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THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1977

Don't Militarize Our Schools

MAX WHISNANT
CONTRIBUTOR

After the tragic Valentine's Day shooting in Parkland, Florida, President Donald Trump vowed to make our country and schools safer. He began by ordering Attorney General Jeff Sessions to look into a ban on bump stocks, a device used in last year's Las Vegas shooting that allows a non-automatic weapon to simulate the abilities of a fully automatic firearm. Trump then suggested that training teachers in the use of firearms would allow our schools to have an effective first line of defense. Under this plan, teachers would volunteer for specialized training in the use of basic firearms; they would receive a marginal bonus for their

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Left, above: student organizers of the walkout. Photos courtesy of Max Amar-Olkus.

A Generation Defined by Mass Shootings

LAUREN BARETTA
OPINIONS EDITOR

While reading the *New York Times* a couple weeks back, my self-identity received a serious blow. I was born on October 6, 1996; according to many parameters, I am not a millennial. In fact, most of us attending Connecticut College right now are not millennials.

Those of us 22 and younger have been intermittently deemed "Generation Z," "the iGeneration" or "iGen" as coined by psychologist Jean Twenge, and the "Delta Generation," which refers to the mathematical symbol for

change. Nonetheless, it appears that no standard generational title has been chosen for my age group. Though being named after the corporate giant Apple is personally revolting to me, it is not as terrifying as being named after a particularly relevant brand of tragedy: mass shootings. But after its introduction in a Feb. 16 *New York Times* article, the nightmarish moniker of "the mass shooting generation" is starting to catch on.

One widespread definition of what makes a millennial a millennial, is the traumatic impact

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Walking Out: It's About Time

DANIEL KRAMER
CONTRIBUTOR

To my own bemusement, the presence of Connecticut Second District Representative Joe Courtney did not bring an air of power to the March 1 "Walkout for Our Lives." The event's strength came in numbers and from students who invoked various mantras and pleas for change. The students who planned the walk out distributed information on gun violence and scripts that participants could use to call their representatives, encouraging attendees to continue their activism beyond the day's event.

Courtney's remarks were long-winded. He spoke for seven minutes, a period of time long

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Representative Joe Courtney at the walkout. Photo courtesy of James Murray.

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ARTS

Brooke Sponzo considers *Spring Awakening's* current relevancy on page 14.

TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2018

Consumed by Mass Shootings

With each issue of *The College Voice*, I try to follow the writers' leads to figure out what matters most, moment to moment, for the Connecticut College community. This time, as our cover page indicates, the student body's priority was clear: mass shootings. Where last issue, it seemed like everyone wanted to talk about the Olympics, we've since moved on to a more dire topic.

All that isn't to say that this issue is all about mass shootings—it's not. We have an update on Dr. Andrea Baldwin's case and the retention of faculty of color, a report on Anthony Fantano's visit and surrounding controversy, and a profile on Fire Marshal Vernon Skau, which I hope sheds some light on the newly-announced walk-throughs. So many pieces in this issue are deserving of a front-page spot, and although usually I cherry pick for the best stuff and vary the topics you see first, this issue is different.

The three cover stories aren't even the only place you'll find mentions of mass shootings: the subject shows up in the *Spring Awakening* review, too, and as anyone else who saw the show will probably remember, the show proves relevant to the topic. As Michael Shulman writes in the *New Yorker*, "the unregulated weapon, in [*Spring Awakening*], isn't guns but sex." Due to lack of meaningful attention, it kills.

Gun violence is a pressing issue, but not an isolated one, and we have to remember that. I have almost no reservations about foregrounding mass shootings in this issue, because almost everyone at Connecticut College seems to agree on its deep, horrifying importance. But that's actually the one cause I have for reluctance.

While you can find some sort of ideological variety anywhere, here, the mass shooting issue is deeply uncontroversial. As an activist cause, it almost seems like low-hanging fruit. You don't need much empathy to recognize gun violence as pressing and dangerous: in the event of a mass shooting, we would all be at risk. The only people who think they wouldn't be seem to believe their guns will effectively counter those of attackers, but the rest of us seem to recognize our helplessness.

At the "Walkout for Our Lives," I thought that while there certainly could've been more people present, the crowd was impressive for a demonstration at Connecticut College. It made me wonder if the whole group would've turned out in support of Black Lives Matter, or immigration reform, or trans rights. I have to say that I doubt I would've seen as many faces if the cause were dedicated to an identity-driven group more specific than "humanity."

Despite my skepticism, student activism is a powerful tool on this campus, as on many others. Most seniors and staff members will remember that around this time three years ago, Conn was a hotbed for racism and activism alike. At the time I was a first-year staff writer for the *Voice*, and I remember watching then-editor in chief Ayla and managing editor Dana scramble to fit all the letters to the editor and public statements into these pages, opening the newspaper up like a blank canvas for public debate. I remember the campus as tense, mournful, and fearsome. And I remember that after all the Facebook posts, the vandalism, and the hatred—after all the demonstrations, the open fora, and the petitions—the students got the administration to instate a full-time Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion. The Spring of 2015 eventually got us John McKnight.

Whatever you think of DIEI—the job the office is doing, the people who work in it, etc.—its existence is living proof of the power of student activism. So yes, it's good that we're protesting national issues that affect everyone. But remember that this isn't Florida: this state didn't just pass a "school marshal" program to fund the arming of teachers, and legislation here tends to move in a roughly progressive direction. That doesn't mean it's enough, or that we shouldn't fight for those who live or lived far away. But it does mean that sometimes, we need to look carefully inward, to see what we can change right here.

-Maia

THE COLLEGE VOICE

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Community Bulletin

CT Students for a Dream to Hold Organizing Event in Hood

At “DREAM into Action: Mobilizing for Immigrant Rights,” representatives from statewide activist organization Connecticut Students for a Dream (C4D) will discuss how the Connecticut College community can get involved in immigration reform work. The event will take place in Hood Dining Room on Thursday, March 8 from 5-7 p.m.

International Women’s Day Promises Poetry & Panels

International Women’s Day is Thursday, March 8. At Conn, the Language Fellows will mark the day with International Poetry Night from 7-9 p.m. in Coffee Grounds, and the Womxn’s Center will hold a “Womxn of Conn” panel discussion in the Chu Room from 8-9:30 p.m.

Nor’Easter Causes Power Failures, Local Damage

A nor’easter brought heavy rains and strong winds to the East Coast on Friday, March 2. Some stoplights on Mohegan Ave. temporarily ceased functioning, and College properties from the Athletic Center through the River Ridge apartments lost power, spurring the College to issue and promptly rescind an evacuation order for students living across Route 32.

Sports Spotlight

By GEORGE GROTHEER

Featured Team: Women’s Swimming

NESCAC Championships @ Williams: 3rd/11 teams
NESCAC Invite at Bowdoin: Non-scoring

Seniors, with event:

Katie Edwards, Breast
Emma Gawronski, Free
Juliette Lee, Free
Charlotte Nixon, Breast
Sarah Steingold, IM
Victoria Weinstock, Fly

Coaching staff:

Marc Benvenuti, Head Coach
Dominic Ziolek, Assistant Coach

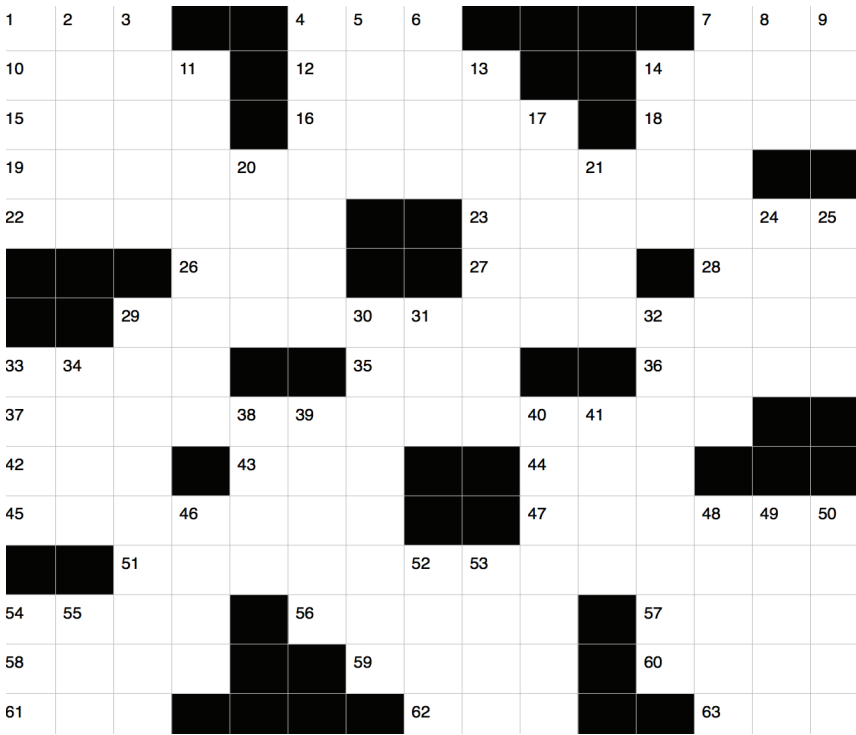
“Our team enjoyed a comfortable third-place finish at NESCAC championships for the second year in a row. Last year, our third-place finish made history, but our growing work ethic and team cohesiveness solidified our stance as major players in one of the fastest D3 women’s swimming conferences. This season reinforced my confidence that this team will only continue to get better.”
-Katie Edwards ’18

Upcoming event:

NCAA Championships @ Indianapolis, IN, March 21-24

The College Crossword

By ELEANOR KNAUSS



ACROSS:

- 1. Sounds made during meditation
- 4. Fucc_____
- 7. Bizarre
- 10. Palindromic time
- 12. Site “for dummies”

DOWN:

- 14. Enthusiastic
- 15. Second smallest Great Lake
- 16. On a scale of one _____
- 18. Behind
- 19. Game
- 22. O’Hara of RuPaul’s Drag Race

- 23. DACA recipient, colloquially
- 26. T-_____
- 27. Western PS3 game
- 28. MLA alternative
- 29. Game
- 33. Hamilton’s home, in a wallet
- 35. Paris based environmental org.
- 36. Cold shoulders
- 37. Game
- 42. Even, to Miguel
- 43. Like memory loss before retiring, abbr.
- 44. Show starring the Avatar, abbr.
- 45. Get back together
- 47. _____ Are Few: book of poetry
- 51. Game
- 54. Mine, to Timothée
- 56. Spider monkey
- 57. 365 days
- 58. DNA album
- 59. Palm starch
- 60. PC port
- 61. Wonder
- 62. Makeshift bed
- 63. Beverage served hot or iced
- 6. Smidgen
- 7. Conquer
- 8. Day in Tijuana
- 9. High energy arcade game, abbr.
- 11. Scuba material
- 13. Erotic nighttime fantasy
- 14. Square footage
- 17. Geeks
- 20. Emu cousin
- 21. Quite
- 24. Fencing foil
- 25. L.A. football team
- 29. Nothing beats _____ for the holidays
- 30. Freshwater fish
- 31. Casual greeting, e.g.
- 32. Infirmarys
- 33. “He loved her from _____”
- 34. Factual
- 38. 10th element
- 39. Snuffs
- 40. Portion
- 41. Vegetarian protein option
- 46. Destroy
- 48. Construct
- 49. Delete
- 50. Damascus country
- 52. Garden State NESCAC
- 53. _____ dancer
- 54. Shelby sister
- 55. Gullet

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At Conn, Fire Marshal Is Often Cited, but Little Known: Catching up with Vernon Skau

MAIA HIBBETT
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Rain pelted the New London Fire Station's windows on Friday, March 2, when the *Voice* sat down with Fire Marshal Vernon Skau. With walls lined with photographs and desks piled high with records, Skau's second-floor office doubles as a mini-museum of fire hazards. On a brief tour of the office, Skau told the stories behind several pieces of fire-investigation evidence: a plastic baby doll with its head charred and its body melted, images from the recent Taco Bell destruction, and an interior photo of a house turned treacherous by hoarding. But present in the greatest physical and photographic abundance were the subjects of the hour: disarmed and faulty fire alarms.

According to Skau, disabled fire alarms are the leading cause of fire-related civilian death. In his 16 years with the New London Fire Department, Skau has seen only eleven deaths in nine fatal fires — all from faulty fire alarms. “Not counting one fire,” he added, “set to cover up a double homicide.”

On Friday morning, Skau already knew he would have a full day ahead of him. Though most of us probably think of rain as a deterrent rather than an incentive of fires, Skau commented that in the Fire Prevention Division, rainy days tend to be the busiest. But while the past weekend's Nor'Easter wasn't pretty, it can't compare to the hurricane that rocked New London eighty years ago. Known as “The Great New England Hurricane of 1938,” the storm caused a fire that destroyed a long



Photos courtesy of Max Amar-Olkus

stretch of Bank St., including the property where the New London Fire Department headquarters now stands. It's one of three fire stations in New London, and the oldest: according to Skau, the current headquarters went under construction right after the hurricane and was completed in 1939 or 1940.

Skau is far younger than the fire station, but a long-standing New London community member nonetheless. Of the 16 years he's spent with the New London Fire Department, he's served as Fire Marshal for just over three of them. But before Skau came to New London, he got his start in nearby Clinton, CT, at an age before most kids learn to drive.

“In my particular case, [firefighting] was in my family,” Skau said. “Several generations had been firefighters.” Referring to the minimum age requirement for Clinton's junior firefighter program, he added: “I couldn't wait until I was fifteen years old... Junior firefighter programs are very limited on what they can do, but it was very enjoyable, being involved in the community.”

Now, Skau's job entails a lot more than it did when he was fifteen. He explained that as Fire Marshal, his work consists of “two primary functions: to enforce Connecticut State fire safety code in any commercial building or any residen-

tial building with three or more apartments, and to investigate the origin of fires.”

Recognizing that his role sometimes posits him as the “bad guy,” Skau said that at the Fire Marshal's Office, “we are looked at as the enforcement arm in the code, but that is the last step in the process. If we get to the point where we're issuing a criminal summons, there's been a misstep [in fire prevention] along the way.”

“Every commercial building in the City of New London has to be inspected by our office,” Skau said, noting that the required frequency of inspections depends on the building's purpose and occupancy. “Our normal day consists of doing inspections, [but] a fire can put a wrinkle into all of that.”

Skau shares his office with inspector David Heiney, who chimed in to estimate that the Division averages three or four fire investigations per week. Battalion chiefs, who attain their own fire marshal certifications through a “two-module course”—one in the fall, one in the spring, like a college academic cycle—take some of the work off of Skau and Heiney's hands. As a result, the Fire Prevention Division only steps in in cases of “significant damage,” like a stovetop fire that spreads



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Fight over Baldwin Illustrates Struggle to Diversify Faculty

HANNAH JOHNSTON
NEWS EDITOR

In higher education, predominantly white institutions (PWIs) like Connecticut College generally struggle to hire and retain faculty of color. The student and faculty demographic makeup of PWIs does not accurately represent the demographic makeup of the United States: of all the institutions in NESCAC, for example, not one has a population of white professors under 73 percent. Among this group, Conn sits at the top for faculty diversity, with 26.4 percent of the professors identified as people of color, according to statistics available on the College's website. When asked about the state of faculty diversity at contemporary PWIs, Visiting Religious Studies Professor Natalie Avalos explained that many colleges are in a time of transition: "some [PWIs] are doing a really incredible job, and, some, and you'd be surprised because some are more prestigious, are stumbling through painfully... Unfortunately with some of the more elite institutions the sense that women of color and faculty of color more generally are tokens is even more salient." The struggle to retain faculty of color is not an issue specific to Conn, but it is an issue nonetheless.

In light of this reality, the current conversation surrounding Professor Andrea Baldwin's employment status at Connecticut College has been charged with more issues than just the logistics of a higher-ed institution's staffing plan, an administrative document that establishes visiting positions and tenure-track lines across the College two years ahead of time. Despite being offered a one-year extension on her visiting contract, Baldwin has chosen not to return without a guarantee that she will be given an opportunity hire the following year. More detailed information on Baldwin's situation

can be found in an article from the *Voice's* last issue.

If a position is not open on the staffing plan, it is not open. Many students, however, have rejected the idea of the staffing plan, demanding that Baldwin be given a targeted opportunity hire. On multiple occasions, Dean of the Faculty Abby Van Slyck and GWS Department chair Danielle Egan have stated that because the tenure-track position does not yet exist, it is not possible for Baldwin to be given a targeted opportunity hire this year.

When a targeted opportunity hire happens, it means that a candidate for a tenure-track position has been offered said position without having to participate in a national search. According to Van Slyck, at a recent follow-up event regarding the College's hiring processes, targeted opportunity hires "should be used very, very rarely and only in exceptional circumstances." In a later interview, Van Slyck also stated that a targeted opportunity has never been guaranteed a year in advance, and that it would not follow any normal academic precedent for Baldwin to be given said guarantee. Egan, in a written statement, said, "I do not believe this is a situation of warranting or not warranting an opportunity hire. There is no tenure track line this year. We cannot make an offer of any kind because we do not have a line to offer." This seems to be a point on which student and faculty opinions greatly differ.

Zaiden Sowle '21, a GWS major and one of the leading advocates for extraordinary measures intended to retain Baldwin, said, "[The administration] keep saying 'that administrative procedure,' 'this administrative procedure,' as to why we're not doing it. And yes, the administrative procedure may be that an opportunity hire is only in an emergency situation, such as Professor Rotramel's opportunity hire, but the closest

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YouTuber's Visit Incites Debate among Students

GRACE AMATO
STAFF WRITER

Music critic and YouTube personality Anthony Fantano had a tour canceled last fall because of his alleged ties to the alt-right, but that didn't stop him from coming to Conn. Originally presented in an article by Fader, the connection between Fantano and the alt-right might seem like a stretch in some regards, but much of Fantano's content remains controversial and offensive to students.

"Personally, I was quite satisfied with [Fantano's] response [to the Fader piece]," said Charlie King '18, the student general manager at WCNI who invited Fantano to campus. "I don't believe anyone is above reproach and criticism but I thought he clearly addressed a lot of the major questions."

The Fader piece deconstructs some of the videos Fantano posted on his second channel, *thatistheplan*, and condemns his relationship with two different social commentators officially tied to the alt-right, Sargon of Akkad and Sam Hyde.

Due to the criticism that spread from the Fader piece, a student of color on campus allegedly felt unsafe and unwelcome to Fantano's recent event. This was a cause for concern to Moll Brown '18 and Fiona Noyes '20. Brown, who agrees that the Fader piece "manipulates material to reinforce their specific perspective," decided to do their own research to uncover Fantano's political views. They created a 31-page document analyzing the videos that Fantano had linked with his response video, which he claimed were not offensive. Their document included screenshots from these videos, where they found some concerning background images. At one point, in a video titled, "Hopsin is the Greatest Rapper," a sudden stream of images goes by so quickly that one has to pause to view them frame-

by-frame. Among the images, most of which were random internet memes, was a picture of Hitler.

Though King was aware of the Fader piece and the controversy surrounding Fantano, he chose to invite the critic to Conn because of his roots in student radio. Fantano began as a music director at Southern Connecticut State University and is now a successful online music critic. He posts his music reviews on his YouTube channel, *The Needle Drop*, which he prioritizes over the controversial and now-deleted channel *thatistheplan*.

Brown, Noyes, and a few other students began to protest the event and were able to voice their concerns the night before the event at a last minute open forum. Conn has no formal policy for vetting speakers before or after inviting them to campus, so the open forum sought instead to develop critical questions with which to confront Fantano after his talk. At the open forum, King condemned Fantano's now defunct channel *thatistheplan* as "poor taste" comedy, with Brown responding that it is easy for someone with privilege to brush offensive content off as "poor taste" when it does not affect them. Those defending Fantano and WCNI's decision saw the conversation as an opportunity to launch a larger critique of the ways self-identified liberals wear their political affiliation as a shield against valid criticism of offensive content.

As for the actual event, Fantano began with an hour-long presentation about his own journey as a professional music critic. Those protesting his visit did not attend the first part of Fantano's presentation, but joined the room later for a question and answer session. Noyes began the session by asking Fantano bluntly if he was any way tied to the alt-right. Some in attendance groaned, but Fantano was open to answering her question, claiming that his chan-

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From Coutoure to Castro: Jeri Rice Challenges Dominant U.S. Narrative on Cuba with *Embargo*

LAUREN BARETTA
OPINIONS EDITOR
AND

MAIA HIBBETT
EDITOR IN CHIEF

With her new documentary *Embargo*, Jeri Rice wants to get through to one group we've long been trying to reach: the baby boomers.

Millennials and members of Gen Z often struggle to get our parents' and grandparents' ears, growing familiar with the sting of their common dismissals: we're too inexperienced, too radical, too sensitive. But Rice is none of those things: she lived through the Bay of Pigs, keeps an open ideological mindset, and, with her black leather jacket and winning smile, she's clearly tough. So, when Rice says that the U.S. government "has been lying to us" about the reality of Cuba's political situation, many are inclined to believe her.

Jeri Rice didn't take a typical route to becoming a documentarian. Before she got to work on *Embargo*, Rice spent three decades in the high-end fashion business, gaining success with her eponymous apparel line based out of the Pacific Northwest.

"The perspective that I'm speak-

ing from is like a girl from Portland, Oregon," Rice said. "I'm not a Cuban. I can't speak for Cuba."

Though Rice framed her roots with humility, the access that allowed her to film *Embargo* was a product of elite connections that she formed through the world of fashion. Rice was identified by the University of Washington as a potential fit for the Center of Women & Democracy, where she soon became a founding member. In 2002, Rice traveled with U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and other 40 influential women to Cuba, where she made the most essential of all her connections: Fidel Castro.

"We were greeted by Fidel Castro individually," Rice reflected. "Being a child of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and a child of the Kennedy assassination...when I met Fidel Castro, who was the monster, I saw him to be very different from the perception that I had of him through the media."

For Rice, the experience of meeting Castro in person was vital to her film's concept. Rice repeatedly challenges negative American public perception of Castro throughout *Embargo*. To demonstrate Castro's prolonged rule and influence, Rice contrasts images of U.S. presidents from John F. Kennedy to Donald

Trump with aging photos of the Cuban leader. The effect is powerful. Yet, not everyone is convinced of her argument, most notably Cuban-Americans living in Little Havana, the Miami neighborhood where Rice opened the film.

Rice's footage of Cuban-Americans celebrating Castro's Nov. 2016 death in Little Havana foreshadowed the backlash she received there. "The last day that I showed [*Embargo*] in Miami, I seriously got a little nervous about my safety," said Rice. To protect herself, she called in a powerful deterrent: St. John Hunt, E. Howard Hunt's son.

"[Hunt's] father had planned the Bay of Pigs and everybody kn[ew] it," said Rice. When a man stood up to protest Rice's film, Hunt walked up to a him, put an arm around his shoulder, and said: "You know, it didn't work last time." He was referring to the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion in April, 1961.

Despite the criticism, Rice's experience in fashion and her outgoing personality have given her remarkable confidence. "In the clothing business... somebody walks in your front door, and right away you have to know them," Rice commented, noting that the "people skills" she has acquired through her retail experience were instrumental to her documentary.

Rice's connections and personality have earned her audiences with figures across a political spectrum, including President Donald Trump, whom Rice has met three times. As highlighted in the film, Trump has worked to undo many of Barack Obama's previous rollbacks regarding the U.S.-Cuba embargo, but not all of his changes have been as significant as promised. Though Trump declared "I am canceling the last administration's completely one-sided deal with Cuba," CNN Politics clarified in June 2017 that many facilitators of diplomatic rela-



Photos courtesy of embargofilm.com

tionships, including new embassies in Washington and Havana, would remain operational. One regulation Trump has enforced more strictly, however, is the so-called "travel ban," which Rice considers key to perpetuating misinformation and fear surrounding Cuba.

"I'm not saying [Cuba's] got everything right," Rice admitted. "I'm just saying that we've got a lot of this wrong." She added that travel restrictions are neither the sole cause nor effect of misinformation within the United States. "This is a much bigger picture than just the embargo," she commented, referencing the pervasive nature of the military-industrial complex and the operations of the CIA. "Who's really holding the cards?" she posed. "Is it a democracy... or is it some other form of government that we can't name?"

Though Trump may sound staunch, Rice is hardly discouraged. "I do think if I got an hour or two with Donald Trump or his daughter, I could actually shift [his stance on the embargo]." She furthered, "I'm not one of those people that hates anybody, so I think there's always an opportunity to reach a human being, including the President of the United States." •



On Return from Abroad, Students Seek Support

ABIGAIL ACHESON
STAFF WRITER
AND
ELIZABETH BERRY
STAFF WRITER

Over half of the student body studies abroad, as the Connecticut College website confirms. There are a large amount of resources available to encourage and support students going abroad, but how robust are the College's efforts in helping students transition back to life at Conn? Perception of the efficacy of the College's support systems varies depending on the position and affiliation of those consulted.

Among the College's efforts to improve re-entry comes the opening of the Walter Commons for Global Study and Engagement. The Commons marks more than a decade of planning and programming among faculty and administration, and with it comes a plethora of changes to Conn's study abroad program and a renewed commitment to global engagement at the College. "The study away landscape has changed really dramatically in the last ten, fifteen years," explained Amy Dooling, Associate Dean of Global Initiatives. Dooling, who has been a member of Conn's faculty since 1998, added that "there's been a tremendous commercialization of study away in the past decade or so." As a result, the Office of

Global Initiatives are working to determine how best to advise students on how they should approach their semester abroad. In order to do this, faculty involved have developed a 25-minute survey which was released to students for the first time this year. This, along with other data collected by the College's Office of Institutional Research and Planning, is being used to further improve the study abroad structure at Conn. This past year, the College received a \$5.5 million grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation that will help fund programs to evaluate and collect information on study abroad at the College.

Operating in conjunction with several study away options at Conn, the Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts (CISLA) provides selected students with the chance to complete an internship in a country of their choice. Cara Masullo, the internship and publications assistant for CISLA, said that the faculty have been working to address the transition back from abroad more directly and help students apply their research to their future careers. In fact, the Office of Career and Professional Development recently held a career session targeted toward juniors who have returned from abroad. According

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Religious Life at Conn Has Many Facets, Limited Visibility

KATEY VESTA
SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR

How does religion fit in the social atmosphere of a college? These few years are a time devoted to exploration of identity, so it seems fitting to dedicate some thought to religion and spirituality in college.

Reverend Claudia Highbaugh has been at Conn for 12 years and currently occupies the position of Dean of Religious and Spiritual Life. She explained that the College offers a myriad of opportunities for any sort of religious practice or exploration that students want to embark upon. "If students want to organize a Buddhist sitting or any kind of meditation group, they can do that," she said. "If Quakers want to come and organize, they can. One year we had a Mormon group of a few people. So it's really based on student interest, we don't run groups for people that don't actively say they want to participate."

And student interest certainly does exist. Abby Merritt '21, who identifies as an evangelical Christian, explained, "there's a lot of ways that, as a religious person, you can find spiritual fulfillment on campus." She cited the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship and student-run weekly Bible study as some of her personal favorites—the Bible study, in particular, is an initiative driven by student interest and support. However, she also noted that outside of these religious communities, Conn can be "a pretty secular society."

This isn't to say that the presence of religious and spiritual life is limited only to those students who already identify with a particular faith. Highbaugh insisted that the Department of Religious and Spiritual Life encourages students to participate regardless of their beliefs (or lack thereof), saying "If 25 people, if 5 people, came to us and said 'I don't know what I believe in,' 'I don't believe in anything,' or 'I want to study this book,' then we would support them."

However, it appears that much of the student body at Conn may not be aware of these opportunities. "Religious and spiritual life doesn't always get a lot of attention," said Rabbi Susan Schein, the director of Zach's Hillel House and one of the five chaplains on campus. "Students need to know what's going on," she added, "that there are opportunities." The department is currently busy as ever, as Schein explained that they are in the process of sending a group of students to Texas in order to help repair the lingering damage from Hurricane Harvey.

Schein stated that, from her own perspective as a Jewish Rabbi, this form of service reflects the idea of "tikkun olam"—to repair the world. "Each [religion] has its own version of that, to do good works," she said. Highbaugh also echoed this sentiment, stating that in her experience, religion and social justice movements are very closely linked; "Community Partnerships came out of the chapel about thirty years ago. Habitat for Humanity

was started by a presbyterian minister... Martin Luther King [Jr.] was a baptist minister, most people have no idea about that."

At an institution that prides itself on its message of social justice, this indicates the kind of role that religion can play in what could easily be considered a fairly secular environment. "Religion belongs on the soles of your shoes," said Highbaugh, meaning that people ought to not only hold their beliefs, but enact the values that they express.

Indeed, even from its roots Conn was not as religious as other similar institutions. Highbaugh explained that many American universities and colleges were founded by religious groups to educate pastors—like Harvard, or Jesuit universities such as Boston College—but Conn never was so. This College started out to educate women in the state of Connecticut, and though it's always had a religious presence, its origins were not strongly religious like so many other colleges.

This hasn't stopped religious and spiritual life from developing its place on campus, however. "It's actually growing in some ways, I think," said Merritt. "A lot of people are searching... for a meaning and for a purpose at college." Highbaugh agreed, stating her opinion that "spiritual and emotional health is a part of a student's life." Similarly, Schein expressed that religion helps in "bringing meaning to your-

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Diversifying the Faculty

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word in modern vernacular that there is to academic procedure is guideline. It's a guideline."

Many students feel that there is as much a need for Baldwin now as there was for Rotramel in AY 13-14, given the fact that Baldwin is an integral faculty member in the CCSRE and especially the Africana Studies Program, and that Egan, Rotramel and other GWS-affiliated faculty recently announced their intention to re-name the Gender and Women's Studies department the "Gender, Sexuality, and Intersectionality department."

Sowle, Castro, and many other students believe that it is not acceptable to re-name the department to include intersectionality when it will be run and occupied only by two white women (with the departure of Baldwin). "[Egan and Rotramel] are saying, 'oh but we're women and we're also queer, that's intersectional!'" said Sowle of the name change, adding, "Yes—although that's true, it negates the origins of intersectionality of being specifically tied to race and gender. It's heavily rooted in race."

Egan, in her written statement, responded to general student criticism by writing, "at the moment, we do have a woman of color in the department as well as people of color on the affiliated faculty and staff. Next year, when we have our tenure track search, we will pay great attention to recruitment to insure that our advertisement... also goes to publications and associations which have higher success rates for

recruiting faculty members of color. Our committee will work closely with Dean McKnight to insure the best possible results."

When asked why academic procedure should not be overridden for Baldwin, Dean of Equity and Inclusion John McKnight explained that "the reason you have policies and practices is because you can protect against inequity by having those in place. If we were to disrupt all of our practices to do so would be to make us even more vulnerable." McKnight added that his office conducts procedures like anti-bias trainings for departments undergoing searches.

"I will defend the tenure system right down to the ground," Van Slyck commented. "It is absolutely crucially important for there to be a system that actually allows faculty to explore ideas in their teaching and in their research that might not be popular, that might be politically charged, that might, in other situations, prompt someone to want to fire you. We have to be able to have that kind of freedom."

Despite their support of the overall hiring system within academia, both McKnight and Van Slyck were eager to admit that there is still a lot of work to be done in the area of hiring and retaining faculty of color. "I know it's a slow process and that's what can frustrate people sometimes, especially if they've been here a long time and they've been given a lot of promises over that period of time, but I do think that we are making good progress," said McKnight when asked

to respond to criticism that the College has not done enough to create equity within the institution.

Baldwin's case illustrates larger issues on Conn's campus. McKnight, for one, is particularly concerned by the fact that many students have said their only real support person on campus is Baldwin. In light of comments like Sowle's assertion that "I wouldn't be here this semester if it weren't for the love and support that Professor Baldwin has shown me, a trans woman," McKnight reflected: "clearly this is a professor who has had a significant impact on the community in a relatively short amount of time... but when [students] say things like, 'she's the only one who cares about me' or 'I couldn't exist in this space without her,' I'm like wow, you know we're gonna need to figure out a way for that not to be the case."

When asked what he thinks Conn can do to better support students of color on campus, Castro said, "I'm glad that here at Conn we have a multicultural center (Unity House), we have Truth Hunter, we have ambassadors and the ALANA program, but it's still not enough. Yes we have the Office of Institutional Equity and Inclusion, but there's still so much work that needs to be done. I think the institution needs to invest more in those spaces and in those programs and in professors and students of color."

This situation has also brought up concerns about the 'invisible labor' that is often put on contingent faculty, especially among women of color. Avalos explained

that contingent faculty are paid on average about 20-25% less than tenured and tenure-track faculty, which means they are a "bargain." "So the irony of course," she said, "is that your bargain position also seems to intersect with your identity and that's where the problem lies... Part of the whole locus of dispossession or the kind of legacy of dispossession for women of color and how they're perceived is that they're disposable. They kind of have to constantly prove themselves worthy even more so than other faculty. That they can be strung along kind of indefinitely."

That being said, Avalos expressed that she has felt a lot of support from many administrators and people at Conn, and that the issue is far more systemic than it is based on one-on-one relationships. She maintains, however, that "structural violence creates direct violence," in the sense that individual people are ultimately affected and hurt by the system.

As of now, students are still in a state of protest regarding Baldwin. "I, along with a few others, are not going to give up until the last day of this semester when it really is too late. But until that last day of the semester we are going to keep

fighting. We are going to keep pushing the administration and the faculty in the GWS department," said Sowle. Castro decided to drop his GWS major because he feels that the GWS department is failing to reflect its core values by not doing more to retain Baldwin.

Both Avalos and McKnight expressed their support for students choosing to share their feelings and their needs during their educational experiences at Conn. Avalos applauded students, saying, "something that often happens is that students don't realize how much power they have and that they need to actually say, 'this is what our needs are and this is what we want.'" McKnight maintained that he has learned a lot about his position and student needs from Baldwin's situation. The retention of faculty of color at PWIs will continue to be a strong point of discussion both nationally and on Conn's campus, and, according to students, the fight for Baldwin is far from over. •

CROSSWORD KEY

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Anthony Fantano

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nel thatistheplan was a site for creative satire, a home for the gross realities of the world and the internet and a place to use dark humor to reflect on them. Giving Noyes a bit of pushback, he asked her if she had ever laughed at seemingly messed up things.

Fantano then chastised those in the audience who groaned at Noyes's question, recognizing that it is important to have these conversations and to be respectful.

Cara Fried '20 then brought up Fantano's relationship with Sargon of Akkad, asking why he would give him a platform through interviewing him in a podcast. Fantano claimed that he did not know the extent of his

views and wanted to gain a perspective on this interesting "cultural battle." He stated that he would have pushed back on Sargon of Akkad's views more if he did not expect his audience to be able to understand and judge for themselves what was problematic or not, but apologized for the fact that he simply did not have the background or information to accurately confront Sargon of Akkad's harmful views.

King says he felt that the event was not giving Fantano a platform to express his political views, "but instead saw it more as an opportunity for critique because he wasn't there voicing his politics, he was there to talk about his experience as an outsider in the music industry and his independent success. [...] It's a lot easier to dismiss concerns when they're vocalized in 140 characters on Twitter than when they are given

in an articulate question and when the person who is questioning you is face to face instead of through the internet." Brown commented that they did not care "if he's not here to talk about offensive content, but that is what he represents. [By inviting him,] we are supporting someone who is putting out really dangerous and violent politics."

"This isn't an uncommon phenomenon," said King, "to have an established publication sort of attack someone who is in new media and sort of drag them through the dirt." Campus conversation around the Fantano affair altogether broaches the question of skepticism in consuming media, not just from the person in question but also from those who are criticizing or calling out another person. •

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Vernon Skau

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beyond a contained area, or a "criminal event." Tampering with a fire alarm constitutes the latter, so the recent surge in fire-alarm manipulation at Conn brought an increased workload for Skau and Heiney.

"We issued a criminal summons last week," Skau said, referring to the fire safety walk-throughs that he and Heiney have been conducting in residence halls and apartments on Conn's campus. "Instead of following through on campus with the Honor Code, we're enforcing [the fire code] criminally."

Despite the strong language and gravity of a "criminal summons," Skau doesn't think that students are purposely endangering themselves and others. "More often than not," he commented, "it's not a malicious attempt—it's ignorance." Skau cited an "excellent relationship" with Environmental Health & Safety at Conn, but noted that the Fire Prevention Division has moved to criminal-level enforcement on campus because, "We started seeing a trend. I felt as though there were forces outside Health & Safety at the College that weren't totally on the same page as I was."

Now, however, Skau thinks that the situation is starting to turn around. "I'm hoping that we're able to move beyond this," he observed. "Where we're at with Connecticut College right now is looking to see where we can get on the fire prevention side."

Skau stressed that the walk-throughs are not meant to seem like a threat to students, and that so far, students have been cooperative.

"We both go—just the two of us," Skau said, referring to himself and Heiney. "When we do

our annual inspections, that's when College staff comes with." He added that students have to be present in their spaces during the checks, noting: "We're not walking into students' rooms unless they're there." To confirm this point, Dean of Students Victor Arcelus commented: "The Fire Marshal is not inspecting unoccupied spaces and does not have keys to our campus buildings."

While Skau considers fire safety at the College a priority, he looks forward to the day when walk-throughs are no longer necessary. "It takes away from other things we need to do," he commented, noting that construction projects which look to revitalize old buildings and establish new housing will need his approval.

Development is surging in New London, Heiney added, as recent job creation at Groton-based Electric Boat has increased the demand for employee housing. "It's the housing market growing that will bring everything else," he said. But despite the population growth, Skau noted: "I don't see tremendous growth in the fire department... The one problem with New London is the tax base: in the city's six square miles, 50 percent of the property is non-taxable," limiting the funding for public services. New London's tax-exempt land is occupied by churches, medical facilities, and the city's biggest non-profit resource consumer: Connecticut College.

Though Skau might not foresee growth within the fire department, he seems to enjoy his job, especially the criminal investigations. "Each fire investigation has its own interesting twists and turns," he observed. As a fire marshal, he added, "you're kind of a truth-seeker." •

Returning from Abroad

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

to Masullo, “the main focus was on helping students to translate their experience abroad to a potential employer.” However, Sarah Potter ’19, who studied abroad this past semester in Edinburgh, Scotland, stated that “the career parts of [the meeting were] helpful... such as reminding [us] how to improve our cover letters and resumes... but the actual [incorporating of experiences] abroad on [a] resume and cover letter” was not as helpful.

Nonetheless, there are other opportunities for students to process their experience abroad. Among members of CISLA, for example, seniors take a seminar and work on senior integrative projects (SIP). While it seems that CISLA already offers students more opportunities to combine their experiences abroad with their life at Conn, Masullo said faculty are creating a “re-entering program [that will be] more robust and available to [non-CISLA] students going abroad.”

Masullo believes it “would be great if we could do a seminar that was required for students.” However, incorporating a new seminar can be challenging and could hinder the efforts of Director of CISLA Marc Forster and others in the administration who are working to modify curriculum requirements to allow more students to study abroad.

Potter agrees that informal events seem more reasonable for now. She suggested that it would be most helpful if these events focused on a

specific theme or department. At the end of her interview, Masullo stated that Conn “has such a strong study abroad program,” but is “lacking in ways to help students after [the fact].”

While not all programs and departments on campus offer re-entry support, CISLA’s senior seminar is not the only course-based support option for students returning from abroad. The Anthropology Department, for example, offers the transition course “Anthropologist Abroad,” which is open to all students, despite being focused primarily on anthropology. Potter described this class as allowing her to discuss her abroad experiences “through an anthropological lens” with other anthropology students, all of whom have studied in different countries. Caroline Longacre ’19, who studied abroad this past fall in Bhutan, also spoke of how the “Anthropologist Abroad” course allows her to speak to other students about their study abroad experiences in an intimate setting. When asked if she would like Conn’s administration to be more actively involved in helping students returning from study away adjust, Longacre said no. She emphasized that the class’s small size and the similarity of its participants’ experiences make it more helpful than administrative meetings would have been. Though Longacre approves of the Anthropology Department’s current model, the College aims to supplement these more specialized courses with a more general course for students not in CISLA or the Anthropology Department.

Another key problem students encounter upon returning from abroad is housing. Longacre spoke of how she did not receive a housing assignment until the first day of the Spring 2018 semester. It was not until after she sat in the Residential Education and Living Office, refusing to leave until they gave her a room, that she received an assignment.

“It was kind of ridiculous,” Longacre said, speaking of how “unpredictable” and “unhelpful” REAL was in finding her housing. To verify this story, the *Voice* reached out to Kathy Longo, administrative assistant and housing coordinator for REAL, who said that “the REAL office cannot comment on an individual student’s housing.”

Though Longo noted that “all students returning to the College in the Spring use their lottery number to select an assignment on Jan. 4,” Potter also described the housing situation as the most difficult obstacle in the transition process. She was able to find a room in Abbey House, where she has access to a kitchen, but many of her friends were not as lucky. Potter explained that “it’s hard for

a lot of people to return to living in a dorm after living in an apartment, [and] not having a kitchen.”

Following national and international trends, the nature of study abroad at Conn is changing. As the College evaluates and updates its requirements and programming, it will continue to face challenges in making the study abroad experience easier. Ultimately, the purpose of study abroad is to experience a new, uncomfortable, and challenging environment.

“I am glad I had academic preparation,” Longacre said of the experience, “[but] prepare to be unprepared.” •

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Religious Life

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

self and connections with others.”

Overall, both Schein and Highbaugh stressed the fact that there are opportunities for every student to get involved with religious and spiritual life, regardless of their prior experiences of current beliefs. Schein even mentioned that there are spiritual events on campus that are not necessarily religious in nature, such as the meditations frequently run by CC Curtiss. Highbaugh also pointed out that spirituality can be found sometimes through unconventional

means, citing the Arboretum as an example.

“The campus itself is a park,” she said, “They know every tree and how old it is and when it was planted here... You want a spiritual experience? Every season [the Arbo] looks different, and it’s beautiful and it’s engaging.” Though this isn’t a traditional sense of spiritual life by any sense, it hearkens back to the Romantic and Transcendental traditions of the area, and it may just be a tradition worth revisiting for students seeking a new form of spiritual fulfillment at Conn. •

Politico Writers Publish Glaring Proposal of Slavery

JENNIFER SKOGLUND
OPINIONS EDITOR

Last month, *Politico* published Eric Posner and Glen Weyl's essay "What If You Could Get Your Own Immigrant?" Upon publishing, both writers and the site received enormous public backlash for what many readers identified as a brazen championship of modern slavery.

Posner and Weyl's piece addresses itself as a solution to the contentious debate over immigration in the US. Cultural hostility could be abated, Posner and Weyl suggest, by busting state and corporate monopolies over the products of migrant labor and shifting the power of labor exchange into the hands of private individuals with purchasing power. Visas Between Individuals, as they call their program, would establish a "radical markets" laissez-faire

system of labor exchange, permitting not only corporations but also "ordinary citizens" to benefit from the exploitation of migrant labor. But just how would Visas Between Individuals work?

Posner and Weyl offer an example of the process:

"Imagine a woman named Mary Turner, who lives in Wheeling, West Virginia. She was recently laid off from a chicken-processing plant and makes ends meet by walking and taking care of her neighbors' pets. Mary could expand her little business by hiring some workers, but no one in the area would accept a wage she can afford. Mary goes online—to a new kind of international gig economy website, a Fiverr for immigrants—and applies to sponsor a migrant. She enters information about what she needs: someone with ru-

dimentary English skills, no criminal record and an affection for animals. She offers a room in her basement, meals and \$5 an hour. (Sponsors under this program would be exempt from paying minimum wage.) The website offers Mary some matches—people living in foreign countries who would like to spend some time in the United States and earn some money. After some back and forth, Mary interviews a woman named Sofia who lives in Paraguay."

Once she logs onto the Amazon for immigrants, all Mary needs to do to "get [her] own" is enter her criteria, and browse amongst many potential options for an ideal match.

It is important to note that under this model, "sponsors would be exempt from paying minimum wage." Minimum wage and the 40-hour work

week, among other labor laws, were federally established with the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938 in order to safeguard against the exploitative practices of employers—who took advantage of the captive labor market during the Great Depression to subject laborers to terrible working conditions and hours—and to provide workers with enough means to stay out of poverty.

Under current FLSA law, independent contractors—a term covering a wide range of occupational careers—are exempt from receiving the minimum wage. This doesn't mean that the majority of independent contractors earn less than minimum wage, though; glassdoor.com reports \$31,515 as average base pay for independent contractors in all industries with 0-1 years of experience working at companies with 1-50 employees. The site's low-range

salary estimate hovers above \$17,000.

For comparison, working full-time at the \$7.25 federal minimum wage earns only \$15,080 per year, the national poverty line standing at \$12,060 for one person. In stark contrast to all of these figures stands the salary of our narrative protagonist Sofia at \$10,400 per year before taxes, well below the individual federal poverty line.

If Posner and Weyl's article comes off as an unabashed endorsement of the legalization of indentured servitude, slavery, or human trafficking, that's because it is. What the two envision is a system in which private households and individuals effectively own the labor—physical, or sexual—of poor migrants. "According to our calculations," they write, "a typical family of four could

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Conn Spirit Lags on Sports

DULCIE EVERITT
CONTRIBUTOR

Over the past two weekends, the swim team competed in two NESCAC Championships, competing separately as women and men. The women's team travelled to Williams while the men journeyed to Bowdoin College, where each team spent three days competing against our NESCAC rivals. Both teams performed outstandingly, with the women taking third place overall for the second year in a row and the men claiming fifth place. NESCAC is the most competitive Division III conference in the country, so these achievements should not be underestimated, and we are all extremely proud of what we have achieved this season alongside our academic commitments. However, these achievements flew largely under the radar, which made us all think about the ways in which sports could be better publicized at Conn.

All sports at the collegiate level have the opportunity to bring students together in a sense of college pride, and

as such, athletic achievements should be shared among the student body. At large Division I institutions, sport is a culture. Team spirit and loyalty are not only shared among college students, but in many cases among their towns and even their states. Sport is both a source of profit due to branding, ticket sales, and endowments, and also profoundly affects student enrollment and culture on campus. Weekends revolve around sports games—tailgating and cheering for your team alongside students from every possible major, grade, and background, united by your team spirit. The pride one feels in one's team extends far beyond sports, into a lifelong commitment to their university. Alumni play a huge role in perpetuating this tradition through donations and purchasing merchandise, or by continuing to follow the progress of sports teams.

As a Division III liberal arts institution, Connecticut College does not share the sports culture of larger schools, but that absolutely doesn't mean we should not care about sports on our campus. Chances are, a lot of your closest friends

are student-athletes or play on an intramural team. But how many times have you actually watched them play? Or kept track of their results over the course of the season? Now think about how different our campus would feel if we all banded together behind every team on campus. What would happen if we had a full crowd for every home game we hold here? How would that affect not only our sense of community, but how our sports teams perform?

Knowing that you have the support of the entire campus behind you is an extremely powerful thing, and provides motivation to make everyone proud and to represent your school. In short, for athletes and spectators alike, sporting events provide the opportunity to create so much "Camel Pride." Though we are not a Division I school, school spirit remains an important factor for prospective students. Most people who enroll at Conn are attracted to its small campus, and its promise of a close-knit community. That is also what makes us feel at home here. Our community would be brought even closer together

if we truly got behind our teams. Let's meet new people, cheer alongside them, and use sport as an opportunity to foster an even more cohesive community. One of the best things about Conn is the million-and-one things that we have going on all the time in all different departments and extra-curricular endeavors. However, that multiplicity should not rule out the opportunity to come together as a whole, support our teams, and share in their successes. As the spring sports commence, let's support, respect, and acknowledge what they do, and use them as a way to connect with each other as well.

To student athletes: let's also do our part to raise awareness for sports on campus. Write about on your teams' achievements in platforms like the *Voice*, or make posters to put around school to advertise your games. Post on social media and tag @camelathletics or @conncollege to make sure you are recognized by the College and the campus community. As athletes we have the privileged opportunity to bring the school closer together—let's use it! •

Militarization of Schools

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

new service.

President Trump's claims, and the statistics behind them, don't leave me with a good feeling in my stomach. According to a *New York Times* article written last week, Trump suggested that 20 percent of teachers should receive firearm training. If his proposition comes to fruition, about 700,000 teachers in both public and private schools would have guns in their classrooms. This figure accounts for nearly half of America's actual forces on active duty. According to a related Washington Post article, if teachers are given the intensive and specialized training required for carrying guns, the bill would slip past 1 billion dollars. Another option proposed by gun supporters include placing six to eight specially trained armed guards in schools. This proposal would add approximately 12-15 billion dollars to the already inflated budget annually. And in Florida, the arming of teachers is already a reality: just last week, the Florida State House Appropriations Committee and Senate Appropriations Committee passed similar versions of a bill funding a "school marshal" program, which allocates 67 million dollars to train ten

teachers per school to carry guns, the Tampa Bay Times reports. Participating teachers would each receive a 500 dollar bonus.

I am all for bonuses for teachers. As the son of an elementary school principal, I understand the rigors that come with jobs in education. Teachers come to school every day ready to deal with fussy parents, kids, and fellow employees. But I would bet that not a single teacher gets out of bed in the morning wanting to barricade doors, hide under desks, or physically shield students from bullets flying through their classrooms.

Furthermore, no amount of training could possibly prepare a teacher to handle a gun in a responsible way. Basic military training takes months, and even the most thoroughly trained teachers are still human, meaning they can make mistakes. On top of everything else teachers deal with every day, some people, like our President, think that adding a weapon to their list of duties is a good idea. Though many Americans like to tout our education system as the best in the world, we are firmly in the middle of the pack. Instead of adding more firearms to our non-existent national gun registry, we need to focus on eliminating easy access to military-grade weapons

used to kill children in their classrooms. We need to allow teachers to do the jobs they signed up for: teach our children.

If the educators at Connecticut College were allowed firearms in the classroom, I would be profoundly uncomfortable. The notion of one of my professors having a loaded weapon in the room as they lectured me is nerve-wracking. I get the same feeling walking around Times Square seeing New York's finest armed with lethal weapons. Now, I understand the motivation for added security in Times Square. It's a huge tourist destination that is a potential target for terrorists, but this logic should not apply to schools. Places of learning should not be added to the list of locations where it is acceptable to carry a gun. Think about the message it sends to the school's students. It is absolutely a message of power and intimidation directed towards any potential school shooter, but this message also finds its way to students, who might be wary of an imminent attack on their lives. Potential violence in schools is not something anyone simply gets used to. Guns in schools are abnormal and should be treated as such.

So, in the wake of Connecticut College's own walk-out against gun violence in schools, let politicians see reason. Do



Photo courtesy of James Murray

not give weapons to our teachers. The militarization of our schools would not only add to the stress-filled lives of hardworking teachers across the country, but would also give students the impression that their lives are constantly at risk. This country needs to get its priorities straight and realize that the issue is not a lack of security at schools, but rather the guns themselves. Follow the example of our high school brothers and sisters at Marjory Stoneman Douglas and demand that our lawmakers address the root of the problem, guns. Our lives depend on it. •

About Time

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

enough for an active shooter wielding an AR-15 to fire about a thousand rounds, as Julia Horowitz '18 aptly noted in her own remarks. Courtney also spoke about the object of time, only now it was not a perception that ended with those lost in the line of a rogue gunman reloading his clip. Instead, the Congressman was speaking about the time politicians have taken and are currently spending in order to bring about adequate gun legislation. However, since meaningful legislation does not exist, Courtney was, by default, also referring to the time some politicians refuse to take to adequately respond to such events that haunt our communities and cast a spectral doom over tomorrow. After a massacre, they turn to each other languidly, and speaking as though they bore guns (not children), they decide psychopaths and eighteen-year-olds cannot play with their babies or bullets anymore.

Wherein there is so much emphasis on stopping psychopaths from obtaining guns, I posit: what does it say about President Trump's own mental state that he claimed he would have run into Stoneman Doug-

las High School unarmed, to be shot and killed, before using his position to bring about necessary radical change? That is a question medical professionals will squabble over, while the rest of us understand from Trump's toadying remarks that he dropped the ball. Like millions of other Americans, he did not seem to get it. The looming issue of school shooters should not be posed as an interrogative question of character in the phrase, "what would you do?" The more pertinent questions remain, what more must we do to prevent said attacks in the future, and how can we foster greater compassion in the wake of extreme malice?

It was evident to me that those who attended the walkout Thursday afternoon did so out of care for their own lives and those of others. Rather than voicing delusions of personal bravado, students spoke of their fears over what would happen if an active shooter wreaked havoc here, at Connecticut College. Those who gathered at the top of Tempel Green took an active stance against those who want to take our time away. This is how we make more time.

In order to combat the problematic gun culture of

the United States, we must first make it even remotely difficult for Americans to obtain guns legally. To this day, the United States has the highest gun ownership rate in the world, warranting a broad crackdown on guns. However, more stringent gun laws are only part of the battle. Without law enforcement's dual efforts in keeping illegal guns off black markets, there is no victory and we can expect further carnage.

The Second Amendment remains protected: we cannot take away semi-automatics or other overly powerful weapons yet, but we will continue to oppose them and propagate a platform of camaraderie over violence, safe spaces for learning over institutions where teachers pack heat. Compassion emanates from people, not from guns. Eliminating a school shooter should not be among the responsibilities of science or math teachers. Would it then be their fault if the desk drawer holding a loaded Glock was opened but the hilt of beaker tongs or of a protractor lying next to the gun was drawn instead? No, the gun is in a safe, whose numerical combination the teacher loses amid semesters of test scores, important dates, and the countdown to lunch. •

Mass Shooting Generation

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

of 9/11. I was five at the time of 9/11. I have only one clear memory from that day— my pregnant mother in our living room staring at the TV, with tears in her eyes. I did not know what had happened. I did know that my Mom was scared and I suppose that in itself was traumatic, but overall I think the cutoff date for millennials as classified by this tragic event is appropriate. I cannot be defined by a memory that is hazy at best.

Memories that are certainly not hazy in my mind are school shootings, of which my generation has seen many. I grew up in Berlin, CT less than an hour away from Newtown. I remember sitting in my AP Psychology class on December 14, 2012, when I was told that 26 people had been killed at Sandy Hook Elementary. 20 of those victims were children under the age of seven. A student sitting next to me cried out in horror that her cousin attended that school.

There had been other mass shootings before Sandy Hook. There were five people killed in a shopping mall in Salt Lake City, UT in 2007; 13 killed at an immigration service center in Binghamton, NY in 2009; and eight killed in a hair salon in Seal Beach, California in 2011. There had even been mass shootings in schools: 13 killed at Columbine High, Colorado in 1999; 32 killed at Virginia Tech in 2007; and 7 killed at Oikos University in Oakland, California in 2012. No doubt gun violence is embedded within our nation's history, but Sandy Hook was a break. 20 children, innocent and defenseless, were murdered. Is a child's right to life less valid than a person's right to own a gun?

Not everyone is convinced that guns are the cause. Conservatives often blame mental health, terrorism, and the irrational decision-making of individuals for mass shootings. However, let us consider Australia as an example of

a country that eliminated its guns and therefore eliminated its problem. In 1996, a 28 year-old white man, shot 35 dead at a café and nearby gift shop in Port Arthur. Within weeks of the mass murder, Australia banned semi-automatic and other military style weapons. There has not been a single mass shooting in Australia since 1996. For the entire 21 years of my life, Australians have been significantly safer than Americans from guns. If I were living in Australia, I would not be writing about whether my generation should be defined by mass shootings at all.

Gun control is an extremely politicized issue in our country. The NRA lobbies and spends its way through Congress, using its wealth to gain a stronghold over our government. It is widely known that Democrats support background checks and bans on assault weapons, while Republicans argue for their Second Amendment rights. This divide concerns me in that I believe gun control should be a unified issue. Immediately following mass tragedy, Australians recognized the problem within their nation. They worked together, liberals and conservatives alike, to make positive change. They didn't take away all the guns, just those that were proven to be dangerous. They stopped the mass murder.

In our increasingly polarized political atmosphere, led by an extremely divisive president, perhaps I am being too idealistic. Perhaps politicization is necessary. I absolutely support standing with those who support checks on gun ownership and calling our representatives until we are heard. Yet, I am disillusioned by our nation's inability to work together on a solution that is so obvious.

Young, innocent lives have been taken. The US has significantly higher rates of gun violence than any other developed country. The day that 20 children were murdered by



Photo courtesy of Max Amar-Ofkous

a man with semi-automatic guns, that is the day this debate should have ended. I fail to understand how our country is still questioning whether the militarization of our society is

acceptable.

So call me a member of the "iGeneration," or the "Post-Millennials" or even the "La-La Land Generation," as was suggested to me by a baby

boomer. Call me whatever you please, but do not let me be defined by more murder. I do not want to be a part of the mass shooting generation. •

"Sponsor a Migrant"

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boost its income by \$10,000 to 20,000 by hosting migrants. The reason is that migrants to the United States usually increase their wages many times, allowing them to pay as much as \$6,000 to hosts for sponsorships (and our average family could sponsor up to four visas, one for each member)."

Note that in this model Sofia produces more than enough capital to keep herself out of poverty. Yet because Mary takes for herself "as much as \$6,000" of Sofia's earnings every year, Sofia remains under the poverty line even as her labor-power increases. As Mary accrues more and more wealth from Sofia's labor, she is able to purchase more labor-power and expand her business, doubling her wealth, while Sofia stays in a basement she might have to share with increasing numbers of fellow migrant laborers. Sofia's chances at securing an independent future for herself are virtually nil because she is being economically exploited and kept in a position of poverty by her "sponsor."

We can understand Sofia, a poor indentured servant from the global South, as an archetype for Posner and Weyl. As they see it, the "Sofias of this world" will constitute a burgeoning new

lower class in American society, economically subservient and racially subordinated to the majority-white labor masters. Increasing captivity of labor markets in African, Latin American, and developing Asian countries will drive wages down and worsen inequalities in living conditions, life expectancy, and access to resources for the poor there. Ultimately what Posner and Weyl seek to realize through the radical markets model is a neo-imperialist's wet-dream: total domination, exploitation and dispossession of the world's poor by global capital, the radical securement and militarization of historically entrenched flows of power and capital from East to West, South to North.

Perhaps one of the most troubling things about the *Politico* piece is its claim to reflect the values and best interests of "ordinary citizens," when migrants make up about 14% of the American population. It is telling that Posner and Weyl frame the sanctioning and reintroduction of the commodification and sale of human life into public discourse as a "just" solution to racially-based cultural contention; often it is the neoliberal parlance of justice and freedom which reveals the most distinctly white supremacist nostalgia for institutionalized slavery. •

Theater Department Performs a Salient *Spring Awakening*

BROOKE SPONZO
STAFF WRITER

When I entered Palmer Auditorium for a special-access viewing of the Theater Department's dress rehearsal for the Tony Award-winning musical *Spring Awakening*, I was greeted by a scene similar to that of a war-torn battlefield. The large theatre was filled with wizened crew heads who donned multiple headsets and guzzled mass amounts of caffeine. They peered with bloodshot eyes over complex computer patterns and paused only to cry frantic orders over the din of vocal warm-ups. With varying amounts of scuffling, I watched a few determined individuals attempt to pave paths among the heaps of costumes and heavy tech equipment. All this occurred under the ever-shifting colors of the stage lights, which illuminated the room blood red one moment, moonlight blue another, with dark pauses in between.

The Palmer stage, which is most normally barren and mundane, had been covered in a great heaping of hay. The

appearance of a shadowy barn loft while the raised center stage featured dated school chairs in front of a massive,

text which echoed some of the shows impactful lines or backlit the rehearsing actors with starscapes and geometric illustrations.

The dress rehearsal commenced with little warning. All of the crazed disorganization from a few minutes past transformed into something concrete and sound. A story began to unfold, and not ten minutes into the show did I actually get real chills from its heart-rendering relevance to today's society.

The show centers around the life of Melchior Gabor, a rebellious boy who is believed by the other students at his German private school to not have any beliefs at all. At Conn, Melchior was played by Sonia Joffe '20, and while *Spring Awakening* has been performed an all-but excessive number of times—enjoying a long Broadway run and later revival, a United States tour, and several international productions—the



Photo courtesy of Andre Thomas

yellow straw took on the colors of the vibrant lights above it and gave off the

green chalkboard. On this chalkboard was projected a series of animations and

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Black Panther Revolutionizes Superhero Cinema

EMIR KULLUK
STAFF WRITER

The issue of whitewashing has long plagued the portrayal of superheroes. Traditionally, movies have only featured white superheroes, and nonwhite actors have been relegated to supporting roles. However, that changed with *Black Panther*. As the first superhero movie to feature a black protagonist—as well as an all-black cast and a black director—*Black Panther* made a revolutionary turn by breaking the unfortunate Hollywood myth that movies with black protagonists don't sell.

As the brainchild of director Ryan Coogler, *Black Panther* was celebrated by fans even before its release. His appearance in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) film *Captain America: Civil War* only increased the excitement behind the movie, with the first trailer leaving people anxious for the movie's debut. The release of the soundtrack a week before the movie was only a catalyst for the record pre-release ticket sales of the film itself. Prominent figures in the film industry, including Disney's chief executive, Robert A. Iger, had

their eyes on the potential success of the movie. Seeing *Black Panther*'s promise, Iger persuaded Disney to increase the film's budget to 200 million dollars.

In my opinion, the film achieved all of its goals and more. It made up to 192 million dollars on its opening weekend, landing just behind movies like *The Avengers* and *Jurassic World*. The movie received good first impressions and was classified by some to be the best MCU film to date.

The film's story is not overly complex, but varies enough from other MCU movies that it does not come across as boring or recycled. After losing his father T'Chaka in an explosion during a speech at the UN in the movie *Captain America: Civil War*, T'Challa is crowned the new king of Wakanda, a country that is far more advanced than any other nation on Earth.

It is the civic aspect of the movie that is so intriguing. Throughout the movie, viewers learn about the culture and traditions of Wakanda, which invites them to question modern day politics as well. The film poses questions about countries giving out aid, receiving refugees, and sharing the resources they have with the world. This political aspect resonates with the viewer most, as contemporary concepts such as globalization force nearly every nation to be an active member on

the global stage.

The antagonist of the movie, Erik Killmonger, helps bring forth this argument of active or passive participation on the global stage due to his background. It's his history and his actions that are the result of the marginalization of minorities dating back to slavery, as mentioned by Killmonger himself in the movie. By the end of the film, the viewer sympathizes with him, even though he is the antagonist. His character is also central to an impactful plot twist in the movie.

Beyond the story alone, the film's cinematography deserves a high level of praise. Coogler did an incredible job with the camerawork and the smaller details, such as color management and pacing. The movie has a steady pace and never bores the viewer, even though the action scenes are broken up by the potentially less exciting aspects of being a world leader, such as diplomacy and negotiations with other powerful Wakan-dans. The camerawork is phenomenal as well, with the camera smoothly moving between characters during long takes, following the action in a way that is not nauseating, and helps to create a fully immersive movie experience. The citizens of Wakanda are colorful,

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U.S. Girls Releases Political Album “A Poem Unlimited”

SAM WEISENTHAL
STAFF WRITER

“A Poem Unlimited,” the new album from the band U.S. Girls, discusses the trials of women’s lives in a contemporary sexist society in a way that is accessible to larger population through both sound and lyric. The album is a collaboration between 20 different musicians, many of whom are members of the Toronto funk and jazz collective the Cosmic Range, including Luis Percival, Macmillin Turnbull, and James Baley. The album has received major acclaim from prominent publications such as *Pitchfork*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Tiny Mix Tapes*. Meghan Remy, the face of U.S. Girls, is known for her unique ability to transform pop into an art form that is at one moment intoxicating and in another moment twisted. After releasing “Half Free” (her most recent album before “A Poem Unlimited”), Remy claimed that her next album would be less polite than her last. “The lyrics are getting, I think, way more violent,” she told ChartAttack in 2016. “I’m dissecting violence a lot more because it’s something I don’t relate with, and yet it’s everywhere.”

Although the album was collaboratively driven, the record speaks to a unified vision, one of remorse and fury, joy and hope. Remy created an album inspired by the fringes of the music world. Until now she has remained under the radar, refining the perfect palette to make an album which speaks of women’s oppression while being sonically and lyrically accessible. Remy has created a dreamy and hypnotic album that is filled with varying sounds, invoking David Byrne, Donna Summers, Cyndi Lauper, Madonna, and David Bowie. The band and album are, admittedly, surprising. For a band so under the radar, it has managed to make pop (a genre often disdained by U.S. Girls’ target audience, hipsters) into something dynamic and interesting, something that keeps a listener on their toes.

The first song on the album, “Velvet 4 Sale,” was released late last year. From the beginning, we see that the record will be exploring sentiments likely to ring true with more women than it should in 2018: “You’ve been sleeping with one eye open because he always could come back, you know / And you’ve been walking these streets unguarded waiting for any man to explode.” The song is a breathy and percussion propelled funk, which describes a woman imploring a friend to buy a gun and confront the man who has abused her. The end of the first stanza clarifies the moral attitude behind the nature of revenge Remy is proposing: “But you can get that power, too / It’s not you, it’s them / You should get it too / ‘Cause they always could come back, ya know?”

“M.A.H.,” or Mad As Hell, is even more blatantly political than “Velvet 4 Sale.” The track attempts to reconcile Barack Obama’s charismatic public image with the knowledge that he continued to wage war both domestically and internationally while in office. Contrasting this theme is the ABBA-esque infectious glee heard on the track. The anti-war anthem moves between a 70’s and 80’s infused bop, masking the politics of the song with the entrancing dancefloor vibes of Studio 54. As Remy uses Obama as a way to express her more general skepticism of political power, the dance-ready tune enables listeners to criticize the unlikely antagonist. Obama represents one version of a general male antagonist foregrounded in the album, as Remy underscores the ways in which the casual forms of male misbehavior are political by framing her relationship with the antagonist as a bad romance. Interestingly, a large portion of “Half Free,” another track on the album, deals with the psychological and physical impacts of emotional abuse.

“Time,” the last track on “A Poem Unlimited,” clocks in just short of eight minutes, yet the piece feels like one of the albums shorter cuts. The song is infectious in its experimental and fast paced beat. The second

half of the song is instrumental and brings listeners on an exciting roller coaster ride, mimicking the feeling of contemporary politics. With the overlapping and at times contrasting sounds of the beat, melody, and pace, the song falls into an overwhelming pit of possible endings. This combination contrasts the lyrics of the song, which claim, “When there is nothing there is still time... When there is nowhere there is still time... When there is something there is no time... When there is somewhere there is no time.” The urgency of the song, paired with the convoluted nature of time and space, shows Remy as lost in the confusion that the rest of the world also manages to dwell in. With the use of passionate guitar solos, funk infused bass, and a hi-hat heavy beat, the vibration of the song is palpable both sonically and metaphorically.

“A Poem Unlimited” is a modern protest album which manages to distill the female rage we see in both our interpersonal relationships and in the social sphere. A dynamic contrast of ultra-femininity along with talks of violence, power, and wrath, Remy is mercurial as ever, shapeshifting her voice and music as easily as she switches narrative and character. This album, although generally cynical in lyric, leaves me feeling ready to take action, a feeling which largely is due to the uplifting sound of the work. “A Poem Unlimited” contains an ember of catharsis throughout the work, a sentiment that is often neglected in narratives about the current state of politics and the social position of women. Remy has used pop as a form of bait, using the accessible medium as a way to make listeners consider the complex ideas of women’s oppression and political hysteria in an increasingly socially-anxious world. With the onslaught of women sharing their experiences surrounding structural oppression, American ears are becoming more used to the sounds of female anger, a change which Remy is taking advantage of in her new album. •

Black Panther

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ranging from bright greens to blues with the robes they wear, and their accessories ranging from bones and gold bracelets, whereas the Dora Milaje (the king’s bodyguards) are depicted in a noticeable and passionate red, with T’Challa himself wearing his black suit, featuring purple linings. Every aspect feeds into the others, and it is this vibrancy that sets *Black Panther* apart from other MCU films.

One other vital aspect of the

film is the soundtrack, which features famous names such as Kendrick Lamar, SZA, The Weeknd, and Vince Staples. Besides the memorable hip-hop/rap tracks, *Black Panther* utilizes songs inspired by indigenous music, most of which comes from Central Africa. The sounds combine tribal drum beats with digital drumlines and were created by Ludwig Göransson with the help of Baaba Maal, a Grammy-nominated Senegalese artist, to depict the peaceful nature of Wakanda. The contrast between the upbeat rap songs and more slow-paced indige-

nous-inspired tunes provides an interesting musical shift for the viewer as the film moves between scenes.

If there is one criticism that I have of *Black Panther*, it is the quality of CGI and the restraints that time put on the plot. During some action scenes, especially during the final act of the movie, the CGI becomes too noticeable, to the extent where *Black Panther* himself looks like a plastic figure who is bouncing around. It is these scenes that interrupt the immersion created during the beginning of the film. My second criticism has to do with

the length. The movie is a solid 2 hours and 15 minutes long, but it still left the viewer with questions. Characters such as M’Baku are developed well, but others are underdeveloped. Even though Killmonger himself is a very effective antagonist, I feel like he could have been introduced much earlier in the movie and could have been swapped in some scenes that feature Klaw, the movie’s secondary antagonist. I would argue that the movie is able to stand on its own, outside of its place in the MCU. However, it still does have references to other films (especially in the

post-credits scenes).

In the end, *Black Panther* is a must-see, not only for fans of the MCU, but for film fans in general. The movie is not only a milestone for Hollywood, but offers a much-needed portrayal in which blackness is not degraded or depicted through stereotypes or secondary roles. *Black Panther* is a MCU movie with an important political message that has more depth than simply “be good” and “do not hurt innocent people.” It asks the world to come together, work as a singular entity, and solve problems that have been present for centuries. •

Spring Awakening

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production right here at Connecticut College is one of the few, if not the only, productions in the entire world that has show's traditionally-male protagonist played by a woman.

I am positive in my assertion that Joffe's performance as Melchior does the role justice. Joffe strikes home the show's message beautifully in her deliverance of it's numerous show-stopping lines. Her voice stands out among the other school boys, focusing the audience's attention on her every word and demanding that what she says be heard and felt by all. Her soliloquies on the lives and deaths of her character's friends and loved ones brought me to tears, and I know by the end of this show's run that I won't be the sole person to have said that. The show will only have performances through March 4, but had this article been published a few days earlier, I'd have warned readers and prescribed tissues for Joffe's bone-chilling take on the angry outcast.

To understand more about this character and the actress who plays him, I sat down with Joffe and discussed the complex part she plays in this production. I asked her specifically about the gender-bent role that she fills and what she thought viewers might take away from this change. She stated that much of it would: "honestly be up to audiences," but that "Melchior in some ways represents toxic masculinity." Joffe believed that

"having a woman play a man who represents toxic masculinity brings up the question of: is toxic masculinity inherently masculine? Or is it just something that we attribute to men?"

Intelligent costuming which has Joffe in pink suspenders and pinned hair during the musical might give her the appearance of a school boy, but what about getting into character as one? "This has been really hard," Joffe commented, adding that she is able to discover the essence of Melchior's character in "finding truth in everything that's said. While the private school rebel searches for his place in the world, Joffe remarked on how she too had to do some exploring to "find where I meet the character and how I connect with him."

But Melchior and Joffe weren't the only ones doing some soul searching in this musical. Juliana Goldluss '20 portrayed Wendla, another lead role. From the way she acts and speaks, audiences will at first believe Wendla's character to be a child. However, it is soon revealed that she is in fact a young woman, made dangerously naive to the realities of the world by her mother's refusal to explain anything to her. Goldluss' performance reminded me of Celia Keenan-Bolger's performance as Laura Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie*, as both actresses portraying a woman seeing a dark world with childlike innocence. Wendla interpreted complex situations with the blunt analysis that develops from the inability to completely understand a situation. In that way, Goldluss plays her character much like Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, where the audience sees the terrors unfolding in front of her but she blindly trusts those who lead her into them, unable to see them for herself. Goldluss' voice, in her sweet renditions of Wendla's heart-filled solos, will guarantee audiences having "Mama Who Bore Me" stuck in their heads days after seeing the show. When Wendla was joined onstage by her impeccably-dressed, pastel-clad, private school girl squad, it felt like the Schuyler sisters just stepped onstage in Hamilton.

Charlie Gold '18 plays Melchior's best mate Moritz, a troubled young man plagued by strange dreams and frightened by daunting thoughts of failure. Moritz's dark downfall is brilliantly portrayed by Gold, who is able to capture both Moritz's strong emotions and yearnings alongside the character's absence of feelings within his world of utter despair. Audiences will feel worried for Moritz, wishing somehow that they could pull him from his plight, but getting stung when realizing they cannot change what happens to this doomed character onstage. Gold's voice is quite unique as well, giving a new element to Moritz's climatic song "Don't Do Sadness/ Blue Wind" and providing a secondary narrative to follow. This compliments Wendla and Melchior's story and further drives home that message of unspoken truth and hidden grief.

The rest of the cast is stellar, and each member



Above: Juliana Goldluss '20 as Wendla. Left: Sonia Joffe '20 as Melchior.
Photos courtesy of Andre Thomas.



seems to get a chance to shine on their own in having a small solo, duet, or monologue. Under the direction of David Dorfman, they dance clever choreography and accentuate powerful notes with equally powerful movements.

As I mentioned earlier, this show was incredibly relevant to the current political climate. Paralleling the message of the March 1 "Walk Out for Our Lives," Joffe wants audience to take away from the show the message that: "the youth deserves to know." As *Spring Awakening* problematizes a system created by adults that imperils children because of its inability to function properly, Joffe related the show to the pervasive issue of mass shootings.

"The system is still failing the kids and the kids are the ones who end up hurt when the adults don't do anything about it," Joffe said. She also thinks *Spring Awakening* is about leadership in young people and that they "have to be able to step up and change the world for the next generations." Joffe explained that, in essence, *Spring Awakening* is about "understanding who you are and how you become that person." In that lies the true "awakening" found in the title, and audiences should leave the show feeling compelled to wonder at who they truly are and how they want to change what is wrong about the world. •