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THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE’S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1977

Screenshot of former location of “Camel Chat” - Photo courtesy of Max Amar-Olkus

This video has been removed by the user.

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YouTube

J-Bang Productions: Camel Chat: Episode 1 (Pilot)

Follow the lives of numerous people living life as a college student in Connecticut, in the latest J-Bang Production, "Camel Chat." All rights are reserved.

YOUTUBE.COM

“Camel Chat” Censored

MAX AMAR-OLKUS
ARTS EDITOR

Editor’s note: The following article is part of an ongoing investigation. Readers should expect to see further coverage of the “Camel Chat” case in coming issues of The College Voice.

Over the recent winter break Jonathan Brown ‘19 came up with an idea. Inspired by sitcoms such as *The Office* and *Parks and Recreation*—two “mockumentaries” that focus on characters’ lives and workplace bonds and feuds at a paper supply company and a small city government, respectively—Brown chose to interpret the genre by bringing it home to Conn.

The creators of *The Office* and *Parks and Recreation* managed to produce wildly funny content even in the most mundane of settings through their expert use of satire. Their characters were just that: characters, individually modeled and in no way meant to represent the greater population of workers in either industry. The characters’ actions and behaviors were over-the-top and exaggerated, true to the comedy form.

Brown, a Film Studies major from Los Angeles, wanted to emulate these shows when he began production of his web series, called “Camel Chat,” at the beginning of

this semester. He wanted to follow a large cast of characters involved in fictional but relatable storylines, satirizing the student experience and mundanity of day-to-day life at Conn.

“I wanted to give the community something unique and specific to bond over,” he told me. “We ended up creating two episodes, and it was in the middle of production for episode three that we found out we were being put on ‘hiatus.’”

“What do you mean you were ‘being put’ on hiatus?” I asked, confused.

“Well, from what I understand, a student brought the show to the REAL Office’s attention. I’m not sure if it was in a good way or bad way, but once they saw that one of their floor governors was an active member of the show, that’s when things went bad. Interestingly enough, they interrogated him about the show and made it clear that his job was in jeopardy as long as the episodes were online. After receiving a few panicky text messages from the floor governor, he informed me of the situation we were in. Ultimately, I had to take the episodes down in an effort to preserve his job as a floor governor. Unfortunately, it didn’t work out that way,” he explained.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Why is Goodwin Going?

MAIA HIBBETT
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Ann Goodwin, current vice president of College Advancement, will leave Connecticut College on April 28, one month after the announcement of her departure. The turnaround will be more sudden than that of most high-level administrative changes, and President Katherine Bergeron’s March 30 email reveals only the fact that Goodwin will be leaving and when; she offers no word regarding how or why.

When members of the Conn faculty or administration choose to leave, it is typical that they finish the semester before transitioning away from the College. Previous instances of this include former director of the LGBTQIA Center Antonio Jefferson and former director of Campus Safety Stewart Smith, both of whom left at the end of Fall 2016; former dean of the College and senior diversity officer Carolyn Denard, who left at the end of Fall 2014; and director of Sexual Violence Prevention and Advocacy Darcie Folsom, who will leave at the end of this academic year. The retirement of former vice president of Administration Ulysses B. Hammond did not coincide with the end of a semester, as his last day was Oct. 30, 2015, but his departure was announced nearly four months prior, on Aug. 3, 2015.

Hoping to understand why her departure was to come so soon, I reached out to Goodwin via email. Though I suggested only a 20 minute meeting, Goodwin responded: “Unfortunately, I don’t think I can fit that into my schedule before I leave.” As a follow-up, I asked Goodwin if she would consider taking a brief phone call, but even that, Goodwin said, would be impossible to arrange.

As vice president for College Advancement, Goodwin holds the highest rank in the Office of College Advancement in Becker House,

meaning that she has no immediate superiors in her realm of the College. According to her LinkedIn profile, Goodwin lasted 2 years and 10 months at the College, a tenure that was preceded by a seemingly identical position at Wesleyan University: associate vice president for Development, which she held for 8 years and 4 months. To find out more about Goodwin’s impending departure, I reached out to Bonnie Wells, who works in the President’s Office as secretary of the College. Wells told me: “You are asking about a personnel matter and I cannot offer any additional insight beyond what is in the President’s messages.”

Of course, people vacate their employment positions all the time, often for personal and sensitive reasons. Had I seen any indication of that being the case here, I would have stopped digging and not written this article. It’s the complete absence of any reason— for Goodwin’s departure itself or the accelerated timeline— that compelled me to keep asking. The President’s messages and my correspondence with staff on campus have left me without new insight.

When she leaves in April, Goodwin will be succeeded by Martha Merrill, current director of Financial Initiatives. Merrill will serve as interim vice president of College Advancement for a currently indefinite term. I reached out to Merrill for comment, wondering why she accepted the position, whether she might consider pursuing it permanently and if she has any thoughts on Goodwin, but given that she will not begin until May, Merrill deemed it “premature” to discuss any information regarding her new role.

To the students wondering about Goodwin’s departure, what we’re allowed to know is simple: nothing. Whether or not it’s any of our business is a subjective matter. •

IN THIS ISSUE		MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2017	
NEWS	PERSPECTIVES	ARTS	ARTS
Allie Marcultis covers Conn’s most recent installment of TEDx, titled “Dare to Bend,” on page 5.	Lauren Baretta questions Conn’s reluctance to support carbon tax initiatives on page 7.	Will Kadison reflects on the closing of MOBROC’s Barn on page 10.	Summer Wrobel details her visit with local activist-turned-artist Mike Alewitz on page 12.

Announcing the New *Voice* Code of Ethics

A professor once told me that in my analysis, I was being “too mean” to the author being studied in class. Since then, I’ve carried the comment as a point of pride. It’s not cruel to be critical; it’s natural, and if we don’t question the information we’re given, we do a disservice to ourselves and the world around us.

This issue questions, and it questions a lot. That tends to be fine, as everyone expects a student newspaper to be critical, but I’ve found that around here, it tends to be considered a lot more fine to question individuals and institutions on Capitol Hill than ones in Fanning. So when we need to defend ourselves, it helps to have a written document stating what we believe and represent, so that if our motives are questioned, we can point to it and say “look, this fits.”

For this reason, it’s timely that it’s this in edition of the *Voice* that I’m unveiling a new, official document we should’ve had for a long time now: our code of ethics. I didn’t intend for this release to coincide with a whole bunch of censorship and hypocrisy talk, but I’m far from dissatisfied with it. I wish I could say I’d done this on purpose.

Read below to understand that while we’re busy raising eyebrows and pursing lips, we’re still adhering to a set of morals. This code of ethics won’t be reprinted in every future edition of the *Voice*, but it will be accessible 24/7 at thecollegevoice.org. I hope our readers see this and get that we’re being critical, not mean.

-Maia

The College Voice Code of Ethics

Standards and Integrity

The College Voice intends to produce writing and reporting of the highest standards possible. Editors of the *Voice* read for accuracy of content, logical clarity of argument and grammatical precision following AP Style. The editorial board takes responsibility for the quality of writing that appears in the *Voice*.

Truth and Accuracy

The College Voice will only report facts that its writers and staff believe to be true. The *Voice* assumes responsibility for the accuracy of all information reported and will correct any printed claim that is found to be untrue. The *Voice* will never publish information that is known to be false or misleading.

Inclusivity

The College Voice is produced for and by all members of the Connecticut College community. Though the *Voice* reserves its right to decline publication of a piece due to a lack of truthfulness, quality or relevance to the community, any member of the Connecticut College student body, faculty or staff is invited to participate in the *Voice*. The *Voice* will not discriminate based on racial, ethnic, national, sexual, gender, religious or other identity, nor will it refuse publication based on a difference in political or ideological perspective. The *Voice* will not publish work that represents discriminatory and/or hate speech.

Restrictions on publication by section:

The News section may decline publication of a piece due to its being clearly biased or opinionated.

The Perspectives section will publish pieces representing any opinion, but it may decline publication if opinions presented are deemed hurtful, derogatory, or representative of hate speech.

The Arts section will publish both opinionated and non-opinionated pieces, but it may decline publication due to harm/hate speech or lack of relevance to the arts.

Accountability

The College Voice claims responsibility for all material it publishes. Section editors are responsible for the quality and accuracy of the material in their respective sections; the editor-in-chief is responsible for the quality and accuracy of all material throughout the paper. Individual views expressed by writers belong only to the writers and do not represent the views of the *Voice*. The *Voice* does not intend to instigate action or “fallout” from its articles and does not claim responsibility for action taken in response to information published in the *Voice*, given that the information follows the *Voice*’s ethical standards.

The College Voice holds itself accountable to its sources by surveying quoted or referenced individuals regarding the accuracy of their representation. The *Voice* will never intentionally misquote, misname, or otherwise misrepresent a source. The *Voice* will never intentionally bring harm to a source or endanger any individual. The *Voice* will protect the identities of all anonymous sources.

CORRECTION: The last issue of the *Voice* misprinted the name of the nation of Colombia in an article by Alexander Mintz. The mistake was an editorial error and not the doing of the author.

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.”

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Thank you for reading

&

Thank you for writing

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Community Bulletin

Africana Studies Holds Black Woman’s Conference

The conference “Resisting Invisibility: Restoring our minds, bodies and communities” took place in Cro on Sun. April 2. Running for a majority of the day, the conference boasted multiple speakers discussing topics like beauty, spirituality and self love and was sponsored by several offices, departments and programs on campus.

SGA Campaigns Begin

Following the conclusion of the March 28 to April 1 nomination period, students will begin competing for spots on the Student Government Association 2017-18 Executive Board this week. Speeches will be given on Mon. April 3 in the Chu Room at 7 pm, and voting will occur from April 4 to April 7. Executive Board elections will be followed by Class Council and Young Alumni Trustee competitions.

Millstone Nuclear Plant in Waterford Aims to Change Sales Model

Due to a decrease in the popularity of nuclear energy over natural gas, officials at Millstone Power Station hope to change their business approach by selling power directly to utilities rather than going through hedge funds. State legislators remain skeptical, as environmental groups claim the change could negatively impact wind and solar power initiatives, and Millstone’s exact level of need remains unclear. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection stated that Millstone is not in danger of closure in the coming decade.

ACA Remains in Place; Trump’s Approval Rating Does Not

According to Gallup, President Donald Trump’s approval rating dropped by five points, from 41 to 36 percent, after he and congressional Republicans failed to repeal the Affordable Care Act on March 24. House Republicans retracted the bill calling for repeal after being unable to secure enough votes for its passing, forcing Speaker Paul Ryan to state that the ACA will remain “for the foreseeable future.”

Tomi Lahren Removed from The Blaze

After admitting to being pro-choice, conservative pundit and Internet sensation Tomi Lahren has been suspended from her job as a host on TV network The Blaze.

Trump Approves Funding for Mars Project

Donald Trump signed a bill on March 21 authorizing the spending of \$19.5 billion for NASA. The bill supports research and testing for a manned mission to Mars and leaves NASA’s Earth science budget intact, though Trump has stated that he believes NASA should focus only on space, not Earth. NASA does not presently face the same cuts as other science agencies.

Venezuela Narrowly Escapes Effective Dictatorship

The Venezuelan Supreme Court, staffed largely by allies of President Nicolás Maduro, reversed a March 30 ruling on April 1 that would have revoked power from the Venezuelan National Assembly, a legislative body led by the opposition party to Maduro. Maduro, a populist socialist leader, instructed the court to reverse its decision after international criticism labeled the ruling a “coup” that would put Venezuela under one-man-rule by Maduro.

Vehicular Terror in London

Four people were killed and dozens were injured in a terror attack in London on March 22. A British-born man named Khalid Masood plowed a rented car over pedestrians on the Westminster Bridge and stabbed Constable Keith Palmer before being taken down by other police officers.

Sports Corner

Women’s Lacrosse (1-5)

@ Middlebury L 4-19
Claremont-Mudd-Scripps L 6-14
@ Williams L 8-14
@ Vassar L 12-13
Colby L 11-19
@ Eastern Connecticut State W 10-9

Women’s Tennis (5-2)

Westminster W 9-0
Belhaven W 5-4
East Texas Baptist L 1-5
St. Thomas L 4-5
Allegheny W 6-3
@ Mount Holyoke W 5-4
@ Smith W 8-1

Men’s Lacrosse (4-4)

Middlebury L 6-8
MIT W 25-12
Roger Williams W 12-6
Illinois Wesleyan W 13-10
Williams L 13-16
@ Stockton L 7-10
@ Colby W 11-9
Tufts L 6-12

Men’s Tennis (3-3)

Merrimack L 3-6
Westminster W 9-0
Scad L 3-6
Belhaven W 5-3
East Texas Baptist T 4-4
St. Thomas L 2-7
Allegheny W 6-3

Sailing

@ John Jackson Regatta 3rd of 8
@ Navy Intersectional (Women) 11th of 20
@ Southern New England Team Race 2nd of 8
@ St. Mary’s Regatta 6th of 18
@ Staake Regatta 2nd of 5

Story Search

Do your best to fill in the blanks, then look for the answers scattered throughout the paper!

- 1) In court proceedings concerning an attack against writer Kurt Eichenwald, _____ will be considered a deadly weapon.
- 2) In a recent column, David Brooks compared Trump’s proposed budget to a _____.
- 3) Demonstrating strong governmental influence, the _____ has developed its own welfare system and a “Housing First” approach to homelessness in Salt Lake City.
- 4) The dynamic pop music group _____ was developed by a pair of lawyers and has now sold over 17 million albums.
- 5) Donald Trump, Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio agree that they have no interest in visiting _____, but Trump “could send Congress,” as suggested by Cruz, a member of Congress.

Staff Picks

Art, literature and journalism recommendations from the staff of *The College Voice*.

- Articles:** “I Meditated Inside of New York’s Quietest Art Installation” by Beckett Muffson in *Creators Project*—recommended by Max Amar-Olkus, Arts Editor
“Why One Powerful Republican Doubts Trump’s Climate Policy” by Robinson Meyer in *The Atlantic*—recommended by Dana Gallagher, Perspectives Editor
Book: *You Get So Alone at Times That it Just Makes Sense* by Charles Bukowski (poetry)—recommended by Allie Marculitis, News Editor
Short Story: “In the Penal Colony” by Franz Kafka—recommended by Jennifer Skoglund, Perspectives Editor

Trumpdate: A March Timeline

RILEY MEACHEM
STAFF WRITER

As usual, President Donald Trump has dominated the national media for the past month. Given the saturation of Trump content in newspapers, TV broadcasts and social networks, it is easy to let one of his various shenanigans slide under one's radar like a Russian spy submarine. For this purpose, *The College Voice* has created a comprehensive list of Trump's news-worthy activities throughout the month of March.

March 4

Trump accuses former President Barack Obama, now retired and demonstrably not involved with the intelligence community, of wiretapping his phone and his place of business before he was elected. He took the claim from an article which, while it did contain the phrase 'wiretapping,' had nothing to do with Trump or Trump Tower, and little to do with Obama. Trump insisted upon the veracity of the claims despite the fact they were refuted by the FBI, The New York Times, Bill O'Reilly, The Wall Street Journal and the House and Senate Intelligence Committees.

This resistance led the President to double down and claim that Obama relied upon the aid of British intelligence officials to monitor his movements, which resulted in a series of vitriolic statements from both U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May and the GCHQ. Trump and his Press Secretary, Sean Spicer, were forced to apologize.

March 17

Trump meets with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and refuses to shake hands with her, a serious and flagrant act of disrespect both in Germany and much of the Western World. It is unclear whether Trump's antipathy for the Foreign Chancellor may have spawned from her liberal policies, the high number of Syrian immigrants allowed into her country, or the fact she was born with genitals different from his own. In contrast to his previously issued apology to the British government, Trump also cracked a joke that being wiretapped by Obama was something he and Merkel had in common, a comment which was widely seen to be in poor taste given that the United States has been accused of wiretapping the government offices and military buildings of its allies.

March 18

Trump proposes a budget that would increase defense spending by \$54 billion but cut funding for research into diseases and injuries, all environmental programs, government housing, education, development grants for the South and Midwest and services for the poor. Trump's budget director calls the cuts "one of the most compassionate things we can do."

March 20

Trump awards his daughter Ivanka an office in the White House, a move that creates a serious conflict of interest, as Ivanka is still employed by her father's corporation and has been accused of doing business from the White House.

March 24

Trump proposes a health care bill which, by his own admission, would actively hurt many of the people who voted for him. The bill, which proposes to abolish a significant amount of coverage, particularly for the poor, loses support in the Republican party and fails to pass in the House of Representatives. Trump spends much of the morning of the vote beeping a horn on a Mack truck, and after the bill failed,

makes a series of ostentatiously nonsensical threats, blaming his own party for the dissolution and threatening to leave Obamacare in place as revenge for the bill's failure. The very next day, Trump claims that he "Never said we were gonna abolish [Obamacare] immediately" despite saying this almost word-for-word several times during his campaign.

March 28

President Trump passes an executive order to remove energy regulations, which he believes will make the U.S. more energy independent by moving more jobs back to coal mining. The bill would not only break several international agreements the U.S. has made with our allies to reduce carbon emissions, but also would likely fail to increase independence.

President Trump has also failed to staff nearly 20,000 executive branch positions, meaning that he is neglecting to create that many available jobs. Many accuse him of refusing to hire any Republicans who spoke against him during his campaign, but such an effort would require Trump's having a stronger memory than he has so far demonstrated. •

Congress Votes to Allow Sale of Browsing History by Internet Providers

ASAF DAVIDOV
CONTRIBUTOR

Within the past two weeks, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) devised proposed legislation that will be presented before President Trump. Introduced in early March, this bill was first presented to the House of Representatives as a way to combat the current monopolies that exist within the Internet Service Provider (ISP) market. However, the proposed law allows any ISP to sell the Internet browsing history of individuals to the highest bidder. This law passed in the House and Senate largely along party lines without any amendments. In the Senate, the bill passed 50-48, and every Democrat voted against it. In the House of Representatives, all of the affirmative votes came from Republican representatives, still without a single Democratic vote.

This bill has stirred controversy for many reasons, beginning with the violation of privacy that it represents. Not only can the ISPs sell Internet users' information, but they can do it without notifying the consumers. At any point, without the customer's knowledge, the ISPs can sell their Internet browsing history for targeted advertisement to the highest bidders, which are most likely to be large retailers such as Walmart

and Amazon.

A second popular concern over the bill is the extensive lobbying done by communication companies such as Verizon and Comcast. *The Verge* published data exposing how much money each representative or senator has received through communication lobbyists online. Among the recipients of the over \$9 million communication companies spent on lobbying for the bill in total, a few Congressmen stand out. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who received \$250,000, emerged as the biggest winner. Although the clear influence of lobbyists worries the bill's critics, many Americans are also concerned by provisions that they say weaken the fight for net neutrality, which ensures that any person with Internet access has equal opportunity and ability to gather attention to his or her website and therefore make more money. Without net neutrality, your Internet provider can choose whether or not your website will be able to gather attention.

If President Trump signs this bill into law, there are two major approaches by which users might avoid its outcomes. The first option, which is less popular, is to use the Tor Project, an old military network that has been made available to the public. The primary drawback to using the Tor Project is its risk level; the network is main-

ly used for criminal activity and is considered unsafe. The second, and widely considered more reasonable, option is to use a VPN service. With the use of VPN, Internet access will still not necessarily be free; many services cost about \$50 a year, but they disguise all of the user's Internet activity, preventing their ISP from selling their browsing data.

Now that the ISP-favoring legislation has passed both houses of Congress, the Executive Branch remains as its only hurdle, and it's a low one. When the legislation reaches his desk, President Trump is expected to sign it into law.

Now that this legislation has slipped through Congress unbeknownst to many Americans, many resistance efforts have taken a more humorous than combative turn. Several publicly funded campaigns seek to buy Congress's Internet browsing history. While it will be difficult to attribute the specific pieces of the entire Congress's browsing history to individual congressmen, the information's acquisition will soon be possible, and it may reveal some interesting results. •

1) an animated GIF (*The Telegraph*)

Cro Boulevard Closing: Trials and Myths

MAIA HIBBETT
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

During the past week, motorists trying to pass through Cro Boulevard have been impeded by jersey barriers and orange gates. The roadblocks may be indicative of campus developments to be made through Connecticut College's anticipated 2017 "Master Plan," which will feature pedestrian safety as an essential concern. Right now, Cro Boulevard is blocked as a kind of test; access is restricted to see if access restriction works.

If the term "Master Plan" sounds eerily similar to the recently-released "Strategic Plan," that's only because of the nebulous name. The content, according to vice president of Finance and Administration Rich Madonna, is different: "The Strategic Plan is comprehensively about the curriculum, athletics and student resources," whereas the "Master Plan" concerns itself with facilities management.

"The Master Plan gives us a roadmap to support the Strategic Plan," he added, presumably without pun intended.

Whether a permanent closure of Cro Boulevard makes it into the 2017 Strategic Plan remains to be decided.

Madonna called the current configuration a "pilot program," noting that other configurations will be tested for efficacy. "We need to understand how this will affect emergency vehicles and delivery vehicles," he commented.

Victor Arcelus, dean of Student Life and a participant in Spring 2016's Pedestrian Safety Working Group, clarified that students should not worry about a complete ban on vehicles in the coming academic year; rather, they might expect Cro

Boulevard to become unusable for through traffic, as throughout the year, Conn will be "piloting the best approach possible to make [Cro Boulevard] an effective parking lot." This development was allowed by the new loop road that reaches around the back of central campus, built over the past summer, which Arcelus noted was originally mandated in the College's 1998 Master Plan.

Though closing Cro Boulevard to motor vehicles entirely is not on the table for the coming academic year, it remains a long-term goal. Arcelus noted that a combination of results from studies done by Fuss & O'Neill, a consulting firm contracted by the College to assess pedestrian safety and make recommendations, and surveys conducted by the Pedestrian Safety Working Group deemed Cro Boulevard the "most concerning" area on campus for pedestrians. In the future, Arcelus hopes to make Cro Boulevard a pedestrian-only space featuring green areas and large sidewalks, which would be wide enough to allow for emergency vehicles when necessary and regular cars on move-in day.

"It's a cultural adjustment," director of Facilities Management Trina Learned commented about the prospect, "We can either say that that block of Cro Boulevard is a perfect place where pedestrians should feel safe, or people could look at it and say: it's actually the spine of the entire campus, which means that everybody needs to go through there, including cars." She added that future pilot efforts might include organizing activities on Cro Boulevard so that students may test it as a gathering area, wondering: "For instance, during Floralia, is there

an activity that would actually go in that space?"

Learned considered it essential that the College collect input from the community on the pedestrianizing of Cro Boulevard. "We should have a process of gathering opinions on it," she said on March 31, "but I realize it has only been three days."

Regarding feedback, Madonna recommended: "Students can email me directly or work through SGA." Before the pilot program began, he clarified, SGA was made fully aware of the plans through a presentation.

Questions of further student interest might regard parking accommodations and the improvement of safety on Rte. 32. According to Arcelus, the College plans to move parking to the perimeter of campus. The road behind Knowlton and Harkness, he explained, used to feature parking, as did the space behind Fanning where there now stands a blue sculpture.

In terms of what's in store for Rte. 32, Arcelus reported that Fuss & O'Neill recommended "using what the Department of Transportation calls 'demonstrating complexity,'" by narrowing lanes and incorporating grass-covered medians. This approach aims to make the stretch of Rte. 32 by the campus feel more like a residential road than a highway, thus subtly encouraging motorists to drive more slowly.

Though proposed changes to the roads on and around campus will not affect all current students, they present a loud and clear call for student feedback. To voice their thoughts on the fate of Cro Boulevard, Rte. 32 and parking areas, students should reach out to Rich Madonna. •

TEDx Dares to Bend

ALLIE MARCULITIS
NEWS EDITOR

Over the weekend, students, faculty and alumni gathered in Oliva Hall to listen to a series of TEDx talks. TED is a non-profit media organization that was founded in 1984, and its conferences have taken place annually since 1990. TED conferences are known for being forums in which presenters may share ideas they find compelling. Differing slightly from TED conferences, TEDx conferences are independently organized events held in communities around the world. Conn has hosted TEDx conferences for years, with this year's theme being "Dare to Bend." All of the speakers were tasked with embodying this theme in their talk. The talks varied greatly in their content, but all contained some aspect of commentary on bending norms.

Talks were given by students, professors, alumni and other prominent figures from a variety of backgrounds. TEDx began at 10 am and concluded around 4 pm. Talk topics ranged from virtual reality to theater for young audiences to dealing with alcoholism. Several talks stood out from the rest, as being notably moving or enlightening. Professor Blanche Boyd of the English Department delivered a talk titled "Booze and Me," during which she relayed her experience of quitting drinking and drugs. Boyd recalled that upon achieving sobriety, a friend told her that she was "completely the same but completely different." Her talk was real and grounding, as she shed light on some of the real issues associated with addiction to drugs and alcohol.

Boyd's talk was not alone in its ability to raise awareness about an important issue. Shameesha Pryor '17 delivered a talk titled "Her Hip Hop Story: Black Hip Hop Feminism," which demonstrated to the audience how black women in hip hop have taken a backseat to their male counterparts. Representations of black women in hip hop often create a narrative of objectification, one that Pryor wishes to see change in the near future.

Other speakers such as Gregory Maguire, author of the novel *Wicked*, and former head chef of Noma Dan Giusti, encouraged students with their words. Maguire spoke about the ability that fiction has to help people cope with real-life issues. "The consolation of the imaginary is not imaginary consolation." Maguire recalled how throughout his life, he has found comfort in recognizing himself in fictional characters and having a place to escape to when the real world became too trying. He encouraged the audience to take advantage of the solace that fiction may offer.

Giusti too offered the audience several words of wisdom during his talk "All In." He discussed his trajectory from his childhood to his leadership position at one of the best restaurants in the world. He began his talk by recalling his childhood aspiration of one day becoming a "corn muffin." His talk maintained levity while also delivering important advice. He encouraged the audience to pursue their dreams and forget about a backup plan. Currently working in New London, Giusti walked away from his job at Noma to pursue his dream of putting professional chefs into public schools to change the way the next generation eats.

"Dare to Bend" ran smoothly, evidencing careful organization, with brilliant speakers and excellent catering. The audience was provided with food from Mystic Market, and those of age were invited to enjoy wine and cheese with the speakers upon the day's conclusion. As a tradition at Conn, TEDx conferences will likely continue in the years to come. As long as people have ideas that they find worth sharing, TED will continue to be a viable forum. Congratulations are deserved by all who were involved. •

2) a sexual fantasy (*The New York Times*)

State Legislators Curtail Protest Rights

DANA GALLAGHER
PERSPECTIVES EDITOR

Since the Nov. 8 presidential election, legislatures in 18 states have either introduced or voted to approve legislation with the effect of curtailing mass protests. The proposed laws coincide with a wave of media-publicized protests, such as those practiced by Black Lives Matter activists and Dakota Access pipeline demonstrators. Perhaps emboldened by President Trump's admonition of progressives supposedly "paid" to protest, lawmakers are now seeking to criminalize the very tactics that have rendered these demonstrations newsworthy. A majority of bills under consideration would increase penalties for protesters charged with blocking highway traffic, accusations that have been levied against activists associated with both movements. Ostensibly introduced to protect the safety of motorists and protesters alike, the restrictive legislation is, in reality, intended to clamp down on free speech and delegitimize protest movements.

Legislators in Indiana, Minnesota and Mississippi have designed the most punitive bills to curb highway protest. If enacted, the proposed Mississippi bill would make obstruction of traffic a felony punishable by a \$10,000 fine and a five-year prison sentence. Lawmakers in Indiana are debating a bill that allows police to issue fines for highway protests, while Minnesota may increase fines for protesters blocking highways and allow jurisdictions to charge protesters for the costs of policing the protests. Experts say that because social media has spurred the rapid organization of large-scale protests, legislators must revise existing laws to address the influx of demonstration participants.

Lee Rowland, a senior attorney with the ACLU, believes that legislators have not introduced new bills "because of some gap in the law." She notes that "every single city and county in the United States" already has laws on the books against obstructing traffic on busy roads. The legislation, Rowland says, is meant to "increase the penalties for protest-related activity to the point that it results in self-censorship among protesters who have every intention to obey the law." Hefty financial penalties may impact the scope and make-up of demonstrations. Lower and middle-income Americans, unable to afford the protest fine or legal counsel to avoid felony charges, may

self-censor and fail to turn out to protest altogether. Protests without a diverse base may emphasize issues of particular salience to empowered groups at the expense of the traditionally disempowered.

In defense of the proposed legislation, state lawmakers tout the argument that highway demonstrations constitute a threat to public safety. State Senator George B. Gainer, a Florida Republican who has proposed raising the fines for protesters who block traffic in his own state, relies upon public safety rhetoric to bolster his claims. "We support the First Amendment altogether and want people to get out and do what they want," he said. "But they shouldn't endanger themselves or others."

On its surface, this argument is legitimate. Highway demonstrations not only place protesters and motorists in danger but also could delay law enforcement and medical personnel from responding to life threatening situations. These arguments, however, fail to address the essential purpose of any protest. Protests are meant to disrupt. Sustained and organized, they foment tension by forcing groups to confront issues they have the privilege to ignore. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., protests "dramatize the issue so that it can no longer be ignored." Protesters may not successfully "dramatize" an issue without first engaging in direct action that inconveniences and disrupts the social fabric.

The more outrageous defenses of the proposed bill have historical roots. Speaking to *The Capital Times*, Arizona State Senator Kavanaugh portrayed the legislation in his state as an attack against "full-time, almost professional agent-provocateurs that attempt to create public disorder." According to Douglas McAdam, a professor of sociology at Stanford University, this rhetoric "is standard operating procedure for movement opponents." Civil rights workers, he notes, were described by opponents as "outside agitators, and the tea party was dismissed as an 'AstroTurf' phenomenon rather than a legitimate 'grassroots' movement."

Claiming that protests are somehow staged, Republicans create a false perception that the issues they oppose are similarly unimportant to a vast majority of ordinary Americans. A denial of the uptick in protests and the legitimate purpose of demonstration tactics, however, represents nothing more than a set of alternative facts. •

John Oliver and the BuzzFeed Effect

RILEY MEACHEM
STAFF WRITER

Much, if not too much, has already been said on the subject of fake news, with a significant amount of that being fake news yelled from the bully pulpit of the sentient megaphone now living in D.C. So there's not much need to discuss the outright lies spread around by awakepatriot.com or ozy.com.

However, there is another type of equally lethal misinformation disseminated and consumed by millions of American consumers of news each day. News which has been especially tailored to entertain viewers, gain high ratings and make money often does so at the cost of accuracy and nuance. Here I refer to the phenomenon of engrossing yet heavily biased and reductionist news entertainment which will be called, for lack of a more scientific moniker, "John Oliver and the BuzzFeed effect."

It might sound like the name of a bad 50's garage rock band, but this media phenomenon is more popular and financially successful. *Last Week Tonight* regularly garners upwards of 4 million viewers each week. Talk shows like *The O'Reilly Factor* and *Real Time with Bill Maher* have enough regular viewers to run for longer than many critically acclaimed TV programs. Even the online forms of parody platforms like *The Onion* and *Clickhole* easily make millions over the course of a year.

But what is intrinsically wrong with a news media system designed to lure viewers in with entertaining content, you might ask. In a nation which notoriously eschews civilian involvement or familiarity with the sciences and politics, hosting political debate over enticing jokes, images and music or leaning heavily on the private opinions of entertaining personalities is not a manifestation of evil. It is on the other hand a manifestation of a perhaps more insidious phenomenon at work in the economy of American social news media. If you really want to sit down each week to watch John Oliver compare another congressional program to some chain restaurant and make a meaningless gesture after spoofing yet another PSA, go ahead. But what has become obvious is that an increasing number of people can and do rely exclusively on these vehicles for all news acquisition.

In a study conducted in 2016 by the Pew Research center, it was

revealed that 62% of adult Americans regularly receive news from social media— up from 49% in 2012— and that 18% receive information about current events only from platforms like Reddit, Twitter, Facebook, Youtube and for-profit cable television.

That might seem disheartening at first, but before jumping to conclusions, let's really examine what it means. When consumers gets news from Facebook or Twitter, they are relying on two main tools; the "What's Trending" section and the content appearing on users' walls. Both of these sources are heavily influenced by algorithms. *Slate* explains Facebook's algorithm, one of the most highly guarded in the world:

"[The algorithm] scans and collects everything posted in the past week by each of your friends, everyone you follow, each group you belong to, and every Facebook page you've liked. For the average Facebook user, that's more than 1,500 posts. If you have several hundred friends, it could be as many as 10,000. Then, according to a closely guarded and constantly shifting formula, Facebook's news feed algorithm ranks them all, in what it believes to be the precise order of how likely you are to find each post worthwhile. Most users will only ever see the top few hundred."

Issues that receive the most searches or clicks will appear high on the "What's Trending" list, while issues that don't won't appear at all. The result of this media populism? Stories about Trump beeping the horn on a truck and the final four have both topped the list in the past 14 days. Documentation of the current conflict in the Congo over silicon, which has cost millions of people their lives and made a significant profits for Silicon Valley, including companies like Twitter and Facebook, has never once made the list.

Algorithms also ensure that highly seen items, or items by posters uniquely popular with users, appear more frequently. A combination of demographic breakdowns and saved activity history mean that as a consumer, you are constantly bombarded by articles the sites think you will like, based on the fact a lot of other people clicked on them. If you ever make the decision to click the article yourself, your exposure to such posts will

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Conn Neglects Carbon Tax Initiative

LAUREN BARETTA
CONTRIBUTOR

Connecticut College has historically been recognized as a pioneer of environmental protection and boasts the creation of one of the first environmental studies programs in the nation. However, as a college we have failed to continue this legacy by neglecting to support a carbon tax, an initiative publicized by the National Geographic documentary series *Years of Living Dangerously*.

The carbon tax campaign titled “Put a Price on It” has encouraged local, state and federal politicians to recognize the harmful externalities that stem from carbon production. The movement asks for support from colleges in order to put pressure on governments to adopt public policy that discourages high carbon output. Although “Put a Price on It” is nonspecific in its exact policy aims, it recommends cap and trade, carbon taxes and regulations all as possible solutions to address the global carbon crisis we face.

Environmental Science and Government Professor Jane Dawson insists that our reliance on carbon is a pressing issue. “Climate change is real. The science is not disputed,” she said. Professor Dawson added: “This really is an issue even if we have an administration in Washington that would like to deny that it is an issue.” Carbon is directly linked to severe storms, coastal flooding, water scarcity, food insecurity and disappearing island states. These concerns

offer a superficial glimpse into the massive environmental effects of carbon output that will undoubtedly lead to social worries in the form of climate migrants and environmental injustices. In order to limit global warming to a two degrees Celsius rise, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that the US will have to cut current carbon emission levels to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

This is a tall order, but on a more optimistic note, the state of Connecticut has made progress utilizing a cap and trade strategy. Nine New England states are members of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI); CT signed on in 2005. Cap and trade works in terms of incentives. Essentially, the program begins with the power industry. Companies in the sector purchase carbon allowances through auctions or from other corporations. Due to the added expense of purchasing allowances, energy demand goes down and companies are incentivized to find greener solutions. As time passes, the amount of carbon allowances offered decreases, effectively lowering total emissions. Since the program’s implementation in 2008, \$4.67 billion dollars in auction profits have gone to the RGGI states and 60% of those funds have been invested in energy efficiency efforts. This includes providing citizens with more efficient appliances and assistance in winterizing their homes. Professor Dawson explains, “While we have had the cap and trade system going, energy demand has gone down and the economy has grown. It

makes a lot of sense.”

The disconnect in progress made by the state and the College is obvious. Connecticut has already jumped on board and reaped the benefits of the environmentally and economically sound initiative. The fact that Connecticut College remains hesitant about simply supporting the campaign seems irrational. Perhaps the College is afraid to play a leadership role in the current environmental movement, but we shouldn’t be. Environmental protection is our legacy.

Beginning on April 3, the Goodwin Niering Center for the Environment and the Environmental Studies Department will co-sponsor showings of three episodes from the *Years of Living Dangerously* series. The Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday night viewings will be open to the college community and public. They will take place in Silfen Auditorium beginning at 7pm and cover rising sea levels, increasing energy demand around the world and ocean warming, respectively. On Thurs. April 6, former “60 Minutes” reporters and co-creators of *Years of Living Dangerously*, Joel Bach and David Gelber, will host a conversation about climate change and its impacts in Palmer Auditorium at 7pm. Additionally, an online petition urging the College administration to support “Put a Price on It” is available on Facebook. A paper petition will circulate after each *Years of Living Dangerously* event in order to allow the public to voice thoughts as well. Let’s start the conversation. •

Buzzfeed Effect

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

only increase. Because biased and humorous articles which present simplistic views of complex political issues are universally popular, they show up the most.

Basing visibility of posts on competitive measures of popularity wouldn’t be so bad if the posts themselves managed to provide nuanced looks at issues. But they don’t. One John Oliver segment about surveillance never actually broaches the question of whether or not surveillance is a necessary evil or an intrinsically bad thing, instead turning a broad and complex question into a joke about dick pics so that viewers encountered on the street are able to provide the overwhelmingly one-sided answer the shows desires. The actual dilemma and debate around surveillance, regarding the promotion of government profiling, allowance of private medical data to be easily accessible by government and corporate bodies, and decreased number of violent crimes committed and more

humane and effective monitoring of the mentally ill associated with it, indeed the important details at stake, are left completely out of the picture. *The Guardian’s* most recent editorial, a fluff piece on the meaning of pet ownership concludes that animals are too stupid to love, and that any “real animal-lover wouldn’t dream of thinking they had the right to own one and treat it like a personal possession.” BuzzFeed has run nothing on Angela Merkel, the economy or indeed anything international or unrelated to Trump’s faux-pas in more than a week. The site has, however, managed to produce “Comet Ping Pong ‘Pizzagate’ Shooter Pleads Guilty To Weapons Charges,” an ostensibly hilarious piece about a man widely believed to be mentally ill destroying a pizza restaurant.

It’s exciting to be so close to so much information, closer to it than we have ever been at any point in history. But getting information and getting good information are two different things, and the latter remains, as always, more difficult and rigorous than the former. •

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Jeff Sessions Just Says No to Marijuana

MAX AMAR-OLKUS
ARTS EDITOR

Jeff Sessions, a man deemed too racist to serve as a federal judge in the 1980s, now heads the United States Department of Justice and holds a coveted position as the nation's chief law enforcement officer and lawyer. To many young people across the country—myself included—this feels like a scary episode of *Black Mirror* or *The Twilight Zone*, one in which someone's crazy old racist grandfather has, seemingly out of nowhere, ascended to a position of power that affects more people than just those living in his condo complex in Boca Raton.

While the analogy above can be applied to the majority of President Trump's cabinet, Sessions stands out. He is an unabashed racist and has spent the majority of his career opposing civil rights and the Voting Rights Act, doing everything in his power to make it more difficult for people of color to vote. He's close with the KKK, but this otherwise rosy relationship hit a snag when Sessions revealed he thought the KKK was "Ok until [he] learned they smoked pot."

Sessions famously said "Good people don't smoke marijuana," and has been quoted as saying, "I think one of [Obama's] great failures—it's obvious to me—is his lax treatment in comments on marijuana... It reverses 20 years almost of hostility to drugs that began really when Nancy Reagan started 'Just Say No.'"

Sessions is one of a select group of people who feel nostalgic for Reagan's War on Drugs. That's likely because of the war's debilitating effect on communities of color across the nation and because of Sessions' close ties with the private prison industry.

In February, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer told reporters that he expects states to see "greater enforcement" of the federal law

against marijuana use, a statement that prompted advocates for marijuana legalization to fall into a paranoid frenzy.

Sessions' review of Obama-era policies of "hands-off" pot enforcement has liberal and libertarian lawmakers rattled, but behind closed doors he promised senators Rand Paul (R-Kentucky) and Cory Gardner (R-Colorado) that he would have "some respect for states' rights on these things." While this may seem somewhat reassuring, don't forget that Sessions has been accused of lying under oath to the Senate about meeting with a Russian diplomat during the campaign season.

On March 15, in a speech about violent crime

ing fashionable. I reject the idea that America will be a better place if marijuana is sold in every corner store. And I am astonished to hear people suggest that we can solve our heroin crisis by legalizing marijuana—so people can trade one life-wrecking dependency for another that's only slightly less awful. Our nation needs to say clearly once again that using drugs will destroy your life."

For me, logic is more at play than fashionability in efforts to decriminalize marijuana. Marijuana is not "only slightly less awful" than heroin and opioids; overdoses from the latter killed almost 33,000 people in 2015. Prescription painkillers are a central, though not the singular,

cause of the epidemic, and studies have shown that legalization of medical marijuana has been associated with a reduction in opioid painkiller prescriptions, overdoses and opioid-linked traffic deaths.

As heroin and prescription drug abuse in the US has reached a 20 year high, the country is undoubtedly facing a drug epidemic. Sessions should focus his efforts on the crisis, but targeting states that have legalized marijuana is a tactic that will not play well. If Sessions cracks down on the legal and medicinal marijuana industries,

approximately 150,000 people could be left unemployed nationwide, and a nearly six billion dollar industry could be squashed. We would see a reversal in policies meant to keep urban youth, predominantly those of African American and Latino descent, out of prison for petty offences such as marijuana possession. But this is by no means the end of the story. This issue will most definitely continue to develop, and will likely include some sort of draconian legislation. But like just about everything with this new administration, it seems impossible to predict what's to come in the future. •



"I thought they were ok until I learned they smoked pot."
Illustration by Roo Lerner

in Richmond, Virginia, Sessions spoke briefly about the opioid addiction crisis facing the nation. He said that as heroin and opioid abuse continues to rise, violent gang activity does as well. Harping on rhetoric perfected during the height of the War on Drugs, Sessions stated that the only way to deal with addiction was to make sure people never use drugs in the first place. While this tactic is both antiquated and unrealistic, I could kind of see the logic behind his perspective—until he dropped a bombshell about marijuana. He said:

"I realize this may be an unfashionable belief in a time of growing tolerance of drug use. But too many lives are at stake to worry about be-

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Paper Moons at Lyman Allyn

SOPHIA ANGELE-KUEHN
CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Faint, sentimental notes of Nat King Cole singing “It’s Only a Paper Moon” filtered down as I walked through two galleries on the second floor of the Lyman Allyn Art Museum. Other singers, including Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra, followed with their versions of the 1930s tune.

The exhibit itself, curated mostly by Connecticut College students enrolled in Professor Christopher Steiner’s Museum Studies Certificate Program, is aptly titled “It’s Only a Paper Moon: Souvenir Photography in America, 1870-1950.” These palm-sized photographs – numbering over 425 – draw from the private collection of the professor of Art History & Anthropology himself. They depict everyone from infants to fun-loving teenage boys posing with an array of items featuring taxidermy alligators, 2D airplanes, fake orange trees, and yes – paper moons.

“The images were printed on penny postcards and were popular among travelers and tourists, who would then ship the photos to family and friends,” noted Steiner. Photo studios had become increasingly common and sought-after attractions at carnivals and state fairs after the invention of photography in the mid 1800s. The iconic crescent “paper moon” with a background of stars or clouds was the most prevalent set design.

Connecticut College has collaborated with the museum for several years now, allowing faculty from the Department of Art History to curate and display their projects, most often with the help of students. For example, last year Professor Karen Gonzalez Rice invited her students to help her put together an exhibit on the relationship between text and image in modern art.

“For my collaborative project I proposed an exhibition on souvenirs and memory. At the time, I wasn’t exactly sure what form

the exhibit would take,” admitted Steiner. “But by the end of last year, I had decided to focus the show on souvenir photography... I have been collecting “paper moon” photographs (as well as other forms of souvenir photography) for about 6 years now. The collection grew out of my teaching interests in vernacular and outsider art.”

Most of the undergraduates who worked with Steiner on “It’s Only a Paper Moon” are pursuing the Museum Studies Certificate, while others were simply passionate to partake in the project. Even though the task required a tremendous amount of work planning, framing and mounting almost 500 photographs, Steiner believed “this was a terrific opportunity for the students who worked with me on the exhibition. One of the great benefits of having access to the Lyman Allyn Art Museum on the southern edge of our campus is that students can gain firsthand experiences in museum work, object handling and exhibition installation.”

Julie Blazar ’20 enjoyed visiting the exhibit as well, commenting: “I liked how some of the photos looked fake and some of them could have been real. I was thinking about why people would pose in these photos with the moon and not just take a conventional photograph. I think that adding the prop adds an element of fun to the photo and that it allows the person in the photo to customize their photo.”

The Lyman Allyn Art Museum even provides an adjacent “paper moon” photo booth where visitors can select a hat or feather boa and pose like the hundreds of strangers in the snapshots of the past. “We know little or nothing about the photographers or the subjects in their photographs, but each image stands as a powerful aesthetic statement about the values and identities of “average” Americans,” said Steiner. He was thrilled that muse-

um-goers could “experience in a very real way the mood and sentiments that are captured in the hundreds of historical photographs featured in the exhibition.”

“It is only a paper moon, sailing over a cardboard sea, but it wouldn’t be make believe, if you believed in me...” trailed after me and my friend as we walked out of the “paper moon” photo booth and away from the faces of the past we attempted to imitate, toting our own souvenir photographs and memories. •

4) Kidz Bop (*The New York Times Magazine*)



“African American girl on moon.” No location, ca. 1940s
Photos courtesy of Sophia Angele-Kuehn



“Two men with sign.” No location, ca. 1907-15.



“It’s Only a Paper Moon” Exhibit

MOBROC Barn Shut Down Indefinitely

WILL KADISON
CONTRIBUTOR

The MOBROC Barn is one of the more memorable buildings at Conn. The small red building sits on the north side of campus, overlooking the Sprout Garden. Occasionally, passerby can hear the music of a student band as they practice. Barn shows have always been a fun and welcoming environment for students, but MOBROC has had an up-and-down relationship with the College's administration. Recently, MOBROC was stripped of its privilege to perform after an improperly organized show. The show was over capacity, and there were open containers found in the barn that night. However, many students feel that the punishment did not fit the crime.

SGA President Ramzi Kaiss '17 commented: "No, I don't think [the decision] was warranted. I think in the future the Barn should continue to serve as a space for students to socialize, make music, and have a good time. Given the limited amount of available spaces on campus, it is imperative to keep the Barn open and operating."

While this may be the opinion of many students, many have wondered if barn shows could return this semester. When asked, Membership Director Rose Montera '19 simply replied, "No, there won't be any more shows this year." Montera assured me that she did everything in her power to get barn shows back, but there was no room for negotiation with the College. Dean of Student Life Geoff Norbert did not respond to a request for comment.

As a senior, I have to say that it's sad to think I've seen my last Barn show. Barn shows have been some of my best Conn memories. Barn shows mean a lot to the students here, and Kaiss feels it would diminish the Conn experience to lose them. He elaborated: "For me Barn shows have illustrated the sheer talent found on this campus, and the sense of community that we are capable of building. There is no space on campus like it, and to lose it would do great harm to the student experience at Conn."

Connor Gowland '17, co-president of MOBROC, commented: "The Barn gave me a sense of community immediately upon transferring to Conn my junior year. Being able to start a band with likeminded musi-

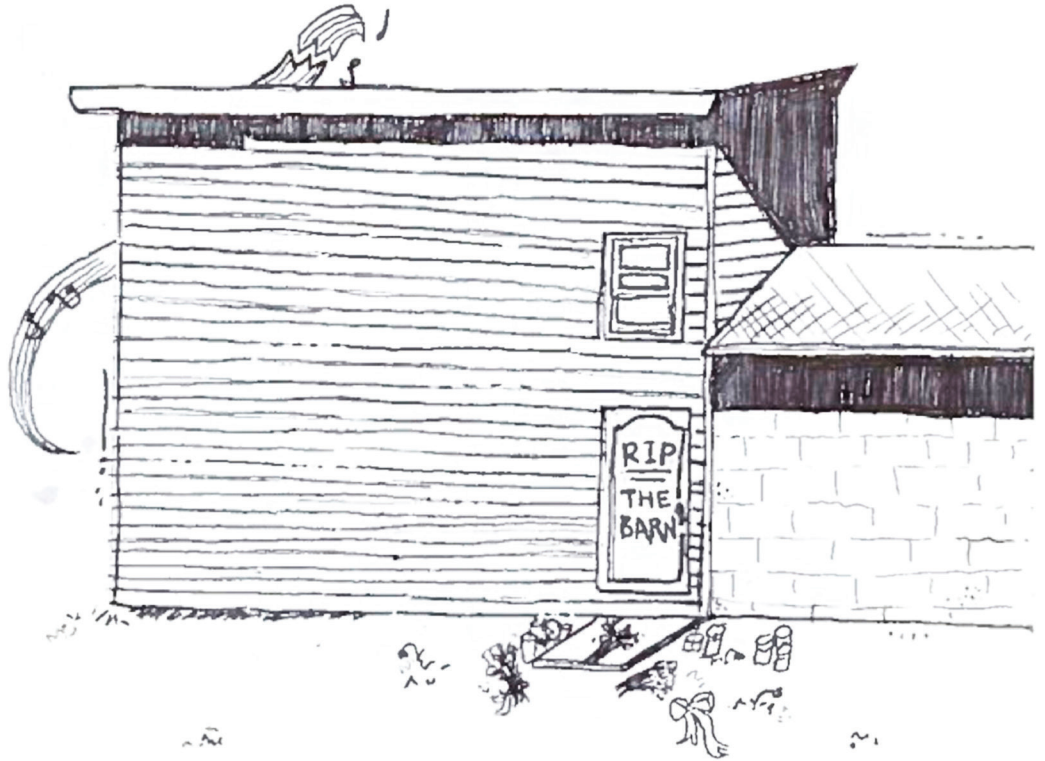


Illustration by Amanda Chugg

cians and also having the privilege of using such an amazing performance space known as the Barn has shaped my extracurricular life and social life here at Conn. I see MOBROC remaining as an organization with the key mission of bringing musicians together and giving them a space to perfect their craft." The Barn is a unique space for students to be creative, and it is a shame to see a sudden, swift punishment from the College.

Moving forward, only time will tell when Barn shows will return to Conn. However, it seems as though my fellow seniors and I have attended our final Barn show as students. •

5) outer space (*The Washington Post*)

Censored Chats

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

"He still got fired?" I asked.

"Yes," Brown replied. Despite the removal of the videos and a positive recommendation from his housefellow, Alex Medzorian '19 was not renewed for a REAL position in the 2017-18 year. I was perplexed, as this series simply resulted from a personal passion for filmmaking and drive to create, not as a commissioned project for the College's marketing team, giving the College no pretense to dictate its content.

Never did Brown think that his series was controversial, and, according to him, "Students loved it, and I was shocked with how well-received it was. People would come up to me and ask if they could make an appearance or help out with the next episode. I would always say yes because I would like to emphasize that I made the show for the students, and what made 'Camel Chat' special is that it showed off an entertaining side of student life that is not always visible here at Conn."

He continued explaining what the REAL Office found unsettling about the series, saying, "Apparently, they believed that the fact that Alex was referred to by his real name and as a floor governor was potentially an 'image problem' for them, meaning that they feared the possibility

of anyone outside of the school seeing the show and viewing Alex's role as a representation of the REAL Office. It's strange because we never said anything bad about the REAL staff themselves."

"This sounds a lot like censorship," I commented.

"This is the epitome of censorship," he replied without hesitation. He paused for a moment to gather his thoughts, then continued, "For an institution that claims to be a place that cultivates creativity, it sure as hell doesn't feel like that is in any way true anymore. When the whole situation came to reality, me and plenty of other people felt discouraged for the longest time because we felt our creative voices were being silenced based on a 'potential view' that only the REAL Office saw but no one else even thought of. It sucks plain and simple. And now, me and a bunch of people are somewhat cautious as to what to create next because we're not sure what we can or cannot film since we don't see things the same way the REAL Office or Connecticut College sees things. The last thing an artist wants is for people to be punished because they wanted to help make a vision based



Jon Brown '19
Photo courtesy of Max Amar-Olkus

on good intentions become a reality."

I couldn't help sympathizing with Brown, as he was visibly disheartened and disappointed. To me, this is a disturbingly clear-cut example of institutional censorship of freedom of expression and creation. The reasons behind the censorship are even more dubious; they strip away the façade that Connecticut College creates for itself— one of being a benevolent environment fostering the exploration of personal passions, creativity and freedom of expression across a 'diverse' student body. As this façade cracks, one begins to see the institution for what it really is: a business looking to preserve its image for potential investors. •

Black Students Highlight Community and Achievement through Film

MAIA HIBBETT
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

At the premiere for Georbina DaRosa '17's documentary "I Am Because We Are," Maurice Tiner '17 opened with words that I had heard in our interview earlier that day: "The essence of this film is about community... And we're gonna have to be cozy. If you have to sit on the floor, sit on the floor."

Amid apologies, Tiner issued this instruction because the room was packed. Ten minutes before the scheduled 5 pm start, students, faculty and staff had filled the auditorium seats in Blaustein 210, occupied the extra chairs and begun lining the sides of the room with standers, kneelers and the cross-legged. In the pre-screening interview I conducted with DaRosa, Tiner and Gil Mejia '17, DaRosa admitted: "We thought about doing Evans Hall, and we should've done that, but this will be more intimate... It's gonna be over-capacity; there might be fire violations." Tiner added: "I told her: 'it's gonna blow up.'" It did.

DaRosa's film, whose March 31 airing marked the culmination of a Holleran Center project spanning more than a year, reflected the experiences of six self-identifying Black and Afro-Latino students at Conn: seniors DaRosa, Mejia, Tiner and Yasmin Fabian, and sophomores Jermaine Doris and Ivana Lamptey. Noting the assumptions that prospective viewers might make upon learning of the film's content, Mejia observed that the film "isn't so much about reacting or responding as it is about building or restoring... We're talking about how to exist in a Black body at a white institution; people are gonna be like 'alright, they're struggling, what are they doing to make sure that they're better?' but it isn't about that. If the project was about that it would be validating and making systems of power at the center."

The film employs a multi-platform approach to storytelling and features works of visual art by Lamptey and Brynne Radin '17; spoken word poetry performed by Vessel Day '20, Nifemi Olugbemiga '20 and Shameesha Pryor '17; music performed by Doris and Sterling Rowe '19; and video testimonies from the six starring students. Transitional points during the film feature quotations by Audre Lorde and Nina Simone, which DaRosa credited to a course taught by Professor Nathalie Etoke of the French Department.

"All of the quotes were from that class," DaRosa said of Etoke's Spring 2016 course "Existence in

Black" during the post-screening panel, which was facilitated by Professor Cherise Harris of the Sociology Department. DaRosa, Fabian, Mejia and Tiner all participated in the course.

During our earlier interview, Tiner noted: "I think we changed from being in that class. So [it] will be featured heavily in this film." This extends to the point, according to DaRosa, of its title; the name "I Am Because We Are," she said, was inspired by Etoke's class.

In the film, participating students discuss the interrelated subjects that affect their daily lives on campus and in the world outside. Mentioned themes include spirituality, athletics and activism.

Students embrace the term "activist" to varying degrees, with some noting that they intend to reach higher personal development and clarity before claiming the term, and others explaining how they grew comfortable with it. After the film, Fabian commented: "First I was labeled as [an activist], and then I owned it. I received an email that was like, 'You've been identified as a student activist.'" But she unpacked the term and grew to understand it, she explained, in classes with Professors Etoke and Hybel.

When athletics emerge in the film, Tiner acknowledges Lamptey's prominence on the track team as a form of excellence to be recognized beyond the obligatory work of the academic sphere. Their conversation highlights the intrinsic link between excellence and pressure, as students who apply themselves to academics and engage in extracurricular activities, especially those dedicated to activism, often find themselves stretched thin. This leaves little room for mental health and spirituality, which DaRosa ties together in her own testimony.

Both DaRosa and Tiner commented, both in the film and the panel, that while they are devoted to faith, the environment at Conn proves challenging. Tiner noted: "This is not a space that really welcomes spirituality... from the students," referring to a culture which prioritizes night life over worship on weekends and does not appear outwardly religious.

DaRosa added: "It's not just a Conn issue; it's an issue in America with the way the education system is set up," nodding at the expectation that students will prioritize their academics and resume-building over mental health. For her, faith- and by extension the space and time to practice it- is inextricable from mental wellbeing.



From left: Maurice Tiner '17, Ivana Lamptey '19, Yasmin Fabian '17, Georbina DaRosa '17, Jermaine Doris '19, Gil Mejia '17
Photo courtesy of Maia Hibbett

Mental health, some students noted, can serve as its own form of activism. Fabian highlighted the power in "re-defining activism," explaining: "a smiling Yasmin is different from a Yasmin who's running around, and you can see the stress on her face... so for me, [this form of activism] means slowing down."

The theme of activism remained throughout the panel, and one related question managed to make presenters squirm: an inquiry about the legacy that the students would leave after graduating. After a prolonged, bashful silence, the presenters began to engage with the idea of who and what would succeed them on campus, voicing a mix of hope and frustration.

"Thinking that I will have a legacy is hard to even fathom," Lamptey admitted.

Recognizing the challenges of the question, Doris considered his own experience as a first-generation college student from an immigrant family- which he discusses in the film- and commented: "I never want another student to feel like that ever again." But he added that such a sentiment can be constructive when used to motivate change and advised: "Think about yourself in terms of a legacy."

Tiner contrasted exasperated and optimistic sentiments, noting: "My frustration was with students of color... I felt very discouraged when I would call on my own people for help and they would let me down," making him worry for the campus after his graduation, but he added: "I'm kinda over it now."

Tiner explained that because of strong mentorship on campus, he has learned to respect the difficulty that comes with making oneself visible- and therefore vulnerable- on behalf of a cause. Regarding his

mentors on campus, Tiner said, "Africana Studies has changed my life" and "with new leadership fostering and mentoring the community, there's hope... I'm glad that [the College] didn't realize too late." He referred to the hiring of Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion John McKnight and "professors that really care."

Despite the leadership of highlighted faculty and staff McKnight, Etoke and Harris, work remains to be done on campus. On this subject, Doris noted that "One of the biggest demonstrations of white privilege is the ability and power to create a moment, to step in and step out... Even [with] something as powerful as this [film], people will walk away and the next week it won't be on their minds. And that's not on us. I used to think it was on us. That's the nature of privilege."

DaRosa's film draws a clear distinction between those who have the option to walk away from an issue and those who do not, but it does not ground itself in the negative, instead portraying a celebratory account of a difficult but impressive reality. Of the film, McKnight said: "This is a piece that deserves to be in the archives."

As Tiner highlighted, community lies at its center, and of this Mejia noted: "There are times when it gets really rough and you convince yourself that no one else will understand... Give yourself permission to find the best parts of yourself in someone else."

For those who missed the screening but still wish to see the film, DaRosa promises that it will be online soon, though the large file size makes processing difficult. "I'm gonna find a way to make it accessible for those who wanna see it," she assured. •

The House on Federal Street: Meet New London's Resident Censored Artist

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Editor's note: The following story was written for Professor Blanche Boyd's class "Narrative Nonfiction" and was first published to Mike Alewitz's Facebook page. This is an excerpted version of the story; the full version can be found on thecollegevoice.org.

When I first contacted Mike Alewitz about an interview, I assumed we would be meeting alone. But as he offers me a seat at his dining room table, I realize we are in company. Seated across from me is a mannequin, her head tilted slightly to the left, as though she is listening but distracted. She has makeup on her eyelids and cheeks. Seated next to her is a large, plastic bunny with long white ears. To my left, a life-sized skeleton with a black top hat. His arm is outstretched across the wooden table. We are a full house. Above all of us hangs a painting with big letters that read: Capitalism Sucks.

Mike Alewitz is an activist, an artist and a former professor. He is 5'8 with a short buzz cut, fair skin and a few fine wrinkles that accentuate his cheekbones and chin. He sits leaning his elbows into the table. He has on tiny black spectacles, a black watch, a black turtleneck with loose black pants and one tiny black earring.

We are sitting in the dining room of Red Square, Mike Alewitz's home, museum and gallery. Known by the community as the Red or Pink House, or even just the House on Federal Street, the building is identifiable by its fiery red exterior and vibrant pink detail. Just standing outside the front door, the paint so colorful, so rich, so unblemished, is

enough to make anyone curious.

As we sit at the table, I ask Alewitz about himself. He does not tell me much about his early years. It is clearly not a time he is proud of, or that he cannot find the words to describe. Teenage years of rebellion, anger, or what, I will not know. When he finally makes eye contact with me he says, "If I had not become political, I probably would have died."

Alewitz describes his career as being "ass-backwards." While most artists turned political, he is an activist turned artist. At Kent State, where Alewitz went for some of his undergraduate years, he was the chairman of the Student Mobilization Committee and a witness to the Kent State Massacre. After the shooting, he left to become an organizer for anti-war movements, traveling to Austin, Los Angeles, Cleveland, New Orleans, Virginia, Boston, New Jersey. At the time he began working for the union movement, he was in industry as a railroad worker and machinist. He even laid some of the railroad tracks in New London, Connecticut that remain about half a mile from his house. While working, Alewitz picked up sign painting and billboard painting before going to the Massachusetts School of Art in his late thirties. He considers this the beginning of his art career. "I had the background," he tells me. "I could render."

Yet the start of Alewitz's career was inextricable from the start of his censorship. At the Massachusetts School of Art, Alewitz had a weekly painted column and after dedicating a mural to a local Black man killed by the police, he walked in to find the police graffitiing all over it. Once the cops left, the president of

the university had the mural and the graffiti painted over in white. Since then, Alewitz has been devoted to agitprop work, a combination of agitation and propaganda, which he also refers to as "high grade street art."

As Alewitz speaks about his past, he becomes fidgety. Finally, as though to cure his own restlessness, he decides to give me a tour of his artwork and we both stand. Talking to Alewitz at the dining table is like trying to keep up with someone slipping back into their past. But talking to Alewitz while he shows me his art, it is as if I am suddenly in a classroom. I see him as a professor as he points to the figures in his work. He asks me, "Do you know who these people are?" and I stammer out a response, embarrassed of not knowing. He responds with engagement and challenge. He talks with expectations.

I find myself in his class as he takes me from mural to mural. He asks me if I recognize the people he painted for a border organization project in Mexico City. I shake my head no and he does not seem surprised. "We have been robbed of our history," he says. The mural was done in commemoration for the Haymarket Massacre which took place in Chicago. The man and woman staring down at me are Albert and Lucy Parsons. Albert Parsons was one of the trade union workers who was framed and executed in the massacre.

We move back into the hallway and I notice a blue pair of mannequin legs by the front door. He takes me past a mural for striking mushroom workers in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, the mushroom capital of the U.S. The church bells ring outside. He points



Red Square in New London
Photos courtesy of Mike Alewitz

to another mural, at the base of the stairs, done for the International Confederation of Energy and Mine Workers. Diagonal from it is a mural dedicated to Fall River Textile Workers. Another for the Rodney King rebellion in South Central L.A.

"There is a book in every one of these stories," he says. I realize then that I am only hearing pieces from his past. There are novels behind his paintings and behind those novels are history books. His house is a time capsule.

In 1999, the White House Millennium Council identified Mike Alewitz as a Millennium Artist. He was funded to design a series of murals called "Dreams of Harriet Tubman" that were supposed to be painted around Baltimore. The central mural shows Harriet Tubman holding a gun and on either side of her are red swirling waves. Silhouettes of people cluster and crowd at her feet. The mural was never made public. "You're in a place where there are statues with white men with guns everywhere and they can't..." his voice trails off as he tells me the story. "I painted the only image of a woman...a Black woman...with a gun." After the mural was rejected, Alewitz issued an offer for a free mural but no one would provide a wall. "Everybody's afraid," he says. "It was censorship and not the kind that helps your career."

Alewitz's stories are a routine of acceptance and decline, of struggle and movement. His pieces are vibrant, loud, colorful. They declare to be acknowledged. Stored amongst the rooms of the house are boxes and boxes of press coverage from the censorship of his art. But, as Alewitz explains, not a single article has made it into an

art journal. "The minute you start painting about this stuff, you cease to exist."

When we reach the third floor, I ask Alewitz what it is like to see his work destroyed, a recurring fate for his politically charged and public pieces. He describes that the success or failure in each piece is in its process and effect. Alewitz tells me the story of his first mural in the United States, the P-9 Mural for striking meat packers in Minnesota, where the national guard was called in. The mural was destroyed by the Hormel Company and workers were sent to jail. "A lot of the most famous strikes and struggles we think of in history actually didn't win," he explains. "But they won in the sense that they had a profound effect in what was going on. That is what my work is trying to do. That is how I judge it."

Alewitz tells me we are now going to see the best part of the house, and I do not know what to expect. He leads me up a tiny staircase into the attic and then to a small ladder which leads to the roof. As he climbs up the ladder, the sunlight filling into the attic creates a spotlight around him. For a second, he looks like a painting, frozen between shadow and light, before he disappears. I follow him. This is where Alewitz spends his summers, on his small roof, with one of the best views of New London. In the distance you can see the Thames River and two churches. We don't say much. We stand in silence, thinking different thoughts, taking it in. When we walk back down to the first floor of the house I comment on all the windows. None of them have any shades or blinds. The house is flooded with muted winter light. "I was poor most of my life," he tells me. "I can't bear to cover them." •



Dining room at Red Square