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# THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1977

## Knapp's Leave Shows Complexity of Student-Faculty Relationships

MAIA HIBBETT  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

In a community as small as Connecticut College, information proves difficult to control. Concrete facts transform into rumors as they pass between tellers, moving further from the truth with each translation. While the College recovered from spring break, one such rumor emerged.

On Sunday, March 25, two separate sources told members of the *Voice* staff that Visiting Assistant Professor of History Bryan Knapp had been fired and was under Title IX investigation. At the time of this printing, the rumor of Knapp's firing is false, but the investigation's occurrence is true.

Professor Lisa Wilson, Chair of the History Department, confirmed on March 28 that rather than being fired, Knapp is on leave from the College. In order to protect the integrity of the Title IX investigation and the privacy of the students involved, the *Voice* will not release the identities of any student informants, but has received firsthand confirma-

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David Grann visits Boyd's class. Photo courtesy of Miles Ladin '90.

## With New Petition, Students Keep Baldwin Debate Alive

HANNAH JOHNSTON  
NEWS EDITOR

Although Visiting Assistant Professor of Gender and Women's Studies and Assistant Director of Africana Studies Andrea Baldwin turned down two offers to extend her visiting contract by another year, and Dean of the Faculty Abby Van Slyck has confirmed Baldwin's last day of employment at Connecticut College to be June 30, 2018, students are still working hard to convince

the administration that they need to make more of an effort to retain Baldwin. On March 28, students launched a petition in response to the conversation that has surrounded Baldwin's employment over the past few months. The petition outlines students' demands to the administration, but it includes some factual inaccuracies.

The petition appears online, verbatim, as follows:

We demand that the administration of Con-

necticut College:

- 1) Make a public apology to Dr. Andrea Baldwin through an email to all students, faculty, staff, and trustees
- 2) Make a clear outline of what is going to happen to Africana studies students during the next academic year (2018-2019) as to how students will be able to progress and/or finish their major/minor. As Dr. Andrea Baldwin will no longer be teaching at

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## David Grann: An Explorer of Myths, Legends, and Murder

LAUREN BARETTA  
OPINIONS EDITOR

Despite rarely slapping a Tilley hat on his head or strapping Merrell boots on his feet, David Grann is an explorer. Although he doesn't regularly battle the heat and insects of the Amazon like his subject, Percy Fawcett, or the cold and bleak nothingness of the Arctic like his muse, Ernest Shackleton, he shares these explorers' tendency toward obsession. Grann becomes consumed by his topic as he writes of the myths, legends, and murders that mark our history as human beings. As Grann put it, "being a writer or an author is essentially a quest."

On March 27, the Connecticut

College alumna and staff writer for the *New Yorker* magazine gave a talk in Palmer Auditorium about his new book, *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*. Like many of his works—such as his novel *The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession* in the Amazon and his long-form article published in the *New Yorker* called "The White Darkness: A Solitary Journey Across Antarctica"—*Killers of the Flower Moon* uncovered an unknown mystery. His tale of the deceit and betrayal the Osage Indians faced during the 1920s is shocking and widely unknown by the general public. I hadn't read the book when I en-

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#### OPINIONS

Max Whisnant reflects on his experience at the March for Our Lives on page 9.

#### ARTS

Sophia Angele-Kuehn reviews the stop-motion animation film *Torrey Pines* on page 16.

## Hold the Juice

I have a complex relationship with the word “juicy.” When I see a student hunched over a copy of the *Voice*, their eyes racing over our pages, I feel proud. If they look up and tell me that the content is interesting, or relevant, or—best of all—important, I smile. If they say it’s “juicy,” I know it’s intended as a compliment, and I’m inclined to feel flattered, but still, I wince.

The word “juicy” conveys intrigue, but in doing so, it’s double-edged. It tells us that we’ve gotten a scoop that others find interesting, which is crucial to relevant, worthwhile journalism. But it also suggests that the information has a gossipy appeal, as much information does, especially at a tiny, insular school where everybody seems to know everybody. So I want to make this very clear: I’m not trying to spur rumors with the *Voice*’s reporting. I can’t control what people will do with the information they learn from us, but I hope that members of this community will be careful with their words—that they will think before saying something hurtful, that they will refrain from perpetuating unverified or unproductive information, and that they will respect the privacy of their peers. To this last note, I also want to stress that the *Voice* will always protect the identity of its anonymous sources.

Determining what should be said requires us to decide how much, and what kind of, information the public needs. If I folded every time someone disagreed with what and how I write, I would be a terrible journalist, and an even worse editor. But it’s important to engage with criticism and to remain conscious of how your audience might respond to what you publish, especially including how the information you divulge might affect the subjects. It’s been essential to remember this when making this week’s reporting decisions.

I think the Bryan Knapp story matters because it reminds us, as I wrote in an editorial last semester, that this College is not immune to instances of sexual misconduct and abuses of power. I think it’s our duty to write what we’re confident we know because we’ve had credible sources tell us, and because the truth matters. From the evidence that I can see, I don’t think this is a case of administrative bungling or cover-up, and I respect the College’s need to keep the whole situation confidential. I don’t think we need to blow the lid off and reveal something shocking that no one else would believe; rather, I think we need to acknowledge what’s been happening right before our eyes.

The story about the petition for Andrea Baldwin, likewise, raises questions about what does and does not need to be said. Although the *Voice*’s point of view changes along with its dynamic body of writers, I think of this as a paper that tends to be on the side of student activism. Hannah and I agreed that we hope the article doesn’t tamp the College’s activist spirit with its factual corrections. Pursuing justice is important, and it has to be done based on solid fact. Not every activist effort is built on truth and accuracy, but the most successful ones are—and if you want an example of noteworthy student activism happening right now, look up Howard University.

This campus is small, and misinformation circulates easily as a result. I’ve heard some of the errors in the petition springing forth from the mouths of students on several occasions, and I had heard rumors about Knapp before, considering his behavior a kind of “open secret” on this campus. Hearsay has a nebulous, pervasive nature; it easily becomes engrained in our reality as collective knowledge without a specific or verified source. Sometimes people believe things because their friends believe them, or because that’s what the side of “right” in general seems to think, so they spread gossip they’re not sure is true or slap their names on a petition without evaluating its demands. Sometimes, conformity gets in the way of truth. But sometimes, it flips around.

Collective action and group momentum don’t always spread falsehood, and when a trend of truth-telling starts, it can be formidable. We saw such a revolution this fall, though it was concentrated among the hyper-privileged. While it’s important to remember that the #MeToo movement was incited by Black activist Tarana Burke before its move to Hollywood, the movement gained the momentum it did largely because of its advocates’ combined visibility and income bracket. People listened to the movie stars who came forward because they were movie stars, many of them white, all of them wealthy. And the movement turned next to the news media and athletics, similarly high-profile arenas. If the world of academia is next, I can’t say that we’ll be reaching far enough in terms of accessing underrepresented voices and communities, especially at a school like Connecticut College, where a majority of students benefit from staggering privilege. But, I think it’s important for the so-called culture of silence to be replaced with a culture of awareness wherever possible, and for the energy of the #MeToo movement to transcend arenas beyond Hollywood, including this one.

Nothing truly trickles down, but culture does have a self-perpetuating nature. I certainly don’t think that the way to change damaging, oppressive, power structures should be top-down, but I do think that wherever something can be done, something should be done. So keep talking, Conn. Open or closed, turn your nebulous secrets and your suspicions of falsehood into concrete knowledge. Do it not for the jaw-dropping details, the breaking stories, or the salacious scoop, but for the change.

We’re not here to be juicy. We’re here to make people aware, because when we’re aware, we can get something done.

-Maia

## THE COLLEGE VOICE

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

MAIA HIBBETT ’18  
*Editor in Chief*

DANA GALLAGHER ’19  
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## Community Bulletin

### Federal Judge to Commemorate Death of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Federal Court Judge Carlton Reeves of Jackson, Mississippi will visit campus on Wednesday, April 4 for a commemoration of the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. Reeves will host a conversation on the ongoing battles of the Civil Rights Movement over lunch from 11:50 am to 1:30 pm in Ernst Common Room.

### Martha Redbone to Perform *Bone Hill*

Musician and performance artist Martha Redbone will be on campus on Thursday, April 5 to stage *Bone Hill*, a musical theater piece about colonization and race in the United States. Redbone will participate in a pre-performance conversation in Unity House from 4:30 to 5:30 pm, then perform from 7:30 to 9:30 pm in Evans Hall.

### New London to Sue Big Pharma over Opioid Crisis

The City of New London joins dozens of municipalities, counties, and states in suing major pharmaceutical companies for the marketing of opioid medications, *The Day* reports. The suit seeks to hold pharmaceutical companies accountable for an epidemic that included 14 fatal overdoses in New London alone last year.

## Sports Spotlight

By GEORGE GROTHEER

### Featured Team: Women's Lacrosse

@ Colby L, 3-15

Eastern Conn. St. W, 18-8

Tufts L, 4-20

#### Seniors, with position:

- #1 Bryce McClure, Defense
- #13 Caitlin Mahoney, Defense
- #22 Mackenzie Axelson, Defense
- #24 Annie Cornbrooks, Attack
- #25 Anna Jorgensen, Attack
- #33 Megan Mullin, Goal

#### Coaching staff:

- Lisa Vogeley, Head Coach
- Liz Cahn, Assistant Coach

#### Upcoming events:

- April 4 @ Trinity
- April 7 vs. Bates
- April 10 @ Amherst

## The College Crossword

By ELEANOR KNAUSS



#### ACROSS

- 1. Word before tire or parts
- 6. Rampage
- 10. Words spoken by cheerleaders
- 14. Peels off
- 15. "I'm \_\_\_\_ you!"
- 16. Awesome
- 17. Cool Starbucks order

- 19. Look intently
- 20. Coffee alternative
- 21. Allowed
- 22. Conrad of The Hills
- 23. \_\_\_\_ Pen
- 24. Went over with a brush again
- 27. Sites of origin
- 29. Holy book

- 30. Ugly Betty Actress Williams
- 33. Year, in Lisbon
- 34. Ovum
- 37. 2017 film based on a novel by André Aciman
- 41. Genetic messenger, abbr.
- 42. Cube used in betting, often
- 43. Betrayal
- 44. "It's not my \_\_\_\_!"
- 46. Competes
- 47. Staple alternative
- 51. "\_\_\_\_ vous plaît"
- 52. Fruit with a navel
- 53. Soothing succulent
- 55. Group founded in part by
- 67-Across
- 58. Tyke
- 59. Old Crow Medicine Show hit
- 62. Squalor of A Series of Unfortunate Events
- 63. Historic periods
- 64. Like many campfire stories
- 65. End
- 66. Warped
- 67. "Nothin' but a 'G' Thang" Artist

#### DOWN

- 1. What camels do
- 2. Gait
- 3. Surface measurement
- 4. Like strawberries and cherries
- 5. It is practiced by many a procrastinator or daydreamer
- 6. More than LOL
- 7. Deduce
- 8. Expected salary, abbr.
- 9. Foot digit

- 10. Adjust again
- 11. Not together
- 12. New employee
- 13. Wave surge
- 18. Kimono belt
- 19. It is found on a yacht
- 22. Left-wing British party
- 23. German noble
- 25. Online marketplace
- 26. May be noir
- 27. Indian bread
- 28. IRA affiliate
- 30. Place to play VHS tapes
- 31. Lure
- 32. "How \_\_\_\_\_ Becomes a Law," Schoolhouse Rock hit
- 34. No trouble
- 35. Like many crops, abbr.
- 36. i.e Millennials, abbr.
- 38. Alpine Sasquatch
- 39. Studied, as notes
- 40. Hammer counterpart
- 44. \_\_\_\_ bender: small accident
- 45. 2012 Ben Affleck flick
- 47. Betting game
- 48. Awake
- 49. Patil, of Harry Potter
- 50. Religious deviant
- 51. Male child
- 54. Missing
- 55. Object of bullying, perhaps
- 56. Figure skater Johnny
- 57. Sheltered
- 59. Charlotte had one
- 60. "\_\_\_\_ we there yet?"
- 61. Feminine object

KEY: PAGE 15

# Residents of Connecticut Say “Weed Like to See Some Change”

JACEE COX  
STAFF WRITER

Marijuana legalization has been blazing through New England states in recent years, and could be coming to Connecticut soon. Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont have passed measures approving recreational cannabis, while Rhode Island and New Jersey are currently considering legislation to follow in suit. As a result, Connecticut is facing pressure from these neighboring states and in-state voters to reevaluate current marijuana policies. Hashing out issues surrounding marijuana on the national level has proven to be difficult for the past several decades, however Americans increasingly favor legalization. Pew Research Center data from 2016 indicates that 57% of adults in this country support legalization efforts. In Connecticut specifically, as of the fall of 2017, a Sacred Heart University poll revealed that 71% of those surveyed support the legalization and taxation of recreational marijuana.

A bill in Connecticut is currently being proposed which would permit individuals 21 and older to have possession of one ounce of marijuana. The legalization measure also includes considerations of selling and cultivation, as well as corresponding regulation plans. Issues of taxation are often brought up in the ongoing marijuana debates across the country. This proposal in Connecticut would include taxation rights on marijuana sold in the state.

As it stands now, possession of marijuana for personal use ranges from a civil penalty to a misdemeanor or depending on the amount of substance, with fines spanning between \$150 and \$2,000. Incarceration is applicable to amounts greater than 0.5 ounces. In terms of distribution or cultivation, punishment is significantly more severe. All offenses are penalized as felonies. Incarceration length ranges from 7-25 years. Maximum fines are between \$25,000 and \$100,000. An additional 3 years of incarceration is applied if distribution or cultivation occurs “within 1,500 feet of an elementary/middle school, public housing project, or daycare center,” according to the 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, the NORML Foun-

ation. Additionally, if an adult (over 18 years old) is found to distribute to a minor, 2 years of incarceration are attached to their sentence. The legal consequences for marijuana-related infractions have been widely recognized to disproportionately affect people of color, contributing especially to the mass incarceration of black men.

Chronic roadblocks to legalization are debates surrounding approving the substance solely for financial purpose without thorough consideration of health and safety implications. However, dialogue presented by Connecticut legalization supporters is cushioned by the state’s medical marijuana program which has so far exhibited success. The state is waiting for more concrete signals from Democratic Governor Dannel P. Malloy on how he would vote if the bill made it through the legislative system.

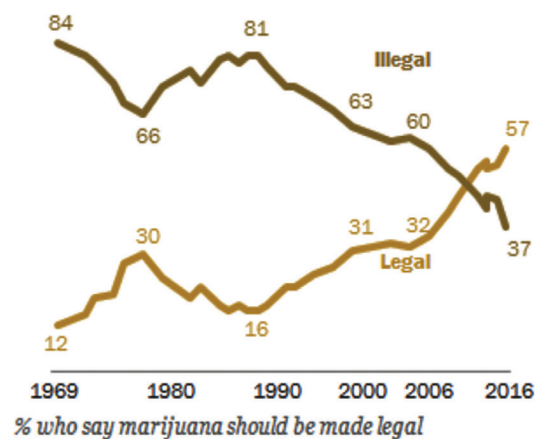
Limitations on age, quantity, and other specifics of marijuana’s legal status vary state by state. Despite these discrepancies, marijuana legalization will all-but universally affect college campuses. Despite legalization, college campuses have predominantly remained firm on their forbearance of substance use.

Connecticut College’s drug policy states: “The use, possession or sale of illicit drugs or drug-related paraphernalia as defined by Connecticut state law is strictly prohibited on Connecticut College property, as is the misuse of prescription drugs.” This wording places all illicit drugs into one mixing pot. If legalization were to pass in the state, Conn would have to revise its policy to address marijuana individually, as being separate from other illegal substances.

The hesitation for colleges to permit marijuana use on campuses is not necessarily due to safety or substance concerns. Institutions fear that their federal funding will be revoked for permitting the usage of drugs on academic campuses. The law of concern is the federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, active since 1989. For marijuana to be permissible on college campuses would require a joint effort from college administrations and the tougher task of achieving legal recognition by the federal government. •

## Opinion on legalizing marijuana: 1969-2016

Do you think the use of marijuana should be made legal, or not? (%)



Graph of national opinion courtesy of Pew Research Center

# SGA Elections in Progress

## EDITORIAL BOARD

It’s election season at Connecticut College, and voting for next year’s Student Government Association Executive Board is already underway. Polls opened on April 1 and will remain active through April 7. Information about the elections has been less readily available than usual this year, but the *Voice* has obtained a full list of candidates. See below to find out who’s running, as well as to check who held the position for the past year.

### President

**Candidates:** Brandy Darling ’19, Jamila Ezbidi ’19  
**Current:** Julia Horowitz ’18

### Vice President

**Candidates:** Tyler Clark ’19, Cheikh Gaye ’19  
**Current:** Yoldas Yildiz ’18

### Chief of Communications

**Candidate:** Nadia Bednarczuk ’19  
**Current:** Zachary Bermack ’20

### Chief of Finance

**Candidate:** Ian Wallace Semon ’20  
**Current:** Amanda Yacos ’18

### Chief of Sustainability

**Candidates:** Maggie Newell ’19, Maddy Quirke-Shattuck ’19  
**Current:** Lera Shynkarova ’20

### Chair of Honor Council

**Candidate:** Alison Joyce ’19  
**Current:** Marta Martínez Fernández ’18

### Chair of Equity and Inclusion

**Candidates:** Nicholas Alexander ’20, Anabell Pichardo ’20, Maryum Qasim ’20  
**Current:** Paolo Sanchez ’18

### Chair of Academic Affairs

**Candidates:** Andy Duong ’20, Sam Simmonds ’19  
**Current:** James Murray ’18

### Chair of Student Activities Council

**Candidates:** N/A; election postponed  
**Current:** Sarah Nappo ’18



## Petition to Retain Baldwin

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Connecticut College next year and a majority of the professors who have courses that fulfill requirements and/or electives in the degree are going on sabbatical next year, leaving only a few professors left to help students progress and/or finish their major/minor is insufficient for the Africana Studies Program to continue educating students.

3) Make a clear outline of the 5-year plan for making Africana studies into a department.

This includes:

1. The number of tenured positions
  2. The number of tenure-track positions
  3. The number of non-tenure/tenure-track positions
  4. A financial plan supporting the department
- 4) That SABs work directly under Dean of Faculty Abigail Van Slyck and who's work directly connects to hiring, as this will make the hiring process far more democratic and gives students a more influential voice.
- 5) Offer Baldwin a secured tenure-track position once her three-year visiting professor term is up.
- 6) The resignation of Professor and chair of the Gender and Women's studies department: Danielle Egan, because she is the one who has made the decision to not keep Dr. Baldwin at Connecticut college and is a perfect example an opportunity hire being given to a white cisgender woman, rather than a woman of color.\*

Three students, Zaiden Sowle '21, Hope Cooper '19, and Sam Weisenthal '18, have been named as being primarily responsible for the writing of the petition but seem to disagree on their individual levels of involvement. Sowle is the listed author of the petition on petitions.moveon.org and told the *Voice* that she did write the petition, but that Cooper and a "larger group" were involved in determining its demands. Cooper, however, wrote in an email, "I didn't really do too much with this petition actually I mostly edited as did Sam Weisenthal. But it was mostly Zaiden who composed it I just want to make that super clear." Weisenthal, for her part, said that she did have access to the petition before its publication, but that she did not edit it.

According to the College staffing plan, the position that the petition seeks to grant Baldwin will not become available until AY 2019-20, and granting the position to Baldwin without doing an outside search would require an extreme mea-

sure, like an "opportunity hire." An opportunity hire is the procedure used to offer a position to an existing faculty member without conducting an outside search and was used to hire Associate Professor Ariella Rotramel, not Egan as the petition implies. Van Slyck has said that opportunity hires generally only occur in instances of extreme and pressing need, and as such, there is no precedent for guaranteeing an opportunity hire ahead of time. Van Slyck, Egan, and Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion John McKnight have all maintained that they had wished for Baldwin to remain at Connecticut College, and that is why she was offered a visiting contract extension.

The background of the petition expands on the question of opportunity hires, as it states: "what is most obvious and disgraceful, is that the GWS department has now twice in the past five years created possibilities for exceptional 'opportunity hires.' Both professors who were lucky enough to benefit from these opportunity hires are white cisgendered professors, who were both granted tenure." However, Egan was indeed hired after a national search yielded her and three other finalists who interviewed on campus. When asked about this inaccuracy in the petition, Sowle said, "I understand that Egan was not an opportunity hire, but that term was initially in a demand that we did not include in our final version, and accidentally got grouped in with Professor Egan. We are deeply sorry to Professor Egan for this mistake."

According to Sowle, Baldwin "felt blindsided by [the] notice [of her last day of employment] and had no recollection of ever officially turning down the offer," which is in direct contrast to what administrators have stated publicly and on the record on several occasions. Baldwin was not able to corroborate this statement, as she did not reply to the *Voice's* request for comment. McKnight, however, recognized this as a misunderstanding between the administration and the students in his comment to the *Voice*. "I hope we can get to a point of greater clarity about this situation and that we'll keep working on our communication as a campus," McKnight said, first stating that he "support[s] the right of students to organize and to share their concerns with the administration."

The petition includes two specific demands regarding the Africana Studies Program. Ever since it was announced by Egan and later Van Slyck that Baldwin would not be returning for AY 2018-19, many students raised concerns over the future of Africana Studies. With many key professors in the program going on sabbatical next year and the departure of Baldwin, Africana

Studies majors and minors are deeply concerned over how they will be able to complete their program requirements, which may not be possible for them if Baldwin does indeed leave Connecticut College at the end of this year. Cooper added in her comments to the *Voice*: "the administration seemed to be unappreciative of how much work Baldwin has done for the program."

When asked why the petition seeks Egan's resignation, Sowle corrected some of the petition's wording. She said "that it was our understanding that Egan was the one who ultimately decided how to proceed with Dr. Baldwin because in the conversations we have had, we were told different stories by different people. This led to some great confusion on our part and are sorry for inaccuracies that may have resulted." Despite the lack of certainty as to the final decision-maker regarding Baldwin's hiring, Sowle still wishes for Egan to resign "because she, at the very least, has not fought to keep Dr. Baldwin at Conn and is a perfect representation of the whiteness of the Gender, Sexuality, and intersectionality Department." The *Voice* reached out to Egan for comment, but received no response by the time this article was printed.

At the time of this printing, the petition had 86 signees. One of the undersigned, Emma Race '18, explained why she is supportive of the initiative, stating: "my stance on the petition is that I'm really proud of my fellow students for standing for something they believe in, and I want to support that effort. I think that what happened with Professor Baldwin is a symptom of something that happens really frequently on this campus, so I think that taking an aggressive stance around this issue with help the situation generally." When asked if she supports each specific demand, Race said, "to be honest, because I'm not a GWS major, for me it's more about the trust that I have in the people that are organizing that."

Clearly, Baldwin is an important figure for her students, and as Race indicated above, Baldwin's case speaks to a larger, systemic issue of undervaluing professors of color in higher education. More detailed reporting on this issue can be found in a previous *Voice* article. However, the petition's significant factual flaws make it clear that the administration and the involved students are not yet on the same page, complicating discussions of a resolution to this issue.

*\*Editor's note: The text of the petition is unedited and appears exactly as it does online, with the exception of a formatting change to the list under the third demand. The Voice added an indentation to the list and changed its numbering style for clarity.\**

## Knapp Investigation

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

tion from witnesses that Knapp is currently under Title IX investigation for having romantic and sexual relationships with students. Though the sexual nature of some relationships constitute the most pressing concern under Title IX, one informant stressed that not all of Knapp's alleged conduct fits under a single label.

"This is a pattern of behavior," the source said, emphasizing that Knapp's misconduct has operated "to varying degrees." Beyond having romantic and sexual relationships with students, Knapp is said to have formed close friendships with students both male and female, sometimes taking them out to dinner or smoking marijuana with them. Among the alleged romantic and sexual relationships, the extent of Knapp's involvement with students varies, but constitutes a violation of College policy and Title IX regardless.

"Information for Faculty, Administrators, and Trustees"—also known as the faculty handbook, or IFF, and available to anyone with CamelWeb access under the "Dean of the Faculty" within "Documents"—details the College's position on student-professor relationships. It states that even in seemingly consensual situations, "a sexual relationship between a student and a faculty member raises serious concerns about the validity of the consent, conflicts of interest, and unfair treatment of others. Such relationships are prohibited at Connecticut College, unless the relationship commenced prior to a student's enrollment at the College," as would be the case if the spouse or partner of a faculty member were to enroll in a College course. Dean of the Faculty Abby Van Slyck confirms this to be a current and accurate statement of the College's policy, adding that it was last up-

dated and approved by a vote of the faculty on May 3, 2017, "after a long and considered process to ensure that faculty, staff and student handbooks are consistent with one another as they relate to the College's compliance with Title IX regulations."

While Knapp's Title IX investigation has been confirmed by involved sources, Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion and acting Title IX coordinator John McKnight is bound by confidentiality measures from discussing the case and did not disclose its existence.

"[Knapp] is on leave," McKnight commented, "that's all I can say."

Though he cannot personally affirm its existence, this investigation may be one of McKnight's last cases as Title IX coordinator. In a comment not directly related to Knapp, McKnight noted that a hiring search for a new, full-time Title IX coordinator has been approved, and will be announced to the campus community shortly. McKnight assured the *Voice* that the search committee will include faculty, staff, and students; students outside the search committee will have the opportunity to meet with finalists during the on-campus interview period.

Similarly to McKnight, Dean of the College Jefferson Singer stated that his position forbade him "to comment on any personnel matter" when contacted. The *Voice* also reached out to Knapp for his response to the allegations, but he did not reply.

This semester, Knapp was teaching three classes, including a 100-level ConnCourse in History, the senior seminar for American Studies, and a 200-level course cross-listed between History, American Studies, and the Critical Center for Race and Ethnicity. As confirmed by Wilson, Knapp's courses have been taken over by Associate Professor of History and Director of Africana

Studies David Canton and Associate Professor of History and Interim Director of American Studies James Downs, with Canton teaching the ConnCourse, Downs the senior seminar, and both professors co-teaching the course in History/American Studies/CRE.

Despite the disruption, Wilson commented: "I am confident that these two professors will make the transition as seamless as possible for the students."

Though changes of instructor came as a shock to many, members of Knapp's senior seminar told the *Voice* that Knapp had created a unique classroom environment before his leave. By advertising details about his personal and marital life during class, they said, Knapp made some students uncomfortable, but inspired a reverent following among others. Like many professors, Knapp served as a personal and academic mentor to some students. This dynamic illustrates that while some of Knapp's alleged actions are explicitly forbidden by College policy, others prove harder to classify.

Although the College's policy on relationships between faculty and students may seem straightforward, even expected, protocol in these situations remains an area rife with debate. Not all colleges have policies on the matter, and among those that do, the particulars vary. In Feb. 2015, when Harvard University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences instituted a ban on sexual relationships between faculty and students, the *Washington Post* reported that "a small but growing number of colleges" prohibit such relationships, citing Yale and UConn as examples. A Sep. 2003 *New York Times* article adds Duke, Ohio Wesleyan, Stanford, the University of Iowa, the University of Virginia, and William and Mary College to the list, noting that the latter held "the strictest policy" of the group, as it "forbids consensual

relationships between all faculty members and undergraduate students," not just those over whom professors hold direct authority.

The question of direct authority marks a key divergence among policies, as Columbia University illustrates in stating that "no faculty member shall have a consensual romantic or sexual relationship with a student over whom he or she exercises academic or professional authority." But beyond the distinction of direct authority, discussions at Columbia and other campuses prove that the debate over professor-student relationships are not moving in as singular a direction as some might expect.

In a Feb. 2017 opinion piece for the *Columbia Daily Spectator*, then-Barnard sophomore Toni Airaksinen argues: "While I concede that there is indeed a power differential between students and professors, this can often be mitigated or even reversed by the specifics of the relationship," citing the case of former Northwestern University Professor Peter Ludlow as an example of how "a consensual relationship with a student can result in financial and professional ruin." Though Airaksinen describes Ludlow's relationships as "consensual," Robin Wilson notes in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* that a graduate student "says [Ludlow] raped her one night in November of that year. Mr. Ludlow denies that accusation, saying they regularly had consensual sex and had even discussed marriage," and an undergraduate, who was 19 at the time, alleged that at a bar, "[Ludlow] ordered alcohol and insisted she drink," later spending the night with her, though the two did not have sex. Also in the *Chronicle*, Laura Kipnis, a former colleague of Ludlow's at Northwestern, calls the situation a "Title IX witch trial." The case is long and complex, too much so to recap entirely here, and was heavily disput-

**Breaking:**  
*A hiring search for a new, full-time Title IX coordinator has been approved.*

ed in academia-focused and mainstream news outlets alike. Among many others, Wilson and Kipnis's takes are available online through the College's library access to the *Chronicle*.

Despite its complexity—or better, because of it—the case crystallizes a debate about consent and appropriate conduct that is far from over, as well as evidence of the pressure to remain silent that plagues college campuses. Wilson notes that though the graduate student's relationship with Ludlow took place before the undergraduate's, the former had not presented complaints against Ludlow until the latter came forward with a lawsuit. For some parties, this provided grounds for skepticism; for others, it demonstrated that once one person decides to speak out, others will feel more comfortable to follow.

Like Ludlow's, Knapp's case contains some murky material. For some members of the community, Knapp's alleged behavior in and out of the classroom was something of an "open secret," known or suspected by many, but recognized officially by none, and it's far from the first of its kind.

Knapp's case shows us that information does not always remain within its intended channels, and if it spills out, it can have significant force. When it does, it takes careful listening and experienced testimony to parse rumor for fact. •



## David Grann, Explorer

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

tered the auditorium, but his lecture convinced me to put it on my list.

Though Grann's lecture was both engaging and intelligent, I preferred talking to Grann in the more intimate setting of my Narrative Non-fiction class taught by English Professor, Blanche Boyd. Grann had been Boyd's student, years before I was even born. The two authors sat side by side in class, occasionally sharing private comments as if life had never separated them at all.

Grann's current accomplishments as an author are impressive, but I found myself deeply curious about how he worked his way to the top. Professional writers often fall into the trope of the starving artist; anyone can write, but it is difficult to make that writing matter enough to earn a paycheck. Becoming a paid writer goes beyond talent. Grann himself claimed, "writing does not come easy to me." Yet, he made it. Despite a few setbacks and writing "some really bad poetry" upon graduating from Conn, Grann's work has been published in *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Atlantic*, the *Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, among others.

During Boyd's class I asked Grann how he did it. "I went to Mexico after

college," he said, conducting research for his Thomas J. Watson Fellowship. He also spent his days writing a novel he hopes is "buried" because, as he puts it, "it was terrible," and working on a variety of local news articles. Grann explained, "I would type it [the article] on the typewriter, get on a bus, and turn in the copy." The proceeds from the pieces he wrote provided him with enough money to see a movie in Mexico City and take the bus home.

When he returned to the U.S., Grann began working as a low-level copy editor at a D.C. startup called *The Hill* in 1994. He managed to move up in the ranks quickly, becoming an executive editor by 1995. Eventually, Grann left *The Hill* to write for the *New Republic*. Although he was earning a steady paycheck, Grann was unsatisfied with his work. He was known as a political writer, but this was not his passion. He reflected, "I covered Capitol Hill a lot but I didn't want to write about Capitol Hill."

With the support of his wife, Kyra Darnton—who formerly worked for 60 Minutes and is currently the



Photos courtesy of Miles Ladin '90

executive producer of *Retro Report*—Grann moved back to his hometown of New York City to do freelance work. Though he wasn't making a significant paycheck, he was doing work that was meaningful to him. The risk he took by quitting his stable job in order to write about what he was actually interested in fortunately paid off. In 2003, he was hired as a staff writer for the *New Yorker*; this had been his dream since college.

Though Grann has accomplished much of what writers strive toward, he said regarding self-doubt and desperation: "If you want to become a writer, it will never end." He told our class the story of his tour of the *New Yorker* headquarters after being hired. He entered the office of one of the editors on staff—who happened to be Grann's personal hero—and noticed a mattress on the floor. Sometimes the editor had to sleep in his office as pieces came in paragraph by paragraph well into the night. Grann summed up the humor and symbolism of that mattress on the floor in relation to the challenges of being a writer: "Even my hero had a mattress in his room in his 60s... I knew

then that it would never end."

Becoming a writer is difficult and even once you have made it, the job doesn't get much easier. Yet for Grann, "It's a habit. It's a calling. I love learning about things I don't know about." His stories are compelling and deeply researched. From Fawcett's disappearance into the Amazon to Mollie Burkhart's intricate family dynamics and horrors, it is clear that Grann understands and values people. Toward the end of our class, he detailed his writing process: "You begin with individuals. They have hearts and souls, troubles, illnesses and children. You care about them."

Grann's humble attitude and gentle manner reflected this deep concern for people and their stories. Though the author said he can "crumble" if he reads bad a review, and struggled through a short trek into the Amazon jungle as part of his research, he is perhaps more similar to the brave and earnestly curious explorers he writes about than is immediately obvious. With words, rather than machetes or snow shoes, he uncovers the mysteries that have been buried with time and tells the stories that have gone untold. •





## Engagement with New London: An Uphill Battle

GRACE AMATO  
STAFF WRITER

At Connecticut College, some students take classes for which they must complete community service in New London as a requirement. Students can also work in the New London area through Community Partnerships for work-study or to volunteer in the more traditional sense. However, I personally feel that Conn lacks an infrastructure that encourages involvement in New London. Obviously, there are individuals who make an effort to be engaged. But as whole, I do not believe campus culture promotes relationships between the college and community, and we are not doing enough to share our resources with New London.

A token class that does facilitate a deeper connection between students and New London is Sustainable Food Systems. The course is meant “to give students a background in the main food systems issues in the United States,” said Professor Rachel Black, who promotes “look[ing] for local case studies so [students] can apply textbook learning and see what’s happening in the community.” Due to monetary support from the Holleran Center—a selective academic center which partly focuses on community collaboration—Black brings in local speakers, takes her students into the community, and assigns work that encourages her students to go into New London. Grace Berman ’18, a student in the course, said that she has not taken many other classes at Conn that encouraged her to take more

interest in New London, except for her anthropology of migration class. The class, she said, “had kind of a partnership with IASC, Immigration Advocacy and Support Center. We did research for them and interviewed immigrants about their experience in New London.”

Despite the positive example that Black’s course provides, how often do most Conn students go into New London, make an effort to learn more about the community, or try to make a connection between themselves and community members and organizations? In my experience as a first-year, there is not much of a student drive to go into New London to socialize, to volunteer, or to explore the downtown area. I personally do not have any classes that require community work through Community Partnerships, bring in speakers, or relate our classes to New London.

Despite the fact that some departments and professors try to encourage and at times require student involvement with the New London community, the school itself does not seem to be doing enough to create a deeper connection between students and New London.

The College’s geographical location is a physical representation of the divide between Conn and New London’s community. Unlike some college towns, New London’s downtown area is not easily accessible by foot or by bike because the Mohegan Parkway is so dangerous to pedestrians. This infrastructure makes it especially difficult for first-years to begin exploring New London and build rela-

tionships early on, as we are not allowed to have cars on campus yet.

Additionally, when students do venture into New London, it can feel like there are a limited number of businesses that cater to student interest, as they do not usually have steady student consumer base. A possible reason why businesses in New London do not depend heavily on students is because the Conn community has a reputation in some New London circles as only taking advantage of downtown bars and nightlife; this image was further solidified when multiple underaged Conn students were caught drinking in local bars. Due to the separation between Conn students and New London residents, it becomes difficult to build real relationships. If there were more of a connection between the two, perhaps there would be more New London businesses that aligned with college students’ interests. This could create a positive atmosphere that would encourage Conn students to spend more time downtown.

Berman provides recommendations on how the student body may develop greater connections with the New London community. Berman said, “I think spending more time in New London and supporting local businesses can be a place to start making more connections and making it better for other people in the city.” As students who are learning about solving large social problems in the classroom, we could not only bring revenue to support local businesses and work to improve the economy, but also gain experience through learning more

about local issues and working to solve them. The lack of urgency regarding the New London community from students as a whole is hypocritical, especially if we claim to be socially aware and politically active in the classroom.

New London and the Conn community differ socioeconomically. Whereas the estimated median home value in New London stands at \$184,000, median income per household is less than \$37,000. While the population of New London is comprised of slightly more black and hispanic residents than white, Conn’s 2017 IP-EDS Fall Enrollment Survey shows that only 20% of Connecticut College students are “U.S. students of color,” a group which includes those who are “American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or two or more races.” Many Conn students come from wealthy homes, attended private boarding schools, and/or lived near highly populated cities like New York and Boston, which have a plethora of businesses and events. In 2017, only 17% of Connecticut College students received a Pell grant, an aid gift given to students with exceptional need which does not need to be repaid.

New London, at least in the past, has shared their resources with Conn. New London Hall was built from money provided by the New London community—workers donated one day’s wages in order to have the academic building put up. Not only is there a lack of student involvement with New London, but I do not feel like the admin-

istration does enough to share our resources with the surrounding community, which is economically depressed. There are many structural barriers that keep New London from improving, including the high taxes that make it harder for new small businesses to begin and stay open. As a private institution, we not only have the resources to bring in speakers and host events, but also have a lot of influence over the students and faculty. Therefore, it would be easy for the school to promote more events that would connect students to the New London community and give incentives to students to support local businesses, like partnering with popular dining destinations to accept Camel Cash.

Beginning with supporting local businesses, and hosting more community events, Conn could create a stronger bond between students and the community. As students, it is important for us to give back to New London. “In lots of classes we talk about [social justice issues] and bring it up but we don’t actually do anything,” said Berman. The least we can do is spend more time in New London, learn about a city with a complicated social and economic history and try to find solutions for what Professor Black calls “wicked problems, those that aren’t easily solved or have many answers.” Instead of complaining about the lack of opportunities in the area or about New London’s demographics, we should put time into expressing our gratitude to the city and apply the theories learned in class to New London and the greater community. •

# Welcome to the Revolution: We March for Our Lives

MAX WHISNANT  
CONTRIBUTOR

In the shadow of the U.S. Capitol, 800,000 people stood strong. We sang songs, cheered, and shed tears. All of this, we did together. The sun burned bright, welcoming a lively crowd and a group of precocious children. An introductory video flashed across jumbotrons, a fitting opening number for the acts of civil discourse that were soon to follow. As students took center stage, adults were relegated to the role of supporting cast. After years of waiting in the wings for their chance to shine, our nation's youngest are finally ready to take the lead.

A thick skin and media savvy have allowed the students of Parkland, Florida to remain in the news cycle. In the face of critics peddling "crisis actor" rumors, among others, Marjory Stoneman Douglas students have yet to demonstrate how their youth precludes them from having a voice in our society. The massive demonstration these high school students pulled together in a matter of weeks is nothing short of inspiring. Using various social media platforms and a stiff upper lip, Stoneman Douglas students, rather than professionals, organized the march. They haven't just kept the spotlight on their town, their school, and their grief alone. They pulled it straight from the fingers of lawmakers and the National Rifle Association (NRA) and back onto the issue at hand.

Organizing the march was just the first step in an incredible display of force and passion from our nation's youth. Organizers sought to diversify the event by inviting students from across the country representing varying demographics. This concerted effort by march organizers brought much needed attention to African-American community, a group of people whose voices are often needlessly ignored on the issue of gun violence. However long it took

for communities that are frequently under-covered and misrepresented in the media and our society to get the recognition they deserve, there can be no denying that including them in the march was a powerful statement and yet another small step in the right direction.

There were many moments at the

march where I could not help but feel chills run down my spine. Between Emma Gonzalez's tear-stained silence as she relived the Parkland shooting down to the second, or 11-year-old Naomi Wadler who proved you can never be too young to start your activism career, or 9-year-old Yolanda Renee King who is the granddaughter of Civil Rights legend Martin Luther King Jr., or any one of the countless moments throughout the day that tugged on the heartstrings. Yet, one speaker who was a standout was Zion Kelly, a young D.C. teen whose brother was shot and killed by a robber. He stood and delivered this stirring opening to his speech: "I'm here to represent the hundreds and hundreds of thousands of students who

live every day in constant paranoia and fear on their way to and from school." Kelly's message throughout his speech was simple. You must honor those you have lost, but there comes a time when action must be taken. It is your duty. He challenged everyone at the march to fulfill that duty. Each of these extraordinary

young people knows first-hand what being a victim of gun violence feels like. Each of them knows, in one way or another, the feeling of being ignored solely on the color of their skin, their sexual

orientation, their age. They've had enough. They accept the challenge.

Many of the speakers stood defiant, staring down the NRA and Congress with disdain. They spoke from a place of deep frustration that was well-placed and obvious. Fed up with the NRA's message that mental health is the only problem worth focusing on, the Parkland students refused to hold back and mince their words. Though the NRA bore the brunt of the speakers' denunciations, the U.S. Government did not make it through the day unscathed.

Many of the speakers took to passionately criticizing Congress for its inaction, calling for better leadership.

Under all of the anger and resentment was a rallying cry determined to galvanize young people. Each speaker spoke from the heart, the pain on their faces ever-present and almost tangible to the crowd beneath them. Ryan Deitsch was that cry incarnate: "We cannot make America safe again until we arm our teachers." Silence and confused looks were rampant, followed by a smattering of "boos" as marchers looked up, shocked. Deitsch continued, "We need to arm them with violence pencils, pens, paper, and the money they need to support their families and to support themselves before they can support the futures in those classrooms. To support the future that sits down at that desk waiting to learn." The crowd turned electric, erupting into a roar as we realized what was happening. Yet another high schooler had injected the crowd and young people across the nation with the fire and passion necessary to affect meaningful change.

The students of Stoneman Douglas had one goal on march day: to keep the focus on meaningful gun reform while rising above the numerous political pundits who trivialize and dismiss the movement. They accomplished that and then some that day. With fiery speeches, a quiet fortitude, and grace, members of our youngest generation have taken the world by storm. They keep their heads held high, their hearts set on a message of reassurance rather than divisiveness, and all the while never wavering in the face of steady criticism and ridicule. In the shadow of the U.S. Capitol, 800,000 people stood strong. Every single one of them embodying the simple proclamation delivered earlier in the day by Cameron Kasky, "Don't worry, we've got this." •



Photo courtesy of Max Whisnant



# Reflecting on Recent TRIP to Socialist Cuba

HANNAH NOYES  
CONTRIBUTOR

Associate Professor of History Leo Garofalo's Modern Latin American History class arrived in Cuba with fluttering nerves and heightened anticipation, wondering how the experience would unfold. Our itinerary was jam-packed and translated into busy days, allowing the exhilaration of being in a new country to overcome our fatigue. No time was wasted as we transitioned smoothly from the airport to the barrio of Marianao, located twenty minutes outside of downtown Havana, where we were welcomed by multiple smiling families. It was incredibly humbling to be received so warmly and readily by our host families; there was a flurry of excitement as we made introductions and parted ways to our respective homes. Living with Cuban families was an integral part of this educational experience; participating in homestays promoted awareness within our group of our position as educational tourists in comparison to theirs as residents. We were able to make unique connections that allowed for a deeper understanding of Cuba's social, political, and economic past and present. Many of the homes contained multi-generational families, illustrating the prominence of tight-knit communities and families in Marianao.

Our class was hosted by the Autonomous University of Social Movements (AUSM), and what they told us was

spot-on: when you live with a host family they consider you to be one of their own "children," an act of inclusivity that fostered a relationship with our hosts and Marianao in a remarkably short amount of time.

On our first day, we participated in an exercise where the goal was to "get to know Marianao." This activity entailed going out into Marianao in two groups without our professor or host families. Being placed outside of our comfort zones in this manner reminded us of our position as tourists; we felt that we stuck out like a sore thumb. The tasks put forth by the program encouraged independence and pushed us to take responsibility for our role as foreign students experiencing Cuba for the first time. Our knowledge of the area was limited, but by engaging with Cubans, we were able to navigate the bustling streets of Marianao. We overcame our nerves and asked for directions in order to complete our assignment of seeking out specific landmarks, differentiating between private and state-owned business, locating certain hospitals, and counting all of the schools we saw. "Getting to know Marianao" was a constructive practice of placing ourselves in situations where familiarity and comfort were not afforded to us.

By exploring the city, our class learned that Mariano's health sector is strong and includes four hospitals, four clinics, and three dentist clinics. My classmates visited a primary healthcare center in Marianao, and we were blown away by



Photos courtesy of Hannah Noyes

its services. Doctors and healthcare providers visit families individually, utilizing a classification system to determine how often a home must be visited in a year. Doctors live within communities, often above their offices, as a result of a system created by Fidel Castro wherein the government pays for these services instead of the citizens. Education and healthcare are free for all Cubans. Consultations, tests, vaccinations, birth control, and admittance to hospitals for surgeries or transplants are all free to patients. My classmates and I listened with incredulous expressions on our faces. Our questions continually prompted the healthcare provider to repeat herself; "sí, todo es gratis."

After observing the multiple schools within Marianao, we learned of the municipality's tremendous educational capability. The Ciudad Libertad school complex receives over 55,000 students, includes primary and secondary school, technical school, art school, and the National Museum of the Literacy Campaign. We were able to get an idea of the size and capacity of Ciudad Libertad when we visited the museum on one of our last days.

*El Museo de la Alfabetización* (the Literacy [Campaign] Museum) is a few minutes' drive from Marianao and is the only one in existence. One of the goals of the Cuban Revolution was to eradicate illiteracy in Cuba. The campaign to achieve literacy (*Comisión Nacional de*

*Alfabetización*) was launched in 1961 after Fidel achieved victory in 1959. Over one million Cubans were illiterate at this time, with the highest percentage residing in the countryside. The agents of this campaign were younger students who left the comfort of their homes, worked alongside farmers during the day, and taught them at night. There was a very protective family culture at this point in Cuba's history, and many families were reluctant to let their children participate. Nevertheless, the intense pull of solidarity brought over 100,000 Cuban youth and thousands of professors to join the campaign to fulfill the task put forth by Fidel. In one year, 20% of illiteracy had been eliminated. Advocates for literacy in other Latin American countries including Argentina, México, Nicaragua, and Venezuela have pursued their own literacy campaigns, largely inspired and sometimes supplemented by Cuba's, and experiencing varying levels of success.

Between our visit to the primary school and the time spent in this museum, I could sense the pride surrounding the achievement of the literacy campaigns, which seems to translate into a current national dedication to education.

Upon returning to Marianao, I discussed Cuba's education and healthcare with my host mother Luisa. She reit-

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## Faster, Higher, Not Far Enough: Jack Ewing and the VW Scandal

SHARON VAN METER  
CONTRIBUTOR

During winter break, I saw an event on Facebook from the Goodwin-Niering Center advertising guest speaker Jack Ewing, a journalist at The New York Times. The event title immediately caught my interest: “Can a Corrupt Company Be Green?” I am fascinated by the links between corporations and the environment, an interest sparked by Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* since it was required summer reading for the class of 2020. The event title reminded me of Carson’s critique of the pesticide industry and how a desire to make a profit resulted in widespread environmental poisoning. I thought this would be the perfect lecture to go to, as I was eager to hear what I thought would be a well-researched critique of capitalism’s role in our environment.

A month after I initially saw the Facebook event, I walked into a packed 1941 Room for the lecture. Jack Ewing approached the lectern and began to discuss his book *Faster, Higher, Farther: The Inside Story of the Volkswagen Scandal*. I enjoyed the first part of his discussion, when he revealed how Volkswagen was founded as Nazi propaganda. The company promised to provide Germans with “the people’s car” (the English translation of the German “Volkswagen”), but in reality utilized forced labor, funded by stolen money from German labor unions, to build it. I found this historical background to be the most enlightening part of his lecture, and I wish he had spent more time discussing it.

After mentioning Volkswagen’s origins, Ewing talked about Volkswagen’s rise in the United States, from the Beetle’s emergence in 1960s cultural iconography to its eventual fall. Ewing argued that in order for Volk-

swagen to recapture the contemporary American market, the company decided to advertise its new cars as running on environmentally friendly “clean diesel,” a more efficient alternative to hybrid and electric cars. This campaign was spearheaded by Volkswagen CEO Ferdinand Piëch, a figure Ewing described as “brilliant but ruthless.”

Piëch “saved Volkswagen” in Europe by creating a climate of fear studded with scandals and wrongdoing, including, but not limited to, stealing secrets and providing labor leaders with prostitutes. He decided to make the clean diesel movement possible by lying about how clean the diesel really is, using illegal software to cheat federal laws and spending millions of dollars to advertise “clean diesel” as the future of fuel. Volkswagen’s efforts to cheat the system were thwarted when graduate students and faculty at the University of West Virginia road-tested the clean diesel cars and discovered that the emissions software VW had installed on “more than a half-million diesel cars in the U.S.—and roughly 10.5 million more worldwide... allow[ed] them to sense the unique parameters of an emissions drive cycle set by the Environmental Protection Agency...In the test mode, the cars are fully compliant with all federal emissions levels. But when driving normally, the computer switches to a separate mode—significantly changing the fuel pressure, injection timing, exhaust-gas recirculation, and, in models with AdBlue, the amount of urea fluid sprayed into the exhaust. While this mode likely delivers higher mileage and power, it also permits heavier nitrogen-oxide emissions (NOx)—a smog-forming pollutant linked to lung cancer—up to 40 times higher than the federal limit,” as Car and Driver reports. An investigation into the cars followed, with Volkswagen eventually coming clean about the cars and financially settling with regulators and car owners.

Ewing’s central conclusion from his expose of Volkswagen is that companies with a corrupt corporate culture do not have the capacity to be environmentally friendly, which I viewed to be dissatisfying, as well as common sense. Without even hearing about the Volkswagen scandal, I could have guessed that corrupt companies would not be environmentally friendly. I decided to probe Ewing to see if he would scratch the surface more on his ideas regarding corporate corruption and the environment. I asked him two questions: “Can any company operating under a neoliberal capitalist system be environmentally friendly?” and “Is there a such thing as ethical capitalism?” Ewing argued yes. After proclaiming his belief in free market capitalism, he argued that environmentally friendly practices differed on a company to company basis.

I disagree wholeheartedly with this answer. While Ewing declared that it is impossible for corrupt companies to be green, he failed to mention the reasons why corruption takes place at all. Corporate corruption does not simply happen on its own, and companies are not corrupt for the sake of being corrupt. The root of corruption lies in the primacy of the profit motive within our neoliberal capitalist system. This phenomenon was evident with the pesticide companies that Carson disparages in *Silent Spring*, and it is especially evident with Volkswagen. Piëch wanted Volkswagen to cheat to gain money, a fault of the system rather than mere corruption.

While Jack Ewing was well-researched in his topic, his failure to address systemic issues that make corporate corruption that lead to environmental pollution resulted in an unsuccessful lecture. I would recommend the Goodwin-Niering Center obtain a guest lecturer more willing to push the boundaries than to bring in a centrist figure who fails to think critically about their lecture topic. •

## TRIP Course to Cuba

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

erated that both services are free, but added that the government only provides necessary resources to the Cuban people which do not extend to the supplies and equipment needed within schools and hospitals. These items are not always available, up-to-date, or functional. The effects of the embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States can be seen in this instance. Every single person we spoke to referred to it as “*el bloqueo*,” or the blockade, placing more emphasis on the role it plays in impacting the lives of Cubans.

Because the blockade impedes Cuba from importing certain “modern” products, a common miscon-

ception is that Cuba is an underdeveloped country. In reality, it has produced extensive education and healthcare systems that function at advanced levels, and unlike in some so-called developed countries, the services are free and accessible to all. Goals of the socialist revolution were directed towards “remaking society” by strengthening health and education with efforts such as vaccination and literacy campaigns. We saw countless schools, clinics, and research centers as we were driving to and from Marianao. We visited two farms and gained greater insight into the green revolution; Cuba banned the use of chemical products, and instead uses biological products as natural repellents. Every plant on the farm has a pur-

pose, whether it be medicinal, for consumption, fertilizer, repelling insects, or providing shade to other crops.

These advances might be difficult to recognize, especially because anti-communist propaganda abounds in the United States, where images of Cuba as a dirty country in disrepair seek to hide the impressive social and political progress the nation has made since the Cuban Revolution. Many buildings in Cuba have been standing since the colonial period, simultaneously displaying the beautiful architecture of another time, gradual deterioration due to economic restriction, and living evidence of colonization. The misunderstandings surrounding Cuba’s social, structural, and economic

achievements often hide the intelligence and innovation that exists on this island. With taxi drivers skilled at navigating narrow streets and vehicles surviving since the 1950s, history meets contemporary life, setting a complex, fascinating scene for the activity of our class’s trip. I am grateful to the people in Marianao for playing an active role in our education by helping us to understand our position as students from the United States within Cuba’s social, political, and economic context. This level of connectivity has left a significant impression on my history class, and though it was brief, I must stress how meaningful and inspiring it was to experience Cuba. •



## Sophomore Playwright Mocks the Canon with *Secret Macbeth*

**BROOKE SPONZO**  
STAFF WRITER

“No it works, trust me!” were the words of Aidan Gorrell '18 to his mother when he explained to her over the phone how Wig and Candle's new production would be an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, with the omission of the play's title character.

For those unfamiliar with the story of *Macbeth*, as I was before shamelessly plugging the title into Sparknotes, it's essentially about a man's greedy rise to kingship. After three witches issue a prophecy on his future reign, the general Macbeth murders the current king, Duncan, and kills anyone standing in his way to royalty. In the end, however, he meets his demise at the hands of the families he has wronged.

It's an interesting decision from writer and director Evan O'Donnell '20 to remove the eponymous Macbeth, who causes most of the action in the play. In *Secret Macbeth*, two witty detectives discover that the power hungry general is behind a series of murders but are unable to locate the

man anywhere. Witnesses, upon interrogation, do not even remember seeing Macbeth in the days or weeks prior to the killings, prompting the duo to ask the group: “Has anyone seen Macbeth... ever?”

O'Donnell's reasoning for Macbeth's absence was simple: “it's humorous,” and I wouldn't argue with him there. The play is hilarious. Gorrell, who plays Banquo, Macbeth's foe and second murder victim, in the production, describes the change as “inherently absurd,” stating that “[the play] lends itself to comedy really easily because it's missing the most important part of the show.” Sharon Van Meter '20, who plays Duncan's son, Malcolm, stated that the play illustrates “the importance of the central character and what happens when they're taken away.”

*Secret Macbeth* pokes fun at one of Shakespeare's most

well-known works, highlighting how, to today's youth, the events within the story seem more laughable than realistic. O'Donnell says that the lofty image the public holds of Shakespeare and his plays makes the material “very easy to make fun of” and that “if you're making jokes in that

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## A Look Back at the 2018 Oscars

**EMIR KULLUK**  
BUSINESS MANAGER

Everybody knew that the Oscars were not going to be purely about film, and to nobody's surprise, they were not. Whether it was Jimmy Kimmel's jabs at Trump, or people calling out The Academy for awarding alleged rapist Kobe Bryant, a lot of non-film related stuff happened. However, this year's Oscars had some solid nominations, and it will be these movies that drive Hollywood the next year, so they should not be overlooked.

First, let's talk about the elephant in the room: Guillermo Del Toro's brain child *The Shape of Water*. It won four Oscars for Production Design, Original Score, Best Director, and Best Picture. *The Shape of Water* follows the relationship between an amphibious, humanoid creature and a mute woman, showing the transcendent characteristic of love, while exploring issues such as abuse of authority, racism, and the disgust for the LGBTQ+ community that still exist. The setting of the movie—a secret American testing facility during the Cold War

era—has a particular color palette, ranging from different shades of blue and green to bright yellows and bleak whites. It is most definitely a movie that deviates from the mold of best picture winners and shows that The Academy is trying to get rid of its attached stereotypes. Usually a movie about slavery, a real life story about abuse, or a clichéd love story gets nominated for and wins best picture. Despite being a good movie overall, I found some tonal inconsistencies within *The Shape of Water* that detracted from the experience.

Besides *The Shape of Water* and its semi-controversial Best Picture win, there were some expected winners. This includes *Dunkirk* for Best Sound Mixing and Best Sound Editing, since it was the sound that gave the movie its claustrophobic feel and tense atmosphere, amplifying the visuals. Whether it was the horns of approaching fighter planes to do runs on *Dunkirk* or hundreds of soldiers battling with raging waters, the film owes a great portion of its overall

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## *Call Me by Your Name* Relaxes Viewers with Aesthetics, Seizes with Emotional Intensity

JAMES MURRAY  
ARTS EDITOR

A stylistic and subtle two-hour-plus journey, director Luca Guadagnino's *Call Me By Your Name* is a beautiful film that wrestles delicately with themes of young love, sexual exploration, and growth. Elio, (Timothée Chalamet) is a 17-year-old living in Italy during the summer with his family where he meets Oliver (Armie Hammer), a classically handsome student of Chalamet's father. What follows is an almost painstakingly drawn out summer romance between the two, the first 75 minutes or so of the movie replete with only palpable tension and chemistry between Chalamet and Hammer, which grows in its intensity as they gradually gravitate towards one another with more frequency.

Chalamet delivers what I would describe as a natural, effortless performance. He is a young 22 and easily passes for a clever, whip smart, curious 17-year-old. His character Elio spends his days at his family's house lounging in the sun, swimming, reading, and composing and playing music. Hammer's arrival very obviously throws a confusing wrench into Elio's normally languid and almost hedonistic summer routine. Chalamet does well to capture the complicated emotions of a teenager experiencing his first head-over-heels love: he is standoffish and dismissive of Hammer at times, who is instantly a favorite of the family and the local women. He gets annoyed by Hammer's brash confidence and comments on his informal language with Elio's parents. These reactions and his dismissal of Oliver at first demonstrate Elio's confidence and youthful swagger as he questions the presence of this larger-than-life outsider who has in-



Photo courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics

vaded his own personal sanctuary. But close quarters, common interests, and an intangible force hard for either of the two to articulate make it so they constantly find themselves together. As the movie goes on, Elio's self-assuredness gives way to at first subtle and then obvious displays of his own vulnerability, and acknowledgment of the undeniable chemistry, compassion, and deep affection that exists between the two.

At the beginning of the film, it is almost hard to imagine how these two individuals who at first seem so far apart in so many ways find their way to one another. Oliver is a statuesque, intelligent, brash, and charismatic man, while Elio first appears as simply a rail thin, adventurous but quiet teenager. Elio seems to be able to bring out Oliver's softer and more contemplative side, whereas the more time Elio spends with Oliver, we see his impressive talent and

knowledge beyond his years, and a unique maturity. Both reveal the best in one another, and the film itself is a refreshing and rare portrayal of male actors in a movie as we frequently see raw emotion and sensitivity from all of the main male characters—whether that be Hammer, Chalamet, or Elio's father, played by Michael Stuhlbarg. Stuhlbarg himself delivers one of the more memorable and prominent monologues in the movie after Elio has to deal with Oliver leaving after his six weeks are up. This preceding scene in which Elio bids farewell to Oliver is a particularly heart-wrenching moment, as the goodbye feels altogether too brief and formal. As much private vulnerability, openness, and emotion that the two display with one another throughout the film, the final scene in public on the train platform seemed to be a glaring rebuke of the double standard in society

about public displays of affection in same-sex couples.

My only issue with the film may have been its pacing, as there are long stretches of time, especially in the first half of the movie, in which very little happens in terms of events that advance the plot. However, in the case of *Call Me By Your Name*, this feature almost seems to work. The gradual character and plot line development go along with other elements of the film, including the soft, sleepy background music in combination with a family that seems perpetually at ease in a gorgeous Italian villa with little to do besides pick fruit, ride a bicycle, and go out at night. The slow, aesthetically and stylistically pleasing set and environment also contrast effectively with the sharp intensity of the romance between Chalamet and Hammer. •



## Oscars Reflection

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style to its sound.

Another winner who certainly deserved the Oscar was Roger Deakins, who came away with Best Cinematography for *Blade Runner 2049*. His work made *Blade Runner 2049* the visual masterpiece it is, with every set piece having its own personality ranging from the clean whites of the valley of California, the bright reds of Las Vegas, or the dark streets of Los Angeles separated by neon signs. Besides the color palette of the movie, the creative uses of

lighting, such as bouncing light off of water to create more subtle and natural lighting, or the smooth camerawork that allows the viewer to take it all in and appreciate the composition of the shots make Roger Deakins deserving of his Oscar. As he walked up on stage, everybody in the crowd could be seen smiling. This was Deakins's fourteenth nomination but his first win, ending the long wait to see him rewarded for his contributions to cinema.

Other nominees that many agreed deserved

their wins were *Get Out* for Best Original Screenplay, as there is little precedent for a horror movie with as much clever, detailed and topical social commentary as *Get Out*. Frances McDormand earned support for her win as Best Actress in a Leading Role in *Three Billboards*, and Gary Oldman won a deserved Oscar for his portrayal of Winston Churchill in the film *Darkest Hour*. Combined with his makeup, which

leaned heavily on and succeeded due to its editing. There is even a scene in the movie that is edited in such a way that the song "Tequila" by The Button Down Brass and Ray Davies is recreated using gunshots. These snubs were not considered controversial by all, but many people, however, argue that the Academy's decision-making process is oddly complicated and questionable, as the voters' first choices are often less important than their second picks.

The 2018 Oscars were a lot to take in, as there were and still are debates going on about the winners and the way Jimmy Kim-

mel hosted the show, the #MeToo movement, the shake-ups in Hollywood in relation to sexual-abuse allegations, and the political spectrum within the US. Most of the awards, especially the major ones, found their deserved winners in the eyes of many fans, and the art of filmmaking was successfully celebrated through the speeches given by the winners, the well-crafted montages that made us all remember the magic provided by film, and the awards themselves. •

was recognized with Oscar, Oldman's portrayal of Winston Churchill is captivating. His performance carries the whole movie. There were some other, more controversial wins within the Oscars, such as *Coco* for Animated Feature Film. Though Pixar undoubtedly worked its magic again, it was sad to see *Loving Vincent*, a movie entirely composed of paintings that depicted the last years of Van Gogh in an intriguing way, lose. Another controversial win was *Dunkirk* for Best Film Editing, as *Baby Driver*



The Shape of Water Director Guillermo del Toro. Photo courtesy of Getty Images

## Forgive or Forsake: When an Artist Messes Up

KATEY VESTA  
SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR

I read a fantasy book once that absolutely blew my mind. It was *The Way of Kings* by Brandon Sanderson, and it changed how I perceived every other fantasy novel. I told some of my friends that I thought the world-building was even better than Tolkien (which is high praise from someone who has read *The Silmarillion* numerous times). I fawned over that book, cherished every one of its many hundreds of pages, and hyped myself up to read the sequel. Then, I learned that the author was homophobic.

This stopped me in my tracks. I did some research, of course, and found out that Sanderson had commented about how his religious beliefs prevented him from viewing same-sex marriage as morally right. I was hurt, of course: this man created a world that I absolutely adored, and now I could no longer enjoy his creations without a lingering feeling of guilt. The knowledge that the author held a belief so fundamentally opposed to mine, in my eyes, ruined the source material. I couldn't bring myself to pick up the sequel, and every time I saw any of his books I felt an immense sense of loss. Such unique creativity and skill was ruined for me and many others by the author's opinions, even though they didn't necessarily manifest in the art.

Such a story is becoming increasingly common, especially in the past few months. A YouTube personality makes racially inflammatory remarks; an actor is exposed as a sexual predator; and the trend repeats

in seemingly infinite ways. In the end, it boils down to the fact that an artist betrays the trust of some or even all of their fans when they engage in hateful or abusive behavior. What, then, becomes of their art? Can people still appreciate it while maintaining their moral values?

This is a tricky situation, one toward which many people have turned their minds and pens. It raises even more questions as one unravels it: can art be separated from its artist? How much forgiveness should be allowed for ignorant mistakes? Should celebrities be held to higher standards than others? A fairly timely example is Harvey Weinstein—should people stop watching any movie he helped make now that it's widely known what awful things he did to women? None of these questions are easy to answer, as it ultimately depends greatly on the individual consumer of the art to decide. Some people have a lot more tolerance for mistakes, others have a strict one-strike policy.

However, reclaiming the art from a flawed artist can be a powerful statement. One of the biggest benefits of consuming art is that the audience has almost as much power as the artist does. Was a book written by a homophobic author? What happens if you interpret the main character as gay, or all of the characters as gay? Once an artist puts their art into the world, people who view it can project whatever they want onto it, interpret it in whatever ways seem fit or poignant to themselves. This doesn't change the perspective of the artist, of

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## Secret Macbeth

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context, they land easier.”

The play sticks to the original plot of *Macbeth*, but the characters all use modern English. This puts added emphasis on the more wild actions and phrases in the play that would usually be masked by poetic, and sometimes confusing, sentence structure. With this change, Gorrell hopes audiences will question the story more and hopefully exclaim things like: “why is this like this? It’s so stupid!” By jabbing at the original, iconic storyline, the play is made incredibly entertaining.

Only Macduff, a lord played by Katie Rooney ’21, speaks in long-winded, dramatic old English, much to the dismay of the other characters, who can never understand what he is saying. At another point in the play, Macbeth’s hired mercenaries, who usually are just present to murder

Macbeth’s enemies, have existential crises and consider changing their career paths.

The play reminded me a lot of the musical comedy *Something Rotten!* which is currently on a national tour after being on Broadway a few years ago. This show depicts Shakespeare as a rockstar who is ridiculed by other playwrights who don’t understand his immense appeal to the public and are frustrated that his crazy plot lines and befuddling language make his plays more popular than theirs.

*Secret Macbeth* certainly demonstrates that Shakespeare is easy to make fun of. But is it important to read? Titles like *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* have become staples in middle and high school classrooms across America, but are they worth all the comprehension struggle to understand? Van Meter seems to think so, adding that, in addition to the plays’

“universality of themes,” they are also incredibly “open to interpretation.” She believes that the creative freedom artists have to work with and to adapt this material into new and unique outlets makes the literature pieces worthy of remaining a part of today’s society. O’Donnell’s response to the question, however? “I don’t think everyone needs to read Shakespeare,” he says. He confessed that: “I’m not super connected to *Macbeth*, I read it in sophomore year and I just thought it would be silly to write something about it.” However, he further noted that people with an interest in theatre should definitely take a look at the texts.

Whether you’re a fan of the famous bard or not, it seems that a good laugh can always be had when making jokes about these recognizable works that just seem to keep popping up in modern society. •

## Forgive or Forsake

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course, but it can help someone to maintain their appreciation for a work despite their dissonance with the artist’s opinions.

This being said, there must be a recognition of the limitations to the powers of audience interpretation. Consumption of art, even in a subversive way, still provides support to the artist and does little to challenge problematic views. The limits of the interpretive approach require that people be vocal about the problems inherent in various artistic works and that they know when to draw a line in the sand. It’s a tricky balance to strike, especially if the artist’s misdeeds were minor in nature, or if they claim to have learned from the past.

I have since learned more about the context of Sanderson’s homophobic comments. The blog post that started the discussion went up in 2007, and mostly discusses his reaction to Dumbledore’s then-re-

cently revealed homosexuality. Beyond this, I also learned that in 2011 he posted a lengthy apology in which he stated that he had learned to analyze his own privileges and biases, and that he supported the rights of LGBTQ+ people. Though this doesn’t erase the fact that he did originally write homophobic remarks, and it by no means demonstrates a complete abandonment of his original mentality, it’s a big step toward helping the people he hurt regain the ability to enjoy his works. Of course, a verbal apology can’t heal all ills, and there are some situations where the actions on the part of the author remain unforgivable. These are the scenarios in which a work of art may not be separable from the artist and will always retain a certain shadow.

I don’t believe that this should necessarily keep people from enjoying the source material. It simply necessitates a conversation about the artist: yes this art is good and enjoyable, but one must be mindful about the person who created it.

Such a rule can really apply to the consumption of anything. In the end, it is the consumer’s responsibility to be aware of the messages that they are supporting and spreading. In this way, the audience enjoying the art can also keep an attentive eye out for any areas in which the artist’s bias or negative opinions stain the art. No piece of art has ever been created by a perfect individual, it is simply up to the consumer to decide on their own litmus test of morality and then experience art at their own discretion.

I, for one, have found this conundrum to be challenging. I tend to have a low level of empathy for people who practice intolerance, but I also understand that celebrities are often held to unrealistically high standards. The line between art and artist is one that I am still figuring out for myself, and I’m becoming increasingly aware of who creates art and how they influence it. I think that everyone ought to have a conversation with themselves about how they would react to being

disappointed or even betrayed by an artist they once loved, and how they might continue to interact with art that comes from toxic roots. I know there are some artists whom I now refuse to support due to past acts they have committed: Woody Allen, Roman Polanski, Quentin Tarantino, and Nick Robinson are only a few, as the list is unfortunately long. However, I am also looking forward to finally reading the sequel to *The Way of Kings*, though with a bit more scrutiny in mind. •

### CROSSWORD KEY

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



## Torrey Pines Combines Queer Identity and Punk Spirit with Childlike Wonder

SOPHIA ANGELE-KUEHN  
ARTS EDITOR

It began—like almost all films—with a clean, black slate. No color, except for that conjured up in audience members' minds from the sounds of a whispering, spraying ocean. And indeed, the first scene of the stop-motion animated film *Torrey Pines* opens on a parking lot in front of the Pacific Ocean. It is a child's paper world, colorful and alive, yet split between the gray, depressing plane of the parking lot and a mysterious field of grasses and red mountains, penetrated by a highway. The wild side is about to be explored. True nature, once hidden, revealed.

*Torrey Pines* is a sixty-minute, coming-of-age journey of trans director Clyde Petersen's life growing up in California in the 90s, just north of Torrey Pines State Beach. According to the on-stage pamphlet at the movie viewing in Evans on Feb. 23, *Torrey Pines* are beautiful trees that only grow on the sandy bluffs above the Pacific Ocean. Petersen often escaped from his schizophrenic mother to count pelicans there and walk on the train tracks running parallel to the ocean, as demonstrated in the next scene of the film, after his mom tells him while driving on the highway the conspiracies at the White House, which include an alien spaceship and hippies.

Cue the beach music, literally, for the film was accompanied by live music played by Petersen's band Your Heart Breaks. As paper Petersen traverses the parking lot filled with people drinking beer and listening to music, and under the bridge of the highway, with red Converse beating the train tracks, audience members could observe Zach Burba beating the drums, Petersen plucking his bass, Jacob Jaffe strumming his guitar, and Lori Goldstein playing the cello on stage. The feel-good, sincere music brought the animation to life and made the audience members better connect and listen to Petersen's story.

However, *Torrey Pines* can already relate to viewers. Be it from the annoying boy who sat next to you in middle school science, finding your pet parakeet dead when you came home from school, or even watching *Star Trek* on TV late at night, Petersen's childhood echoes all others by being unselfconsciously honest.

"He was really trying to just tell the



Stills from *Torrey Pines* courtesy of Clyde Petersen

truth of his life," noted attendee Sara Abbazia '21, a student in the introductory art class Concepts in Two Dimensions. "He laid it all out on the table, he wasn't going to edit anything out." *Torrey Pines* covers all the quirks of growing into adolescence.

The animation of these day-to-day battles was spectacular, and crafted entirely by hand. Petersen and fellow animator Chris Looney used a small, 99-square-foot bedroom as their studio for a year and half, assembling and painting the paper characters, backgrounds, and sets with the help of seven interns. According to the DVD kindly given to the writer by Petersen, *Torrey Pines* was created on a multiplane animation stand, or to be less formal, a "wire Ikea shelf frame without the baskets." Custom cut glass layers provided different stages for the paper objects to be laid upon, making the animation cleaner and creating a sharp foreground and foggy background on film. On the

very top shelf, pointing down at all the layers through a cut hole, was a DSLR camera. On the very bottom shelf lay the beautiful shifting background scenery, which could be scrolled through as the characters "moved" above.

"You could see a lot of detail went into this, a lot of love," said Abbazia. "And the creative ways that he conveyed texture." For example, in one scene Petersen is brushing his teeth in the mirror, and viewers can watch the individual bristles move and fit into the teeth as if in 3D. "There were certain techniques. It was all 2D, but then certain things made me question it, like it looked 3D and it had the illusion, but it was all flat paper."

All the sounds in *Torrey Pines* were also handmade, with most noises created live on stage by Susie Kozawa rubbing a towel over a drum for sea spray, or smooching into a mic for a kissing scene. However, except for the film's paper-remake of the 80s TV series Beau-

ty and the Beast, no verbal dialogue is spoken.

*Torrey Pines* is radical in many aspects, mixing the awkward and bizarre with the hilarious, thus perfectly capturing Petersen's life in her town as a twelve-year-old. Tigers leap out of arguing mouths, a freshly dissected frog is squished into a desk drawer, and newborns are flung at a distraught Petersen after he realizes the harsh realities of woman.

"His art style and the music style wasn't always 'pretty,'" noted Abbazia. "I went to another movie event and it was about mental health, and we were watching film clips and they were all very nice, but they were all very 'pretty,' and it was like you're burying your story, but you're also making it something that we can consume easily... it's like, 'oh, this is so aesthetically pleasing.' But it's not the truth."

*Torrey Pines* confronts and embraces the uncomfortable truth. Petersen wanted to create a queer punk autobiographical film in order to help others going through mental health situations in families or feeling alone in small towns. The song "Torrey Pines" that Petersen had recorded nine years before the release of the movie speaks to this theme: "Open up your mouth, and let it all out / you've got to get it all out, just get it off your fucking chest. The shit that you've been through is the reason you're you / and I bet someone's listening with a similar history. Once the words are spoken, they're all out in the open / it will help other people feel a lot less broken. So open up your mouth."

*Torrey Pines* is Petersen's blank slate, a way of starting anew. Even though Petersen values his past (as shown by the love that he put into his film, as an audience member remarked), it was difficult, and sharing it with others makes it less so. It is art with a purpose.

And yet, it is also art for art's sake. After the viewing, audience members, including Abbazia, came up to Petersen in the lobby and asked him if the recurring appearances of the ocean or birds symbolize anything. "But he was like, 'This is what I like. Me and my friends have a band. We're playing music,'" laughed Abbazia. We feel a need to "read" into a story and expose the truth. However, Petersen clearly demonstrates that already nothing is hidden—he is out in the open, colorful, free, and wild. •

