

**T
C
V**



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thecollegevoice@conncoll.edu

In Loving Memory of National Squash Month

Austin and Sabilah

ACROSS

- 1 Venezuelan musician found in "bar carts"
- 5 ___ Ababa, capital of Ethiopia
- 10 Layered salad with hard boiled eggs and bacon
- 14 Roger Rabbit or Phineas e.g
- 15 "So what?"
- 16 Opera solo
- 17 Today, tomorrow
- 18 One calf, served
- 19 She has frozen custard
- 20 Cannon balls and mortars e.g.
- 23 Squash implement
- 24 Opposites over hypotenuses
- 27 Travel as a band
- 28 Stringy squash
- 32 Often doubled vowels
- 34 It comes before carte or mode
- 35 Xiaoping, Chinese leader
- 36 Why you pee after sex
- 39 Merchants
- 42 Steely ___
- 43 Brothers of Daughters
- 45 WooSox or some Duracells
- 46 Tree blood
- 48 Shouldn't (squash species)?
- 51 Tie up, as a ship

- 54 Speed or trick plural suffix
- 55 Squash v.
- 58 Goes off the cuff on the beat
- 62 Tirade
- 64 Arthur Conan or Paloma
- 65 Monopoly card game
- 66 Cheese in 10A
- 67 Mad scientist's glassware
- 68 Conn's peer backcountry guide
- 69 Children throw them
- 70 Perceive
- 71 Gueverras on protest signs

DOWN

- 1 Average
- 2 Intimidate like a lion
- 3 Bulk store
- 4 Oldie, but a goodie
- 5 Make ___ (realtor's success)
- 6 Goose warmed comforters
- 7 Arboretum pests
- 8 "Perhaps"
- 9 Narcissist's love
- 10 Lugged
- 11 Like a first-year after Welcome Weekend
- 12 Jokester's commitment
- 13 Sheep sound
- 21 Flies or worms
- 22 Sorta

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- 25 Volcanic mother of monsters
- 26 Ratify
- 29 Nation closet to Guam
- 30 It's often pale
- 31 Amazonian deadliest catches
- 33 Way to prepare a tuna
- 36 Useful cords
- 37 Solicit
- 38 What Ralph breaks in the sequel
- 40 Minecraft party connector
- 41 Metroid heroine
- 44 Low cloud
- 47 Position for new PhDs
- 49 The sixth sense
- 50 AIDS indicator

- 52 Kool-aid exclamation
- 53 Connect
- 56 Actress Witherspoon
- 57 Public school laptops
- 59 Navy personnel submersibles
- 60 ___ gras, dish
- 61 Rivera or Gosling
- 62 Unfriendly facade
- 63 Boxer Muhammed