

THE MIRROR

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Students Begin to Cast Their Votes: Here's How You Can Too

BY MAXLIMRIC
Editor in Chief

Senior Claire DeMarco is 135 miles away from her home in Pennsylvania. But she didn't let that stop her from voting. Last Thursday, she received confirmation that her absentee ballot arrived in Pennsylvania three days after casting her vote for Vice President Kamala Harris.

Even though early voting will occur for the first time in Connecticut's history this election, DeMarco's home state is Penn. and wanted to vote in her local elections, not Conn. Therefore, she sent in an absentee ballot and took The Mirror through the simple process.

"When I filled out that application, it couldn't have been easier," she states. "I just googled it, and through the Penn. voter services portal, I was able to use my current home and school address, as well as my Penn. Driver's license to apply."

Not only is it the first time early voting is happening in Conn., but the Fairfield University Media Center will be an early voting location from Monday, Oct. 21 to Sunday, Nov. 3 from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (with extended hours on Oct. 29 and Oct. 31 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.) in the Conference Center Lobby.

For students who are residents of other states and do not want to register to vote in Conn. elections, Stags Vote recommends they reach out to engagement@fairfield.edu "sooner rather than later because deadlines to register for a mail-in/absentee ballot are approaching and engagement@fairfield.edu can get you the correct forms (and send them out for you if your state does not have online voter registration capabilities)."

For Conn., the voter registration deadline is Oct. 18. However, there are other ways to register to vote in this upcoming election. During the Early Voting Period, students can register to vote for the first time or update an existing Conn. voter registration at an Early Voting location and cast their vote immediately at the same location.

Conn. also offers Same Day Voter Registration on Election

Day, Nov. 5 at the designated Same Day Voter Registration locations in their town.

For many seniors like DeMarco and most undergraduate students alike, this is the first presidential election that they are eligible to vote in, although DeMarco has been able to vote in midterms and local elections.

"I voted absentee in Penn. because my state tends to be a 'swing state', so I feel like my vote really matters in my area. I also had a few local candidates that I was very passionate about supporting," DeMarco shared.

Additionally, she acknowledged the further impact these candidates will have on her life: "Given that after graduation, when these candidates are actually in office, I will likely be back in my home state, I feel like the issues there really apply to me."

DeMarco felt "extremely excited" to cast her vote for Vice President Kamala Harris and her running mate Tim Walz because she believes she's "voting for the person who could be the first female president of the United States, as well as someone who would bring in a diverse administration who would truly care about and protect my future, and all of our futures," she asserts.

"Their commitment to women's bodily autonomy, implementing gun control policies, providing healthcare to those with pre-existing health conditions and their opposition to the Project 2025 agenda," are the main issues that prompted DeMarco to cast her vote for the democratic party.

All residential students on the 1073 North Benson Campus, as well as commuter and Beach Residents who live in the Town of Fairfield, are eligible to vote in Fairfield and can do so by updating your address to the Town of Fairfield and then voting in the Town of Fairfield elections via Early Voting, Same Day Voter Registration or at your designated Polling Location.

Editor's Note: *The Mirror tried to interview both Democrats and Republicans, but DeMarco was the only one who agreed to talk to us for this article.*



Tonight, Wednesday Oct. 9, candidates for state senator Tony Hwang (far right) and Rob Blanchard (far left) will share their platforms at a forum hosted by Fairfield University in the Dogwood Room at 6:30 p.m. State Representative Jennifer Leeper (middle left) and her opponent Alexis Harrison (middle right) will also be present.

Tonight: Connecticut Candidates Stop at Fairfield University on Campaign Trail

BY SAMANTHA RUSSELL AND JACQUELINE RIGAZIO
Executive Editor and Copy Editor

With anticipation drawing for the election, only 27 days away, Fairfield University is hosting local candidates to share their messages to students and community members in the Dogwood Room of the Barone Campus Center on Oct. 9 at 6:30 p.m..

Candidates present at the event who represent Fairfield students are current GOP Senator Tony Hwang who will face off against Democratic candidate Robert Blanchard. Also in attendance, current Democratic State Representative District 132 Jennifer Leeper who is being challenged by Republican Alexis Harrison. The forum welcomes Fairfield community members, students and faculty to engage with candidates about their platforms and voice their concerns.

"I think it's a great opportunity to bring student voices," Blanchard said, a current member of Fairfield's Representative Town Meeting. "We want to ensure their voices are being heard."

For the last several weeks, these campaigns have made it into student's group texts and social media sites like Fizz. Those posts discussed how these candidates would address a major student issue like hosting parties on the beach. However, The Mirror inquired into

these candidates' responsibilities and discovered none of these candidates have a direct say on this local issue.

Running as the youngest Fairfield candidate, Blanchard claims he heavily sympathizes with what college students and recent graduates are going through—still having active college loans himself. What he deems as important is collaborating with these groups to better understand how they wish for policies to be enacted.

The Mirror reached out to Senator Hwang multiple times for an interview, but he did not respond in time for publication. Based on his campaign website, his primary missions are "rooted in the values of hard work and the pursuit of the American dream." His website continues that a vast portion of his leadership focuses on educational access and success for all students as well as a commitment to his community.

Blanchard graduated from Syracuse University, a private institution with "less control over tuition," he said. He praises the Jesuit practices of the university and its dedication to social justice, which he claims is similar to his concentration on amplifying the voices of others.

When Blanchard launched his campaign in January, he raised a substantial amount of money by going door-to-door and hearing stories from seniors, young families and students alike. He

NOTE: For students who are residents of other states and do not want to register to vote in Conn. elections, Stags Vote recommends they reach out to engagement@fairfield.edu "sooner rather than later because deadlines to register for a mail-in/absentee ballot are approaching and engagement@fairfield.edu can get you the correct forms (and send them out for you if your state does not have online voter registration capabilities)."

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR EARLY VOTING!

Location:
Fairfield U. Media Center

Dates:
10/21 to 11/3 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Extended Hours:
10/29 to 10/31 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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Brian Torff Group to Kick Off 'Live at the Levee' Music Series Tomorrow

BY KATHLEEN MORRIS
Managing Editor

The floor of Brian Torff's office is scattered with black cases. The walls hold shelves of vibrant books, with titles including "The History of Jazz" and "The Anatomy of a Song." On the wall, there is a framed photo of piano keys. To its right, a wooden stand is piled high with CDs. Below, there is a keyboard. On its stand, a flier reads "Seize the Beat: Music and Race in the Deep South."

Torff reaches inside the largest case, revealing a glossy guitar. He begins to strum, unleashing a bluesy melody. He plays with a casual nature, at ease in a space filled with relics of a rich musical past.

He continued to sweep the silver strings, eventually breaking loose from an almost trance-like state to reveal the song's title: "Good Trouble." The original piece was written in honor of John Lewis and inspired by Torff's crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the site of the "Bloody Sunday" conflict in 1965.

His time spent in Selma, Alabama marked a stop in a larger tour of the Deep South. Accompanied by his wife, Torff ventured into the heart of the Civil Rights movement. He recalls standing on the grave of Robert Johnson, a legendary bluesman and activist buried in Mississippi.

"It was so profound, it just hit me like a thunderbolt," Torff remarked.

Today, this electrifying moment continues to fuel his creativity. He formed the Brian Torff Group, a band driven by a desire to capture the complexity of the American story "through American roots music with an updated twist." By blending original music with classic Delta Blues, Torff aspires to demonstrate the deep impact of Black music on our nation's culture.

The Fairfield community will have an opportunity to experience their unique performance style by attending the "Live at the Levee" Music Series. The series will commence tomorrow, Oct. 10 at 7 p.m., functioning as an "informal music gathering." Torff highlighted the intentional distinction between the gathering and a typical concert.

"When we think 'concert,' we usually think, 'I'm going to sit in the chair,'" he explained. "This is probably an assignment and there's something expected of me."

As a member of Fairfield's Arts Institute Steering Committee, Torff understands the value of programs that bring students into traditional art spaces. But, he also sees merit in providing on-campus opportunities that are "not as high level as the Metropolitan Museum of Art."

By performing in the Levee, which he characterized as a "kind of unused resource," Torff hopes to remove the notion of obligation. By opting for an unstructured format, he believes the dynamic essence of the Blues and Jazz genre will be amplified.

"We're just going to play and have fun," he shared. "And, we hope the audience does the same thing."

The setting of an understated sports bar is not Torff's standard venue. His extensive resume includes performances at the White House, Carnegie Hall and the Hollywood Bowl. Torff has shared the stage with icons of the industry, plucking his double bass alongside the likes of Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett. Still, he is just as thrilled to set up on the tiled floor of the student body's beloved pizza joint. To Torff, his title as a Fairfield University professor is at the top of his list of accomplishments.

"I think it's a critically important role to be in," he said. "I take it very seriously."

Torff began teaching in 1993, following a stint as a substitute teacher for a "History of Jazz" course. He admitted that he "came into academia through the backdoor," but has since fallen in love with the educational environment. However, he also recognizes the limitations of the classroom setting.

"We need more students to make the discovery. It's about going and looking and seeking," Torff emphasized. "It's great to have an assignment. It's great to learn in school. But, ultimately, it comes down to the individual living a life that seeks out continuous learning."

Senior Justin Sabogal was offered the opportunity to collaborate with the Brian Torff Group, tapping into this mode of hands-on learning by creating videos for the band. With fellow Film, Television and Media Arts (FTMA) major Jacen Januseski '25, he filmed and edited a three-hour set of the band's original music.

"We filmed 11 songs that were all original pieces written by Brian," Sabogal noted. "Filming the band was a really cool experience. I enjoyed capturing the performance while also listening to great music."

The film was recorded in Studio A at the Media Center. The featured songs included "Mississippi Saxophone," "Ain't Gonna Play No Second Fiddle" and "Legend of Robert Johnson."

Owen Bonaventura served as the recording engineer for the project. By assessing the technical resources offered at the Media Center and pulling equipment from his personal studio, he was able



Kathleen Morris/The Mirror

During his interview with The Mirror, Torff picked up a vinyl record to symbolize the drastic shift within the music industry. He explains to his students that the digital age has impacted our experience of music. Thus, the Levee Music Series will offer a unique opportunity to revisit traditional practices of the past.



Kathleen Morris/The Mirror

Professor of Music Brian Torff performs his original piece "Good Trouble" in his Canisius office. Torff draws inspiration from Civil Rights research trips to the Deep South to create music that tells an American story.

to execute Torff's aesthetic vision.

"Brian's music is very 'rootsy' and vintage-inspired, so he wanted the aesthetic of the recording to feel like the viewer was watching a live band playing together in a room," Bonaventura illustrated. "He didn't want it to be too perfect—he wanted it to feel real."

Bonaventura, who received a Grammy nomination for his work in the "Dear Evan Hansen" movie, can recognize notable talent. He underscored that, in addition to immense musical talent, Torff possesses intangible qualities that "allow him to perform among the echelon of artists that he does."

"There are many people who are masters of their instrument, but there is a great distinction between someone who is just a talented player and someone who plays among the greats," he clarified. "The musicians that get the calls are good people first, above all else. They are very easy to get along with, and their presence lifts the energy in the room... Working with Brian is very easy because he deeply enjoys making music, and his energy fosters an environment where creativity thrives."

Sabogal echoed Bonaventura's sentiment.

"Working with him on that project was a great experience, but getting to know him and hearing his story was even more meaningful," he said. "I've always loved collaborating with artists because of their incredible talent and creativity."

With his sights set on a career in the entertainment industry, Sabogal is inspired by Torff's pursuits and looks forward to filming another concert in Spring 2025. He reiterated the role that music and film play can play in driving positive change and feels that the Levee Music Series will be an extension of this movement.

"Fairfield will benefit from this event because it will create a new community on campus," Sabogal observed. "It will bring students and faculty together to enjoy music that's not often heard on campus, performed by one of their own."

Bonaventura agrees, adding that the Levee Music Series will "expose Fairfield students and faculty to genres that are historically significant in the development of modern American popular music while remaining entertaining and educational for today's audiences."

Torff celebrated 50 years as a professional musician on Oct. 2, as his first "break" the opportunity tour with Cleo Laine in 1974. Half a century later, he continues to lean into life's "unexpected twists and turns" and the ever-evolving "language of music." In the spirit of a true Jazz musician, Torff is open to adaptation. Whether performing for a crowd of 20 or 20,000, he is compelled to communicate meaningfully with each new audience.

"Music can't solve the world's problems," Torff concluded. "I do think, though, that it has power in the sense that more people will want to come and hear music than listen to a speech. The problems of race in America are ongoing and we have a responsibility to put important messages out there. We can't go to sleep on it."

The Brian Torff Group will perform at the Levee from 7 to 9 p.m. tomorrow. Their next performance will take place on Thursday, Nov. 14. Dates are also planned for January, February and March of 2025. Admission is free.

SCAN TO LISTEN TO HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BRIAN TORFF GROUP





Compiled by Kathleen Morris

Information contributed by the Department of Public Safety

10/1

2:45 p.m.

Members of the catering staff contacted DPS after smelling gas in the Conference Center. The source was identified as a broken pilot light in a stove.

10/3

2:15 p.m.

A student reported that his car was keyed in the Bellarmine overflow lot between 11 and 12:30 p.m. The incident was not captured on camera, so DPS was unable to assist.

10/3

11:50 p.m.

A female student was trapped in an elevator in Regis Hall. The door opened six inches and the elevator appeared to be off track. The student was rescued and the company was contacted.

10/4

1 a.m.

ABM called to report that syringes were found in garbage bins at the Egan School of Nursing. The syringes were used as part of training, but the staff was concerned about the potential for injury. DPS is working to have discarded syringes placed in a sharps container.

10/5

1 a.m.

ResLife contacted DPS for assistance with four disorderly male students in Kotska Hall, stemming from a noise complaint.

10/6

5:40 p.m.

The smell of gas was identified in the intersection outside of the CUF building. The Fairfield Fire Department was called and assured that there was no immediate threat. The gas company fixed the issue on the following day.

Fairfield University Glee Club Reinstates Chamber Singers

BY SOPHIA COSSITT-LEVY

Head News Editor

The Fairfield University Glee Club has already started to expand under the new direction of Michael Ciavaglia, '04, DMA, who has been a professor at Fairfield University since 2014. Among the first changes Dr. Ciavaglia made was reintroducing the Chamber Singers, an ensemble that existed underneath Glee Club, but was dissolved a few years ago.

Jane Coppola, a sophomore member of the Glee Club and its ensembles Chamber Singers and Sweet Harmony, describes the way Dr. Ciavaglia introduced the Chamber Singers as "ominous." According to Coppola, the fact that the Chamber Singers would be reinstated as an ensemble under the Glee Club was very casually mentioned.

Still, her attention had been caught. "I was very intrigued because I love to sing. It's like my biggest thing, so I really like to be involved in as much vocal performance stuff on campus as I can be."

Chamber Singers was mentioned again the next week. Though it was founded in the 1980s, the last time this ensemble had been on campus was before the COVID-19 pandemic, and once the pandemic was over, the group didn't immediately come back together. Dr. Ciavaglia offered a sign-up sheet for anyone interested. Because of how new the ensemble was, auditions wouldn't be required. Coppola and nine others signed up.

Coppola describes Chamber Singers as "glee, but smaller." The ensemble meets once a week, outside of typical Glee rehearsals, and they focus on acapella music. Currently, they're working on five songs for an upcoming concert, which Coppola says are more "intricate" than what they work on in Glee. According to her, there's more you can do with a small ensemble, rather than a larger choral group of ninety people.

The rehearsals for Chamber Singers have also gotten off to a good start. So far, they've been working on songs in Latin and Italian, among others. Because of the smaller group size, they have the opportunity to try

different things out. Coppola was asked to solo a portion of a song "just for fun," just to see what it would sound like.

Another sophomore, Liana Randazzo has been really enjoying Chamber Singers. "So far it's been really fun. I like that it's a smaller group which has allowed us to bond quickly. The songs have been fun as well," she says.

At the Chamber Singers' first concert, Randazzo is especially looking forward to performing a song called "Oh Occi Mansa Mia," which she says is "so fun and energizing." She adds that the Chamber Singers sound especially good together on that song.

Coppola's favorite song so far is "Will the Circle Be Unbroken," which Kylee Faulkner '26 also agreed with. Like Coppola, Faulkner has also enjoyed being part of the Chamber Singers. "A lot of my really close friends are in it, and we can kinda just be goofy, too, while we're still learning harder music and getting to be better musicians," Faulkner said.

The song Dr. Ciavaglia said he was most excited for the Chamber Singers to perform was also "Will the Circle Be Unbroken," which was "[made] famous by the Carter Family, who were Country music pioneers about a century ago. Rather than singing from a prepared arrangement, we have devised our own version in rehearsals."

Dr. Ciavaglia has also been pleased by the work the Chamber Singers have done so far this semester. "Our work has been great so far! In my first year directing the Glee Club, it's wonderful to [have] both a big chorus (the Glee Club) and a small chorus (Chambers) of dedicated singers," he said.

As for the future of the Chamber Singers, Dr. Ciavaglia says, "I hope to look for opportunities for the Chamber Singers to perform on its own as well as with the Glee Club, both in Fairfield and traveling."

The Chamber Singers will make their debut at the Glee Concert happening at the Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts on Oct. 20 during Alumni and Family Weekend.



Photo Courtesy of Jane Coppola

The Chamber Singers rehearsing for their upcoming concert. From left to right: Kylee Faulkner, Drew Gray, Sofia DeSanto, Jane Coppola, RJ Buscher, Zach Cirillo, Liana Randazzo, Matthew Bulger, Izzy Deangelo and Brian Satrohan. Pianist: Beth Palmer.

THE MIRROR

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Fall Weekend Hours

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12TH-TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15TH

THE TULLY

Saturday-Sunday: 8am-8pm
Monday-Tuesday: 7:30am-8pm

THE STAG

Saturday-Tuesday: 3pm-9pm

SUSHI DO

Saturday-Monday: Closed
Tuesday: 11am-8pm

THE LEVEE

Saturday-Monday: Closed
Tuesday: 4pm-10:30pm

DUNKIN'

Saturday-Sunday: 8am-3pm
Monday-Tuesday: 7:30am-3pm

STARBUCKS

Saturday-Tuesday: Closed

PEET'S & SAMBAZON

Saturday-Tuesday: Closed

TASTE OF CULINARY CUISINE

Saturday-Sunday: Closed
Monday-Tuesday: 12pm-9pm

STAGIONI'S

Saturday-Tuesday: Closed

ZUPPARDI'S

Saturday-Sunday: Closed
Monday: 4pm-8pm
Tuesday: 11am-8pm

ROTATING TRUCK

Friday-Tuesday: Closed

Delayed WVOF Renovation Sparks Frustration

BY ASHLEY DEVLIN
Assistant Opinion Editor

The WVOF Radio Station is currently still undergoing renovations after a summer and five weeks of waiting during the school year. Members of the club and those looking to get involved are frustrated, Sam Ponessa '25, a member of the central staff at WVOF recounts.

The WVOF Radio Station is located in the Lower Level of the Barone Campus Center, next to the Fairfield University Student Association (FUSA) Office. These offices are nestled within the hub of student life, surrounded by the Mirror Office and the new Rearview Office.

WVOF serves as an outlet for creatives and those looking to pursue any sort of career in journalism, Logan Runde '27 states. It has been a "Fairfield staple" since 1970, providing students with expe-

“ The station was supposed to be done before school started. Now, our faculty advisor doesn't know when it'll be done, hopefully within the next couple of weeks, but there is still no definitive date.”

-Sam Ponessa '25, WVOF Central Staff Member

rience broadcasting, podcasting and hosting radio shows. Runde '27 also believes that it "makes people comfortable in the uncomfortable" because it pushes you to work through nerve-racking situations that he believes better students overall. The shows can be listened to on 88.5 FM or online.

Runde '27 has been a member of the club since the start of his freshman year and as an active member, he has had the opportunity to participate in a number of exciting events. Recently, Runde was promoted to be a member of the central staff and he now serves as the assistant sports director.

Runde '27 remembers that he randomly signed up for WVOF at the club fair one day his freshman year. He states, "When I came to Fairfield I was a business student which I thought I was going to be for the rest of my education. However, I called my first ever game in the Fall semester of my freshman year and fell in love with broadcasting and now I want it to be my career."

Being able to call this game changed the trajectory of his career and WVOF gave him the opportunity to explore these new aspirations.

The club has provided Runde and many other students with a creative outlet, but that outlet is not available to them right now due to the ongoing renovations.

Sam Ponessa '25, a member of the central staff, says, "The station was supposed to be done before school started. Now, our faculty advisor doesn't know when it'll be done, hopefully within the next couple of weeks, but there is still no definitive date."

For many, this is discouraging, as there have been multiple delays in the renovation process, pushing the reopening date later and later.

Daniel "Danny" Mayo '25, another member of the central staff at WVOF, says "WVOF was supposed to be finished back in September at some point; however, due to some delays with the supply chain logistics, it was delayed two times. We don't have an exact date yet but it will be ready sometime in November."

Mayo '25 notes that the office is taking longer than expected because they are waiting on a shipment of new panels for the studio.

November, however, is a later date than before school, which was originally planned and promised to members of the club and other students who use the studios.

Despite these setbacks and unforeseen circumstances, Runde '27 states "As a staff we were hoping to use the studio right when the school year began, but we are extremely excited and optimistic about the future of the studio and we all believe that the sky is the limit for our station."

Runde and his fellow members of the WVOF are grateful for the renovation because it gives them new microphones, sound boards, lights and TVs that will improve the performance of and overall experience for members.

He explains that even though students are unable to currently use the studio, they can participate in broadcasting through the Media Center, as he does sports commentating through them currently.

Once the office is finished, which is projected to be at some point in November, at the latest, students can look forward to learning how to use new podcasting and broadcasting technology and equipment and being back in an environment that facilitates great bonds, according to both Mayo '25 and Runde '27.

Mayo '25 is most thrilled about seeing the office's new updates and says, "I'm extremely excited to finally get brand new equipment at the top-of-the-line. Very few college stations are gonna have the opportunity that we have this year."

Mayo and his other central staff team have a decent outlook on these frustrations. Rather than expressing impatience with the renovations, Mayo '25 states, "Great things take time and I'd rather the studio take its time."

While there have been numerous setbacks in the office, Runde '27 encourages students who are frustrated to try to adopt this attitude as well, as the studio's renovations are being done to improve the student experience in the studio.

Students are asked to join the WVOF office in celebrating the reopening of the office in November and joining the club after opening day.



Ashley Devlin/The Mirror

The WVOF Office renovation has yet to be unveiled to students. Next week will be the sixth week of classes, and students are voicing frustration over the twice delayed WVOF renovations.

Students to Benefit from Civic Engagement at Candidate Forum Hosted in the Dogwood Room

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

also admitted his efforts to connect with groups on social media such as Instagram and TikTok, trying to find a way to communicate with people and encourage conversation.

"My inbox is always available," he said.

Hwang graduated from Cornell University and, explained on his website, "dedicated himself fully to public service." He was elected in 2008 to the Connecticut General Assembly and, in 2014, became Fairfield's first Asian-Pacific American State Senator.

"As Chief Deputy Senate Republican Leader, he has consistently demonstrated a commitment to working across the aisle to create policies that protect the most vulnerable and promote opportunities for all communities. Tony has been a steadfast advocate for fiscal responsibility, ensuring that Connecticut's resources are managed wisely while fighting to preserve funding for essential services," it reads.

When it comes to differentiating from their opponents, something that will be covered during Fairfield University's Candidate Forum, Blanchard believes some of the biggest issues setting apart himself and Hwang is gun safety. He noted that, in the past, Hwang has opted to weaken gun laws.

Blanchard continued that in 2022, in a period of pandemic recession, Hwang voted against "historic tax cuts." Issues important to Blanchard are ensuring paid family medical leave and investing in higher education.

In the State Representative election, both Leeper and Harrison are running to represent the 132rd district. This area covers Fairfield Beach Road to Stillson Road, as well as Southport Village. The 28th Senate District is comprised of

four towns—Bethel, Easton, Newtown and Fairfield.

Leeper entered the political sphere when she believed that Connecticut needed "good people who care about policy." Furthermore, according to the current representative, making meaningful progress through things like data and active community listening is a vast part of her political platform.

GOP candidate Alexis Harrison considers Fairfield very "special" and looks forward to attending the Forum. She began volunteering on different town boards when she was 25 years old, and twenty years later, she says that "giving back and public service" is still a big part of who she is.

She hopes to gather student concerns and learn "what they want to see in a leader, what they want in representation." She believes students are "the future of our country" and is hoping to gather students' concerns and ideas.

"I want them to know that their viewpoints matter to me, and I will be listening," Harrison says.

For Representative Leeper, clearing up misinformation remains a top priority of hers. "It's really hard to know about your state legislature," she said, which is a bridge from what she described as the chaos off in Washington D.C. to the small town of Fairfield. With this forum, she hopes to showcase what her party and platform can accomplish.

Harrison prioritizes affordability, describing it as a "number one issue" for her. She was inspired to run for town representative when she saw "the current legislation not really advocating for our community in terms of affordability."

"I want all people to be able to stay [in Fairfield] if they

wish," Harrison says. She disagrees with the "reckless spending" coming from Hartford and seeks to lower tax burdens.

Harrison also shares that diversity of housing is "absolutely a priority" for her. She aims to do this in a way that focuses on the stakeholders of the community, rather than directly coming from Hartford.

Leeper aims to work with specific plans for developing and modernizing the Fairfield area, a commitment she claims her opponent lacks.

"My opponent is a single-issue, anti-development extremist," Leeper said.

Harrison thinks it is important to have a representative who is deeply connected with the community. Harrison is a Fairfield native. Her parents and sister also live here. "I have felt the pains of losing a job during economic turmoil ... and I think that is relatable to people. I want people to know that I have their voice, I have their best interest and that's why I am running."

The three candidates who spoke with The Mirror encouraged students to attend the forum and voice their concerns, especially if these students plan to stay in Fairfield post-graduation.

Election Day is Nov. 5, but students can begin voting on campus in the Fairfield University Media Center starting Monday, Oct. 21 until Sunday, Nov. 3 from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (with extended hours on Oct. 29 and Oct. 31 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.).

Opinion

Colossal Class Sizes Push Campus Closer to Catastrophe

By TRENT OUELLETTE
Opinion Editor

When walking around campus, especially if you are an upperclassman, it may feel like the freshmen dominate the university. In the class buildings, the BCC, or the dining halls. To a certain extent, this may be caused by the nature of upperclassmen life. Juniors and Seniors have a car that permits them to leave campus as they please, many are not on, or have smaller, meal plans that provide them less time in the dining halls, and some are completely removed from campus due to living at the beach. While this certainly explains some of the causes for the freshman class's omnipresence, it does not account for one large and systematic reason: Fairfield University consistently accepts too many students.

Every year on Fairfield's decision day, without fail, the university will post on social media boasting about the academic strength of the applicant pool as well as the rising number of applicants. Of course, a rising number of applicants is a great thing for the University's brand and public image, so long as they accept a responsible number of these applicants to ensure reasonable incoming class sizes. Over the past 2-4 years, however, this has not been the case. This trend of over-acceptance began with my class, the class of 2025, which had over 1,250 students. This was about a hundred student increase from the class of 2024 and 2023. Those classes were reported as 1,150 and 1,160 students respectively. The class of 2026 was just over 1,340 students, the class of 2027 was about 1,445 students and the most recent incoming class, the class of 2028, is made up of over 1,450 students. Every year since the class of 2024 has seen an increase of around one hundred students apart from the current freshman class. Perhaps the University is finally pulling back on the reins and realizing the class growth is unsustainable.

Freshman class size has gotten to the point where many of the forced triples in the Quad when I was a freshman are now being classified and marketed to current freshmen and high schoolers as triples. Having three freshmen in a room originally built for two is no longer a bug of the first-year experience, but the marketed normal. Instead of providing these students with money back on their bill, like I received my first year on campus, freshmen are instead receiving the new and modern "sleek furniture". In reality, it is the same furniture that has historically been in most Fairfield living spaces, except noticeably smaller. All the while, tuition and other costs associated with attending the university continue to rise. Freshmen, as a result of the increasing class sizes, are getting a worse housing situation at a higher price.

At the same time that the university is stuffing dorms to their limit, a similar situation seems to be playing out in the classroom. My sister, who is currently a first year, found it nearly impossible to switch in and out of freshmen level classes before the school year. Every seat in every class was full. I understand this is anecdotal evidence, however, I do not remember it being such a struggle to move my schedule around three years ago. The flexibility problems are only compounded by what I have perceived as a movement of many classes to less desirable buildings or to buildings that do not correspond to the subject being taught. I know someone with an accounting class in the nursing building and I have had numerous business classes in the media center. This was not the case my freshman and sophomore years. Fairfield's academic rankings may continue to rise, but their bloated class sizes have been eroding the academic experience for many.

This oversized story continues in the dining locations of campus where a growing student body is creating increased wait times and overcrowding. For anyone choosing to dine

at the Tully for lunch or dinner, there is a good chance they will be met with a line that spills into the main entrance of the BCC. The small floor space of the Levee and the Stag Diner is populated in a way that parallels the Grape on a Saturday night. Luckily, the school has expanded the food truck arsenal but in a few years, this location could find itself just as overwhelmed with students. Moreover, the seating capacity of dining locations such as the Tully has remained unchanged during the same period where incoming class sizes have ballooned by multiple hundred—leaving students scrounging for seats.

This evaluation may seem harsh, but I view it as the reality of the situation. The expansion of class sizes has, in all fairness, coincided with a steady drop in the acceptance rate. This year's freshman class had an acceptance rate of 33% which is far lower than the acceptance rate of five years ago. This is great, but the university is doing themselves, as well as current, former and future students, a disservice by accepting as many students as they do. The freshman class's 33% could have been 30%, or even as low as the twenty somethings if Fairfield was more conscious about their colossal class sizes. Choosing to accept a few less students would most likely result in smaller classes that would not only improve the average student's experience on campus, but also help to elevate the university's rankings and prestige on the national stage.

For Fairfield, there is hopefully only one option, and that is to stop increasing the size of incoming classes. The university is only so big at the end of the day. Room to build is running out on campus. Parking is extremely hard to come by. If the University wants to maintain its tight knit, community feel it must stop the never-ending growth of its student body. For the sake of all students, and their experience here at the university, I beg that next year's incoming class will not continue our march further along the road we are currently going down. Hopefully, at some point, the university will realize that tuition revenue needs to be valued less than the students who pay said tuition.



Long lines have plagued the Tully both to get in and to get food at various stations. These lines are just one of many frustrations students are feeling due to the size of the student body.

"Cavemen" Occupy Residence Hall Lounges

By CLAUDIA PETTINATO
Contributing Writer

Making the rounds on Fizz are the "Cavemen," a group of students who take over the Gonzaga second floor lounge constantly. Passing by the lounge and seeing the same people inhabiting it can be bothersome, especially if you want to catch up on homework, watch TV or make some popcorn! A lounge is a designated spot in every residence hall for gathering, studying or just chilling out. These shared spaces can be dead silent or bursting with laughter and excitement any night of the week. My floor's lounge has been lively almost every night of the week since move-in day. Occasionally, there will be a conflict between the people who want to reside in the lounge all day and people who don't occupy it as often. Do some students "hog" the lounge and not let others enjoy it? The answer is yes. Though my friends and I enjoy the lounge often, we have experienced people who never leave!

While the lounge is a shared space open 24/7 to all residents, there should be some limit to the time spent there, especially when others want to assemble without the "usual suspects" being present.

Our floor has engaged in many fun things such as playing Just Dance, Dress to Impress (a game on Roblox), movie nights and baking cookies. These activities are open to all because everyone should be able to enjoy their hall's lounge! Multiple times, however, I have seen students peek into the lounge to see what is happening inside, just to be met with the same inhabitants. They ultimately choose to return to their dorm hall, dejected. Unfortunately, "non-loungers" don't get to experience the shared space as much as the dwellers. There is a healthy dose of time that should be spent hanging out with friends on your floor; making friends and memories is what college is about! As I said before, the lounge is a shared space and should continue to be that way, but definitely with some unspoken rules.

After speaking to my friends on my floor, we agreed upon these unspoken rules to take action in our lounge. These unwritten rules included the following: do not intrude on personal space or conversations, respect others' wishes, do not leave personal belongings, do not hog the TV or appliances and do not leave a mess. Imagine that a student's roommate studies in their dorm often, but the student wants

to have some time to talk and interact with others, the lounge is the perfect spot for that.

At the end of the day, it's crucial to recognize that everyone's college experience is different. This means that on some days students may want to be in isolation and have time to themselves, while on others, they may go to the lounge to engage

with people on their floor. This experience is something that the presence of "lounge hogs" can take away from others. Ultimately, the goal of the lounge is to create a versatile space for people to enjoy a multitude of activities and where all students should be able to take advantage of any hour of the day.



Residence Hall lounges have become a power struggle for many students with competing desires for how to utilize the rooms. Empty lounges, like the one pictured above, are rarely found.

The Robotic Future of Fairfield University: AI Replaces Peer Notetaking

By **MAX LIMRIC**
Editor-In-Chief

The year is 2024. Robots have breached Bellarmine Hall and the AI Lordship officially rules over Fairfield University. Well, maybe I'm being overdramatic. I don't think we're in danger of the GrubHub robots and we're hopefully not in *The Matrix*, but at a Jesuit school focused on being people for others, the reliance on AI instead of our peers is disheartening. With the Office of Accessibility's (OOA) switch from peer notetaking to dependence on the AI-based program Glean, student learning and the classroom community suffer.

Fairfield isn't the first to make the switch to Glean; colleges like Lakehead University in Canada, to Rutgers and Elon have all made the switch to AI notetaking services for students with learning dis/abilities. However, Rutgers' site still offers peer notetakers as an option. In an article introducing Glean, Fairfield offers reasoning for the switch: "Based on course design and the availability of several technology-based notetaking options, a peer notetaker may not be the most effective accommodation for a course." The Mirror reached out to OOA for specific reasons as to the switch from student notetakers, but it did not respond in time for publication.

The Mirror reached a representative for Glean who declined to comment on the pricing for an institution of Fairfield's size and directed the question to OOA. Even though institution pricing was not available on the website, the price for an individual yearly subscription is 129 dollars. When you do the math (note I am not a math major) hiring a student notetaker for one class for a full academic year would cost 1,098 dollars (minimum wage x 2.5 hours of class a week x 28 weeks of class). With the cost of a student Glean account worlds less than paying a notetaker, Glean ensures that the books stay in the green.

From an economic standpoint, purchasing Glean makes sense. Given the University's towering school of business and attempts to milk the student body of every penny they have, the choice they've made makes sense: to cut costs any chance they get. But what about the student workers who relied on notetaking jobs? Whether just for spending change or for their weekly groceries and gas. I understand that higher education is a business and must be profitable, but when will this institution stop making purely economic choices and make a choice that supports their students as well as their academic mission?

For example, because Glean relies on AI, students receiving OOA's services will lose out on good teaching. A machine cannot pick up on the nuances of an exceptional teacher who interacts with the class, choosing not to sit back and lecture the whole time. Human beings can pick up on those nuances and transfer classroom activities and interactions into beneficial notes that transcend any stale notes a Glean robot could transcribe.

Moreover, when professors knew there was a notetaker in the class, many asked the student notetaker to share the notes with them as well, later publishing them to the class blackboard—making notes accessible for every student. Now, the onus is on the sole student with Glean access to offer up their Gleaned notes for the benefit of the classroom collective—if those notes are even helpful.

Glean does have nifty tools and allows students to flag important material during a lecture, or create a checkbox when the teacher announces an upcoming assignment. However, the reliance on technology instead of one's peers is daunting. Of course not every notetaker will have submitted the best notes; but with Glean, every student receiving notetaking services gets the same experience.

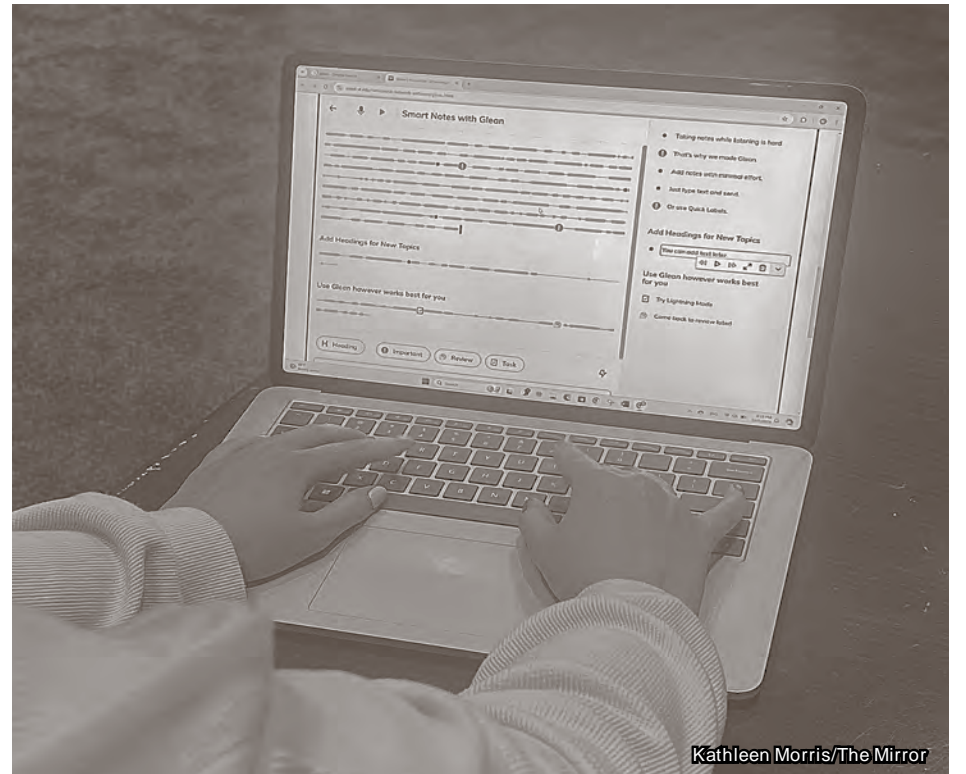
Yes, it's equal, but when the human aspect—the unique ability humans have to record human interaction—is ripped out of the notetaking process, who suffers? The students who are deserving of OOA's services suffer.

Junior Delaney Whieldon receives notetaking services and states that she's been meaning to send an email to OOA voicing her displeasure with the switch. "I hate it. I would rather have a peer notetaker," she begins.

Whieldon claims that the program does not function well, "When I try to audio transcript it, the lecture doesn't make sense. When I'm recording on my computer and taking notes too, I can't hear the lecture, just my keyboard typing."

She wishes for peer notetakers to be an option again, "A peer notetaker is more helpful. I've been lucky, I haven't had a bad peer notetaker even though I know people who have, but overall, the notetaker was so much better than the AI," she concludes.

Eliminating notetakers is only the beginning. If the administration isn't careful, they might one day deem professors to be obsolete—saving themselves the problem of paying a tenure salary, but losing the core principles of a higher education.



Kathleen Morris/The Mirror

Glean's software offers students a number of features to make the not taking process easier, and in many cases, human-free. While helpful for some, the school-wide implementation of this software in place of human note takers is leaving many students disappointed.

Sports Gambling Consumes The Student Body

By **JACOB ENGREN**
Contributing Writer

In 2023, the NCAA did a survey of college students to see how widespread sports gambling was. They found that 58% of college students had at least placed one bet during their college experience. Sports gambling is now more widespread than ever, with more and more states making it legal every year. As of right now, 38 states offer several gambling apps, including FanDuel and DraftKings. With the ability to bet on almost every sport at the push of a button, one has to ask the question, "Is this good, bad, or not important?"

These companies are in the business of making money, and they set up their apps to do exactly that. Even if each team has a 50% chance of winning, according to the sportsbook, the odds on the bets will most likely be "-110" meaning that if you put in \$20 you would only win \$18.18. These odds give the sportsbook room for profit if the bets on that particular game end up being split evenly.

While I do understand that these companies want to make money, sometimes the odds are too favored towards the house, and not towards the people. These companies also offer profit boosts and free \$5 dollar bets. They do this to try and have you bet more, to possibly win more as well. Another way they try to bring you back is through email; if you have not opened the app in a while, sometimes they will send you an email, stating that "you have a profit boost available" or "claim your \$5 bonus bet today only." They continue to do these types of promotions because they know that while not everybody will do it, some will, and that is the only goal for these messages.

While this is a smart tactic on their part, I believe that they are feeding some people's addiction by doing this. If someone wants to place a bet, they can easily do so on their own accord, not through constant reminders and notifications.

These sportsbooks are also required to give the person signing up for the account some information. In all of the apps, they include the gambling problem hotline, as well as daily, monthly or yearly limits you can place on yourself so that you don't spend too much. For FanDuel in particular, they have a notification pop up every time you enter the app, stating "If you or someone you know has a gambling problem and wants help, call ...". While this is a friendly reminder to all that use the app, I find that most people who use the app just click "ok" and show no regard to the message at all.

So while these sportsbooks do meet the required information guidelines, more and more college students decide to bet on their apps, which begs the question, "Could they do more?" In this aspect, I don't believe that they need to do much more; they give out ample number of warnings and messages about the possible consequences, leaving it up to the user to either stay true to the guidelines or not.

One main difference that some sportsbooks have recently added is the option of a "casino" in their apps. This is only available in some states, but Connecticut is one of them, and this could lead to even more profit for the sportsbooks. The games they offer always have a slight house edge, meaning that in the long run, they will make a profit.

Recently, I even saw a billboard about DraftKings working together with Foxwoods casino to offer their games on the app. When comparing gambling to 10 years ago, it is so much easier to bet on everything; 24 hours a day, these apps offer something you can bet on.

Options span from Japanese baseball to automated roulette. This can be consequential for some that want to "win back" all the money that they lost during the day by betting on things that they know nothing about. This could lead to putting yourself in an even deeper hole, which is why I would always bet on sports that you have some previous knowledge about.

To answer my previous question, "Is this good, bad, or not important?"; I believe that this topic has much relevance for college students who just turned 21 and want to make some money sports betting. This could be both a good and bad thing simultaneously. If one is responsible with their wagers, and only go on to the app with a distinct amount they are willing to lose, then it can be a fun way to make games more exciting.

However, if students bet amounts that they either can't afford, or place multiple bets in a day to make all their money back, then it can be the beginning of a bad path.

Personally, I have sports gambled here and there since I turned 21, and I always try to be selective and careful with my picks and bets. I hope that everyone that uses these apps takes the same approach, and maybe, in the long run, we all turn up in the positive.



Photo Courtesy of Steve McLaughlin

Students across campus are finding just as much entertainment in the activity of sports gambling as they do at university basketball games. The growing prevalence of the practice raises the question of whether it should be discouraged on a campus wide level.

THE VIEW

Edited by Caitlin Shea

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'The Outsiders' Shines
In Broadway Adaptation

Fresh Finds: Fairfield's
Farmer's Market

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'The Outsiders' Shines In Broadway Adaption

BY FIONA WAGNER
Assistant Vine Editor

In an age where societal divides seem more prominent than ever, "The Outsiders" remains a powerful story that examines the struggles of youth and self-identity. This classic coming-of-age novel by S.E. Hinton was written back in 1967 and is still talked about today. The book already has a movie adaptation, released in 1983 but now it's on Broadway! "The Outsiders" hit Broadway last March and has been a smashing success ever since.

I had the opportunity to see the show, along with fellow Stags through the Ignatian Residential College Program here at Fairfield. While I have never read the novel, I have always been a huge fan of the film adaptation, so I was excited to see it on Broadway.

In case you are unfamiliar with the story, "The Outsiders" follows Ponyboy Curtis, a smart young teen from a working-class neighborhood, as he navigates life with his friend group, the Greasers. Set in 1960s Oklahoma, this story creates tension between the two main groups, the Greasers and their rich rivals, the Socs. This is a story about friendship, rivalry, family and heart-break filled with unforgettable characters and heart-touching moments.

I had the pleasure of seeing "The Outsiders" last weekend and I think it's safe to say that it brilliantly blends heart and grit while staying true to the original story. The cast was absolutely phenomenal, acting their hearts out while giving emotional and moving performances. I thought that Trevor Wayne (who was an understudy to Brody Grant) stole the show with his performance as Ponyboy.

The story centers around brotherhood, highlighting the importance of family. The relationship between Ponyboy and his brothers Darrell (Brent Comer) and Sodapop (Jason Schmidt) was nothing short of emotional.

Sophomore Rebecca Quintana also saw the musical and said that Darrel was her favorite character. She said she "loved how much he cared for his family and all the sacrifices he made to keep them together."

She commented on the fact that while Darrel was often hard on Ponyboy, "you can tell how much he admires his little brother."

During an emotional scene in Act II, Ponyboy runs away and Darrel and Sodapop are left in their home without him. Comer

and Schmidt give an outstanding performance of "Throwing in the Towel" which Quintana said was her favorite song.

Daniella Norena-Mesa '27 agreed and said that the song "brought me to tears... the brothers' harmonies were stunning."

Norena-Mesa loved the show, commenting on how compelling and heartbreaking the story was. She went into the show blind, never reading the novel nor watching the movie. She explained how amazing of an experience it was to see it and was even able to meet some of the cast after the show.

While I thought the entire show was fantastic, a standout scene for me was when Johnny, Ponyboy's best friend, dies. The haunting musical score, combined with the raw performances of the cast perfectly captured the devastating impact of loss. At the very end of the show Sky Lakota-Lynch, who played Johnny gave an outstanding performance of the song "Stay Gold." Ever since I watched the movie, the line "Stay gold Ponyboy" stuck with me, so I loved that they dedicated a whole song to that scene.

Joshua Boone, who played Dally Winston, gave some of the best performances of

the whole show. His heartbreaking ending came with the song "Little Brother" which was a total tearjerker for the audience. I thought that his acting was phenomenal and provided a perfect blend of comedy and vulnerability. Boone did an amazing job of showcasing Dally's complex nature, bringing depth to the stage.

Overall, "The Outsiders" on Broadway is definitely something to look out for. The show is a stunning triumph that revitalizes a classical tale many know and love. With its powerful performances, electrifying music and touching themes of family, this show is a must-see.

You can find tickets for "The Outsiders" and many other amazing shows here at broadway.com.



Photo Courtesy of outsidersmusical.com

The cast of Broadway's 'The Outsiders' puts their game faces on.

Fresh Finds: Fairfield's Farmer's Market

BY EMMA DOBROVICH
Contributing Writer

Every Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Fairfield Farmers Market comes to life with a laid-back, welcoming atmosphere that draws in locals and visitors alike. Set right in the heart of downtown Fairfield, it's the go-to place for fresh produce, homemade goodies and a variety of handcrafted items. But what really sets this market apart is the incredible community spirit that brings together local artisans and their creative work.

everyone.

Walking through the market, the smell of fresh food fills the air and you can hear the buzz of friendly conversations as people shop and chat with the artisans. For many of the vendors, the market is more than just a place to sell their goods. It's a space where they can express themselves and share their passion with the community.

chologist, but here, I get to show my creative side. It's fun to see people appreciate my work and take home something that I made."

The market has also become a bit of a side gig for many artisans, helping them turn their hobbies into a small business. Nicky Serrano, who sells her illustrations of cats on different notebooks, pins and cards started off making them for fun.

"The market gave me a chance to share my products with people outside my circle," she says. "It's not just about the sales—it's about connecting with people and being part of the community."

And it's not just the vendors who feel that sense of community. Shoppers keep coming back week after week, supporting local businesses and enjoying the friendly, small-town feel.

After trying samples from almost every table at the market, I went home with a delicious cup of iced elderberry tea and two sticks of dry-cured salami from 'Oui Charcuterie'. Not only were these products delicious but they were affordable and I knew that I was going to be helping a small local business.

The Fairfield Farmers Market has grown into a Sunday tradition, not just for the food

and crafts, but for the connection it brings to the community. It's a place where you can meet local artisans, discover unique handmade items and enjoy the sense of togetherness that makes Fairfield feel like home.

The last week to attend this market is October 13th! So, if you're around next Sunday, stop by the Fairfield Farmers Market. Grab some homemade snacks, check out the local crafts and take in the good vibes—there's no better way to spend a Sunday morning.



Photo Contributed by Emma Dobrovich

Fairfield's Farmer's Market hosts some incredible small businesses.



Photo Contributed by Emma Dobrovich

The Fairfield community is brought together through the weekly Farmer's Market. Delicious foods and many amazing local businesses can be found.

You'll find everything from homemade pickles, sausages and cheeses to beautifully crafted pottery, lotions and even aromatherapy products. There's a little something for

"I've been coming here every Sunday since the beginning of the season," says Sandra Vitake, who sells her handmade pottery. "During the week, I work as a school psy-