

Connecticut College

Digital Commons @ Connecticut College

2023-2024

Student Newspapers

2-14-2024

The College Voice, Vol. 58, no. 7 [February 14, 2024]

Connecticut College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/ccnews_2023_2024

Recommended Citation

Connecticut College, "The College Voice, Vol. 58, no. 7 [February 14, 2024]" (2024). 2023-2024. 6.
https://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/ccnews_2023_2024/6

This Newspaper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Newspapers at Digital Commons @ Connecticut College. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2023-2024 by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Connecticut College. For more information, please contact bpancier@conncoll.edu.
The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER, SINCE 1977

NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2024

VOLUME LVIII ISSUE 7

THECOLLEGEVOICE.ORG

Legacy Lives On: A New London Staple Collapses

AVA GEBHART
CONTRIBUTOR

On the afternoon of Thursday, Jan. 25, 2024, the steeple of the First Congressional Church collapsed, causing a stir in New London. Adjacent to the church is Connecticut College's Manwaring building, an off-campus housing option for upperclassmen students in downtown New London. No students were injured during the collapse and only one person, the church office manager, was within the church at the time and exited with no apparent injuries.

As a result of the collapse, the city decided to tear down the entirety of the church due to too much damage done to the structure. Manwaring residents had to be moved during the demolition project. Dean of Students

Victor Arcelus sent an email to Connecticut College students, faculty, and staff, stating, "The New London Fire Department notified Campus Safety and they immediately evacuated Manwaring. Campus Safety also sent a CCA alert to all students, notifying them that Manwaring needed to be evacuated and directing Manwaring residents to their email for more details. Manwaring students gathered in Cro's Nest to meet with Office of Campus Life staff to check in and discuss the next steps."

With a partnership that the College had established with the New London Holiday Inn during the COVID pandemic, Manwaring residents quickly moved into the Inn and met with the Red Cross to receive essential items until their return.

Article continued on page 3.

On Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2024, once

Trust, Promise, and Stability: Dining Staff Votes for Unionization

SULEMAN SALEEM
CONTRIBUTOR

On December 14, 2023, Connecticut College faculty, staff, and students gathered to rally in support of the dining staff's collective decision to inaugurate a union on campus. Organized with the help of UNITE HERE Local 217 — an organization that helps serve union efforts for hospitality workers across Connecticut — the demonstration helped emphasize part of a wider discourse that has since become a mainstay with students, staff, and faculty.

Since December, there has been an outpour of campus-wide support for this now-inaugurated union. Flyers have been put up in locations far and wide, including staff testimonials in Harris Refectory, faculty endorsements in Crozier-Williams, and student letters of support in Cummings Arts Center, among other places. Beyond this, it is also estimated that ~850 students recently signed a petition drafted by the Local 217 chapter in support of the union's formation. Among the dining staff, 93% of workers voted 'yes': a near-unanimous approval. This union promises to

Article continued on page 4.

provide opportunities for job stability, growth, and a more ethical and energetic culture of working. It could also allow Connecticut College, as an institution, to finally compete with fellow NESCACs such as Trinity College in Hartford where, after intermittent demonstrations, workers have begun to earn upwards of \$23.85 per hour.

Case for Inauguration:

While the word 'union' has subliminally been in the air for the past 30 years, it is only since 2020 that it has gained a more profound recognition on campus. Several workers from all three of Conn's dining locations mention the COVID-19 pandemic as the first pivotal moment. Dining staff workers, designated as essential staff, were required to come in without the prospect of earning hazard pay. This, combined with low hourly wages and general safety concerns, led to much of the workforce quitting, which has since led to understaffing and longer hours for the remaining staff, including shift alternation between dining halls on especially busy days. Mio, a dining employee,

IN THIS ISSUE

SPORTS



Photo Courtesy of Grace Contreni Flynn

The Untapped Potential of Humphrey's

Humphrey's, Connecticut College's on-campus bar, is a fun spot full of good vibes. However, I believe that it is not living up to its full potential. Now, this has nothing to do with...

See Page 6

OPINIONS



Photo Courtesy of Connecticut College Arts Programming

A "Beyond Eclectic" Night at the Cabaret

On a Friday evening in a sold-out Palmer Auditorium, the last thing I expected to hear was a story about Alan Cumming and Sir Ian McKellen lounging together on a nude beach. Throughout the evening of Och and Oy!

See Page 11

Letter From the Editor

Hoping everyone enjoyed a pleasant break and has returned invigorated for Camel life, we at The College Voice welcome you back to campus! Uncommonly warm but pleasant, we among TCV staff have appreciated the clear skies and sunshine, though we do miss the opportunity for snow angels in the Arbo and sledding down the Castle Court stairs. If our layout today is an indication of the rest of the semester, I am ecstatic to expect smooth, efficient, and enjoyable work this semester.

It's the first edition of the new spring semester, and it's an exciting and reflective time for TCV. I can't help but recall a similar time last year when journalism looked very different for us: daily updates, breaking news, midnights in our office in Cro stuffing inserts in the middle of our papers before distribution, when it seemed everyday was full enough for a whole edition. It's hard to believe almost a whole year has gone by since such times and—at the same time—that it's only been that long. So much has changed, as is evident looking through the past year of TCV publications, as I was doing earlier this morning. In this edition, you won't find that same urgency, but you will find the steadfast themes of TCV that have persisted for decades: displaying student voices, student life, and a Camel community that is truly unique.

As we begin a new semester of journalism, it is my pleasure to welcome the new members of TCV's editorial board. Among them are News Section Editor Evie Lockwood Mullaney '27, Opinions Section Editor Claire Hlotyak '27, Layout Editor Alana Maguire '27, and, for the first time in history (that we know of), we have a Cruciverbalist, Hannah Casey '27! We are also pleased as punch to welcome back Grace Contreni Flynn '25 in the position of Arts Section Editor.

In this edition, we have an even spread of fantastic writing across all our sections. Ava Gebhart '27 covers the history of the First Congressional Church and the aftermath of its recent collapse while Suleman Saleem '25 reports on the unionization of Conn's much-appreciated Dining Staff. Meanwhile, Frederick Baldauf, Co-Editor-in-Chief, provides his loving critique of Humphrey's, and Kevin Lieue, Managing Editor, returns with his staple, Camel of the Edition, this time highlighting cross-country and track runner Alexa Estes '26. In Arts, Claire Hlotyak reviews Och and Oy! A Considered Cabaret, which, after little consideration, I do declare is a fantastic read and not to be missed. And finally, I encourage all to attempt Cruciverbalist Hannah Casey's crossword at the end!

As always, we welcome new writers and love to hear from you all. Pitch meetings are now at 7:00 pm in Alice Johnson and open to all. We look forward to a great new semester!

Until Next Time,
Adrien

THE COLLEGE VOICE

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

ADRIEN LANDON '25
FRITZ BALDAUF '24
Co-Editor-in-Chief

EDITORIAL BOARD

KEVIN LIEUE '26
Managing Editor

KERI KRASNOFF '24
EVIE LOCKWOOD MULLANEY '27
News Editors

WADE ANTHONY '24
CLAIRE HLOTYAK '27
Opinions Editors

JOCELYN LEWIS '24
GRACE CONTRENI FLYNN '25
Arts Editors

EVAN YOUNG '26
LILLA KATE TUCKER '27
Sports Editors

HANNAH CASEY '27
Cruciverbalist

MANAGING STAFF

ROBBIE LYNCH '24
ANDREW KUPOVICH '26
NICOLE SANFILIPPO '27
ALANA MAGUIRE '27
Layout Editors

SOPHIE MULVIHILL '25
FINN MICKITTERICK '25
Social Media Managers

ILAN LISTGARTEN '25
Business Manager

CONTACT US

thecollegevoice@conncoll.edu
270 Mohegan Avenue
New London, CT 06320
thecollegevoice.org
@the_collegevoice on Instagram
@thecollegevoice on Twitter

Legacy Lives On: A New London Staple Collapses

Article continued from page 1.

the initial phase of destruction was complete and the site was deemed safe, Manwaring residents moved back in. The demolition of the church was officially completed on Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024, and the land is currently being surveyed for an environmental assessment of the conditions of the grounds.

The First Congressional Church had been an iconic feature of New London since its founding by early town settlers in the 1600's. Though the church is now destroyed, it had a history of accidents dating back to 1848, when the original church burned down in a fire. Following this incident, architect Leopold Eidlitz was commissioned to design a new church in the heart of New London. Eidlitz, originally from the Czech Republic, was well known for his architectural endeavors, specifically his work designing the New York State Capitol building and the "Iranistan," a mansion built for P.T. Barnum in Bridgeport, Connecticut. In his creation of the First Congressional Church, he chose to design it in the Gothic Revival-style, a popular church design at the time commonly associated with the neoclassical revival throughout Britain and the United States. After just over a year of construction, the newest church was completed in June of 1853. Since the original

construction of the church, changes had been added to the structure, including a bell tower and an additional building attached to the original church.

With its long history, the First Congressional Church of New London has had a profound impact on New London with its commitment to supporting the city and its people. Before its destruction, the church held breakfast on weekdays for community members of New London. Additionally, the church hosted funerals for homeless individuals in the New London community after their passing. Currently, church services have been moved to local churches across the New London area, including Hallam Chapel. In remembrance of the church, Studio 33 Art & Frame Gallery will present a new exhibit on Feb. 14, "A Church With Heart In The Heart Of The City," celebrating the church's impact on the community of New London and appreciating the space it provided for many.

Though the beloved New London skyline will never be the same, the collapse of the First Congressional Church has shown how our community continues to persist through the challenges it faces and emerges even stronger than before. Further, the legacy of the First Congressional Church lives on through the many people it has impacted and the connection New London Residents have with this historical monument. •



Photos Courtesy of Elena Crowell '25

Images taken over the course of multiple days from the Manwaring Building

Trust, Promise, and Stability: Dining Staff Votes

Article continued from page 1.

worked at Harris for 6 years before relocating to the dining hall at Jane Addams House, citing difficulty serving a continually increasing influx of students during peak hours.

As previously mentioned, conversations with dining staff also revealed low hourly wages as a recurring factor in ensuring union solidarity. Multiple staff members lamented the little scope for career advancement within their respective positions and an even rarer opportunity for a pay increase, with the highest-paid employee earning \$20. With rent costs within the New London area reaching upwards of \$1,900, some workers have found themselves working second jobs, leading to tighter shifts and more strenuous day-to-day living. The quality of food has also been placed in a state of neglect, with faulty machinery (such as ovens, refrigerators, and dishwashers) being put to the task of handling an ever-increasing number of servings.

More recently, however, there have been additional fears and anxieties from the dining staff about putting into practice ideas introduced by a private consultancy firm. Just this past month, the HR office sent out an email discussing the administration's proactive



Photo Courtesy of Kevin Lieue

approach toward assessing the validity of outsourcing Dining. As a result, staff are worried that jobs for certain dining positions, some already held by staff, could potentially be put on sites such as Indeed.com as part of an effort to possibly routinize job efforts. Conversations

with dining staff have revealed a sense of feeling slighted by this potential development, presenting concerns regarding job security and retention.

Trust in School:

However, this is not to say that the staff feels entirely skeptical about all recent developments. Many workers expressed their faith in Interim President Wong's promise to "respect [the dining] employees' decision and [...] bargain with the union upon request." Mio, the aforementioned J.A. employee, also cited President Wong's prior experience with union politics at his previous institution of employment as instilling some faith in future negotiations.

To be sure, the administration's efforts have also, on a pragmatic level, been beneficial. The installation of the new, functioning slat conveyor belt in Harris has been especially useful in the rapid parsing of dirty plates during rush hour, as duly noted by members of the dining staff.

Promises of a Better Future:

Ultimately, what has been expressed in every union-advocating demonstration, flyer, and leaflet is the promise of security, safety, and retention. Within the guarantee of a union is also embedded an overwhelming sense of fraternity: many permanent dining workers have been working for over 5 years, becoming part of a wider culture of belonging within the campus' social fabric. Standing at the grill at Harris, they chat with students about daily happenings; working the cash register at Oasis, they joke about recent sports games: it is all part of a larger energy that they enjoy being a part of. In the words of one Oasis employee, "[We] do this for you guys. You're part of the reason we've stayed." •



Photo Courtesy of Kevin Lieue

"I'll Just ChatGPT It": Questioning The Effects of AI Use in Classrooms

ISABELLA MEEHAN
CONTRIBUTOR

I began researching the impact of artificial intelligence on students' creativity and ability to think for themselves in an academic setting by first asking ChatGPT—an AI tool—for some input. ChatGPT ultimately gave me two well-written but notably vague paragraphs weighing the pros and cons of AI use in classrooms. The pro section rather arbitrarily emphasized AI's ability to "facilitate collaborative projects, offering students opportunities to engage in innovative problem solving and express their creativity in new ways." At first, I was skeptical of this response as I had never seen ChatGPT used in this way before. Still, upon asking for collaborative project ideas, I was granted an extensive list covering various methods for building engagement

and connection across disciplines. Meanwhile, in the cons portion of the assessment, ChatGPT said, "The reliance on AI for tasks such as information retrieval and analysis might lead to a reduced emphasis on traditional research and critical thinking skills." Such a statement is true. People are far more likely to rely on AI technologies than to take the time and effort to locate credible sources of information. AI should not be chalked up as the enemy of originality, but people, especially students, should use it cautiously. I encourage people to keep an open mind and remain curious about AI and its place in our future.

Article continued on page 5.

Article continued from page 4.



You

How does ai impact a students creativity and ability to think for themselves in an academic setting



ChatGPT

The impact of AI on students' creativity and critical thinking in an academic setting is multifaceted. On one hand, AI can enhance creativity by providing tools and platforms that encourage exploration and experimentation. AI-driven applications can facilitate collaborative projects, offering students opportunities to engage in innovative problem-solving and express their creativity in new ways. Moreover, AI can assist in automating routine tasks, freeing up time for students to focus on more complex and creative aspects of their academic work.

However, there are concerns regarding the potential negative impact of AI on students' ability to think for themselves. The reliance on AI for tasks such as information retrieval and analysis might lead to a reduced emphasis on traditional research and critical thinking skills. Students may become dependent on AI-generated content, potentially hindering their ability to independently assess information, think critically, and form their own opinions. Striking a balance is crucial – integrating AI tools to enhance learning while emphasizing the importance of independent thought and critical analysis can contribute to a more holistic educational experience. Educators play a pivotal role in guiding students to use AI as a tool to augment their capabilities rather than replace essential cognitive skills.

< 1/2 >

Photo Courtesy of Isabella Meehan

Some people call it laziness, while others call it savviness; either way, research and the presentation of information have seen drastic changes with the development of AI. The main problem we're facing with AI today is its egregious abuse by students. AI programs, such as ChatGPT, are specifically appealing as they can produce seemingly eloquent essays on any subject with just a few keywords typed in by the user. With access to all data on the internet, if asked to write an essay on well-recorded, well-analyzed literature such as "1984" or "The Iliad," ChatGPT will effortlessly generate an essay with the simple command "write an essay about ____." That said, ChatGPT will have difficulty honing in on specific details of the books as there is so much information on the web about them, leaving the resulting essay—while well written—flat and vague. Similarly, for subjects with very little engagement on the internet, ChatGPT's analysis tends to use flourished language and perfect grammar to convey empty ideas about the topic.

In recent research, ChatGPT-4 tackled various standardized tests. Notably, on AP tests, ChatGPT-4 tended to score very high (between 4 and 5) in history, math, and science courses but remarkably low (2) in English, where there is more subjectivity in writing. Such scores reflect ChatGPT's ability to regurgitate information but inability to have original or nuanced ideas. When questioned about their opinions on AI's academic effects, one student who had a teacher encourage the use of ChatGPT for some assignments said, "It's certainly different

from what I'm used to. It's almost like a teacher telling you to cheat, but I definitely think it is something that could prove helpful once we know how to use it more positively." Another student said, "I think for kids under the age of 13, it's a nightmare. Over 13, it can be useful, but the chances of it being used properly with the right intentions are relatively low." This student pointed out that there's a big difference between efficiency and laziness, and very few people know how to use ChatGPT for efficiency. "Its gimmick is that it's advertised as a useful tool, which it can be, but it's capitalizing on laziness." Ultimately, students must discover how to use AI to complete tasks efficiently rather than using it as a cheat code.

In comparing quality and effort, it's logical to claim that the credibility of information decreases as the ease of finding it increases. The less effort we put into research, the less we understand its credibility, and the quicker we are to believe misinformation, especially if it is within our personal biases. Considering AI technologies gather information from all sources of the internet—which covers all extensions of the imperfect, biased human mind—there are some questions of

Exam results (ordered by GPT-3.5 performance)

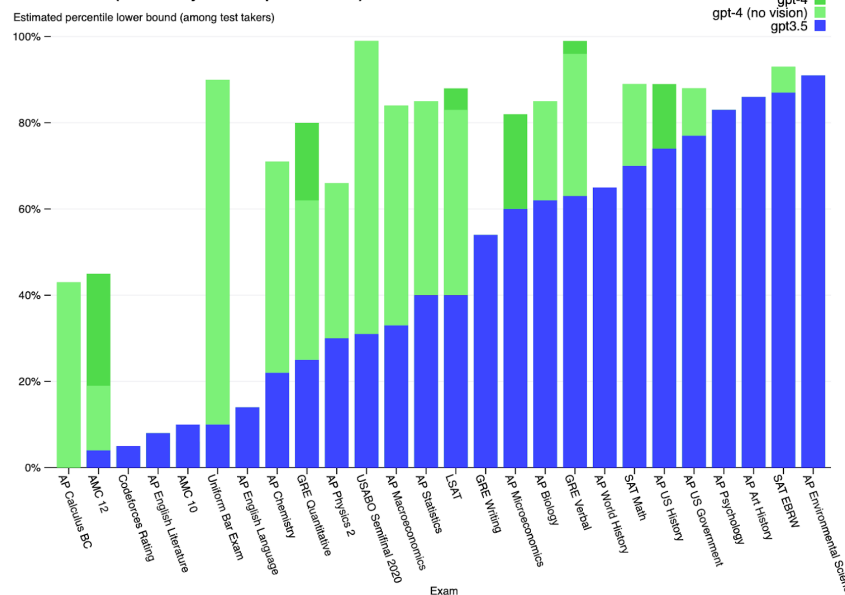


Photo Courtesy of OpenAI

reliability concerning its integrity. While using AI programs (such as ChatGPT) to gather information is far less strenuous than traditional research methods, nothing tells you where the program got its information. If we use AI to simplify the research process, we should use it to help us find credible sources instead of relying on AI as a credible source. AI, while a machine, was created by humans who have sourced all the information generated. AI won't distinguish between a primary source and a blog unless we tell it to, and that's where the quality of our research goes down. If we are to learn anything through AI, we must be willing to question its intelligence, as it is based on our own. •

The Untapped Potential of Humphrey's

FRITZ BALDAUF
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Humphrey's, Connecticut College's on-campus bar, is a fun spot full of good vibes. However, I believe that it is not living up to its full potential. Now, this has nothing to do with how it's operated – the staff at Humphrey's are all wonderful. The beer is cheap (which is important for us college students). The vibe is perfect for a campus bar: fun and lowkey. It's perfect to come for a few drinks, chat with friends, play pool, and maybe even sing some karaoke.

What's holding Humphrey's back is when it operates, not how it operates. Humphrey's is only open on Thursday nights. While various social groups on campus may differ in their habits, most of Conn's campus primarily goes out on Thursday and Saturday nights. Friday nights generally serve as a night to relax or socialize more casually.

In my experience, for most Conn students, going out on Thursday nights (the one night of the week when Humphrey's is open) means leaving campus to go to the various bars in New London, Groton, or even Mystic. Many students will go to parties at the River Ridge or Winchester apartments, if not the bars.

My friends (those of legal drinking age) and I go to Humphrey's every once in a while, maybe one to two Thursday nights every semester. It's always fun, and there is a decent crowd, but it often feels like it has more potential. The challenge is that the culture developed on campus means that most students would rather leave campus on the one night of the week when Humphrey's is open.

What if we moved the one night of the week when Humphrey's is open from Thursday to Friday? I believe this could go a long way towards creating a stronger on-campus social culture, at least for the upperclassmen for whom Humphrey's is available. Since most of the student body stays on campus and doesn't go out on Friday nights, having Humphrey's as an option would almost certainly lead to more students taking advantage of the awesome on-campus bar.

Being located in Crozier-Williams, Humphrey's is a one to three-minute walk from anywhere on campus and six to eight minutes from the Ridges and Winches. With Friday nights being when those looking to have a few drinks generally want to keep it casual, Humphrey's would be a perfect alternative to dorm rooms, on-campus apartments, or local off-campus bars. It would be easy to run into friends from other groups on campus, but it's also low-key and relaxed enough to provide a break from the high-energy environment of bars on Thursday and Saturday nights.

What are the potential cons of moving Humphrey's night of operation? There are certainly students who would rather not go out or drink at all between Thursday and Saturday, truly using Friday as a break. Speaking from experience, sometimes that's a very nice option.

There's also the issue that it would rule out most in-season athletes from visiting Humphrey's. Most teams will have games, regattas, or races on Saturdays (and sometimes Sundays too). Many teams have a 24 or 48-hour rule, and members of teams that don't have such rules still won't be found drinking at a bar the night before a competition. Given the size of Conn, athletes are an immense part of the social life and party culture on campus. Athletes are certainly not the only driving force of the party scene. However, at a small college with no Greek life and a large athlete population, the culture of these teams significantly impacts the overall social scene and schedule. While Humphrey's being open Fridays as opposed to Thursdays would likely take any in-season athletes out of the equation, it's important to note that only about 30 to 50 percent of total athletes at Conn are in season at any given time, depending on the time of the year. Take it from me: when we are out of season, we like to live it up. Circling back to one of my original points, even when Humphrey's is open on Thursdays, most students – athletes and non-athletes alike – prioritize on-campus parties and the off-campus bar scene anyway.

At the end of the day, this is an issue of competition. Even though most students are more likely to go out on Thursdays and Saturdays than Fridays, Humphrey's has to compete with the local bar scene, parties, and any other plans that students may have on a Thursday night. Were it to be open on Saturdays, the same would be true. If operations were to move to Fridays, you would lose the in-season athlete crowd. However, plenty of students at Conn are not athletes; at any point of the year, around half (if not more) of athletes are out of season.

Given our campus's current social and party culture, Humphrey's would face little to no competition if operations moved one day in the week, which would likely mean a significant uptick in students dropping in our on-campus bar. As I have repeatedly stated, the atmosphere there is perfect for the Friday night vibe on campus. This could potentially help build school spirit and class camaraderie. Humphrey's is a really fun spot that more students should take advantage of, and the best way to accomplish this within the current campus culture would be to shift its operations from Thursday night to Friday night. •

SAC Faces Declining Attendance at All-Campus Parties

MADELINE MOTES
CONTRIBUTOR

If you've attended any campus-wide parties this year, you may have wondered where everyone was. With the exception of what I thought to be a highly successful Fall Ball in September, attendance at campus-wide dances and parties seems to have dwindled. Official attendance records are unavailable according to the Student Life office, but on the evenings of the Winter Dance and Festivus, many students could be seen hopping into Ubers or heading to the Ridges, opting out of the official College parties. Under the tent or in the Cro 1962 room, attendance was visibly sparse.

When asked about declining attendance, Jeannette Williams, Associate Director of Student Engagement and New Student Programs said she couldn't say whether attendance had declined because "we don't keep attendance records." She added, "SAC isn't really doing anything additional to get more people to go to these events as we already do a lot of promotion, and it's just a matter of students actually showing up."

Student representatives of SAC say there has been a disappointing response to recent events, and the SAC is working hard to address it in preparation for next year's events. Dexter Knight-Richard, Class of '27 SAC Rep, says, "I'm definitely not happy with the attendance this year," adding that "We might be trying to schedule events that are more relaxed and take place at different times, like on Fridays instead of Saturdays because more people have plans on Saturday

nights."

While there are no official attendance records to compare the success of these parties year to year, anecdotally, Fall Ball seems to have had the best turnout. At the Halloween dance a few weeks later, some students reported that it was a heavy Campus Safety presence at the entrance to the dance that drove many students to alternative events. The same was true for Festivus, with many attendees grabbing s'mores and hot chocolate before departing for alternative parties. Attendance at last weekend's Winter Garden dance suffered due to a competing themed party at Shaking Crab, located down the road from campus.

Upperclass students have also noticed a significant change in how events are attended this year compared to their freshman year. "There has been a puzzling shift in student engagement with campus events across all clubs and orgs, not just limited to SAC," states Taylor Austin, '24, chair of SAC. She added that "Conn is not alone in this, and that it reflects a much bigger trend across higher-ed institutions." During Austin's freshman year, most events were small, outdoors, or remote due to the spread of COVID. Big events like Fall Ball, Festivus, and Floralia were still highly attended during her sophomore year. However, over the last two years, she's been unsure why there's been a drop in attendance.

If you want to ensure these events are successful and fun, you can always come to a SAC meeting and propose ideas, help plan, and voice your suggestions! •

Conn's Pilot Project – It Just Won't Lyft Off

LUKE CORLESS
CONTRIBUTOR

It is the service we all know and love: the Lyft pass. Conn has advertised these passes relentlessly since their introduction to the College in 2020. At first glance, they sound intriguing: a reputable company providing college students with four free rides a month to explore their city. If only it were that simple. The Lyft program allows each Conn student four monthly rides, each discounted by \$15. There are two different passes; one is available from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day of the week to Waterford and Groton, and the other is available on Sundays at the same times but to different locations in New London. The passes help make traveling around the College's neighborhood cheaper for students, but they have many flaws, leaving the program unsatisfactory in meeting student expectations.

The issues first arise with the program's pricing. Lyft rides fluctuate in price depending on the availability of drivers and traffic. The program only allows for a \$15 discount, which can assume the total cost of a ride at certain times, but during more on-peak Lyft hours, it might make no more than a dent. Because of this fluctuation, the discount can sometimes be insignificant, even for relatively short drives.

The problems don't end when you get a discounted ride because then you face choosing a destination. The passes have a list of specific locations where each ride can go. Some helpful options include nearby malls, the train station, and many religious centers. The concern is what isn't included: locations like pharmacies, museums, restaurants, and grocery stores. Identifying these desired locations could prove challenging from a technical perspective, requiring significant changes to the online system. However, having a limited selection restrains students' connection with the environment off campus. Having an exclusive number of options for students to travel to perpetuates a facade that there isn't anything going on in New London and the city isn't worth your time or money. With the list already limited, having different passes for different days of the week adds another frustrating wrinkle. The Sunday pass includes churches, the New London Mall, the Social Security Administration, and Ocean Beach. The question it leaves students with is, why only on Sunday? Why specifically the New London Mall on Sunday and no other day? Why the Beach? The Social

Security Administration is slightly more puzzling because, according to their hours of operation, they aren't open on Sundays. This location is relatively close to Walgreens and CVS, which slightly makes up for not having a direct stop at the pharmacies, but that means Lyft passes can only pick up prescriptions on Sundays. These inconsistencies make planning excursions and errands frustrating with a seemingly simple solution of creating a universal pass for all of New London, Waterford, and Groton.

The number of rides could also be seen as an issue. Four isn't quite enough, but the College has a solution. As per the Connecticut College website, "You can maximize the number of rides per month by sharing rides with friends." However, as with every step of the Lyft pass experience, this also has a caveat. The pass only works for 'standard rides,' meaning you can share it with friends, but only three friends—no more than that. Lyfts aren't the easiest to come by in this area of Connecticut, so planning a trip off campus with a medium to large group forces people to split up for a possibly long period, or money must be pitched in to pay for a larger car, again making the program pointless.

The Lyft system isn't a complete failure. It is the foundation for a project that could build a robust, beneficial relationship between New London, Connecticut College, and its students. However, with the school's policy against first-year students bringing their cars to campus and as parking has become further strained with the growing student body, the demand for an alternative to personal vehicles is rising. New London's public transportation is spotty and inconvenient, with most of the South Area Transit District (SEAT) bus system running buses once every one or two hours per route and often no weekend service. An easy-to-use service developing Conn's link with the City of New London would be desirable to all Conn students and is right within reach but a few oversights are holding it back. Making a certain number of rides within a radius or several townships free would solve the issue of inconsistent pricing. Expanding the operational area to that radius or the number of townships instead of specific destinations would further unite the College to its neighborhood, and changing the type of rides the passes pertain to would incentivize more students to go out more often and explore our community. •

What's Up With the Wi-Fi?

GRACE SCHMIDT
CONTRIBUTOR

It can strike at any time. Sometimes, you're doing homework; sometimes, you're just watching TikToks; but usually, it's when you're trying to be productive. Your website won't load. You can't scroll through social media to procrastinate. You go to YikYak to see if you're alone, and you're never alone. Eduroam is down again, and you can't get anything done. Last semester and in previous semesters, eduroam outages occurred once a month—maybe. However, this semester, it has become almost a daily battle. Nearly every day of the first week, the Wi-Fi went out for a significant period of time. On Monday, February 5, the Wi-Fi went out for most of the night.

Check YikYak when eduroam goes down, and you will find students unifying around one cause: something needs to be done about the Wi-Fi. On February 5, students made humorous statements such as "EDU NEEDS TO START ROAMING AGAIN" or "Weekly Wi-Fi outage [heart-eyes emoji]." Some students on the app called out the school's inability to provide working Wi-Fi, commenting, "Conn College (a higher education institution) has functional wifi challenge (Difficulty: Impossible)." Others referenced the College's tuition prices: "Question totally unrelated to the internet issue, how much does tuition cost again?" Unfortunately, The Hump has not commented on the situation, perhaps due to a lack of Wi-Fi.

Eduroam is not exclusive to Connecticut College. It is a Wi-Fi provider whose name is shorthand for "education roaming." According to its website, eduroam provides Wi-Fi in more than 100 countries. Connecticut College is not alone in its struggles with this network, either. My friend at NYU told me they also have issues with their Wi-Fi. However, the students have the means to access better networks around the city, where Conn students rely solely on eduroam.

The February 5 Wi-Fi outage frustrated students all over campus. With the Wi-Fi out most of the night, students had short windows to work on their home-

work. Even though most students have cellular data, it seems to not work for many on campus, and it can be a financial burden for those with limited cellular plans. Since the beginning of the semester, Information Services has sent a series of emails detailing ongoing maintenance for the Wi-Fi. On January 16, Information Services emailed students that eduroam was unavailable. On January 18, they sent another email for the same reason. On these days, most students were finishing their winter break, and the students on campus were not in class. Information Services sent another email on January 24 detailing the reasons behind the outages, pointing to a "failed upgrade." Information Services assured students that they were working on the issue but to expect outages due to maintenance. They also announced working with an outside consultant to remedy the issue. February 6's email from the College's Vice President for Information Services, Matt Gardzina, explained that the problem had not been resolved but that he had approved the purchase of new monitoring equipment.

Perhaps the issues with the Wi-Fi are connected to the school's admission issues. Starting in 2022, the College has admitted an excessive number of students. This has led to the creation of students living in former common rooms, forced doubles, triples, and quads, and frequent overcrowding in both of the campus dining halls. It would be unsurprising if these issues with over-admittance led to the Wi-Fi becoming overcrowded and shutting down, especially during peak activity hours when students do homework.

For me and many other students, the shutdown of eduroam is frustrating and a blow to productivity, especially since it goes down when students are working on homework. At a supposedly top school, the lack of adequate Wi-Fi is enraging and is one of many issues that come with admitting as many students as have been admitted in the past couple of years. I hope the Wi-Fi issues wrap up before the outages continue to impact students more than they already have. •

Conn Winter Sports Updates

KEVIN LIEUE
MANAGING EDITOR

While most college students enjoyed a prolonged winter break following the end of the first semester, a majority of student-athletes on Connecticut College's winter sports teams enjoyed shorter breaks full of training camps and competitions. Here is how each of the College's winter sports teams have performed so far.



Courtesy of Sean Elliot

Men's Basketball — Following a season in which the men's basketball team finished 14-11 and secured back-to-back appearances in the NESCAC playoffs for the first time since 2009, the Camels have built on last season's success. The team earned a spot in the NCAA Division III men's basketball regional rankings for the first time since 2001 and are currently 18-6, with only two losses in NESCAC competition. Center David Murray '24 has led the charge for the Camels, leading the team in points scored, rebounds, and blocks. Both Murray and RJ Casey '26 have won NESCAC player of the week honors this season. Guard Cam Schainfeld '25 and forward Ben Rice '24 have both played a large part in the team's success, starting all of the team's games so far this season. The Camels finished third in the NESCAC regular season standings and are primed to make a deep run in the NESCAC playoffs.

Women's Basketball — With the loss of six of the team's players from last season, the women's basketball team has found wins hard to come by this season. Despite close games against Hamilton and Middlebury, the Camels only won one game in the competitive NESCAC conference this season. Forward Rebecca Oberman-Levine '24 was a bright spot for the team, starting all 23 games and leading the team in minutes played, points scored, rebounds, and blocks. First years Mia Xeras '27 and Addi Hunter '27 both played key roles for the team, starting nearly all of the team's games and finishing second and third respectively in average points per game.



Courtesy of Sean Elliot

Men's Ice Hockey — After a disappointing season in which the men's hockey team won only two NESCAC games all season, the Camels have enjoyed a much improved season this year. Currently 7-9 in the NESCAC, the team has already enjoyed highlights such as winning the Codfish Bowl Tournament and handing #10 Trinity College their first loss of the season. Captain Sean Dynan '24 has enjoyed an outstanding season in goal and was named a semifinalist for the Joe Concannon Award recognizing the best American-born player in New England in D-II/III. Forward Quinn Kennedy '27 leads the team in points and assists, while a number of Camels have played in all of the team's games so far this season. The team faces a vital pair of games this weekend on the road against Colby and Bowdoin to determine NESCAC post-season placing.

Women's Ice Hockey — Coming off a season in which the women's hockey team made the quarterfinals of the NESCAC tournament, the Camels have had a difficult time securing NESCAC conference wins this season. With only two conference wins this season, the Camels currently sit at the bottom of the NESCAC

standings. However, the team still has a shot to make the NESCAC playoffs with a crucial double-header at home against Colby this weekend. Currently, Casey Chesner '26 leads the team in goals scored and total points, while Alana Brum '26 leads the team in assists.

Men's Squash — The men's squash team recently wrapped up regular season play with a 6-11 record. The Camels enjoyed strong wins over the University of California, Haverford, and Fordham this season. The team led by Alex Lorenzo-Cruz '24, Sam Lovejoy '24, and Ryan Mach '24 matched their regular season win total from last season. With regular season play finished, the Camels look to build off their success at the CSA national championships.

Women's Squash — After a 6-12 finish last season, the women's squash team matched their win total with a 6-8 regular season record this season. The Camels enjoyed large victories against Vassar, Haverford, and Brown this season. The team also enjoyed their first NESCAC win since 2020, defeating Hamilton on the road. Like the men's team, the Camels now shift their focus to the CSA national championships.

Men's Swim and Dive — Following a short training camp in Naples, Fla., the #23 men's swim and dive team enjoyed a strong regular season and finished with an 8-2 record. Led by captains Andrew Bartolomucci '24, Matthew Laclef '24, and Will Nash '24, the team picked up memorable wins against Colby, Middlebury, and NCAA Division I Holy Cross. The team enjoyed strong performances from returning All-American swimmer Justin Finkel '25, who broke numerous pool records, and Evan Lyons '27, who was honored as NESCAC Performer of the Week. With the completion of the regular season, the Camels will hope to better last season's fifth place finish at the upcoming NESCAC Championships.

Women's Swim and Dive — After a sunshine filled training camp in Florida, the women's swim and dive team improved on their regular season record from last season and finished 4-5. With the addition of 14 first-year athletes, the Camels notched strong NESCAC wins against Trinity and Wesleyan. The team captained by Sarah Franco '24 and Marie-Eve Hebert '24 will now look to improve on their ninth place finish last season at the NESCAC Championships.



Courtesy of Sean Elliot

Men's Indoor Track and Field — Following a program-best sixth place finish at the indoor New England Division III Championships last year, the men's indoor track and field team looks to improve upon last year's success. Captain Jayson Firmin '25 currently leads the team in points scored and is followed closely by captain Ethan Bush '24 and sprinter Dylan Haime '26. Many individual athletes have already secured time qualifiers for the upcoming New England championships and hurdler Errol Apostolopoulos '27 was able to break a school record in the 60m hurdles.

Women's Indoor Track and Field — After a strong fall cross-country season in which the Camels qualified as a team for the NCAA DIII National Championships for the first time in program history, the women's indoor track and field team has only built on program success. Returning NCAA Nationals qualifier Emma Wheeler '24 currently leads the team in points scored and set school records in the pentathlon and 60m hurdles. Alexa Estes '26 set school records in the 600m and 1000m events and is currently 6th across DIII in the 800m. Estes, Grace McDonough '26, Lilla Kate Tucker '27, and Abby Fernald '26 set the school record in the DMR, while Estes, McDonough, Fernald, and Edin Sisson '24 set the school record in the 4x800m. The Camels will hope to better last season's tenth place finish at the indoor New England Division III Championships. •

How Does Not Having a Football Team Affect Conn's Culture?

EVAN YOUNG
SPORTS EDITOR

Football, though not considered America's Pastime (a title historically held by baseball), is the most watched sport in the country. It is also considered to be a massive part of college culture, as college football attracts nearly as much viewership and attendance as the NFL, as well as being a source of school pride. With that being said, Connecticut College is the only one of the 11 schools in the NESCAC to not have its own varsity football team. We reached out to the Dean of Admission and Financial Aid Andy Strickler who works closely with Athletics, for his take on the matter. "Football is an interesting element to the Conn experience, or I should say, the lack of football is." Says Dean Strickler. "While I am a huge football fan—go Eagles—I am a huge fan of not having football at Conn."

One reason that Dean Strickler offers is that with Conn not on the table for the sport, the rest of the NESCAC has an even ten teams to put together competitions with. "The NESCAC loves the fact that we do not have football...us not having it means there are only ten schools playing, which makes things really easy on the conference to schedule."

He also argues that the cost for facilities isn't nearly as important as other priorities that the school has in mind. "We do not have a facility that would really be suitable for football and I think we have a ton of higher, more pressing, needs to address at the College, versus building some kind of football field." The price tag associated with not only putting together the proper facilities, but also the maintenance of a college team itself could reach into the millions, so this is a fairly solid point. Considering the diverse demands from the student body for many changes from better dorms, better food, and more accessibility, the



Courtesy of Robbie Lynch '24

prioritization of resources becomes a valid and pragmatic consideration.

Dean Strickler brings a unique perspective to the discussion, drawing on his extensive experience with football programs at previous institutions. Despite his personal affinity for the sport, he appreciates the change of pace at Conn, highlighting the breathing room that it provides for other facets of its student experience. He notes, "I like the fact that the absence of football here gives a ton of oxygen to the other things that we do here. Whether that is other athletics, the arts, or other student activities, the lack of football creates the time and space to highlight our other elements of the student experience."

With a rich lineup of athletes, artists, and engaged students, the college thrives on the diversity of what it has to offer. The arts, in particular, benefit from the absence of football, as the spotlight shines on theater productions, art exhibitions, and musical performances—without competing for attention with a football season.

Moreover, the absence of football does not diminish the Camel spirit at Conn; rather, it redirects that energy towards other athletic endeavors. Conn boasts successful athletics programs from soccer to lacrosse to track and field, each contributing to a culture of pride and competition. Students rally behind Conn's teams, creating a spirited atmosphere that unites the community. This diversified approach to athletics allows Conn to celebrate achievements across its various programs, fostering a well-rounded and inclusive sense of community.

"I should summarize by saying that I am a huge football fan, but love that we do not have it at Conn for the particular elements it adds and highlights in our community." •

Camel of the Edition: Alexa Estes '26

KEVIN LIEUE
MANAGING EDITOR

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

Alexa Estes '26 recently broke school records in the 600m, 1000m, and as a member of the 4x800 relay. The middle-distance runner hailing from Virginia Beach, Va. has built on her success from her fall cross-country season, where she was part of the women's cross-country team which competed at the NCAA DIII Cross-Country National Championships for the first time as a team in program history. Estes has already qualified for the postseason DIII New England's meet in four events and currently holds the fifth fastest 800m time among all NCAA DIII women. The College Voice caught up with Estes to learn how she went from getting cut from her middle school track team to getting recruited to run in college, how she mentally prepares herself for races, and her goals for the rest of the indoor and outdoor track seasons.

Could you please introduce yourself?

I'm Alexa Estes, an art history major and classics minor. I use she/her/hers pronouns. Other than track and cross-country, I'm part of Residential Life and the president of the Women's Network [club].

Talk me through your journey in sports?

I didn't play any sports up to high school. I tried out for the track team in middle school and I didn't make it [because] they cut me in the first round of cuts. I tried out [for the track team] in high school and they didn't cut [anyone] in high school, so they kept everyone and I was able to make the team. I started out as a sprinter. So I did the 100m, 200m, and jumping in the high jump, long jump, and triple. I wasn't very good at it so I decided to give cross-country a try. After my first season

of doing cross-country and going back to sprinting, the improvement was significant enough that I thought maybe if I keep at it that this was something I could do in college. As progress happened throughout the four years, it became more of a reality.

When and why did you decide to focus on running?

I've never been very coordinated so I figured running would be simplest and I've always liked running. For example, in elementary school, we did a final mile [every year] to raise money for Operation Smile for people with cleft lips that I really loved. We would run miles after school and one day in March we would meet together to do one mile race to raise money. I'd always wanted to be a part of a team, which is why I wanted to try out for the track team. When COVID hit sophomore year in March I was faced with the decision to quit the team or to keep running, and I decided I would keep running just to see what would happen. As I was coaching myself during the pandemic, I started to fall in love with the sport. I enjoyed staying consistent and seeing consistent improvement. I loved setting a goal, working for it, and accomplishing it. During the pandemic it gave me something to do and focus on. It helped foster community [for myself] because I could get to see people outside.

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

My recruitment process was kind of normal. I went through an organization, NCSA, where you make an account and emailed coaches through the account. I emailed basically any school I could think of from as crazy as Oregon to local schools around my house. I found out about Conn when [Coach] Ned emailed me my senior year. I really wanted to leave Virginia super bad so going to Connecticut was super exciting because it was not Virginia. I thought the Camel mascot was

Article continued on page 10.

Camel of the Edition: Alexa Estes '26

Article continued from page 9.

[in Connecticut] must have a good sense of humor. I found the [team's] womenofthedesert account [on Instagram] and they all seemed to get along so well, I so badly wanted to be a part of that.

What sort of differences did you notice between college and high school running?

My high school coach was very different from [Coach] Ned. Practices were much more intense in high school. For example, when we did 400m repeats, everything was always all out. Coming to Conn and having an easy run was a new thing that I had to get used to. In high school, all the girls were pitted against each other every day versus here we all work together in a different way than I was used to but in a good way. It was definitely a healthy transition to here.

How did your first college year go last year?

I was super excited for it because I didn't set any expectations. Even for cross-country, as long as I finish a 6k, I [would be] super excited about it, because I had never run a 6k before. I was not expecting to have the success I had last year, everything was just such a shock. Racing at Pre-Nationals and regionals in cross-country, getting to be on the DMR relay, and trying to qualify for nationals was so unexpected. Setting the school record in outdoor [track] was so far out of my hopes and dreams.

How do you prepare yourself for the 800m and other difficult events knowing it's going to hurt?

I visualize every race. I start thinking about [the race] roughly a week before, and as I get closer I start focusing more on it. The day before the meet, I'll mentally walk myself through every lap of the 800 and try to find a song that is around the same length as the time I'll want to be racing. I try to split up the times for each lap. So for example, for the 1k I prepared myself by thinking if I go out at this time for the first lap, here's how I'll adjust. I'll try to give myself different scenarios so if anything happens during the race, I've already done it mentally so I'm mentally prepared for it. I also gaslight myself into thinking the pain of the 800 is the best part of it so when it starts to hurt I'm like this is what I want, this is the fun part.

What songs have you used recently to mentally walk you through races?

Taylor Swift is my go to. Her songs tend to be on the longer side but I'll repeat [my] process when it hits the time. For example, last week's song was Ready for It. But if I just need something with a really good beat I'll just do [a song from] Imagine Dragons.

What did you do during this past summer to improve and prepare for the year ahead?

I really tried to work on my consistency because the summer before the freshman year of college I tried to be consistent but everything was so new [training-wise] it got overwhelming for me at times. But this [past summer], I knew [the training] and how [Coach] Ned worked and what his [training] process is. So this summer I tried to do one thing each day to get better. For example, I started doing mobility exercises and speed drills to work on my form and work on my speed. For example, I would do a skips and b skips or throw in some 200s at the end just to get some speed in. I also worked on adjusting the training, because the heat in Virginia is different. So being open-minded to doing more cross-training than I would have before.

Were you satisfied with your fall cross-country season?

Yeah, there's definitely a lot I look back on now and feel like there is work I could do [to improve]. But it was still an incredible season and I don't have anything to complain about. Running at nationals for the first time as a team was really cool. But really, getting to work with such fast girls was awesome. The best part of cross-country was when there were 12 of us all in the same pace groups all doing workouts together. I would look forward to workouts knowing that I got to do the workouts with them because my biggest

goal for cross-country was just to be with them during workouts. I never took that for granted, and qualifying for nationals at regionals with them was so cool.

You recently broke school records in the 600m and 1K, and were a part of the 4x800m record breaking team, did you expect to break so many records this early in the indoor track season?

I started thinking about the records and the possibility of breaking them in the summer. It gave me something to think about during long runs. It started to become more of a reality in workouts [in the fall] when I was hitting splits that I wasn't expecting to hit. The 600m [record] I wasn't really expecting to hit. I was aiming for it during the race but I knew it was a shot in the dark. The 1k [record] I was expecting to break going into the season, but I wasn't expecting to run the time I did at all.

How have you improved your times over the past year and a half in college compared to high school?

I think [it's] mindset and the people I'm surrounded by. Like my teammates are so supportive and so fast that even just to keep up with them means I have to be on my A game all the time. I also think being more confident with my abilities has helped a lot. Like even when things get tough in a workout or race, I know that I'm strong enough to finish it versus in high school I would be in a workout questioning if I could finish a rep.



Photo Courtesy of William Vazquez

The College's women's middle-distance event group has seen a large improvement in times over the past year and a half with yourself and so many of your teammates all securing qualifications for post-season meets. Do you know why the team has been so successful recently?

I think it's just because they're so dedicated and they seem to have so much fun. At the core of it, everyone loves the sport and that's really what matters the most. Like today during the workout people were laughing and joking and we all supported each other. I think that's why we're all so successful. We have a thing where we say happy runner fast runner, but not every day is going to be a happy day, like some days are just all about the grind. But, most of the time we're just happy to be out there having fun and we're lucky enough to have everything work out for us and to be running some fast times right now.

What are your goals for the rest of the indoor season?

I would love to hit the 800 record this season, that record scares me the most which is why I want to go for it the most. My biggest goal of the season would be to make it to nationals, especially because it's in my hometown and it's at the track I used to race at in high school. I really think it would be a really important full circle moment to be able to go back and have my high school team be there supporting.

What are your hopes for the outdoor track season ahead?

I would like to PR in 1500m and get the record in the 800m. I also think we can better our 4x800 time and to qualify for nationals outdoors would be really cool too. I really love outdoor [track] because it feels like field day to me. Everytime we're at an outdoor meet it is just so much fun. Obviously, we're there to put in the work and show off our dedication and hard work but it's also just so much fun to be outdoors and doing what you love to do.

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

A “Beyond Eclectic” Night at the Cabaret

CLAIRE HLOTYAK
OPINIONS EDITOR

On a Friday evening in a sold-out Palmer Auditorium, the last thing I expected to hear was a story about Alan Cumming and Sir Ian McKellen lounging together on a nude beach. Throughout the evening of *Och and Oy! A Considered Cabaret*, I came to expect the unexpected. A game of celebrity roulette, a brief history of the 2014 Scottish Referendum, and a heartfelt love ballad about a beautiful latte-making barista all made for a delightfully comedic and uplifting evening. Friday’s performance, starring Alan Cumming and Ari Shapiro, was their first of the year, although the two have been touring this show since its premiere in 2019.

Cumming is a longtime performer known for his time on *The Good Wife* and Tony award-winning role as Emcee on the Broadway musical *Cabaret*. He has also written six books, won a BAFTA, and is the co-owner of a cabaret club in New York City called Club Cumming. The two stars actually met in what they referred to as the original Club Cumming, which was just Cumming’s dressing room that he had retrofitted to include a full bar and neon sign. In an attempt to define his illustrious career, Cumming was described – much to his and his co-stars’ amusement – as “beyond eclectic” during the Q&A hosted before the show.

Not to be outdone is his award-winning partner in crime, Ari Shapiro. Shapiro is a journalist and longtime host of NPR’s *All Things Considered*. He is the author of a New York Times bestselling memoir. He has covered wars, presidencies, and other major global events, yet still finds the time to sing with the band *Pink Martini*. His rendition of “Total Eclipse of the Heart” had the crowd waving their hands and left me wondering how many other serious reporters secretly possess an angelic voice.

You may ask yourself why a Broadway star teamed up with an NPR anchor to host a whimsical evening of song and dance in matching tuxedos. You’re not alone, as I was asking the same question. Long after the houselights had come on and the two stars were off to their next show in Indiana, I found myself contemplating what made this performance so unexpected yet so special. Maybe it was the insight into Alan Cummings’s time as a 16-year-old horoscope writer. Maybe it was Ari Shapiro’s heartfelt recitation of a Scottish poem titled “The Morning After” that claims “there’s nothing broken that’s not repairable.” Whatever it was, they had the audience laughing, singing, and, eventually, on their feet in a standing ovation.

Och & Oy! is a masterclass in intertwining comedy with personal, often emotional, stories. Nowhere was this delightful contrast more apparent than when Alan Cummings’s story of crowd surfing in a monkey suit in Edinburgh somehow beautifully segued to how the Marriage Equality Act impacted both their lives. The performance was threaded with their experiences of being a part of the LGBTQ+ community, with Cumming describing the show as “queer joy” and a “form of protest.” Although the two grew up in vastly different places – Cumming hails from Scotland, and Shapiro grew up in Portland, Oregon – their journeys are similar in that they have both turned to art and media to express their identities and leave their own personal mark on the world. An overarching theme of this show is the role art and creativity play in expanding people’s worldviews. In fact, when asked about their opinions on performing all over the country, Cum-

ming said of the varying audiences that “their minds are going to be opened a little bit, and the world will be a better place” after they see the show.

Near the latter half of the performance, the suit jackets came off, revealing Cumming, Shapiro, and their pianist in sleeveless white button-downs, echoing a comment made earlier by Cumming that “life is the same show with different costumes.” I would describe *Och & Oy!* as a comedy-talk show interwoven with bursts of energy and color. Cumming and Shapiro’s relaxed demeanors and playful banter transformed the evening into what felt like a comfortable and joyful conversation with a close friend.

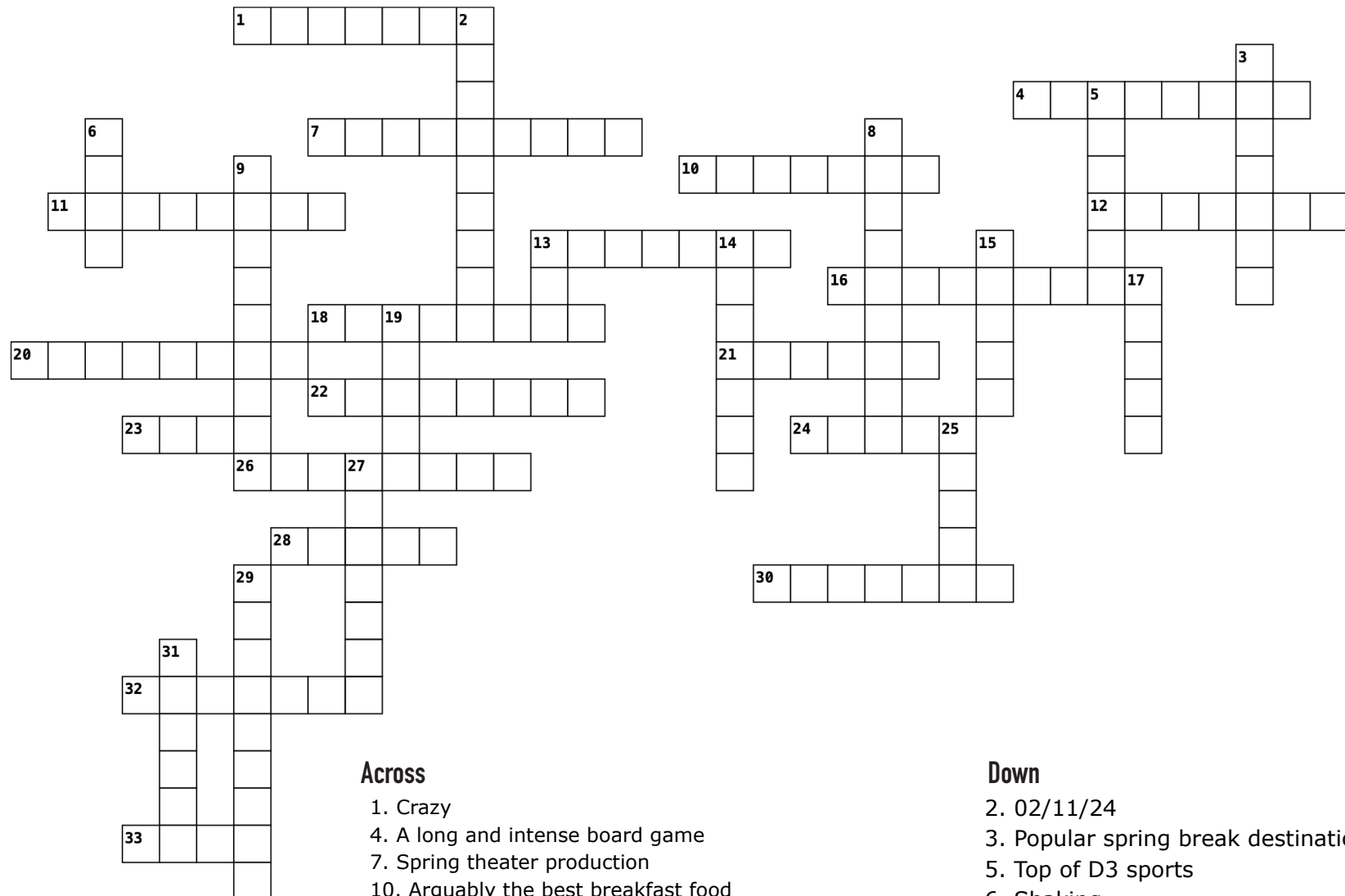
The local community truly showed up for this performance, creating a cheerful atmosphere inside the auditorium. The Athey Center for Performance and Research at Palmer Auditorium finished construction in 2022 and has transformed into a center for community gatherings. Hopefully, we will continue to see bonds between the New London community and the College strengthened through a shared love of performance.

This is a show that sticks with you. Almost a week later, I continued to think about how the two performers blended their different backgrounds and experiences to create something truly unique. *Och & Oy!* is a love letter to individuality, practically shouting from the rooftops that you shouldn’t be afraid to break free from the role you think you should play. Embrace being “beyond eclectic.” You never know where it may take you. •



Photo Courtesy of Connecticut College Arts Programming

Crossword



Across

1. Crazy
4. A long and intense board game
7. Spring theater production
10. Arguably the best breakfast food
11. Lower-level
12. Popular energy drink
13. This class fulfills a language requirement
16. This class typically has two midterms
18. Miss Peregrine
20. Ideally every professor would allow this in class
21. Frequented by college students
22. Everyone's favorite camel
23. You should register to do this when you are 18
24. Watering hole
26. College Students, Seniors, and Veterans
28. Sunday, Haunted House, Spiders
30. Cats & Dogs
32. Noah Kahan
33. "Your passes have been reloaded"

Down

2. 02/11/24
3. Popular spring break destination
5. Top of D3 sports
6. Shaking
8. Sneakers that light up
9. Baffled
13. Meets every thursday night
14. Music
15. Of inquiry
17. Conn gets this instead of snow
19. Campus security
25. Quietest on the third floor
27. Academic violation
29. Holleran Center for ____ Action
31. Recall