

THE MIRROR

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The Office of Student Diversity and Multicultural Affairs offers resources and programming to bring awareness to student diversity. An email from Dean Johnson details multiple homophobic and racist incidents last semester.

Fizz Fuels Tension Between N. Benson and Bellarmine Campus Students

BY MAX LIMRIC
Editor-in-Chief

Fizz is at the center of controversy once again after remarks made on the anonymous app have resulted in tensions between Fairfield University students enrolled at the North Benson Campus and students enrolled at Bellarmine Campus.

On the app, which requires a Fairfield student email to join, posts targeted Bellarmine campus and its students, spewing hateful statements such as: Bellarmine is “ghetto,” they have “unplanned pregnancies” and that they “stab people.”

The racist and hateful posts have since been taken down by the user or deleted by moderators of the app.

Such comments arose after Fairfield students at North Benson Road campus noted

Bellarmine students on the North Benson Road Campus, with a comment reading, “Why are Bellarmine Campus kids just randomly taking field trips to our campus.”

“Both campuses are your campus. [...] You are welcome here. Every department was looking forward to Bellarmine Campus being started.”

-Pejay Lucky,
Assistant Dean for Student Success

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Fall Semester Sees “Numerous” Reports of Homophobia and Racism

BY MAX LIMRIC
Editor-in-Chief

At the beginning of the semester, students received an email from Dean Johnson that discussed the “numerous” reports of homophobic and racist incidents that students brought forth throughout the fall semester.

Wedged in between a chili recipe and COVID-19 protocols, a section of the email sent on Jan. 19 reads, “I spent time during the break reflecting on the fall semester. I imagine many of you did the same. Something that was brought to my attention numerous times during the fall were multiple incidents of inappropriate racial and homophobic language being used cavalierly by students across campus.”

The email continues, “Equally disheartening were the number of students who stood by idly while their peers acted in this manner, as others were hurt or made to feel uncomfortable due to these actions. This type of behavior is the antithesis of what we strive to be as a campus community, and clearly goes against our mission and values.”

Homophobic and racist incidents are a part of Fairfield University’s campus culture; as the removal of a Black Lives Matter flag from the Counseling and Psychological Services Office sparked outrage, insensitive comments posted on Fizz after a Black Stags Matter walk targeted students of color and an anti-LGBTQ+ anonymous note left in Donnarumma Hall attacked sexuality studies.

Fairfield University Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) questions the increase in homophobia and racism on campus: “Did it increase or was it always there?”

The club’s statement continues, “being part of the LGBTQ+ community at Fairfield University is a unique experience. Oftentimes many of the members have at least one homophobic experience on campus.”

“One member explained how they and their friends were called some slurs out of a window. This was a similar experience to another GSA member as well,” the group adds.

A first-year student, who was granted anonymity due to the sensitive nature of this article, describes incidents in

Being part of the LGBTQ+ community at Fairfield University is a unique experience. Oftentimes many of the members have at least one homophobic experience on campus.”

-Fairfield University Gender and Sexuality Alliance

which she has been referred to by inappropriate names by fellow students.

“The other day I was called Pocahontas,” she states. Another time she was called “Sacagawea.” Although she believes the comments were intended to be humorous, they still made her feel uncomfortable.

Dean Johnson offers resources and services in an attempt to reduce homophobic and racist incidents on campus.

“Our Step Up Stags initiative has stressed the importance of taking action

and not being a bystander. I understand the desire many people have ‘to not get involved’, however, sharing what you have witnessed with a Residence Life Staff member, Public Safety, or submitting a report via LiveSafe will allow you to keep yourself from getting too involved, share the occurrence with the appropriate people, and increase the likelihood of action being taken against those who harm our community. Stepping up is the right thing to do!” the email reads.

In addition to Dean Johnson’s suggestions, long-term services are offered through the Office of Counseling and Psychological Services.

Moreover, The Office of Student Diversity and Multicultural Affairs (SM-DA) offers programming throughout the spring semester to provide awareness. The Women’s Basketball Pride Awareness Game will be on Feb. 24. Additionally, the office will be sponsoring Campus Pride in the Quad on April 14 and Laverder Graduation on April 7.

In response to Dean Johnson’s email, GSA confirms that submitting reports is a “good starting point.” But they question its efficiency, asking, “in actuality how many students are self-reporting?”

Even with a multitude of resources and services offered to students, many believe it is not enough and will not enact change. Fairfield GSA notes that even though initiatives like Step Up Stags are beneficial in acknowledging the issue of homophobia and racism on campus, “it is merely addressing the basics of a very complex issue.”

In a survey conducted via text message, The Mirror asked 15 participants for their reactions to Dean Johnson’s email. All of them declined to comment.

Town Residents Express Outrage Over SantaCon

BY MAX LIMRIC
Editor-in-Chief

Fairfield residents gathered at a town hall with Fairfield University and Lantern Point Association representatives on Jan. 23 to address the fallout of December’s SantaCon. Throughout the session, residents voiced personal safety concerns and the event’s environmental impact on the coastal ecosystem.

First Selectman Bill Gerber began the event by stating “we have to avoid human tragedy.”

“I saw young adults collapsed in the street. I heard from many people that they almost ran these young adults over. And in one instance, a car full of young adults almost ran a family over,” he

described.

Selectman Gerber also brought up the “environmental tragedy” that occurred at the beach as a result of students who trashed the beach. Even though a beach cleanup was scheduled for the next day, Gerber explained that “trash of that magnitude dumped on the beach is going to go out into the sound with high tide. There were two tides that came in and washed that trash out to the sound.”

After panelists spoke, residents in attendance were invited to share their suggestions on how to make SantaCon a more “livable experience.”

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Over a thousand students gathered at Lantern Point on Dec. 9, 2023, causing a strain on town resources. At a recent town meeting, residents offered suggestions to address SantaCon.

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Students and Campus Ministry staff on an immersion trip to San Diego, Calif. in 2023. The trip brought students to the U.S.-Mexico border where they learned about the effects of gentrification on surrounding neighborhoods and spent a day learning about the dangers of crossing the border.

Campus Ministry Immersion Trips Offer Learning Opportunities Through Community Engagement

BY SAMANTHA RUSSELL
Executive Editor

Campus Ministry has recently called for their most courageous Stags to take part in their Spring Break Immersion trip, traveling this year to the U.S.-Mexico border and immersing its students in community-driven projects and personal reflection.

The trip will last from March 2 to March 9 and will engage with the large Chicano community in San Diego, CA. While applications are accepted on a rolling basis, Jan. 31 marks the final day that students can apply.

During this once-in-a-lifetime experience, participants will learn through firsthand living and community initiatives the challenges of residing only 15 miles from the U.S.-Mexican border. The program, in partnership with Via International, not only recognizes these challenges but also foregrounds their impacts faced by families, businesses and local farmers.

“The Immersion Program offers immersion opportunities around the United States for students, faculty and staff to explore what it means to live a faith that does justice and to deepen their relationships with God,” explains Kevin Molloy, Associate Director at Campus Minister for Justice and Ignatian Formation.

Molloy’s responses were curated alongside Kathleen Haimoff, Assistant to Immersions and Justice. Hence, she will be credited alongside him.

According to Molloy and Haimoff, this extensive exploration is accomplished through the program’s direct living experiences, critical reflection, the construction of long-lasting relationships with peers and program partners and an exposure to the diversity of God’s creations within different cultures. Moreover, by offering skills, resources and gifts, students are encouraged to build a world filled with more love.

The week-long program is aimed as an opportunity to enrich spirituality and enhance personal growth. Rooted in Ignatian tradition, it asks for the full commitment of its students; this commitment includes their time, dedication to social justice and authentic desire to grow.

“We will hear things and see things that may challenge our preconceived notions, they may surprise us, sadden us, inspire us and challenge us,” revealed Molloy and Haimoff. “Students should be ready to receive the experience, open to the Spirit and be courageous enough to allow themselves to be changed.”

Community activists involved in preserving Chicano culture, as well as pastors and community leaders working on both sides of the border, will meet with immersion students to reinforce the vitality of full-rounded support for all those around us. These trips eradicate the influence of media or politics and demonstrate to students the absolute truth about border living.

Haimoff and Molloy further emphasize the distinction between service trips, in which Campus Ministry cannot sponsor, and “immersion trips.” The latter are places where relationships with God, peers, the self and an abundance of complex realities are directly encountered and experienced.

“As a Campus Ministry trip, we believe in a God who created all humans to flourish, and so, students will meet the human face of the border, so as to break down stigma, stereotypes and the dehumanization of the ‘immigrant.’”

Fairfield University – as a Jesuit institution – finds endeavors like these extremely important to fulfilling its mission of a Jesuit education, which shapes students into a “well-educated solidarity,” according to Molloy. The Jesuit mission calls its practitioners to become engaged citizens, a particularly necessary action as globalization continues to increase and to demand justice for individuals with greater vulnerability.

By partaking in Campus Ministry immersion trips, students are given a wider perspective of the world and its diversity. Additionally, they become more capable of taking concrete action to combat social

injustices.

Haimoff and Molloy add that because God encourages his followers to stand with the oppressed, a Jesuit university works to inspire its students to change the world.

Senior Courtney O’Connor has attended two immersion trips with Fairfield University – one to San Diego in 2023 and one to Ecuador earlier this year. During her time in San Diego, O’Connor participated as a student leader.

“There is something so special about a community of strangers embracing you with open arms in the short time you are there, and educating you on their way of life and the inequalities that their community faces,” she commented. For her, this immersion experience uncovered the effects of gentrification in a Barrio Logan neighborhood, among other things.

Over winter break, Campus Ministry led an immersion trip to Quito, Ecuador. Four students, two student leaders and two Campus Ministry staff members attended the trip from Jan. 3 to Jan.11. Student participants led meticulous work at the Center for Working Families, meeting with classroom teachers, staff, families and K-12 youth in Quito and nearby rural communities.

“They are inspiring people and changing the lives of so many families,” stated Kitty Vernon ’26 about the Center. “Being a part of this beautiful family for just seven days, we were taught the lesson and benefits of living simple lives which I am currently trying to implement into my life.”

A vast part of Campus Ministry’s excursion to Ecuador involved a deeper learning of the living complexities in the country, namely in regard to economics and social and political systems and their perpetuation of ongoing poverty. This knowledge was assisted by the interaction of culture and customs and the integration of food, nature, and the central city of Quito.

O’Connor attests that these families often earned an income less than minimum wage. She was able to observe their living conditions, listen to their personal stories, and discern the overarching purpose of the Center.

Vernon credits the Ecuadorian trip as her first-ever immersion experience and Fairfield University trip. “I’m so happy I got to experience this opportunity, and am grateful I got to go with my fellow students and Campus Ministry advisors,” she added.

Molloy reiterates that the goal of immersion trips is to establish critical analysis around cultural, social, political and economic systems and to figure out through faith how a more just world can be reached.

When he is not on a trip himself, Molloy assists in planning its logistics and working with student leaders to ensure that the deepest questions are posed and challenges are faced with lasting, out-of-the-box solutions.

“The diversity of life experience makes for deeper reflection and a more transformative experience,” he stated. “The focus on building community in the U.S.-Mexico Border Immersion in particular could be beneficial to any student who might not feel they have a strong community yet at Fairfield.”

For the upcoming Spring Break Immersion Trip, a \$50 deposit is due with each application; if a student is not placed on this specific trip, their money is refunded. Individual fundraising is also available. According to the application on Life@Fairfield, trip costs consist of airfare, transportation at the site, partnering organization fees, food and housing.

Apart from the initial deposit, a student’s total cost, \$1,500, is split into two payments.

Upon being accepted for the trip, students will meet with their leader and staff advisor for weekly sessions during the month leading up to departure. These meetings will provide a more comprehensive view of the purpose of the trip and their host partners, fostering the groups’ bond and familiarity with group reflection.


As for upcoming events, a spring weekend immersion trip will take place in April. Molloy states that more details will be disclosed soon. Furthermore, the opportunity to attend an LGBTQ+ conference for IgnatianQ will arise at St. Louis University from April 18-21.

Campus Ministry is seeking five LGBTQ+ students to attend the St. Louis conference. The application for those identifying students can be found on Campus Ministry’s Life@Fairfield page.

Expressed with sincerity, Campus Ministry Immersion Trips are meant to expand the mind of a Jesuit student. Molloy and Haimoff note that, “people on the ground, those encountering challenges have the best solutions to those challenges. So those living along the border, those living on both sides can teach us something that textbooks might not. The immersions offered by Campus Ministry are integral experiences to the mission of Fairfield as a Jesuit university.”



Over winter break, Fairfield students went on a Campus Ministry run immersion trip to Ecuador. The immersion trip allowed them to learn while engaging with the community.



Compiled by Kathleen Morris

Information contributed by the Department of Public Safety

1/21

9:20 a.m.

An exit sign was vandalized in the second-floor stairwell of Regis Hall. The sign was removed from the ceiling, leaving behind hanging wires. Due to the nature of fire code enforcement, the perpetrator will face serious repercussions.

1/21

3:15 p.m.

Residents of the townhouses reported that they were being harassed by Fairfield Prep students who were banging on their doors and windows. When asked to stop, they retaliated by throwing ice and snow. The Fairfield Prep students were identified and reported to their administration.

1/22

1:30 p.m.

DPS assisted the Fairfield Police Department with a motor vehicle accident in the Loyola Drive traffic circle. No injuries were reported.

1/23

6 p.m.

A student observed unusual scratch marks on their parked car, leading them to suspect that their vehicle had been keyed. DPS is reviewing videotape footage to complete their investigation.

1/24

12:15 p.m.

A vehicle belonging to a Fairfield University coach was hit near McAuliffe Hall. The incident remains under investigation.

1/26

11:48 a.m.

Students housed on North Benson Road reported a smell of gas coming from their basement. DPS contacted the Fairfield Fire Department, who determined that the oil tank had been over-filled and caused leakage.

1/26

10:45 p.m.

DPS witnessed a vehicle driving recklessly on campus. Eventually, the driver was identified as a Fairfield Prep student and referred to Prep administration.

Feeling 22: Lucas the Stag Celebrates His Birthday in Style

BY BRIDGET KEOHANE ERICA SCHINDLER

Assistant News Editor Assistant News Editor

Fairfield University’s beloved mascot, Lucas the Stag, recently marked his 22nd birthday with the help of the Fairfield community. Birthday festivities began at the Leo D. Mahoney Arena on Jan. 19 as the Fairfield Men’s Basketball team took on Saint Peter’s University.

The Stags won the game 76-67 after a night of Taylor Swift-themed contests and giveaways. Swift’s song “22” from her “Red” album was the inspiration for the game’s events. The game on Saturday night included a “finish the lyric” game, Lucas poster giveaways and an Eras tour outfit contest.

Other festivities for Lucas’ birthday included a celebration on the day of his official birthday, Jan. 25, at the Barone Campus Center Information Desk. Members from Fairfield’s Student Alumni Association (SAA) joined the mascot from 11 a.m to 1 p.m to offer students celebratory hot chocolate and cookies while Taylor Swift’s hit song “22” played on repeat to carry on the theme.

During the event, the adored mascot was seen decked out in birthday gear, including a T-shirt quoting Swift’s infamous lyrics, “I don’t know about you, but I’m feeling 22.”

Sophomore Lauren VonHassel, Co-Director of Events for Fairfield’s SAA, reflected on the event and its success this year. “Lucas’ birthday is always one of my favorite events we run during the spring semester,” VonHassel stated. “I especially loved the Taylor Swift theme we went with ... it put such a fun spin on the event and I’m looking forward to seeing how we celebrate in years to come!”

The Stag Statue was not left behind in the celebrations. VonHassel, along with other Fairfield SAA members, decorated the statue with a birthday hat, sash and large number twos complemented by birthday signs directing students towards the celebration in the BCC.

While any reason to have a party is a good reason, the talk on campus surrounding Lucas’ 22nd birthday celebrations has led some students to wonder how Lucas is only 22 – the same age as some undergraduates. Meghan Morrissey ’24 shared in her peers’ confusion relating to the history of Lucas, stating “Why isn’t Lucas’ age reflective of the history of Fairfield’s founding? Was there a different mascot prior to Lucas?”

While the University was founded in 1942, Lucas the Stag was only “born” and officially named in 2002. As explained in a @fairfieldu Instagram post from last March, Lucas the Stag was named after Bill Lucas ’69. The real-life Lucas is a former

Fairfield University administrator and now holds the privilege of sharing a name with the University’s beloved mascot. Before Lucas the Stag was given his name, the University mascot was known simply as “The Fairfield Stag.”

In 2002, the University also acquired a real stag head that is still on display on the wall of the lower level Barone Campus Center. According to a Mirror article from the time, Lucas’ head was met with mixed reactions from students. Former Fairfield University Student Association President Joe Piagentini ’02, who was quoted for the article, said that the head “does a good job welcoming you as you walk down the steps.”

A few years later in 2009, the infamous Stag Statue, created by sculptor J. C. Dye, was unveiled at Family Weekend. The ceremony was marked with a parade, performances and an appearance by the Lucas mascot. The bronze statue was placed in front of Gonzaga Hall and has since become an iconic fixture of campus and for all prospective and current students.

In more recent years, Lucas the Stag has undergone a bit of a makeover. 2015 saw the reveal of Lucas’ new look, which is more modern than the previous Lucas costume. Nearly ten years later, and 22 years after his birth, Lucas is still sporting this look and looking as good as ever.



Lucas the Stag celebrates his 22nd birthday on Jan. 25. Celebrations included cookies and hot chocolate in the BCC.

THE MIRROR

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Faculty Affirm Bellarmine Students’ Belonging on Both Campuses

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Bellarmino student, Ana Aguirre ’25, expresses her disappointment at the harmful, racist views conveyed by students on Fizz.

“It’s disappointing to see that people today are still viewing those in minority groups as ‘thugs’ and ‘violent’ despite them being some of the most hardworking people ever,” she states.

A user on Fizz responded to the insensitive comments that were presumably posted by students on the North Benson Road campus.

“Some of you have zero self-awareness, and are spoiled out of your minds, leave the Bellarmine kids alone. They don’t deserve hate for simply being on campus,” the comment reads.

Another post states, “Thank you guys for defending us Bellarmine kids. We go to campus, mind our business, we’re peaceful and don’t bother anybody. We have a right to go to the school and if that’s bothering you, you’re the problem.”

Fairfield Bellarmine met as a community on Monday, Jan. 29 to discuss the comments after students expressed concern.

Assistant Dean for Student Success Pejay Lucky and Director of Student Wellbeing Wendy Mendes led the discussion.

The talk focused on how both Fairfield and Fairfield Bellarmine are one and that each student earned their right to an education.

“You all work hard to be here. You weren’t gifted this academic opportunity. You belong here,” stated Mendes.

“The North Benson people. Nothing they do, their tuition, their fees, pay for your seat here ... you guys pay for your seat here. As long as we keep spreading that message, then we will change that narrative of Bellarmine,” she concluded.

Lucky shares Mendes’ sentiments and confirms that Fairfield Bellarmine students have a right to go between campuses, even as posts on Fizz may deter them.

He begins by stating that “one thing I do want to highlight is that both campuses are your campus. This may be your home base where your classes are, but again, we came over here to start this campus so that everyone would have access.”

“You are welcome here. Every department was looking forward to Bellarmine Campus being started,” Lucky adds.

“Despite the negativity, I have a good feeling we are going to prove them wrong. We deserve to be at our campus. We are peaceful and don’t bother anyone. We just want the same respect back.”

-Ana Aguirre ’25

Aguirre affirms that Bellarmine students will continue to advocate for themselves. “Despite the negativity, I have a good feeling we are going to prove them wrong. We deserve to be at our campus. We are peaceful and we don’t bother anyone. We just want the same respect back,” she stated.

Residents Call for Fairfield University to Take Action after Santacon Results in “Environmental Tragedy”

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Among suggestions, the avoidance of human tragedy was a prominent theme. Fairfield resident, Ben Rosenbloom, who has lived in Fairfield for well over ten years added that “Sacred Heart is being sued by one of their students who was in the Uber who got [hit] by another drunk Sacred Heart student.”

He then questioned, “Are you going to wait for a Fairfield University student to end up in the morgue before we do something serious about SantaCon?”

“Are you going to wait for a Fairfield University student to end up in the morgue before we do something serious about SantaCon?”

-Ben Rosenbloom, Fairfield Resident

Townpeople also offered suggestions which included seeking to expel the students involved with SantaCon, revoking leases, moving the leasing age to 25, increasing police presence, arresting students, charging for SantaCon, as well as moving SantaCon on campus.

Resident Lucas Scholhamer asked President of the Lantern Point Association Chris Tymniak, “Are there plans to evict the tenants who hosted the parties at the three waterfront houses who were clearly hosting?” He then asked Vice President of Marketing and Communications Jennifer Anderson ‘97, MBA, “Are there plans to withhold or suspend students from walking at graduation?” To which Tymniak responded that he was not prepared to answer those questions and Anderson stated, “Let’s talk after.”

Before the floor was open to the public, Anderson shared that Fairfield University implemented suggestions raised during a Fairfield Beach Road joint stakeholders meeting prior to SantaCon.

For example, “on the same day of SantaCon, the University directly spent 150,000 dollars on ticketed events counterprogramming to keep students away from the beach.”

“We put an event on campus, we created a ‘Winter Fest.’ In partnership with The Grape, we hosted an event. We tried it, but it’s not what the students wanted. Drinking on college campuses is a problem nationwide,” she stated.

The university also spent over 10,000 dollars hiring significant police and fire personnel, as well as planned and had University personnel present at a beach cleanup the next day.

Anderson reminded those in attendance that “it’s important to recognize that off-campus students are private residents living on



Piles of cans and garbage seen on Fairfield Beach after SantaCon. Town residents voiced their concerns about litter and its impact on the coastal ecosystem amongst other issues at **Photo Courtesy of HamletHub**

private property that is not controlled by the university. [...] Federal law also restricts the University’s ability to sanction or discipline certain acts outside of its campus.”

Still, because Fairfield seniors rent the houses on the beach and invite Fairfield students, resulting in parties that overflow into other beach residents’ private property, as well as onto public roads, residents claim that the University shares responsibility.

Many residents brought up the criminality of Fairfield students’ acts. One stated, “What Fairfield University students are doing on the beach – littering, publicly urinating, driving under the influence, etc. – is against the law.” His statement was met with applause.

“Maybe we have to zip-tie thirty kids and have that on social media,” adds another resident.

Amanda Morgan, a resident of Fairfield and professor at Fairfield University made her voice heard at the event. “Fairfield University’s marketing materials are full of references to live at the beach. The University is dependent on the community’s value for attracting students. My students say the beach draws them to the University.”

Another Fairfield resident credited Fairfield University’s culture as a root cause of the results of SantaCon. “There is a culture at Fairfield University where students think they are entitled to these things. I have heard multiple students yell at me when I’m on my porch that this is what I get for living next to Fairfield University students,” states Ashley Scholhamer.

“When they are urinating on my property, they are urinating on the sand my daughter plays in,” she concludes.

Even though Anderson maintains that “nearly 70% of

documented incidents were not Fairfield University students,” a twenty-one-year-long resident of Fairfield Beach Road believes that “the students do not show much responsibility, and frankly I don’t think the University shows as much responsibility as they should.”

Junior Ariana McKernan offers her thoughts on SantaCon. “Other similar ‘darties’ that have taken place at the point are contained to Fairfield students. Due to the scale Santacon has grown to, guests from other schools attend and do not feel the repercussions of disrupting local resources and residents.”

She believes that the University has no ability to take control of SantaCon. “It would be difficult for the University to take control of such an event when they don’t have control over a large portion of the crowd which does not attend Fairfield.”

In a statement shared with The Mirror after the town forum, Anderson states that “During the upcoming Fairfield Beach Road Joint Stakeholders meeting in early February, I will again explain to the Beach Resident Associations that Fairfield University Student Conduct Code does apply to all University students both on and off campus, and behavior off-campus, documented by the Fairfield Police Department, is processed through University officials and the Dean of Students office.”

However, Anderson holds that “the University would like to have continued dialogue with students on and off campus on the role events play in their experience, and students’ role in planning events that are safer and more manageable for the extended community.”

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Opinion

Is Tik Tok's Newest Bumboclaat Trend Ethical?

By **CRYSTAL ARBELO**
Assistant Sports Editor

In recent weeks, a new TikTok trend has influenced many to add a new word to their vocabulary: bumboclaat.

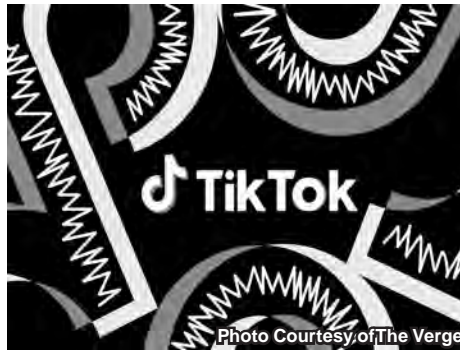
While this word is widely used among the Jamaican community, it's never had a single, finite definition.

Being from a diverse community, I've learned a few phrases of Jamaican Patois from my Jamaican peers and learned to appreciate the versatility of the language. "Bumboclaat" is an 'enhancer' of sentences, used to emphasize the overall message of a given sentence.

As its usage continues to rise, it is important to steer clear of potential stereotypes and practice cultural appreciation, not appropriation.

I interviewed two Jamaican-American students who noticed the word becoming more popular in recent weeks.

When asked her opinion on this trend, Ruth Morgan, a first-year at Georgetown University commented, "It's definitely due to the rise in white TikTok creators using the word on the



Tik Tok is a short form video content platform app. It was created in September of 2016/

app." Morgan goes on to explain her stance on the matter, "There is a fine line between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation, and to me, it's lowkey on the appropriation side.

She adds, "Jamaicans do, however, like when people partake or enjoy parts of our culture (especially when it comes to music or vocabulary)." While she attends a fellow Jesuit institution more than 280 miles away, Morgan's outlook is not unique.

Tiara Campbell, a first-year at Fairfield University agrees with Morgan's stance. When talking about those who use the term after it became popular on Tik-Tok, Campbell states, "If they were using the term correctly, it wouldn't be that bad, but they're not."

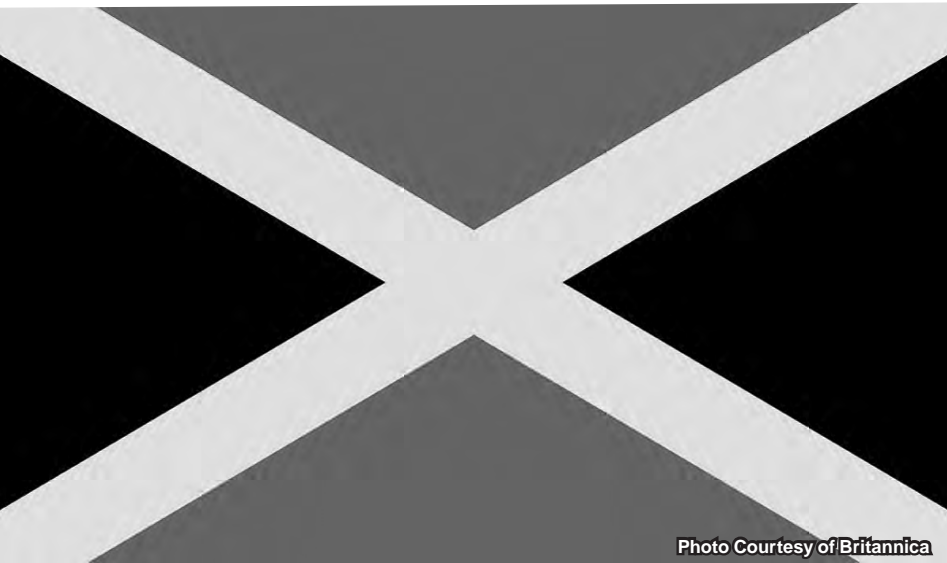
"People who appreciate Jamaican culture do not use the word, instead they try to immerse themselves with other things. If I had a Jamaican event right now, they would not show up," she concludes.

Campbell's point on the lack of support for affinity-related events on campus is felt throughout the (non-white) community and is something I've noticed myself.

The well-known aspects of diverse groups are well-received by the campus community, such as a love for diverse music, slang and food.

When invited to social justice events or affinity celebrations, attention is lost.

Sharing language, values, music, food and other aspects of culture are



Jamacia's national flag colors include green, yellow, and orange. It is flown proudly in the all over the nation .Jamcia became an independent nation from the United Kingdom in August 1962

things that bring us all together.

But using these aspects without proper knowledge does more harm than good. Things can get lost in translation and add to harmful stereotypes.

For language specifically, the true use of words gets lost, and an important part of a cultural identity becomes washed out. "Bumboclaat" is not the first word to be treated as a funny trend.

Reem Kharbouch '27 shared stories of people randomly saying "Allahu Akbar" to her family while in town just because her mother wears a hijab.

No matter the culture, specific words being used out of context is an overused narrative that gets repeated for almost every identity of people.

Using these words properly is a reminder that we are a group of people from backgrounds that trace back to every corner of the map, yet share such a precious moment in time together where we can learn from each other and celebrate what makes us unique.

Words are powerful and can do tremendous harm or good depending on the context.

If you can't be funny without possibly offending someone, then you aren't funny in the first place. Stick to words you can define.

Snow and Ice Demand Classes Online

By **OLIVIA DUPRAT**
Contributing Writer

A new semester of classes brings all sorts of challenges – organizing a new schedule, making new friends, getting your textbooks, the list goes on. But getting to class safely should not be one of them.

This past week, Fairfield students bundled up and braced the freezing temperatures in order to make it to their classes. Although some early morning and late night classes were canceled, the majority were not. We should consider just how safe it was to be walking to class in these conditions. Not only were there freezing temperatures, but the addition of wind and ice made it unsafe for students to walk to class – definitely not the best mix of conditions that one wants to be walking in. I, along with others, struggled to keep myself upright on the slick walkways.

This dilemma begs the question if students' safety should be compromised in order to stay up to date with classes. I personally think that canceling classes is the safest option when it comes to these situations. However, the question of whether or not to move classes online is then brought up.

I feel as though this decision is dependent upon a few things:

1. The significance of that class's subject material. As a nursing major, a lot of my classes contain material that must be learned at a certain pace or else we fall behind, so moving those classes online for the

day would be beneficial.

2. The leniency of the professor. Some professors may feel as though their students deserve to relax, and that whatever material that would have been covered in the canceled class can be incorporated into a future one.

3. How meaningful moving a class online would actually be. I'm sure many people have had the feeling that some Zoom meetings could have been simplified into an email. I would also guess that many students also feel that way about classes that have had to meet over Zoom, whether that be due to a professor's illness or weather related. Personally, I feel as though they are not very productive as whatever work done during that time could have been completed on my own time and at my own pace, without the extravagance of a Zoom meeting (setting up your meeting space, making sure the lighting is appropriate, overcoming the anxiety of having your camera on, etc.)

Overall, if the course's material must be learned at a pace that it is pertinent to not miss one class, then an online class would be beneficial. Sometimes it's necessary. However, if the course allows some leniency in its schedule, then I do not see a problem with totally canceling that class. That may seem a bit extreme, and I can understand that. I, too, am someone who needs structure and an organized schedule. I like having assigned due dates so I know how to ration my time throughout the week, as well as



Snow coats the quad outside of first-year residence hall, Joutes Hall. Students struggle to get to class with ice covering walkways with temptures hitting single digits during syallbus week.

being able to plan other activities around my classes throughout the day. By doing this, I set myself up to be successful in school.

Nevertheless, in the grand scheme of things, it will not be the end of the world if one class is canceled. However, it does become a problem when those days pile up and outnumber the days actually, physically in class. At that point, professors should send emails out with what they believe students

should be able to accomplish that day for their missed class, and the expectations outlined for the next time they were to meet in person.

Classes should be canceled due to freezing temperatures with students' safety in mind, but whether classes should then be moved online by professors depends upon the different factors and variables specific to one's courses.

New Year, Same Toxic Resolutions

By JENNA CODEY
Contributing Writer

Intense workouts twice a day. A gallon of water consumed. Journal pages filled, alcohol avoided and vegetables for every meal.

Every year, Jan. 1 rolls around and people scramble to declare their resolution, the new activity or habit that will dramatically change their life. In fact, it is difficult to get through the first month of the year without getting asked on a few occasions what it is you are doing to improve yourself. This buzz creates pressure to attempt every change possible, and even a shame if one decides to opt out and live their life as it was the week prior.

This year, I noticed that the pressure was more heightened than in years past. With every scroll of TikTok, I saw a new influencer posting about their new challenges. Dry January entails even the biggest party-goers taking a month off booze, while 75 Hard consists of a workout routine, diet, reading and progress pictures for 75 days straight. While these TikTok challenges make for interesting content, I tend to believe that New Year’s Resolutions are not sustainable in the long run.

One thing I have learned is that the truest, most constant thing in the world is change. Each and every day, change is inevitable, no matter how much we fear it or try to run from it. Without warning, one’s life can be flipped on its head, a new challenge arising or a newfound passion evoked.

So, why do we pick Jan. 1 as the day to make our lives better? Realistically, your life could change more on a random Friday in September or in the middle of your walk to class. Life isn’t on a schedule, it isn’t going to change just because the calendar does. So, why do we expect ourselves to change on a schedule?

My problem with New Year’s resolutions is that they suggest that self-change is based on external factors and timing. If we have a goal, it is an amazing thing to take the steps to change it. But this should happen at one’s own time, when they feel most inspired. If the change did not come from the heart, but rather out of necessity to fill a quota, it likely will feel like a chore. In

fact, there is a chance the person becomes resentful of the requirement. Then, a few weeks later burn-out can hit and suddenly the habits are dropped. I think a change only truly works when you want it to.

The nature of resolutions is also very all or nothing when, realistically, making small changes and improvements every day is more sustainable. I don’t think it is realistic to completely give up or alter a part of your everyday life. If you eat dessert every day, ditching it all together might feel harsh. Instead, changing to every other day may be more achievable. I’ve often had the resolution to be more positive. I’ve realized that for me, this cannot mean never being negative again. Rather, it may present as finding one spot in every day to find the good. It’s far better to be a little better every day, as opposed to attempting to completely change in one day.

So, treat yourself gently. And if you find a place that you would like to work on, do it. Don’t fall victim to the resolution culture, rather focus on what really matters: you. There is no need to alter yourself because of a calendar date, and no need to put a new you off until the New Year!



January is the time of the year for new goals. However resolutiions can be toxic for many.

Does Nikki Haley Stand a Chance?

By ROISIN MCCARTHY
Opinion Editor

New Hampshire held its first presidential primary this week. Republicans Nikki Haley and Donald Trump battled it out to gain the support of New Hampshire voters. Trump walked away with 54.4% of the votes whilst Haley brought in 43.3%.

With the exit of Ron DaSantis and Vivek Ramaswamy Nikki Haley is the main contender to beat Donald Trump in the race for the presidential primaries.

With Desantis and Ramaswamy’s exits, Haley has the momentum she has been waiting for. The Nikki Haley presidential campaign has raised almost three million dollars in the past week, the push forward into the New Hampshire primary with the South Carolina election in the near distance.

Although Nikki Haley came in a close second to Donald Trump in the New Hampshire primaries, I feel this is still a huge win for her campaign.

“I have news for all of them. New Hampshire is first in the nation. It is not the last, this race is far from over. There are dozens of states left to go, and the next one is my sweet state of South Carolina,” Haley stated in a speech to her supporters after losing in the New Hampshire primary

Haley’s campaign manager, Betsy An-kney, said in a recent memo, “Roughly 50% of Republican primary voters want an alternative to Donald Trump. 75% of the country wants an option other than Donald Trump and Joe Biden.” Many voters searching for an alternative to Trump and Biden have turned to support Haley’s presidential campaign.

Knowing all this information about Nikki Haley’s fight to win the bid as the Republican nominee, it still may not be enough to beat Donald Trump.

Trump swept the votes in the Iowa caucus while winning over 50% of the votes in New Hampshire. It is projected that



Nikki Haley was the former governor of South Carolina. Today, she is on the predential trail.

Trump will also be declared the winner of the South Carolina primary in late February.

Since the presidential election is a numbers game, the grit Nikki Haley has doesn’t seem to be getting her more votes at the polls.

The path that she has carved out in this campaign is narrow and could come to a screeching stop. With the intense support Trump receives from his mass amount of supporters, it will be a challenge for Haley to surpass him in votes.

I don’t think that fundraising will be the answer to all her problems. Money doesn’t buy votes.

For Haley to win the GOP Republican nomination, she would have had to win New Hampshire on top of South Carolina. But Trump is already projected to win South Carolina. With both Ramasamy and Desantes endorsing Trump, it is likely their supporters won’t follow Haley into the upcoming primary election.

For myself and many, having Trump become the Republican nominee is not the ideal choice and it’s looking as if Haley will not be able to beat him at the polls.

EDITORIAL BOARD

From Barnyard Heroes to Fizz Controversy: Looking Back to Look Ahead

By MAX LIMRIC
Editor-in-Chief

I would like to take this space to self-indulge a little and speak about myself ... if you don’t mind. My name is Max Limric, the new Editor-in-Chief of the Fairfield Mirror. It’s been a long time coming; Monday night pitch has been a weekly recurrence for me ever since I joined the staff in the second half of my first year.

I’m just thinking out loud, but I believe now is as best a time as any to reflect on the work I have done with The Mirror. But not only the work I have done, but also what I hope The Mirror can accomplish during my next two semesters, in a position commonly referred to as the “top of The Mirror food chain” (just kidding).

In all seriousness, now a second-semester junior, I’ve written a few articles that I’m proud of. So far, I’ve covered a multitude of events that highlight and celebrate diversity on a campus that is not very diverse. Covering events hosted by the Black Student Union, Gender and Sexuality Alliance and Asian Students Association has allowed me to grow as I share their successes.

Then, Fizz arrived at Fairfield

University and it rapidly became the center of student life, becoming a major mode of communication for the whole student body since it offers students a wall of anonymity to hide behind. With such a large, anonymous audience came controversy. As I covered Fizz’s rise to popularity on campus, I revealed its proclivity to spread insensitive and racist comments after comments attacked a Black Stag’s Matter walk last year and obscene comments were left regarding Fairfield staff.

Because of my position on the staff, I have been put in contact with faculty and staff who are fighting for better working conditions. I hope that through writing about negotiations between Unions and Fairfield University, the students on our campus become more knowledgeable on every aspect of campus life — including the behind-the-scenes aspects, not just what is immediately visible.

Additionally, my reporting has allowed me to uncover anti-LGBTQ+ sentiments that are present in the Fairfield community; but I have also been able to highlight faculty and student voices and organizations actively working to combat such beliefs.

Many of my articles also feature heroes and the work they or their organizations and clubs are a part of on campus. One article in particular stands out to me, though: “Heroic Student Fights Fire in Barnyard.” In my opinion, this is a news story that would appear in a vintage newspaper or even written by Clark Kent in The Daily Planet (not saying I am anything like Superman, of course). It’s simply the fact that a Fairfield student climbed on the roof and risked their well-being to possibly save a fellow student — or at the least save Fairfield University a major headache. His actions are indicative of the compassionate campus culture and strong community that we all do our best to cultivate at Fairfield University.

With that being said, I plan to continue to highlight the stories and people that Fairfield University has to offer. I plan to use my voice and my position to uplift the voices of others; to listen and collaborate with the student body on the issues that resonate with them. And I hope my reporting is filled with feel-good stories, just like the actions of that one senior when he scurried across the barnyard roof, a bucket of water in tow, ready to save his fellow Stags.



Max Limric '25 was recently named Editor-in-Chief of the Fairfield Mirror. Over the past three years, he has covered a range of topics.



THE VINE

Editor: Caitlin Shea



Warm Up Your Winter Nights:
Four Film Recommendations



By **FIONA WAGNER**
Assistant Vine Editor

Winter’s chill invites the perfect excuse to savor the comfort of cozy movies. There’s something so magical about the combination of chilly weather outside and heartwarming films that create the perfect atmosphere for a relaxing time. Here is a list of my personal favorite flicks to watch during those cold months.

Groundhog Day

As a Pennsylvanian, Groundhog’s Day is a big deal, so obviously I have seen this film many times. This is a captivating, comedic film about a weatherman who is trapped in a time loop, forced to live the same day over and over again. It sounds like the film would be boring and repetitive, but somehow it works. It is filled with funny dialogue while covering the message of living life morally.

Valentine’s Day

Continuing the trend of holiday movies, “Valentine’s Day” is an annual rewatch for me during February.

This is a heartwarming romantic comedy that weaves together multiple storylines of love. It captures the ups and downs of relationships, love and life in general. The cast is filled with A-list stars including Julia Roberts, Patrick Dempsey, Bradley Cooper and even Taylor Swift! If you are looking for a new rom-com to add to your list, I highly recommend this one.

Five Feet Apart

I know I said all these movies bring cozy vibes, but this one is a little different. “Five Feet Apart” is a compelling romantic drama about two teens battling a deadly disease – cystic fibrosis. As they navigate the challenges of their illness they form a close bond, but have to stay five feet apart at all times. As a fair warning, this is a gut-wrenchingly sad movie, but it is worth a watch.

The Mighty Ducks

On a happier note, “The Mighty Ducks” is an uplifting sports comedy that follows the transformation of a troubled lawyer, Gordon Bom-

bay, who reluctantly coaches a youth hockey team. Filled with humor, heart and underdogs, the movie truly captures the spirit of teamwork.

If you are a huge hockey fan, and even if you aren’t, this is a wonderful film to watch that shows the value of friendship and family. I know that winter can seem dull and depressing, but it can also give you an excuse to curl up and watch a great film. Whether it’s an uplifting sports comedy or a gut-wrenching drama, these films wrap audiences in a cinematic blanket of warmth and comfort. I hope you enjoy my list and maybe give one of these movies a try!





Top Tips For Starting
Semester Off Strong



By **SOPHIA COSSITT-LEVY**
Contributing Writer

Starting a new semester and adjusting to a new schedule can be a bit of a challenge. So, here are five tips to make that transi-

tion a little smoother. **TO DO LIST** Write a to-do list for each day, and be sure to include some easier tasks so you get a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment (putting ‘Wake Up’ or ‘Brush Teeth’ at the top

of your list is totally valid!). I also use this to help me break up longer assignments. This way, the assignment doesn’t feel so tedious, and I feel more accomplished as I go along. Keep in mind that it’s okay to not cross everything off – don’t feel bad, and know that tomorrow is a new day.

PLAN AHEAD

In a similar vein, write out your assignments for the week. I prefer to work week by week, rather than create a long list of assignments at the beginning of the semester. This way, if deadlines change, I’m more on top of it and can plan my days accordingly

CREATE A SCHEDULE

Once you figure out a schedule for each day, try to stick to it. For example, if doing laundry on Thursday is easy and doesn’t require much planning, do it at the same time next week. That way, you know what to expect and don’t have to think too much about it. Also, I’ve found that simply having a routine makes life easier.

SUNDAY RESET

Participate in a Sunday reset. Take a couple of hours (you probably won’t need much more than that) and prepare yourself for the upcoming week. For me, this means creating my weekly to-do list and tackling a few assignments, so that I can ease into the week.

I usually try to accomplish what’s due on Mondays and Tuesdays so that I stay two days ahead of my work. If something comes up, I’m better prepared for it. **TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF** Finally, make sure to take time for yourself!

It can be easy to get sucked into all the work you have to do, so be sure to either spend time doing fun things with your friends or take a day and spend it in bed watching TV. Personally, I keep my Saturdays free from schoolwork. Instead, I sleep in, have a long breakfast with my friends and watch a few episodes of whatever TV show I’m working my way through.

I also make sure I have time for at least one me thing each day. Usually, this is dinner with friends, going to the gym, taking some time to read or watching a TV show. This can also be getting yourself a little treat to motivate yourself on a day with a big workload. Stop at Dunkin’ for a donut or get a drink from Starbucks. I find that the me thing of the day helps me stay motivated and have a better school-life balance during the week. I hope this list gave you some ideas on how to settle into the new semester, and I hope you all have a wonderful and successful Spring Semester!



Stag's Spirited Winter Break

By CAITLIN SHEA
Head Vine Editor

As stockings are tucked away with care and the Sugar Plum Fairies take their final bows, the clock strikes midnight, marking the end of 2023. Unfortunately for Stags, this also means the end of winter break.

For many Fairfield University students, winter break was time well spent with family and friends. For others, it was a period of much-needed relaxation in preparation for the new semester.

Spending the majority of my holiday season surrounded by my loved ones, I had an amazing holiday break. Balancing two winter classes did not leave a lot of time for fun, but when I was able to get away from the computer, I had a blast!

Hopping on the train one Wednesday afternoon, my friends and I visited Boston. After sharpening our skating skills on the Frog Pond, we found ourselves scarfing down some delicious food in Snowport.

While busy, I also made sure to get some quality time with those that I love.

Sophomore Abi Evans also

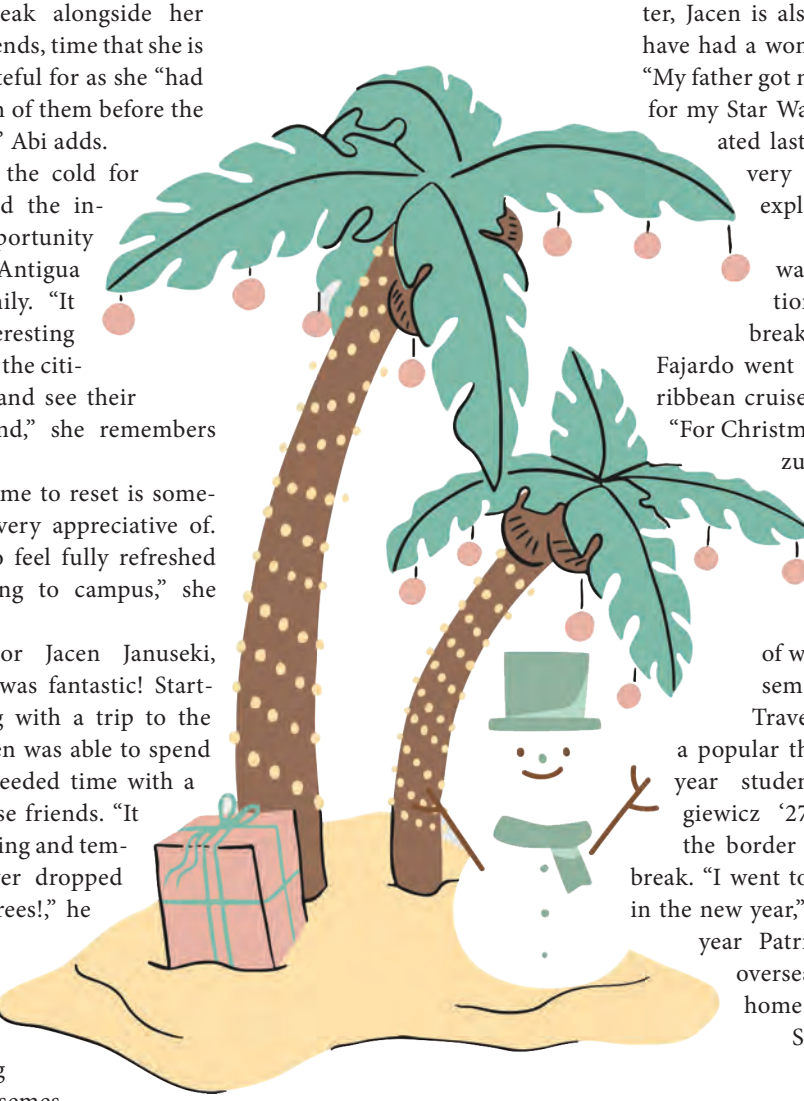
spent her break alongside her family and friends, time that she is extremely grateful for as she “had not seen much of them before the first semester,” Abi adds.

Escaping the cold for a bit, Abi had the incredible opportunity to travel to Antigua with her family. “It was really interesting to learn about the citizens’ culture and see their beautiful island,” she remembers fondly.

Having time to reset is something Abi is very appreciative of. “I was able to feel fully refreshed when returning to campus,” she expresses.

For junior Jacen Januseki, winter break was fantastic! Starting off strong with a trip to the Bahamas, Jacen was able to spend some much-needed time with a few of his close friends. “It was very relaxing and temperatures never dropped below 70 degrees!” he exclaims.

Alongside lots of sleeping and preparing for the new semester,



ter, Jacen is also very grateful to have had a wonderful Christmas. “My father got me a framed poster for my Star Wars film that I created last year, which I am very thankful for,” he explains.

The Bahamas was a recurring location for students over break. Junior Jennifer Fajardo went on a Western Caribbean cruise right after finals. “For Christmas, we were in Cozumel, Mex. it was so relaxing ...” I bet she wishes she was still there after the first two weeks of weather we had this semester.

Travel continued to be a popular theme among first-year students. Seina Dowiegiewicz ’27 traveled across the border into Canada over break. “I went to Montreal to ring in the new year,” she shared. First-year Patrick Breeden flew overseas to travel back home to Hawaii.

Staying inside the

United States, Erin Resnick ’25 took a trip to Florida. When asked what she did, she recalls her trip to Marco Island, Fla., in which she read books on the beach.

She couldn’t help but mention that there were so many fun shells and that since it was Christmas-time, the holiday cheer was beautiful with the palm trees that had Christmas lights on them.

Even after finishing her last semester with The Mirror, Executive Editor and Vine Editor emerita Brooke Lathe ’24 was still “super busy!” She went on a nine day writer’s retreat in Enders Island with the Fairfield MFA program in which she “learned a lot and built connections with so many people like [herself].”

For even more fun, she spent a weekend in Boston, MA. with her older brother, attending a Celtics game and dining at a Gordon Ramsey restaurant, an experience she claims has been on her bucket list for forever!

Whether it was flying to a tropical island, traveling to a big snow-filled city, or staying home to be close with loved ones, Stags were able to enjoy their winter breaks before the new beginnings of the spring semester.

THAT’S SO FETCH: MEAN GIRLS REVIEW

By ERIN MCGETRICK
Contributing Writer

It’s gotten to that point: Our favorite childhood movies are being revived and reimagined for present-day audiences. Timothée Chalamet graced theater screens last month as the titular role in “Wonka” (2023) and Halle Bailey sported a mermaid tail as Ariel in “The Little Mermaid” (2023). Now, one of the most iconic and beloved comedies that has marked Oct. 3 as a national holiday is back in the spotlight: “Mean Girls.”

However, don’t expect an exact replica of the 2004 movie. “Mean Girls” (2024) is a film adaptation of the musical which debuted on Broadway in 2018. Tina Fey, who reprises her original role as Ms. Norbury in the new film, wrote the book for the Broadway production. The musical received praise from musical theater fanatics and earned Tony Award nominations.

The musical component seemed to have taken the general public by surprise. This was because the original trailers released by Paramount Pictures lacked any indication of the film being a musical, instead using Olivia Rodrigo’s “get him back!” to gain the attention of audiences. In a viral TikTok that has since been deleted from @user03776127, there are several groans and laughs that can be heard from the audience as Cady Heron, played by Angourie Rice, begins to sing “Stupid With Love.” Paramount reportedly conducted exit polls at theaters to discover that 75% of audiences knew the film was a musical before purchasing a ticket and 16% left the movie disappointed.

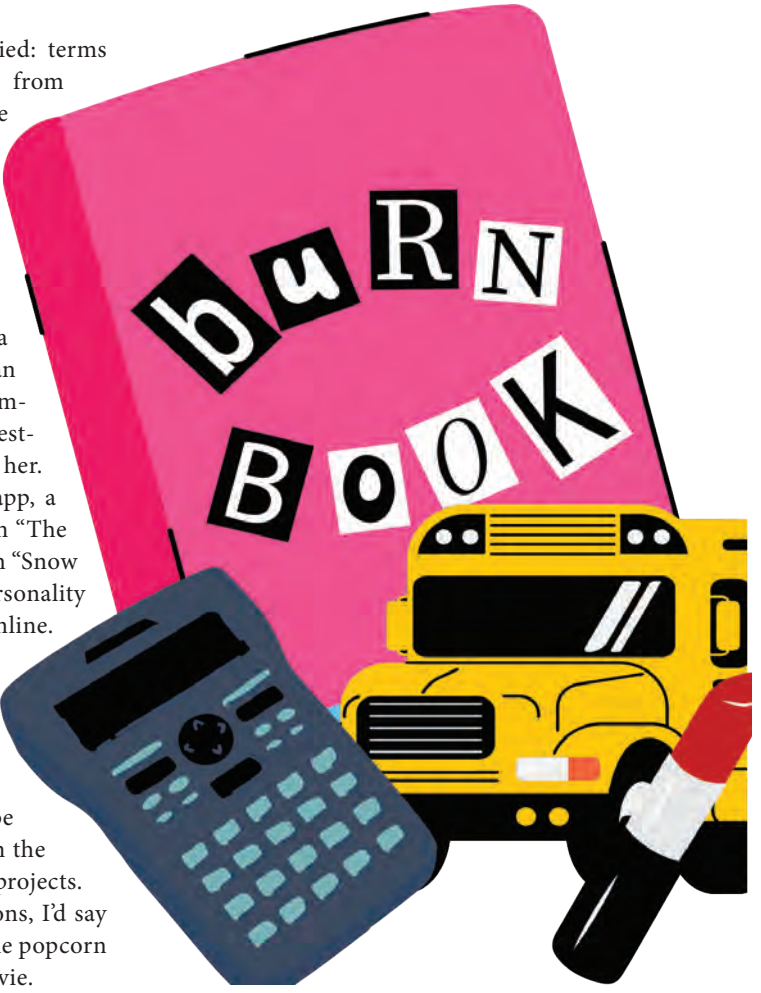
If you are a fan of the musical genre, this movie is right up your alley. It combines the familiar storylines of

high school hierarchies and teen romance with flashy dance breaks and show-stopping ballads. The music isn’t too musical theater-esque, and it has elements of pop and R&B that can appeal to a majority of moviegoers.

The entire aesthetic is definitely Gen Z-ified: terms that are no longer acceptable were eliminated from the movie and social media was added into the hellscape that is high school. Part of the charm of the original film is that it takes place in the 2000s, which the revival fails to capture within its modern-day representation of teenagers.

Another big change made in the new film is that the main character is no longer Cady Heron, the new student who was homeschooled in Africa and gets inducted into the Plastics. Ultimate mean girl Regina George is marketed as the leading woman this time around, which seems like an interesting switch considering the story revolves around her. However, the Queen Bee is played by Renee Rapp, a famous singer and actress known for her work on “The Sex Lives of College Girls” on HBO and her album “Snow Angel”. She’s also recently become an internet personality for her comedic comments in interviews and online. Rapp also played Regina on Broadway during its run at only 19 years old. The marketing in this case paid off: Rapp’s performance was a stand-out while Angourie Rice’s performance as Cady Heron fell flat.

“Mean Girls” (2024) is fun and should not be taken too seriously by audiences. Is it better than the 2004 original? No, but again, they are separate projects. Other than some questionable marketing decisions, I’d say that this movie is a great opportunity to grab some popcorn and chocolate and enjoy an entertaining new movie.



Andiamo On a New Adventure

By JACQUI RIGAZIO
Contributing

Ciao, Fairfield! I hope everyone is enjoying their time back on campus for the start of the spring semester. For me, this semester looks different than any I have experienced before. On Jan. 24 I landed in Florence, Italy, to kick off my semester abroad! Although I have only been here for two full days so far, it has already been such an amazing experience. Florence is home to some of the most famous art, food and architecture in the world and I walk around the city in awe that I have the opportunity to live here for three and a half months!

Jan. 24, 2024 was one of the craziest days of my life. I took a red-eye flight on the night of the 23rd out of Boston Logan Airport and landed in Munich, Germany for a quick layover. Not only was I in Europe for the first time, but it was also my 21st birthday! I will never forget handing my passport over to the man working customs at the Munich airport. He looked down at my passport, and then looked back up at me with a smile, saying “Happy birthday by the way.”

Hearing this hit me with an unexpected wave of emotions and all of a sudden I was tearing up in the middle of customs at the Munich airport (slightly embarrassing). I have been looking forward to starting my study abroad journey on my 21st birthday for over a year now, and finally experiencing this moment was more surreal than I could have imagined. I thanked him, collected my passport and continued through the airport to hop on my next flight to Florence.

Thankfully, the flight from Munich to Florence was only an hour and thirty minutes, which was a very nice change from the six-and-a-half-hour flight that I had just taken. This plane was packed with study abroad students – not only did I run into a couple of Fairfield friends, but I was able to chat with some UMass Amherst study abroad students as well. Getting to make new friends on the flight was so exciting; I already felt more reassured that I would have a few friendly faces to see while out and about.

The second that the plane landed in Florence things started to take off. Once I got my luggage, I was handed keys, shown to a car and driven to my apartment. If I

thought the driving back home in Boston was bad, I was in for a rude awakening. Cars in Florence fly down narrow cobblestone streets and do not seem to prioritize pedestrian safety. Pro tip: always be aware of vehicles while walking around!

Living right outside of the Basilica of Santa Croce, my apartment is in a stunning location with tons of street market vendors, coffee shops and an amazing panini place all within the piazza. My bedroom has huge windows that open up like double doors to a view of the Basilica – I have to pinch myself every time to remind myself that this is real life!

After a couple of hours of orientation meetings and a dinner with all of the Fairfield study abroad students, I was absolutely

exhausted. Running on three hours of sleep for the past two days made me feel like the Walking Dead. Despite this chronic fatigue, some of



Fairfield students kick off spring study abroad semester at the Duomo di Firenze.

my friends convinced me to go out and celebrate my birthday. In what was probably the most forceful

boot-and-rally of my life, I fought off the exhaustion and enjoyed the night exploring the city and checking out some local spots with some friends, new and old. And the best part is that I didn't pay for a single drink! Regardless of how badly my body needed sleep at this moment, I will always be thankful that I had such kind and fun people to celebrate my 21st with. It is definitely a birthday I will never forget!

Since move-in day, I have gone to some cute coffee shops, walked along the Arno River, stared in awe at the Duomo di Firenze, made new friends and had some of the best food I have ever tasted (I am still thinking about the ravioli with truffle sauce that I had for dinner last night). Although I am still chronically tired, I have been having a blast so far.

This city is unlike anything I have ever seen before and I still cannot believe that I get to call this beautiful place my home for the next three and a half months! Make sure to keep reading The Mirror throughout the semester for updates on my adventures in Florence!

Ciao, for now, Stags!

New Year, New Stags

By ABBY WINEY
Contributing Writer

Like clockwork, every Dec. 31 as the ball drops, my mind runs wild.

I scribble in my notebook setting new goals and resolutions for myself in the upcoming year.

The best part of Jan. 1 is that it is a complete blank slate. It's a new year, new you, with

new opportunities to grow and shine.

Settling back into campus after a month at home can always be a tough adjustment.

As we've valiantly navigated our way through the first week of the second semester, I've gotten the opportunity to talk to some fellow Stags about their New Year's goals and resolutions.

I've found some common themes throughout my chats and compiled some advice on these resolutions.

Eating Healthy

Being a college kid, the desire to eat healthy isn't at the top of everyone's list.

After a night out, a McDonald's quarter-pounder is the first thing on my mind.

But, it's always important to remember that the food you eat fuels your body.

Meaning, if you're munching on McDonald's every day you're probably not fueling your body the way it needs to be.

With that, I present to you the 80-20 lifestyle.

This means 80% of the time you're eating with the intention of being healthy while the

other 20% you indulge in whatever greasy fried food you can find.

This creates a balance for your body which will give you the energy and brain power to ace that Bio test but also give your cravings the exact fix it needs.

I'm a huge believer in eating what makes you happy with no restriction and I truly believe that the 80-20 lifestyle works.

Being Kinder to Ourselves

It's so easy to beat ourselves up over the smallest things.

Whether it's critiques about our physical appearance, the way we bombed our finance test, or the way we stumble over our words talking to our crush, it's tough to truly believe this but I promise, in a world of self-absorbed people, the only person who truly cares how you look or act, is you.

So I urge you to remember that we live on a floating rock.

Give yourself some grace in the new year and try not to be as harsh on yourself.

Learn a New Skill

This is something intriguing to me as I truly believe I have no talents. We may feel old, like we left our varsity basketball talent in High School or our Honors Chorus talents in Middle School but we are never too old to explore new hobbies. There are so many clubs and events that take place on campus that could possibly spark a love affair with a new hobby. You never know until you try. In this New Year, I encourage you to step out of your comfort zone a little and try something new.





SPECTACULAR STUDENT PRODUCTION:
39 STEPS EVEN MORE BRIDGED



By CAITLIN SHEA
Head Vine Editor

Each year, the students of Theatre Fairfield select and produce a show as a part of the Independent Play Project.

Entirely student-run, this year's production of *The 39 Steps: Even More Abridged* is definitely a standout. Alongside classmate Nora Jacobi '25, Angelo Corsini '25 discusses the work this kind of showcase demands. As directors, both Jacobi and Corsini started working on a proposal for this show in June.

"After a lot of back and forth, we finally landed on 39 steps," Corsini explains.

Although the faculty was concerned about the rehearsal period, as the cast and crew would only have around three weeks to perfect the production, the directors were given the green light.

To get the show as composed as possible, each member of the cast and crew balanced final exams alongside rehearsals, set building, costume design and so much more.

This diligent group even cut their winter break five days short to make the show the best it could be. As a capstone project for theater majors Jacobi and Corsini, it is evident that passion and heart has been poured into this production. "The most gratifying part of the experience is the atmosphere in rehearsals," Corsini shares.

"Everyone is having fun, everyone is

friends with everyone, it is such a positive environment," he describes. The chemistry between these Stags is apparent on and off the stage, as everyone has put forth their heart and soul to bring this show to life.

First-year Dominic Chila, who plays Richard Hannay, describes his second production at Fairfield.

"It has been an extremely enjoyable experience, everyone works so well together, we are all friends, it's very cohesive," he says.

Fellow first-year Oliver Merriam, who assumes the role of Clown, highlights his favorite parts of the production.

"My favorite thing about this show is that it is student-run. It feels like a group hang out, with a lot of room for suggestions and collaborations," he comments.

Another aspect of this production that stands out to Corsini is the flexibility and willingness of everyone.

A student production comes with a lot of unexpected circumstances, but Corsini asserts how grateful he is to the cast and crew for their problem-solving abilities.

"For example, we've had a lot of problems with the door in the show," Corsini explained.

"At first, it would not open, so our props department quickly added hinges.

Then, during rehearsals one of the beams broke, so it was moved to the shop where it unfortunately fell over and broke, meaning we had to replace the entire door,"



Fairfield stags showcase their talent in student-run production. The play, "39 Steps: Even More Abridged" is directed by Angelo Corsini '25 and Nora Jacobi '25.

he continued, attributing the creation of a new door to tech director Kylee Faulkner '26.

Corsini also extends extreme gratitude on behalf of the entire production to their sponsor, the Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation. This foundation generously sponsored the show, allowing these students to have the opportunity to create and perform. All of the ticket sales will also be going to Fellowship Place in New Haven, which will sup-

port programs that work to treat and provide assistance to adults living with chronic mental illness.

Despite working against the clock, and dealing with the twists and turns of any production, these students produced a show for the books!



Walking Hand and Hand
In a Winter Wonderland

By ISABELLA SAGARESE
Contributing Writer

With the cold weather approaching, it may be hard to come up with creative ways to enjoy time with a partner.

Here are five date ideas that will bring warmth into your dating life!

A NYC trip!

New York is always such an exciting, stimulating place with plenty to do.

Personally, I love going to Soho and shopping for jewelry, clothes and gifts.

Recently, I went with my long-distance boyfriend and had lunch at a restaurant called Parm.

We then got matching permanent bracelets from Adina Eden!

Definitely worth checking out.

An aquarium date!

Looking at the fish, sharks, turtles and even petting stingrays can be an exhilarating experience.

Plus, you can view these amazing aquatic creatures, avoiding the cold outside.

Who doesn't like some cute marine life?

Movie night!

Set up the couch with cozy blankets and some of your favorite snacks and drinks.

A movie is a perfect way to relax and

wind down from a busy day.

Eating your favorite food and cuddling, what could be better?

Paint your own pottery!

Places like Color Me Mine are perfect for painting your own designs on pieces of pottery.

The pottery ranges from plates and cups to figurines.

Expertise in painting is not required for this activity.

Anyone will enjoy it! And if you ever want to paint your own piggy bank, this is the time and place to do it!

You could even take a trip to Hands on Pottery right on Post Road!

Cook together!

Whether you make homemade pasta, a new recipe you saw on TikTok, or bake Grandma's chocolate chip cookie recipe, it will be tasty and a bonding experience.

My boyfriend and I made the Gigi Hadid spicy pasta recipe once and it was delicious!

Ice skating!

How much fun is it to throw on skates and a sweater and grab your partner's hand?

Whether you both know how to, just one of you or neither!

It is such a fun activity to experience together.

Sledding!

Hopefully, you live in an area where there is a decent amount of snow.

Sledding can be exhilarating if you find a steep hill and a slippery toboggan.

Afterward, you can have some hot cocoa to warm up by a fire.

Try a new restaurant!

It is so fun to get dressed up for the night and enjoy yourselves.

Italian, Mexican, seafood ... you name it!

During the week, it can be so busy, but a romantic setting can be a perfect place to relax and talk to your partner.

I hope this was helpful for some date ideas for you and your partner.

And that you try a few of them this winter. Stay warm!



A snowy walk through the Quad.





COFFEE BREAK

GAMES, PUZZLES AND MORE
Editor: Matthew Robles



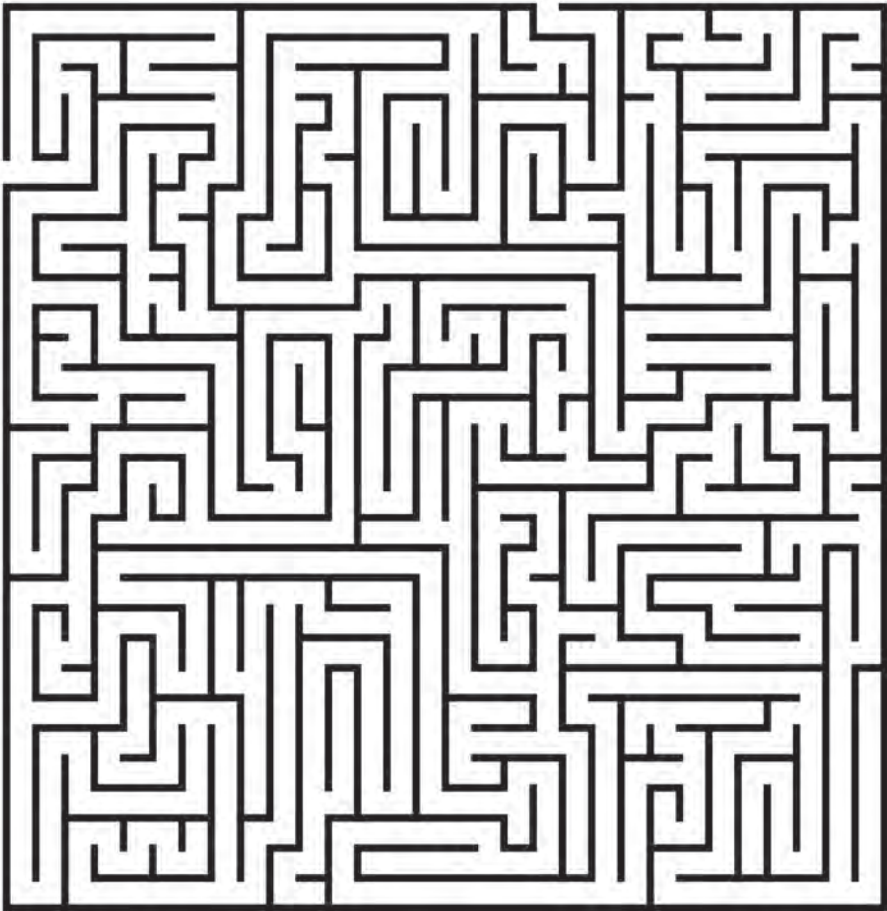
Sudoku



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

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

MIRROR MAZE!



LUCAS THE STAG'S BIRTHDAY MAD LIBS



ON HIS 22ND BIRTHDAY, LUCAS THE STAG
CELEBRATED WITH _____
(NAME OF FAIRFIELD STUDENT)

TO KICK OFF THE DAY, HE VISITED _____
(FAIRFIELD BUILDING)

HE RAN INTO HIS FAVORITE PROFESSOR, _____
(NAME OF PROFESSOR)

WHILE HE WAS AT THE TULLY, HE INDULGED WITH _____
(DESSERT)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, LUCAS! UNTIL NEXT YEAR!



Jan. 31	Feb. 1	Feb. 2	Feb. 3	Feb. 4	Feb. 5	Feb. 6
Women's Tennis at University of Connecticut Manchester, Conn. 1 p.m.	Women's Basketball at Rider University Lawrenceville, N.J. 7 p.m.	Men's Tennis at Brown University Providence, R.I. 3 p.m. Men's Basketball at Iona University New Rochelle, N.Y. 7 p.m.	Women's Basketball at Iona University New Rochelle, N.Y. 3 p.m.	Men's Basketball vs Manhattan College Fairfield, Conn. 2 p.m.	No games scheduled	No games scheduled

Women's Basketball Extends Win Streak With Wins vs MAAC Foes

By DANNY MCELROY
Assistant Sports Editor

Fairfield Women's Basketball continued their remarkable season with wins over conference foes Quinnipiac and Canisius last week, improving their record to 17-1 on the year.

The week began for the Stags with an intrastate trip to the Bobcats on Thursday. Freshman standout Meghan Andersen led all scorers with 19 points, followed by teammate Kendall McGruder '25 with a season-high 18, as Fairfield pulled out a 74-59 victory.

After a back-and-forth first half, the Stags used a dominant third quarter in which they shot 75% from the field to widen their lead, a stark departure from their prior contest against Marist where the team shot just 38.2% for the game.

"I thought at Marist we didn't do a good job of sharing the basketball," head coach Carly Thibault-DuDonis said in a post-game press release. "We took that to heart to create good shots for one another."



Photo Contributed by the Sports Information Desk

That change was evident on the court and in the box score, where the Stags posted 16 total assists compared to just seven against Marist.

The Stags then came home to Leo D. Mahoney Arena on Saturday to take on Canisius. Where the game against Quinnipiac was hotly contested in the first half, the contest against the Golden Griffins was not. Fairfield used a stifling defensive effort to hold Canisius to just six points in the first quarter, forcing six turnovers

The women's basketball team extended their win streak this past week taking their record to 17-1 on the season so far as they look to finish strong.

in the frame.

From there, the Stags never looked back. The final tally featured 12 steals as part of 25 Golden Griffins turnovers, putting an exclamation point on a convincing 70-42 win.

Janelle Brown '24 scored 19 points to lead the team, followed by Andersen's second double-digit effort of the week with 16.

The two victories extended the Stags' winning streak to 15

games, the second longest in the country behind national number one South Carolina. The mark also ties the university record since the Stags became a Division I program.

As such, the team and individual accolades have been plenty. Andersen is an eight-time Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Rookie of the Week this season and has been MAAC Player of the Week twice. Brown won

three straight Player of the Week awards earlier in the season and ranks 12th nationally in field goal percentage.

Their tremendous seasons, combined with the number one scoring offense and number two scoring defense in the conference, have been the engine of a team that is receiving votes in the AP Top 25 poll for the first time in program history.

"I'm proud of the collective effort of every single person in this program," Thibault-DuDonis said in a press release after the Canisius win. "We have a long way to go still but I'm proud of the day-to-day intentional progress that we made."

The Stags will try to add to their winning streak as they head to Rider on Thursday, Feb. 1. Tip-off is at 7 p.m.

In this week's issue...

- Men's Tennis Stumbles Starting Spring Semester (Page 14)
- Opinion: Boone's Big Mistake Batting Soto Second (Page 15)
- Men's Basketball Loses Heartbreaker to Quinnipiac (Page 15)
- Go Stags! A Celebration of the Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2024 (Page 16)

Men's Tennis Stumbles Starting Spring Semester

BY RYAN MARQUARDT
Head Sports Editor

Junior Sam Hodges ‘25 was named as the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference player of the week on Jan. 24. He went 3-1 in the Army Spring Kick-Off winning a singles match vs the number eight player in Division 1 where Hodges went 4-6, 6-4, 1-0 to win. His one loss came on a singles tie-break. He also played doubles and won both of his matches.

The Stags men’s tennis team continued their spring semester by heading to Yale University. The Bulldogs defeated the Stags 7-0 in a not very close match. In the number doubles match Jim Ji and Eric Le of Yale defeated graduate students Nick Condos and Thomas Smart 6-2. The number doubles match was a little closer with Kostas Kollias ‘26 and Kean Shah ‘24 winning five games but ultimately falling to Vignesh Gogineni and Dylan Tsoi of Yale who won seven games to take the set. In the final doubles match Alex Aguiar ‘26 and Hodges lost 3-6 to Walker Oberg and Luke Neal.

In the number one singles match Smart took on Gogineni. The first set was very close with Smart forcing an extra game in the set but he ultimately lost

7-5. He eventually lost the set 7-5. Smart could not gain his momentum back as he also dropped the second set 6-3 giving Yale the first singles match. The second singles match saw Ji defeat Hodges 6-3, 6-3 winning both sets decisively. The number three singles match saw Condos manage to force a tiebreaker in the first set which he eventually lost 9-7. The second set saw a decisive Ji victory winning 6-2

Photo Contributed by The Sports Information Desk

and taking the match. Aguiar, Kollias and graduate student Griffin Schlesinger all also lost their matches leading to the Stags losing 7-0.

“We had our chances in both singles and doubles but didn’t play the big points well enough. We saw a lot that we liked, but also a lot of things to improve upon,” Head coach Jeff Bricker told fairfieldstags.com.

Following their defeat at the hands of the Bulldogs, the Stags headed to another Ivy League school to face 11 seed Columbia in a doubleheader. The Stags fell by a score of 7-0 in both games.

In the first game Shah and Kollias lost 6-0 vs the Lions' top pair, the Stags also lost the number two and three doubles matches as well. The number



two match went unfinished as Aguiar and Hodges won two games to Columbia’s five, giving the Lions the win. The final doubles match saw Luca Benaibbouche ‘27 and Will O’Brien ‘25 fall by a score of 6-2.

Only Hodges put up a fight in the singles matches, where in the number one singles he lost the first set four games to six then the second two games to six. No other Stag won more than three games across their singles matches as the Stags fell 7-0.

“It was a

Graduate student Nick Condos has had one of the stronger starts to the Spring semester of the members of the men's tennis team .

good experience to play Columbia and see the level of a top team in the country. Hopefully, the guys learned a few things and can use it going forward,” stated Bricker to fairfieldstags.com.

The second game saw the Stags face a similar result as they could not compete with a top 15 team in the nation.







The top doubles pair of Condos and Smart fell to Columbia’s Theo Winegar and Michael Zheng in a clean 6-0 sweep. Hodges and Aguiar managed to win two games in the number two doubles but lost 6-2. The final doubles pair had the most success of the Stags with Benaibbouche and Kollias winning three games and losing 6-3.

In the number one singles match Smart lost the first set 6-3 then the second 6-2, showing the most success of any Stag across the singles matches. Aguiar won two games in his first set but was swept in the second. Condos won three games in the first set but was swept in the second as well. Benaibbouche won a game in the first set and two in the second, Schlesinger was swept in both sets, and in the number six singles, Jessett Calum won a game in each set.

The Stags men’s tennis team will have their next match on Feb. 2 at Brown University. For more information visit www.fairfieldstags.com.

The Weekly 5x4

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

	 <div>Max Limeric Editor-in-Chief</div>	 <div>Kathleen Morris Executive Editor</div>	 <div>Samantha Russell Managing Editor</div>	 <div>Britdget Keohane Assistant News Editor</div>	 <div>Caitlin Shea Head Vine Editor</div>
What book series was your favorite as a kid?	Diary of a Wimpy Kid. Big Nate. Captain Underpants. I think you might be able to tell what type of kid I was ...	Harry Potter! I found a kindred spirit in Hermione Granger, as she shared my plucky attitude and bibliophilic tendencies.	As a big fan of “Divergent,” probably my review of Veronica Roth’s book tour event.	Why, Dr. Seuss of course! One fish two fish red fish blue fish.	Harry Potter, I love the storytelling and how it transported me into a magical world.
What is your pick for Album of the Year at the Grammys?	No clue to be honest. I don’t really follow awards like that. The Barbie soundtrack was a fun listen, though.	I’ll forever be rooting for Taylor Swift, so “Midnights” automatically gets my vote!	Enjoying my last semester at Fairfield!	What are the nominations?	I don't follow the Grammys, but I guess Taylor Swift?
What’s your go-to everyday shoe?	My New Balances, comfy.	I have developed an affinity for metallic sneakers, as I rotate between my gold and silver kicks.	Good luck and have the best time on staff. Take care of Vine for me!	My Stan-Smiths.	Converse, specifically my blue high-tops.
Who’s the GOAT of sports?	Maybe Michael Jordan I think.	If I said anyone other than Tom Brady, it would be a betrayal of my New England roots.	Can’t wait to see what the future of The Mirror brings!	Wayne Gretzky.	Patrice Bergeron. Go Bruins!

Opinion: Boone's Big Mistake Batting Soto Second

By RYAN CANFIELD
Contributing Writer

After a season that saw the New York Yankees go 82-80 and finish fourth in the AL East, posting their worst record since 1992 when they went 76-86, changes had to be made.

What is the best way to improve an offense that scored the sixth-fewest runs and had the second-lowest team batting average across MLB?

Acquire one of the best hitters in the sport: Juan Soto.

Soto and captain Aaron Judge will now form one of the most fearsome one-two punches in all of baseball.

But who will bat 2nd, and who will bat 3rd?

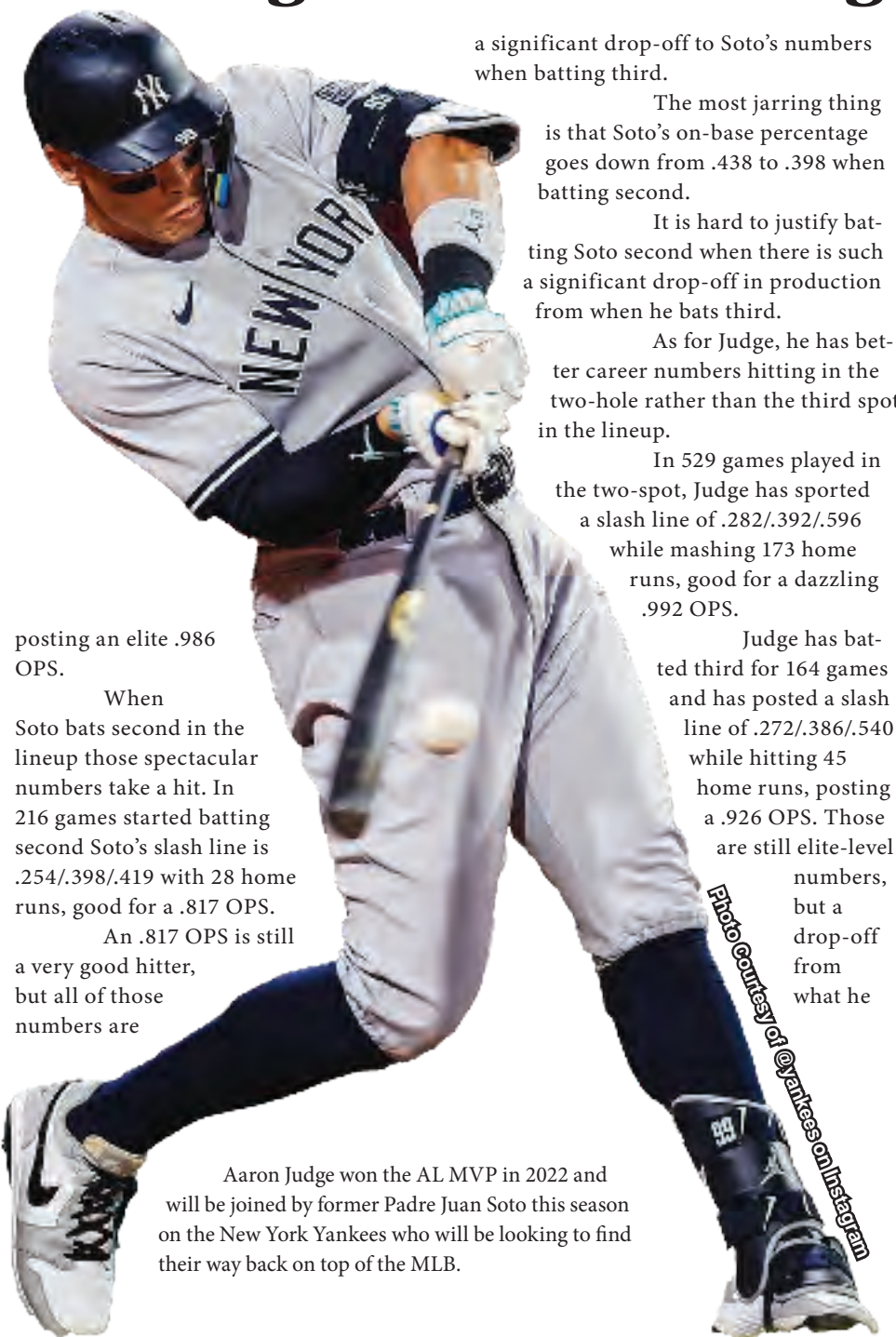
Manager Aaron Boone said on the Foul Territory show that he would be “leaning towards” batting Soto second and Judge third. Boone said a lot can change but right now that is what he is thinking for the top of the lineup.

Boone’s logic makes sense because Soto, since debuting in 2018, leads the league in walk percentage, and would be on-base frequently with the man who holds the American League record for most home runs in a season coming up behind him in Judge.

But I disagree with Boone, I think Judge should stay in the two-hole with Soto batting third for a couple of reasons.

Soto in his career has been a more productive hitter hitting in the third spot in the lineup compared to the second.

Soto has batted third 312 games in his career and has a slash line of .288/.438/.548 while hitting 73 home runs,



posting an elite .986 OPS.

When Soto bats second in the lineup those spectacular numbers take a hit. In 216 games started batting second Soto’s slash line is .254/.398/.419 with 28 home runs, good for a .817 OPS.

An .817 OPS is still a very good hitter, but all of those numbers are

Aaron Judge won the AL MVP in 2022 and will be joined by former Padre Juan Soto this season on the New York Yankees who will be looking to find their way back on top of the MLB.

a significant drop-off to Soto’s numbers when batting third.

The most jarring thing is that Soto’s on-base percentage goes down from .438 to .398 when batting second.

It is hard to justify batting Soto second when there is such a significant drop-off in production from when he bats third.

As for Judge, he has better career numbers hitting in the two-hole rather than the third spot in the lineup.

In 529 games played in the two-spot, Judge has sported a slash line of .282/.392/.596 while mashing 173 home runs, good for a dazzling .992 OPS.

Judge has batted third for 164 games and has posted a slash line of .272/.386/.540 while hitting 45 home runs, posting a .926 OPS. Those are still elite-level numbers, but a drop-off from what he

produces batting second.

Most importantly though for the Yankees, they need to make sure Soto is comfortable.

From the second they traded for him, they knew Soto would not be signing a long-term contract extension before the season because he is a Scott Boras client, and Boras prefers to let his clients hit the open market rather than sign extensions.

This entire season the Yankees are pitching themselves to Soto as to why he should sign what will likely be a \$500 million contract that will span out over a decade long with them.

Soto voiced his displeasure with batting second when he was with the Nationals to manager Davey Martinez.

With the Padres Soto was said he was okay with batting second because it meant they could keep two righties behind him to prevent teams from bringing in a lefty just to face Soto.

The Yankees lineup will probably be altered on a day-to-day basis depending on who the opposing starting pitcher is, yet there is no reason as to why every single lineup should not have Judge batting second and Soto batting third.

The Yankees employ two of the best hitters on the planet and need to put them where they are primed to succeed. The Yankees offense is going to be driven by an engine that will heavily rely on Judge and Soto.

But batting Judge second and Soto third means more than the 2024 season.

It means you have a better chance of making sure Juan Soto goes into the Hall of Fame one day wearing a Yankees hat.

Men's Basketball Loses in Heartbreaker Against Quinnipiac

By TJ CRIARES
Contributing Writer

Despite a 66-64 loss, the home crowd was roaring on Sunday afternoon as the Fairfield University men’s basketball team took on the number one ranked team in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, Quinnipiac.

Going into the game, The Stags were 12-8 coming off a three-game winning streak, but they had a tough task ahead of them taking on Quinnipiac, the top team in the conference.

Graduate Student Caleb Fields and Jalen Leach ‘24 led the team with 18 points each with both of their performances including highlight-worthy plays.

Garrett Nelson ‘24, student manager of the men’s basketball team, believed Fields “found a way to get hardpoints including multiple ‘and-one’ opportunities.”

Fields hit two three-point shots and Leach threw down an impressive dunk over a Quinnipiac defender with less than four minutes to go in the second half.

Nelson also believed this play “was a huge momentum shift.”

At halftime, the Stags had a 33-32 lead over the Bobcats shooting 25% from the three-point line and 50% on free throws.

There were moments



The Stags men's basketball team has had a hot January going 5-2 including multiple in conference wins helping the Stags find the third spot in the MAAC standings.

throughout the second half where the Bobcats were looking like they were going to take over the game, including going up 43-36 at the start of the second half and going up 55-48 with seven minutes to go in the game, but the Stags stayed resilient to keep themselves in the game.

With less than two minutes to go in the game, a 62-62 game had the home crowd get loud and on their feet.

“The team always plays better when the crowd shows up,” Nelson says. “They always feel extremely energized to play at their best level when the home crowd is behind them. It really helps when they are on defense, it causes the opponent a lot of confusion when they can't hear their plays.”

The entire arena knew that this game was going to come down to the final seconds.

The Stags were able to take the lead with just over a minute to go, but two unanswered Bobcat layups made by Matt Balanc, including a possession where they managed to take over 20 seconds off the clock, iced the game.

Although there are no moral victories in sports, Nelson says that “the team felt good about the performance. The game came down to the final possession and we nearly beat them.” The Stags finished the game shooting 19.2% three-pointers, 68.4% on free throws, and committing six fewer turnovers than the Bobcats.

The team looks to get back on track this next week with a game on the road against Iona this Friday, Feb. 2 and a game in front of the home crowd again on Sunday, Feb. 4 against Manhattan.

Go Stags! A Celebration of the Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2024

By CRYSTAL ARBELO
Assistant Sports Editor

Fairfield University added seven new names to the Fairfield Athletics Hall of Fame on Saturday night with a ceremony in the Dolan School of Business Event Hall. The night was filled with community and nostalgia, as those honored gathered with family, friends and staff to celebrate their achievements. Those added to the list of legendary names include Ann Burgoyne '17, the late Dr. Wayne Gibbons '70, Bob Heussier P'09, Tyler Nelson '18, Ryan Plourde '14, Paulina Rys '10 and the 1998 Fairfield football team.

The ceremony was kicked off by brief remarks from University President Mark Nemec and Paul Schlickmann, Vice President of Athletics, followed by a dinner and cocktail reception. Gene Doris, 2023 Inductee and Director of Athletics from 1994-2017, was honored first since he could not make it to last year's ceremony. Doris reflected on his time at Fairfield as Director of Athletics and noted that at Fairfield, "there's a sense of friendship, common purpose and values that's difficult to find in a workplace." He also reminisced on the old layout of the university while praising the improvements that have been made in recent years, "The baseball layout provided many splinters for anyone who wanted to see the games. Only basketball had dedicated locker rooms. Be proud of yourselves for all you've accomplished here at Fairfield."

Each inductee honored was introduced with a highlight reel of their achievements and applause that surely brought them back to the glory days.

Burgoyne was recognized for being the all-time leading scorer in Fairfield field hockey history, racking up 56 goals and 126 total points in just three years while leading the Stags to their first-ever MAAC Championship.

Heussier was the play-by-play broadcaster for Fairfield men's basketball from 1983 to 1988 and continued to serve the Fairfield University community by acting as a mentor to students at the campus radio station, WVOF. Heussier continued his career with WFAN and has done play-by-play for the UConn Men's Basketball team, the Connecticut Sun and the New Jersey/Brooklyn Nets.

Nelson is the all-time leading scorer for Fairfield men's basketball, with 2,172 points from 2014 to 2018. Averaging 17.1 points per game, he ranks eighth all-time on career charts. Scoring 732 points in his senior season of 2017-28, Nelson led the Stags to the MAAC Championship Game for that season.

Plourde was chosen for the All-MAAC First Team twice and the All-New England First Team while playing for Fairfield baseball. Catching and posting in the outfield for the Stags, Plourde put up a career average of .323 from 2011 to 2014. He currently ranks among the top 10 in program history with 224 hits, 11 triples, 121 walks, 324 total bases, 117 RBI and 139 runs scored.

Rys helped lead Fairfield women's tennis to back-to-back MAAC Championships in 2009 and 2010. The All-MAAC First Team Singles and Doubles performer in 2009 was also chosen as the MAAC Player of the Year and Championship MVP in the same year. During her second



Pictured above are four of the eight 2024 inductees into the Fairfield Hall of Fame this past weekend.

championship campaign in 2010, Rys was chosen as a First Team Singles and Second Team Doubles honoree.

The late Dr. Gibbons had an impact on and off the court at Fairfield University. He was one of eleven 1,000 point scorers in Fairfield men's basketball history. With a total of 1,016 points, Gibbons averaged 13.2 points per game in his career. Post-graduation, Gibbons went on to become a doctor and went on mission trips to countries including Guatemala, Nigeria and Ghana for almost 40 years. Gibbons passed away on July 24, 2019, at the age of 70; his daughters accepted the award on

his behalf. In their acceptance speech, they recalled some of his best moments with Fairfield, including his buzzer-beater to beat Villanova in the Palestra during the 1967-'68 season. His daughters extended their gratitude to the University, saying "Thank you Fairfield for loving our dad."

Throughout the night, each acceptance speech was highlighted with the catchphrase "Go Stags!" that got the crowd of athletes, friends and family to cheer with pride each time.

The 1998 Fairfield football team had the best season in the history of the program, in just its third year as an NCAA I-AA program. The 9-2 Stags were led by Head Coach Kevin Kissel, posting up an impressive 7-1 record against conference opponents and leading the nation in rushing defense and total defense. They finished their season with eight consecutive wins, ultimately winning the '98 MAAC title.

Pat Grugan '01, nose guard for the '98 team felt the growth between his time as a student on N. Benson Road and now, saying, "For me personally, being back on campus and driving around with my family, I was very excited to show them all the great advancements made to the athletic facilities, fields, Rafferty Stadium and of course Mahoney Arena. It meant a lot to me, for my children to see that Fairfield isn't afraid or bashful to invest in sports, and having such a tremendous Arena so present and center on campus made it very easy to feel the sense of pride that Fairfield University has for its Stags!"

After captain and quarterback Jim Lopusznicz '00 was asked what being inducted into the Hall of Fame means for their

team, he answered, "Having this '98 football team being placed in the Hall of Fame for the accomplishments of the group, now makes this team the best I have ever been a part of in my career! It means that we achieved the highest level of greatness as a group, which in my opinion, is much tougher to do vs. individual achievement."

This induction also brings about a sense of hope for a potential revival of the football program at Fairfield. Lopusznicz shared his dreams for a revival, "Bringing back the football program at Fairfield University is something that I have dreamt about." The sense of pride Lopusznicz felt when he was a part of the team stuck with him, and he expresses his feelings about the program ending in 2003, "The type of pride that you would like to share with others, in hopes that they might achieve that greatness one day. Having that taken away from you is metaphorically like losing a family member." Lopusznicz signed off on his approval of a revival, saying "I would unequivocally support the resurgence of a Football Program at FU, and would do everything in my power to help support the program."

The weekend of the induction was filled with recollections of the athlete's favorite moments and to All-MAAC placekicker and all-time leading scorer for Fairfield football Stephen Mirasolo '02, it was the win against Duquesne in Pittsburgh after a tie which sent them to overtime and they came out on top. "I fondly remember celebrating on the field with teammates, and our families and fans rushing onto the field. Seeing my dad and giving him a big hug is a memory I'll always cherish."



Pictured above are the other four inductees including the 1998 MAAC champion Fairfield football team.