



Photo Courtesy of The Rearview Media

“Scabby the Rat,” who is often associated with pro-union movements, gathered with IUOE Local 30 Union in front of President Mark Nemec’s residence. Protestors urged Nemec to support the workers on campus amid stalled union negotiations.

Facilities Union Protesters Urges President Nemec to Support Workers

BY MAX LIMRIC
Managing Editor

Protesters supporting facility workers gathered outside of Fairfield University President Mark R. Nemec’s residence on Round Hill Rd. on the morning of Friday, Dec. 1. Members of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 30 (IUOE Local 30) urged President Nemec to support the workers on campus amid stalled union negotiations.

Currently, IUOE Local 30 represents facility workers and is in the ninth month of negotiations with Fairfield University for a new bargaining agreement that guarantees safer working conditions, livable wages and health-care benefits.

Director of Special Projects at IUOE Local 30, Andres Puertas detailed the motivation behind the demonstration being that Fairfield University “handed [negotiations] off to an anti-union law firm.”

“The anti-union law firm should not be speaking for the administration and we wanted to urge the President to get involved,” Puertas stated.

IUOE Local 30 claims that Bond, Schoeneck and King, the firm managing the labor negotiations on behalf of the university, is a “legendary union-busting firm out of New York.” Puertas believes that the university’s use of a law firm demonstrates Fairfield lacks the desire to achieve a fair contract for facilities workers.

Alongside with The Fairfield Mirror, which published on the negotiations on Oct. 4, Fairfield University’s Faculty Welfare Committee and its chapter of the American Association for University Professors (FWC/AAUP), wrote an

article regarding the negotiations.

In the FWC/AAUP fall 2023 issue, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology Dave Crawford reflected on an Oct. 4 report published by The Mirror highlighting the Facilities workers’ demands and pointed to how the organization is charged with “representing faculty welfare.”

Crawford first referenced the “Guidelines of Contracting Services,” created in 1999 which include notions of “just compensation” and “a minimum level [of income] that the University deems just.”

“President Nemec has the power to settle a contract for these workers.”

-Andres Puertas
Director of Special Projects for IUOE Local 30

He then compares the different uses of language in the statements from 1999 to the ones the university administrations made this year. “The University now says that it is committed to paying ‘competitively relative to the market.’”

He also points out a driving factor in the negotiations, “On the tragic death of a subcontractor, a sore point in today’s union negotiations, Fairfield states coldly that ‘The University was not cited by OSHA for any safety violations related to the subcontractor’s tragic death. Only the subcontractor’s own company was cited for such violations.’”

Puertas echoes Crawford’s sentiments as he believes that given the death

of a subcontractor on campus on May 31, 2022, the administration has an ethical duty to “consider the substandard working conditions for these members of the Fairfield University community and workers on campus.”

Due to the University’s changing statements, Crawford believes that “we now have a ‘Standard Fairfield University Vendor Contract’ written in potent legalese intended precisely to avoid any notion of responsibility. The point seems to be that dignity and safety can be subcontracted. Our current verbiage has nothing to do with justice or dignity and everything to do with expediency.”

In light of Crawford’s statements, Puertas’ concern over safety is evermore pertinent and he asks, “Is the University doing everything possible to uplift these workers and protect them?”

The Mirror reached out to Fairfield University’s Marketing Department for a comment, but they did not reply in time for publication.

In addition to support from faculty, IUOE Local 30 felt a lot of support from the public during the protest as “students passing by applauded [their] efforts that day.” Because awareness has already been raised regarding the negotiations, “This was not a demonstration intended to simply raise awareness; it was a demonstration to urge President Nemec to support the workers on campus as we would expect a University President to do,” Puertas voices.

It is unknown whether President Mark Nemec was at his home at the time of the demonstration.

“President Nemec has the power to settle a contract for these workers,” and the Union believes it is time Nemec does that.

“Impractical Jokers” Star Joe Gatto Makes Stop at Leo D. Mahoney Arena

BY SAMANTHA RUSSELL
Assistant News Editor

Anticipating the weight of final exams and a noticeable chill in the air, it is important for undergraduate students to come together, de-stress and share a laugh or two. Does a ticket to see Joe Gatto’s comedy performance suffice?

On Dec. 2, comedian and former star of the hidden-camera reality series “Impractical Jokers,” Joe Gatto, drew a full Fairfield crowd to the Leo D. Mahoney Arena for an hour set of comedic storytelling, advice-giving and witty audience engagement.

Honored as the first comedy performance held at Fairfield’s new arena, the event attracted a diverse yet equally enthusiastic crowd, complete with die-hard “Impractical Jokers” fans, those acquainted with the show and of Gatto, and others who simply joined their friends for a memorable Saturday night.

Nonetheless, Gatto’s lineup of ironic family stories, amusing fan encounters and endless jabs at his best friends and co-stars of “Impractical Jokers” left audience members with superseded expectations.

Upon its announcement on the Office of Student Engagement’s Instagram page, the front-runner of the event, Fairfield University students expressed tremendous elation around Gatto’s campus appearance. First-year Crystal Arbelo confided she “almost cried when I saw Joe Gatto was coming to Fairfield.”

“I’ve been such a big fan of ‘Impractical Jokers,’” she added.

Arbelo was not the only holder of such excitement. Madison Governale ‘26 revealed that her enthusiasm led her to purchase a ticket immediately and with “pretty high” expectations for the show.

“My friend’s school also had him come a few weeks back so I was even more excited to see that he was coming to Fairfield, too!”

Pre-show thoughts witnessed a trend of mixed emotions around Gatto’s solo comedy performance. Of the students The Mirror spoke to, many who bought tickets as

“Impractical Jokers” fans often admitted to having little expectations towards his comedy potential outside of the show and his co-stars.

“I’m not sure what I am expecting to see as I don’t know much about him outside of ‘Impractical Jokers,’” stated Emma Maselli ‘26. “He is very funny on the show, so I am looking forward to his comedy by himself.”

“Joe Gatto is my favorite celebrity now based on his jokes about me.”

-Lucas Steele ‘27
Student

Similarly, Andrew Becker ‘25 acknowledged that the comedian’s performance would certainly be different because of its removal from his typical and televised environment. Still, he credits Gatto with being his favorite ‘Joker’ and stated he was “definitely super pumped to see him perform.”

Regardless of these presumptions—or a lack thereof—Gatto kept his crowd laughing and undeniably amused, even shifting some student perceptions of the performer from neutral to positive. His set began with an introductory university discussion, in which he made sure to declare the uselessness of his own accounting major to the business-oriented school.

Gatto learned his audience well and tailored several of his jokes to Fairfield-specific topics. He commented on the notorious app, Fizz, tossed a Snicker’s bar to front-row student Lucas Steele ‘27, better know to the student community as Luke Steele, and somewhat apologetically referred to the arena of Stags as “angry reindeer.”

“Joe Gatto is my favorite celebrity now based on his jokes about me,” reported Steele in an interview with The Mirror. “I am very happy about the Snickers bar and I’m deciding not to eat it and just keep it, maybe sell it on Fizz marketplace.”

Approximately halfway

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Fairfield University SLED AHEAD OVER WINTER BREAK

More than 45 undergraduate and graduate online courses available.

fairfield.edu/winter

Questions?

Contact Sandy Richardson
at arichardson@fairfield.edu



Gatto ‘Hits Home’ With Hour-Long Comedy Show

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

through his show, Gatto called out another female student fan holding a flag with a head-shot sign of Salvatore “Sal” Vulcano, a fellow “impractical joker,” which depicted a photo well-known to the show’s fanbase. Gatto questioned the frequency to which she travels with it and, with many laughs, she admitted to owning a blanket of the photo.

“Okay, uh ... Security, thank you,” Gatto joked. “Nice to meet you, Ava, thank you.”

Becker highlighted this type of personal engagement as a strong facet of the show. “I thought it was really cool the way he interacted with students and made it feel like we were a part of the show,” he said.

Throughout the event, Gatto disclosed insider information about “Impractical Jokers,” such as how it took him two and a half hours to unwrap his house after it was gift-wrapped—a punishment for being that episode’s “loser”.

More insider information centered on the genie episode and that despite being promised he would not flip over during his genie punishment, Gatto asked the audience, “Did you guys see the episode?” The Joker attributes his harness malfunction to the seventeen-year-old “apprentice” who abruptly took over his harness control.

A considerable portion of Gatto’s performance discussed his all-time favorite pastime: messing with people. In fact, he provided his audience with tips on how to do the same. All things he has done before, he recommended keeping your eyes open at the dentist, taking business cards and then re-handing them out as yourself and keeping your bathroom stalls not open, but unlocked.

Within this segment, he noted the fun he has with messing with fans of “Impractical Jokers,” especially when they recognize himself but not where he is from. He recalled previous experiences in which he has been recognized as the guy from “Impossible Pranksters,” and more notably as Steve Carell by an entire staff of Jimmy John’s employees.

Regarding this Jimmy Johns’ confusion, Gatto not only took pictures with the staff as “Mr. Carell,” but allowed the location to post it on their social media page and tag the famed celebrity.

According to Gatto, he “messes with people, [he does] not get messed with.” And, through all his encounters, Vulcano still remains his favorite target.

A considerable selection of Gatto’s bits discussed his own family dynamics, many of those focusing on his two children. While he

teaches his children kindness and refrains from words like “hate” and “shut up,” he admits that especially his son, has obtained pieces of his own outspoken personality.

For instance, his son, Remington Gatto, shares his father’s concern for the “many potholes” in Disney’s “Cinderella” story, predominantly the mystery around the princess’s glass slipper.

However, when Gatto failed to protect Remington from the “bad people” of Disneyland’s “Star Wars” ride, he lamented that the child cried for his grandfather across the country instead.

Mentioning his family, the dog-loving comedian could not go without calling attention to his “Gatto Pups” either, all named after his favorite pastries and desserts. The Gatto’s are strong proponents of the campaign “Adopt Don’t Shop,” which Gatto made sure to highlight to his audience—along with the fact that he enjoyed a pre-show cannoli backstage.

In typical Gatto fashion, sarcastic comments towards the “angry reindeer” were not forgotten during his performance. Whether he criticized the skiers of the Northeast for putting “nine and a half wood panels on [their] feet” and falling down a mountain or reminded the young crowd that a designated driver is an “Uber driver whose name you know,” the comedian created an authentic, two-way exchange of humor by including his audience in his bits.

Gatto’s opening act, a comedian known as “Jiggy,” performed in a similar fashion. Not only did he engage the crowd in his jokes, he migrated off the stage and through the aisles to truly “meet the people.” Moreover, his delivery of an anti-Sacred Heart joke received strong approval within the arena.

Despite any criticism Gatto made, however, his show concluded with statements of gratitude and support for his guests. As an avid television fan himself, he emphasized his appreciation for the full array of seats in front of him.

“Stay strong,” he said. “I know you needed some laughter right now. I hope I was able to give that to you.”

Following his words of encouragement, backstage approval and audience applause encouraged him to perform an encore. In this well-perceived recollection of another unsuspecting individual, Gatto disclosed that he convinced an unknown number to arrive at work a half hour early with two dozen bagels and their medically recovering Chihuahua.

“I did that,” he bragged.

As his final story, he ended it with a bang, reminding his audience to “speak with misinformation with confidence” and trailing

with his typical late-night thoughts, most heavily concerned with the fear felt by the first pregnant woman.

His wide array of stand-up material left students with rave reviews. Maselli commented, “I had a great time ... Joe Gatto came out and it was so funny. I didn’t want the show to end, I was sad when it was over.”

She hopes that Fairfield holds another event like this one.

Furthermore, Becker stated he was “really impressed” and that the performance was “a ton of fun.”

Junior Marie Fanizza, an accounting major despite Gatto’s previous remark, shares the comedian’s hometown: Staten Island.




Photo Courtesy of Kevin Camy
Joe Gatto wears a Fairfield University shirt during his show.

“He’s coming from Staten Island for this, so that really hits home for me.” While she was bummed about his lack of Staten Island-themed material, she assured that she “had a really good laugh.”

Gatto’s performance was put on as a part of Fairfield University’s Winter Fest, a nine-day-long series of events preparing students for the end of the semester and the holiday season. Student tickets were sold at \$15, faculty tickets at \$25 and guest tickets at \$35; students and faculty were limited to two guest tickets each.

Gatto’s “Night of Comedy” tour is set to continue all the way until February 2024, with him traveling to venues across the country, including Oregon, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania.



Compiled by Kathleen Morris
Information contributed by the Department of Public Safety

11/30
2 a.m.
A car received a boot as it was deemed in violation of the parking policy. The policy states that if a student receives five tickets, paid or not, they will be added to the Chronic Traffic Offender list. If you are parked where you are not allowed, you will be booted and will have to pay the ticket and boot removal fee.

12/1
2:50 p.m.
Two male students at 42 Langguth Road were found in possession of narcotics. It was reported that they were smoking marijuana in the gender-neutral bathroom. The students willingly surrendered the paraphernalia and were referred to the Dean of Students.

12/1
9:25 p.m.
The Area Coordinator of Jogues Hall sought assistance from DPS in the confiscation of drug paraphernalia. Allegedly, students on the third floor were found in possession of marijuana and lighters. The students were identified and referred to the Dean of Students.

12/4
12:10 p.m.
A motor vehicle accident took place in the Conference Center parking lot. The incident was a hit and run, in which a professor's car was damaged by an unknown vehicle. The Fairfield Police Department has stepped in to investigate.

12/4
1:10 p.m.
A Rhino Vehicle Immobilizer was placed on a vehicle in the Kelley Center West parking lot. The owner of the vehicle was using a permit that belonged to another student. The permit was confiscated and both students were referred to Human Resources by Student Services.

12/5
2 p.m.
An elevator rescue took place in the Marion Peckham Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies. No one was trapped for a prolonged period and the company was called to rectify the issue.

THE MIRROR

Incorporated 1977

Tommy Coppola, *Editor-in-Chief*
Brooke Lathe, *Executive Editor*
Max Limric, *Managing Editor*
Julian Nazario, *Copy Editor*

Editors
Julian Nazario, *Head News*
Samantha Russell, *Assistant News*
Kathleen Morris, *Assistant News*
Liz Morin, *Opinion*
Abigail White, *Head Vine*
Jacqui Rigazio, *Assistant Vine*
Ryan Marquardt, *Head Sports*
William McGuire, *Assistant Sports*

Staff Photographers
Kylar Erezuma & Shea Burns

Business Department
Email: info@fairfieldmirror.com
William McGuire, *Chief Financial Officer*

Advisor
Tommy Xie

Contact Information
Fairfield University
1073 North Benson Road, BCC 104
Box AA, Fairfield, CT 06824
General email: info@fairfieldmirror.com

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Students to Expect ‘Strong Law Enforcement Presence’ at SantaCon

BY MAX LIMRIC
Managing Editor

KATHLEEN MORRIS
Assistant News Editor

Fairfield University administration warned students about the preventative measures being taken this year both through an email and the implementation of new protocols and events. The new procedures attempt to ensure that a repeat of last year's SantaCon does not occur.

In anticipation for this year’s event, which is slated to take place on Dec. 9, Dean of Students William Johnson, Ph.D. addressed the impact of the annual holiday gathering in an email sent to the student body on Nov. 30.

“In the aftermath of this event, the University has been working closely with the Town of Fairfield and residents in the beach area to implement measures to prevent a similar episode from occurring this year,” Johnson states.

A joint release from then-First Selectwoman Brenda Kupchick and the university noted that the Dec. 10, 2022 gathering on Lantern Point garnered attendance from an “estimated 1,000 partygoers... [with] students from Sacred Heart University, Quinnipiac University and other schools arriv[ing] by train, bus, ride shares and with many parking at Veterans Park and Reef Road.”

Junior Erin Dugan comments on the influx of students from other universities.

"It was mainly people from other schools in the area and not the students from Fairfield University who created the out-of-control party," she declares.

The massive crowds placed stress on local resources, including emergency response capabilities and public works. Lt. Mike Paris of the Fairfield Police Department noted that the Fairfield Police Department (FPD) “received one call for trespassing, four for breach of peace, 22 for ambulance transportation due to incapacitation by alcohol and issued three infractions for urinating in public.”

The joint statement revealed that FPD and university staff members met on the morning following the event. The meeting provided an opportunity to review what had happened and identify ways to improve going forward.

Johnson noted that “the Town has developed an operational plan utilizing local law enforcement to essentially shut down any activity that has the potential to escalate to an event like last year.

He reinforces that “students should anticipate a strong law enforcement presence, acting on any violations of local law (e.g., noise ordinance, underage alcohol consumption, open containers, etc.).”

Additionally, the University has introduced new events to provide alternative outlets to celebrate the holiday season. The Office of Student Engagement unveiled Winter Fest, a nine-day-long series of events throughout December.

Specifically, Winter Wonderland is a student-only event that will feature a beer garden, live music and other food options. The event will be held Dec. 9 from 12 to 4 p.m., which coincides with SantaCon.

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) states that the implementation of Winter Wonderland aligns with the university’s efforts to keep students on campus. Still, DPS assures students that they will be prepared to assist individuals in emergency situations.

Likewise, “Christmas Pregame at the Grape” is being hosted during SantaCon, which could be viewed as another attempt to ensure that students do not attend activities on the beach.

The event will take place from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Seagrape Cafe and will feature an open bar. Students may purchase tickets through Eventbrite, which lists the event’s organizer as the Beach Residents Association.

Tickets originally cost \$35, but now are being sold for \$15. According to a message in the Class of 2024 GroupMe, the decrease occurred because “a donor has stepped in to drop the price.”

Senior Hannah Collins, a current beach resident, expressed her concerns on behalf of her peers.

“I’m sad about the changes because celebrating ‘SantaCon’ at the beach is a tradition,” she shared.

“It would be better if security from Fairfield came and asked us to show our Stag Cards,” Collins continued. “Students from other schools came and ruined it. It never should have been this big.”

Last year, The Mirror reported on the consequences students faced due to the chaos that ensued during “SantaCon” 2022. Dean Johnson revoked access to guest passes for Clam Jam, sharing that “individuals who are not current Fairfield University students will be unable to gain admittance” to the annual Spring concert. Ultimately, Clam Jam was canceled 26 minutes prior to the event’s start time due to inclement weather.

The university has yet to announce if any disciplinary actions will take place if this year’s SantaCon sees a similar outcome to last year’s festivities. Johnson urges students to take “part to help ensure an uneventful last few weeks before the break.”

Sophomore Blessed Stephen Awarded First Place in Fairfield Art Symposium

BY JULIAN NAZARIO
Copy, Head News Editor

During the month of November, Fairfield University hosted an art symposium and competition in the Barone Campus Center focused on student expressions of social justice. The event, which was guided by this year’s Fairfield Art Museum exhibition on Arthur Szyk’s role in advocating for human rights, featured over 130 visitors and served as a gathering opportunity to reflect on the values of social justice in the arts.

The competition, organized by Karen Langton, Ph.D., a visiting assistant professor in the Department of Religious Studies, featured seven student submissions with topics ranging from race, gender, drug addiction, autism and social concerns. Blessed Stephen, a sophomore student from Chicago, Ill., was awarded first place with her piece “Broken Promises.”

In an interview with The Mirror, Stephen indicated that her piece was inspired by her family’s experiences with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the passing of her brother during her first semester at Fairfield University.

“Mine was titled ‘Broken Promises’ and focuses on veteran’s rights. My brother passed away last year, in 2022; it was the second week of freshman year, so it was hard,” said Stephen. “I did it to dedicate it to him.”

Stephen, who is a student with a major in Art History with a concentration in Visual Administration, explained that the title comes from the idea that people join the armed forces for the benefits they provide to members and their families, but “they really don’t keep those benefits or promises.”

“It’s a way to engage people, but in reality, people don’t actually end up seeing those benefits,” Stephen argues.

She highlights the necessity of events like the symposium, which “brings awareness to a lot of issues happening in the world that are not very well known.” The



Photo Courtesy of Fairfield News

Blessed Stephen honors the life of her brother and veterans with her winning art piece titled “Broken Pieces.

sophomore, who participated in the “Chicago Made” campaign before moving to Fairfield University, added that “having events like this allows students to express themselves and the interests they have.”

“Broken Promises”, which is now featured in the Fairfield University Art Museum Walsh Gallery, represents a big accomplishment for Stephen as it represents part of her work and advocacy on social justice while combining her passion for the arts.

She concluded that the piece of art was another way of honoring her brother and a way to bring awareness to the struggles of military personnel.

FINALS & CHRISTMAS BREAK HOURS:

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14TH-MONDAY, JANUARY 15TH



WED. 12/20 - SUN. 1/14: CLOSED
MON. 1/15: 4PM-8PM



WED. 12/20 - SUN. 1/14: CLOSED
MON. 1/15: 4PM-10:30PM



WED. 12/20: 7:30AM-3PM
THURS. 12/21 - MON. 1/1:
CLOSED
TUES. 1/2- MON. 1/15: 9AM-2PM*
*CLOSED ON WEEKENDS



WED. 12/20 - MON. 1/15:
CLOSED



WED. 12/20 - MON.
1/15: CLOSED



WED. 12/20: 7:30AM-3PM
THURS. 12/21 - MON. 1/15:
CLOSED



SAT. 12/14 - MON. 12/18:
7:30AM-10PM
TUES. 12/19: 7:30AM-4PM
WED. 12/20 - MON. 1/15:
CLOSED

FOOD TRUCKS

SUN. 12/17 - MON.
1/15: CLOSED

STAGSHospitality

CORRECTIONS

An article on Page 3 of last week's issue about the Fairfield Experience Fair was not included. Instead, the article included featured the Bellarmine Alumna article from Page 2. The online PDF version of the November 29 issue reflects the corrected version.

Happy Holidays
FROM THE MIRROR STAFF



WE WISH ALL OF OUR
READERS A SAFE AND
RESTFUL HOLIDAY SEASON!

Opinion

Editor: Liz Morin
Email: elizabeth.morin1@student.fairfield.edu

Extremism Has No Place in The Catholic Church

By COOPER AIKEN
Contributing Writer

Pope Francis is not happy with extremist U.S. Catholics.

In his latest effort to combat the rise of conservative extremism that has become more concerning in recent years, Pope Francis has “relieved” Texan Bishop Joseph Strickland of his duties within the Diocese of Austin.

Strickland has been an outspoken conservative political figure for years, gaining popularity with his Christian-right followers.

The former bishop has been involved in many controversies for his views, including being adamant against pro-LGBTQ policies within the Church.

Pope Francis has taken a different message with LG-BTQ Catholics than his predecessors, instead welcoming them into the Church.

Whilst Pope Francis still views homosexuality as a sin, he has since walked back this 2021 position and now allows members of the Church to bless same-sex marriages.

Evidenced by these changes in how the Vatican views LGBTQ members, the Pope has been vocally displeased with Strickland’s and other American Catholic leaders’ response to these changes and their language towards LGBTQ individuals.

This culminated in a news release that dismissed Strickland from his duties to the disapproval of many American Christians.

Bishop Strickland’s removal is just one instance in a history of animosity between American Catholic dioceses and the Vatican, and as a community, we need to push for a realignment with Vatican values.

The Pope is meant to guide and unify the Church



The rise in U.S. Catholic Extremism, fueled by the identity politics and religion's influence in American society, has raised concerns within the Vatican's leadership.

globally, which has already seen a significant decrease in membership. To blatantly disregard the preachings of the Pope and work to further fragment the Church is to work against Catholicism.

The Nicene Creed declares that Catholics “believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God ... For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven”. It is our duty to live by his words in accordance with the Scriptures.

In one of his essential teachings, Jesus gave us his commands to Earth, including, “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you,” (John 15:12 KJV). Pope

Francis is moving to change the Church in a manner more befitting to its mission, accepting and loving all who enter it. Those in the U.S. who fight against the Church’s new mission to be a genuinely accepting institution are fundamentally anti-Catholic.

While Pope Francis has affirmed that he believes homosexuality is a sin, which I vehemently disagree with, as Jesus famously loved any sinner who came upon him.

Many verses portray this, like in Matthew 11:19, where Jesus is referred to as “a friend of tax collectors and sinners.” If homosexuality is a sin, it is still against Scripture to be hateful towards the LGBTQ community.

The extremism that has grown in American Catholicism is not limited to LGBTQ policies, however.

Some Catholics have draped the rosary over AR-style rifles to justify and gain support for their extremist ideologies.

The perversion of the image of the rosary and all it signifies to support weapons that kill Americans en masse is disgusting and goes against everything the Church is meant to support.

The Church supports loving your neighbor and forgiving your enemy.

The rosary represents Jesus’ life and Mary’s, including how Jesus died a violent, painful death for our sins. To use this holy object to promote a weapon that sends innocents to a similar fate is not Catholic. It’s abhorrent.

Pope Francis has been taking increasing measures to show his disdain towards growing American Catholic extremism, and it’s time our local Church officials take notice of this problem and work to mitigate it.

The American Catholic Church won’t be truly Catholic until they take a cue from the Pope and work to welcome every individual into their doors and start reprimanding officials who preach against Scripture.

Students Push for Extended Dining Hours

By LIZ MORIN
Opinion Editor

In the past, I’ve been pretty clear about my frustration with the lack of dining options at Fairfield, but I have to give credit to the school.

I believe there are many more options this year with the addition of Sambazon Acai in the library, the pizza and hot-bowl food truck and the rotating food trucks.

I’ve run into no issues with the offered food this year, so I give Fairfield their credit.

Despite the menu upgrade, there have been frequent comments regarding the hours of operation of the Tully, like questioning why it closes at 8 p.m.

Three weeks ago, a Fizz user posted a poll asking, “Would you sign a petition to keep the tully open past 8?” A whopping 2,173 students responded that they would.

The posts regarding the Tully hours have frequented Fizz since the launching of the app, with another user saying, “Why can’t we have a food place open past 10? The Tully opens at 7:30 a.m. but closes at 8 p.m. More people want to eat past 8 than 7:30.”

Another post states, “Upvote if we should have another dining option that doesn’t close at 8 p.m.”

I never put much thought into the closing hours of the Tully myself, but I was surprised when I visited Trinity College over Halloween and noted their dining operation

hours.

We went to get food at 10 p.m. and my friend was confused about why I was so surprised by this.

Trinity is one of many schools with varying hours per dining option, with “The Cave” open until 11 p.m. the entire week.

This does not include their dining halls, which open from 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

My sister attends Wellesley College, where they have a specific dining option that has “Late Night” hours for students.

These are only a few examples of how college dining halls have accommodated students who are up late.

Sophomore Caroline Hart expressed her frustration at the early closing time of the Tully.

“The Tully closes way too early. I have late classes some days that go until 7:45 p.m. and there is not enough time after to go to the Tully, because it closes at 8 p.m.

I could go to the Stag, but that becomes repetitive as there are limited food options.”

As someone who has dinner between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m., I never ran into an issue with the closing time at the Tully, but I did run into an issue with the weekend hours of other dining options.

Everything except the Tully, the Stag and Dunkin is closed on weekends.

However, the Stag does not open until 3 p.m., and Dunkin does not take meal swipes, so if you’re trying to save your dining dollars, you’re pretty much limited to the Tully.

And you may not even be in the mood for the Tully.

Personally, I wouldn’t mind if the hours of the Acai place, Dunkin, Starbucks and Sushi Do were cut shorter during the week if it

meant they were open on the weekends.

For example, I don’t believe Acai needs to be open until 4 p.m., so if they cut their hours to 2 p.m., that could leave room for them to be open on Saturdays.

“I understand the staff has lives outside of Fairfield, but I wish there was a way to hire more staff or potentially create a night shift,” said Anne Baird ‘25. “If one place has staff that specifically work at night, that would possibly allow for one dining option to be open past 11 p.m.”

Not having that many dining options on weekends means I’ve had to rely on groceries on weekends, which shouldn’t have been an option for underclassmen.

We don’t have a kitchen like the townhouses or Barnyard, so we cannot make sustainable meals for ourselves.

Not only that, but we also don’t have cars, so I’ve often had to Uber to various grocery stores, which can be pretty expensive.

To close the Tully so early also feels hypocritical to the basic meal plan, where four meal swipes a week must be used at the Tully.

Before I fully understood the meal plan, I went to get Stag after Tully hours but didn’t realize I had used up my weekly meal exchanges. I was grateful they let me still have my dinner, but what if they had turned me down?

A generic meal plan at Fairfield is \$3,400. For that price, why do students have to go hungry on weekends or after 8 p.m.?

Also, why are students also only given 14 meal swipes a week and made to skip some meals during the week? Realistically, other colleges have proven that there are ways to be fair to staff while also making hours go later into the night.



Fizz user have expressed their frustration with the operating hours of the Tully.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Graduating Seniors Say Goodbye to The Mirror

Tommy Coppola, Billy McGuire, Brooke Lathe and Abby White deliver special messages to readers and the next Editorial Board, as they prepare their last issue of The Mirror.



Right to left: Tommy Coppola, Billy McGuire, Brooke Lathe and Abby White.

TOMMY COPPOLA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I can't believe it's been four years. It doesn't seem like that long, now that I look back.

I want to thank The Mirror for being a provider of immense opportunity for me. I owe a huge thank you to everyone who has believed in me along the way and who helped me get to where I am today. The Mirror has helped me develop connections with alumni, network and even find internships.

Our advisors throughout the years have been some of the best resources for us as a staff, always giving us guidance and pushing us to be our best. The valuable experience I gained with this newspaper is something I will

carry with me for the rest of my life.

There have been ups and downs, but such is life. I have learned so much along the way; I've learned how to pick myself back up when I make a mistake, I've learned how to lead as best I can, and most importantly, I've learned how to ensure each page is in CMYK print (just kidding).

Though I didn't accomplish everything I set out to do at the very beginning, I still feel as though the 2023 Mirror Staff has made a formidable mark around campus and the greater community. We covered the pressing issues in great depth, uplifted various voices around our community, and kept students informed. And for that, I am extremely proud and grateful to be part of such an amazing group.

My message to future staff members of The Mirror, whether it is one year from now or 10, I urge you to never

take the time for granted. If you're a part of The Mirror, you're a part of a group much bigger than yourself; you have the most powerful position on campus to bring equity and fairness to all.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the incredible, hardworking staff that helps put this paper together every single week, our contributing writers, our readers, and everyone who supports The Mirror on our amazing campus. We literally could not do any of this without you.

To the next Mirror staff, I know you will be in amazing hands and I know that everything will go smoothly. The job is not easy but it is quite possibly the most rewarding thing you can do here at Fairfield, and I know you all are going to be incredibly skillful at it. I'll be cheering you all on and reading every single week! GOOD LUCK to you all!

BROOKE LATHE
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Coming into college during the middle of a pandemic was not something I ever expected—and yet, I'm happy to say that I was still able to make the most of it.

During my first semester of what felt like strict isolation, I found comfort in joining the campus newspaper, The Fairfield Mirror. I signed up for one pitch weekly in the Vine section and was beyond excited that I was actually getting published whilst receiving support and validation from staff members at the time like Molly Lamendola.

During the spring semester of my freshman year, Molly encouraged me to apply for her previous position as the head entertainment editor—a thought that didn't even

cross my mind—and started what I call a long history.

In my four years of working for The Mirror, I contributed to over 70 issues while moving from Head Vine Editor to Copy Editor and finally Executive Editor. I added a double major in Digital Journalism.

I published 164 articles! I grew as a writer, interviewer, editor and leader. It is what I believe to be the biggest reason for most of my undergraduate successes—forever friendships, off-campus publications and four internships.

It feels surreal that my time to reflect on my experience in the office has already caught up to me so fast. And it feels even more surreal that my time as a Fairfield student is following closely behind.

I love everything about being a Stag. I love Barnyard Manor, Faber Hall and even Regis Hall. I love the film department. I love my Fairfield family. I love every English class I've ever taken. I love Sonya Huber and Steph Gallo. I

love the countless opportunities that are at my fingertips. I love The Fairfield Mirror.

I could not be happier that my 17-year-old self chose this school.

I'll never be able to express my gratitude for the previous staff members who pushed me to climb the ladder, my current coworkers who always helped me whenever needed and our phenomenal advisors—Tommy Xie and Matthew Tullis—who constantly provided encouragement and helpful constructive criticism. So, I'll share a simple thank you instead.

And, of course, thank you to all of the brilliant and hardworking underclassmen who are involved in any aspect of this extraordinary paper—you are this publication's future, and don't you forget it.

But also make sure to soak up every day ... it goes by before you know it.

ABBY WHITE
HEAD VINE EDITOR

It is surreal to think that my three incredible years at The Fairfield Mirror are coming to an end. I remember the first time I walked into the office, a nervous sophomore seeking out writing opportunities but scared to share my writing.

I wrote one article for The Vine. Then another. Then another. Until there was no question that I would be writing an article every week. I knew by the end of the semester that The Mirror was something I absolutely had to be a part of.

Working for the Vine first as Assistant Editor and then as Head Vine Editor has been such an incredible opportunity for me. In the past three years of writing and editing for the Vine, I have grown so much as a writer and challenged myself creatively.

From covering Quick Center events to reviewing Theatre Fairfield productions and even writing articles as fun as restaurant reviews or book recommendation pieces, this amazing section of The Mirror has allowed me to experience parts of campus life I may never have had the chance to without it.

I have not only gained valuable experience throughout my time working for The Mirror but made incredible friends as well. Hardworking, determined, funny. There are not enough words to describe how much I value the

friendships I have made working with The Mirror staff.

Working for The Mirror has genuinely been one of the best parts of my college career here at Fairfield and I will be forever grateful for the experience it has given and the friendships it has provided.

I am no longer the nervous sophomore who waltzed into the office just a few short years ago, not knowing what the future would bring. I have a newfound confidence in my writing. I have a newfound confidence in my editing and design skills. And I have a newfound confidence in my abilities in leadership and organization. I have The Mirror to thank for all this.

I'm incredibly sad that my time at The Mirror is coming to an end, but I can't wait to see the amazing work that is to come with the next Mirror staff!

BILLY MCGUIRE
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

It is wild to think that this is the final issue that I will be a part of as a staff member for The Fairfield Mirror. It feels like yesterday that in my News Writing course during the fall semester of my sophomore year, I would be inclined to try something new.

I have always loved talking about sports and expressing my opinions on them, and when the previous editor-in-chief Molly Lamendola came to recruit writers, I was on board with lending The Mirror a hand.

Little did I know that the first few articles that I wrote on (which were not my greatest by the way) earned me an invitation to apply for a position on staff by none other than Tommy Coppola. I received a text from him one night

in January 2022 asking me to apply for a position on staff. Shortly thereafter, I made the decision to apply. It was hands down one of the best decisions I ever made.

As one of the sports editors, I have covered practically every sport that the University has to offer, from Rowing to Basketball and to Golf, and have been able to write some fun, but boisterous pro sports articles, including ones about the NFL season with my colleague that I entered The Mirror with, Ryan Marquardt.

I have been fortunate enough to do other fun things such as conducting interviews with Fairfield athletes and coaches. Those are things that you do not do every day.

What I will miss most about being a part of The Mirror are the excellent hardworking and genuine staff members that I have been so fortunate to work with. I have been fortunate to develop some great friendships here at The Mirror, and it has been an honor and privilege to work with all of you over the past two years.

You all have been a lot of fun to be around and it was truly a joy being around some really, really good people. In particular, I want to tip my hat off to Ryan. I could not have asked for a better colleague to have worked alongside for the past two years.

Little did I know that two kids from the neighboring towns of Madison and Chatham, N.J. would find a way to coexist, but we did. I could not have done it without his support, and I know that he's going to continue to do great things for the sports section going forward.

It is the ultimate honor to be a part of a team and be a part of something special and I am grateful for the opportunity that Tommy gave me, and I will forever be grateful to him for that.

To the future staff members who may be reading this, I cannot wait to see what you guys will do!! I know you guys will continue to carry on the legacy of The Mirror and I wish you all the best in doing so!!

The Vine



Editor: Abigail White

Unwrap The Magic: The Ultimate Guide to Holiday Fun

By FIONA WAGNER
Contributing Writer

As the holiday season arrives, people eagerly anticipate exploring exciting destinations and engaging in festive activities. The desire to immerse oneself in fun-filled activities ignites the holiday spirit and fuels the need for fun. If you are wondering what jolly and exciting activities we have here at Fairfield, I am here to help!

On Campus:
Cocoa & Cookies: Sip, Dip and Decorate!
If you are a fan of baking and decorating, I highly recommend checking out the Cocoa & Cookies: Sip, Dip and Decorate event happening on Thursday, Dec. 7 at 5 p.m. in Regis Hall.

RA Emily, Devone and Karla will be serving hot chocolate and there will be plenty of holiday cookies to decorate and eat!
Stuff A Stag
If you are a Freshman here at Fairfield, you probably don't know about the Stuff A Stag event that Fairfield At Night [F@N] hosts every year, but it is one of their most popular events. Join F@N on Saturday, Dec. 9 from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. in the Barone Campus Cen-

ter [BCC] Oak Room to stuff your holiday friend. There will also be holiday treats, hot chocolate and festive music. This event is always a big hit, so I wouldn't miss it if I were you!
Hanukkah Party
If you are looking to celebrate Hanukkah here at Fairfield, attend the Hanukkah party on Thursday, Dec. 7 from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the lower BCC. There will be a menorah, dreidels, latke treats and more! Being a Catholic University, there are not as many Hanukkah events as there are Christmas, so this is a perfect opportunity to learn about or celebrate the holiday!

Off-Campus:
Festival of Lights
Every year in Fairfield, the town hosts a Festival of Lights. This is a light show where you can stroll around the farm and look at all the holiday decorations and lights. You can also sing along with Buddy the Elf and enjoy s'mores kits. The Festival of Lights takes place at Hope River Farm and runs Dec. 8-9 and Dec. 15-16. Tickets are \$10. This is a perfect activity for anyone looking to get away from campus for a while

and enjoy the holiday season.
Holiday Wish Express
Calling all "The Polar Express" fans! The Holiday Wish Express is an immersive holiday odyssey filled with lights, candies, toys and more. The journey starts on a holiday express train as it leads you through glacier islands with polar bears, a holiday forest, reindeer stables and finally North Pole's Main Street! Mrs. Claus then guides you through the North Pole and Santa's Workshop filled with luminous lights and magical elves. At the end of this experience, there is even an interactive snowball fight. This activity is perfect for anyone who wants to heal their inner child and remember the holiday

magic! The Holiday Wish Express is in Stamford and is running through Dec. 24, with tickets priced at \$35. I hope that this list allows you to embrace the holiday spirit here in Fairfield! I know that finals season can be rough and stressful but remember to take time out of your day to enjoy the holidays. There is so much to do and see both on and off campus.



Pop Into The Fairfield Popshop Holiday Market



By ABIGAIL WHITE
Head Vine Editor

On Saturday, Dec. 2, the 10th annual Popshop Holiday Market returned at the Fairfield Theatre Company from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Hosting over 60 small businesses, the Popshop Holiday Market is the perfect place to get holiday shopping done while simultaneously supporting small businesses and making a difference in the local economy. This year's holiday market was free for all, and the variety of vendors at this pop shop was impressive. Having nothing to do on a Saturday, and wanting to get some of our holiday

shopping done, my roommates and I hopped in the car and headed to downtown Fairfield. With the sun shining and the weather a mild 50 degrees, it was a beautiful day for a holiday market! As we entered the market, we were met with a display of booths where various small local businesses were selling their products. We browsed clothing racks full of beautiful, trendy clothing items. We sampled delicious-smelling hand creams, soaps and facial scrubs at the Espalier Botanics booth. But my favorite booths had to be the beautifully handcrafted jewelry stands (some included Soja Designs and The Spark Bar & Rhubarb Jewelry). I was tempted to buy just about every bracelet, necklace or ring that was displayed on all the tables. Some more of my favorite vendors included She Sells These Shells, Coastal Beads by Rebecca and The Clean Earth Project. Each vendor had incredible products to offer and I found myself tempted to make purchases at almost every booth.

As we continued walking through the booths, we noticed there was an indoor section that was host to dozens more booths. From jewelry to candles to clothing to coffee, there was no shortage of amazing products for all holiday shopping needs. The Popshop Holiday Market brought out quite a crowd. I saw families shopping together. I saw young kids running around the booths, excited at the treasures that lay on each table. I saw friends, high schoolers, college students and many more. I loved seeing the Fairfield community come together to support small businesses and partake in a fun holiday event. I am always impressed to see the amazing products (often handcrafted) that each vendor sells. Though I did not end up buying anything, I had a great time at this year's Popshop Holiday Market and even helped my roommates do a little holiday shopping. If you didn't get the chance to pop by the market this year, you won't want to miss it next year!

Inspired Writers Series Dives Into The Art Of Literary Criticism



By JACQUI RIGAZIO
Assistant Vine Editor

Fairfield University’s Inspired Writers Series hosted a discussion on the evening of Nov. 30, featuring literary critics Ryan Ruby and Becca Rothfeld.

Phil Klay, a Fairfield University professor and host of the series, chatted with Ruby and Rothfeld to gain their insight on literary criticism as an art form.

As two well-established critics, Ruby’s literary criticism has been featured in “The New York Times” and “New Left Review” among many other journals.

Rothfeld is the nonfiction book critic at “The Washington Post” and has written essays for “The New Yorker” and “The New York Times Book Review”.

Based on their experience, these two critics were eager to chat and share their thoughts on criticism as an art form.

On his motives for being a critic, Ruby reflected on the importance of reading overall.

He said, “we forget that reading is a part of life. Being a reader influences your way of being in

the world.” He shared how each person’s understanding of a book differs depending on their understanding of themselves and their own lives, contributing to the interpretive art of reading as a whole.

Because of the immense impact that reading has on people’s lives, Ruby feels as though literary



On Nov. 30, The Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts welcomed literary critics Ryan Ruby and Becca Rothfeld to discuss the art form of literary criticism.

criticism is a fundamental part of this process.

By closely analyzing and criticizing a literary work, it helps one understand more not only about the piece but about themselves as well.

Rothfeld echoed this sentiment, saying “Criticism, like art, is transformative, it’s supposed to transform you.”

She commented on her own transformation through criticizing literary works and how the development of critical sensibility is similar to the development of a character throughout a story.

Criticism of other’s works has made her a more critical-minded individual when it comes to producing works of her own.

Ruby and Rothfeld also discussed how each author’s specific style of writing can convey meanings of their own.

Rothfeld elaborated that some people have argumentative writing styles, while others may have emotional writing styles, but each writing style is a factor in how the overall piece is interpreted.

“We can associate a particular style with a particular writer,” Ruby says, “The style depends on what each of these writers wants their art to accomplish.”

Klay prompted a question of what makes a piece of writing ethical, to which Rothfeld responded that “to have good style is to succeed ethically in a certain way.” She also spoke about how ethics does not necessarily define a book’s success.

“There can be a book with bad politics that is still successful” based on other factors like plot, characters and writing style.

Klay shared that he has gained a greater appreciation for literary criticism as an art form, especially after hearing thoughts from two of the most well-acclaimed critics themselves.

He said that his appreciation for what art is doing for our society and culture has grown immensely and that he has been noticing more of art’s impact in “community, politics and economic systems.”

While many people appreciate literature and books as an art form, literary criticism often goes unnoticed.

Ruby and Rothfeld’s insight on the importance and art of criticism provided a perspective of writing that often goes undiscussed.

The Perfect List Of Christmas Cookie Recipes

By SOPHIA COSSITT-LEVY
Contributing Writer

With the holidays right around the corner, many may be wondering what to bake for celebrations with their families.

To give you some ideas, here are five of my favorite cookie recipes.

NESTLE TOLL HOUSE CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

These are a classic and one of my favorite things to bake.

Occasionally I’ll make batches with white chocolate chips or even M&Ms, and they still taste fabulous.

Be sure to add a splash of milk while mixing all the ingredients to uplevel the cookie!

Check the back of your bag of chocolate chips, or look right here for the recipe: Original NESTLÉ® TOLL HOUSE® Chocolate Chip Cookie Recipe

LEMON -GLAZE COOKIES-

These have been some of my favorite cookies ever since I was a little kid.

My mom makes them during her baking extravaganza each holiday season, and I always look forward to them.

Here’s the recipe: Glazed Lemon Cookies

CHOCOLATE CHERRY COOKIES-

Chocolate is my lifeline, so of course these are another

one of my favorite holiday cookies.

The sweet cherries just pair so well with the sharper taste of the dark chocolate.

Check out this link for the recipe: Chocolate Cherry Cookies Recipe - Two Peas & Their Pod

-GINGER -SNAPS-

A more savory holiday treat for those who aren’t in for something too sweet.

These are also one of my favorite cookies (can you tell I really like cookies?!), and the recipe is here: Old Fashioned Ginger Snaps Recipe | Sweet Tea + Thyme.

Skip the sugar at the end if you really want something more savory and want to let the spices truly shine.

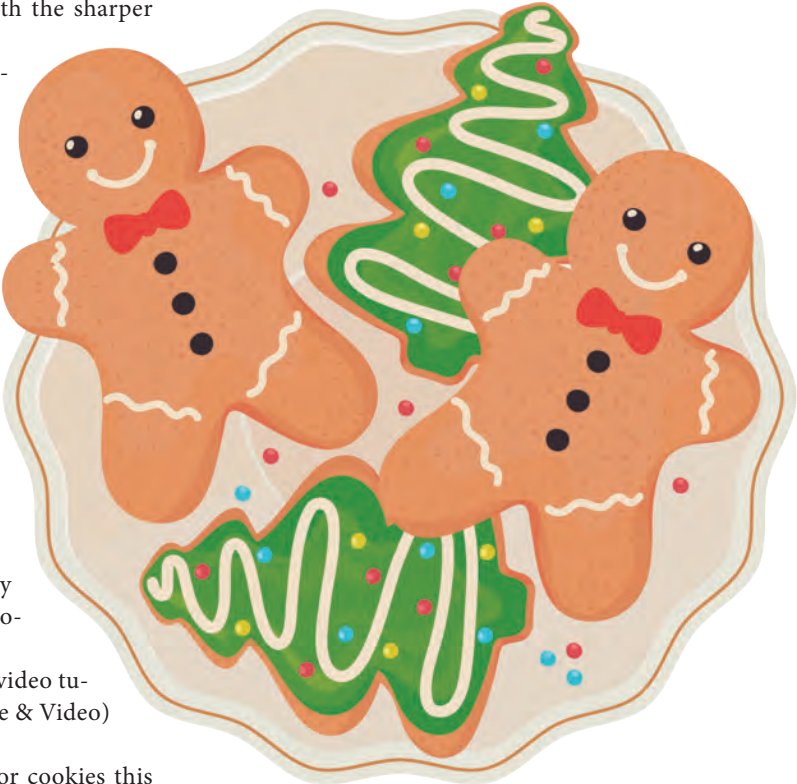
-SUGAR COOKIES-

This is another classic.

These are so fun to make, and I especially enjoy cutting the dough into shapes and decorating them at the end.

This is a great recipe, and there’s even a video tutorial with it: The Best Sugar Cookies (Recipe & Video) - Sally’s Baking Addiction

I hope this gives you some ideas for cookies this holiday season—happy baking!



THE STUDY ABROAD SURVIVAL GUIDE: LONDON EDITION



By **ROISIN MCCARTHY**
Contributing Writer

In the land of palaces and pubs, I have created a beautiful abroad experience with memories to last a lifetime. However, this feeling wasn't easily achieved. The first weeks here in London were new, frightening and a little bit overwhelming. Now, I'm loving my home here, and the thought of leaving breaks my heart.

My time here has helped me create a survival guide to help those who are pondering or eventually going to pack up their life



Photo Contributed By Roisin McCarthy
A telephone booth that Roisin spotted on her walk towards Westminster Abbey.

and study abroad. Here are my five tips and tricks to ease you into life abroad!

Find a homey coffee shop

It might feel like you have just been dropped into a new and scary place, but there are ways to ease that feeling. Once you are all unpacked and settled, lace up your walking shoes and explore the area around you. Find a coffee shop that makes you feel at home.

Being a regular at a coffee shop or breakfast place gives you a sense of community. Here in London, there is a chain coffee shop called "Pret a Manger." Although it's a chain, I go to the same one every day! It's gotten to the point where the manager greets me daily and has memorized my coffee order. Sometimes he even gives me a free coffee!

This will create a sense of routine which will settle your nerves and give you a space to be yourself; and who doesn't love coffee?

Travel Alone

I know this sounds scary, and trust me I never thought I would be able to hop on a flight alone. I was so fearful of planes and airports before I traveled alone but the only way to get over your fears is to face them head-on. I traveled to Ireland and Scotland by myself and let me tell you, those two trips helped my confidence grow.

I found this new sense of independence that I didn't have before. You can gain independence in many different aspects of your life but traveling alone is the best way to have that main character moment. Now I feel like I can figure out any situation that is thrown at me because I know

how to navigate the big bad airport. I am so grateful to my friends in Ireland for letting me stay with them and my cousins in Scotland for showing me around!

Cry it out

You are going to feel overwhelmed, overstimulated and lost. However, those feelings are fleeting and are a small fraction of the experience abroad. Don't hold it in! The second I opened myself up to my new friends during my first two weeks here, I felt at ease.

I cried in front of all my new roommates and friends and it was the moment that brought us together. My friends and I look back at those moments of fear and tears and laugh because we have created such a loving home together.

Make a Study Abroad Instagram

People want to see what you are up to, especially your relatives. I used my second Instagram account where I posted weekly updates. I did this for others so I wouldn't get requests for pictures and videos from everyone, but secretly it was all for me. Having some of your favorite pictures taken abroad in one place is an organized way to keep everyone updated.

I looked forward to posting weekly because I got to reflect on what I got up to—it was almost like my journal. Your abroad memories deserve to be cherished by yourself and others too. Maybe you will become a famous travel influencer!

Find Balance

Although going out and about is so fun,



Photo Contributed By Roisin McCarthy
Study abroad students in London explore the city, witnessing impressive sights like Big Ben.

it can be exhausting after some time. Finding a balance between fun and rest is essential. I've had times where I've pushed myself too far which made me feel exhausted. Have a day where you can just rest and recharge because being abroad takes a lot of energy out of you. Make sure you are taking care of yourself.

If you are going abroad in the upcoming months, just know you are going to kill it! I know everyone says it's the best time of their life and once you get past those nerves you will agree with them. Be open to new people, places and opportunities. Good luck and well wishes, and as they say in London on the train, "Mind the gap."



2023 IN THE BOOKS: BEST READS OF THE YEAR



By **BROOKE LATHE**
Executive Editor

Every year I make a strong attempt at sticking through with my New Year's resolutions, but I always fizzle out six months in. Surprisingly, however, 2023 was the year of following through!

As a literature fanatic, I noticed how I put a lot of emphasis on writing in the past three years of undergrad rather than making time for pleasure reading.

Due to this, I wanted to set a goal of getting back on the saddle and reading 50 books—a number that seemed daunting at first.

But once I jumped back into a good story, I flew through my bookshelf (and my roommate's) and just finished my 71st read of the year!

If I had to pick out of my large stack of novels from this year, however, five really do stand out for me.

So if you're looking to get out of your reading funk for 2024, make sure to add these stories to your shopping cart.

"I Know This Much Is True" by Wally Lamb

My best friend told me this was her favorite book sometime last year and once I finished it, I instantly understood why. This read is over 800 pages so starting it definitely

felt overwhelming but turning the last page was incredibly satisfying.

I've never read a book with such seamless and real internal dialogue that makes it feel like they're your own thoughts.

The plot revolves around the Birdsey brothers who are twins, one of whom suffers from schizophrenia.

After Thomas cuts off his hand in a public library, he is sent to a psychiatric hospital which Dominick tries to get him out of.

In the middle of this battle, readers follow Nick in both his past and present struggles.

"Everything I Never Told You" by Celeste Ng

I read this during spring break earlier this year sitting on the beach and it was the highlight of my vacation.

I love a good mystery and the descriptive writing in this had me hooked for sure.

Lydia, a daughter of a Chinese-American family, drowns in a local lake. We learn how her family is affected and what Lydia's final months were like.

"The Woman In The Window" by A.J. Finn

Finn's novel is basically a modern-day "Rear Window" and I'm not mad about it. The thriller balances mental health and voyeurism to create a nail-biting story.

Although Anna Fox is a psychiatrist, she struggles with a myriad of her own psychological issues. As she is house-ridden

due to her poor mental health, she witnesses a murder in her neighbor's house—a situation hard to solve when her public image is already tainted.

"The Stranger In A Lifeboat" by Mitch Albom

Although I'm not really into religion or faith much, I really love Mitch Albom books. There's something so magical about his writing that brings me completely into his stories and makes his reads so quick.

I also love his book, "The Five People You Meet In Heaven," but this one spoke with me even more.

Once a party yacht blows up, a group of survivors try to stay alive in a lifeboat—the only problem is, that one of them whom no one recognizes claims that he is God.

He claims that it is only until the entire group believes in God that they will be saved, which sends the survivors into an ongoing argument.

"Finding Me" by Viola Davis

Again, it's the year of surprises for me! I always turned a blind eye to memoirs because I thought

they were boring when I was younger, but now I'm on a nonfiction spree.

I especially love reading about industry workers and their experiences prior to their stardom—it's always inspiring and raw.

Davis writes a lot about her childhood and balances her story of a struggling family with her dreams of becoming an actress.

She grows to understand self-love and consistency, proving to people that you can achieve anything that you continue working toward.

After a lot of poor book recommendations from "BookTok," I've resorted back to seeking out books I find on the store shelves instead of trusting the opinions of my literature-loving friends.

But I can confidently say that these are definitely some of the best of the best that can skip the shelf scanning step.



THINKING BACK ON
THANKSGIVING BREAK

By CAITLIN SHEA
Contributing Writer

The animated movie *Free Birds* said it best. “We’re going back in time to the first Thanksgiving to get turkeys off the menu.”

Well, maybe not the first Thanksgiving, but as finals are rapidly approaching, let’s take a moment to slow down and reflect back on our much-needed Thanksgiving break.

Having class until late on Tuesday, my break had a slow start.

However, once it began, my time was filled with delicious food, good company and lots of reading.

The highlight of my Thanksgiving break had to be seeing the new “*The Hunger Games*” movie.

Not only did the film have me on the edge of my seat for the entire two hours and 38 minutes, but as we were leaving the theater, snow began to fall.

As the young President Snow says himself, “Snow al-

ways lands on top.”

For first-year Elizabeth Miller, her Thanksgiving break took her on a plane into the mountains of Buffalo, Wyo.

It was not just the altitude that got her spirits high, but the ability to visit her aunt and uncle.

“It was the first time being all together again since I have been in college,” she says.

Not only was there good food and amazing time spent with family but beautiful scenery and sunsets that provided a much-needed restful break.

For Miller, the highlight of the trip was playing a huge game of Monopoly with each of her family members.

“Being out in the middle of nowhere, off technology and just enjoying each other’s company

was super nice,” she remembers fondly.

For first-year Abby Roberge, Thanksgiving break took her on a train to New York to visit her sister.

After navigating through Central Station, Roberge found herself in the mix of the hustle and bustle of the Big Apple.

Decorated for the holidays, she loved seeing all the holiday spirit and “can’t wait to go back to see the city during Christmas,” she exclaims.

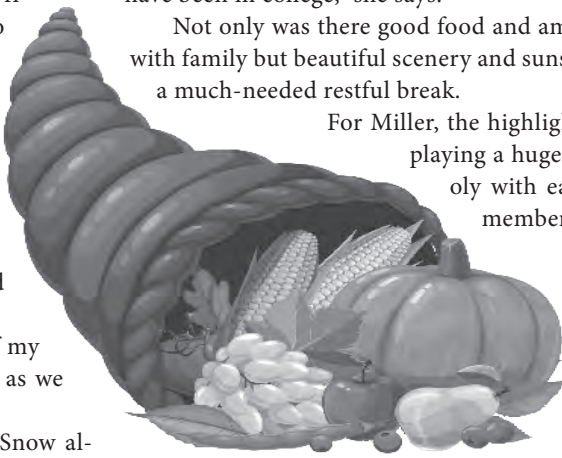
Not your typical Thanksgiving meal, but Roberge and her sister found themselves enjoying the exquisite cuisine at Jing Li, a Chinese restaurant located in Queens.

“The food was delicious,” Roberge says.

While the break may have been short, Turkey Day provided some much-needed rest before the end-of-semester stress.

For many stags, Thanksgiving was full of appetizing meals, and time well spent with family and friends.

Now with stomachs filled to the brim and holiday cheer lighting the way, stags can take on the last few weeks of classes in full stride.



POETRY ANALYSIS: T.S. ELIOT'S "THE WASTE LAND"

By THOMAS SENESAC
Contributing Writer

Published in 1922 and widely regarded as one of the greatest poems of the 20th century, “The Waste Land,” by Thomas Stearns (T.S.) Eliot, is the quintessential Modern poem.

The poem is composed of a chain of monologues, given by various characters, who are occasionally interrupted by multiple narrators.

The poem is also made up of 434 lines and is divided into five parts, and within those parts and lines the reader hears voices ranging from Countess Marie Larisch Von Moennich, of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to a fortune teller, a woman gossiping in a lowly bar, and the ‘Fisher King’.

Eliot’s poem is often compared to the debris and rubble made of so many homes and churches during the first World War.

What once had order was now fragmented and scattered; and “The Waste Land,” with its soundbites, repetitions and quotations is thereby a poem of fragments. I have highlighted a fragment from each of the poem’s five parts below.

THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

To show Eliot’s ability to change voices, in the opening passage of Part I, “The Burial of the Dead,” the narrator, alluding to Chaucer from lines 1-4, gives a dramatic description of flowers in early spring.

However, from lines 5-17, the poem is interrupted by a new narrator: Countess Marie Larisch von Moennich telling the story of her cousin taking her out on a sled.

Finally, in line 18, either a new narrator or a continuation of Countess Marie’s monologue, says, “I read much of the night and go south in the winter,” a line which, for all intents and purposes, is completely random and does not proceed logically from any lines that have come before (Eliot, 18).

Lines like these go on to support Eliot when he said that “In ‘The Waste Land’ I wasn’t even bothering whether I understood what I was saying” (Ellman and O’Clair, 458).

This opening passage introduces a theme that recurs throughout the poem which is water or rain bringing vitality to the land; how-

ever, most of the poem takes place when the land is without water, and therefore without life.

A GAME OF CHESS

One of the most beautiful qualities of this poem is Eliot’s ability to give colloquial, everyday language a musical quality. Eliot does this particularly well in one section of Part II, “A Game of Chess,” from lines 139-172, where a woman gossips to her friend about a woman named “Lil,” whose husband, Albert, has just been discharged (“demobbed”) from the army (Eliot, 139).

The unnamed woman tells her friend how she told Lil that she should get a new set of teeth because Albert is coming back and she ought to look more attractive.

The speaker then goes on to tell Lil that she has aged poorly for being, “only thirty-one” (Eliot, 157); however, Lil says that she has aged so poorly only because of pills that she was prescribed by her druggist after her abortion (Eliot, 157;159). The speaker finally concludes her story by asking Lil, “What you get married for if you don’t want children?” (Eliot, 164).

THE FIRE SERMON

One of the narrators in Part III, “The Fire Sermon,” from lines 215-256, is Tiresias, the transgender prophet from Greek mythology who was turned into a woman after striking his staff between two serpents mating in the woods and was turned back into a man again, eight years later, in the same way. In Tiresias’ monologue he, being a prophet, foretells of a woman being sexually assaulted by an “undesired” lover (Eliot, 238).



This passage is striking, not only due to its actions but also because of Tiresias’ voice and tone, both of which are traumatized by prophetic knowledge and personal experience.

Tiresias knows that this event will take place since he has the power of foreknowledge and he knows how that woman will feel because he too has, “foresuffered all / Enacted on this same divan or bed” (Eliot, 243 - 244).

Prophecy in “The Waste Land,” is a curse: all you will see in the future are repetitions.

DEATH BY WATER

Part IV, “Death By Water,” being only nine lines long, is the shortest section of the poem but it is crucial to the poem’s narrative structure and the themes of sacrifice and resurrection. Though Phlebas, “the drowned Phoenician sailor,” is referred to by Madame Sosostiris, a fortune teller we meet in Part I, and is reminiscent of Mr. Eugenides in Part III, his importance is in his placement in the narrative as it brings a loose anthropological or mythological structure to the poem (Eliot, 55).

Phlebas’ death is archetypal of the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, and of every hero’s sacrifice which is preceded by salvation.

WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

Finally, in Part V, “What the Thunder Said,” the thunder, which signals the coming of rain, and of life, is represented by the syllable, “DA,” (Eliot, 401; 411; 418).

Following all three strikes of thunder are the Sanskrit words: “Datta” which means

‘give,’ “Dayadhvam” which means ‘sympathize’ or ‘mercy’ and “Damyata” which means ‘self-control’ or ‘restraint’ (Eliot, 402;412;419). Eliot is alluding, in this section, to a story from the Upanisads, a Hindu text dating from the ninth century BCE.

The story Eliot alludes to is called the “Brihadaranyaka Upanisad,” which tells of Prajāpati and the three kinds of children he had, “gods, humans and demons”.

All three groups of his children were also his students, and when their education had been completed, each group asked Prajāpati, “Sir, say something to us” (Upanisads, 73). To each group Prajāpati replied, “Da.”

Prajāpati then asked each group whether or not they had understood what he meant; each group replied, “Yes, we understood” (Upanisads, 73).

And each group, “gods, humans, and demons,” then went on to say that they heard something entirely different from the other groups.

The gods heard “dāmyata;” men heard “datta;” and the demons heard, “dayadhvam” (Upanisads, 73). And to every group, Prajāpati, upon hearing the different answers, replied, “Yes, ... you have understood” (Upanisads, 73).

Through this allusion, Eliot turns his poem into a work of universal theology where the three principal virtues are “datta,” “dayadhvam,” and “damyata”; Give, Sympathize, Self-Control (Eliot, 470).

Eliot, in the final line, goes on to surprise the reader, further, by quoting a Vedic mantra, “Shantih shantih shantih” (Eliot, 434).

As Eliot points out in his footnotes to the poem, this Sanskrit word does not have an English equivalent, but can roughly be translated as ‘incomprehensible peace’ (Ellman and O’Clair, 470).

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Composed by Brooke Lathe, Max Limric and Kathleen Morris



COFFEE BREAK

STUDY BREAK SUDOKO

5	3			7				
6			1	9	5			
	9	8					6	
8				6				3
4			8		3			1
7				2				6
	6					2	8	
			4	1	9			5
				8			7	9

		6				5		8
1		2	3	8				4
			2			1	9	
				6	3		4	5
	6	3	4		5	8	7	
5	4		9	2				
	8	7			4			
2				9	8	4		7
4		9				3		

					3		8	5
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			5		7			
		4				1		
	9							
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		2		1				
				4				9

3			8		1			2
2		1		3		6		4
			2		4			
8		9				1		6
	6						5	
7		2				4		9
			5		9			
9		4		8		7		5
6			1		7			3



Finals Hack:
The Pomodoro Method!

- 1.) Pick a Task
- 2.) Set a 25-minute Timer
- 3.) Work on Task Until Time is Up
- 4.) Take a 5-minute Break
- 5.) Every 4 Pomodoros, Take a Longer 15 to 30-minute Break

Men's Basketball Falls to Iona in Home Opener; Beats Rider on the Road

By CRYSTAL ARBELO
Contributing Writer

The Fairfield University men’s basketball team faced Iona University in an electric conference opener at the Leo D. Mahoney Arena last Friday, Dec. 1. After a neck-to-neck battle for the majority of the game, the Gaels pulled away with a 78-67 win.

Despite their loss, Fairfield put on a great display of determination and discipline when facing the Gaels. There was a noticeable pattern of eager rebounds, to which guard Louis Bleachmore ‘24, forward Peyton Smith ‘27 and guard James Johns Jr ‘26 each had five. Guard Jasper Floyd ‘25 contributed 17 points while going 8-for-12 and guard Jalen Leach ‘24 added on 12 himself. Another highlight of the night came from graduate student guard Caleb Fields, who had a season high of 21 points, 12 of which came from three-pointers.

Entering the arena, fans knew that the Stags needed to play their best game in order to come away with a win, and the opening half was indicative of the Stags being capable of doing just that. Iona stayed at just two points during the first five minutes of play, yet Fairfield failed to capitalize and could only come up with a 6-2 lead in that window.

The student section was energetic as ever at the display of matched talent, and it quickly

became obvious that it would be a close game up until the final horn. By the middle of the half, it was tied 13-13 following a three-pointer from Johns. Fairfield then managed to pull away again with a lead of 18-17, but Iona kept pressure on and managed to end the half on top with a 35-31 advantage.

Floyd’s layup and a triple from Fields started the second half, reclaiming the lead. However, the Stags were quickly met with a 10-2 run from Iona to push past Fairfield, causing the scoreboard to read 45-38.

Both teams kept scoring while Iona remained on top, but the Stags pulled away after a 6-0 run to make things close, narrowing the gap to a 52-49 Iona lead with just over nine minutes left. The Gaels, however, expanded upon their lead again after a few minutes of play, making things 70-54 with 3:14 left on the clock. Ultimately, it was 78-67 after a valiant effort to lessen the gap from Fairfield that just wasn’t enough.

Iona’s noteworthy offensive work came from guard Wheza Panzo, who had 23 points and a 7-for-13 record for three-pointers.

When recounting the loss, Interim Head Coach Chris Casey noted the missed chances that could’ve changed the trajectory of the game.

“We needed to make a few more shots and grab a few more rebounds tonight. I thought we got a good number of decent looks; if we make



The Stags average 73.4 points per game and are allowing roughly 75 points per game.

those and make our free throws, we could have given ourselves a chance to play from in front and dictate more of the game,” Casey said, according to the official press release. He also highlighted the defensive work from the Stags. “We did well defensively on everybody except Panzo. You know he’s going to get a couple, but we missed some switches and left him open too many times.”

Fairfield returned to action with a game against Rider University on Dec. 3 that was the first of three away. The Stags came out on top with 88-81 against the Broncs, improving their MAAC record to 1-1.

The Stags return to Leo D. Mahoney Arena on Saturday, Dec. 17 against Wagner with a 2 p.m. tip-off.



FAIRLEIGH-DICKINSON
AWAY
12/21/23 – 7 P.M.



LE MOYNE
HOME
12/30/23 – 2 P.M.



SIENNA
AWAY
1/5/24 – 7 P.M.



MARIST
HOME
1/7/24 – 2 P.M.



NIAGARA
AWAY
1/12/24 – 7 P.M.



CANISIUS
AWAY
1/14/24 – 1 P.M.



**MEN'S BASKETBALL
WINTER BREAK SLATE**

Tommy Coppola/ The Mirror

In this week’s issue...

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Opinion: For the Good of the Patriots, Belichick Should Step Down

BY AIDAN MCGRATH
Contributing Writer

Sure, the New England Patriots downed what many deemed a Super Bowl contender before the season in the Buffalo Bills just a few weeks back. And while their record in one of the National Football League’s toughest divisions sits at 2-2, they can’t seem to figure out how to stop anyone else. Outside of a 29-25 thriller over Buffalo and an annual victory over the offensively maligned New York Jets, New England has been outscored by its opponents by 109 points across nine games—all losses.

Quarterback Mac Jones has not taken the leap many anticipated with the hiring of offensive coordinator Bill O’Brien, “leading” an anemic offense averaging just 13.5 points per game. Despite being on the field for the majority of games, even the defense under Belichick’s tutelage has surrendered 22.5 per contest. Special teams, which could be penciled in as a net positive for every other Patriots squad under Belichick, have been disastrous.

Nothing’s working for New England, and their head coach is no exception. A fortunate win over the Bills might dupe Patriots fans into thinking otherwise, but the truth is that the man who has won all six of the franchise’s Super Bowls has to go for this team to attain its former glory.

Although it’s impossible to replace the greatest quarterback of all time, New England’s 27-35 record since Tom Brady left for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 2020 does

not speak highly of their recent success. While the on-field product has been mediocre at best, thanks in part to Belichick’s coaching, it’s his decisions as general manager that have further sent the Patriots into a downward spiral.

Over the past five years, let’s just say that the Patriots have had their chances to secure a star or two that eventually slipped away, thanks to Bill’s outdated view of the game. The first alarm sounded in 2019 when the Patriots selected wide receiver N’Keal Harry as their first-round choice in the NFL Draft. Who, might you ask, went off the board in later rounds? No big deal, just three bonafide studs at the same position—Deebo Samuel, A.J. Brown and D.K. Metcalf.

This mishap is far from the only draft misstep by Belichick as the Pats’ GM, with questionable selections, including (but certainly not limited to) Sony Michel over Lamar Jackson in 2018, as well as the first-round choices of Mac Jones and Cole Strange in recent years. While defensive mainstays like JaWhaun Bentley and Kyle Dugger were hits, Belichick has struggled to adapt on the offensive side of the ball.

While, yes, Belichick’s expertise has always been shutting down the opponent’s best players with a suffocating defense, New England’s offense has ranked at or near the bottom of the league in critical offensive statistics such as points scored, red-zone efficiency and yards per game since 2020.

Once again, his head coach and managerial decisions have

compromised the team’s ability to contend with high-flying opponents like the Kansas City Chiefs and divisional foes like Buffalo and the Miami Dolphins. After offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels was hired away by the Las Vegas Raiders ahead of the 2022 season, Bill Belichick inserted a “committee” of coaches to design the offense. These two men were Matt Patricia (offensive line coach) and Joe Judge (quarterbacks coach), who were emphatic failures in brief stints as head coaches and are not well respected around the league. Patricia had no prior experience as an offensive play-caller, either, with his expertise coming on the defensive side of the ball, while Judge’s focus had been on special teams.

Even in free agency, Belichick handed millions to unproven, anemic wide receivers like Nelson Agholor, DeVante Parker and—most notably—JuJu Smith-Schuster, who has yet to reach 100 yards this season. Meanwhile, 2022 leading receiver Jakobi Meyers, who was given a three-year, \$33 million deal identical to Smith-Schuster’s, has produced nearly 400 yards on 37 catches for the Raiders.

As things stand in 2023, the New England Patriots’ weakest position groups are quarterback, wide receiver and offensive line. Maybe Mac Jones isn’t the answer, but at least give him a passable receiving corps and protection, neither of which he has. But no, Belichick had to draft a KICKER in the fourth round when the Patriots had no receivers or offensive linemen selected. Belichick waited until the

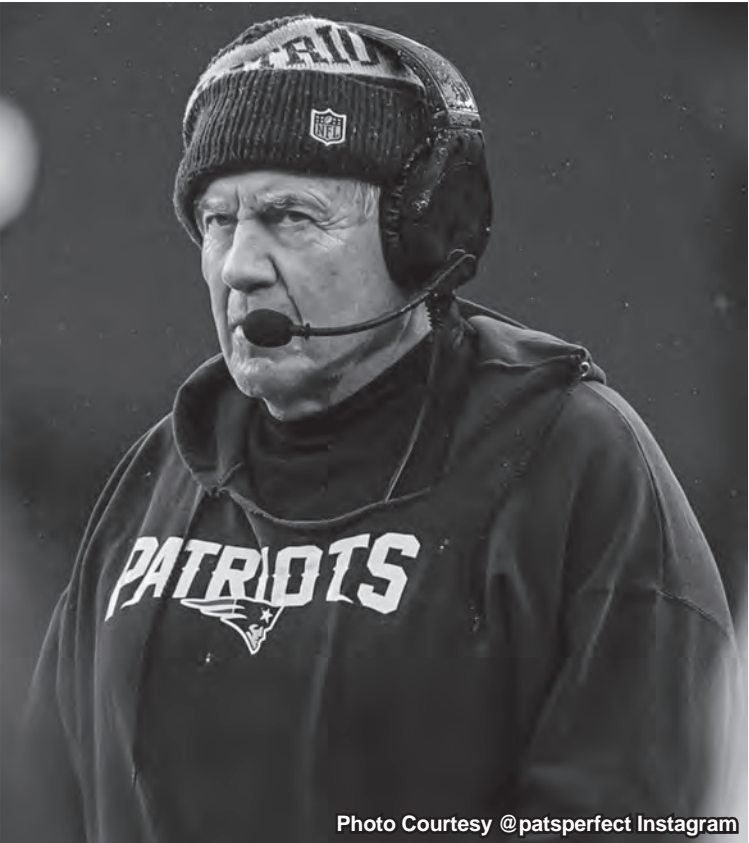


Photo Courtesy @patsperfect Instagram

Bill Belichick was hired as the Patriots 23rd head coach in 2000.

sixth round to select a wide receiver.

The Chiefs have Patrick Mahomes and Travis Kelce. The Bills have Josh Allen and Stefon Diggs. The Philadelphia Eagles have Jalen Hurts and A.J. Brown. The Cincinnati Bengals have Joe Burrow and Ja’Marr Chase. Even the Los Angeles Rams have Matthew Stafford and Cooper Kupp. All the best teams from the past few seasons have had a star quarterback and wide receiver/tight end duo. The Patriots have Mac Jones and Kendrick Bourne.

Enough said.
Seven weeks ago, the New

England Patriots supposedly hit rock bottom—losing 34-0 to a similarly challenged New Orleans Saints team—after being punked 38-3 just a week earlier in Dallas. These losses, in which the Patriots were outscored 72-3, prompted head coach Bill Belichick to declare—for the first time in his 24 seasons as head coach—that New England was “starting over.” Fast forward to Week 12, and they lose to the Tommy Devito-led New York Giants, 10-7. And although Belichick might not realize it, the theme of “starting over” has to begin with his departure from the team.

The Weekly 5x4

Five People. Four Questions. Because we have witty things to say.

What is your favorite Mirror article you have written?	Tommy Coppola Editor-in-Chief	Brooke Lathe Executive Editor	Abigail White Head Vine Editor	Billy McGuire Assistant Sports Editor	Jacqui Rigazio Assistant Vine Editor
What will you do with your newfound free time next semester?	You'll have to read my article on Page 16 to find out.	I have 164 so this is hard ... probably my review on Il Pelicano? Super tasty research.	As a big fan of “Divergent,” probably my review of Veronica Roth’s book tour event.	“The Importance of Autism Awareness” without a question.	Definitely “An English Major’s Top Three Favorite Reads”. Shout out to the English Department!
What is your message to the next Mirror staff?	Probably just relaxing, focusing on my classes and savoring my last bit of time in college.	I'll be working in New York City as a script intern for The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon!!	Enjoying my last semester at Fairfield!	Definitely hit the golf course and enjoy the beach a little more. This semester has been extremely hectic.	I'll be studying abroad in Florence, Italy! European travels here I come!
What is your final 5x4 message?	You'll make mistakes, and that's part of life. Learn from them and keep pushing!	Buy a new couch for the office.	Good luck and have the best time on staff. Take care of Vine for me!	Work hard and be respectful. You will always go on to new places if you do those two things.	You can learn so much from your fellow editors, both as writers and as people.
	I've been here since day one. It's been real. *Drops mic*	So who's coming to my retirement party?	Can't wait to see what the future of The Mirror brings!	Wishing everyone who is on staff next year nothing but the best of luck!!	Being on The Mirror staff is my favorite thing I've been involved in. Miss it already!

Opinion: 49ers Undisputed Favorites to Win Super Bowl

By **RYAN MARQUARDT**
Head Sports Editor

We are now through week 13 of this National Football League season and one thing to me is very clear. When healthy, the San Francisco 49ers are the best team in football, they just walked into “The Linc” and ran through the previously 10-1 Philadelphia Eagles. The Eagles were supposed to be the big dogs of the National Football Conference (NFC) but possibly got a wake-up call this weekend. With that being said my prediction for the one seed in the NFC and the team with home-field advantage in the playoffs is the 49ers. They have been dominant against both the Dallas Cowboys and the Eagles, owning the head-to-head match-ups against each. All they have to do is get a game back on the Eagles.

Dallas will surpass the Eagles atop the NFC East as the two seed after they beat them twice and keep the streak of no consecutive NFC East winners since 2004. Detroit will follow up as the third seed and the Buccaneers will get by the Falcons and take the NFC South. Rounding out the NFC playoff picture will be the Eagles, the five-seed who will travel to Tampa Bay in round one of the play-offs and obliterate the Baker Mayfield-led Bucs.

The sixth seed will be the red-hot Green Bay Packers who will travel to Detroit for an in-division playoff game for the ages, which ends with a Jordan Love hail mary as time expires to take the lead as time expires giving Detroit flashbacks to Rodgers doing the same to them eight years ago. The seventh seed will be the New York Giants (just kidding). They are going to end with the fourth pick in the draft and miss out on the big three of top prospects Caleb Williams, Drake Maye and Marvin Harrison.

The real seven-seed is going to be the Los Angeles Rams trying to make another Super Bowl run which will be quickly halted as Dallas trounces the Rams as they did earlier in the regular season.

The second round of the playoffs will feature Green Bay traveling to San Francisco for another installment in the historic Packers v 49ers playoff matchups. Jordan Love and the young Packers team put up a valiant fight but the 49ers defense proves to be too terrifying for Love leading to the Niners advancing to the NFC Championship for the second year in a row. Additionally, Philly will head down to Dallas for what will turn out to be a legendary addition to the Eagles and Cowboys rivalry.

Philly and Dallas will deliver haymakers back and forth the entire game only for Philly to get down to the one yard-line with just seconds left in the game down four. We all know what happens next, Jalen Hurts rides on the back of Jason Kelce into the end zone bringing Philly the win in Dallas.

The NFC Championship is a match-up of titans, titans who despise each other. Fights happen almost after every whistle, non-stop talking and late hits continuously occur, the refs are letting them play and calling a fair game (for once). However, Philly coming off a physical game vs Dallas cannot last the entire game, slowly losing energy and hope as Deebo Samuel runs through tacklers and into the endzone repeatedly. Brock Purdy with a this time healthy UCL in his throwing arm leads the 49ers to the Super Bowl beating the Eagles and beating the system quarterback allegations. Now that we know the 49ers are in the Super Bowl, time to talk about who they are playing.

The AFC playoff picture is a bit more heated than the NFC playoff picture. The Jaguars, yes the Jaguars, with an easy rest of season schedule will stand alone atop the AFC playoff picture. The race to Las Vegas will run through Jacksonville. The Ravens will follow as the two seed followed by Miami at the three and the Chiefs finish at the four spot.

Read full article at
www.fairfieldmirror.com

By **BILLY MCGUIRE**
Assistant Sports Editor

As Ryan mentioned earlier, it is crazy to think that we are already onto week 14 of the NFL season. Time flies when you’re having fun, and I sure as heck am doing that as both a huge league enthusiast and a stressed-out Giants fan. One key takeaway from week 13 is that I agree with Ryan’s take on the 49ers, they are indeed the hottest team in the game. I could care less regarding the fact that the Eagles are still in first place, the 49ers deserve props for the way they played yesterday. They are loaded on both sides of the ball.

Brock Purdy is the perfect quarterback for Kyle Shanahan’s offense, he arguably is the best play-caller in the game save for his former confidant, Miami Dolphins head coach Mike McDaniel. The young Iowa State product does what he has to do to win, and his accuracy is quite outstanding. Not only does having the likes of Deebo Samuel, Christian McCaffrey and George Kittle help, but having a solidified offensive line led by all-pro left tackle Trent Williams helps significantly, along with the plethora of other options they possess.

Did I mention the loaded pass rush that they have as well? Oh, and by the way, it just got even stronger with the addition of Chase Young from the Commanders. Having him, Nick Bosa, Javon Hargrave and Arik Armstead in the fold will make opposing quarterbacks’ lives a living hell. The unit makes life a lot easier for the second circuit on defense, who can deter their focus on stopping the run and playing aggressive pass coverage, skills that no other team can usurp them in.

Middle linebacker Fred Warner is a tackling machine, and outside linebacker Dre Greenlaw is one of the best cover linebackers in the game. The secondary will miss rising star safety Talanoa Hufanga, who suffered a torn ACL in week 11, but if the unit can simply do its part and play with a next-man-up mentality, then they should be fine. With the Seattle Seahawks stuck in quicksand, the Los Angeles Rams being unproven outside of a few core pieces and the Arizona Cardinals doing everything they can to obtain the number pick in order to draft hotshot USC quarterback Caleb Williams, the 49ers easily will win the NFC West and will ultimately grab the number one seed in the NFC.

Going back to the Eagles, they are still no doubt a contender. But are they the favorites to win the Super Bowl? No. I think Jalen Hurts is a good quarterback, but I think the engine that gets the Eagles moving is their elite offensive line, arguably the best in the game, as well as their one-two punch at receiver with AJ Brown and Devonta Smith. Oh, and did I mention their defense yet? They have as good of a pass rush as their offensive line, and I honestly think that only the 49ers have a stronger defensive line on paper than the Birds.

That secondary featuring the one-two combo of Darius Slay and James Bradberry will only induce the anxiety for opposing offenses to a higher degree, and they also massively upgraded at safety with the acquisition of Kevin Bayard from the Tennessee Titans. The Eagles also improved at the weakside spot of their linebacking core by scooping up Shaquille Leonard, who recently got released by the Indianapolis Colts and this move will only enable them to elevate from here on out. With the archrival Dallas Cowboys struggling to get the Eagles’ number, and with the Giants and Washington Commanders both having abysmal seasons, the division is for the Eagles to take once again.

Read full article at
www.fairfieldmirror.com



Deebo Samuel has helped lead the 49ers to their dominant record with 38 catches, 590 yards and 3 TDs this season so far.

Volleyball Season Comes to End in Hard-Fought Loss to Purdue

By **DANNY McELROY**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

A championship-winning season came to an end last Thursday for the Fairfield University women’s volleyball team, as they fell in three sets to 13th-ranked Purdue University in the first round of the National Collegiate Athletic Association Volleyball Tournament.

The Stags were led by outside hitter Svenja Rodenbüsch ‘25, who had a team-high eight kills in the losing effort.

The match began in what was a hotly contested first set, with Fairfield facing just a 17-15 deficit thanks in large part to Rodenbüsch putting down seven of her eight kills early. From then on, however, the Boilermakers would go on a 7-0 run, eventually closing the set out with a final score of 25-17.

“I thought we held our own,” said libero Kyla Berg ‘24. “In the first set, we came out hard with our offense and defense, but our passing broke down at the end of the set.”

Berg, who had nine digs in the contest, spearheaded an impressive backline defensive effort for the Stags, which kept them in just about every point through the match despite slightly wider margins of victory for the Boilermakers in sets two and three.

Ultimately though, the efforts of Purdue standouts Eva Hudson and Chloe Chicoine, with 16 and 15 kills respectively, proved too much to overcome.

“We don’t see [Purdue’s] type of speed in our conference, so it was difficult to defend and attack against them,” Berg said.

Regardless, the match was a competitive affair that showed how the Stags were able to claim both the regular season and tournament title in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC).

Finishing with a 22-6 record last month prior to the loss to Purdue, Fairfield became the winner of five straight regular-season crowns, as well as six of the last nine conference tournament titles. It did so in spite of significant turnover in the program from last year, including seven new additions on the court and the hiring of new head coach Nancy Somera.

“We came into this season with half a new team, a whole new coaching staff, and a new facility,” Berg said. “Being able to succeed with so much change has been a highlight of this season.”

Stags both new and old had career years on the court. Outside hitters Allie Elliott ‘26 and McKayla Haut ‘25 were both named all-conference first-team selections, with setter Blakely Montgomery ‘25 and middle blocker Maya Walker ‘26 joining the honor roll on the second team.

Newcomer Mamie Krubally ‘27 was also selected to the conference rookie team.

Berg, the longest-tenured player on the roster, collected four “MAAC Libero of the Week” awards over the course of the season and passed 1,000 career digs in an Oct. 11 contest against Iona.

Despite all the individual accolades, though, it was as a team that the Stags developed their winning formula. Six different hitters on the team tallied over 100 kills on the season, led by Haut with 264.

“We had to find our way as individuals and as a group,” Coach Somera said in a press release after the team’s conference championship. “We’re

not standing here today without all 14 players buying in completely and working their tails off from Day One.”

For Berg, who played the final game of her collegiate career against the Boilermakers in her home state of Indiana, it’s the team dynamic that means the most.

“We came together and decided that we were going to do our jobs and accomplish great things together,” she said. “I am incredibly proud of our team.”

The championship banner hanging in the rafters of Mahoney Arena will cement the legacy for the 2023 women’s volleyball team for years to come.



The Stags season ended as they travelled to #12 Purdue and lost in the NCAA Tournament.

A Trip Into The Past: My Greatest Hits In The Sports Section

By TOMMY COPPOLA
Editor-In-Chief

Now that I’ve reached the end of the road as a staff member for The Mirror, I wanted to look back and count down the top ten articles I’ve ever written for this amazing section (SportsCenter Top Ten style, fittingly). All articles mentioned here were written by me and hold some sort of sentimental value, whether it be the writing style I introduced or simply the experience of writing it. So, here goes my “greatest hits”.

#10) “Who Will Take Home Lord Stanley’s Cup?”

Published Sept. 16, 2020
What better way to start us off than with my very first article? Backed merely by a high school degree and a good vocabulary, I decided to take my first-ever step into journalism with this article. I did some research as to who I thought would be the winner of the Stanley Cup at the dawn of the newest NHL season and basically wrote an essay (I’m not kidding).

Now that I read it, it’s pretty corny. But it was special to me at the time and still is, as it was the spark that led to my huge interest in sports media and written communications as a whole. For the record, my prediction was pretty far off, so it left the door open for improvement and a whole lot more articles to come.

#9) “Opinion: The NHL Needs A Culture Change, Soon”

Published Nov. 17, 2021
After hearing what had happened within the Chicago Blackhawks franchise back in 2021, I was motivated by anger and frustration to write this article. It deals with the inner workings of a very serious case involving Blackhawks players and coaching staff, as well as upper management neglecting to take action against huge issues.

For some context, this article came out just days after Kyle Beach’s testimony hit the news, which struck me. I watched interviews, read stories and tried to create the most well-rounded piece possible while giving grace to Beach’s story and denouncing the Blackhawks for letting such issues pass them by.

I still believe the Blackhawks got off relatively scot-free for this issue. Though the subject matter is extremely tense and heavy, I urge you to go read this and learn the story of Kyle Beach.

#8) “Beyond the Baskets of Fairfield’s Disc Golf Course”

Published Oct. 27, 2021
Did you know Fairfield University had a disc golf course? I had always passed by these funny-looking baskets on my way to the Dolan School of Business which gave me the idea to discover their origins. I was led to none other than Fairfield University chemistry professor Kraig Steffen, Ph.D. for an in-depth interview.

Steffen actually designed the course and has been the overseer of it ever since. I haven’t been able to get out on the course myself, but I would still love to play it one day. I enjoyed writing about the fun, more intricate details of sports at Fairfield University like the disc golf course.

#7) “Fairfield Women’s Basketball Welcomes New Coach”

Published April 20, 2022
With former women’s basketball head coach Joe Frager retiring from coaching after a Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference win and a March Madness appearance, the bar was set extremely high for the person to fill his shoes. When current head coach Carly Thibault-DuDonis stepped into the vacant role, she excelled and was able to shine in her first-ever head coaching role. It was interesting to examine the backstory of Coach Carly, who has been surrounded by basketball since birth. Conducting an interview with her right as she arrived on campus helped The Mirror establish strong connections with both basketball organizations and additionally helped Stags stay informed about the new-look team. I remember putting this article together extremely quickly when the news was first announced, and really enjoyed how it all came together.

#6) “Men’s Basketball Moves Past Marist, Meets Match vs. Manhattan”

Published Feb. 22, 2023
This basketball game, personally, was like no other for me. I had media access planned in advance, got to sit in a special seat to report on the game and even was given all the press materials I needed. Attending this game helped me realize the true capabilities of the platform that is The Mirror, and it helped me realize my passion for sports journalism.

My writing style was different in this one, as well. Narrative subheadings broke up each text block which helped the article flow nicely and helped transition from block to block. There was no shortage of statistics included in this piece, which I used to help tell the story of these two basketball matchups. To me, it was the perfect blend of analytically-driven content and narrative storytelling, and I think it is one of my highest-quality articles to this day.

The reason it is in the number six spot is because the next five all mean a lot to me, and are much more unique. After all, this one simply recaps a basketball game.

#5) “Red Sea Returns With Leo D. Mahoney Arena Ribbon-Cutting Event”

Published Nov. 22, 2022
I remember sinking a lot of time

and research into this piece, which was a boots-on-the-ground effort to write about the new arena opening. Since the name was unveiled a couple of weeks prior, the excitement for me was building. As you’ll see in my number four spot on this list, the “Arena 100” series was very dear to me, as I tracked its progress from the ground up. Seeing the completed arena for the first time was something I’ll never forget. The atmosphere they created with Leo D. Mahoney Arena is like no other, and I was happy to see how everything came together.

#4) “Arena 100 Progress Report: A Semester in Review”

Published Dec. 8, 2021
When I started the Arena 100 series, I simply took pictures of the unfinished arena and noted any updates or changes in construction over the month. This, of course, turned into a monthly update piece, but at the end of the semester, it morphed into this article, which was an entire overhaul of everything I had covered.

I got to speak with the Vice President for Athletics Paul Schlickmann, who talked to me about the arena’s features. I continually spoke to athletes who would be using the arena and got a sense of what they were excited about. I think the icing on the cake was that I was able to compile all the pictures to truly show the progress it made over a couple of months.

Overall, this one was special to me as it felt like a culmination of my hard work and it ultimately turned into a rewarding article that concluded with the “door-busting” event.

#3) “How Far-Fetched is Fairfield Football?”

Published Nov. 2, 2022
The alliteration of the headline alone is enough to make me smile. In all seriousness, I loved exploring the possibility of Fairfield’s football team returning and it was a cool experience to look through issues of The Mirror back in the 90s and early 2000s to try and find football articles.

I learned a lot about Fairfield’s football organization back when I wrote this. I also didn’t know that Ben McAdoo, who

has coached many greats during his time in the National Football League, was a tight ends coach here. Go figure, right? Our current Head Sports Editor, Ryan Marquardt ‘25, actually got in touch with a bunch of former players and attended a reunion event the team held to celebrate many great years of Fairfield football. This article thus turned into more of a series of articles that explored the real possibilities of football at our school. My parting message is that I hope to one day see the team return.

#2) “Rocket League Team Tops Iona For First MAAC Championship”

Published March 29, 2023
Writing this article specifically meant a lot to me personally, and the way it came out made me extremely happy. It felt really rewarding putting together such a unique and different type of story, which in this case tells the tale of how club Esports came to be at Fairfield University.

This story was written more narratively but ultimately reported on how Fairfield’s Rocket League team won the MAAC championship over Iona University. The team members are incredibly talented and getting to speak to them for this article only elevated the story, in my opinion. As a Rocket League player myself, it was easy to write and bring a fresh take to the sports section.

#1) “Stag to Soccer Star: Matt Turner Returns to Fairfield”

Published Oct. 7, 2021
This was by far the coolest experience I’ve ever had as a reporter and writer for The Mirror, and I hope this serves as a blueprint for future sports writers who are looking to cover stories like this. Granted, it’s not my most well-written piece (as I was only a year into my journalism career), but it is easily one of the most memorable articles I’ve ever written. To summarize, Matthew Turner ‘17 announced he was returning to Fairfield for a night dedicated to his honor. The alum walked onto the men’s soccer team here and instantly became a name in the soccer world—eventually, after some time in Major League Soccer with the New England Revolution, he became the starting goalkeeper for the U.S. Men’s National Team at the pinnacle of world football.

In 2022, Turner became a goalkeeper for Arsenal F.C., one of the most well-known and famous franchises in the English Premier League. As of August of this year, however, he has joined the Nottingham Forest F.C. squad as their starting keeper.

His time at Fairfield was tumultuous, to say the least; he went viral for an own goal he let in as a young goalkeeper. He didn’t let adversity define him and has since become one of the greatest soccer goalkeepers in the world, and his roots start right here in Fairfield, Conn.

In my article, I got the chance to sit down with Turner himself for an interview and pick his brain on what it’s like to be back and how Fairfield helped prepare him for his soccer playing career. He was a super down-to-earth guy and I was super grateful for the chance to chat with him. This was, by far, the coolest experience I’ve had.

