

2-2011

## OVCS Newsletter February 2011

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The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

# COMMUNITY LEARNING

## CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

### OVCS NEWSLETTER

February 2011

#### LINCC Photography Contest

by Breanne Timura '12



**L**INCC (Linking New London and Connecticut College Communities) was created by Holleran Center for Public Policy and Community Action scholar Jesse Meadow '08 in 2007. As part of the club's mission to strengthen the bond between the college and city, LINCC has held

annual photography contests to allow students to capture New London and Connecticut College's relationship through the lens of a camera.

To continue the tradition, this year's photography contest was held in conjunction with Connecticut College's Centennial celebrations in

the Provenance Center. Entitled "CONNECTIONS: Connecticut College & New London," the exhibit features student entries, faculty submissions, works by Professor Ted Hendrickson, and a historical collection from the College's Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives.

The evening of Saturday, January 29th proved to be busy for downtown New London. Connecticut College students and New London residents came together to view the opening night of CONNECTIONS, as well as "Take the Stage," a 12 hour performing arts talent showcase at the Garde Art Theater,

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#### "Escaping the "Ivory Tower" Syndrome: Academics as Actors of Social Change"

by Elizabeth Barnett '12

"But Liz, why do you want to be stuck up high in an Ivory Tower your entire life; away from the problems that you care so much about?!" is the common, yet still irritating response I receive when I tell family and friends about my future career goal of becoming an educator in higher education. Why is it that many people believe that academics serve no important role as initiators and influencers in positive social, political, and cultural

change? Possibly, they have yet to be exposed to the educators and their scholarship that effectively work to inspire and bring about change, and consequently have no respect for such work.

An embodiment of social activism through scholarly engagement is the current Afro-Mexican social justice movement. As the focus of my Senior Honors Thesis, Afro-Mexicans represent one of the most marginalized and

neglected ethnic and racial groups throughout Mexico. This is partly because Mexican national discourse on race relegates blackness into something foreign and separate from what it means to be Mexican, and subscribes to racial ideologies of white superiority and black inferiority. Due to the stigma of slavery and the belief in the inferiority of African slaves, the African presence



and contributions to Mexican national identity were left out of the national identity discourse. The popularly held belief that there are no blacks in Mexico allows for obvious anti-black racism to persist unquestioned. At the forefront of the movement to gain Afro-Mexicans'

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## LINCC Photography Contest (cont'd)

and “XXXII Salon des Independants Art Festival” at the Hygienic, with artwork from hundreds of community members – the only guidelines being “one piece per artist: no judge, no jury, no fees, no censorship.” Those who attended

the opening night of CONNECTIONS were invited to vote for their favorite student submission. Grace Griffin '14 won first place, and Andrew Nathanson '13 placed second and third. In addition to voting, guests listened to music

by local band Matzah Cigar and enjoyed hors d'oeuvres from downtown restaurants.

The exhibit will be on display through March 1st. For more information about the Provenance Center, viewing hours, and

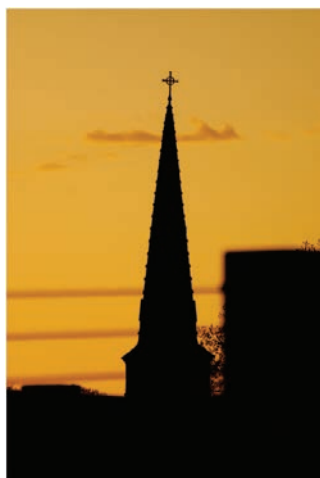
upcoming special events, please continue reading.

**Provenance Center**  
**165 State Street, New**  
**London**  
**860-405-5887**

**Exhibit hours:**  
 Thursdays 3:00 - 6:00 p.m.  
 Fridays noon - 3:00 p.m.



*First Place - photo by  
 Grace Griffin '14*



*Second Place - photo by  
 Andrew Nathanson '13*



*Third Place - photo by  
 Andrew Nathanson '13*

## Relay for Life

The third annual Relay for Life will be taking place at Connecticut College on April 15th-



16th. Relay for Life is the signature fundraising event of the American Cancer Society and provides a chance for the college community to come together in the fight against cancer. Groups of students, faculty and staff form teams to participate in the overnight event,

which takes place on the college green and features food, games, prizes, and performances, as well as chances to honor the survivors in our community and to remember those we have lost. In the past two years, we have had over 400 participants annually

and raised over \$100,000 in total for the American Cancer Society. Learn more and sign up at [www.relayforlife.org/conncoll](http://www.relayforlife.org/conncoll) to help create a world with more birthdays. Please feel free to contact the planning committee with any questions: [relay4life@conncoll.edu](mailto:relay4life@conncoll.edu).

## AmeriCorps\*VISTA

**Potential Opportunities through Connecticut College OVCS:**

- o 5 summer positions
- o 2 full time positions

For more information, contact OVCS at extension 2458 or stop by the office in Crozier-Williams room 217.



# “Escaping the “Ivory Tower” Syndrome: Academics as Actors of Social Change” (cont’d)

special recognition and to combat this racism and achieve social and political equity are scholars such as Bobby Vaughn, who use scholarship as a tactic for change. The Afro-Mexican social movement in Mexico is founded and run by academics, including Vaughn, who, through research and teaching, are working towards changing the perceptions and understandings that Mexicans have towards blacks. Vaughn’s activism is not confined to his scholarship. He is an active leader in organizations such as Mexico Negro, which fights for Afro-Mexicans’ political, cultural, and economic gains. Historical scholarship is a major strategy of the organizations to increase recognition of the history and conditions of Afro-Mexicans. My thesis is inspired by such scholarship and discusses how Afro-Mexicans’ blackness influences and

shapes their migratory experience, proving that African descendants from Mexico deserve their own scholarly attention separate from other groups in Mexico. The more that is written and taught about Afro-Mexicans, the less likely it is that this group will continue to be forgotten about and neglected.

As a member of the SATA group of Connecticut College students who traveled to Oaxaca this past fall, I continued to be exposed to scholarship that stimulates change. I believe it is safe to speak for all when I say that our time spent with Dr. Tom Hanson in Chiapas, Mexico was one of the most impacting and inspiring parts of our semester. Why was this? For starters, Dr. Hanson’s dedication to social justice through his activity in many social justice movements, as well as his position as

president and founder of the Mexico Solidarity Network, was inspirational. However, most importantly was the non-forceful manner in which Dr. Hanson got every member of the group to rethink, re-evaluate, and understand the consequences of the neo-liberal society we subscribe to. As an educator, he achieved this effect through the use of scholarship that was not only engaging, but presented history in a way that challenged us to rethink a system that is inherently unjust and built on a system of oppression and exploitation. As a result of Dr. Hanson’s discussions, there are 12 less individuals who will be complacent actors in this unjust system.

Although I am sure we have all daydreamed, doodled, and suffered through our fair share of unnecessarily dull classes that start off with something to the effect

of, “in 1492 Columbus reached the New World...” History and academia, as a whole, possess a powerful and useful force for those wishing to inspire and initiate change. Following in the footsteps of scholars and educators such as Bobby Vaughn and Tom Hanson, I urge all professors to reevaluate what meaningful and provoking conclusions they wish for their students and audiences to learn and take away from their classes and scholarship. Only with this outcome in mind can there be a true escape from the “ivory tower” syndrome; a condition that isolates the scholar from the real world.



*Pictured above are the members of the SATA Oaxaca fall 2010 program.*

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## Honor New London Day

**Please join in the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the 1911 fundraiser that brought Connecticut College to New London.**

**Date:** Tuesday, March 1, 2011

**Location:** Harris Building Atrium  
165 State Street  
New London, CT 06320

**Time:** 5:00-6:30 PM – hors d’oeuvres, a cappella music and a Centennial photo exhibit  
5:30 PM – short speaking program

**Shuttle:** 3:30-7:00 PM - from Cro to downtown and back to campus





# Connecticut College OVCS Mentor Programs and Project Kids, Books, & Athletics

Connecticut College OVCS Mentor Programs and Kids, Books, & Athletics (KBA) promote academic excellence, physical fitness, overcoming challenges, learning new

skills and having a lot of fun. The programs, collaborations with New London Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School, meet Monday through Thursday and OVCS collaborates with

the Athletic Center to integrate the resources of the Athletic Center and Dayton Arena.

Connecticut College students join Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School

students in learning how to ice skate at the College's Dayton Arena and how to scale the rock wall in the Athletic Center.



*A Connecticut College student learning to skate with Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School student in the KBA program*



*College student mentors and middle school mentees from the REACH mentor program pose following an afternoon of skating at Dayton Arena*



*Two SISTER mentees climb the rock wall in the college's Athletic Center*



*Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School students skating in a Conga line during a KBA session*

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