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Macklemore Pops Tags and Expectations with New Smash Hit

ANDREW STEEL
STAFF WRITER

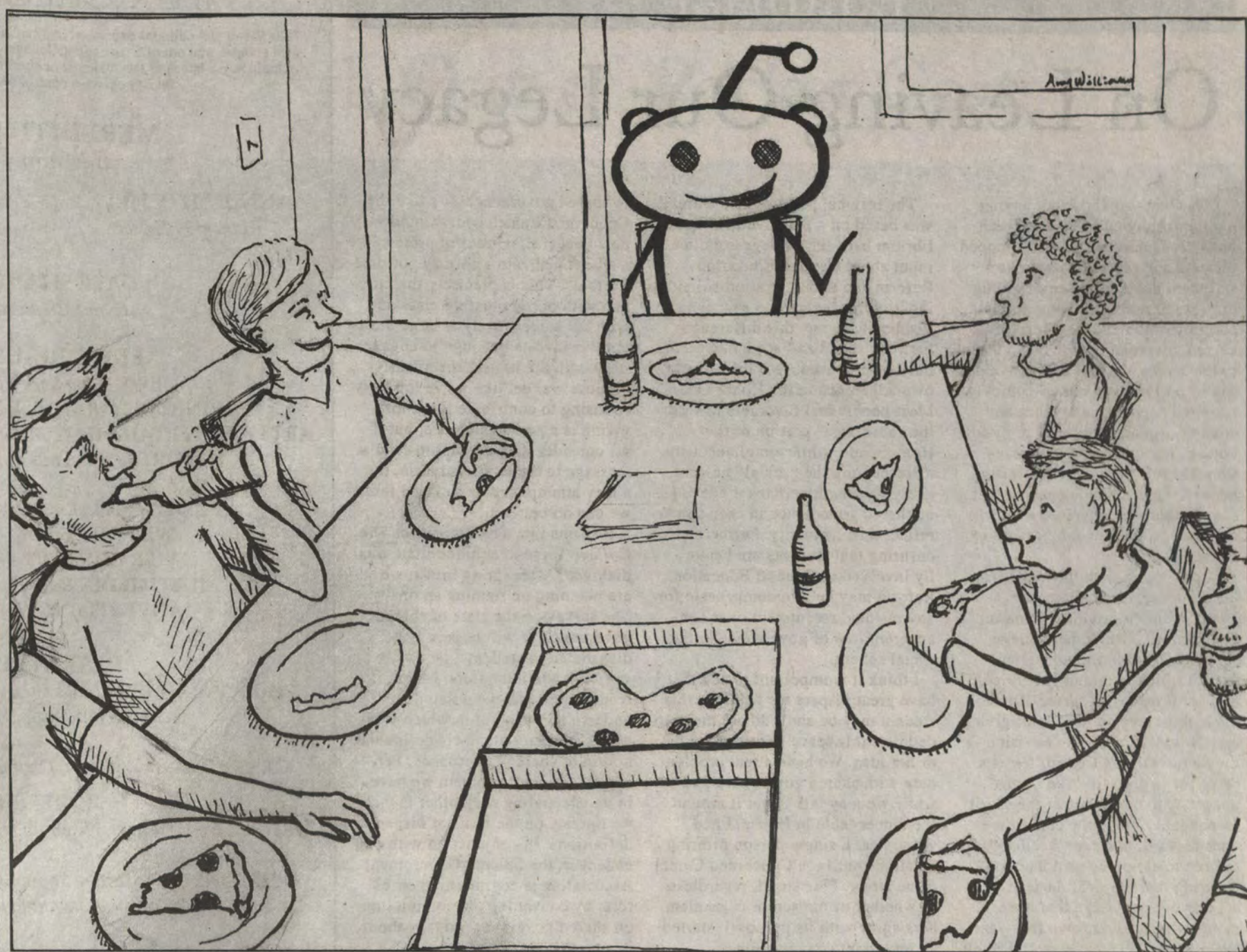
"I'm gonna pop some tags, only got twenty dollars in my pockett
I'm, I'm, I'm huntin, lookin for a come up
This is fucking awesomme"

If you don't know those lyrics, go Google them and listen to the song. And watch the version with the official music video. Good? Damn right it is. Did you hear that sexy sax riff? The delicious baritone chorus? UNF. But we're not talking Barry White here; this is a song about carousing thrift stores for cheap clothes. The premise is so crazy out-of-nowhere ridiculous that it makes you wonder how it could possibly be the first rap song to ever make the Billboard top 100 without any backing from a major record label. Is it really just that catchy? Yes. Oh yeah it is. But let me tell you why it deserves to be on that list.

I would love to harp on why the music video itself is so good, but I'm here to talk about the song, so let's get into that. The first time I heard this bad boy, I was sitting in my mom's Volvo, half an hour early to meet my family at a diner after their movie-going experience with *Les Miserables*. When this song came on, I was bored out of my mind and half-asleep, lulled by the lightless parking lot's dark embrace. I gotta tell you, I perked up when that little opening thing with the "Wut wut? Wut? Wut?" and the guy yelling some indecipherable three word phrase kicked in. It sounded like some stupid gimmicky crap, and I went right for the radio dial. But that sax riff started just as I was about to change it, and I paused. Then the chorus came in talking about...what, buying beer for twenty bucks or some shit? "Hm...you know, it's probably the usual fanfare about getting smashed on Saturday," I thought to myself. "...But that sax riff's pretty sweet. I'll stick it out, see where it goes."

Now, pretty much all I got out of the first listen was the ear worm chorus and that bit about wearing your granddad's coat. Oh, and the style. I hardly knew any of the words, but there was just this flare to the music. It was saying something cool, even if I didn't know what at the time. Let me try to explain what I mean, since I've familiarized myself with the lyrics a bit more by now. Look at the chorus: the final words are "this is fucking awesome." Macklemore's first line in the whole song is "Nah, walk into the club like, 'What up, I got a big cock!'" That's ridiculous. How could you pull anything meaningful out of a song like that?

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AMY WILLIAMS

Reddit or Not, Here Comes the Next Big Internet Sensation

MOLLIE REID
STAFF WRITER

Web users have found *Reddit.com*, a popular entertainment and social news website, an all-encompassing example of how the rise of the Internet has led to an increased sense of online social connection and interaction. Founded in 2005 by Steve Huffman and Alexis Ohanian, two University of Virginia graduates, Reddit essentially operates on user action and moderation through a bulletin board system, allowing users to upload, download and exchange mes-

sages, among other actions, by logging into the system. On average, the site has more than three billion page views a month.

Similar to many other popular websites focused on user-generated content, such as Tumblr, Reddit encourages users to plunge into the depths of the Internet (for better or for worse) through subcategories. For example, those seeking interesting, maybe even random, scientific matter can search through the subcategory, or "subreddit," appropriately called "r/science." Among "r/science," users can browse

through other subcategories, like "r/gaming," "r/random" and "r/funny." As with most material on the web, photos, .gifs and other types of digital media drive many subreddits, many of which are memestyled.

Aside from the influx of joke photos and .gifs on the site, Reddit offers its users two subreddits that promote an interesting sense of community interaction as well as entertainment: r/AskReddit and r/IAMA, also known as Ask Me Anything, or AMA. Users post an assortment of questions and await responses

that usually turn into long threads of comments. "Good" or "bad" comments or submissions, as deemed by the Reddit community, can be voted "up" or "down," changing the comment or submission's rank on the page. Such questions can range anywhere from "what is a common problem in your subculture that most people don't realize exists?" to "what is the scariest story you can come up with that only takes one sentence to tell?" To say the least, much like Reddit itself, these questions and comments range from very questionable to very amusing.

Secondly, r/IAMA, or Ask Me Anything, allows users to learn about other people, ordinary or distinguished, through a collection of questions. Recently, Bill Gates completed an AMA session in which he answered questions dealing with his work with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the future and past of technology and what he does for fun. When asked if he ever owned a Macintosh computer, Gates answered: "Microsoft does a lot of software for the Mac. I mostly use Windows machines but from time to time I have tried all of Apple's products."

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The Tea Party Disowns Karl Rove

CORY SCAROLA
STAFF WRITER

Have you ever heard of Karl Rove? If you haven't, allow me to introduce you to him. He is a very conservative political strategist, consultant and policy advisor. Rove has been a consistently outspoken voice for conservatives, a position that has resulted in him being labeled one of the most conservative men in America.

Now as anyone who knows me will testify that Karl Rove and I

would not get along; our politics are diametrically opposed on just about every issue. However, having said that, I was surprised to find that an action by one political group earlier this year led me to feel offended on Mr. Rove's behalf, something which I had honestly believed was impossible until it happened. That political group was, as you might have already guessed, the Tea Party, and that action was comparing Karl Rove to a Nazi and even going so far as to Photoshop a picture of Rove wearing the uniform of

none other than Heinrich Himmler, who as we all know was the prime mover behind the Holocaust and its atrocities.

The first question to ask is: why would they do this? It doesn't make any sense; Rove should be a poster boy for the Tea Party - why would they do something so heinous? In addition to raising money for the now irrelevant Tea Party, this political ad was a response to Karl Rove's creation of the group he refers to as The Conservative Victory Project. The Victory Project's

focus is to nominate conservative candidates that are actually "electable" to run for government office. The way Rove sees it, candidates like Michelle Bachmann or Todd Akin (you know, the "legitimate rape" guy) will never be elected because their views are so extremely conservative that they wind up alienating more voters than they attract. If the Republican party wants to have a real future in government, they need to start backing more serious candidates, ones who are more capable and centrist enough to at-

tract larger numbers of voters, as opposed to people who, say, consider witchcraft to be a legitimate issue. Rove sees that too, which is why he created the Conservative Victory Project.

Naturally, the Tea Party did not share Rove's view on the electability of their candidates and they went on the attack. They sent out a letter to all of their members. Attached was the aforementioned image of Nazi Rove and it read as follows:

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Editorial

On Leaving Our Legacy

I was worried about not having a topic for my editorial this week until "A Concerned Camel" stepped forward and offered a controversial idea: boycotting senior giving in order to send a message to the administration and stand up for shared governance. The email – sent to the senior class by an anonymous senior on Friday evening – quickly received support, annoyance and counter-arguments via the reply-all button. The email and conversation that followed were interesting because they echoed concerns that I, and others, have voiced about our college and our senior class in particular.

I don't agree with the tactics of the Senior Giving Committee, as I said in an editorial last semester. Specifically, I think the College should adopt a more holistic approach (think community service) to what it means to "give." Due to the ambiguities on the senior giving card, I think it's easy to envision the Senior Giving Committee as a drive for cash to fill "the Deans' pockets", to quote one of the email respondents. What the committee does do well, however, is allow us seniors to earmark our donations, ensuring that they will benefit aspects of the college that have most influenced our own four year experiences. For that reason, I don't think boycotting senior giving is the right approach. Yes, it will send a message if we give at a significantly lower percentage this year, but we have to think critically about who is truly on the receiving end of the message. President Higdon and the Deans are not.

The original premise of the email was based on a perceived disequilibrium between College-solicited input about General Education Reform and administration-solicited input in the decision to cancel Fishbowl. To me, this difference between social and academic seems only natural because it reflects our own adherence to the Honor Code. Most people feel favorable towards the "academic" portion of the Honor Code, while simultaneously disrespecting the "social" portion every weekend; perhaps the levels of shared governance in each sphere reflect this inequality. Furthermore, ensuring that students are heavily involved in General Education Reform may help to compensate for any residual resentment over our apparent loss of governance in the social sphere.

I think it is important to add that I have great respect for whoever this student may be and I do not mean to dedicate this space to critiquing his or her idea. We have a real problem here with shared governance and while we may talk about it around the dinner table in Harris, I had yet to hear a single person offering solutions until the Concerned Camel came along. This email, regardless of whether or not senior class members agree with its proposal, started an important conversation.

I believe it is our responsibility as the class of 2013 to leave a proper legacy, and I don't just mean a naked one. No surprise to learn that most of us are suffering intense senioritis; we're the lame ducks and, truthfully, it is hard to find the time to fight for sustainable change

in shared governance. It's like the Concerned Camel said, "Could we do a peaceful, respectful protest like a sit-in? Nah, ain't nobody got time for that." This is precisely the problem with our graduating class and with the student body at large: nobody is invested enough to engage fully with the issues, specifically because we feel like we're too busy. Refusing to contribute to senior giving is a personal choice, but if we consider it an attempt to send a message to the administration, it's a lazy attempt and as a class I think we can do better.

It seems like a natural fit for *The College Voice* to help facilitate this dialogue. After spring break, we are planning on running an on-line survey on the state of shared governance. It will hopefully be distributed to students, faculty, staff and administrators. I think it is important that we, as students, understand the ways in which various community members define the notion of shared governance. Perhaps the biggest problem we have in understanding each other is that we operate on the basis of disparate definitions. In conjunction with our endeavor, the Student Government Association is continuing their efforts by convening the commission on shared governance to talk about its practice and future.

The Concerned Camel is correct: it's time to stand up, but the way we do it will contribute to the legacy we leave. I hope you'll join us in investing the time it takes to create a legacy deserving of the class it represents.

-Meredith

THE COLLEGE VOICE

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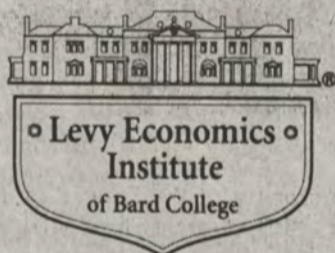
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News & Features

MARCH 4, 2013

THE COLLEGE VOICE

Ultimate Frisbee Yard Sale Illustrates Club Team Struggles with Out-of-Pocket Costs

MARINA STEWART
STAFF WRITER

You'd think that in a college setting, you wouldn't have a lot of stuff accumulated to sell at a yard sale. However, the Frisbee team makes it happen. Just outside the bookshop in Cro there are tables filled with knick-knacks, clothes, DVDs, CDs, books and other items such as a CamelBak and a little Nikon camera. I myself got a new scarf!

The purpose of the Frisbee team yard sale, as well as the Frisbee team auction, is to raise funds for their first outdoor tournament in Georgia this year. "The school gives us a lot of money, but the majority of it comes from these fundraisers and out of pocket," said Captain Jesse Moskowitz '13. "I will spend close to 1,000 dollars out-of-pocket this season."

This is a huge part of being on a club team—the school does contribute some money, but the captains deal with everything that the college or a coach would handle on a varsity team. "We have to cover food, gas, transportation, housing, jerseys...we couldn't do it without fundraising," said Captain Max Weigert '13.

This fundraiser is an annual event and is specifically to fund team food, housing and gas for those who are driving people to Georgia this year. The auction earlier this week was also for the Georgia tournament. "It was more of a skills auction," said Captain Kat Beame '13. "We auctioned stuff like a serenade, to wait a table for a Harris date, cooking a Mexican dinner, paper editing, hanging out with a puppy for an hour—things like that."

To prepare for the yard sale, members of the team went around to every dorm on campus asking for donations of stuff people didn't want. "We also bring our own stuff," said Beame. "Also, since we do this every year, the people who work in Cro will bring us their old stuff too, we have a great relationship and anything we don't sell we will donate to the Salvation Army."

The Frisbee team plays in



these types of tournaments all season, and they are equivalent to games or meets for other teams. The tournaments occur almost every weekend—most are for the team's standing in the USA Ultimate, but some are also for fun. The team can also go on to compete at regionals and nationals if they qualify.

"We play a lot of schools in the Northeast, mostly colleges like ours but some against big schools like Yale," said Carmen Zazueta '13. "But we have our big tournaments like in Georgia or in the fall the men went to one in LA where they played the top Division III schools."

"The tournament in California was really fun," said Weigert. "We were right up there with these big schools and played very competitively against them."

The men have qualified for nationals before and hope to repeat that this year with the growth the team has experi-

enced. "We've grown a lot this year," said Moskowitz. "We actually have a coach, he comes to our practices and we've seen improvement." Their coach is John Korber, a member of the Connecticut Constitutions, a professional ultimate Frisbee team in CT.

Ultimate at Conn has also been around for a while. "It was started in the '70s," said Christina Fogarasi '13. "It was started by a group of philosophers at Conn, one of them was Michael Rossi-Reader, or so he says." The team's name, Dasein, actually comes from Heidegger's philosophies, the word Dasein meaning, "being there" which some could say is essential for a Frisbee player.

As of this season the team itself has about twenty women and thirty to forty men, they practice together for the most part but compete in separate teams at each tournament. "It's a great sense of community,"



PHOTOS BY MAIA SHOENFELDER

said Weigert. "In addition to being just a sport, we become really close friends, through all the practices, tournaments, hotel bonding."

Weigert and Moskowitz are captains of the men's team, while Beame and Annalise

Keeler '14 are captains of the women's team. "It's a great experience," said Moskowitz. "It's a lot of time but it's always enjoyable, it's never a chore."

"One of the best aspects is learning how to lead and or-

ganize in addition to learning how to balance the role of a mentor and a friend," said Weigert. "Especially since I've played all four years, growing into the role has been a great process." •

Good Intentions, Bad Information: Faculty Members Respond to Nicholas Kristof's Ideologies and Methodologies

HELEN ROLFE
NEWS EDITOR

"Striving for Global Justice: Faculty Panel on 'Tackling Gender Oppression, Empowering Women and Thinking Critically about Kristof's Approach'" just may be the longest, wordiest title possible for an event that lasted less than an hour and a half. Packed into that relatively short interval, however, were numerous valuable and potent insights from five professors of diverse academic backgrounds—insights concerning both the merits and flaws exhibited by journalist Nicholas Kristof's work in human rights activism and journalism. While each faculty member's remarks were strictly limited to eight minutes, each speaker managed to contribute a novel and unique perspective to a topic that has essentially been saturating intellectual con-

versations on campus ever since Kristof's lecture last month.

First to speak was Associate Professor of Sociology Afshan Jafar, who focused primarily on two things: first, that Kristof is undeniably "very good" at what he seeks to do, namely "to shock people and get them to the point where indifference is not an option." However, the brute force of Kristof's tactics, Professor Jafar argued, often conceals an essential "lack of nuance" to his arguments. One statistic cited in *Half the Sky*, co-written by Kristof and his wife Cheryl Wundt, provides a particularly clear example of how Kristof tends to make his point while failing to tell the whole story. A passage states that "Only 25% of Egyptians think there should be a woman president," all the while neglecting to mention that polls on similar questions taken in the United States seldom show sig-

nificantly higher percentages of support for a female president.

The next presenter, Professor of Government and International Relations Tristan Borer, agreed with this explanation of Kristof's strategies, but questioned whether, at the end of the day, these methodologies actually catalyze any behavioral changes on the part of privileged Westerners. In fact, hinted Professor Borer, excessive immersion in sensational words and images can even "desensitize" audiences and lead to "compassion fatigue."

Professor of Gender & Women's Studies Mab Segrest responded to this suggestion that Kristof's work is ultimately ineffective by describing her belief that Kristof's writing "co-opts and mischaracterizes 150 years of women's movements." In what could be seen as a bizarre twist on the Horatio Alger template, Kristof's desire

to transform "brothel slaves into successful" professional women assumes that fulfilling modern capitalist values ensures liberation for women, while ignoring the fact that "Women have always fought back"—in grassroots movements, the political arena and individual rebellions.

Professor of Human Development Sunil Bhatia (who was, interestingly enough, the only male professor on the panel) began his talk with the bold assertion that, by making himself the protagonist in his activist narrative, Kristof actually undercuts his work's overall efficacy. Professor Bhatia then proceeded to identify what he sees as problematically pervasive symbols in *Half the Sky*: a "barbaric culture doing horrible things," "mutilation to powerless brown or black women" and a white savior who portrays "entire non-European cultures in terms of Orientalist

language." According to Professor Bhatia, such one-sided representations ignore the fact that in many cases, these apparent issues were either created or worsened by Western powers' colonizing activities.

Professor Julia A. Kushigian from the Hispanic Studies Department concluded the series of speakers with her look at how interventions on behalf of populations in developing countries can be aligned to cultural values and, thus, can be made more effective than Kristof's frequent choice to simply tell "a single story from a... single perspective." The answer, Professor Kushigian said, is to "bring out the many different voices." She cited the Rotary Club's service worldwide as one positive example, noting that their "grant ideas come from research from the country." For instance, Rotary-sponsored agricultural innovations in India

have enabled local children to return to school because resulting displacements in carbon dioxide led to a tripling in crop production.

Idealists aspiring to somehow change the world must be innumerable among those Americans who are educated (or currently in the process of being educated) and financially stable. Having achieved a sense of security in one's daily life and worldview, it seems only natural to then ask how one can chip in to "help the less fortunate." However, as last Thursday's faculty panel repeatedly emphasized, those of us who seek to make a positive difference would do well to think critically before rushing in to "save the world"—for our methods and our galvanizing ideologies may prove disastrously hostile to a society's cultural and ethical reality. •

THE COLLEGE VOICE

Collier Meyerson Talks “Carefree White Girl,” Race and Gender with Conn Students

MOLLIE REID
STAFF WRITER

Skinny. Wallpaper. Ethereal. Although these words seem unrelated at first, they embody the majority of images of girls that Collier Meyerson, creator of the popular blog Carefree White Girl (CFWG), showed Conn students during her lecture on February 25 in Shain Library’s Charles Chu room. During her presentation, Meyerson discussed the inspiration for CFWG, her goals for the blog and how she has chosen to bring those goals to reality.

To begin her lecture on identity politics, Meyerson invited audience members to shout out relevant adjectives that described images displayed on the lifestyle Tumblr SuicideBlonde. Meyerson partially

Meyerson partially argues that - unconsciously or not - these images have a “vintage feel,” all evoke an underlying sense of a “flighty,” “pretty” and “childlike” girl, or as she has famously coined, a “carefree white girl.”

argues that—unconsciously or not—these images, many of which have a “vintage feel,” all evoke an underlying sense of a “flighty,” “pretty” and “childlike” girl or, as she has famously coined, a “carefree white girl.”

Following her logic, many of these photos do depict young women in relaxed, “go with the flow” type moods. For example, throughout her talk, Meyerson used the example of the young “carefree white girl” who has spontaneously decided to take a cross-country road trip. Untethered by rules or obligations, she feels free to roam the open fields of the American Midwest and will occasionally stop for gas without any shoes on. (For readers who are less familiar with these Tumblr images, think of alternative singer Lana Del Rey’s music video for “Ride,” in which she swings on a tire swing in the middle of the desert as an expression of ultimate freedom.) These carefree white girls usually have long and flowing straight or wavy hair and are very skinny - traits many teenage girls desire due to the prevalence of these media representations.

Meyerson’s inspiration to create CFWG stems from her

upbringing as a woman of color who often became the subject of snide comments with underlying racist tones. Meyerson felt that she lived in a bubble of sorts while attending an elite New York City private school, where her friends’ parents often suspected that she was on scholarship. This type of narrow-minded thinking followed Meyerson as she got older, causing her to feel “not as wanted or accepted” by her white peers. For example, she recounts how her friends would steal from stores, but she would not because of the simple belief that stealing is bad. Despite Meyerson’s good actions, she was always on the radar instead of her less-virtuous friends.

CFWG’s namesake even comes from one of Meyerson’s most symbolic and telling stories from her young adult life. Relaxed and candid, as if speaking to some friends, Meyerson told her audience that while preparing for her first “real” date, she asked her non-carefree-white-girl friend how she should behave during this date. Without thinking twice, Meyerson’s friend said, “Just act like a carefree white girl!”

Although the blog’s title perhaps expresses some comedic elements, its simplicity highlights the essential issues surrounding societal norms about beauty and the “ideal” image of women. In creating CFWG, Meyerson wanted to address why society so openly and submissively accepts and relates the image of the carefree white girl with the stereotypical image of a “beautiful woman.” Instead of talking to her online followers, she wanted to take a more didactic approach in educating those who clicked on her blog. By using humorous commentary on photos like the ones she showed during her presentation—girls sitting docilely in French teashops sipping tea but never eating the pieces of chocolate cake next to them, drunk girls who chug Four Loko but who are too relaxed to really care and girls whose flowery garments cause them to seem like wallpaper. Meyerson commented that, “We blindly look at these images. No, let’s not look at them blindly.”

Society mindlessly accepts these images as normal because, as Meyerson argued after reading excerpts expressing W.E.B. Du Bois’s idea of “double consciousness,” gender is largely a performance. Unfortunately, such a performance limits those who do not fit the carefree white girl image. For girls like Meyerson who struggled to feel accepted in a society driven by “white power structures,” Du Bois’s concept of “double consciousness,” or the term



Collier Meyerson, creator of the popular Tumblr Carefree White Girl.

used to describe individuals who belong to multiple groups, rang very true. In other words, for Meyerson, it was difficult to perform in order to adhere to societal expectations.

As with all forms of media that take a critical (and possibly unfavorable) stance on a social issue, CFWG has faced some scrutiny. Meyerson told Conn students that she once received an email from a reader saying something along the lines of “If you’re white, then it’s okay [to create this blog], but if not, I don’t know what to think.” Another comment I found while scrolling through the site read, “Are you jealous of CFWG? Some of the descriptions on your posts make you sound forever alone.”

At the same time, CFWG has received positive feedback. For every negative comment Meyerson has read, she has also read one that commends her comedic approach to a complex topic that, when discussed, can quickly turn into an angry battle of raised voices. One anonymous reader praised CFWG by saying, “this tumblr is hilarious I love it.” The majority of Meyerson’s audience in the Chu Room seemed to lean towards this sort of enjoyment of CFWG and her candid opinions.

Meyerson closed her talk by showing the trailer for the 2012 film *The Impossible*. The movie tells the story of a white family who was separated during the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. After it ended, Meyerson argued that *The Impossible* represents how the carefree white girl (in this case, Naomi Watts’ character) has forcefully entered the international stage.

Prior to thanking the audience, she left us with two questions:



Jessa from Lena Dunham’s HBO Series *Girls* is going to be “fat like Nico” because she’s “full of experiences”.



A young girl, presumably in a field without shoes on, is one of Meyerson’s quintessential carefree white girls.

“Are we looking at the subjects in these photos or the actors in them? Who is the focal point?” Although Meyerson’s claim has been raised before, its relevance and poignancy

in relation to the pervasiveness of the media has never been stronger. The blog’s tagline is “Carefree White Girl, where reality goes to die.” While revealing the societal

ills of the media, Meyerson has certainly revived an underlying reality against which people are nervous to truly speak out. •

Madness: Our (Glass) House

ANDREW SHAW
STAFF WRITER

Last Thursday, the Philosophy Department showed the 1982 film *Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance*, which was followed by a discussion. I went to the screening unsure of how a movie could be turned into a philosophical discussion, but that’s just what happened. I spent the first twelve minutes of the film trying to think of what other film it reminded me of. The answer: the beginning of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. *Koyaanisqatsi*, Stanley Kubrick’s 1986 science-fiction film, is also vaguely reminiscent of *The Gods Must Be Crazy* from 1980. After I answered that nagging inner question, I settled back into my custom when watching movies: listening to the soundtrack.

This process was perfectly suited to the film in question, which, while lacking dialogue, combined a score by late-twentieth-century minimalist composer Philip Glass with natural images to create a truly breathtaking experience. (Minimalism is a style of composition characterized by an intentionally simplified rhythmic, melodic and harmonic vocabulary. Glass himself never liked the term, preferring to speak of himself as a composer of “music with repetitive structures.”) In a perfect description of the film’s score, Glass’ website says that his music, “immerse[s] a listener in a sort of sonic weather that twists, turns, surrounds, develops.” I would add to that description that the music sounded strange and untraditional. But I listen to similar stuff in my free time, thanks to my experience

as a clarinetist in a wind ensemble so I enjoyed the music.

The film opens with deep, ominous incantation that made me think of Gregorian chants (which are, admittedly, the only historical chants I’m aware of). Such chanting recurred throughout the film while the score maintained its ominous quality. Glass’ “repetitive structures” would bore me if I had to play them as a musician but excited me as a listener as they created a really neat overall effect that kept me engrossed. Part of the time, I had to force myself not to close my eyes and attempt to dissect the score in my mind - because then I’d miss the images. But I’ll certainly listen to the score alone later!

In making the film, as the ominous soundtrack belies, director Godfrey Reggio wanted

to show the clash among city life, technology and nature. That is, our glass house is shattering and returning to the sand from which it was made. We’re left with madness. We get verbal proof of this motive for making the movie at the film’s end, when the Hopi word “Koyaanisqatsi” is printed on the screen. The word, which is part of the title and a word that is chanted throughout the movie, is a noun meaning: “crazy life,” “life in turmoil,” “life out of balance,” “life disintegrating” and “a state of life that calls for another way of living.” The movie ends with three baleful Hopi prophecies: “If we dig precious things from the land, we will invite disaster.” “Near the day of Purification, there will be cobwebs spun back and forth in the sky” and “A container of ashes might one day be thrown

from the sky, which could burn the land and boil the oceans.” That “container of ashes” is an exploded unmanned spaceship.

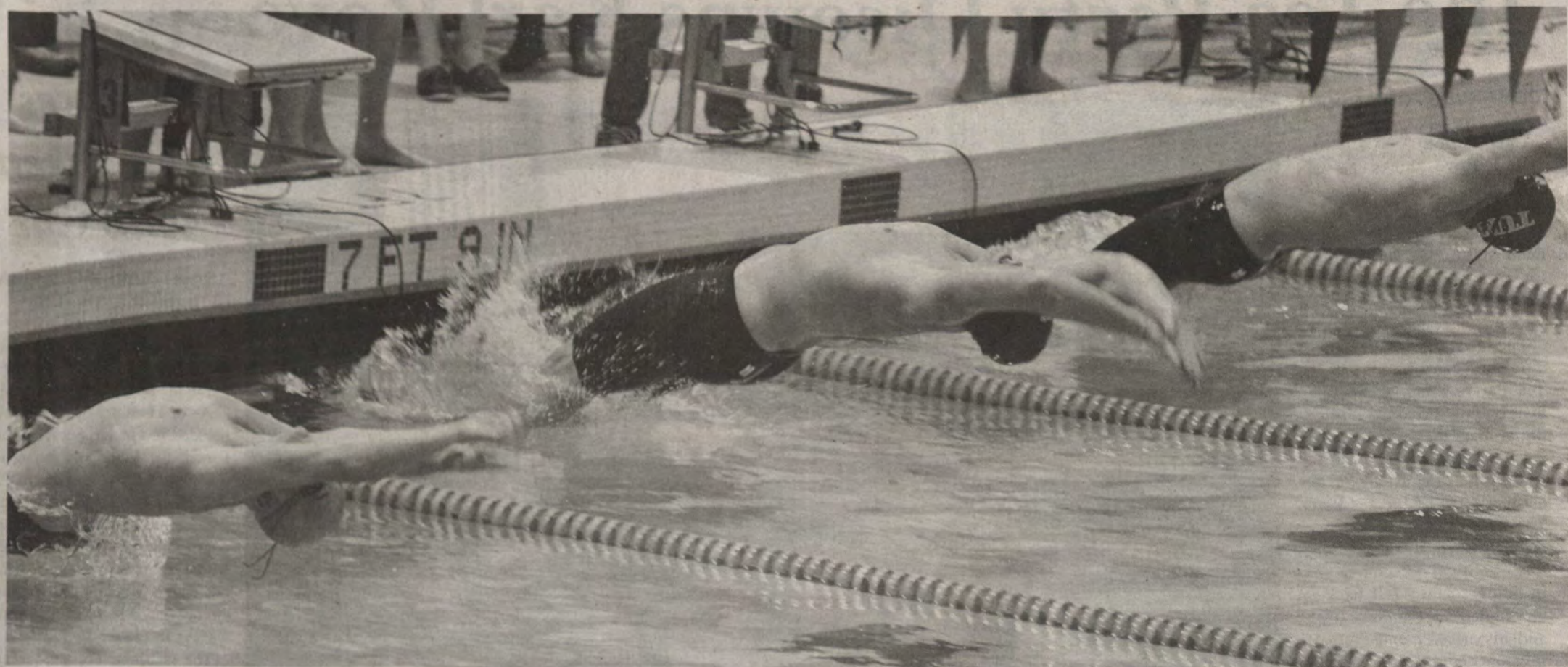
Part of the discussion following the film was focused on the prophecies and how, if they weren’t included, the film would be a lot more open to interpretation than it is. They were included, though, and as such the director’s desire for a call-to-arms movie seems evident. These prophecies, coupled with images of manmade destruction (spaceships exploding, mushroom clouds, buildings being destroyed), plus one of the definitions of “Koyaanisqatsi” (“a state of life that calls for another way of living”), leaves a pretty bleak view of humanity. We are ruining the one world we call home. The question in my mind, and a question we discussed,

is: Is this destruction our fault, or is it inevitable, doomed to happen in the normal course of development? I think that humanity is partly to blame for the destruction, but I also think that destruction is part of rebirth. Fire, for example, is a source of both energy and destruction. Given the fact that natural destruction and decay were noticeably absent from the film, however, I’m betting that the director fully blames humanity for damaging the world and believes that if we continue on this course the earth’s complete desertification will ensue. Even as camels, I doubt we’ll survive long under such complete ruin. No big deal! We’ll just have to jump on the Enterprise and explore strange new worlds instead! If only that were an option... •

Sports

THE COLLEGE VOICE

MARCH 4, 2013



Men's swimmers start the 50-yard backstroke including Camel Kyle Matson '14.

KATIE KARLSON

Men's and Women's Swimming & Diving NESCAC Championships

The women and men's swimming and diving teams competed at the NESCAC Championships February 15-17 and February 22-24, respectively. The Lady Camels were sixth out of 11 teams in what became a very competitive meet with only seven points separating fifth and seventh place. The Conn men made history, swimming to

an impressive third place.

At Bowdoin, Julia Pielock '14 led the Lady Camels to a sixth place finish winning the 50 and 100 yard freestyle events, provisionally qualifying for NCAAs and achieving All-NESCAC recognition. Sam Pierce '16, Emma Rotner '16, Sarah Lauridsen '16 and Pielock were also named to the All-

NESCAC team for their performance on the 800-yard freestyle relay.

The men lit up the Wesleyan natatorium from the start of the meet, winning the 200-yard freestyle relay composed of Pat McGinnis '15, Drew Andre '16, Cam Johnson '15 and Sam Gill '14. Overall, the men broke seven varsity records and appointed

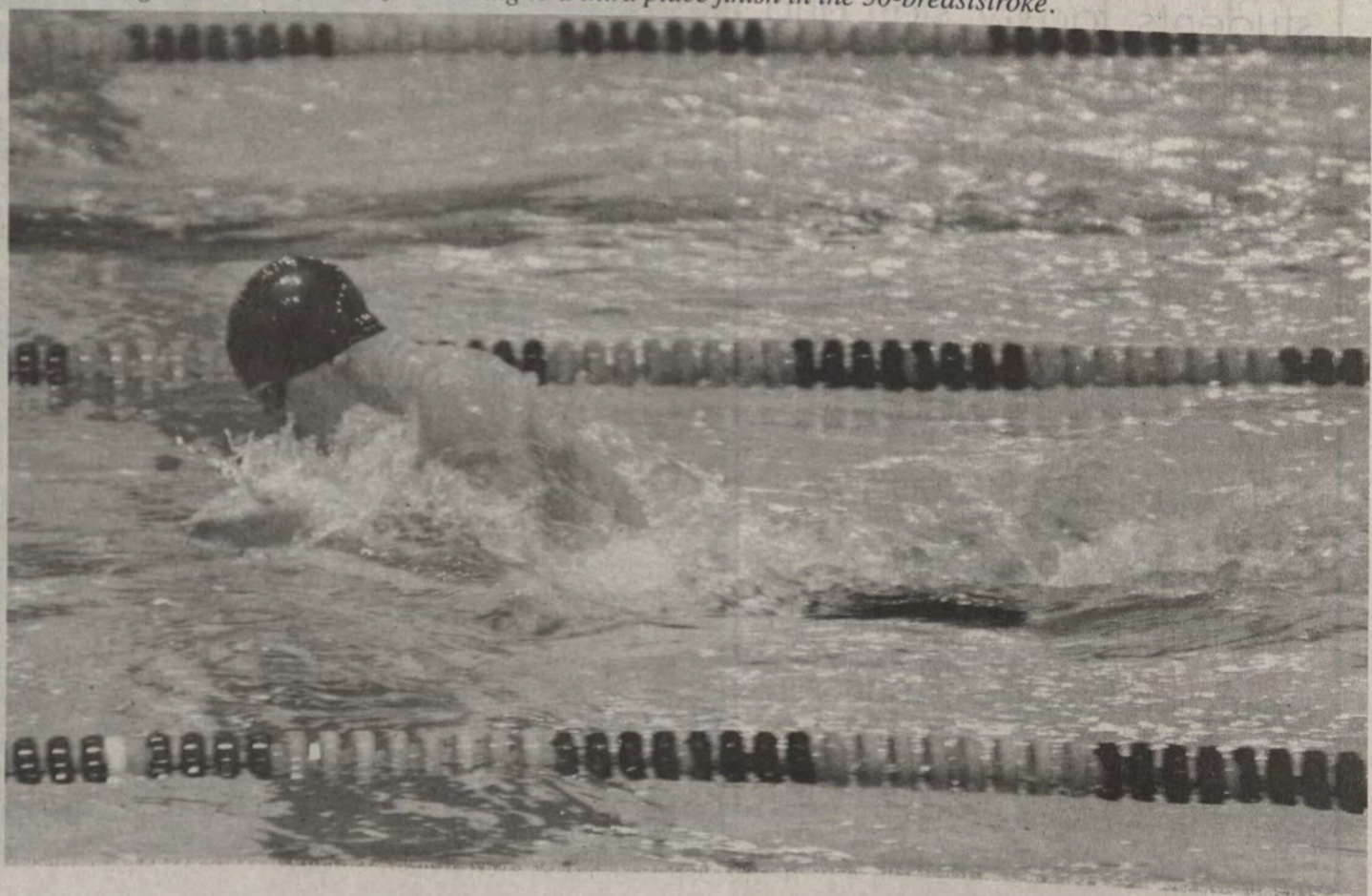
seven to the All-NESCAC team. To cap off a great weekend, Coach Benvenuti was named Coach of the Year for the men's performance.

Pielock and Gill will continue training for NCAAs held March 20-23 at the Conroe Natatorium in Shenandoah, TX. •

Below, senior Katie Karlson poses with freshmen swimmers Jessica Cronin, Kelsey Ewing and Sarah Lauridsen. They placed sixth in the 400-medley relay.



Below left is the men's winning 200-freestyle relay team and on the right is Kirk Czelewicz '15 racing to a third place finish in the 50-breaststroke.



The Tea Party Disowns Karl Rove

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Dear Patriot,

Karl Rove thinks he can raise hundreds of millions of dollars, crush the Tea Party, and protect the big-government status quo in Washington from millions of freedom loving Americans. Well, he's wrong.

The letter goes on to ask for monetary contributions to the Tea Party, which would ultimately build up to the million-dollar mark they want to reach.

I have to say that I am angered and disgusted on yet another level by the Tea Party. They have crippled sophisticated, respectful and productive political discourse but in doing so they fall back on unfounded personal attacks and historically and factually invalid claims. Just because you disagree with someone politically does not give you permission to attack them on a personal level or to wrongfully label them a Socialist, or a Communist or a Nazi. I have news for you, Tea Party: Karl Rove is not a Nazi, nor is President Obama a Socialist, nor would it really be that bad if a president were a Socialist, because it is a legitimate political theory. But the Tea Party, along with anyone else who throws those arbitrary insults around, doesn't seem to know that.

And furthermore, Tea Party, I can assure you that just about everyone in this country, Democrats and Republicans alike, loves freedom; we just have different ideas about how to govern a nation. But that's



DAVE SHANFIELD

the whole point of political discourse: to discuss, decide and compromise on the best ways to manage our country, and that's exactly what the Tea Party has, to a large extent, successfully worked to derail. I stand happily beside Mr. Rove in saying, "enough is enough."

American politics desperately need to get serious again, which is why I commend Karl Rove for his creation of the

Conservative Victory Group. We have a right to state and debate our opinions without being called a Nazi. There are rational voices on both sides of the aisle, and everyone should make more of an effort to enable those voices to be heard and not drowned out by the cries of a vocal but misguided and uninformed minority.

So if Rove's Conservative Victory Project results in a greater number of centrist Re-

The Tea Party has crippled sophisticated, respectful and productive political discourse but in doing so they fall back on unfounded personal attacks.

publicans being elected, I'll be happy. No, I might not agree with them on most matters – in fact I probably won't – but I'll be happy because it is my hope that those who are elected will be more willing to come to the table and compromise on important issues rather than continue to let petty elementary school politics continue to divide and lower the level of conversation. •

Monopoly Contest Replaces Iron Token with Cat

SAM GRAINGER-SHUBA
STAFF WRITER

I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but I guess I'll just get it out in the open: the iron is dead.

As of February 6, Hasbro Inc. decided to change one game token in the Monopoly game, replacing it with a new token. The new piece was decided by a contest via the Monopoly Facebook page (which has ten million fans), where fans were polled to find out which Monopoly token they did not like, and what they would want in its place.

The existing pieces are racecar, thimble, old shoe, Scottie dog, the battleship, the bag of money, the iron and the wheelbarrow. Obviously, the iron was eliminated.

The choices for new pieces were diamond ring, helicopter, guitar, cat and robot. The Facebook poll revealed the cat to be the winner.

Those of us who played monopoly as a kid but were the last to come to the table always had to choose between the old shoe and the iron. Everyone always preferred the racecar or the Scottie dog, or in the case of the monopoly game at my house, the bag of money. Why is the shape of the token so important? I don't know. However, as a child, it was practically the worst fate in all of board game history to be saddled with an ugly token.

In an interview, Jonathan Berkowitz, vice president for Hasbro game marketing said, "Tokens are always a key part of the Monopoly game. Our fans are very passionate about their tokens, about which token they use while they play."

My question is, who came up with the monopoly pieces in the first place? Who thought that a thimble was a good token for a game of savage property purchase and races to free parking? The iconic tools for our beloved monopoly game originated from the niece of its creator, Charles Darrow, who wanted to use charms from her charm bracelet to represent her placement on the game board. Most of the pieces were introduced on the original production of the game in 1935, but the Scottie dog and the wheelbarrow were added in the early 1950s.

My next question is why would any person vote for the cat when a robot, a diamond ring, a guitar and a helicopter are available?!

"I think there were a lot of cat lovers in the world that reached out and voted for the cat to be the new token for Monopoly," was Berkowitz's reason. Is he insinuating that many monopoly fans are crazy cat ladies/gentlemen, by any chance?

That doesn't excuse a thoroughly uninteresting decision. Out of all of the cool new pieces to choose from, the cat was by far the least innovative. Cats are great, but to be frank, robots are so much out of the ordinary. Basically, anything would be out of the ordinary in comparison to the cat token.

As much I love Monopoly, this change is probably the least important piece of news that has happened so far in 2013 (which isn't saying much). The thing that makes the change newsworthy is that this is the first time that the tokens have changed since the '50s. It is also the first time that fan input has been a part of the inclusion or omission of tokens in the game. However, other than that, this is a small piece of news when you think about all of the budget cuts coming up and other pieces of world news. •

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Arts & Entertainment

THE COLLEGE VOICE

MARCH 4, 2013

Seth MacFarlane: The Unstoppable Host

CONOR MCCORMICK-
CAVANAGH
STAFF WRITER

Last Sunday night, Academy Awards host Seth MacFarlane began the show, "Welcome to the Oscars. And the quest to make Tommy Lee Jones laugh begins now." The camera panned to Tommy Lee Jones laughing, and with that, the night of hilarity began. The Oscar producers chose MacFarlane to pace the night with his caustic humor and song and dance performances to add to the musical motif of the ceremony. Even though his jokes were relatively tame compared with his *Family Guy* material, MacFarlane's sense of humor quickly polarized media pundits and worldwide viewers alike.

Some critics slammed him for racism, misogyny and insensitivity. At the same time, many viewers lauded MacFarlane for a hilarious and entertaining routine. Most importantly though, it is clear that from the minute MacFarlane cracked his first joke about Tommy Lee Jones, no one turned off the TV.

Oscar viewership increased by over one million during last weekend's show.

MacFarlane can take credit for that influx, though he managed to effectively offend blacks, women and Jews, and still kept viewers invested in the night. His animated comedy series *Family Guy* is filled with many more offensive jokes about an even greater variety of different types of people. The show stays on air because

cartoon characters portray all of the insensitivity that truly exists in our world. It seems silly to blame a caricature. On Oscar night, instead of using cartoons to steer clear of a potentially chastising audience, Seth MacFarlane used his A-list celebrity good looks and pearly-white grin to shed some of the blame. By striking a balance between a handsome, charming celebrity and an insensitive, inappropriate comedian, MacFarlane transformed himself into an unstoppable host.

His sense of humor also hooked in the younger viewers that Oscars producers crave. The eighteen to thirty-four year old male viewership increased by thirty-four percent. *Family Guy* markets so well to this same exact age and gender category. Throughout the night,

MacFarlane somewhat filtered his absolutely candid writing that has characterized *Family Guy* and maintained respect for the overall structure of the night.

Controversy still surrounds the joke in which MacFarlane claims that Chris Brown and Rihanna view the particularly violent *Django Unchained* as a 'date movie.' Many viewers tried to express disapproval at these seemingly insensitive jokes, but often could not help themselves from laughing. MacFarlane seems to know exactly what everyone thinks about controversial topics, their limits and what to say to evoke laughter from the majority of his audience.

At the same time, MacFarlane would have had a more consistently funny act if he included fewer musical performances. He

is undoubtedly talented and in another life, could have made a career on Broadway. However, except for the Bond songs, the Oscars could have shed the excess of show tunes. MacFarlane is funnier and more entertaining when he is sedentary, facing the audience and dishing out one-liners and insulting other celebrities. His line poking fun at Daniel Day-Lewis, "I would argue, though, the actor who really got inside Lincoln's head was John Wilkes Booth," perfectly embodies MacFarlane's uncanny ability to go past the realm of the acceptable, but still make everyone laugh and smile. Of course, the line did elicit groans from the live audience, but he quickly chimed in, "Really? 150 years and it's still too soon?" During this piece of his

routine, MacFarlane performed with a smile on his face and even laughed at his own jokes.

Overall, MacFarlane's performance kept the audience invested. Some people were hooked in because they wanted to see his next performance gaffe, while others stayed tuned in to witness a comedic genius. Detractors of MacFarlane are excited to hear that he has already denied the hosting position of the Oscars for next year.

His supporters are disappointed that they will not get to witness his charm and humor on stage any time soon. Even so, the Oscars did itself a service by asking him to host this year. He may have polarized the crowd, but he also entertained in his own unique way. And let's be honest, he wasn't nearly as bad as James Franco. •



Macklemore

The emerging artist breaks norms with his new, atypical track

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The thing that makes this song so magical is how it presents itself. It takes itself seriously, if you can believe it. It's written in such a way that it's fun without being silly, real without being harsh. Even with all the humor it throws in, it isn't really self-deprecating. All that clothing that not just Macklemore, but everyone in the song, is buying—yeah, it's cheap, it's outlandish and sometimes downright odd, but there's more to it. It's not about the clothes these people are wearing, it's about the person wearing them. "I wear your granddad's clothes. I look incredible." It's not because the style's cool, it's because the person wearing it rocks it. Macklemore spends half the music video running around in a (piss-scented) fur coat with an absurd collar/hood ordeal. And yet it looks fly as hell, because he's a player. "What up, I got a big cock!" It takes balls to wear something like that. And that's what this whole song's say-

ing: get courageous, be yourself. Don't pay for the \$50 Gucci shirt; that trash isn't worth your money and it wasn't worth the money of the other six guys in the club wearing the exact same shirt. "Tryin' to get girls from a brand? Man, you hella won't." The video treats the issue humorously with an upbeat tone, but at the end of the day, it's like, "But seriously—I'm bein' real right now, even if it sounds all 'Wut wut? Wut? Wut?'—Do yourself a favor and be your own label."

Macklemore might be heralded as the new Eminem, if only because he's a (by now) popular white rapper. And it's not an invalid comparison outside of that: they're both artists. And I don't use that to mean they produce music. I mean the take words and dab them on the ethereal canvases of air and sound. They don't just use words, they make words speak.

"What are you talking about, Steel." Alright, let me broaden the playing field a bit. Go listen to another song by Macklemore,

"Same Love." It's on *The Heist*, the same album as "Thrift Shop". No, I mean it, go. This article has so much less value to you if you don't listen to these songs. As a matter of fact, your LIFE has less value for not hearing them. It will take less than ten minutes. Go.

...Holy shit! Was the guy who rapped about wearing a onesie just making a compelling argument for gay marriage equality? A straight, white male rapper made a song about gay marriage equality that (as of my writing this) has twenty million views and counting on Youtube? On at least some level, that is groundbreaking. To do something like that takes courage that only a guy who wears my grandpa's hand-me-downs could pull off. As a gay guy myself, I found that the video really spoke to me, not because I've been oppressed or anything, but because of how beautiful the love expressed in the video is; the love story part of it, the interactions between only the two guys in love, could have just as easily been between a guy and a girl (or

two girls). All this coming from a guy I'd normally expect, in his profession, to be homophobic at worst and unconcerned at best.

See, this is (a not entirely perfect proposal of) the difference between Eminem and Macklemore. Eminem's got a passion all his own, but it's angrier and more personal. He raps about his life, his struggle to get where he is, how he had to fight to get there. Macklemore instead takes an issue or experience that bothers him, then he looks outside himself and finds a message regarding it that needs to be spread. He pulls it in, absorbs it in his essence, and then bleeds it out in language. He bleeds *truth*. I don't need to tell you that he's a talented rapper in terms of the speed and complexity of the vocals he writes himself, but his real power comes from the words themselves and the way he says them. If you're not convinced, listen to "Wing\$," also off of *The Heist*. Listen to the whole damn album.

You know what I love recently? And maybe these are just

isolated incidents, but it seems to me like musical acts with...agendas, I guess, though I'd like a less political word for it...they're get-

Macklemore instead takes an issue or experience that bothers him, then he looks outside himself and finds a message that needs to be spread. He pulls it in, absorbs it in his essence and then bleeds it out in language.

ting played! Like, huge! I'm sure you either love or hate the band Fun, by now; you know, the guys who did "We Are Young," "Some Nights" and "Carry On"? The ones who got played like every hour on the hour on every radio station for the past year? Yeah. If you've never taken any of the near-infinite opportunities you've

been given by the media to do so, sit down and really listen to the lyrics of a song of theirs some time. They're cool, man! But they're not just cool, they speak to you in a way that's more profound than a lot of lyrics you hear floating around in mainstream music. Their whole album *Some Nights* is actually supposed to depict, with each song, a different night, and how they can each be so similar yet so different. They take a look at a bigger picture; not quite the one Macklemore sees, but one all their own. That's awesome! And people really like it! Yes, I realize many people just like a song for how catchy it is, but I like to think that the majority of people also like the music they listen to because it speaks to them. And these songs that we're seeing become popularized recently? They convey some really heartfelt, insightful messages.

At the end of the day, we all want to have our voices heard. But it's cool when the voices everyone hears have something powerful to say. •

We're still looking for ideas for the New London issue!



Email mboyle@conncoll.edu

THE COLLEGE VOICE



PEOPLE WATCHING

Nicole Smalley '13 in her piece *Post-School*

Miles Keeney '15 in his piece *W3rk*

SPRING DANCE CLUB SHOW

PHOTOS BY DUNCAN SPAULDING



Shannon Quinn '15 and Gabriella Gentile '13 in *I've Saved This Seat* by Mindy Toro '15

Christophe Desorbay '15 in *Ineffable* by Abby Reich '15



Nora Loughry '13 in *Flock* by Gabriella Gentile '13

Alex Michaud '15 and Shannon Quinn '15 in their piece, *Sometimes we need Some disconnect*

Arts & Entertainment

THE COLLEGE VOICE

MARCH 4, 2013

Student-Directed Musical *Dead Man's Cell Phone* Leaves Audience Smiling but Reflective



PHOTOS BY ANDREW NATHANSON

ANDREW MARCO
STAFF WRITER

Ringling phones, punch line zingers and awkward comedy were in abundance at this weekend's performance of *Dead Man's Cell Phone*. The play, written by Sarah Ruhl, follows a bookish young woman named Jean (Julia Larsen '14), who discovers a dead man named Gordon (Ben Ballard '16) at an adjacent table in a lonely café. He leaves behind an ever-ringing cell phone as his only link to life, which serves as a catalyst for Jean's journey into the world he occupied, full of the people he knew. As Jean delves deeper into Gordon's world, she finds herself constantly preserving his legacy.

Dead Man's Cell Phone is a unique theater experience in every sense of the word. Ruhl's influences here are varied, ranging from the absurdist humor of Samuel Beckett to the film noir genre of the 1940s. Her message is simple, though a bit heavy-handed at times; Ruhl believes that technology is destroying relationships and warping the ways in which people interact. It's a fair point in our modern, technology-driven world.

This production marks the directing debut of Talia Curtin '13. She is no stranger to the stage, having appeared in multiple productions during her four years at Connecticut College. She's also done considerable amounts of technical work in supplement to her performing. Curtin's mix of acting savvy and technical knowledge shows in her direction of *Dead Man's Cell Phone*. The play presents more than its share of challenges in staging, but Curtin's understanding of the big picture helps to maintain a balance.

At the center of *Dead Man's Cell Phone* is Jean, played impeccably by Larsen, who shows some of her most varied and introspective work to date as she maneuvers through and manipulates the loved ones of Gordon, our dead man. Larsen is a joy to watch onstage. At one moment, she can be hilarious; a second later, heartbreaking; and a moment after that, so beautifully awkward that the audience can't help but cackle uncontrollably.

Complementing Larsen's Jean are the two Gottlieb brothers, Gordon and Dwight, played by Ben Ballard '16 and Julian Gordon '14, respectively. Ballard's Gordon, who makes but a brief cameo in the first act, opens the second act with an extended monologue, which may be the best writing in the entire show. As Gordon, Ballard is charming and smart, fostering a strong connection with the audience through a realistic conversational approach to his material.

Julian Gordon's performance as Dwight, Gordon's brother, provides an appropriate counterpoint. Whereas Gordon is charming and independent, Dwight has his weaker qualities, often relying on the women around him for support. Gordon's played many a strong character onstage, which makes it refreshing to see him embrace the feeble, yet passionate character of Dwight.

Perhaps the most memorable character of the show, especially in this production, is Mrs. Gottlieb, played by an unrecognizable Alex Marz '13. Although Marz plays a woman, his spot-on line deliveries and excellent stage presence help the audience to forget, somewhat, that he is a man. Marz owns the role and makes no attempt to ac-

knowledge its drag component. This begs the question of why a man was cast to play a part written for and usually portrayed by a woman. The casting choice does not detract from the material, but seems out of place.

Dead Man's Cell Phone succeeded on many levels, but it was not without its flaws. The cabaret-style seating arrangement established an appropriate mood for the piece, but created constant sightline issues that left the audience craning to see the action onstage. The pace was noticeably slow throughout the show, creating awkward pauses, both in scenes and transitions. The production attempted to mesh the art of Edward Hopper with the stylized world of film noir, but these moments were few and far between, leaving a sometimes-confused design concept.

Still, when *Dead Man's Cell Phone* was good, it was very good. Towards the end of the second act, when the show has reached its most absurd and ethereal, comes the "cell phone ballet," a beautiful, simple sequence choreographed by Chloe Spitalny '13. The ballet is accompanied by a haunting music cue, combining the music of Ben Zacharia '13 and the disembodied voices of cell phone voicemails. A projector provides the only lighting for the scene, raining fragmented sentences and words down on the cast. Luckily enough, the cast has umbrellas, which figure prominently into Spitalny's choreography.

Dead Man's Cell Phone shows the fruits of collaboration, and is another solid entry in an already great theatrical season here at Conn. •



Vagina Warriors Promote Women's Empowerment

ANEKA KALIA
STAFF WRITER

On Saturday, February 23 and Sunday February 24, eighty-five women from Connecticut College took over Evans Hall to perform the eleventh annual production of Eve Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues."

"The Vagina Monologues" consists of a series of short monologues that deal with issues such as violence against women and try to promote women's empowerment. Because the cast was so large, each monologue included multiple people. Some were serious and rose awareness about issues like female genital mutilation, and others were more humorous. One of the funnier pieces was titled "The Woman Who Loved

to Make Vaginas Happy," which starred Shannon Keating '13 and Ali McKeigue '13. The two women spoke openly about orgasms — a topic that is not discussed in everyday conversation.

Outside of Evans Hall, the cast had booths set up so that viewers could purchase raffle tickets, buy refreshments and make donations. The proceeds go to various organizations that are focused on helping women who have been violated. The production raised roughly \$10,000 and eighty-five percent of the proceeds go to Safe Futures, an organization in New London, which is geared towards helping women who are affected by domestic violence. The rest of the proceeds will go to Ensler's worldwide activist movement called "V-Day" and the campaign

that they have launched this year called "One Billion Rising." The "V" in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina. On the fifteenth anniversary of V-Day — February 14, 2013 — women in particular stopped what they were doing and danced in a public space. This campaign has reached over 200 countries, and the purpose is to make people take notice; dancing is one way of achieving this goal. As "The Vagina Monologues" program reads: "Dancing takes up space, makes people stop and look and requires that we are seen and heard. It sends a message that we are here and ready to fight the forces that keep us silent."

On Valentine's Day, "The Vagina Monologues" cast supported the movement by creating a flash-mob dance to Abba's "Danc-

ing Queen" outside of Branford House. The show ended with a monologue entitled "Rising," referencing the "One Billion Rising" campaign.

"The Vagina Monologues" show was very well-organized considering the size of the cast. Written in a blunt fashion, the monologues don't sugarcoat any of the issues that they address. The point of "The Vagina Monologues" is to make topics regarding women's sexual health more comfortable to talk about, and the performers did the explicit nature of the show justice.

One part of "The Vagina Monologues" not seen by the audience is what the cast does before they go onstage. Lucy Wallace '13, one of the show's producers, said that the dedication portion is the

best part of the show. "We open up the floor to the cast to dedicate the show to a person, experience [or] feeling that made them want to do the show or pushed them to continue to be in the show. They can be sad, serious, funny and heartwarming, and all powerful messages. It shows how important this show is to so many women."

The cast call themselves "Vagina Warriors," and many of these Vagina Warriors found the process of performing and being part of the production to be a very rewarding experience.

"The girls come from all different grades, backgrounds and have many different reasons for doing the show. A lot of seniors do it all four years, some girls do it once or twice, but I think that everyone will agree that it has a huge impact

on their overall experience at Connecticut College," Wallace said.

Vagina Warrior Alexis Dito-massi '16 said, "All of the girls were so unique and friendly, and it was awesome to be a part of such a variety of people, which is what I think made it so special."

Audience members were very receptive to the message of "The Vagina Monologues." Charlotte Marcoux '16 attended Saturday night's performance and said, "After seeing 'The Vagina Monologues,' I felt that some [pieces] were a little bit slow, there were a couple that were very entertaining, but overall I thought the subjects were very deep and informative, and therefore I got a lot out of it."



A CAPPELLA FLASH MOB

The Office of College Relations approached Williams Street Mix and asked them to perform a Flash Mob to promote the Camel Photo Contest for last week's theme "#WhyIChoseCC." The Flash Mob occurred on Friday, March 1 and began in Oasis and ended on the steps of Cro.



PHOTOS BY MAIA SHOENFELDER

Reddit or Not, Here Comes the Next Big Internet Sensation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Gates is not the only established figure to dedicate some time to answering questions through r/IAMA; last August, President Obama's AMA generated more than twenty-thousand comments. Obama answered many serious questions regarding America's economic future — a topic many Redditors wondered about since the website's demographic mainly encompasses members of Generation Y. A recent law school graduate wrote in explaining that he, like many other graduate and undergraduate students, felt frustrated by the lack of job opportunities in this country and wondered how Obama's planned response the issue. Obama later answered many informal questions that had

little or nothing to do with U.S. politics. He said that the recipe for the White House beer would "be out soon! I can tell from firsthand experience, it is tasty." Also, as a self-proclaimed "Bulls guy," Obama said that [Michael] Jordan was his favorite basketball player.

Ask Me Anything also highlights those who live the farthest away from wealthy or glamorous lifestyles, causing usernames to seem less like avatars and more like real, emotional human beings. Most recently, a young adult shared his stories about living with his mother and stepfather who were meth cooks; a girl claimed that she gets "allergic" reactions to the cold and supported her case with photographic evidence (she put a pack of frozen green beans on her arms and shortly after

developed very uncomfortable looking hives); and a college student who was born deaf and was raised by a deaf family gave users and people browsing the site just for fun some perspective about how others live. After all, r/IAMA's tagline is "I Am A, where the mundane becomes fascinating and the outrageous suddenly seems normal."

Redditors can also engage in gift exchanges. Although these users have never met each other (and most likely never will), they seem to like each other enough to send one another presents and packages. For example, according to statistics published on their site, last Christmas 57,400 people participated in Reddit's annual "Secret Santa." 55,322 presents were shipped and 45,966 people actually re-

ceived gifts, an amount equal to approximately \$1,996,904. Currently 8,059 Redditors are in the midst of a book exchange where approximately 1,616 books (about \$39,668) have been shipped. Other gift exchanges include the "socks exchange," the "decorate your dorm exchange" and the "holiday greeting card exchange."

Those against the site have targeted its underlying, but nonetheless, strong current of misogyny, and argued that its subreddit "r/atheism" has strayed from its original identity as a platform for discussing atheistic beliefs to one that engages in single-minded attacks on other ideologies. Female users of the site have often felt that they have to conform to using "male usernames" to prevent harassment by many dogmatic male users.

One female user reflects, "Most people on Reddit assume I am male until I make it a point to say otherwise. More often than not, once it's discovered that I own a vagina I'm no longer taken seriously, my opinions are belittled and a slough [sic] of sexist and misogynist jokes/accusations get thrown my way." Another user was told that she should be raped. Although digital harassment has been an ongoing problem as the web has become a primary mode of interaction, some users of the site have argued that these issues underscore the seemingly positive identity of the site, and by extension the online community.

Although some argue that spending time on digital media sites (and social media sites for that matter), like Red-

dit, Pinterest and Tumblr promote loneliness, it seems like there is something to be said for the sense of community (excluding the misogynists and extreme atheists) around which Reddit operates. After all, with Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn becoming increasingly prominent modes of communication and interaction, why shouldn't web users attempt to create an online forum for interesting discussions and lighthearted fun? However, if the site wants to increase its popularity from an Internet start-up to something much larger than it is today, that sense of community must transition from one that allows sexist and biased remarks to one that exercises positive values and respect for all of its users. •