In Layman’s Terms: Russia & Ukraine

Have no idea what the hell is going on with Russia and Ukraine? Me neither! So let’s simplify things. On Thursday, Feb. 3, the Conn government department had a Zoom event where Professor Eric Fleury, Professor Petko Ivanov, Professor David Patton and Olha Vasyliv ’23, broke down and answered questions about the ongoing crisis between Ukraine and Russia that has been dominating the news. In the simplest of terms, here’s what’s going on:

Brief History & Context:
As Professor Petko asserted, the crisis in Ukraine is seen by the Kremlin as a direct response to the collapse of the Soviet Union. After the fall of the USSR in 1991, over 90% of Ukraine voted to formally declare independence. As Russia has recovered and attempted to reestablish itself as a major power like it once was, relations between Russia and Ukraine have been tumultuous.

In the 30+ years of Ukraine’s independence it has been searching for a unified national identity, going back and forth between governments, some of which leaning more towards an increased alliance with the West, and some vying to restrengthen ties with Russia. All the while dealing with its own internal issues of corruption, economic struggles and ethnic tension.

In the past fifteen years there have been multiple occasions on which it looked as though Ukraine or former USSR countries would strengthen their ties to the west by joining organizations like NATO or the EU only for Russia to interfere. In 2008 when Georgia was rumored to join NATO, Russia invaded. In 2014 when Ukraine sought to be a member of the EU, Russia prompted a revolutionary uprising in Kiev, drove the Ukrainian president into exile and later waged a hybrid war. To this day Russia stokes the flames of ethnic tension in Eastern Ukraine as well as arming Ukrainian separatists.

As of now, Ukraine is seeking to affiliate with the West, possibly by joining NATO. In response, Russian president Vladimir Putin, who refuses to even acknowledge that Ukraine is a real country, has lined the Ukrainian border with over 100,000 Russian troops. Things look tense to say the least.

In Layman’s Terms: Russia is a jealous and ‘guardian’ to Ukraine, but refuses to acknowledge its independence. Imagine if despite what the court said, Britney Spears’ dad still acted like the conservatorship never ended. Any time Ukraine looks to go play with new friends or join a new club with Russia’s adversaries, Russia threatens them because it’s scared.

What’s the Ukrainian Point of View?:
Perhaps most important in this situation is what the citizens of Ukraine think and feel. Conn’s own Olha Vasyliv and her family are from Kiev, and when asked for her perspective, she said “this is yet another crisis for me.” Vasyliv commented on how this national dynamic has been a constant in her upbringing, and that she’s “not that reactant” anymore. Professor Ivanov echoed this, describing how the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia has led to a “sense of normalcy in daily life” for most Ukrainians. Vasyliv emphasized that while the Western media continuously refers to this situation as a conflict, this is still very much a real war.

Vasyliv concluded by nonchalantly voicing that while she appreciates the U.S and other countries supporting Ukraine at this time, that this is just another “strategy to scare us.”

In Layman’s Terms:
While not quite a “what else you got?”, there certainly seems to be a sense of “what else is new?” to Vasyliv and many other Ukrainians. The people within this war and with what appears to be the most at stake, are maybe the least alarmed.

What Does Russia Want?:
Russia is citing Ukraine’s interest in NATO and the potential increase in Western power and influence as a threat to their national security, and they want these concerns to be taken seriously. Their most prominent demands include: NATO will not expand into the former Soviet Union (including Ukraine); NATO will cease the expansion of offensive weaponry and personnel into the former Soviet Union; there will be a withdrawal of all Western military and NATO personnel that have been instituted in the former Soviet Union since 1997.

These demands being met is extremely unlikely. As to why Russia is demanding these things (and so aggressively), Professor Fleury claims the biggest threat to Putin is that “Ukraine is Ukraine.” The panel illustrated how if Ukraine begins to flourish as a truly independent country with the help of the West, the citizens under Putin’s long standing and oppressive regime could begin to look inwardly at their own nation and think they could have things better.

Ukraine beginning to prosper could have what Professor Patton calls “a magnetic effect” on neighboring countries, including Russia itself. Should Ukraine join NATO, Russia would have a much more difficult time imposing their will on them like other adjacent states, as attacking a NATO country is something entirely different.

In Layman’s Terms:
Russia is like Jack Sparrow, trapped on a vessel that no longer belongs to him, yelling “stop blowing holes in my ship!” at the West. They want all NATO weapons, personnel and influence to leave anywhere that used to be in the USSR. They don’t want to see Ukraine succeed because the countries under their direct influence (including themselves) may see that they’d be better off otherwise.
Letter From the Editor

Welcome back!

We at The College Voice are so glad to have you back with us at Connecticut College in the year 2022. It’s thrilling to get the chance to bring The College Voice to the campus community once more this spring. I cannot believe that our time together this year is halfway over, but I hope that we will make the most of it.

Student journalism is a labor of love and seeing all of our hard work in print never gets old. This is the first of the six biweekly issues we’ll release this semester and we hope you’ll stick around for all of them. A major shout out this week goes to Zoe Dubelier ’23 for creating this issue, a near impossible feat and my mind is blown by her skill, dedication, and patience. This paper would not exist without her.

But now we have a paper! What should you read first? We have some suggestions.

Turn the page back and read our front-page coverage of the Russia/Ukraine roundtable held by the Government department last week, “Ukraine on the Brink: What Caused the Current Crisis, and What Happens Next?” helpfully broken down by Arts Editor Eli Christopher ’22.

Hannah Gonzalez ’23, interviews Director of Race and Ethnicity Programs Maurice Tiner ’17 for The College Voice regarding the new Racial Affinity Club Executives, or RACE program dedicated to supporting BIPOC student groups.

Staff Writer Alexa Beckstein ’22 analyzes the new Lumineers album, BRIGHTSIDE, for all the indie-folk-rock fans out there, saving us from having to listen to it ourselves.

Dream team and TCV Arts and Opinions Editors Caoimhe Markey ’23 and Jimmy Cork ’22 sit down and talk to Rob Radochia ’23, not only a member of the Connecticut College men’s hockey team but also an actor in the Oscar-nominated film Don’t Look Up on page 20.

Finished with Wordle today? Already over the NYTimes mini? Looking to further postpone a dreaded Moodle post? Try your hand at our crossword on page 19 made by the talented Zoe Dubelier ’23.

The College Voice is back and better than ever. Considering joining us? We’d love to have you on our team. We’re always looking for writers, artists, people interested in layout design, and photographers. Come to our Sunday night meetings at 8pm in Cro’s Nest, follow us on Instagram @the_collegevoice, find us on Connquest, or email us. We can’t wait to hear from you!

As always if interested in offering a correction or if you have further questions please email us at eic@thecollegevoice.org.

A Note From the Editor:

To submit a letter to the editors please email us at eic@thecollegevoice.org. We review all letters that we receive for publication in our next issue.

All work submitted to The College Voice will become a part of the College’s archives and our website after publication.
In Layman’s Terms: Russia & Ukraine cont.

Article continued from page 1.

How Does This Involve the U.S.?

Professor Fleury immediately rejected two popular narratives about how the U.S. plays into this situation. Firstly, he rejected the idea that this situation has everything to do with the U.S. This is not a test of American (or President Biden's) resolve or a way for Putin to exploit American weakness. This is about Ukraine and Russia. However, he also rejected the idea that this has nothing to do with the U.S or that Putin has reasonable demands and has to be taken at his word that Russia's security is actually being threatened.

In the same vein that this is not a Machiavellian ploy to exploit the U.S, this equally is not a plot to humiliate Russia. Putins assertion that Ukraine is a pawn, or the stage on which Russia and the grander powers of the West will face off seems thin.

While Russia's entire reaction comes across as sort of an abrasive cry for attention or desperate reminder that they're still powerful enough to rival the U.S and the rest of the West, it's also not as if the U.S can just ignore them like a toddler kicking you in the shins on a work call. Russia's equivalent of throwing a tantrum is threatening the general security and sovereignty of entire nations with attack and invasion, so it's going to take more than just the silent treatment here.

The U.S, and everyone else, thinks Russia invading Ukraine would be bad, so they're heavily invested in preventing that. Tangentially however, the U.S is also looking to finally sort Russia away into one box or another: are they really a dangerous power, or just a sullen, former threat? If the U.S is looking to put most of their overseas political attention towards China and Asia in the future, it's annoying that Russia keeps resurfacing as a nuisance.

In Layman's Terms:
The U.S. doesn't want Russia to invade Ukraine. That would likely lead to war and danger beyond just that region. However, just because Russia's reaction looks like a cry for attention doesn't mean their threats are fake or they can be easily ignored. The U.S. wants to settle this for their own convenience as well as everyone else's.

Will There Be An Invasion:
The biggest question on everyone's mind is whether Russia will actually invade or not, so it needs to be asked whether an invasion would actually advance their goals, or if it would just be a vindictive reaction to being dismissed. As for their goals, anything short of a full blown occupation would mean facing off with a resisting Ukraine armed with missiles and other forms of Western support, so it's hard to see how that would help get rid of NATO.

Both Professors Fleury & Patton agreed that there must be a balance struck from NATO, as they want to issue support to Ukraine without doing so much that it actually validates Putin's security concerns. Professor Fleury quoted Don Corleone, saying that Putin has to see enough support from the West to know that "if a bolt of lightning" should strike the wrong side of the line, Russia would be in trouble. Professor Patton succinctly said Western reinforcement should be enough to give "reassurance and deterrence."

In the end, a lot of this seems to boil down to Putin. While he's not the James Bondian, mastermind villain that he's often posed as, he's still an authoritarian dictator with a violent history. If he elects to invade for one megalomaniacal reason or another, it very well may go forward. While this may end up aging like radioactive milk, realistically the signs point towards an invasion not happening, although sadly that does not mean this situation will have a tidy or timely resolution. Tense negotiations will likely continue for some time.

In Layman's Terms: Signs point against invasion. Still, this situation should be taken seriously and will probably take some time to conclude.

A Space of Solidarity: First Unity House Market Comes to Life

On February 19th, Unity House will be hosting its first-ever Unity House Market event at Connecticut College. Created by the Race and Ethnicity Community Engagement team, made up of Aaquib Akhtar '22, Elizabeth Lopez '22, Hannah Gonzalez '23, and Mika Cook-Wright '22, the event will run from 12-3. The team is also supported by Maurice Tiner ’17 Director of Race and Ethnicity Programs and Unity House Program Coordinator Dulmarie Irizarry. The first hour will be specifically devoted to on-campus BIPOC student entrepreneurs having an opportunity to connect with alumni. Tanaya Cardenaes ’17 will be the event’s featured speaker. Cardenaes was chosen for her success as a social media entrepreneur and will open the event by giving advice to the student entrepreneurs virtually.

From 1-3, the event will be open to the entire campus community. "We worked with the Race and Ethnicity program in Unity House and came up with the event during a brainstorming session for the spring semester," Lopez continued. "We noticed how many students had their own small businesses and saw alumni advertising their businesses in Facebook groups for students of color and it helped us draw inspiration for a space to support these on-campus entrepreneurs."

The team worked on plans for the event through the end of the fall semester and over winter break, as well as in the early weeks of the spring. "Unfortunately, the ever-present pandemic has caused many traditions and programs to be significantly altered not only at Conn, but for many institutions of higher education. Alternatively, it has pushed us to find new and exciting opportunities to create in collaboration with others. The Unity Market is a by-product of that creativity. We are excited to cultivate an intentional space to promote entrepreneurship, especially for communities where access to a large number of consumers may be challenging. The Unity Market will bring current students and local alumni [safely] together at the historic Unity House to sell fantastic products. Who knows, we may have the next multi-million dollar product right in our midst," said Tiner.

There will be twelve featured student businesses at the market with students representing all current class years and alumni from the class of 2020, Jennifer Rojas, and from 19990, Dorriel Larrier. These businesses and entrepreneurs range from photographers, jewelry and clothing designers and stores, hot sauce makers, film production businesses, and more.

One BIPOC student entrepreneur, Jocelyn Pinero ’24 runs Josie's Closet, a modern thrift store that sells preloved clothing, shoes, and accessories on campus, and is looking forward to being featured at the market. "I had the idea to create a thrift store for many years, but I immersed myself in doubt, thinking that I wasn't good enough to start up a business. With a gentle push from close friends and family, I built the courage to start up Josie's Closet last semester, during my sophomore year as a pop-up shop in front of Cro. The market is a space for students of color, who strive to be entrepreneurs, to connect with BIPOC alumni who also are entrepreneurs. This space would not only provide insights on how to become a POC entrepreneur during and after college, but it will also provide a space for my small business to gain some love and attention!"

The team promoted the event through posters made by Cook Wright shared on social media platforms, ConnQuest, and across on-campus spaces. "I think that what we’re trying to create is a space of solidarity and support and create a space for [students] to get exposure and knowledge," Lopez concluded.

Stop by on Feb 19th and support Conn’s BIPOC entrepreneurs.
SCOTUS Justice Breyer Retires – A Breakdown of Possible Candidates

After more than 27 years, Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer is stepping down, leaving party officials and citizens alike buzzing with questions about who will replace him. On Jan. 27, President Biden officially announced Dr. Stephen Breyer's retirement from the Supreme Court. Viewed as a “moderately liberal” judge, Justice Breyer is renowned for being professional, intellectual, and practical, in addition to his preference for riding his bike to work. During his years of service, he is most remembered for writing the 2016 Supreme Court decision to strike down a Texas law that would make it increasingly difficult for women in Texas to access abortion clinics. Additionally, during his tenure, he wrote the Court’s 8-1 decision expanding freedom of speech rights for students after a 14-year-old cheerleader cursed her school while off campus. He also wrote to uphold the Affordable Care Act for the third time in 2021.

In his speech on Jan. 27 announcing Justice Breyer’s retirement, President Biden remarked the process for selecting Justice Breyer’s successor “is going to be rigorous.” President Biden claims he intends to uphold the lingering promise from his campaign, as he stated in his White House address: “I’ve made no decisions except one: The person I will nominate will be someone with extraordinary qualifications, character, experience, and integrity, and that person will be the first Black woman ever nominated to the United States Supreme Court. It’s long overdue, in my view.”

Since his public remarks on Breyer’s retirement, three potential nominees have emerged. Currently, the three contenders for Justice Breyer’s replacement are federal Judge Kentaji Brown Jackson, California Supreme Court Justice Leondra Kruger, and South Carolina Judge Julianna Childs.

Judge Kentaji Brown Jackson, a current member for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, was on former President Barack Obama’s shortlist for Supreme Court nominations in 2016. After graduating from Harvard University and Harvard Law School, Judge Jackson clerked for Justice Breyer before moving on to work in a private practice. In 2003, Jackson worked as an assistant special counsel to the United States Sentencing Commission before becoming assistant public defender in Washington, D.C. in 2005. President Obama then nominated Jackson to serve as judge for the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, the second-most powerful court in the United States.

As a federal judge, Jackson is most notable for her ruling against former White House counsel Don McGahn, requiring him to testify to the House Judiciary Committee as part of the investigation into Russia’s interference in the 2016 election and Trump’s possible obstruction of justice. In response to this case, she wrote that “presidents are not kings” and “no one is above the law.” Historically, Jackson has received substantial bipartisan support. She has been twice confirmed unanimously by the U.S. Senate.

Similarly, Justice Leondra Kruger received her bachelor’s degree from Harvard University and her J.D. from Yale Law School. Justice Kruger served in the Department as an Assistant to the Solicitor General and as Acting Deputy Solicitor General from 2007 to 2013. During her six years in the solicitor general’s office, she argued 12 cases at the Supreme Court. She has now served on the California Supreme Court for seven years, having joined in 2014. At 43 years old, Kruger would be the youngest Justice by over four years.

Unlike the other two prospective nominees, Judge Julianna Michelle Childs did not graduate from an Ivy League school but from the University of South Carolina Law School, yet she later received her Master of Laws degree from Duke University School of Law. Childs currently sits as a district judge on the United States District Court for the District of South Carolina, having been appointed by President Obama in 2010. She previously acted as an adviser for the American Law Institute on the Reinstatement Third, Employment Law and was the first Black woman to be a partner in a major law firm in the state of South Carolina. Childs is regarded for her expertise in employment and labor law. Even garnering support from her home-state Senator, Lindsey Graham, Child’s unconventional resume of not being D.C. based and with her background in labor law is drawing attention, and has resulted in her consideration for the U.S. Supreme Court seat. Just last month, Biden nominated Childs to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, but that nomination is still pending.

Democratic officials say it’s important to have courts that reflect the demographics of the country we are living in to better represent the people of the United States and achieve “justice for all.” Conservative commentators, on the other hand, have pushed back, calling President Biden’s pledge “unprecedented and unnecessary.” Senator Ted Cruz of Texas called it “offensive” and “an insult to Black women.” Regardless, upon nomination, should President Biden follow through on his promise, any of these candidates will be the first Black woman nominated to the United States Supreme Court. There have only been two Black Justices and five women Justices in the 233 years since the creation of the Supreme Court, resulting in a lack of representation for minority communities. A majority vote in the Senate is needed to confirm a nominee into the Supreme Court. The Democratic party currently holds the majority with Vice President Kamala Harris’s tie-breaking vote.

Justice Breyer will step down at the end of the current session, presumed to be in June or July. Biden is expected to act quickly in order to be ready for when the Supreme Court begins session again on Oct. 3rd.

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INFORMATION SERVICES
Camels Abroad: Lucie Englehardt ’23

Lucie Englehardt ’23. Studying abroad in Granada, Spain is our first Camels Abroad feature of 2022.

Major(s), minors, centers, pathways: English, Anthropology

What made you choose this program?

Ironically, I didn’t. I was going to study in Rabat, Morocco for the spring before the prolonged border closure foiled those plans. But studying or living abroad, if possible, was a priority of mine since before entering college. I (frantically) applied to other institutions and searched for opportunities abroad and got into a program in Granada about two weeks before its start date. It’s been a whirlwind, and it’s a huge privilege of mine to be here now.

How have you adjusted to life in Spain?

Other than jet lag that has since passed, I’m adjusting well! I have been looking forward to studying away for a while, and it feels beyond satisfying that it has now come into fruition. I have really welcomed living in Spain and having the freedom to be independent and explore. It’s kind of been a matter of trying something new every day; tonight, I tried a Moroccan tapas bar that brought me to a new corner of the city!

Were there any clichés that were proven true or false?

What holds true about Spain: long lunches and late dinners, midday siesta, nights that easily bleed into mornings. People drink early and often, but the culture around it is entirely different. Nothing is as egregiously expensive as in the states, healthcare and housing included. About studying abroad: people joke about the personality you create while abroad and return home with, but you’re essentially finding a new way of being, so you’re bound to adapt and grow.

What is a typical day like? Is it similar to Conn at all?

I have 3-4 classes each day except Friday, all of which are Spanish taught. I walk to either the IES center (about 15 min) or the University of Granada for class (about 30 min). My classes interact pretty deeply with the city. For instance, we travel around quite a bit for my art class to sketch different cityscapes. After or between classes, more often than not, I will sit on the terrace at our center – this is a favorite spot of mine as it overlooks Plaza Nueva and sits in front of the Alhambra – or I’ll sit at a café outside. Plaza Nueva finds its daily rhythm around lunchtime, around when the flamenco dancers beckoned in by street musicians and the goings-on at the adjacent courthouse all compete for our attention. Our lunch is around 2pm and our dinner around 9pm, with a siesta in between. Granada has winding cobbled roads lined with street art, making it a wonderful city for getting lost and stumbling upon interesting little alcoves. Taking long routes home every day and going on walks has been a means of grounding myself here. Another notable routine: I eat a shit ton of bread every day. It’s truly never-ending.

How has the pandemic affected your program?

Did it affect your choices when applying? Besides the very program itself being a product of pandemic complications, we have handled COVID rather smoothly. Fortunately, COVID tests here are pretty accessible at about 3 euros.

What is your housing situation? What is that like?

I live in a home with a few other Americans and several Spanish students at the University of Granada. We have a “madre Española” who manages the house and is incredibly kind and gracious.

Are you involved in anything outside of classes?

We have weekly soccer games, which is great! I am also trying to spend my time intentionally here and pay attention to what might give me energy rather than drain it. When I’m at Conn, I think I start to glorify painstakingly busy schedules and a far too meticulous balance between jobs, leadership positions, and schoolwork. I think Catja [Christensen ’23] also spoke about this in her own segment last semester. Some things here that I would love to try out: dance classes, cooking classes, and finding more community events and spaces – some of which I hopefully will have dipped my toe into by the time this issue comes out!

What is the best part of abroad for you?

1. Taking my education beyond the four walls of a classroom. I wanted to challenge the stagnancy of my learning and create in a new place, in a more global context. 2. I feel very fortunate to be in Granada. It is a fascinating city with stories of culture and history at every turn. It’s such a privilege to constantly be learning.

What is the biggest challenge?

My anxiety didn’t go away when I moved abroad. Though I have had the fantastic pleasure of meeting so many new people here, those who know me so well over in Connecticut feel far away. Studying abroad has shown me in stark form how deeply important my friends at Conn are to me and my heart feels somewhat divided across the world. It’s not homesickness, but a kind of yearning to be understood in a foreign place. In another sense though, a small school can kind of suck you in and make you forget that the world is much wider. My anxiety (social and otherwise) heightens in tight spaces like that, and living in Spain has reminded me what I kind of always knew in the back of my mind: the world simply keeps turning.

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

1. Your phone plan will work out eventually.
2. Be curious and get outside your comfort zone. If you are studying a new language, take advantage of every opportunity you can to learn it. Switch your phone, read the news, watch films, and listen to music in your new language. Also, find activities and practice habits that will ground you in an unfamiliar community, whether that be playing on a sports team or establishing a morning routine.
3. Be careful about falling into the trap of comparison when looking at other students studying abroad. Social media is often a highlight reel, and this experience comes with a lot of emotional ups and downs that aren’t being talked about enough.

What do you think you would have liked to know that you know now?

Something that sounds trivial but has been an unforeseen challenge: finding how to balance my own personal style within the larger sphere of European streetwear. Seeing my identity through style is different here, which has been fun, but forced me to reckon with my embodiment a little differently. I wish I took more time while packing to think intentionally about European fashion culture, weather, and what I could realistically wear (in other words, pack less!). •
Arabic Studies: An Invisible Department

Adrien Prouty
Contributor

I believe the department needs to expand as soon as possible,” says Adham Khalifa ’22 in reference to the Arabic language department at Connecticut College. In reality, the department does not even exist. Arabic Studies at Conn is a program under the Department of Classics, Arabic, and Jewish Studies. Unlike many other offered languages such as French or German, Arabic Studies does not have its own department and there is no possible major for the language. Khalifa, the current Arabic language tutor, laments the size of the program. He notes that there are students who love Arabic, who take all four semesters offered in the language instruction, but are then left without any direction or further course opportunities at the college to continue to learn more. “I just feel so sad because [these students] are so skilled with something, but what can they do?”

While the program was never as large as some other foreign languages at the college, Khalifa has seen the Arabic Studies program struggle significantly in the past year. With the stressors of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent sabbatical of the Arabic professor, Waed Athamneh, it was a genuine concern of Khalifa’s that the already small program would shrink further. The preservation of the Arabic language courses during this time has been a happy success in Khalifa’s opinion.

In his freshman year, Khalifa chose to take Spanish as his foreign language and was amazed by the range of opportunities available in the Department of Hispanic Studies. Courses were offered on history, culture, and linguistics with specializations for different Hispanic regions of the world taught in English, Spanish, or both. In comparison, Arabic Studies has only minimal course offerings. The presence of Arabic at Connecticut College can be ignored. The Arabic “department” does not demand attention and many students are able to spend a full four years at the college without ever learning much about anything the program. In Khalifa’s words, “you can let the department be invisible.” Whether students take a Spanish course or not, they are likely exposed to an event or social media announcement about the existence of the department on campus.

The basic four courses of language instruction, ARA 101 through 202, are available, but there are little to no equivalent opportunities currently available to students to continue their language studies beyond those. For Arabic, this is particularly unfortunate. In formal communications and academic settings, like at Connecticut College, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is used. However, MSA is not a regional native language for any Arabic speakers. This means that once students complete ARA 202, they understand a form of Arabic that people do not usually speak, and are left without additional ways to learn one of the 25 dialects Arabic speakers would actually use.

Khalifa has shared some ideas for potential opportunities to add to the program to make this increasingly useful language possible for students at Conn. First, regional focus courses like those offered in Hispanic and East Asian Studies, would enrich the Arabic Studies program. The many various regions of the Arab world have unique histories and cultures, which could be offered in English, Arabic, or both, making involvement in the program possible without stressing the commitment of enrolling in a complex foreign language. Additionally, an option for independent language study for credit would be beneficial for Arabic language learners in Khalifa’s opinion. With Arabic’s dialectal variability, allowing students to continue to learn beyond four semesters of MSA would be crucial if students wished to be able to communicate with Arabic speakers outside the formal classroom environment.

An alternative option to offering traditional independent study would be a loosely-structured advanced Arabic dialect course where students would be able to enroll all together but split themselves into smaller groups by the dialect of their choice with the oversight of a professor. They would be able to spend the semester learning their chosen dialect together while meeting checkpoints relative to their respective dialect choices.

Though there are not currently as many opportunities as are open to those interested in other languages, students interested in Arabic have the opportunity to attend the language lunches at Walter Commons at 12:00 PM every Wednesday. The lunches are open to all students, regardless of whether they have any knowledge of the language. It is one way to become acquainted with a language of interest and its program without having to be dedicated to the courses. Khalifa has faith in the possibility of a thriving Arabic department for the college in the future. He hopes the college will work to provide more opportunities for students to learn about Arab cultures without necessitating that they enroll in the Arabic language courses to do so. He believes the department could grow if there were greater investments for independent study and an increased presence on social media.

Growth in the Arabic Studies program at Connecticut College is possible. As an Arabic language student myself, I am only hoping I will be able to continue my studies through the four semesters of the language presently offered, but I am wary of hoping for much beyond that. I want to be able to speak Arabic, but can Conn support that the same way they support students learning other foreign languages? Is the program as invisible to the college as it is to the students?

Dr. Rodmon King: Conn’s New Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion

By the fifth grade, Dr. Rodmon King was already alert to inequities in the education system. He recalls being assigned a project on European explorer Marco Polo, and when he pushed back, his teacher reassigned him South African anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko. Recently hired by Connecticut College as the new Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion, he considers this a foundational awareness-raising moment. The tools for an alternative education were present, but obfuscated.

King did not always anticipate working in the realm of educational equity. As an undergraduate at Roberts Wesleyan, he started in astrophysics, then switched to mathematics before settling on philosophy. Specifically, he was interested in the questions about justice that were posed in philosophy. King still uses his philosophy background in his work today. “When you’re dealing with large-scale initiatives...it comes down to arguments and evidence within the context of a value system,” he explained.

After earning his BA, MA, and PhD in philosophy, King spent ten years teaching philosophy at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. During his tenure, he received a request that surprised him: to advise the Black Student Union. “That changed my academic career,” King expressed, “that led me to go into shared governance.”

He had attended predominantly white institutions and recalls knowing all of the Black students because there were so few of them, which made him determined to implement structural changes in order to improve the student experience for everyone. His focus was on the development of inclusive community-based models in which the voices of BIPOC students were valued.

While at Hobart and William Smith, King co-founded ‘Tools for Social Change,’ a dialogue-driven initiative to advance equity in the Finger Lakes region. He described this experience as “interesting and unfortunate.” Tools for Social Change began after the police-involved murder of a person of color in Geneva, NY. Following the shooting, he collaborated with two of his colleagues and they had the idea to train community members on how to protest and create social change. However, according to King, the initiative “became something entirely different.”

Some issues that Tools for Social Change tackled were the lack of BIPOC representation in the local government and the food deserts that existed in local neighborhoods.

Article continued on page 7.
Dr. Rodmon King: Conn New Dean of Institutional Equity Inclusion

The initiative inspired many people of color to run for local government, and King noted that one person who ran is still a big part of police reform in Geneva.

King’s leadership at Connecticut College will likely be influenced by a few key decisions from his time with Tools for Social Change. King and his colleagues used a dialogical model to achieve collective power building in the local community. This proved itself to be more inclusive and effective than social justice training sessions, in which the voices of each community member may not be heard. He described this project as an “organic process to create human connections between people” with no hierarchy. He did not want to be called “Dr. King” because that title established him as superior to the community members; he preferred a horizontal distribution of power.

After working as the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Diversity Initiatives at Centre College in Kentucky, King landed at SUNY Oswego, where he created the first division of diversity, equity and inclusion and took on large responsibilities for the SUNY system as a whole. Here is where King created lasting change in the New York public college system. Curriculum on diversity, equity, and inclusion became a requirement for all students at Oswego, and other SUNY schools soon followed. Even in math or physics, diversity, equity, and inclusion principles can be applied. Students should not have to study history or the social sciences to learn about equity; they should learn how to be an inclusive citizen in all of their classes.

King was drawn to Connecticut College because the job posting required full participation in the community. King loves working in collaboration with faculty, staff, and students in order to make change, and he saw himself doing that at Conn. He originally knew very little about the college, but meeting the staff members with whom he would be working “sealed the deal.”

While impressed by Conn’s DIEI programming, King also sees challenges ahead. Regarding Conn’s Equity and Inclusion Action Plan, King hopes to strengthen gender inclusion, include all stakeholder groups (faculty, students, and staff), improve infrastructure at Conn, bolster policies and staffing in the Title IX department, and expand accessibility services and religious services. “Every community is on a journey,” King said, “so is Conn College.” He seeks to diversify faculty hires, and emphasized that he feels equal eagerness from the staff members he has met so far.

“Institutional equity and inclusion is really everybody’s work and requires everyone to do it,” King asserted. He noted that if people think about the concepts of antiracism, feminism, and other social justice movements without using the labels, they sound like common sense. “Discourse creates barriers in peoples’ minds.” Rather than proselytizing, King seeks to embed the workings of these theories in the way Conn, and the community, operates.

Outside of work, King has loved making music since he was a teenager, and it is a large part of his cultural identity. King plays the guitar and bass and writes his own music, and has even made musical instruments before. Additionally, King has a strange obsession with “really, really bad movies,” intrigued in particular by people who made movies that they thought would turn out great, but ended up being terrible.

King encourages anyone interested in contributing to his work at Conn to visit his office in Unity House—his hopes are to partner with faculty, staff, and students who “want to envision ways that the world can be different.” He concluded, “dreaming beyond limitations is how growth and change happens.”

R.A.C.E.: New Beginnings for Conn’s BIPOC Affinity Groups

Hannah Gonzalez
Contributor

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown a wrench into just about every routine over the course of the past year and a half, and extracurriculars have been one aspect of the college experience that took a particular toll. In struggling to connect with students riding out the pandemic at home and to maintain regular programming with ever changing campus COVID protocol, student clubs faced challenges throughout the last school year like they never had before. Arguably, Conn’s affinity groups - or student organizations that gather students based on a common identity - have faced some of the most difficulties in maintaining its membership base throughout a year of optional studying-at-home. To aid affinity groups in recovering from a year of loss and isolation, Race and Ethnicity Programs has rolled out a program dedicated to supporting BIPOC student groups: Racial Affinity Club Executives.

Racial Affinity Club Executives, or RACE, is a consortium of affinity group leaders designed to effectively organize the executive boards of student organizations whose programming centers around race and ethnicity. Since the beginning of this academic year, RACE has met monthly with the Presidents and Chairs of its member organizations to strengthen the sense of community amongst BIPOC student leaders and to provide a collaborative space to discuss effective leadership models. In the future, RACE will host leadership training for the executive boards of its member organizations and, if finances for DIEI improve, provide financial support for collaborative projects and events amongst its student groups. RACE is currently co-lead by the Director of Race and Ethnicity Programs Maurice Tiner ’17, and the Leadership Development Ambassador of Race and Ethnicity Programs, a member of student staff. 10 student groups, including but not limited to established organizations like Umoja, the Black Student Union and Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MEChA), as well as to newer student groups like People Of Color Alliance (POCA) and Queer and Trans People Of Color (QTPOC), have joined RACE as its first cohort got to work at the beginning of the year.

To get more insight as to the inspiration for creating this group, I interviewed Tiner to better understand how his experience as a student impacts his work as a professional staffer for the Division of Institutional Equity.

Q: What were some lessons you learned as a student leader at Conn about the importance of building community with other clubs and organizations?
A: “It was important to me to build community with others because I’m a firm believer that you can’t make genuine progress, especially large-scale progress, without being in collaboration with other folks… How can I build with you, grow with you, and push the College forward if I know nothing about you other than what you present? I’m an advocate for community development, getting to know each other, and being vulnerable because in those instances it makes us more comfortable for us to trust each other when we are pushing something forward… Building community helps to halt barriers that would prevent progress, when you’re invested in getting to know people then those barriers won’t be as prevalent.”

Q: How do you think the student body’s extracurricular experience was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic? How will it change the vision of leadership on campus in the future?
A: We had to re-envision the way we work and what it means to come together without being together. I think it has presented challenges because it has forced us into a norm of solitude. On the other hand, it has allowed us to be more creative with how we work - even us, having this conversation virtually but still getting the exact same work done as if we were sitting in Unity House. It’s presented opportunities for people to reimagine innovative ways to work collaboratively. Leaders are probably going to be a lot more strategic about working around burn-out culture and how we can do so much more in creative ways without having to be all over the place. Before the pandemic,
R.A.C.E.: New Beginnings for Conn's BIPOC Affinity Groups

Q: What do you hope to see students take away from RACE in its first year? How about in the years beyond?
A: I want to see clubs develop structure in a way that will make the job of student leaders in the future a lot easier. All of them can benefit from organizing in a way that will help them do their work better than they are already doing. In years to come, I want these affinity groups to be succinct where they program and fundraise with each other, advocating for themselves and the institution with each other. I really see it being a coalition building space where whatever the group sees as its goal can be achieved.

As the spring semester begins and as the College welcomes Rodmon King, the new Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion, the landscape of equity and inclusion work on campus looks much different than it did at the beginning of the pandemic. Through times of uncertainty, professional staff and student leaders in DIEI have adapted to the programming demands of a student body with a need for community greater than ever before. Thanks to initiatives like RACE, the next generation of BIPOC student leadership at Conn will be better prepared to support each other through new challenges and to grow together in spite of them.

Big Belly Trash Cans Swallow Up Waste

**Aparajita Tyagi**
CONTRIBUTOR

Connecticut College has upgraded its garbage collection process by installing hi-tech trash cans on campus. The previous system required the ground staff to check the garbage levels in the bins at least thrice a week. Now the solar-powered sensors on the trash cans detect the levels and notify the staff through email when the bins are 80% full. Additional benefits include that the trash cans are fully covered which prevents snow from settling in the bins (and keeps the squirrels from pillaging through the garbage).

The college collaborated with Big Belly, a company that specializes in waste management and recycling, to set up the smart bins. It strives to provide technological solutions to waste disposal problems in cities and college communities. The Office of Sustainability has been in talks with Big Belly since 2019, however, their plans to improve the garbage collection system were delayed by the pandemic. The project was pushed forth after President Bergeron expressed interest.

Though their initial plan was to set up bins at all the spots that formerly held trash cans, after evaluating the need for trash cans around the campus the Office decided to have just 12 bins. Only 7 of these bins run on solar energy, the rest rely on batteries to power the sensor. Currently, the Office is looking to install the smart trash cans in the Arboretum, said Margaret Bounds, the Director of the Office of Sustainability. The entire project cost less than $75,000 which was covered by the Hale Gift, a gift of $30 made by Rob ’88 and Karen Hale P’20 last spring. It remains to be seen whether the project was worth the investment.

Is There News We Aren't Covering?

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Sayonara to Sexy Spokescandies

CATJA CHRISTENSEN
OPINIONS EDITOR

Miserable, non-binary candy is all we deserve.

These words were splashed across the screen on Fox News’s Tucker Carlson tonight on Jan. 21, 2022. The misery? Mars Inc’s redesign of the six M&M “spokescandies.” Each of the rainbow-colored M&Ms received a footwear update: the original Red and Yellow characters now have laces on their shoes. Orange’s laces are now tied neatly, and Blue’s boots are marginally changed.

However, Green and Brown, the two feminine characters, received the biggest updates. Green traded her iconic boots for nondescript sneakers. And Brown? Well, her iconic stilettos were lowered to a more modest, “Hillary Clinton” type of shoe as some have put it. The internet has polarizing reactions to these changes, telling Mars to give Green her go-go boots back or to let Brown be a boss in big heels. However, Carlson’s comments went viral for his sheer… candor about candy?

“Less sexy. That’s progress!” He exclaimed on his show. “M&M’s will not be satisfied until every last cartoon character is deeply unappealing and totally androgynous. Until the moment you wouldn’t want to have a drink with any one of them. That’s the goal. When you’re totally turned off, we’ve achieved equity.” In response to Mars’s statement that “we all win when we see more women in leading roles,” Carlson retorted, “Because leading women do not wear sexy shoes. Leading women wear frumpy shoes, the frumpier the better.”

While Carlson’s wailing about the de-sexification of anthropomorphic spokescandies was hilariously absurd and the endless responses on Twitter were amusing to read, the wave rushing from his viral comments sparked a greater conversation about marketing and the push for companies to promote inclusivity, too often in a performative manner. Mars announced its “global commitment to creating a world where everyone feels they belong and society is inclusive” on its website in tandem with the redesign release. However, does taking away stereotypically feminine, “sexy” footwear and giving sneakers near laces exemplify that commitment?

Gendering candy for the sake of marketing to humans is quite the task. The original characters, Red and Yellow, have historically been male since their inception in 1954. Brown, the latest M&M character who debuted in 2012, was introduced to slightly even out the gender imbalance between feminized Green and perceived male Red, Yellow, Orange, and Blue. Mars recently removed the prefixes from the candies, so the formerly Mr. Red and Ms. Green are now just Red and Green. Therefore, interpreting gender from visual and auditory cues is more subtle. In advertisements, Red, Yellow, Orange, and Blue have been voiced by actors who identify as male, and Green and Brown’s voice actresses all identify as female. Visually, Brown’s perfectly fanned eyeliner behind her glasses, Green’s mascara, and both characters’ more voluptuous lips signify their femininity. The other M&Ms are more gender-fluid and androgynous, which is not a bad thing unlike what Carlson implies. The gender binary is an outdated concept, and people’s gender expression is not for the purpose of being “appealing,” especially to people like Carlson. Nonetheless, is Mars doing inclusivity right with the redesign? Are shoes and candy faces that much of a representation of belonging and representation?

I understand the intent. Female characters have historically been objectified and sexualized, so Mars tried to counteract that stereotype by swapping go-go boots for sneakers. Green’s character biography on the company website is full of female empowerment phrases: “hypewoman,” “supportive friend,” “success,” “I’m too busy shining to throw shade.” This new and improved Green rejects her previous sexuality. Yet, is this the right move? Has the messaging switched from sexualizing female characters to now implying that female success cannot coexist with being sexy? Brown’s bio says that she’s “Not bossy. Just the boss,” as she stands, arms crossed, eyebrows raised, and little heels propping her up. While the quote directly addresses the stereotype that women in power are perceived as “bossy” rather than assertive, as their male counterparts are typically described, why does that mean bosses can’t wear stilettos? Maybe Brown just wants to feel tall and accentuate her calves – all while being a boss.

Anthropomorphism has been a successful food marketing tactic for decades. Think of Frosted Flake’s Tony the Tiger, the rabbit from Trix, or the Cinnamon Toast Crunch ads where they literally try to eat each other. These characters are memorable because they aren’t so human in appearance but in character. Tony is inspiring, the Trix rabbit is silly, and Cinnamon Toast Crunch squares are goofy (albeit a bit cannibalistic). M&Ms fell short because in trying to make their iconic characters more relatable, they lost that whimsical appeal and inadvertently perpetuated negative stereotypes about women’s dress and personalities.

Impact is just as important as intention, and we have yet to see how positively impactful, if at all, these character redesigns are. Do people really look for representation in candy ads? Maybe. But are there better ways to promote inclusivity in a less performative way? Definitely. Maybe M&Ms should be more open about advocacy work for humans and support people in real life with their massive popularity and global platform. It is important to consider who the market audience is, but I believe the messaging can be better.

Representation is important in marketing and advertising, but I think people would rather have real people be included in the workplace and consumer audience than to have superficially “inclusive” candies represent them. The M&M redesign is performative, and though it did make headlines thanks to Carlson’s commentary, they aren’t making significant positive change for the community nor M&M branding. Candy doesn’t have to be that deep, and actions speak louder than cartoon shoes.

So, whether you’re a spokescandy or a human, you can be a girlboss in gogo boots, strut your stuff in sneakers or stilettos, and wear whatever you want to work.

Spider-Man: Is There a "Best" Version?

HANNAH STOEVER
STAFF WRITER

If you have not seen the film Spider-Man: No Way Home yet, I advise you to avoid reading this piece, as it will contain spoilers from the movie.

Since Spider-Man: No Way Home has debuted in theaters, the film has been a constant topic in daily conversations. For many fans, myself included, we were just elated for the pure nostalgia and return of iconic characters from our childhoods. This includes the return of previous Spider-Man actors, Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield.

However, while I could talk about that film in particular for days, there remains an age-old question that has remained unanswered among fans of the Spider-Man franchise: is there a best version of the titular character? While there are thousands of adaptations of Spider-Man, from comics to movies to video games, this article will be focused on those in film.

I would like to start by saying that the four performances of the character that I will be discussing in this article are Tobey Maguire, Andrew Garfield, Tom Holland, and Shameik Moore, who voiced Miles Morales in Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse. Although the conversation has mainly been in regards to live-action portrayals, Moore’s performance and iteration of the character are incredibly important to this discussion.

One observation that I have noted over the years is how harsh fans can be when it comes to subjects like this. Whether the topic is related to the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) or the Star Wars franchise, people...

Article continued on page 10.
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As the College begins what it hopes to be a banner spring semester, many students with cars fear a return of the endless parking tickets that dominated the fall semester. During the fall semester, it was reported by Mary Savage, Head of Campus Safety, that Campus Safety had given out over 1000 parking tickets, which, according to my estimations, would result in approximately $50,000 worth of parking tickets distributed to students. Mary Savage did not respond to questions asking how these statistics compared to other semesters in recent years.

This money then goes to the college's general fund. It is important that we know exactly how it will be used. Rather than to a general fund for the College, perhaps it can go towards more security measures to end the epidemic of voyeurism on our campus.

Another issue that must be raised is the timing that students are allowed to park in faculty and staff lots. Setting the arbitrary time of 2:30 AM for students to move their cars out of administration and faculty is illogical. It is very unreasonable to assume that many employees, if any at all, are showing up to campus at 2:30 in the morning and require all parking spots designated for faculty and staff to be cleared. Setting a later cutoff time for students to vacate faculty and staff parking, such as 7 AM, while also creating a designated number of spots that are only open to faculty/staff/administration 24/7 would create more than enough time for students to get up in the morning and move their cars before employees begin coming onto campus, and athletes to bring their cars down to the Athletic Center in the morning, freeing up parking spaces.

There have also been several reports of Campus Safety ticketing students in lots on weekends or between the hours of 5 PM and 2:30 AM on weekdays, when they are allowed to park there. Andrea Higgins '22 was recently ticketed within the 5-2:30 AM parking allowance and spoke to one of the tow

No Rest For the Ticketed

Marc Stern
Staff Writer

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Article continued on page 11.
truck company people, who said that “they try and wait 1-2 hours until the College calls again because they genuinely feel bad for how often they are called to tow cars.” If the very people who are supposed to be making a profit off of towing our cars are finding what the College is doing is ridiculous, then when will the College learn that putting this unneeded added stress on students involving their cars is only hindering our ability to succeed.

This feeling of chaotic disarray surrounding the parking situation can also be shown when many athletes returned to campus early for practice and were able to park their cars in staff lots they wouldn’t often be able to, as there was little to no faculty working on site. Once the semester was soon to start, however, Campus Safety was quick to give tickets on a Friday night.

Rather than the school sending out an email asking students to move their cars before the end of the weekend when people began moving in, they immediately decided to ticket students without warning for something they were allowed to do for over a month.

Although this has largely been a critical piece, I’d like to leave this article with an uplifting anecdote, where a student’s car was about to be towed from Ridges on a Saturday night. The student asked the tow truck driver how much money it would take for him to not tow the car, to which the driver said somewhere around $80. Rather than leaving their fellow Camel behind, many people around began chipping in whatever money and spare change they had brought down with them on a Saturday night for this student to not get his car towed. This fostering of community not by the college but by its students is what makes Conn truly a remarkable school to be a part of. Although its students and many faculty can pride themselves on setting an ideal of “no man left behind”, I hope that the leaders of the college can do the same soon.

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**CT Gov. Announces Pro-Choice Mask Policy, Conn Should Too**

Earlier this week, Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont announced that the state’s mask mandate for public schools will finally end later this month. Lamont’s decision joins a wave of Democratic governors ending mask mandates across the country this week. In fact, currently only six states (California, Hawaii, Illinois, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington) intend to continue mask mandates in schools, marking a readiness to return to normal. Connecticut College should follow suit and relinquish the outdated mask mandate in place.

While most red states have remained absent of mask mandates, many purple and blue states have been leaning into this direction for a while now. With the vast protection offered by the widely available COVID vaccines, significantly reduced severity in the omicron strain, and updated knowledge on which masks do and do not work, the threat posed by COVID has become infinitesimal for those vaccinated, allowing people to access their own risk and make decisions that they believe best suit themselves, not others.

Newly-elected Gov. Glenn Youngkin of Virginia ended the mask mandate through executive order on his first day in office, sparking outbursts from media, pundits, and partisans. In response to controversy regarding Youngkin’s authority to end the mandate through executive order, a bill was drafted in the Virginia state legislature. Not only did ten of the Senate’s 21 Democrats vote in favor of ending the mask mandate, but the bill was co-engineered by state Sen. Chap Petersen (D-Fairfax City).

Democrats adopting a pro-choice position on masking is more common than one may assume. Colorado’s Democratic Gov. Jared Polis never instituted a mask mandate and resisted calls to implement one during the rise of omicron. Even the presumed Democratic nominee for the Georgia gubernatorial race, Stacey Abrams, posed for pictures with public school students maskless, demonstrating through her own actions that masks are largely unnecessary.

Shifting to a pro-choice mask policy on campus would align Connecticut College with the settings of restaurants, most workplace environments, and now public schools in acknowledging the minimal risk of COVID, especially the omicron strain. David Leonhardt of the New York Times aptly noted, “Children face more risk from car rides than Covid.” College-aged students—especially those who are vaccinated and boosted—are among the least vulnerable demographic for Covid. As Leonhardt emphasizes, “Severe versions of Covid, including long Covid, are extremely rare in children. For them, the virus resembles a typical flu.”

Students at Conn are seemingly familiar with this knowledge. In dorm rooms on campus, it’s common to see students walking maskless in the hallway or in the bathrooms, because they recognize the vanishingly small risk of COVID. Masks are required within the dining hall, yet turn the corner into the vast seating area and you’ll find tables full of maskless students eating shoulder-to-shoulder. COVID does not magically halt transmission when eating, but we have correctly accepted that masks are not needed in this scenario. Why not, out of consistency’s sake, apply this logic to the rest of campus life?

Updated information on mask effectiveness also makes pro-choice masking more suitable for everyone. We now know that cloth masks provide meager protection, while surgical masks are effective at protecting others but not the wearer. N-95 and KN-95 masks, however, are effective at providing protection to its wearer. If a student, staff member, or professor wanted extra protection beyond that of vaccines, they would have the choice to wear an N-95 or KN-95, offering further protection without inconveniencing others.

As we slowly revert into a post-pandemic era, Connecticut College should have policies that reflect the data and science of COVID and that are consistent with public schools, or even Harris dining hall. Invoking a pro-choice mask policy would allow students at Conn—half of whom have never had an in-person college class without a mask—to revert to normal, while allowing those who wish to take extra precautions to do so. If Gov. Lamont believes K-12 students and their parents should be able to make their own masking decision in classrooms, why shouldn’t college students be offered that same choice?
The 2022 edition of the NBA All Star Game is quickly approaching, and after several long weeks of voting and debates we finally know who will be going to Cleveland on Sunday, Feb. 20th. As has been the case since the NBA revamped its All Star Game in 2018, the game will not be played in the traditional Eastern Conference vs. Western Conference format, but rather in a team captain format where the leading vote-getters from each conference will select their roster (first starters and then reserves) from the player pool. For the second straight season, the All Star captains are LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers and Kevin Durant of the Brooklyn Nets. James has been an All Star captain every season since the new format was implemented, and this is Durant's second time as a captain.

Both captains’ teams are in danger of missing the playoffs this season, but both James and Durant have been individually spectacular. James has been incredible at age 37, averaging 29 points per game, with 6 assists and 8 rebounds per game. Without their star forward this Lakers squad would most likely be sitting at the very bottom of the ever-ultra competitive West. Durant has been far from the biggest storyline in Brooklyn this year, with his excellence overshadowed by his co-star Kyrie Irving's anti-vaccine controversy and his other co-star James Harden's recent rumors of discontent and desire for a trade, which in fact resulted in his being dealt to the Philadelphia 76ers at the trade deadline, February 10th. Despite these distractions, Durant was on an incredible run of play prior to his knee sprain, averaging 29/5/7.

The rest of the starters from the East are as follows: guard Trae Young of the Atlanta Hawks, forward DeMar DeRozan of the Chicago Bulls, forward Giannis Antetokounmpo of the Milwaukee Bucks, and center Joel Embiid of the Philadelphia 76ers. Embiid has been on a tear of late, averaging 29/4/10 for a surging Sixers squad, vaulting himself into the MVP conversation, and providing a beacon of hope from the Ben Simmons drama in Philadelphia, who was in fact the player the 76ers swapped for Harden.

Antetokounmpo, fresh off of leading Milwaukee to their first NBA title since the 1970s, has battled injuries this year but has Milwaukee in the top three in the East and has averaged 29/6/11 for the season. Milwaukee has also added some signature wins, with three straight recent 130+ point performances.

DeRozan has been one of the best stories of 2021/22, vaulting the Bulls to the top of the East standings in his first season in Chicago, garnering himself some fringe MVP dialogue with averages of 27/5/5. Young is undoubtedly an All Star, but is a controversial inclusion as a starter. He’s averaging a gaudy 28/9/4, but Atlanta has been one of the biggest disappointments in the league this year. After a deep playoff run last year, the Hawks are fighting just to make the play-in tournament this season. It doesn’t help Young that he is once again one of the league’s worst defenders.

Out west, the other starters will be guard Stephen Curry and forward Andrew Wiggins of the Golden State Warriors, guard Ja Morant of the Memphis Grizzlies, and center Nikola Jokic of the Denver Nuggets. Jokic is one of the league’s most unique players, its reigning MVP, and is firmly in the conversation to win those honors again. He’s dragged a Denver team missing its second and third best players to fifth in the West while averaging 26/8/14.

Morant has led a young, hungry Memphis team much further up the standings than anyone could have anticipated, currently sitting at third in the west. The third year guard is averaging 26/6/5 for a team that is far ahead of schedule.

Curry has led a resurgent Golden State team to second in the conference. He was the MVP favorite for much of the season, and broke the all time 3-point record back in December, but a recent slump has seen him slide down the MVP ladder. Despite this slump, he has found his shooting touch again in recent games, is averaging 26/6/5, and, with Golden State nearly back at full strength for the first time in years with Klay Thompson’s recent return to the court, he has the Warriors as one of the title favorites again for the first time since Kevin Durant left for Brooklyn.

Joining Curry is the most controversial All Star starter, Warriors forward Andrew Wiggins. In his second full season with Golden State, Wiggins has undoubtedly had an excellent season, far exceeding expectations. Wiggins has been one of the Warriors’ most consistent players all year, averaging 18/2/4 and defending at a high level; he’s finally looking like the player many expected when the Minnesota Timberwolves drafted him first overall in 2014. With that being said, he should not be an All Star starter. He certainly has a strong case to be an All Star reserves, but raibd Warriors fans and a shout-out from a K-Pop star were enough to push his fan vote totals to such extreme levels that he was able to crack the starting lineup over candidates such as Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert, Phoenix Suns’ guards Devin Booker and Chris Paul, or Dallas Mavericks forward Luka Doncic.

The West reserves are as follows: Gobert, Booker, Paul, Doncic, Golden State Warriors’ forward Draymond Green, Utah Jazz guard Donovan Mitchell, and Minnesota Timberwolves center Karl-Anthony Towns. Gobert remains one of the best defensive players in the NBA, single-handedly turning what is otherwise a horrible Utah defense into one of the better ones in the NBA. With Utah sitting at fourth in the West, Gobert is averaging 16/1/15 for the season.

Fresh off of an NBA Finals appearance last season, Paul and Booker have Phoenix sitting atop the NBA standings. Both would be starters if the west backcourt didn’t include the two best guards in the NBA (Curry and Morant). Paul, ever the brilliant orchestrator and feisty defender, is averaging 15/10/5 at age 36, and Booker is one of the best pure scorers in the NBA, averaging 25/4/5.

Although his efficiency isn’t where many would like it to be, Doncic is in the midst of another excellent season, averaging 26/9/9 with Dallas sitting in the midst of the playoff picture. It’s easy to forget that the do-it-all Slovenian is just 22 years old.

As always, Draymond Green’s numbers don’t tell the story of why he is an All Star. The 31 year old forward is averaging 8/7/8 for the season, but has been the anchor of the Warriors’ league-best defense, and is also the main distributor for the offense once again. Before he got injured, Green was a virtual lock to take home the league’s defensive player of the year honors.
## Sports Spotlight

### Featured Team: Women's Swim and Dive

2/10-2/13 NESCAC Championships in Waterville, Maine

**Upcoming Events:**

- NCAA Championships 3/16-3/19 in Indianapolis, IN

**Coaching Staff:**

- Kristin Steele, Head Coach
- Kenzie Lancaster, Assistant Coach
- Tim Sweeney, Head Coach
- Corey Begly, Assistant Coach

**Upcoming Events:**

- 2/18 vs. Hamilton 7:00 pm
- 2/19 vs. Hamilton 3:00 pm

### Featured Team: Men's Basketball

2/11 vs. Hamilton W, 62-43
2/12 vs. Amherst W, 71-65

**Seniors:**

- Austin Lavitt
- Ryan Omslaer

**Coaching Staff:**

- Tim Sweeney, Head Coach
- Corey Begly, Assistant Coach

**Upcoming Events:**

- 2/18 vs. Hamilton
- 2/19 vs. Hamilton

### Featured Team: Women's Squash

2/12 vs. Colby L, 4-5
2/12 vs. Wesleyan L, 0-9

**Upcoming Events:**

- College Squash Association 2/25-2/27

**Coaching Staff:**

- Michael MacDonald, Head Coach

**Upcoming Events:**

- College Squash Association Nationals
  - 2/18

### Featured Team: Men's Ice Hockey

2/11 vs. Amherst L, 4-1
2/12 vs. Hamilton L, 4-2

**Seniors:**

- Mike McHale
- Anthony Quatieri
- Kyle Shero
- Sam Stone
- Peter Scheschareg
- Paul Capozzi

**Coaching Staff:**

- Chris Adamsons
- Tim Kobler
- Steven Senese
- Colin McCabe

**Upcoming Events:**

- 2/18 vs. Hamilton 7:00 pm
- 2/19 vs. Hamilton 3:00 pm

### Featured Team: Men's Squash

2/4 vs. Middlebury L, 0-9
2/5 vs. Wesleyan L, 1-8

**Upcoming Events:**

- College Squash Association Nationals
  - 2/18

**Coaching Staff:**

- Michael MacDonald, Head Coach

**Upcoming Events:**

- 2/18 vs. Colby L, 0-3
- 2/12 vs. Colby L, 0-3

### Featured Team: Men's Basketball

2/11 vs. Hamilton W, 62-43
2/12 vs. Amherst W, 71-65

**Seniors:**

- Austin Lavitt
- Ryan Omslaer

**Coaching Staff:**

- Tim Sweeney, Head Coach
- Corey Begly, Assistant Coach

**Upcoming Events:**

- 2/18 vs. Hamilton
- 2/19 vs. Hamilton

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**IS YOUR FAVORITE TEAM NOT GETTING ANY COVERAGE?**

Write for The College Voice’s Sports Section

email Johnny Alexandre: jalexandr@conncoll.edu
Hannah Foley  
**STAFF WRITER**

The Bates Student, the Bates newspaper recently published an article ranking the NESCAC mascots, and I disagreed so much I had to post my own (correct) rankings. First, it’s important to know that Bates rankings were done based on the image and quality of the physical mascot suit. There should be no world where a cow ranks higher than a camel in a mascot war. My rankings will be based on logo design, mascot creature, and colors. And to maintain the integrity of these rankings I will be leaving out the greatest mascot in the NESCAC, our beloved Humphrey the Camel.

10. Williams Ephs - I have so many objections to this one that I don’t even know where to start. Let’s start with the animal, a cow. Seriously? I don’t care if you try to confuse us by now calling yourself “the Ephs,” it’s still bad. When you look up “what is an Eph?” the definition of a union permit comes up.

Upon more digging, I learned that “Eph” is the nickname of their founder, Ephraim Williams. Lame. Plus add in the fact that their colors are purple and yellow, and their logo is the cow showing its butt, it’s a definite last-place ranking from me.

9. Hamilton Continentals - Only barely avoiding last place, the Continentals is maybe the least creative mascot of all time. White guys have enough representation, they don’t need to be a mascot. Their saving grace is their colors; the blue, tan, and white actually ends up looking pretty nice. And the logo is designed well considering their limited material.

8. Trinity Bantams - There is nothing that can make a chicken – excuse me, a Bantam – scary. For those of you who don’t know, a bantam is a miniature chicken, usually no heavier than 4 pounds. While the colors of blue and yellow vibe, the design might be more uncomfortable to look at than the Ephs. The Bantam is giving off a pouty side-eye, with its wings on its hips (do chickens have hips?) and a scrunched up, tilted head. Trinity will try to convince you otherwise with the floor-to-ceiling mural of a bantam in their gym, but there is no reason to “fear the chicken.”

7. Colby Mules - The Mules have the potential to move up. The love child of a horse and a donkey, a mule itself has some bulk to it. However, the logo depiction could not be any less intimidating. The logo solely shows the neck and head of the mule at a side profile. Because of the side view, it looks like it’s giving you some side-eye, and the mouth looks like it’s saying the world’s least enthusiastic “yay.” Basically, it looks like a teenager who was just told they’re going mule riding with their family. The white and blue combo is nice and at least I knew what this animal was without Google’s help.

6. Amherst Mammoths - While I wouldn’t have chosen an extinct animal that hasn’t been seen in 4,000 years to be my mascot, a mammoth at least looks a little scary. Unfortunately, you don’t get to see the toughness of the Amherst Mammoth because the logo depicts only the silhouette of the beast. There is zero creativity involved in the design of this logo but the purple and white is a nice combo. As The Bates Student pointed out, too, they also have no physical mascot costume, probably because it’s hard to make a costume of a silhouette. With a little bit of effort, the Mammoths could be a contender, but definitely not a top 5 right now.

5. Tufts Jumbos - Ok time for the top 5 now. The Jumbos barely squeak their way into the top 50%. An elephant mascot could go very poorly, but this logo is done well, giving the elephant big tusks and an intimidating look. However, their colors are blue and brown. Not a light, tan-ish brown – poop brown. Not sure who thought that was a good idea, but no. Also the name, Jumbos (the chant is “go bos”), it’s just not a good combo with the poop brown. It brings… other images to mind. But I am a fan of the logo so number 5 for Tufts.

4. Bates Wildcats - A classic school mascot that prompts the need to sing in the hallways and while playing basketball, I’m impressed with how well Bates designed their logo. It’s pretty simple, parallels to the mammoth silhouette, but by putting it inside of a “B” they make the mascot their own. I applaud the creativity, and the red gives it a little bit of subconscious intimidation. And honestly, if it’s good enough for Troy Bolton it’s good enough for me.

3. Wesleyan Cardinals - A few years ago the Cardinals wouldn’t have cracked the top 5, but a recent logo rebrand has certainly helped their case. The new cardinal looks like a fighter, and it’s head kind of looks like a flame. It’s a little basic just to put the Cardinal on top of a “W” but I can appreciate the attempt to attract it to the school. Red and black are tough colors too. All in all, the Cardinals have a solid mascot.

2. Bowdoin Polar Bears - With no known predators, a polar bear is a great mascot. It gives the message that they’re on top and fear no opponents. The logo shows this dominance. The Polar Bear towers over the “B” and appears to be staring down whoever is looking at the logo. Black and white isn’t the most creative color combo but it works. Overall, a very solid and intimidating mascot, worthy of the number 2 ranking.

1. Middlebury Panthers - Top-notch logo, top-notch animal, and top-notch colors. All around, I’m a fan of the Panthers. The logo depicts the Panther in its attack position, using the white shading to emphasize the muscles. You can see the Panther’s teeth, and they look like they could rip some flesh. The navy blue and white is one of my favorite combos, and compliment the panther logo really well. Easily the first-place mascot in my opinion.

No matter what school is on top, however, we can all agree that the NESCAC conference has some of the most unique mascots out there.

Spotify Chooses Money over Musicians

Sophie Mulvihill  
**STAFF WRITER**

Known for his polarizing political views, podcaster and comedian Joe Rogan, is at the center of a new Spotify controversy. Fed up with Spotify prioritizing the money his podcast brings in over the misinformation being spread on it, several artists, including Neil Young and Joni Mitchell, have pulled their works off the streaming service.

On The Joe Rogan Experience, Rogan hosts comedians like Kevin Hart and Amy Schumer; political activists and commentators, including Editor Emeritus for The Daily Wire Ben Shapiro and Innocence Project ambassador Josh Dubin; and many other people in the public eye, including Neil deGrasse Tyson, Elon Musk, Mike Tyson and Quentin Tarantino.

On a Dec. 2021 episode (#1757) Rogan hosted Dr. Robert Malone, who was banned from Twitter for spreading misinformation during the pandemic. Malone has promoted an idea that the vaccine has toxic cells in it, and was one of the people who first suggested taking ivermectin, which is a dewormer typically used for horses and cows, as a COVID cure. When Rogan announced that he had COVID in late August/early September of 2021, he shared that he took ivermectin, along with antibiotics, monoclonal antibodies and a vitamin drop. Rogan has not gotten the vaccine, and suggests that young and healthy people do not need it.

During his appearance on Rogan, Malone compared the pandemic and vaccines to 1920s and ’30s Germany. He said that “mass formation psychosis”...
Spotify Chooses Money over Musicians

was happening in America with society’s reaction to the pandemic, which he claims is what happened during the rise of Nazi Germany.

On Jan. 24, Neil Young posted and then removed a letter to his website, where he announced that he would be taking his music off of Spotify, "because Spotify is spreading fake information about vaccines – potentially causing death to those who believe the disinformation being spread by them.” Joni Mitchell, who is under the same label, Reprise Records, followed suit. "Irresponsible people are spreading lies that are costing people their lives.” Podcaster and social psychologist Brené Brown also pulled her podcast from Spotify, but has since gone back to posting content due to her multi-year contract with the company. If she had kept her work off of the platform, Brown would not have been able to put it elsewhere.

Twitter was flooded with #CancelSpotify and #DeleteSpotify in the past weeks. Roughly 380 million people are paying subscribers of the streaming service. According to a poll done by Forrester Research, nearly 19% of users have canceled their subscription, or are going to. However, this is likely not a totally accurate percentage; some people may say they are planning to cancel their subscription but do not end up following through. Some respondents answered that they would consider leaving if other musicians also pulled their works. However, because many artists do not have full control over their collections, and the service is so integral to success in the music industry, this is unlikely to occur.

In a poll conducted for this article on campus, out of 15 respondents, just over half were aware of the situation, and only 3 people had considered deleting the service, but did not end up doing so. "I feel that Spotify is responsible for the misinformation being spread and that they should not be allowing Joe Rogan to continue to be spreading lies. I also believe that more artists should band together and threaten to leave as well,” said one polee. This is unlikely, because of how large an impact streaming, and especially Spotify, have on today’s music industry. Another polee said that "While I don’t think Joe Rogan should be censored, I am angry with the situation. Spotify does not seem to care that MULTIPLE classic rock artists have removed their music from the platform as a result of Rogan’s podcast. As a die hard Spotify user, it is extremely frustrating, especially as someone who enjoyed the music of Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, and Crosby, Stills, and Nash.”

On Feb. 4, Artist India Arie announced through Instagram that she would be taking her music off of Spotify because of previous racist remarks and slurs used by Rogan, a white man, in his podcast. Arie included a compilation of this speech from Rogan in her post. That same day 73 episodes of The Joe Rogan Experience were deleted off of Spotify. He did apologize for his use of the language after the video was released.

Artists have used their music to sway the music giant before. In 2021, Adele made a deal that Spotify would remove the button that automatically shuffles albums and playlists, in exchange for streaming rights to her newest album. Also, in 2014, Taylor Swift took her music off of the platform in an argument that “valuable things should be paid for,” as artists are paid much less for streaming than when their works are bought. She came back without a major announcement or real change – at least for smaller artists. Young also removed his music once before, because he thought that the sound quality was poor, though he returned because, "that’s where people get music.”

Rogan’s podcast has an exclusive $100 million deal with Spotify, so it is unlikely that either party will decide to stop working together anytime soon. Spotify’s CEO Daniel Ek wrote in an open letter that: “While I strongly condemn what Joe has said and I agree with his decision to remove past episodes from our platform, I realize some will want more. And I want to make one point very clear – I do not believe that silencing Joe is the answer. We should have clear lines around content and take action when they are crossed, but canceling voices is a slippery slope. Looking at the issue more broadly, it’s critical thinking and open debate that powers real and necessary progress.”

Young, Mitchell and Arie’s move might not have led to a larger Spotify or Rogan takedown like they hoped, but they may help bring larger change in the future as artists realize the power that their music holds.

Spotify Chooses Money over Musicians

Ants From Up Here

OWEN AVERY
CONTRIBUTOR

Back Country, New Road (BC,NR) is a constantly evolving band. Born out of the late 2018 group Nervous Conditions, an ensemble that disbanded due to sexual assault allegations against lead singer Connor Browne, BC,NR quickly rose to cult status with the release of singles “Sunglasses” (2020) and “Athens, France” (2021). On these tracks Isaac Wood, the lead singer of BC,NR, formerly the guitarist of Nervous Conditions, sings about Kanye West, antidepressants, and being the “second best Slint tribute act.” This reference, accompanied by an eclectic assortment of instrumentation, encapsulates a classic BC,NR track from the For The First Time era.

In October 2021, BC,NR announced their second album, Ants From Up There (AFUT), and dropped the lead single “Chaos Space Marine.” On this track, the band abandons their previous sound of building guitar riffs and spoken word vocals. Instead, Wood and crew opt for a more upbeat and poppy sound with lyrics about the titular Chaos Space Marine, a popular creature from the board game Warhammer 4000. Tyler Hyde, bassist of the band, stated in an Apple Music annotation that she and her bandmates “allowed [themselves] to get out all the stupid, funny joke style of playing.” This is evident, and the track presents itself as a form of escapism from the rest of the more somber tone and lyrical content of the album.

Following the short and playful Space Marine, the gang serves up “Concorde.” The third song is the longest of the album so far, clocking in at just over six minutes, and is filled with bright percussion and a darker, personal subject matter.

The Concorde was a supersonic passenger jet that operated in the late ’90s and ceased usage in 2003 after a series of issues. While the motif is surely evocative, it doesn’t feel particularly poignant from a group that ponders the past on almost every track. However, just days before the release of AFUT, the band announced that Wood would be leaving the band due to mental health issues. With this news in mind, the lyric illustrates the no-win dilemma that stays through the album: The band flies at supersonic speed, hoping to reach stardom, all while Wood comes to a halt.

The Concorde is referenced throughout the rest of the album and stands out from the rest of the many references that the band is known for. Themes of anguish and worry continue in “Good Will Hunting” alongside

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Ants From Up Here

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unusually synth-heavy instrumentation. Wood calmly recalls “You call/I’ll be there/What’s more?/I’m scared of the phone,” and coolly describes the paralyzing parallel that both the stage and a relationship can hold all while an alluring guitar riff plays in the background. This calm continues for a few minutes until Wood ascends into a growl, saying “she had Billie Eilish style,” an illustrative lyric to some and a cringe-worthy pop culture reference to others.

The seventh of the ten tracks on AFUT is the short, instrumental “Marks Theme.” The piece is a touching tribute to saxophonist Lewis Evans’ uncle who passed away from COVID last year. While Evans’ saxophone is truly a warm and moving memorial, it takes away from the flow of the album and could have served better as the opener.

The album’s stand-out track, “The Place Where He Inserted The Blade”, draws you into the final triplet of intensely beautiful tracks with an alluring piano instrumental. Wood pulls no punches, voice quivering about how “We’re scared of a world where you’re needed/So you never made nice with the locals.” Wood continues to softly spin a tail of fear and anxiety as violins, guitars, drums, and vocal layering build. Wood’s singing slowly becomes more and more agitated as the run time progresses, building into a triumphant chorus where he recalls how “every time I try to make lunch/For anyone else, in my head/I end up dreaming of you.”

This dream, however, is shattered on the penultimate track, “Snow Globes.” Standing at a whopping nine minutes, the track takes its time and begins with three minutes of plotting guitars and a tender horn. While this instrumental lead-up may be grating to some, the vocal-less start makes Wood’s words seem ever more important. Wood utters “We must let the clamp do what the clamp does best.”

“‘The clamp’, a representation of Wood’s anxieties and worries, is a concept that has been referenced on multiple BC, NR songs throughout their discography. This time, however, Wood opts to leave the clamp behind and instead ponders the storm of feelings that one deals with on the daily. The rest of the track’s five minutes of runtime is dedicated to one refrain: “Oh, god of weather, Henry knows/Snow globes don’t shake on their own, ah” Wood sings this over and over again, unable to understand the reality he is experiencing. While Wood’s vocal performance and dedication to the line are admirable, he is outshined by drummer Charlie Wayne’s breathtaking performance. Wayne seems to be in a world of his own as his frantic drumming overpowers Wood’s voice. No matter how loud the singer cries, the storm of drums is always louder. The snowglobe shakes and Wood admits defeat as the track slows down until nothing but barren guitar chords can be heard. After having listeners sit through a seven minute cut followed by a nine minute track, many groups would slow it down with something a little more traditional to end the album. However, as fans should know by now, the band is anything but traditional.

“Basketball Shoes,” the final track, is a 13 minute long song that has been heard at live shows as early as 2019. The cult classic (which could have a whole article written about it) originally started as a commentary on paracausal relationships through the narrative of an erotic dream about Charli XCX. While there was something to be said for the discomfort of the original lyrics, Wood has thankfully toned down some of the cringier and uncomfortable moments of early iterations and opts for a more tasteful approach to the subject matter.

The track is split up into three main sections: A tone setting instrumental introduction that leads into the first verse, a frantic guitar accompanied by Wood singing about his hypothetical relationship, and a powerful final chorus where the group lays all cards on the table. The relation to the earlier, more blunt lyrics are all contained in this final chorus. Wood repeats “my bed sheets, now wet/Of Charlie, I pray to forget” as his vocal inflection and the group’s instrumentation become more and more unnerved.

Wood shrieks the final refrain while the rest of the band ferociously plays, and one can only hope that the anguish and pain that Isaac Wood channeled in his short career as frontman is left behind; for as much as one must appreciate all that he has done for the group, a happier and more peaceful reality, is hopefully on the horizon.

Searching for the BRIGHTSIDE of The Lumineer’s New Album

ALEXA BEKCESTIN

A claimed folk rock band The Lumineers released their fourth studio album on Jan. 14, 2022 to fairly positive reviews. While some critics praised BRIGHTSIDE for its stripped back, authentic sound and bright, atmospheric energy, many fans (including myself) were left unsatisfied with the caliber of the music due to the previous three powerhouse releases from the band. Due to the album’s uniformity of the sound and brief length, BRIGHTSIDE is, regrettably, forgettable.

Perhaps releasing three incredible albums set the lukewarm BRIGHTSIDE up for failure. This album falls short of what fans know the band capable of producing based on their immersive and lauded previous discography. Had the album been created by a new artist bursting onto the indie folk or folk rock scene, BRIGHTSIDE may have been justifiably appreciated for its strengths and its weaknesses may have felt less obvious.

Regardless of the album’s potency as a cohesive whole, The Lumineers do not completely miss the mark; the three singles released, “BRIGHTSIDE,” “BIG SHOT,” and “A.M. RADIO,” are some of their best music to date. The eponymous track “BRIGHTSIDE” contains some of the most noteworthy lyrics on the album recalling the evocative lyricism from past albums. The narrator sings of being his love’s “brightside, baby, tonight” as he recalls specific vignettes and elucidates his undying positivity even in difficult times. The second verse is particularly compelling for the lyrics: “I was stranded in the bed / You were listening to The Dark Side of the Moon”; the clever reference to Pink Floyd’s album playing off the album, reminding listeners that The Lumineers are capable of creative lyricism. These lines along with the pre-chorus display the band’s distinctive ability to use simplistic language to evoke resonate feelings within their listeners; “But the light in your eyes / Alone on a feeling,” sings lead singer Wesley Schultz in pre-chorus number two, in classic Lumineers fashion.

The album’s second single, “BIG SHOT”, follows in the footsteps of their breakthrough favorite “Ho Hey”; sonically intriguing, catchy, lyrically accessible, “BIG SHOT” is liable to be the tune stuck in your head all day as your brain sings the simple hook over and over: “And you wanna be a big shot / You wanna be the big man / You wanna hold a big gun / You better have a quick hand.” Though the lyrics are not revolutionary, musically “BIG SHOT” serves as the perfect song for your road-trip playlist.

“A.M. RADIO” is perhaps the best of the bunch — the third and final single from the album has the intensity and rawness of emotion which The Lumineers are known for, and which is nearly absent from the rest of the album. Alongside “BRIGHTSIDE”, “A.M. RADIO”’s lyrics prove superior from the rest, as the words swell and surge in a cathartic wave of words. A savior sings “from the fire escape on the second floor”, a lover promises the other that they will “make it to the catamarans”, and the singer repeats “Long as you run / I couldn’t give you up / Forever run / I couldn’t give you up.” “A.M. RADIO”’s lyrics avoid cliches while remaining simple enough to encourage listeners to relate on an emotional level, which is the band’s cornerstone.

One of the album’s biggest failures, with a few exceptions including “A.M. RADIO”, is its cliches. The appropriately titled “BIRTHDAY” provides

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chorus: “It’s alright, / it’s alright, it’s alright / It’s your birthday, dear / It’s alright, it’s alright, and we will carry on / And you know, and you know, and you know / It’s your birthday” which is so lacking in creativity and variation that it borderlines on childish. "ROLLERCOASTER”s lengthy intro of a piano melody provides promise for a song devoid of cliches, however once the lyrics begin this wish loses all steam; “Sittin’ on a rollercoaster, holdin’ on for dear life” repeats twice, followed by the lackluster chorus: “I know what is what / I who you are / I know what is already gone.” Track 6, “NEVER REALLY MINE,” is encapsulated within the title itself — thematically the song holds barely any substance and the track brings nothing novel to the table. "REMINGTON" might have been on par with the album's three singles were it not for the fact that the track does not even reach the two minute mark. The song intrigues both conceptually and thematically, but by the time the listener is invested with where the song is headed, it is already over. "WHERE WE ARE" would be stronger without the band’s past discography holding it back, as the upbeat track has potential in its chorus which repeats the title of the song, and bridge (“I know who you wanted me to be / Always holding up your tragedy”), but ultimately feels like it retreads old beats from The Lumineers's past albums. The subject of retreading is especially relevant in the final song on the album, "REPRISE" which, as the name suggests, reprises facets of the album, specifically the title track "BRIGHTSIDE". While I find "REPRISE" to be one of the more enjoyable tracks on the album and it serves as a suitable thematically bookend, the album has not earned this reprisal. On Billie Eilish's debut album When We All Fall Asleep Where Do We Go?, her final song “goodbye” quotes every song previous in reverse order, yet even in its callbacks the song felt new and subversive in comparison to the rest of the album; "goodbye" was an original, purposeful track on a sonically experimental and diverse album. "REPRISE" would likely feel earned and desired had BRIGHTSIDE been longer, more stimulating, or distinctive; however, it merely fades into the blur of the rest of the sonic portrait.

Part of the issue with BRIGHTSIDE stems from The Lumineer’s perpetuation of old habits, falling back on tried and true methods musically without imbuing the deep emotive quality that they so often manage to bottle within their music. Perhaps the experience of the album would be different for a first time listener who has never heard the band’s other work, as the music wouldn’t feel repetitive and reaching, and the highs of the album would far outweigh the lows.

Many other reviews of the album describe BRIGHTSIDE as if it is a breath of fresh air during trying times, which seems to be the antithesis of their previous work. Cleopatra (2016) and III (2019) are weighty, trenchant works of art which contain the power to deeply impact their listeners. The Lumineers (2012) is likely the closest to BRIGHTSIDE in its lighthearted nature, but the music’s touching and passionate undercurrent contrasts the airy and light undertones of BRIGHTSIDE. Fans expecting to find tracks on the album as dynamic and charming as “Flowers in Your Hair” or as relatable and gut-wrenching as “It Wasn’t Easy to Be Happy for You” or as down-right heartbreaking as “My Eyes.” Ultimately, BRIGHTSIDE plays it safe and fails to excite listeners or elevate The Lumineers’s discography. To quote the band’s iconic line from their masterpiece “Stubborn Love”: “the opposite of love’s indifference.” I hope the next album The Lumineers releases has enough spark and intention within it to render listeners either lovers or haters of the work, that it contains enough substance to be divisive, rather than leaving fans like me woefully indifferent, as is the case here. •

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A Magical Night at Niantic Cinemas

Cinema returned to its roots this weekend. In 1902, French filmmaker Georges Méliès created one of the first truly iconic pieces of cinema, *A Trip to the Moon*, a thirteen minute silent short film that follows a group of eccentric explorers who face off against an alien race who live beneath the moon's surface. Though the film was never intended to be anything more than fantasy, it reflected how general knowledge of what was on the moon was very limited at that time. Now, 120 years later, cinema is returning to the moon in *Moonfall*, a film that presupposes that every discovery made about the moon in the past century was wrong.

The film, which stars Patrick Wilson and Halle Berry as astronauts who team up with a moon-truther (John Bradley), features what is arguably the most mind-numbingly insane conspiracy theory ever put to film. *Moonfall* depicts an artificially constructed hollow moon inhabited by a malevolent black swarm of AI. Director Roland Emmerich has made a career out of movie premises that don’t make much sense. *Independence Day* (1996), his most iconic and celebrated film, which chronicles humanity fighting back against an invading alien force hell-bent on destroying American landmarks, is far from a logically sound film, but the charm of leads Will Smith and Jeff Goldblum and genuinely jaw-dropping scenes of earthly destruction make for a breezy, fun blockbuster.

That energy is not present for *Moonfall*, which is lacking in engaging performances and feels especially bogged down by an overreliance on greenscreens, despite its budget of $146 million. Even sequences void of any action, like a scene set at the Griffith Observatory, are made awkward by the lead actors being clearly composited into these locations as opposed to actually being there. The only explanation for this being that the film was shot mid-pandemic, entirely in Montreal, a place where approximately zero percent of the film was on the ground, eyes-wide, his trademark showman persona nowhere to be found, and starts asking simple questions like “What happened?” Absent from the mix are former *Jackass* stars Ryan Dunn, who died in a drunk driving accident in 2011, and Bam Margera, whose substance abuse problems led to him being ousted from the film. Margera has publicly stated disdain for his former co-star Johnny Knoxville who was willing to put himself at risk. The *Jackass* films have not been completely shy about this connection, as the musical finale of 2006’s *Jackass Number Two* features a house facade falling around Johnny Knoxville in direct homage to Keaton doing the same stunt in 1928’s *Steamboat Bill, Jr.*

The tone of the *Jackass* films is, however, much more juvenile than their silent film ancestors with this latest entry being particularly obsessed with the torture of the male genitalia. Stunts include Steve-O’s penis being completely covered with angry bees, Wee Man being tied to the ground wearing only a G-string stuffed with jerky and then having to face off against a hungry vulture, Preston Lacy’s scrotum being placed through a hole in a table and then being pummeled by a mechanical device wearing boxing gloves, and a particularly brutal cup test starring Ehren McGhehey involving a heavy-weight boxer, a softball pitch, a hockey puck and a pogo stick. And that’s just scratching the surface.

Like *Jackass* has always done, many stunts in this film blur the line between rough-housing and reckless endangerment. As he did in the second and third installments, Johnny Knoxville takes a direct charge from an angry bull in this film but this brutal hit, which is showcased in slow-motion, resulted in 50-year old Knoxville sustaining a concussion, broken ribs and a broken wrist. We get to watch the moments immediately following the hit as Knoxville lies on the ground, eyes-wide, his trademark showman persona nowhere to be found, and starts asking simple questions like “What happened?” Absent from the mix are former *Jackass* stars Ryan Dunn, who died in a drunk driving accident in 2011, and Bam Margera, whose substance abuse problems led to him being ousted from the film. Margera has publicly stated disdain for his firing on social media, so much so that director Jeff Tremaine reportedly has an active restraining order against him.

Both films, at their best, could be described as "dumb fun", but *Moonfall’s* non-stop barrage of non-sense may be too much for even the biggest disaster movie fans to stomach. *Jackass Forever’s* simplicity, on the other hand, works in its favor as it puts the insane stunts front and center without pretending to be anything more than the low-brow docu-comedy that it is. Either way, if you’re looking to sit down in a cinema and turn your brain off, the movies have got you covered this week.
### ACROSS
1. A northern province in Argentina known for Plaza 9 de Julio
6. Shakespeare's foot
10. Tapioca drink
14. F1 driver from Monaco, le ___
15. The disputed land in the Treaty of Luxembourg
16. Unit of rotational speed
17. A company might provide a job ____
18. Levelheaded
19. A bug bite might
20. Will you conquer the world or lose it all on some Old Time Rock & Roll?
23. Hailey Bieber, ___ Baldwin
24. Director of 45 across
25. One of the dialects of the Sioux
28. Spanish Olympian on loan from Tottenham Hotspur, Bryan ___
29. ___ the night before Christmas
31. Investment company that buys and holds a portfolio of stocks
32. Will you find the killer or clear your teacher's name?
36. ___-____-tete
38. You might put one of these in a fire
39. The Gram
42. Rolling Stone named it the best album of 2021
43. Founder of the first dynasty of Egypt
45. Will you end up in Countryside Acres or Pacific Estates?
47. How you might spell ñ
48. Singer of "At Last," ___ James
51. More extreme (up)
52. "This makes me so _____. And so ____. I'm smad!" - Sookie Saint James
54. Paint and ___
55. Work permit for non-citizen in the US
58. Will you make it around the board or stay King and keep the jewels?
62. OMG
64. Spacious
65. Milk with greater than 3.5% fat
66. Waterford
67. Headless statue on Conn's campus
68. Mathematician known for creating graph theory
69. Fine in Sweden
70. What some might do on February 14th
71. Land between France and Germany

### DOWN
1. What you would not want to feel toward your lover on Valentine's Day
2. Baby daddy of Youtuber Zoella, ____ Deyes
3. Norwegian flatbread
4. "I'm planning to ____ up Mt. Everest"
5. Water-soluble paint
6. This crossword is in an ____ of The College Voice
7. Skinny batteries
8. Pairs well with a pedi
9. Supporting actress in 32 across
10. One might say the Connecticut wind is ____
11. Unsubscribes from Moodle emails
12. Go here for a broken leg in Boston
13. He's gonna catch em all
21. Casus ____ (to justify a war)
22. Kanye's opposite
26. What you might do with loose ends
27. Rival of SEGA
28. An anarchic pledge
29. Cybertruck manufacturer
30. (blank clue)
32. A childhood pastime and a hint to 20, 32, 45, and 58 across
33. Princess of Avalor
34. Muted
35. Intergovernmental organization
37. When employees own shares in a company (Abbr.)
40. "Live Your Life" rapper
41. One carnival
44. Patriots linebacker elected to the Pro-Football Hall of Fame in 2015
46. CCEI's goal on campus
49. #bankhuman
50. (blank clue)
53. How far will she go?
54. Eye lumps
55. City in southern Italy and a 1979 film
56. Actor in Disney's The Santa Clause
57. Tractor company
59. 2019 Super Bowl
60. British slang for the lowest ranking air craftsmen in RAF
61. No no
62. Response to a shocking text
63. Hi in Dutch
Don't Look Away: Camel Co-Stars in Best Picture Nominee

Caoimhe Markey
Arts Editor

The apocalypse is no laughing matter. Unless, of course, Adam McKay has something to do with it.

Chances are, if you’re one of Netflix’s whopping 222 million subscribers, you’ve seen or at least heard about *Don’t Look Up*, one of the most anticipated movies of 2021, due to the allure of massive stardom and an enticing premise. With renowned actors Meryl Streep, Leonardo DiCaprio, Jennifer Lawrence, Jonah Hill, Rob Morgan, Timothée Chalamet, and Cate Blanchett; Adam McKay (*Step Brothers, Vice, The Big Short*) directing; guest appearances from superstar musicians Kid Cudi and Ariana Grande; and the imminent destruction of Earth hanging over the characters’ heads, you’d have to be a force of nature to resist the temptation of watching this movie.

If you’re anything like my family and me (embarrassingly avid Streep fans), you watched the movie first thing after opening presents on Christmas Day when the movie was first released. The title tells us not to look up but I couldn’t look away when I saw a familiar face on screen, almost twenty minutes in.

“Hey! I think I know that kid!”

Yep. If you’ve ever had the pleasure of meeting Rob Radochia ’23 on campus, you probably recognized him playing Evan Mindy, Leonardo DiCaprio’s on-screen son.

Driven by a fierce love of comedy and Jennifer Lawrence, I contacted Radochia about an interview, and he kindly agreed to sit down with myself and fellow TCV editor, Jimmy Cork ’22 on Feb. 6th.

So how does a Massachusetts-born hockey player at Connecticut College end up starring alongside some of the movie industry’s biggest names? We asked him.

“It was very freaky. I was taking the spring semester remotely. The reason I left school had nothing to do with this movie. I was stuck in contact quarantine for three weeks. I got stuck in my room. I started really getting into my head a bit. And I was like, ‘Okay, I’m gonna go home before I start feeling really terrible about myself and what I’m doing, and I’m going to try something new.’ I had no intentions of throwing auditions out there initially. I’d done it in the past when I was around ten years old, just some commercials and modeling and other stuff. But it was actually my mom who encouraged me; she forwarded me an email about local casting, so I just threw my audition tape out there. I was extremely lucky.”

According to Radochia, the casting call for the film, which was shot in Boston in the spring months of 2021, disclosed only that it was a Netflix production, with DiCaprio starring. He soon found himself on the set of a star-studded, $75 million dollar production, but shooting in the midst of a pandemic led to an unconventional shooting experience.

COVID protocols caused director Adam McKay to have an unusual presence on set: “He was more of a voice in the sky. I got to see him sometimes but because of the COVID restrictions, but mostly they just had him outside in a sprinter van. He had full view of every camera on set, and he would just make calls over the loudspeaker. He was like Oz.”

Radochia appears a few times throughout the film, playing one of Dr. Mindy’s (DiCaprio) two sons, but he can most prominently be seen during the film’s climax. The film concludes with Dr. Mindy’s family gathering around the dinner table with their newfound friends Kate Dibiasky (Jennifer Lawrence), Dr. Teddy Ogelthorpe (Rob Morgan), and a scraggily, Twitch-streaming young man named Yule (Timothée Chalamet) as they wait for Comet Dibiasky to hit Earth.

We asked Radochia about the bittersweet dinner scene towards the end of the movie, what it was like to act with such a star-studded cast, and specifically, how the crew managed to simulate the dining room shaking as the comet hits.

“They installed a rotor at the bottom of the table, but the camera couldn’t pick up enough movement from that. This guy named Mike, an assistant on set, went under the table in between Rob Morgan and I, and literally just kicked his feet against the table. I was literally handing him snacks and water under the table because we were shooting that scene for hours.”

I asked Radochia about McKay’s process and whether or not Rob himself got to improvise any parts of the script.

“I didn’t get to read the whole script, but I used the lines I got as a guide for who my character was.” Radochia said. His introductory line, ‘I’m a solid 4′, comes when his onscreen dad, Dr. Mindy asks him to rate how his new antidepressants are working on a scale of 1-10. “That line kind of told me that Evan must take after his dad a bit,’ Rob said, referencing Dr. Mindy’s landslide of medications that we see him take here and there throughout the movie.

So how did Radochia’s little knowledge of his character inform his improvised lines?

“During the dinner scene, when we’re all telling stories, Adam gave me a cue over the loudspeaker: ‘Rob, let’s mix it up a bit, try saying you fell asleep in the backyard and then something happened: I’m like ‘shit, shit, shit, okay, what would Evan Mindy say?’. 20 seconds later, we’re shooting, and I just say ‘I’m thankful for that time I fell asleep in the backyard and woke up face to face with a baby deer’; I kind of paused for a second, like I wasn’t sure if I was gonna keep going with it, and then I say, ‘that was the best day of my life’.”

The line ended up making it into the final cut of the movie, and it’s not hard to see why. Despite being under the eyes of some of the best actors in Hollywood, our very own Rob Radochia delivered an equally wholesome and bleak line right on the spot.

When we finally caved in and asked Radochia if he had any good anecdotes about working with the actors on set, Rob didn’t disappoint.

“Leo [DiCaprio] had a story every five minutes. He’s done just about everything. In between takes, I was sitting down on the couch and he came up to me and he said, ‘I got to visit Koko the gorilla before she passed.’ and I was like ‘Oh nice’ even though I didn’t even know who Koko the gorilla was.”

“In the movie, he plays someone who completely lacks confidence and has to cope with that by medicating, but that’s not the presence he gives off at all in real life. Usually you’d see people getting into character on set but Leo would just snap into it as soon as the camera rolled and then go back to his normal self between takes.”

Rob is now back at Conn, continuing to push himself into uncharted territory as an actor:

“I’m taking an acting course here with Professor Jaffe. That’s a whole different animal. I’ve never done theater in my life before,” he told us humbly. We figure that starring alongside Leo DiCaprio is a pretty good start.

*Don’t Look Up* is available to stream on Netflix. You can see if it takes home any of the four Academy Awards it is nominated for, including Best Picture, on March 27 on ABC.