

Connecticut College

Digital Commons @ Connecticut College

2017-2018

Student Newspapers

12-5-2017

College Voice Vol. XLI No. 6

Connecticut College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/ccnews_2017_2018

Recommended Citation

Connecticut College, "College Voice Vol. XLI No. 6" (2017). *2017-2018*. 5.
https://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/ccnews_2017_2018/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Newspapers at Digital Commons @ Connecticut College. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2017-2018 by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Connecticut College. For more information, please contact bpancier@conncoll.edu.
The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1977

Shelter Proves Crucial in Opioid Epidemic

ABIGAIL ACHESON
STAFF WRITER

Deaths from opioid overdoses have quadrupled since 1999. The National Institute on Drug Abuse estimates that over 64,000 Americans died from a drug overdose in 2016 alone, and almost half (46%) of the American population has a family member or close friend with a current or past drug addiction according to Pew Research Center. Drug addiction is a difficult and multifaceted issue that requires a similar solution. While it seems that there will be no substantive federal action in the foreseeable future, Connecticut College students, New London residents and non-profit organizations are working to bring some relief to those recovering from addiction locally.

The effort comes following a disturbingly frequent pattern of overdose deaths in sober homes—private residences advertised to be safe, structured, and drug-free environments which individuals recovering from drug addiction can utilize to transition back to normal life. Because neither the Federal nor the State Government of Connecticut regulate these sober houses, landlords often take advantage of the fact that they can rent out properties to more people and make a larger prof-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Photo courtesy of Lauren Baretta

Battling Food Insecurity in N.L. County, One Garden at a Time

LAUREN BARETTA
OPINIONS EDITOR

When I first arrived at the Giving Garden in Mystic, CT, I wasn't sure whether I was in the right place. There was a parking lot and a visitor's center, but no garden to be seen. I cautiously walked up a gravel path lined with stone walls—this was adjacent to Stonington after all—and stumbled upon a set of rock stairs and a chicken coop before noticing a large hoop house fronted by rows of cabbages, lettuces, radishes, and more.

An older man in belted jeans, a tucked-in flannel, and a faded ushanka cap greeted me with a handshake and a confident grin. In February 2014, Craig Floyd, whose go-to email signature is “farm on,” founded the

Giving Garden. As Floyd put it, “If we don't help our neighbors, what the hell are we?”

Floyd classified the garden as a “no till, no-spray, high-brix, biointensive, biodynamic” one that aims to bring the nutrition back to food. Floyd furthered, “Food has lost 50% of its nutritional quality since 1940 and it loses another 30% within three days of coming out of the field.” By promoting a chemical-free approach to gardening, Floyd claimed that he has managed to increase the nutritional value of the food he produces exponentially.

Throughout our interview, Floyd gave me insight into the crystals he buries beneath the soil and the healing ceremonies he pe-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Net Neutrality Under Grave Threat

CAMERON DYER-HAWES
CONTRIBUTOR

No matter how snugly it sits in the pocket of corporations, the federal government is still responsible for protecting citizens from the type of unashamed indecency of expected exploits that would come with the repeal of net neutrality. The Obama-era regulation ensures that internet providers are not allowed to create tiered access to the web. In other words, net neutrality promises the general public a free and open internet. The internet is one of the few bastions of American society that is not marked by the melancholic violence and despair of massive class divide. It is a place where information is accessed with a freedom not provided in any other sector of American life and represents an imperfect but viable vision of the mythological “American Dream.” Even if you are relegated to the underbelly of American society, on the internet you can be anybody, access information from anywhere, and pursue money-making ventures that would be impossible in the “real world.” The internet can provide an escape from the increasingly totalitarian socioeconomic environment of the United States. It is a space of flashing images, sounds, stories, texts, and personas that conflict with the stagnant depression that many Americans face everyday.

Net neutrality ensures the internet is accessed on equal terms, and the removal of its equality threatens

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

IN THIS ISSUE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2017

NEWS

Jacee Cox considers the future of financial aid as tuition costs increase on page 5.

NEWS

Dana Gallagher highlights Spanish language storytelling on page 6.

OPINIONS

Maia Hibbett discusses historical amnesia and the relevancy of Japanese internment on page 7.

ARTS

Riley Meachem and Emir Kulluk find entertainment over quality in recent feature films on page 12.

On Staying Vigilant, at Home and at Large

This issue marks the conclusion of my second semester as editor in chief of the *Voice*, meaning I'm two-thirds of the way done. Next semester, I'll have to focus more of my energy on mentoring the next generation of *Voice* editors, rather than adhering to my typically preferred method of sucking up as much work as possible for myself.

While my problem-solving approaches might lean toward the solitary, I of course could not do all of this myself. Most people don't see the inner workings of this newspaper before it gets printed every week, but as you might imagine, it relies on a lot of communication and cooperation. The current team of *Voice* editors has been, hands down, the best I've ever worked with, and I was still extraordinarily impressed with them this issue. The content they've gathered is strong and relevant: you'll find commentary on current, pressing topics like net neutrality and the Keystone Pipeline, coverage of community welfare efforts in New London, and student takes on artistic works on campus and beyond.

But, while we've gathered a lot of great content here, limitations of time and space mean that we can't treat every topic. There are some key things missing from this issue.

We're missing a chance to discuss the Senate tax bill, which slipped into approval just before 2 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 2. Passing by just two votes, the bill is characterized not only by the impediments it poses for social services and the tactful loopholes it offers to businesses and religious interests, but also by its haste. Senate Democrats lamented that they were given insufficient time to read the bill before the vote, meaning that some of our elected officials showed up to the vote less-prepared than many students arrive to end-of-semester class meetings.

We didn't get to comment on what happened at UConn last Tuesday, when Lucian Wintrich, White House correspondent for the *Gateway Pundit*, attacked a woman during his own lecture. Toward the end of a talk titled "It's OK to Be White," a woman approached the podium and removed some papers, to which Wintrich responded by chasing her into the crowd, where he "grabbed her, pulling her back in a violent manner," the *Hartford Courant* reports. The lecture was cut short when Wintrich was arrested by UConn police, and he was later charged with breach of peace and released on a \$1,000 bail.

Wintrich, called a "conservative boy wonder" by Fox News, was invited to Storrs by the UConn College Republicans and has previously been denounced, according to the *Courant*, as a white supremacist and "a dangerous pseudo-intellectual." The College Republicans claimed that they did not wish to promote white supremacy with Wintrich's visit, though the organization's president Tim Sullivan apparently told the lecture's attendees that Wintrich's speech would not be suitable for "a bunch of snowflakes." The debate that currently rages on about Wintrich involves a series of familiar questions, including which speech should be protected under the First Amendment, how to discern between productive versus inflammatory oppositional discourse, and what level of responsibility we assume in reaffirming white supremacy by giving neo-Nazis a platform.

On issues here at Conn, we lacked the space to mention the ongoing "master planning" process, which was discussed in open fora for faculty, staff, and students last week. I attended the session intended for faculty and staff, and though I counted over 75 attendees stuffed into Cro's Nest, only one was an identifiable faculty member. The event, presented by the prestigious and surely expensive consulting firm Sasaki, provided obvious revelations: we learned that Tempel Green is one of the most valued spaces on campus, that students dislike the Plex for its sterility and long for more apartment space, and that classes in New London Hall are preferable to those in Bill. We got stunning revelations on traffic: a majority of pedestrian traffic flows from academic buildings on the southeast side of campus toward Cro, and the "main entrances" for vehicular access campus are the two gates on Route 32 and the one on Williams Street. And best of all, we learned that survey respondents identified the "campus heart" as the space between Shain and Cro, so our hearts reside in the pit that houses Floralia. How touching.

I understand why a vast majority of the faculty skipped, given that the meeting was tedious, and the insights less-than-insightful. But while students and faculty may have scorned the "master planning" event, staff members presented a variety of passionate and innovative ideas, many of which had to do with the campus's notorious shortcomings in accessibility, but also included ideas for improving waterfront access and optimization of student spaces. To me, this fervent desire to be heard suggests a lack of platform. Student opinion, at least, is constantly sought through surveys and fora, but how often do we listen to our staff?

Whether we're looking out at a national level, checking on our in-state neighbors, or self-reflecting, it's important—even when it's exhausting—to keep thinking critically about current events. That's why news exists, after all: it's not just for us to consume, but also to question, and even to change. I hope, as you flip through these pages, that you'll raise questions of your own, and consider joining our conversation.

-Maia

THE COLLEGE VOICE

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

MAIA HIBBETT '18
Editor in Chief

DANA GALLAGHER '19
Managing Editor

EDITORIAL STAFF

PRICE DAY '19
HANNAH JOHNSTON '18
News Editors

LAUREN BARETTA '18
JENNIFER SKOGLUND '18
Opinions Editors

SOPHIA ANGELE-KUEHN '20
JAMES MURRAY '18
Arts Editors

MANAGING STAFF

SAADYA CHEVAN '19
Business Manager

GUINEVERE FELDMAN '19
Head Copy Editor

HALLIE CARMEN '18
Web Manager

EMILY RUBIN '20
KATEY VESTA '21
Social Media Coordinators

CONTACT US

eic@thecollegevoice.org
270 Mohegan Avenue
New London, CT 06320
thecollegevoice.org
The College Voice on Facebook
@thecollegevoice on Twitter

Community Bulletin

Underage Students Caught at Octane

A Connecticut State Liquor Control Commission raid on Thursday, Nov. 16 found more than 125 underage patrons in New London’s popular Octane Bar & Cafe. The offenders, many of whom are Connecticut College students, had their fake I.D.s seized and were fined for underage alcohol consumption.

Women of Color Feminist Group Starts Up on Campus

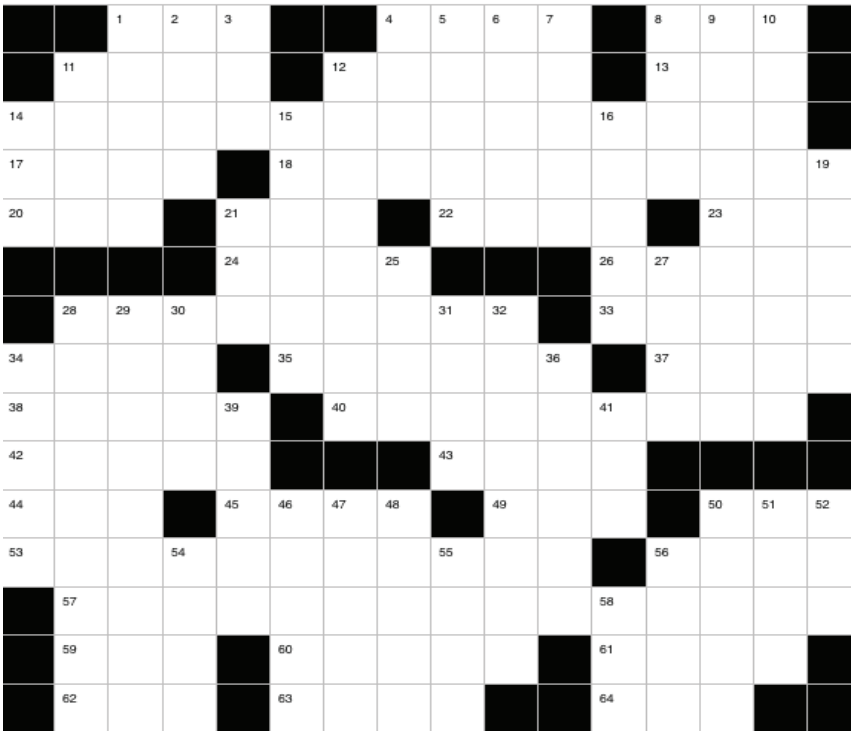
A new organization focused on tackling the issues women of color face on campus convened for the first time on Nov. 30. The group, which advertises with the slogan “Calling all feminists (especially those of color),” intends to serve as a sanctuary for women of color and allies while laying groundwork for the future of intersectional feminism at Conn.

The Day Participates in “Trusting News” Project

New London’s local newspaper, *The Day*, has partnered with the “Trusting News” project, a national effort to increase the public’s trust in journalism. Using methods including Q&A chats and informational sessions on newsroom transparency, *The Day* and “Trusting News” seek to improve media literacy and understanding of the journalistic process.

The College Crossword

BY ELEANOR KNAUSS



ACROSS:

- 1. _____ whiz
- 4. Spots
- 8. Civil Rights leader and suffragist Wells
- 11. Perky
- 12. _____ Bleu!

- 13. Crypto-currency platform
- *14. “I Write Sins not Tragedies” group
- 17. Shrek, for example
- *18. Heavy metal band
- 20. Golf tool
- 21. One on a shelf?

- 22. Consortium of educators from New York to Tel Aviv, abbr.
- 23. Singer Sremmurd
- 24. U.S. Territory in the Pacific
- 26. Assessment, abbr.
- 28. Indifference
- 33. Bind again
- 34. Black _____, French rapper
- 35. Event eliciting feelings hinted by starred clues
- 37. Obtains
- 38. Son of Abraham
- 40. Woman working at Target, perhaps
- 42. Terrible
- 43. Rip
- 44. Demi-Leigh _____-Peters
- 45. Skywalker mentor
- 49. Like kissing in a park, for short
- 50. It can be used for downhill or cross-country
- *53. _____ Scott
- 56. Beer serving, often
- *57. Bone cracks due to overuse
- 59. Chamomile or ginger, for example
- 60. Frosting
- 61. E.g. oak or elm
- 62. Globe
- 63. Point of intersection
- 64. Writing utensil

DOWN:

- 1. Rock or reggae, for example
- 2. Lake bordering Ohio
- 3. List ending, abbr.
- 4. Points on a graph
- 5. Earthy pigment
- 6. Author of *My Life of Overcom-*

- ing
- 7. Small car
- 8. Moment, abbr.
- 9. Embellished
- 10. Ethical delinquency
- 11. Loose leaf
- 12. Gwen and children
- 14. Plant holder
- 15. “_____ piece,” many a Buzz-feed article
- 16. More slick, in the winter
- 19. Votes in favor
- 21. Inflated sense of self
- 25. Arabic speaking region, abbr.
- 27. Rogelio de la _____
- 28. Obeys, as a boss
- 29. One distributing pamphlets
- 30. Consortium of universities in TN focused on sciences and technology
- 31. Pepper counterpart
- 32. Gym class game with “night” and “day” areas
- 34. Food item
- 36. Font created by Serge Shi
- 39. Bonnie and _____
- 41. Christian cult in northern Uganda, abbr.
- 46. Light sensitive proteins
- 47. 1-Down popular in the 1970s
- 48. Selective eating disorder, abbr.
- 50. Ambulance or police car fixture
- 51. Leg joint
- 52. “_____ all Greek to me”
- 54. One from Syria, perhaps
- 55. “Rule Britannia” composer
- 56. Uncontaminated

KEY: PAGE 15

Sports Corner

Women’s Ice Hockey (4-1)

- Amherst W, 3-2
- Amherst W, 2-0
- @ Salve Regina W, 2-0
- @ Middlebury L, 3-0
- @ Middlebury W, 4-3 OT

Women’s Basketball (5-1)

- St. Thomas L, 75-53
- @ Skidmore W, 74-65
- FDU-Florham W, 84-59
- @ Babson W, 73-62
- Worcester State W, 62-41
- @ New Rochelle W, 74-44

Women’s Squash (2-3)

- @ Bates W, 5-4
- @ Colby L, 7-2
- @ Bowdoin L, 5-4
- @ Amherst L, 9-0
- Northeastern W, 8-1

Men’s Ice Hockey (2-2)

- @ Wesleyan W, 5-3
- @ Trinity L, 2-1
- Middlebury W, 5-0
- Williams L, 7-2

Men’s Basketball (4-3)

- Lyndon State W, 87-80
- Southern Maine W, 78-62
- Eastern Conn. State W, 89-77
- Roger Williams L, 79-60
- @ Clark W, 79-68
- @ St. Joseph’s W, 77-67
- Coast Guard L, 84-69

Men’s Squash (1-4)

- @ Bates L, 9-0
- @ Colby L, 8-1
- @ Bowdoin L, 8-1
- @ Amherst L, 9-0
- Northeastern W, 8-1

Sober Houses

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

it without being held accountable to provide promised services. Due to provisions included in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Fair Housing Act (FHA)—which prevent housing discrimination—governments are prohibited from mandating, restricting or otherwise controlling where disabled individu-

als can live. Activists in the New London community that include the non-profit Community Speaks Out (CSO), Professor of English Blanche Boyd, and the Roosevelt Institute chapter at Connecticut College are working to create a voluntary registration program that would legally bar health care providers from recommending any non-certified sober homes.

Not too long ago, the National Alliance for Recov-

ery Residences (NARR) used to provide trainings and certification programs for sober houses, but since the organization lost state funding, CSO has taken over the task. Boyd is currently in the process of certifying two sober houses she owns, one in New London and one in New Haven. She decided to remodel the homes after a friend, who owns a sober house for men, suggested Boyd convert her properties into safe spaces for the desperately underserved population of recovering women.

“Did you know that jail is often the first safe place women live?” Boyd asked incredulously, in the midst of explaining the transition vulnerable women face as they attempt to recreate a drug-free life. All people need a safe and structured environment to live after getting clean in order to prevent relapse, and that is why the sober houses that Boyd runs have strict rules meant to “mirror real life.” Unregulated sober houses leave susceptible men and women at the mercy of landlords, who can have a big impact on tenants’ recovery.

This semester, two students in the Roosevelt Institute club on campus got involved by writing a policy proposal that suggested the creation of a state-funded certification program and prevent health professionals from recommending residences not on that list. Roosevelt Institute is a nonprofit which encourages students across the country to design and submit policy proposals in order to “reimagine the rules that guide our social and economic realities.” The club on campus submits policy proposals every November for the national “10 Ideas” publication, which features 10 member proposals from each of the seven issue areas.

The issue of the opioid epidemic came to the attention of Allie Kyff ’18, assistant chair for Roosevelt and the lead on the proposal, after watching the documentary *Heroin(e)*. The Netflix original covers the struggles of three women in West Virginia to battle the devastating opioid epidemic there. “It [really] struck a chord in me” said the senior, who cited the documentary as what sparked her interest in researching the issue further. Both Kyff and Sarah Rakin ’18, Roosevelt’s chair, collaborated on the proposal entitled “Responsible Recovery: Creating a Certification Incentive for Connecticut Sober Homes” which explores the logistics and plan of implementing a program in New London to regulate which sober homes are referred.

Despite how far stigma surrounding the discussion of opioid addiction has come, society still has a long way to go. There are still those who advocate a tough love and a “just say no” approach that has long proven to fail to solve the problem. Having the strength to ask for help is difficult, so we, the community need to make it just that much easier by not vilifying those who need the most support. Boyd put it plainly: “What did I think was so bad about needing help?” •

**MAKE
THE
MOST
OF
YOUR
WORLD**

We teach in classrooms,
help entrepreneurs take their
businesses online, build apps
to share healthcare information,
and more. If you are inspired
by impact that is hands-on,
grassroots-driven and lasting,
apply by January 1

peacecorps.gov/apply.



**Peace
Corps**

CYNTHIA
Peace Corps
Volunteer,
Nicaragua



The FAFSA and the Furious: Financial Aid Now and Beyond

JACEE COX
STAFF WRITER

Numbers stretching past \$60,000 are becoming the new standard for annual tuition expenses at private, four-year liberal arts institutions, Connecticut College included. This sum makes paying for college difficult to impossible for thousands of Americans, given that the 2016 median household income in America was \$57,617.

Business Insider reported in 2015 that in the 34 years between 1980 and 2014, the average price of college tuition increased by 260%. That number is still on the rise and showing no signs of plateauing.

A dark and frightening online search will reveal that the College Board has a “College Cost Calculator” available online. Using \$68,000 dollars as the average cost of tuition at private liberal arts institutions and a 5% inflation rate, this calculator predicts that in five years, the expected cost for college will be \$86,787 per year: \$374,063 total for four years.

How about ten years from now? With the same average price and rate of inflation, college students in a decade may be faced with an annual bill for \$110,765: \$477,410 after four years.

Currently, most Americans are unable to pay the face-value cost of a college degree. Analyzing the numbers of the future certainly does not help to curb fears. This is where financial aid strategy becomes vital to the industry of higher education.

According to reminder emails in the inboxes of college students and parents

across America, it is time to renew the FAFSA for the upcoming academic year. FAFSA stands for “Free Application for Federal Student Aid.” Completed annually by families of college students, these forms determine a student’s eligibility for federal funding. This funding may be supplied in the form of federal loans (subsidized and unsubsidized), work study, and federal grants, such as the Pell Grant.

In addition to the FAFSA, around 400 institutions in the United States also require the submission of the CSS Profile, a College Board-controlled process. The CSS Profile asks similar questions as FAFSA, but requires further depth and detail, creating a more comprehensive image of a family’s finances.

A conversation with Sean Martin, Conn’s Director of Financial Aid, clarified many questions surrounding the world of financial aid. An important theme which Martin reinforced is that Conn is unique because it promises to meet full demonstrated need of students. Not many other schools in the nation operate under this criteria. Martin acknowledged that the College always wants to be more generous, but the College does not have unlimited resources, especially compared to schools with much larger endowments.

Further emphasized was that the financial office is, unquestionably, a valuable resource for students and parents alike. The goal of the financial aid office is to improve families’ understanding of financial aid and make the process more transparent. After all, as Martin claimed, “financial aid is a study in choices.”

The difficult choice comes into the

conversation when a family’s ability to pay is contrasted with their willingness to pay. Conn students and applicants complete the CSS profile in order for the College to obtain and evaluate information and generate numbers, notably the EFC (expected family contribution). In this technical regard, FAFSA and CSS, according to Martin, offer “fair and equitable” assessments, provided the information supplied is accurate. However, although a family, according to their federal aid award and expected family contribution, may possess the money equal to that needed for tuition, they are usually not able to fully commit these finances to education. Most families juggle a variety of expenses and financial tasks, including mortgages and retirement savings. Additionally, information provided on FAFSA and CSS documents that changes between years can negatively impact students’ awards. When families with more than one college-aged dependent sees a child graduate, the award granted for those who remain enrolled in an institution often decreases. But graduating from college is not an alleviation of financial burdens. If anything, it’s the opposite. Graduates and their families face piles of loans and debt. A student having graduated from a tuition-driven institution does not mean families are then able to afford a higher bill for their enrolled student(s), despite that FAFSA and CSS claim their ability as such.

Criticism of the financial aid assessment process continues in many directions. The way people obtain their income, for example, can impact how helpful of a gauge FAFSA and CSS

forms can be. Wage-earners generally have predictable numbers, since their annual earnings do not experience much fluctuation. Self-employed people, on the other hand, can have good and bad years, sometimes exhibiting drastic financial differences. Many see this as a feature issue with the FAFSA process: information presented may not accurately paint a picture of a family’s ability to pay.

In 2015, the Obama administration made two notable changes to the FAFSA. The form is now open for completion earlier in the year, on Oct. 1, as opposed to Jan. 1. The second, and probably most important change, concerns which year’s worth of tax information parents and students supply. The FAFSA now demands the information from prior-prior year taxes. For example, students applying for financial aid in 2018 will not report 2017 taxes, but rather, 2016. As a result, institutions will receive 2015 tax information from two pools of applicants.

A recurring issue with FAFSA seems to be the general confusion with how to approach completing the paperwork. The Department of Education recognizes several common mistakes people make surrounding FAFSA and financial aid. These include not completing the form, neglecting to fill out the form as early as possible, and not using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, an online database which allows people to access their tax return data, designed to consolidate data and eliminate confusion.

Beginning this year with the class

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

New VP for Advancement Appointed

BILLY GANNON
CONTRIBUTOR

Kimberly Verstandig officially joined Connecticut College as Vice President for College Advancement on Nov. 6. The experienced fundraising professional holds a B.A. in Business Administration and a M.S. in Education from Bucknell University. Verstandig recently departed from her role as interim Vice President for Advancement at Skidmore College, where her direction led to great success for the institution’s current fundraising campaign. Verstandig has over 20 years of experience in fundraising for college institutions as well as nonprofit organizations. Verstandig began her career at Bucknell University, where she spent seven years overseeing various programs within the Advancement Department. She went on to direct fundraising operations for the Albany Medical Center, and later the Albany Academies, before joining Skidmore College.

Connecticut College President Katherine Bergeron released a statement praising Verstandig and detailing the responsibilities of her new role, noting that Verstandig’s responsibilities include “supervising the work of major gifts; gift planning; corporate, foundation, and government relations; alumni engagement and annual giving; strategic initiatives; donor relations; and advancement services.”

Vice President for Finance and Administration Rich Madonna, who chaired the search committee and played a key role in Verstandig’s appointment, described the committee’s role: “[A] committee of faculty, staff and trustees was formed to conduct a national search for a new Vice President for Advancement. The committee

reviewed all candidates and conducted on campus full day interviews with [the] finalists.” Madonna went on to say, “Kim was the top candidate and we are thrilled to have her on board.”

In an interview with the *Voice*, Verstandig emphasized that she was a huge believer in the power of a liberal arts education, sharing that as a college student, she benefited from financial aid. This experience instilled in her respect and appreciation for the fundraising responsibilities of her role at Conn. When asked if she could share any future goals she had for the Office, Verstandig responded: “Although I can’t give any specifics yet, we are planning for the largest and most ambitious fundraising campaign in Conn’s history.” The *Voice* also learned about Ms. Verstandig’s busy schedule, which includes significant time spent for fundraising-related travel. She estimated that about half of her time will be spent meeting with alumni and parents throughout the country to build relationships. Verstandig’s travel is nationwide but will likely primarily include Boston, New York, California, the Midwest, and even Florida.

According to Verstandig, she accepted her new role at Connecticut College because of “the sense of community, size, and visionary strategic plan being implemented by President Bergeron.” She went on to praise the Connection’s Curriculum and speak to the role she sees it playing in shaping Conn’s future as a leader in the liberal arts. Verstandig concluded by saying: “I love what I do, I love working in higher education, because, corny as it sounds, there’s always a new beginning. The culture of discovering newness is something that truly sets working in higher education apart.” •

Pilot Program Fosters Education through Personal Narrative

DANA GALLAGHER
MANAGING EDITOR

Movement building is exhausting, highly skilled work that succeeds only through a combination of painstaking planning and organizing. Achievement of sustained participation in any social movement depends in large part on the degree to which the movement's mission directly relates to the everyday lives of its participants. Emma Race '18 has taken this truism to heart when implementing her Spanish-language storytelling workshops in New London this semester. These workshops offer participants a forum to define and reclaim their individual experiences as immigrants. Discussing her workshop initiative in the context of promoting social change, Race commented that literature resonates with her "as one way to bring something to the struggle."

Race became interested in the intersection of literature with social movements while interning this past summer with LOM Ediciones, a publishing house in Chile. The alternative publishing house, she says, "raised the voices of previously unheard and unpublished activists." As a result of her internship, Race gained a heightened awareness of the ways in which the free press provides an important avenue for criticism. Her experiences taught her the importance of owning and developing a personalized narrative. Returning to Conn, Race sought to "utilize the lessons taught" over the summer to tailor her CISLA Senior Integrative Project around an idea that would benefit the community as a whole. Meeting with community organizers and residents of New London, Race determined that many Spanish-speaking immigrants lacked access to higher education classes. She feels that their experiences are framed within "other people's opinions on them being here" and that a series of workshops targeted at Spanish-speakers in New London could produce tangible benefits for participants.

Race's project has a two-phased rollout: a pilot program implemented this fall semester and a more integrated series of workshops to be conducted in the spring semester. Race, along with Fabiola Ramirez '19

and playwright Carlos Canales, carry out the day-to-day duties of the workshops. Five of these workshops, each lasting two hours, have been held this semester. Each workshop consists of a lesson component, group work and one-on-one writing and editing sessions. Initial workshops focused on general narrative elements and the most effective literary techniques to incorporate into each individual story. Canales gives special attention to developing individual stories in ways that both empower and encompass the fullness of the writer's experience. Race hopes to showcase the work of participants through outlets that respect the highly personal and sensitive nature of the stories. She has connected with members of Eclipse, which organizes the student-run performance under the theme of storytelling, to consider incorporating spoken stories from the community as part of the show. She is also considering whether to record or even publish the stories via campus publications. The end product, Race says, depends on the level of comfort of contributing storytellers.

The pilot program currently includes four participants that span from their 20s to their 80s. Race comments, "It's cool to see the interactions of all different people of a variety of ages and backgrounds." Race values the small group dynamic that lends itself to easier coordination. The process of advertising the workshops, however, taught her important lessons about the challenges of community organizing. Initially, her approach to advertising centered on "handing out brochures everywhere." Brochure distribution spots included the Centro de la Comunidad and the library in New London and places on the Conn campus. Although a number of people appeared excited when handed the brochure, only those whom Canales and Race had interacted with extensively actually showed up for the workshops. Limited to a two-week period to advertize, Race didn't have the opportunity to conduct extensive face-to-face publicity. She now understands that finding participants requires "not just telling people about an event, but explaining the event to them."

To date, Race has received \$3,279 from five different sources (CISLA, the Holleran Center, the SGA Sustainable Projects Fund, the Dean of Institutional Eq-



Illustration by Hannah Capucilli-Shatan

uity and Inclusion, and the President of the College). Funding has been allocated for paying Canales, who leads the workshops, as well as for renting program spaces and providing food for participants. Acknowledging that "it is asking a lot of someone's time" to participate in the workshops, Race says that participants will receive a small gift card by the end of the series. She expects a lower budget for the fall workshops compared to the spring ones because the fall programs represent "a smaller version of what is happening in the spring."

The program, Race says, is gratifying because the people involved are excited about it. The initiative seems to be off to a good start, but Race envisions more for the program. She believes that the structure and curriculum of the spring workshops will facilitate more systematic changes relating to immigration. In its current form, workshops focus on building community through storytelling. By the spring, Race will meet with New London activists to present the workshops "for a community that already exists and is mobilized for change." After laying the groundwork for progress with only a few people, Race hopes to soon have a delegation of activists whose involvement will bring more people to the struggle. •

FAFSA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

of 2018, the state, of Louisiana, in accordance with Louisiana Bulletin 741, Section 901, is instituting a graduation requirement in public high schools mandating that students and their parents file the FAFSA or complete a waiver opting out of applying for federal financial aid. The state hopes this requirement will show families the value of filing the forms and that, by not filing, they sacrifice opportunities to obtain aid. As a new and untested strategy, it is unclear whether or not this will become precedent for other states. It is also questionable whether this will benefit the process overall, given that more people applying for aid means the amount of

money available must be spread thinner.

This spring, the *Atlantic* reported that in the first week the FAFSA forms for the 2017-2018 academic year were made available, 196,736 were submitted. This number is up considerably from the previous academic year, where 135,387 applications were sent within the first week of availability. It is encouraged for families to complete FAFSA forms as quickly as possible in order to be considered for a larger portion of available money. Having an earlier accessibility date seems to be meeting the Obama administration's intended goals, but also boasts the same concern as an increased pool of federal aid candidates.

Despite the frequent confusion and frustration surrounding FAFSA and financial aid awards, a single message remains clearly supported by colleges and the government: all students should be completing the FAFSA. With the appli-

cation being free, students and parents do not stand to lose anything other than the few hours it requires to complete the forms. Even though there are issues with how aid is evaluated, any money awarded is better than no money awarded, and students know this.

Tuition and financial aid packages are increasingly important factors in students' college decisions. In speaking with the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in 2014, Kevin Eagan, the Interim Director of the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, likened prospective students to "shoppers" who are looking for "the best deal." As the supply and demand for financial aid remains unbalanced, families express dissatisfaction with the process, and students graduate with substantial loans and debt.

Since the education belongs to the student, students should be involved in the financial process. As Martin phrases,

typically the financial aid process sees "parents doing the legwork." And this is completely understandable, as students, in their late teens and early twenties, often do not have a substantial understanding of personal and family finance. But if students make conscious efforts to involve themselves in the process, they may strengthen their understanding of the monetary aftermath of their undergraduate education.

As it stands, Conn remains committed to meeting full demonstrated need of its students, which is good news for current and prospective attendees. However, close attention must be kept to tuition trends. As these prices rise, the sustainability of meeting full demonstrated need is called into question. To what extent can this method be supported? If patterns continue, and they are expected to, future students and parents will be seeing even higher tuition bills. •

A.S.I.A. Airs *Resistance at Tule Lake*, a Reminder of Civil Rights Violations

MAIA HIBBETT
EDITOR IN CHIEF

When I perused my “This Weekend at Conn” email on Friday morning, I was surprised and grateful to find a variation from the standard a capella concerts and Cro dances: that night, Asian Students in Action (A.S.I.A.) would be screening *Resistance at Tule Lake*, a 2017 documentary by Konrad Aderer about the underexposed dissenters to the internment of Japanese Americans.

Excited about the screening, I texted one of my best Japanese-American friends: my dad. Like me, he had never heard of the movie, but he commented that “people always talk about the ultra-patriotic 442nd, forgetting that there were some resisters. They were called no-no boys because they responded negatively when asked to sign a loyalty oath.” This covered what I knew, in terms of historical context, about the resistance movement: it had existed, and its members were termed the “no-no-boys.” My family members, narrow escapees of internment, were not among its numbers.

Resistance at Tule Lake is about 12,000 people whose histories are intertwined with my family’s own. As the nickname references, the film tells the story of the “no-no” group of Japanese

Americans: people who, when asked to respond to a questionnaire supposedly designed to evaluate their loyalty to the United States, responded “no” to two crucial and consecutive questions. Question 27 on the survey asked respondents if they would declare uncon-



Resisters at Tule Lake; photo courtesy of Visual Communications

ditional allegiance to the United States government, and 28 if they would renounce their allegiance to the Japanese state and its emperor.

To thousands of Nisei—a term used to designate the second generation of Japanese diaspora, of which my grandmother was a part—the latter question made no sense. Why would they,

American-born citizens, renounce an allegiance that had never been theirs in the first place? And to Issei (first-generation immigrants) and Nisei alike, the former question, as well as the survey in general, was offensive. The surveys were presented within internment

camp, meaning that Japanese Americans—whether they were born citizens, naturalized, or had not been granted citizenship—were asked outright to swear their devotion to a government that had incarcerated them simply for living on the West Coast.

All this I knew, going into the movie: that Japanese Americans were expelled

from the West Coast, that they either fled to other areas or were relegated to concentration camps, and that thousands declared their patriotism on invasive questionnaires and even enlisted in the U.S. military, just to prove allegiance to a government that had forsaken them. My grandma’s family was fortunate enough to have the flight option: they lived in Los Angeles County, and when the internment began, my grandmother, her Nisei siblings, and her Issei parents escaped California to join family members who lived in the more insulated Colorado. My grandmother’s parents ran a hotel, she told me, but had to abandon their business and turn to farming after they moved.

“I was hoping that my mother and father would go into the hotel business because they had experience,” she said, “I guess they decided it was safer to be out in the country, farming.”

But despite the material and professional losses, my grandmother’s family was one of the lucky ones. Incarcerates in the internment camps were subjected to abysmal conditions of the nature that the U.S. government publicly condemns, and the worst conditions were imposed at Tule Lake. *Resistance at Tule Lake* explains that after Japanese Americans, already divided among the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Rethinking Charles Manson

RILEY MEACHEM
STAFF WRITER

If one were to poll pedestrians on a city street anywhere in the country, not all of them would be familiar with the Oklahoma bomber, Timothy McVeigh, or America’s most prolific serial killer, Gary Ridgway. A good deal of them would probably not be able to remember the Bosnian genocide, or remember the names of any school shooters. But no matter where in the country you go, you will encounter a great deal of people who know who Charles Manson is.

The notorious cult leader and psychopath has enjoyed a rock-star like existence among the psychopaths and criminally insane in America, not to mention those who take an interest in such things. His recent death has been met with Facebook obituaries and well-wishing on all social media outlets. He was engaged several years before his death to a wom-

an who is now 29, received an influx of letters from fans and admirers (tens of thousands a day at some points), and has spawned a great many movies and books about cults, as well as being the subject of them.

The question, however, is from whence this notoriety came. It is not the crimes he committed: a popular Google query is “Charles Manson Kool-aid,” indicating that searchers have conflated Manson and his family with Jim Jones, another cult leader. Certainly a debate rages about whether or not it is ethical to provide a platform and such reputation to a man who was responsible for inflicting psychological torture on his followers and for inciting several brutal murders. But these debates miss the point entirely. Whether or not it is ethical is merely a thought exercise: the real question is why this degree of renown.

Manson, who had a swastika tattoo in the center of his forehead, used race and the social progress of the 1960s as a means by which to drive up membership

in his cult, convincing his followers of an imminent race-war in which they would arise superior. Watermelons and the bloody word “piggies” were left at one crime scene in order to give the impression that members of a black liberation front movement were behind the murders of several white celebrities. He hoped that these clues would incite a racial conflict which only whites would survive. And when the story broke that there existed a purely-evil and narcissistic man who had these beliefs and opinions about race, there presented itself a bogeyman on which white Americans could pin their guilt. They might have done or said things which were morally wrong and impermissible, but they weren’t the real monster. This burst of media coverage surrounding his high profile targets made him instantly popular, but it is the many sins of Americans everywhere that have kept him in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Concussions in Hockey: Fighting a Losing Battle

JAMES MURRAY
ARTS EDITOR

My family moved a couple years ago and, when I go home to a place where I didn't grow up, surrounded by people I don't know, I often find myself spending a lot of time with my younger brother Henry. Spending time with him tends to involve watching a lot of hockey, and as a result, I have become obsessed with following the sport at the professional level. This is convenient, because hockey is one of the most important means of bonding I share with my brother. It's something that I cherish seeing, as Henry is eight years younger than I am, and I am always looking for ways to connect with him. We look forward to Wednesday night rivalry games, talk about exciting young players, and argue about who will hoist The Stanley Cup in the Spring. It's interesting for both of us too as we've moved around a few times from Massachusetts to Ohio and now to New Jersey, all the while getting the chance to participate in and learn the culture of different sports teams around the U.S.

As a result of our shared infatuation with the sport, we pay attention to the consistent and steady stream of stories about players being forced into retirement from concussions or other career threatening injuries. A couple weeks ago, the New York Times published several excerpts from a chilling exchange between a sports reporter at the Times, John Branch, and a man named Walter Peat. The publication mostly consists of text messages and emails, parts of a larger correspondence regarding a story that Branch published about Stephen Peat, a former NHL player who has struggled with severe emotional, behavioral and memory loss problems that are suggestive of neurological damage or brain injury. The messages are blunt and tragic in nature. They are indicative of an issue all too familiar to anyone who closely follows professional sports or have had lengthy athletic ca-

reers in any capacity, though this story in particular shines a harsh and uncensored light on one of the biggest health issues in all of professional sports.

Occasionally, the issue of concussions in hockey or sports falls out of the national spotlight. But upon looking closely, there are constant reminders of startling and brutal stories, as the article and subsequent publication of the correspondence remind us. Too often, coverage comes up in fits and fades into the background. While the story of Peat is particularly troubling, people have to connect the dots to see how his experience paints a bigger picture of an insidious problem at all levels of athletics, in particular the game of hockey and the NHL.

Last spring, at the height of the Stanley Cup playoffs in May, arguably the league's most talented and exciting player and a once in a generation talent, Sidney Crosby, was knocked out of game 3 in the playoff series between the Pens and Caps. The Washington Post published an article entitled: "Sidney Crosby's Concussion Shakes Pittsburgh, and all of hockey." Crosby has had a number of concussions and missed extended amounts of time in the past. The most recent round of inductions into the NHL Hall of fame featured two of the most offensively dynamic and exciting players of the 90s and 2000s in Paul Kariya and Teemu Selanne, both of whom are also close friends. Selanne's career spanned 21 seasons of prolific scoring production. While Kariya's record was in many ways equally as impressive, it was cut short in brutal fashion after sustaining several serious concussions, one that effectively knocked him out definitively after a blindside hit from Scott Stevens in the 2003 playoffs. Eric Lindros, considered one of the best Philadelphia Flyers of all time, is another superstar player whose career was cut short in no small part by a head injury not coincidentally incurred by the same individual (Scott Stevens) who knocked Kariya out of the league. These preceding examples are intend-

ed to demonstrate that it's not just the enforcers who ruggedly ply their way through brief 4-5 year careers that bear the brunt of concussions.

Most people even mildly familiar with hockey know these names but often times lose sight of the fact that there are hundreds of players, who are not superstars, whose careers were cut short or ended before they even began because of concussions. Few stories get the attention and press of star players like Crosby or Lindros. Stephen Peat was one of those forgotten "Ice Guardians," as the Netflix film of the same name calls them, that until last year had slipped into anonymity following an unspectacular four year stint with the Washington Capitals. The risk of this trend cannot be understated. The article by John Branch highlights the fact that Peat has not received anything close to adequate support from the NHL in coping with these issues that undoubtedly stem from his stint in the league. Countless other players are not conferred the advantage (if you could even call it that) of having their story be communicated to a wider audience, and suffered in silence until it was too much to bear. Recent history tells us that even when the league's most electric superstars face the prospect of debilitating post-career issues, they won't take the necessary amount of initiative and responsibility (Gary Bettman, Commissioner of the NHL rebuffed arguments linking concussions and CTE as recently as 2016. CTE is a degenerative brain disorder that has been discovered in a number of ex-professional athletes. It is worth noting that there is currently a lawsuit against the NHL including 105 plaintiffs who are former NHL players). What will it take for the NHL to get to this point is a larger question? For now, all we can do is shed light on the stories and understand that this problem is here to stay unless those responsible for its continuation and the safety of the affected individuals are held to account. •

Charles Manson

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7



Manson and fiancée, Star; photo courtesy of Mason Direct/Polaris via Time

the limelight up until his final hours.

Manson has also served as a conservative recruitment tool, given his associations with the movements of the 1960s. Despite the fact he was in prison for the vast majority of this decade and throughout the 1970s when there was increased and more myriad activism in American culture, Manson is still widely viewed as a 'child of the sixties,' and not a child of American capitalism, alcoholism, or the prison industrial complex. Manson had already spent a significant amount of time in prison for assault, theft, fraud, and human trafficking charges before the creation of his cult, and he had been in trouble with the law since he was a young boy living with an abusive alcoholic mother and no father. But his cult is seldom associated with his suffering under the boot of America's judicial system, and while his experiences could not have driven most people to the creation of a murderous movement, it is possible that his crimes were motivated in part by them. He is seen as an inevitable response to people getting too trusting and hoping for a better future, a predator who naturally arose in the free-thinking 1960s.

Today we find ourselves in a country helmed by a notoriously less-than-sagacious narcissist, who is still revered and supported, perhaps blindly, by some portion his followers. How could such devotion be made possible, if not for the existence of such moral absolutes? How could people be made to accept things which do not make sense, if they were not able to compare themselves to famously amoral individuals and the situations they instigated and pick out little differences which would exonerate them?

Trump supporters would likely argue that admiring Trump is nothing like aiding Manson. "Trump doesn't try to isolate me from the world," they might think, "all of my neighbors are supporting him!" The existence of Manson's celebrity, however, is due entirely to statements like these, which have taken on one form or another over the past 50 years.

Manson is not alone in being scapegoated. Invocations of genocides outside the U.S. sometimes allow us to ignore that which occurred in the acquisition of our 50 states; global terrorist organizations provide a demon to absolve America's disastrous foreign policy measures in the past several decades continuing into today. These are magnanimous and histrionic targets for self-justification and undeserved absolution, and while they may be fascinating, we must all contemplate what our reasons for finding them so are. •

Oil Spill Proves Negligence

ABIGAIL ACHESON
STAFF WRITER

Imagine if your roommate had an affinity for candles and one day accidentally set your room on fire. The next day, Conn sends an email to all of its students announcing that candles can now be lit in all of the dorms. That would be ridiculous. Yet, a scarily similar scenario occurred just three weeks ago when Nebraska approved the construction the Keystone XL Pipeline. This happened four days after the current Keystone Pipeline, owned and operated by the same company, leaked more than 210,000 gallons of oil.

Both the new and the ruptured pipelines are run by TransCanada, a company that provides natural gas, oil and power to much of North America. Keystone XL intends to shorten and supplement the existing Keystone Pipeline that runs through the heartland of the Midwest, connecting the Alberta oil sands with oil refineries on the Gulf Coast.

This Canadian oil and gas giant has a notoriously spotty record when it comes to pipeline leaks. In addition to its most recent oil spill of nearly 5000 barrels, TransCanada pipelines sprung gas leaks in 1996, 2009, and 2014. The company claims to prioritize safety, but clearly the focus is set on the safety of investments of its shareholders, and not the safety of local residents or of the environment.

Many groups are concerned about the environmental consequences that yet another oil pipeline could have, especially because of its proximity to sensitive wetlands and potential to contaminate water sources locals depend on. This concern sparked protests across the East Coast and Midwest, where indigenous groups and allies in South Dakota powerfully objected to the violation of land rights.

TransCanada intended to route the pipeline through reservation property and then, after heavy objection, just outside reservation boundaries. This issue reached a climax when federal, local, and state police and private security collaborated to mount a heavy-handed response against a mere 170 peaceful and unarmed Sioux protestors at Standing Rock. In addition, the company planned to seize—through a combination of signed agreements and eminent domain confiscations—land from hundreds of farmers and ranchers. This eventually resulted in a win for environmentalists, scientists and native peoples alike when President Obama refused to approve the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline in 2015.

Cut to January 2017, when almost immediately after taking office, Donald Trump advocated an expedited approval of the pipeline project. Suddenly environmental and indigenous rights groups needed to revive and reorganize in order to fight the pipeline once again. The Dakota Access Pipeline has since been hurriedly approved and is scheduled to begin construction in Spring 2018. Native American groups in South Dakota are asking fellow citizens to join them in picket-line-style protests in the hopes of obstructing construction of the pipeline this spring.

Now, with impending massive tax cuts for corporations and the top 1%, it seems that corporate America has won yet another battle to exploit the general population for its own gain. But this should not be the end of the story. Americans need to get loud about the issues that are most important to them if they want to see change. •

Giving Garden

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

riodically hosts among the plants, but the most fundamental purpose of the Giving Garden is to feed those who may not have access to food with the most dignity and respect possible. As of 2016, 15.6 million people in the US were food insecure at some point throughout the year; 437,530 Connecticut residents contributed to that statistic. To bring that number even closer to home, a third of households in the New London County struggle to make ends meet. 9,860 children in the New London area alone are currently food insecure.

According to a study by the Connecticut Food Bank, 70% of households served by the non-profit were forced to choose between buying food or paying utility bills, while over 60% had to decide whether to pay for food or rent. These are decisions that no family should have to make and yet this is the reality for thousands of people that live within a stone's throw of Connecticut College, where tuition is now over \$67,000 a year.

Sustenance is a basic human need, but according to the statistics, not a basic human right. Floyd aims to remedy this injustice as best he can. 100% of the food the Giving Garden produces goes to the Gemma E. Moran / United Way Labor Food Center, a distribution center associated with the Connecticut Food Bank, that provides food to over 80 food-assistance programs in the New London County. This food center distributes a substantial 2.7 million pounds of food a year, but Floyd highlighted the value of not only quantity, but quality.

Unlike many other providers to food banks that give away excess or leftovers, the Giving Garden grows specifically for Gemma Moran. Floyd commented on the quality of food that is often provided to food-assistance centers, "If you go to the food bank and you watch the people break the food apart... the food is rotten, moldy so I wanted to make a change in the visual presentation of the food... why don't the food insecure people deserve the same respect?" In order to combat the reality

that those being served by food trucks and food centers are often handed loose leaves of rotting swiss chard, cabbage and the like in plastic bags, Floyd makes sure the food he provides is neatly presented. "We now bundle [vegetables], which is extremely labor intensive." He continued, "They're food insecure, so they'll take anything? Give me a break. It's not right." Dignity and respect are fundamental pillars of Floyd's work.

The Giving Garden is able to sustain itself through volunteers, donations, and organizations such as the Nature Center and United Way of Southeastern Connecticut. The original start-up funds were provided by the Robert Youngs Foundation. Robert Youngs was a long time New London resident and carpenter for local New London schools.

When he passed away in 2011, he left everything in a trust that was intended to "benefit the people of the New London area." The recipient of these trust funds, the 30,000 square foot Giving Garden, produced 13,089 pounds of fresh vegetables in 2016 alone and "we're nowhere near full capacity yet," Floyd declared. It seems as though Youngs' vision is well on its way to being recognized.

Despite my enthusiasm and support for the Giving Garden, the program is hardly able to be replicated on a large scale due to the sheer

number of volunteer hours—over 3,800 logged in 2016—as well as outside funding required. When I asked Floyd whether small farms could realistically feed the world, he echoed my fears, "If we went back to small farms we would be so much better off...[but] it's not realistic, it's not going to happen... I don't see modern ag[riculture] changing."

That being said, the Giving Garden as its own entity certainly has made an impact even with its limited space and resources. Floyd passionately explained, "We have a responsibility to our community, especially to the children. The children are the future of the world and without them we're all dead in the water." The Giving Garden—no matter how small—is powerful, and it has made a difference in the New London community. As Floyd would put it, "farm on." •



Floyd at Giving Garden; photo courtesy of Lauren Baretta

Data Collection: How the Web Commodifies Personality

EMIR KULLUK
STAFF WRITER

Ever wondered why minutes after checking out a product on Amazon, you see an advertisement for the same product while watching a video on YouTube? Online advertising has come a long way since its birth almost a decade ago, but this development has not occurred through the hard work of marketing companies. It has been through data mining, data collection, and the buying/selling of this data between companies.

Many already knew that companies such as Google, Amazon, and Facebook were not as friendly and pure as their public images, but they have been profiting off the data that the customers have to provide to use their services, which are all but mandatory in this day and age. Search history from Google, purchases from Amazon, and personal information on Facebook are all categorized and sold to the highest bidder, which will probably use it to develop its own business and make a profit. This helps these behemoths make jaw-dropping profits. These trades are one of the main reasons why Facebook has become a \$500+ billion giant, with Google amassing even greater of a value for

itself, around \$700 billion.

People often wonder how all of this sharing of private information is legal. It is because we all agreed to play by their terms, with the user agreements that we signed without reading. Those user agreements that are more than twenty pages, with many of them being longer than the constitution of the US, all permit the company to store and “utilize” our information. This is how Amazon keeps track of your product search history and then displays the product you were just looking at through ads on other websites, tracking you throughout the web.

The election process of Donald Trump allowed both the general populace and the government to notice the issue when it was discovered that the Russians displayed ads that promoted Trump throughout Facebook to the appropriate people, thanks to the data collection and data analysis systems that are in place. However, up until now, the government has not done anything to restrict the access that Facebook and like companies have to users’ private information, warning them to regulate themselves. Even though some people believe that an act like meddling with the election process and mud-

dying the waters would mean that Facebook would start to crack down on its data collection process, that is not going to happen, and that is what scares a lot of people; ads that target people’s needs, desires or interests are much more different than the commodification and advertisement of politics, as politics should not ideally be affected by advertising. Though politics are already affected by marketing and artificiality, the internet should not push propaganda upon its users.

One might ask how the sale and collection of data affects a possible political process. This is where the frequency and content of the advertisement kicks in: as the user implies that they hold a specific political opinion according to their preferred sites and content, ads in accordance with the user’s beliefs will increase, reaffirming their thoughts. Or, conversely, the opposition might advertise more heavily, causing a user to doubt their own opinion by making them think that the opposition is the more popular and supported candidate. But really, it is just a matter of data collection, and the application of that data, through advertisements.

In the end, Google, Amazon, Facebook, and other companies are all alike. They are busi-

nesses working for profit, and as their values increase, they will start to reach into new areas that they could exploit. For a long time, online advertising had been hard to profit off of due to the irrelevance of the products being shown and the convenience of ad-blocking extensions. Now with the trade of data, companies have been able to target more appropriate markets, increasing user engagement with ads and helping hosts increase profits. Companies will never give up a mechanic that helps them profit, no matter how intrusive it is.

One might ask who is buying their personal information, and why are they buying it? There are the usual large companies, such as Amazon, trying to perfect their advertising and reach a larger audience, but there are also new, up-and-coming companies that buy said information to gain knowledge of consumers and effectively target advertisements. For example, a company that wants to get into the clothing business could see the number of people that like the brands that they might plan on selling by buying sets of data from Facebook and see a possible development of their company by acquiring the purchase history regarding clothing from Amazon. Data collection, data mining and the

transaction of these are what drives the formation and development of companies nowadays.

“There is no privacy on the internet” is a phrase that has been popping up in the last couple of years, and sadly it is true. As users, beyond accepting shady user agreements, we share our opinions, our feelings, and our image willingly. Nobody forces you to share a picture of your surroundings on Instagram, but a lot of people prefer to.

All of this is making it easier for companies to predict what our future interests might be and what we might be doing in the future. They say they are tailoring a personal web-browsing experience, getting rid of all the stuff that we are not interested in, and that is true, to an extent. We are in too deep to completely wipe away all of our private information from the web. However, we can prevent the manipulation of the masses by advertisements and well-placed propaganda by protesting for the regulation of what is done with the data held by the companies. Manipulating someone to vote for a candidate is much more important than manipulating somebody into purchasing a vacuum cleaner they were already interested in. •

Net Neutrality

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

one of the last remaining freedoms accessible to everyday citizens of the United States. The type of freedom provided by the internet is a right to Americans who are otherwise exploited daily by both the government and corporations. The FCC, however, wishes greedily to commodify this freedom. By dismantling net neutrality, “the F.C.C. would simply require internet service providers to be transparent about their practices so that consumers can buy the service plan that’s best for them and entrepreneurs and other small businesses can have the technical information they need to innovate.” When Ajit Pai, the Republican who Trump appointed head of the FCC, mentions “transparency,”

the term is horribly misleading. When have corporations ever been transparent toward consumers? As far as these corporations are concerned, consumers are opportunities for profit and nothing close to human. What Pai wants more than anything is for the liminal restrictions that keep internet service providers, already functioning as billion-dollar enterprises, to be lifted in the name of blind capitalist expansion directly poised against the freedom of American citizens.

An internet without net neutrality would function similarly to how cable operates now. Not only would consumers pay for faster service, but internet providers could block or slow access to certain sites based on affiliation. The proposed rollback of net neutrality also has discriminatory implications, promising that racist economic practices will now extend to internet provision as well. Racial minority groups and lower class citizens already have enough difficulty getting on the internet, and a repeal of net neutrality would impede

fight for justice. The ACLU notes that the end of net neutrality “would be devastating to civil rights organizations and activists, who can’t afford to pay corporations to make their voices heard.”

Laws currently regard internet access as a utility, like electricity or water. This mandates that internet providers must allow consumers of their product full and unmanipulated access to all of the internet. What the FCC hopes to do is change the designation of the internet from utility to “information service.” On Dec. 14, Congress will vote on whether the FCC’s motion to repeal net neutrality, and establish its new regime of commodified internet, should be passed. The announcement of this date came over Thanksgiving break, a deliberate decision that ensured citizens could not contact their representatives celebrating the holidays at home. The FCC hopes people may forget that it is about to destroy the sanctity of the internet and all it represents. They hope people stay silent. Don’t. •

Resistance at Tule Lake

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

ten internment camps, responded to the survey of allegiance, the War Relocation Authority (WRA) reorganized camps with answers in mind. Those who had responded negatively to questions 27 and 28, for reasons ranging from indignance to confusion, were sent to Tule Lake in an effort to segregate dissenters. Tule Lake became notorious among the camps—all of which subjected their incarcerated to harsh conditions, including restricted distribution of food, cramped, uncomfortable housing, and arduous labor with low pay—and fostered a group of active dissenters, who formed an alliance to demand rights from the WRA.

The leaders and the most passionate among the resistance movement experienced a dual incarceration. Removed from their families in the barracks at Tule Lake, they were forced to live outside in tents even during the winter, and were subjected to physical torture by the U.S. military. Out of this practice grew an alliance known as the Hoshi Dan, a group which went a step farther than answering “no-no” by actively pursuing allegiance to the Japanese empire from which they, or their parents, had immigrated.

The U.S. government saw this as an opportunity ripe for deportation: dissenting Japanese Americans, especially those at Tule Lake, were encouraged to renounce their American citizenship and return to war-torn Japan. While some members of the Hoshi Dan actively sought Japanese citizenship, they did so in response to the treatment to which the U.S. subjected them, and many were coerced into renouncing their U.S. citizenship. Nearly 6,000 people—about five percent of all internees—eventually selected this option, choosing on paper to abandon the U.S. for Japan while still incarcerated. But this wasn’t a free ticket out of internment: it meant that once the camps were disbanded—most in 1944, though Tule Lake remained in operation after the end of WWII until 1946—Japanese Americans immediately faced the threat of deportation. It was only due to the work of civil rights lawyers and the ACLU, which sued the U.S. Department of Justice, that a majority were able to stay.

In light of this, I have to echo one more comment of my dad’s on the documentary: “Sounds interesting, and de-

pressingly relevant today.” This brought me back to the first time I decided to write about the internment, during my sophomore year, when the current President of the United States was just a hateful, demagogic, nearly incomprehensible and yet increasingly influential candidate. Though typical U.S. history classes comment only briefly, if at all, on the recent reality of Japanese internment, the ruthless and dehumanizing immigration policies that the U.S. currently employs are not too distant from this legacy of coerced citizenship renunciation. Consider the language, used by many current members of Congress, of “self-deportation.” Likewise, the prejudiced and unfounded screenings and bannings of Muslim Americans, immigrants, and refugees are only a few steps away from sentencing people to concentration camps.

The Japanese internment is an ugly piece of history, and its nuanced layers are obfuscated even more than the reality of the occurrence itself: I remember my grandmother telling me, when she reflected on her own near-miss with internment, how the situation was presented with little clarity.

“I was vice president of the Nisei club [at school],” she told me, “They got all the Japanese children together after the announcement of Pearl Harbor and the rounding up of certain Japanese people...The advisor to our club told me to get up there and tell the class that if there were any people who were in trouble—if their mother or father got taken away—they would get help for us.” But beyond the institutional support provided by her school, she said, the idea of “camp” that arose after the initial Issei roundup was marketed in idealistic terms, as Japanese Americans were told that although they had to sacrifice their property and professions, they would be joining a community of other Japanese people, rather than having to live among the largely xenophobic wartime U.S. population. While my grandmother—who is now 93, and was a teenager during the internment—wanted to leave, her younger sister bought the government’s message and was actively resentful toward her parents for choosing to flee. My grandma told me simply that her sister wanted to go to camp, with the other Japanese kids.

What all these stories share, from those of citizenship-renouncers to my internment-enticed great aunt, is the

essential tool of misinformation. When the internment and ensuing deportations happened, they relied upon mass deceit of people and policy. On paper, the internment began not with a relegation of humans but in fact a statement that the region of the West Coast itself was problematic, because it was simply too close to the so-called evil influence of the East. It was in selectively enacting the policy, by the removal of people termed “enemy-aliens” or in danger of becoming them, that the internment really began.

Now, historical amnesia causes us to forget not just Japanese internment as a whole, but also its diverse details. The notion that people were actively discouraged from holding allegiance to the United States of course sounds contradictory to the country’s patriotic rhetoric, but it’s not that far from current reality. The will to forget and distort encourages the government to repeat its past mistakes, so we should pay attention to the internment, including its finer details. If we do, we might notice before it happens again. •



Over break become a...

- Successful Job Hunter
- Digital Illustrator
- Programmer
- Music Producer
- Small Business Owner
- Graphic Designer
- Comic Book Artist
- iOS 9 App Developer
- Photojournalist
- Documentary Filmmaker

**Learn all this and more
through Lynda.com's Learning Pathways**

Available to students through CamelWeb

Murder on the Orient Express Stays on Track with Thrills

RILEY MEACHEM
STAFF WRITER

I love corny Mystery novels. From Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to *Dexter*, Jo Nesbo to *Nancy Drew* (yeah, you read that right) pretty much any text with a crime, a series of plot twists, and an arrogant know-it-all protagonist will have me turning pages faster than Trump goes through Cabinet members, or a bag of McNuggets. But my first, and thus perhaps my favorite, exposure to the mystery novel came in the form of Agatha Christie's numerous murder stories. I may very well have read every one of them during my last year of elementary school and my first year of middle school, and their grim British wit and breakneck pace have influenced both my taste, and the style of countless other storytellers. As you can imagine, I was pretty excited to learn that esteemed Actor/Director Kenneth Branagh had adapted one of her more famous novels, *Murder on the Orient Express*, to the screen for the second time. When I then learned the movie featured a slew of talented actors and also Johnny Depp, I was even more eager to see it.

While nothing can ever compare to cracking open the novel for the first time, I have to say I thoroughly enjoyed myself. The movie stays fairly faithful to the source material, and the characters are all sketched with both economy and wit. Due to the fact that this is a mystery, i.e. the one genre where knowing the ending actually has any impact on how much you enjoy the story (that's science, look it up) I shall refrain from revealing too much about any character or about the plot in this review.

The movie opens with the Belgian detective Hercule Poirot (played by Branagh) at a breakfast table in Palestine attempting without success to find two perfectly symmetrical eggs, and to

pass off his mustache as normal.

Seriously, who in the goddamn hell grows a mustache like that? No mortal human could ever be capable of such a feat, unless aided by some dark, long forgotten god, or esoteric order of facial hair mystics. But as we quickly see, Poirot is no regular mortal man. Using nothing but his romanticized and undiagnosed mental illness and his walking stick, he solves the Israel/Palestine

conflict in microcosm within the first 15 minutes of the film, all the while cracking his typical series of dry bon mots. Shortly after this affair is resolved, Poirot boards

a train, along with 12 other characters, bound back for Europe through the alps. But while aboard, he is approached by American Gangster and Con Artist Edward Ratchett (played by funny-accent-machine-posing-as-human Johnny Depp). Ratchett claims to have been receiving threatening letters since boarding the Orient Express, and asks Poirot at gunpoint to be his bodyguard (incidentally the same method used by Depp to get any role not in a Tim Burton film). Poirot declines politely, and retires to his chambers, only to awake the next morning and find the train bogged down in snow.

At first, given the numerous allegations of violence against women hanging over him, and the even more numerous accusations of ruining good movies by refusing to display human emotion that are hanging over him, I was both ethically and artistically mystified by Branagh's choice to have Depp in his film. But about 30 minutes into the movie, Johnny's performance drastically improves when he is stabbed to death, and then spends the rest of the movie lying on a bed and not speaking—easily his finest performance since *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*.

Yes, Ratchett was stabbed to death



Photo courtesy of Cinema Blend

Thor: Ragnarok—If It's Not Doing Well, Make It a Comedy

EMIR KULLUK
STAFF WRITER

Ever since I saw the first trailer, *Thor Ragnarok* caused an emotional stir within me. The varieties in color and the serious change in tone made me question whether Marvel was trying something new with one of their less-successful heroes, or simply trying to replicate the success of the *Guardians of The Galaxy* movies. After I looked into the director attached to the film, Taika Waititi, I got a better sense of the superficial direction the latest Thor movie was heading towards as half of what Waititi was saying consisted of the words "awesome" and "cool."

Truth be told, Thor is one of Marvel's weaker superheroes. *Thor: The Dark World* has one of the lowest critic scores out of more than a dozen Marvel movies. Thor, ever since the first movie, was seen as this superhero who had little personality, yelled throughout most of his movies, and only beat up his enemies. Therefore, he definitely needed a stronger personality and more character development if he wanted to compete with the commercial success of other superheroes such as Iron Man, Captain America, and Spiderman, who stole the show with his recently released movie *Spiderman: Homecoming*, portraying a talkative, funny, quippy teenager. Both Marvel and Waititi found the solution by introducing humor into Thor's character. The film also features an innocent three-year-old, mostly someone for Thor to bounce his jokes off of.

Despite Thor's status as one of Marvel's less successful superheroes, the movie is definitely a good time. Throughout the movie, we follow Thor, who is at first imprisoned by a demon who wants to destroy Asgard, Thor's homeworld. Thor imprisons the demon and takes him back to Asgard, where he also dis-

covers that Loki has been disguising himself as Odin, their dad. They go on a journey to find their father, come across Hel, their banished sister and the goddess of death. After losing a battle against her, they are both stranded on a planet ruled by Jeff Goldblum, who is conducting arena fights, with his main fighter being the Hulk. Their goal throughout the rest of the film is to get back to Asgard and defeat Hel. The plot is simple, predictable and goes along with the movie formula created by Marvel. However *Thor: Ragnarok* is not interested in providing the viewer with a complex, thoughtful story that will leave the viewer questioning the deeper ideas behind the movie. *Thor: Ragnarok* mostly serves to entertain the viewers.

The color is eye-catching, and in this reviewer's opinion, preferable to Marvel's other movies with narrower and desaturated color palettes. Sakkar, the planet where Thor is thrown, feels vibrant and lively. The bounty hunters and citizens of Sakkar are actually given interesting dialogue that sometimes caused me to chuckle. The expressive setting and background characters are all used to amplify a vibrant main cast typically absent in Marvel movies.

In my opinion, *Thor: Ragnarok* is not a regular superhero movie, nor was it likely intended to be. *Thor: Ragnarok* is a comedy, and definitely a good one. Thor and Loki constantly throw jokes around, laugh, and make fun of the

people they are fighting against, as seen in the trailer, where Thor happily yells "YES" when he sees Hulk, even though he has to fight Hulk to the death.

This is not abnormal within the movie, however, because the entire cast frequently acts absurd and childish. Even the most serious character in the movie, Hel, is given some funny lines. When Thor



Photo courtesy of Sharp Magazine

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Artistic Representations Perpetuate Thanksgiving Myths

BROOKE SPONZO
CONTRIBUTOR

"Take a picture, it'll last longer" is a recognizable American saying, and it has some truth behind it. By the museums dedicated to art and photography depicting historical scenes, it's clear that illustrations have lasting impacts, but are their legacies true to the stories they tell or do they have greater purposes than accuracy? A closer look at artistic interpretations of the classic American holiday of Thanksgiving gives an insight into this theory.

Many would recognize this first iconic painting: it's one of American painter Norman Rockwell's most famous works. It depicts a family, consisting of multiple generations happily gathered around a table while grandparents serve a robust turkey to complete a perfect Thanksgiving feast. The name of the painting is "Freedom from Want" and, according to the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, the piece is a part of a set of four oil paintings known as the "Four Freedoms," each inspired by a different point of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's address to Congress in 1941.

Roosevelt's speech painted a picture of what a postwar world would look like, where citizens would be free to speak, free to practice their own religions, and free from fear and want. Rockwell, who had been commissioned by the U.S. Army to paint pieces supporting the war effort before, now faced the daunting task of illustrating the ideals in the president's address: a feat that Rockwell said in a *New Yorker* interview, "should have been tackled by Michelangelo."

Rockwell had nothing to fear, however, because according to the Rockwell museum's statistics, the Office of War Information created posters of the paintings along with the phrase 'Buy War Bonds' and printed four million sets. After the illustrations were shown in *The Saturday Evening Post*, the paper received 25,000 requests from the public for reprints of the art. When the set of paintings were sent on tour around the nation, they were seen by over a million people and raised 133 million dollars in war bonds and stamps.

Whatever it was about the allure of the life created in the paintings, Americans of the 1940s were most definitely buying into it. The scenes of peace and prosperity so desired by Americans were at the same time being used as symbols to fund a world war. Perhaps Americans saw in the paintings and in Roosevelt's address, an America, and also a world, that could be changed for the better if American ideals were spread and if they all did their part to help. So does Rockwell's artwork still mean anything to modern day Americans?

Today, millions of Americans still gather as families

to have a feast together on Thanksgiving, and many still find the tradition quite important. In fact, according to CNN, Thanksgiving ranks number two on a list of Americans' favorite holidays, second only to Christmas. And according to AAA in 2015, 46.9 million Americans will travel over 50 miles on Thanksgiving to consume 46 million turkeys. The scene shown in "Freedom from Want" might look a lot like the modern day Thanksgiving table, but do Ameri-



"Freedom from Want" by Norman Rockwell via Totally History

cans today celebrate Thanksgiving so they can feel free from want? And are they free from want because on Thanksgiving they have food and family and all the things they need? Or are they free from want because they have so much excess? Excess, in this case, refers to the notion that they could want no more because they already have everything. Thanksgiving is by no means a regular meal. It is a feast, which is a want, but it is also a feast surrounded by family, which to many is a need.

So that's modern Thanksgiving, but what about the first Thanksgiving? In 1915 Jean Leon Gerome Ferris created an image that would leave lasting stereotypes. The painting shows pilgrims in their iconic garb of black hats and black button down vests giving food

to a group of Native Americans seated on the ground sporting feather headdresses. The work is titled "The First Thanksgiving" and the image is quite common, in fact many may read this and recall performing a skit about it in elementary school. But the first Thanksgiving did not happen in the way Americans are led to believe it happened.

First, an examination of this painting's inaccuracies. *National Geographic* reports that the clothing in Ferris's painting is historically inaccurate, and Nathaniel Philbrick, author of the book *Mayflower: The Story of Courage, Community, and War*, suggests that the two groups would likely have been all sitting around fires cooking the meal and not at long tables and adds that the groups would be eating the food with their fingers, as forks did not come to Plymouth until later in the 1600s. But the image is about as inaccurate as it is consistent. A 1914 painting by Jennie Augusta Brownscombe which is similarly titled: "The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth" also consists of pilgrims at a long table, with utensils, while native Americans are seated on the ground. The motif has been plastered upon just about every dollar store decoration and children's book since.

This celebratory feast certainly happened, even if artists have failed to capture it to its most accurate extent. It is the glossing over of what happened before and after it that begin to paint a more realistic view of the first Thanksgiving. According to a *New York Times* article titled "Most Everything You Learned About Thanksgiving is Wrong," Plymouth was such a nice area to settle in because it already had cleared fields and a spring. Why? Because plagues had killed all the native people living there. And what about the belief that pilgrims came for religious freedom? The article disagrees, describing how the pilgrims had religious freedom in Holland and that coming to Plymouth was about making money. In addition to seeking capital opportunity, they established their own religion as the only religion, which is really the opposite of religious freedom. Native Americans and pilgrims feasting together is a lovely diplomatic moment, but the deadly clashes that occurred between them later as well as the long history of brutality and injustice against the native peoples of America is the ending to the story that is often glossed over.

So, Thanksgiving: it's a patriotic movement, it's a moneymaker, it's embedded in a web of falsehood, and it's often painted through a rose colored lens. It's about family and connections that are strong in the moment, but fragile in the long term, severed by war or conflict. Painters of the holiday can empower a nation, raise millions of dollars, or create a stereotype that will endure for generations, but whatever the result is, it proves that sometimes it is the brush, rather than the pen, that is mightier than the sword. •

tUnE-yArDs Releases Single, Promises New Album

SAM WEISENTHAL
CONTRIBUTOR

Eight years ago, a voice recorder, GarageBand, and Merrill Garbus' feminist pop punk genius were the bare bones necessities used to make tUnE-yArDs' debut album, "BiRD-BrAiNs." *The Guardian* claimed, in its five star review, that "BiRD-BrAiNs" was "the find of the year." The band's popularity grew through word of mouth, and around the world, crowds filled every venue the band visited on their first tour. tUnE-yArDs has enjoyed a high level of success in a short time, demonstrated by the reception of their next two albums, which built off of the strength of their first release. The albums released post "BiRD-BrAiNs" grew in their musical and lyrical strength, resulting in a highly acclaimed pop punk duo who have managed to change the way contemporary listeners view the construct of feminist music.

The second album, released in 2011 and titled "W H O K I L L," was featured on NPR's Tiny Desk concert and appraised by club goers and feminists alike. The album explores the constructs of femininity and sexuality, combining these experiences with the threats of violence Garbus experienced in her daily life. The veracity of Garbus' live shows translate into the work, making it the perfect album for the socially conscious concert goers and living room dancers alike. "W H O K I L L" appeared on all end of year lists, and was named Album of the Year in the *Village Voice's* highly prestigious Pazz & Jop poll, based on the votes of 700 of America's most notable music critics. tUnE-yArDs' last album, "Nikki Nack," was released in 2014 and produced by highly acclaimed artists such as Malay—who has worked with Alicia Keys, Big Boi, and Frank Ocean—and John Hill, known for his work with M.I.A., Rihanna, and Shakira. Although "Nikki Nack" is the first tUnE-yArDs album created in a recording studio, Garbus remains true to her sound. "I had to let

go of tUnE-yArDs being rigidly my production," she writes in an online statement, "I have a very specific vision for the sound of the band and I don't think women producers get enough credit for doing their own stuff, so I was resistant... it turns out that's what's most important [is]: the songs, not my ego."

Breaking nearly four years of studio silence, tUnE-yArDs has finally released a single titled, "Look at Your Hands." The band has also informed its loyal following that its new album, "I can feel you creep into my private life," will be released on Jan. 19. Bandleader Merrill Garbus wrote the lyrics for the record and has formally announced that longtime producer and collaborator Nate Brenner is an official member of the band, making tUnE-yArDs a duo.

In a press release, Garbus comments on the meaning of "Look at Your Hands" by noting, "Yes, the world is a mess, but I've been attempting to look more and more inward: How do all of these 'isms' that we live in manifest in me, in my daily activities, interactions?" Like other music from the band, the single manages to discuss political unrest while seamlessly maintaining an over the top disco beat. With blood-pumping vocals and an unforgettably glitchy hook, the single is more brash and kaleidoscopic than any of the band's previous music. Garbus comments that the "80's throwback production came from wanting the vocals to sound robotic, maybe to counter the sincerity of the lyrics." The combination of 80's club music and modern feminist punk allows the single to be both poppy and socially inclined. Whereas the majority of tUnE-yArDs' past music has relied on narrative lyrics to depict both feeling and meaning, "Look at Your Hands" is assertive in its sound, producing high energy, exhilarating music. Although the song might upon first listen sound one dimensional, closer analysis of the lyrics provides a deeper understanding. Lyrics such as "sell me my own water off of my own land" or "my own father is a wicked man," reveal the underlying power struggle in the



"Look at Your Hands" cover art via Spin

song. Paradoxically, Garbus asks us to look at our own hands, the part of us which is supposed to symbolize agency, all the while pointing out the authority we do not hold. By the bridge, the music becomes ever more chaotic over a hook that repeats the word "harmony." Garbus twists her voice over the lyrics to elicit an unnerving feeling. However, although the sound may become increasingly overwhelming, the music is always controlled just enough for the audience to stay in the message and the music. The combination of thoughtful lyrics and punk pop sound is what tUnE-yArDs has become known for, and "Look at Your Hands" demonstrates how effectively Garbus is able to achieve this challenging blend.

tUnE-yArDs will begin touring Dec. 1, and will be visiting the East Coast. If you are interested, you can catch them either March 8 at the Royale in Boston, or March 9 at Brooklyn Steele. •

Thor: Ragnarok

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

is thrown into prison with other gladiators to fight against the Hulk, Korg, a gladiator made of rocks and voiced by Waititi himself, starts talking about the revolution he attempted and he will attempt it again, asking Thor if he is interested. Although the film primarily feels like a comedy, there are striking and emotive "superhero moments" that make the viewer feel empowered.

Even though the humor works well in the film, there are times when comedic aspects detract from anything else the film is trying to do, as the script puts humor above all else. There are no se-

rious moments within the film that last more than half a minute, due to constant interruptions by a quirky move by an actor or a joke thrown in. There is no weight to the characters being killed or the war that Hel is waging, just as there are no serious lines of dialogue that create tension and suspense. This comedic override is also caused by the inconsistent pace. The movie tries to go back and forth between Hel taking over Asgard and Thor trying to get out of Sakkar, but it does not provide Hel's storyline with enough time to build her as an interesting villain, as the movie wants to go back to Hulk and Thor bantering and making fun of each other in Sakkar. The ending of the movie, which

I will not spoil, is the best example of this, as it completely devalues the movie's prior events.

From a technical aspect, *Thor: Ragnarok* does supply the viewer with interesting shots and editing that is fun to witness, but these are so few in between regular shot compositions that they do not affect the film entirely. The CGI within the film is spotty at times too. In some scenes, it is very apparent that it was shot on a green screen, and one of the effects applied onto Thor towards the end of the film is not fun to look at.

Is *Thor: Ragnarok* a good time? Most certainly. I enjoyed my viewing session a lot, and left the viewing room smiling.

In my opinion, this was one of the best ways to make another Thor movie, and it did so while also providing a refreshing platform for the Hulk's character to develop. However, the comedy aspect of the film detracts from the movie's dramatic aspects, which are in a way pretty crucial to the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), and the film sacrifices genuine sad moments for a quick joke and a chuckle. *Thor: Ragnarok* is a prime example of how the overuse of bathos may affect a movie and its viewer, and it is not all good. Taika Waititi brings a lot of new stuff to the table, while getting rid of some of the old to make a movie he thinks is best. •

Selected Scenes from *In the Spotlight*, an Original Student Play

LINDSEY RUZZA
CONTRIBUTOR

Setting: A blackbox theatre set up like a living room. A table stage left, a couch stage right, and an armoire upstage center.

Characters:
VIOLET.....an actress, twenty-four
MAYA.....an outsider, eighteen
GRANT.....the artistic director, thirty-two

SCENE
MAYA is near the couch, VIOLET on the other side of the theater at the table. MAYA watches VIOLET intently. VIOLET is completely still.

MAYA: I spent my whole life wishing to be an actress and I'm here.

MAYA sits on the couch.

MAYA: I'm where I've always wanted to be.

VIOLET takes out her compact mirror and begins to take off her stage makeup. Slowly, a large and dark bruise is revealed covering her swollen eye. She stares at herself in the compact mirror.

VIOLET: Beauty is pain I guess.

VIOLET finishes taking off her make-up. The sound of glass breaking is heard from offstage. This startles VIOLET, but not MAYA. The sound of GRANT's voice yelling at the person who broke the glass startles her even more.

MAYA: Sometimes things break here.

VIOLET digs her long nails into the back of her hand. Little drops of blood begin to gather where her nails are. As she lifts her hand, the droplets flow down her arm. She brings her hand up so that it is covering her mouth.

MAYA: It's often best to just stay silent.

VIOLET drops her hand, but remains tense.

VIOLET: Yes, Grant will fix this. Grant will make it all go away.

VIOLET tries to get up from the table. She falls over and hits her bruised eye. She gives up on moving.

MAYA: Sometimes people break here.

VIOLET is left bruised and bloody. VIOLET weeps. MAYA sits beside VIOLET. A moment. MAYA holds VIOLET's hand and examines her bruises. It is as if MAYA doesn't notice when VIOLET speaks.

VIOLET: She looks down and all she sees is a violet bruise on my forearm. And another around my wrist. And two more on my kneecaps. Violet—the color your skin turns to show the world you've been hurt. The color of fragility, of weakness.

Blackout.

SCENE
Night. A storm. Water floods the stage. It is pouring rain. VIOLET stands in the middle of the stage, letting the rain fall over her. She is barefoot. She does not cry, but she does not smile. She is soaking wet,

and we can tell she's been out there for a while. MAYA walks onstage, holding an umbrella.

MAYA: Violet! Go inside.

VIOLET: (at peace) No.

MAYA: Come on, Violet. You can't wander through the rain all night because it's poetic.

VIOLET: Fuck you.

MAYA: I'm not your babysitter.

VIOLET: You sure?

MAYA closes her umbrella. She lets the rain fall through her fingertips. She takes off her shoes, folds the umbrella, putting it next to the shoes. MAYA grabs VIOLET's hand and spins her around. The two women waltz in the rain. MAYA spins out, offstage. When she is gone, VIOLET puts on her shoes, takes the umbrella, and stands in the rain.

SCENE
VIOLET alone onstage. She is standing center, in the spotlight. Around her, only

darkness. She might still be wet from the previous scene.

Sound cue: a generic voicemail woman saying "the person you are trying to reach is unavailable and you should leave a message after the tone."

VIOLET: Mama? I just wanted to tell you that I left Electric. I thought it would be the best thing to do. I haven't seen you since you came to New York... you know... to see the show. (Beat.) I know you knew, Mama. Your eyes gave you away. I always meant to ask you why you never said anything but I never could. I just stood there with that ridiculous smile across my face hoping you wouldn't notice. And maybe a little hoping you would. (Beat.) We have the same smile, Mama, you know that? Or at least we used to. It's been a while since I've seen you. Well... Anyway give me a call back sometime because I—

A beeping sound, letting VIOLET know that her message was too long and that she has been cut off.

VIOLET: Miss you. •

Murder on the Orient Express

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

in his car during the night—but by whom? And when? And why? Suspects, clues, and twists all bombard our Belgian in salvos that are both engaging and dark, tragic and amusing, all leading up to an emotional and satisfying conclusion.

Given the lackluster film adaptations of books that have come out this year (Both *The Snowman* and *It* butchered the excellent stories they were based on, in this reviewer's opinion) I went into this with somewhat low expectations. That said, I was pleasantly surprised by and large. Each of the suspects is played with expertise and brevity, as the actors use the relatively small amount of screentime to make a lasting impression (Josh Gadd, Michelle Pfeiffer, Daisy Ridley, and Leslie Odom Jr. in particular deliver outstanding performances). The cinematography also

far surpasses the typical popcorn-seller, featuring incredible crane shots of the train and the murder scene, fast exciting cuts during the action, and the rare good use of Dutch angles to contrast the characters with the train that is tilted diagonally on its side.

As many contemporary adaptations of mysteries tend to do, the movie moves with almost exaggerated haste. This can sometimes work to the movie's benefit, making it a puzzle that is interesting and fascinating to return to for multiple viewings (for example see Thomas Alfredson's adaptation of *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*). Here, the rapid pace doesn't particularly improve the story, but it hardly works to its detriment either. That said, several interrogation scenes fly by, particularly the one with Penelope Cruz's nun, and the German cook. Another minor critique is that the bright and somewhat garish color palette of the film is more reminiscent of a Wes Anderson film than a dark murder

saga. Of course, some people enjoy Wes Anderson films and their bright colors, in the same way some people enjoy setting fires, or killing cats and looking at their insides, and to such people these moments will probably be fun. For me they were not.

While it isn't a masterpiece, *Murder on the Orient Express* is a fun time at the movies. I would give it a 7.5/10. •

CROSSWORD KEY

		G	E	E			D	O	T	S		I	D	A	
	P	E	R	T			S	A	C	R	E		N	E	M
P	A	N	I	C	A	T	T	H	E	D	I	S	C	O	
O	G	R	E		F	E	A	R	F	A	C	T	O	R	Y
T	E	E		E	L	F		E	T	N	I		R	A	E
					G	U	A	M				E	V	A	L
	A	L	O	O	F	N	E	S	S			R	E	T	I
V	N	E	R		F	I	N	A	L	S			G	E	T
I	S	A	A	C		S	A	L	E	S	L	A	D	Y	
A	W	F	U	L				T	E	A	R				
N	E	L		Y	O	D	A		P	D	A		S	K	I
D	R	E	A	D	P	I	R	A	T	E		P	I	N	T
	S	T	R	E	S	S	F	R	A	C	T	U	R	E	S
	T	E	A		I	C	I	N	G		T	R	E	E	
	O	R	B		N	O	D	E			P	E	N		

Theater Department Gets Surreal with *bobrauschenbergamerica*

SAADYA CHEVAN
BUSINESS MANAGER

Perhaps the overall confusing and zany nature of the Theater Department's production of *bobrauschenbergamerica* can be summarized through one statement: Katie Soricelli '18 probably stole the show playing a chicken (and later pizza delivery boy). Soricelli's avian antics included a well-crafted and consistent chicken walk and voice, which she employed while regularly taking offense to the script's occasional chicken jokes. In a particularly memorable moment during a picnic scene, she took a beat too long before realizing she was eating fried chicken, resulting in an extreme emotional outburst. The chicken character, is hinted at but not explicitly mentioned in the original script of Charles Mee's 2001 play, reflects the overall crazy atmosphere of both the production and the play itself. This is unsurprising, given that *bobrauschenbergamerica*—whose Conn rendition premiered the weekend before Thanksgiving and was directed by Kimberly Senior '95, an alumna with several prominent directing credits including Ayad Akhtar's *Disgraced* on Broadway—is



a work that attempts to create a play as the American artist Robert Rauschenberg would have had he instead been a playwright.

Rauschenberg became prominent

in the 1950s as a precursor to the pop art movement, and his art is well known for its incorporation of found objects. The play reflects this aesthetic through scenes and scenery that reference or are in the vein of the artist's work. Aidan Gorrell '18 as Phil the Trucker enjoys soliloquizing from his bathtub, making reference to Rauschenberg's "Sor Aqua (Venetian)," a piece that itself prominently features a bathtub.

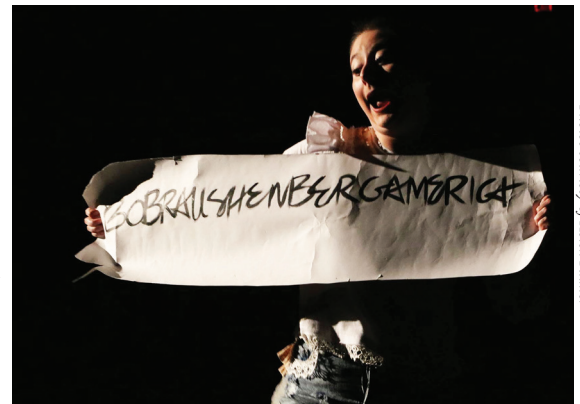
Conn's production of *bobrauschenbergamerica* took liberties by adapting Mee's original text however they saw fit. This is in keeping with Mee's philosophy of playwriting and performance rights, described on his website as "the (re)making project." Mee feels that because his plays have borrowed from the work of others (a tradition he traces through the work of all playwrights) his plays too should be remixed and derived from. To that effect, while retaining some control over his performance rights, he has made all of his work available on the internet, and invites visitors to read and borrow from them. This manifests itself in ways such as the eschewing of stage directions like "A 123-piece local high school marching band (or else a solo bagpipe player) enters playing," in favor of an ensemble made up of the performers, including Gorrell on flugelhorn and Ana Reyes-Rosado '20, Bob's Mom, on saxophone. In essence Mee's beliefs enable the performers to adapt the work for themselves rather than the ensemble that Mee originally wrote for.

At times the piece feels more like contemporary art than contemporary theater. This is especially apparent in the way it introduces its more than 40 scenes: at the beginning of each scene a title displayed on a screen creating a gallery-like effect. There are also scenes that feel like they belong on an audio guide for an art show. Several of these scenes focus on Reyes-Rosado who sweetly delivers monologues of questionable veracity about the artist's life and childhood. However, it's only her very last line that was allegedly spoken by her real-life counterpart. The most literal example of the production's likeness to a contemporary art gallery comes in the middle of the play when Charlie Gold '18 as Carl, is reincarnated after be-

ing assassinated two scenes earlier. He immediately begins delivering a revealing speech welcoming everyone to an art show opening although he realizes by the end that his ramblings offer no real conclusion; this is a moment that feels like it would have made the play more understandable had it appeared much earlier in the script.

The play focuses much more on ensembles than individual performances. Dance is especially prominent at several moments, but there are many moments when everyone suddenly rushes on stage to gather, gossip or just go about their lives. In many scenes characters stand in the background performing their routines; for example, Claire Peyton '21 who gave an excellent portrayal of Phil's Girl, often makes shadowy appearances on a tire swing or sometimes in the bathtub with Gorrell. There's plenty of spectacle too with scenes such as the aforementioned assassination, Mark McPhillips '20 as Allen destroying a trash can with a baseball bat or Peyton setting up a martini slip and slide using gin and olives, which most of the characters slide on while Reyes-Rosado holds up ratings of their attempts.

Through its assorted vignettes, scenes and works of art *bobrauschenbergamerica* tries to present a picture of America as seen through the eyes of its namesake artist. Given the nature of Rauschenberg and the play's presentation of random vignettes representing ordinary and extraordinary America, it's easy for viewers' opinions about it to vary. This fact makes it particularly difficult to pass satisfactory judgment on the play. My opinion is that the piece ultimately falls flat. While the cast certainly presented excellent and passionate performances, the complexity and randomness of the work itself made it difficult to parse in one sitting. •



Photos courtesy of Helen Fulmer

Arboretum Staff Combines Holiday Cheer, Crafting, & Botany

SOPHIA ANGELE-KUEHN
ARTS EDITOR

Participants from across Connecticut joined the Connecticut College Arboretum staff for the annual Holiday Wreath Making Workshop, a popular Arboretum event, on Saturday, Dec. 2. Registrants had reserved their places and paid online in September, though all Arboretum events are free for Conn students. After a brief demonstration by Arboretum curator Mary Villa, everyone selected their plant materials outside from bags before getting to work, winding floral wire around their balsam, juniper, and holly, among other carefully classified species. Each participant left with a unique wreath that will stay green all through the holidays. •



Photo courtesy of Sophia Angele-Kuehn