

# ALL EYES ON THE SKY

Quinnipiac students gather on the Mount Carmel Campus Quad to witness the partial solar eclipse



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

From left: First-year Quinnipiac University students EJ Gorman, Brendan Bailey and Ryan Christel stand on the quad as they stare at the April 8 solar eclipse.

By **ALEXANDRA MARTINAKOVA**

News Editor

Hundreds of Quinnipiac University students gathered on the Mount Carmel Campus Quad around 3 p.m. on Monday to witness a once-in-a-few-decades opportunity – a solar eclipse.

While Hamden, Connecticut was just outside the area of eclipse totality, onlookers were still able to witness a partial eclipse thanks to safe solar viewing glasses that the students in the Astronomy Club handed out throughout the day.

“I did see (the eclipse) once before, but I only saw it through a box,” said Omari Brannen, junior film, television and media arts major. “Now they have glasses and I’m gonna be able to appreciate the beauty of it.”

The club also operated multiple computerized telescopes, which allowed students to get a closer and safe look of the eclipse.

“We have three telescopes, each tracking the sun over the three hours,” said Robert Fischetti, assistant professor of physics, who provided telescopes.

The last solar eclipse visible from the U.S. occurred in 2017 and the next one will not appear above North America until 2044.



PEYTON MCKENZIE/CHRONICLE

A partial solar eclipse as viewed from Hamden.

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# PHOTOS: Students watch solar eclipse on the quad



TYLER RINKO/CHRONICLE

Quinnipiac University President Judy Olian joins the crowd to watch the solar eclipse on April 8 around 3 p.m.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

The solar eclipse viewed through the lens of a telescope.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

Maya Hienz, 9, from New Britain inspects the solar eclipse while donning a 'future astronaut' shirt.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

Junior finance major Robert Letwinski hoists up senior 3+1 biology major Michelle Przestrzelski on his shoulders.



PEYTON MCKENZIE/CHRONICLE

Robert Fischetti, assistant professor of physics, answers questions about the solar eclipse on the quad and helps hand out safe solar viewing glasses.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

Hundreds of students gather in front of the Arnold Bernhard Library on April 8, around 3 p.m. to witness the eclipse.

# School of Communications alumna founds a mythology based makeup brand

By **ALEXANDRA MARTINAKOVA**

News Editor

Narcissus is a figure in Greek mythology who was so beautiful he fell in love with his own reflection on a river surface. While there are many different tellings of this story, it always represents a warning against vanity. However, a Quinnipiac University alumna found a different meaning behind the tale.

"We spin that story," Ashley Cotto said. "We turn it into 'Fall in love with your reflection' in a positive way, beyond just what you see in the mirror."

Cotto founded Narcissus Beauty, LLC in 2021 as a mythology inspired makeup brand with products based on folklore, myths, legends and religious figures.

Cotto graduated from the Quinnipiac School of Communications with her bachelor's degree in journalism three years ago. Her passion for makeup ignited after she worked as a makeup artist on a student film, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I was always really interested in makeup growing up," Cotto said. "I was always distantly surrounded by it. After the pandemic hit, I just started taking it more seriously."

Instead of pursuing a master's degree, like her family wanted her to, she went a different route and got her makeup artist certification in July 2021 with the intention of eventually getting licensed.

"Immediately after, something in my

brain clicked," Cotto said. "'Oh you know what I should do? I should start my own makeup line.'"

And she did. Entirely self-funded from Cotto's own savings, Narcissus Beauty celebrated three years mere weeks ago.

Cotto created her products from scratch, testing all of the already existing makeup brands and figuring out what she liked or disliked about certain products, as well as reading reviews to create the best possible formulas for her own brand.

"I bought the ingredients and kept everything super sterile," Cotto said. "I was working in my studio that was in my living room, and then I sent it out to a bunch of my friends who agreed to try it on."

Some of those friends, her fellow Quinnipiac alumni, still appear in her photoshoots to this day.

So far, Narcissus Beauty offers a variety of lip products, as well as an eyeshadow palette — which was customly created by Cotto and is her current favorite product.

Cotto — who recently worked as a makeup artist for a SAG-AFTRA short film — wants to cater her products to more than just the general public.

"My biggest thing is, I want to make our products as convenient as we can for other make-up artists," Cotto said. "The products that I come out with, yes, I want them to feel luxurious and make you feel good about



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY ASHLEY COTTO

Ashley Cotto, an alumna of Quinnipiac University's School of Communication, is the founder and owner of Narcissus Beauty, LLC.

buying it, but I also want it to be convenient enough for traveling artists to use."

Aside from makeup, the brand's website also offers various merchandise with the brand's logo. Two months ago, it released pride-themed stickers and a portion of their sales is donated to the Trevor Project — an organization that works to combat suicide rates among LGBTQ+ youth.

Cotto also said that she plans on creating makeup master classes for TikTok and her website.

Cotto grew up surrounded by mythology and faith. Her mother is Catholic and her father follows an African religion based on the Seven African Powers, which fueled the idea behind her brand's theme.

"We need more representation in the beauty industry that goes beyond just skin color," Cotto said. "Where we are so divided a lot of the time boils down to culture and religion. We want to go beyond just the surface level of what your reflection is, but what surrounds you, what you believe in, what your background is and who you are."

She themed her business after Greek mythology, as she knew that would get

popular fast.

Cotto said she would like to eventually move on from the Greeks to other mythologies, or as many as she can.

"Obviously, we're still gonna have some stuff that we come out with later on that are from Greek mythology but that's not all we are," Cotto said. "I want to do Norse, I want to do Celtic, Egyptology, all of these different things."

She is also working on a Yoruba mythology line — the Seven African Powers — which honors her late father.

Using her "journalism skills," Cotto recently started the Narcissus Beauty Breakdown blog, which explains and details the stories and ingredients behind her products, and offers a suggestion form for customers to recommend a myth or a legend for her to use.

While she is currently also employed as a news assistant and assignment editor at New York's Fox 5, Cotto says her brand will soon become a full-time job for her.

"It is so stressful to be doing everything," Cotto said. "But I love it. This is my baby. I put all of my love, care and effort into it as much as I can."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY ASHLEY COTTO/PHOTO BY SASHA KAY

Narcissus Beauty carries 10 different shades of lip glosses, all based on various Greek mythology figures.

# Children's writer and illustrator speaks at Quinnipiac about banned books

By **LILY PHILIPCZAK**

Staff Writer

Mike Curato — a children's writer and illustrator — spoke on April 2 at Quinnipiac University's Gender Sexuality Alliance's GAYPRIL kick-off event "Igniting Conversations" to discuss censorship in written media and the epidemic of banned books.

Gender Sexuality Alliance co-hosted the speaker with the Arnold Bernhard Library. GSA established GAYPRIL to be the university's pride month, because most students are not on campus in June.

Curato is a Filipino-American children's writer of the graphic novel "Flamer." "Flamer" has received many awards and honors, including the Lambda Literary Award for children's and young adult literature and the Horn Book Magazine's list of best books of 2020.

The semi-autobiographical novel is about a 14-year-old half-Filipino boy named Aidan Navarro and takes place at a Boy Scout summer camp in 1995. Curato's inspiration for this nov-

el derives from his own experiences as a closeted gay teenager and delves into central themes of identity, self-acceptance and resilience.

Robert Young, a public services librarian at the Arnold Bernhard Library, introduced Curato and gave opening remarks.

"(The novel) emphasizes suicide prevention," Young said. "Reinforcing the message that every individual deserves to exist and be seen."

Curato presented on his journey ranging from childhood drawings and career aspirations, to his eventual entry into the world of children's literature.

The presentation ended with a question-and-answer session moderated by the GSA co-presidents, Emily Bartlett and Gabrielle Inacio. Attendees submitted their questions in an online forum.

Monica Widman, a sophomore health science studies major, is currently enrolled in a one-credit class about banned books.

"I think it is good to have events like this

because I think it opens up people's minds," Widman said.

Widman said growing up she did not see books banned as often as today, but recalled a controversy in her fourth grade class around a book that featured two boys kissing.

"I think that it's interesting that I was in the fourth grade when this started and I didn't realize until I was older what was actually happening there," Widman said, adding that the book returned to the library shelves a year later after being initially removed.

In 2023, The American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom documented 4,240 unique book titles targeted for censorship, as well as 1,247 demands to censor library books, materials and resources.

Sam Fournier, a sophomore psychology major, is taking a comics and graphic novel class, and also took the banned books class in a previous semester.

"I don't have personal experiences with books being banned," Fournier said. "I

heard about Harry Potter being banned because of witchcraft."

Titles that represented the voices and lived experiences of LGBTQ+ people and people of color comprised 47% of those targeted in censorship attempts.

Widman is from New York and Fournier from Connecticut — both liberal-leaning states that faced attempts at censorship.

Many other books — such as "The Hunger Games," "The Perks of Being a Wallflower," "A Brave New World," "Handmaid's Tale," "The Color Purple" — are in the 100 most banned and challenged books from 2010-2019.

Opponents of bans argue that by restricting information and discouraging freedom of thought, censors undermine one of the primary functions of education, teaching students how to think for themselves, according to The Free Speech Center at Middle Tennessee State university.

# Opinion

## Redefining gun violence to promote effective solutions A Sandy Hook survivor's perspective on the media and lawmaking

By **GENEVA CUNNINGHAM**  
Staff Writer

On Dec. 14, 2012, Adam Lanza entered my school, Sandy Hook Elementary, with an AR-15. As the shots erupted, I sat in a closet, knees to my chest. I watched in silence as my classmates wrote goodbye letters to their parents. They did not know my mother was a substitute teacher just down the hall.

Everyone thinks, “that’s not going to happen to me.” Until it does.

Gun control is paramount to keep our communities safe, but bans on assault weapons aren’t enough. The way we define gun violence, collect data on particular incidents and publicize shootings in the media distort reality.

After the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, the U.S. defined “mass killing” as “3 or more killings in a single incident” via the Investigative Assistance for Violent Crimes Act of 2012.

Additionally, the FBI defines an active shooter as “one or more individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area.” Further, the FBI says that “implicit in this definition is the shooter’s use of a firearm.”

There are problems with these definitions. There is no information on the weapons used, the number of perpetrators or how the location of the shooting — occurring in a school, for example — impacts its categorization.

The FBI’s definition of mass murder, which accounts for four or more murders in one event with close geographic proximity, isn’t specific enough either. In this definition, there is no place to account for those wounded.

For effective legislation to combat mass shootings, and school shootings specifically, we need terminology that is inclusive and representative. When there is a consensus on what is a mass shooting, data can then be collected and used to form policy.

Platforms such as the Gun Violence Archive catalog data on gun violence. At first glance, the numbers are overwhelming, with



The Sandy Hook Permanent Memorial in Newtown, Connecticut, honors the 20 children and six educators who were killed in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting on Dec. 14, 2012.

multiple incidents happening every day. The archive records instances of children bringing guns into school, gang violence, domestic violence and psychological crises.

If any of these situations are located near a school, it’s categorized as a “school shooting.” The media directs our attention to the idea of a school shooting, glossing over other devastating — but different — occurrences of gun violence.

According to Brady, 327 people are shot every day and 117 of those people die. In 2021, 54% of those deaths were suicides and 43% were murders, reported Pew Research Center.

Gun violence can take on many forms. When collected as data reflecting a generic number, we view them uniformly.

To address suicide, healthcare services — like social services or therapy — need to be provided at an earlier age, starting in schools.

When discussing gun violence motivated by white supremacy, we need to have a system that holds leaders accountable for fueling polarizing and hateful messages. We need to amend programs and institutions — like policing — that perpetuate and continue to prioritize whiteness.

To address school shootings, schools need more practice with lockdown drills. We were prepared at Sandy Hook because our administrators knew what to do, but that did not stop the shooting.

All of these instances of gun violence are horrific and real, but they require different efforts and a common way of organizing what they are. Shootings are not all the same, but we treat them the same through data and media because gun violence is sensationalized and misunderstood.

The most recent example of this sensationalization was an April 2 shooting in Finland. A 12-year-old boy opening fire and killing a classmate is different from what happened at Sandy Hook based on who the shooters are and their intentions, yet both were covered the same way.

These two shootings require different approaches, but that does not detract from the simple truth that these incidents are both horrifying and heartbreaking.

Media has a fascination with gun violence because it attracts an audience. When a viewer sees “mass shooting” on the television, they’re drawn to it. Once they hear the basics — death

toll, who the shooter is and where it happened — they move on.

Before Sandy Hook, I watched accounts of school shootings on the news. My first memories include watching the aftermath of both the massacres Virginia Tech University in 2007 and Northern Illinois University in 2008. I felt disheartened, but I moved on.

Once I was involved, my experience with gun violence changed, and now I can’t move on.

When I hear about school shootings now, I notice the attention to the heinous details and the egregious shooter. I see pictures of people crying, holding on tight to their children. I’m brought back to where I was, being photographed while I was held by my mother that day.

The media does not do justice to the lasting impression of gun violence on families and communities.

Reporters want to please their employers and they want a good story. This leads to uncomplicated accounts that give the perpetrators what they want: attention.

Reporting on school shootings also enhances public perception, leading people to believe they happen more than they actually do. My experience is the least common, yet the most publicized. Reporters should be conscious of how they portray these events while prioritizing the needs of those affected.

Publicity on mass shootings is designed to raise emotions like fear, anger and frustration. Sensationalist accounts of violence do not center victims in a meaningful way, nor do they create a pathway for change.

Change begins with common definitions, attention to data and unique, proactive solutions so that our leaders can understand the severity of gun violence in all of its forms.

I get the fascination. People are intrigued and they desperately want to understand. I, as a survivor, don’t want you to understand. I want change more than I want your sympathy.

## Trump and his followers pick and choose when beliefs matter

By **LILLIAN CURTIN**  
Associate Opinion Editor

Former President Donald Trump’s supporters are stereotypically passionate about two things: religion and country. But in a sacrilegious move, Trump has released his rendition of the Bible, which his supporters are fawning over while simultaneously bashing President Joe Biden for his dedication to inclusivity.

Trump supporters stirred up controversy this past Easter weekend when Biden confirmed March 31 — which happened to be Easter Sunday this year — as International Transgender Day of Visibility.

March 31 has been the designated International Transgender Day of Visibility since 2009 — the last time Easter fell on that day was 2002.

If you’re Christian, you likely celebrate Resurrection Day, more commonly known as Easter or Easter Sunday. You may also know that the day changes yearly since it’s on the “first Sunday after the full Moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox,” according to Royal Museums Greenwich.

Nevertheless, Trump supporters were outraged by the President’s proclamation and claimed it was — as Trump’s campaign spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt put it — “a years-long assault on the Christian faith.”

Christian Trump supporters were angry that they had to share the day. As a Catholic myself, they reminded me of spoiled children who were mad that someone shared their birthday. Easter is

not on the same day every year, but ITDV is. It’s entitled to expect the whole day to be shifted just because it doesn’t align with your beliefs.

ITDV is on March 31 every year. Yet, the fact that only a small number of people were aware that ITDV existed goes to show that it really hasn’t affected them. Next year, the publicity will be gone.

For people so “passionate” about their religion, Trump supporters conveniently pick and choose what is acceptable, but maybe that’s because they’ve been brainwashed into believing Trump is their savior.

His supporters are “cafeteria Christians,” or Christians who pick and choose what teachings they want to practice.

Meanwhile, on March 26, five days before Easter and ITDV, Donald Trump announced he was selling bibles for \$60, known as the “God Bless the USA Bible,” with “God Bless the USA” singer Lee Greenwood.

Trump paints himself as the messiah. On Jan. 14, he put up a video on his Truth Social account where he is referred to as a “gift from God.” He tells crowds, “I’m being indicted for you,” portraying himself as a martyr.

If his supporters actually cared about their religion and held the same attitudes towards Trump as they did Biden, they would realize that Trump’s behavior is blasphemy.

Biden was accused of disrespecting the religion by being inclusive. But somehow Trump’s



In addition to scriptures, the “God Bless the USA Bible” contains the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

behaviors are okay?

Trump isn’t promoting the Bible; he’s promoting his brand. If his “God-loving” supporters followed the Bible’s teachings, they would realize that it says, “And I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the prophetic words of this book: If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book,” in Revelations 22:18.

Yet, the “God Bless The USA Bible” includes a handwritten chorus of “God Bless the USA” by Greenwood, the U.S. Constitution, Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights and

Pledge of Allegiance.

His supporters have their values, and they believe that Trump respects and believes them. He doesn’t care about his supporters’ beliefs. Trump’s version of the Bible quite literally goes against the teachings that his supporters claim to hold dear. This political tactic is evidence that he doesn’t care about them as people either, but just as votes.

This country needs stability and inclusivity, not two-faced political tactics. But we aren’t going to get it if Trump and his supporters are seemingly picking and choosing their morals in the name of being good Christians.

# Opinion

## 'Sephora kids' are eroding beauty community values

By GINA LORUSSO  
Staff Writer

In today's beauty landscape, skincare isn't actually about skin anymore—it's become a trend.

We live in an era that is saturated with beauty influencers who flood social media algorithms with the latest skincare crazes. Unfortunately, this means content reaches younger audiences. That's not always a good thing.

"Sephora kids" are ill-mannered pre-teen girls who exhibit impulsive behavior by loading their shopping baskets with expensive serums and anti-aging creams, products often unnecessary for their age and skincare needs. Their extensive exposure to the internet makes them susceptible to influence, leading them to purchase and use these products without fully knowing the consequences.

These kids are disruptive in stores, make messes and throw tantrums when they don't get what they want. They also sell out products, taking them away from people who actually need them. This is a new definition of spoiled.

In a TikTok posted by @beautylinds, a beauty and skincare creator, she shows multiple testers that she says have been destroyed by kids. To combat this, some Sephora stores have even begun locking testers in boxes, making it inconvenient for other shoppers, according to Business Insider.

One of the most popular skincare brands among this group is Drunk Elephant. Although Drunk Elephant's philosophy is to use only clean ingredients that benefit skin, its popularity among young people raises concerns.

A majority of the products target issues like

fine lines and acne and aid in slowing down the aging process — none of which most pre-teens struggle with. Why are they using these products in the first place?

When kids consistently use products with active ingredients such as peptides and retinols, they may find themselves in a bit of a pickle. These active ingredients work to firm the skin and slow down the aging process. However, using them incorrectly can result in the reverse effect, UCLA Health cautions.

Their ignorance isn't doing them any good.

Aside from using unnecessary products, these kids are draining their parents' bank accounts by the second. Some of Drunk Elephant's skincare products, for example, can be close to \$200 and these kids are purchasing multiple products at a time.

Oblivious to the price tags and often begging their parents to purchase things for them, these kids end up accumulating several hundred dollars worth of skincare at checkout. What's astonishing is their ability to get away with it, then boast as if they used their own savings.

In a TikTok video, Natalie Herrera told her viewers about a time she experienced this in real life. Needless to say, she was appalled by the behavior of the children.

Another emerging trend in skincare is creating "smoothies" — blends of various products to reach specific skincare goals. However, combining certain active ingredients can also have a negative effect, triggering irritation and damaging the skin barrier.

After purchasing such products, many kids online refuse to keep quiet about it — that's when you know it's just a trend.

They frequently turn to social media to document their skincare routines and flaunt their fancy new products. Some of them have routines comprising of 12 products, most of which contain harsh acids unsuitable for young skin.

Many of the comments under these videos feature those with more experience in skincare providing constructive criticism. The "Sephora kids," however, dismiss these as jealousy or hate comments, failing to recognize the valuable advice being offered.

One way to combat these issues is to create age restrictions. Implementing age limitations can safeguard against the purchase of potentially harmful products for children. There's no reason kids should be buying luxury skincare with anti-aging ingredients, especially when using them can have negative consequences.

Additionally, the attitude conveyed by these children is often a reflection of the parenting they receive.

Parental awareness is much needed in these situations. Just by simply looking into the products their child wants them to purchase, parents will recognize their child doesn't need them. They should also act as a voice of reason to steer their children away from unnecessary and pricey products and point them in the right direction when it comes to picking out skincare that's safe and affordable.

I'm fed up with "Sephora kids."

They have turned skincare from a focus on skin health to a trend-driven culture and ignored the consequences of doing so. Their behavior is awful and they make it more difficult for everyone else to shop in beauty stores.

The "Sephora kid" trend not only distorts beauty community values but also creates hurdles for those genuinely seeking to keep their skin healthy. Their actions reflect their troubling prioritization of profit over ethical consideration and well-being.



ILLUSTRATION BY KATERINA PARIZKOVA

## The truth about UFC fighter pay

### How the organization stiffes its athletes out of millions

By BEN BUSILLO AND QUINN O'NEILL

MMA fighters are today's modern-day gladiators, putting their bodies and lives on the line to entertain millions of combat sports fans around the world. However, it's not worth it for the fighters to put themselves through hell to receive little to no monetary benefit.

Before stepping into the ring, fighters must weigh the reality of limited pay against UFC President Dana White's preferential treatment of high-selling fighters. Those who generate little pay-per-view sales often juggle a second job with a grueling five-day-a-week training schedule, all in pursuit of a UFC title.

The median annual salary for UFC athletes is \$51,370; however, many fighters earn less. Of all fighters, 43% made less than \$45,000 in median yearly earnings, according to a 2024 Gitnux Market Research study.

UFC fighters are not employees, but are classified as independent contractors. Through this form of employment, the UFC is not obligated to provide long-term health insurance or retirement benefits.

Despite being the ones putting in the hard work, only 18.6% of the company's revenue goes to fighters. Compared to the NBA, NFL, MLB and NHL (who share 50% of all revenue with players), that revenue share is minuscule.

The reason this number is so low is because there isn't a UFC fighters union to negotiate a fair collective bargaining agreement. With no union, there's no way to bargain with the executives.

However, there was once a time when UFC fighters were close to obtaining a union. The Mixed Martial Arts Athletes Association was nearly launched in 2016, but never got off the

ground. The truth is that up-and-coming fighters just couldn't find the bravery to challenge the organization. The potential risk of being ousted from the organization they spent their whole lives trying to reach was not worth it to them.

The proportion of profits the UFC is willing to hand over to its athletes is borderline disrespectful. So why don't UFC fighters just leave the promotion?

No other MMA organization in the world has the draw of the UFC. These fighters aim to reach the top of the food chain and become superstars. Organizations like ONE Championship, Bellator and Rizen simply don't have the reach.

While the UFC increases its revenue year over year, White refuses to lower fighter taxes and pay the fighters more. In 2023, the UFC made \$1.3 billion in revenue, yet not even 20% of this money went to the fighters.

The UFC taxes fighters 30% yearly, and fighters have to pay other expenses such as managers, gym memberships, medical bills and travel, leaving them with minimal pay. Considering many UFC fighters are international, they also have to pay international taxes that deplete their salary.

In addition, when UFC events are held internationally, the host country is able to enforce its income tax rates.

In past years, fighters were allowed sponsorships, which increased their annual revenue. Superstars like Brock Lesnar, Georges St. Pierre and Randy Couture would crowd their in-cage shorts with logos like a NASCAR driver.

In 2014, when the UFC partnered with Reebok, these types of individual fighter sponsorships ended. The UFC decided that for a brand to sponsor an individual fighter, a \$100,000 fee has to be paid to the championship itself. Some businesses just couldn't afford it and were phased out of the organization.

White and other UFC executives' greed is apparent. Instead of allowing fighters to profit from their likeness, they prefer to remove sponsorships from the fighters in order to make bigger and more lucrative deals for the UFC itself.

It's not just fighters outside the top 15 who are financially handicapped. White has always expressed a level of favoritism toward superstars Sean O'Malley, Israel Adesanya and most notably, Conor McGregor. These fighters pull in the most revenue and pay-per-view buys, which is why White loves them. Yet, his favoritism toward them also hinders other fighters' ability to grow their popularity in the sport and at times, ruins

their careers entirely.

Demetrius Johnson, one of the most skilled MMA fighters to ever enter the octagon, was a fighter White and the UFC continuously disrespected. Johnson has spoken out about being mistreated by White and the media, and promoted unfairly. Despite defending the UFC flyweight title a record 11 consecutive times and being one of the greatest MMA fighters of all time, Johnson is widely unknown today by casual sports fans.

White and the UFC board are too focused on the concept of "running a business." MMA athletes are putting their mental and physical well-being on the line because of the sport. The UFC views its fighters as pawns in its ultimate goal of simply making the most amount of money. If you're not valuable to the company's financial gain, you're likely to be forgotten, fighting for your life inside and outside of the cage.

The solution — unionize, unionize, unionize.

The power of a UFC fighters' union could lobby for fighters to self-represent, have their own personal sponsors and receive health-care benefits and pensions. The UFC lets their "independent contractors" be independent only when it comes to their health and their future.

Maybe if White took care of his fighters, MMA legends like Ben Askren, Anderson Silva, Nate Diaz and Tryon Woodley wouldn't have to box Jake Paul for financial security later in life.



ILLUSTRATION BY TRIPP MENHALL



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY CARLEIGH BECK

Staff writer Carleigh Beck visits the U.S. Capitol during her semester in Washington D.C.

## Urban dreaming: A semester abroad in Washington, D.C.

By **CARLEIGH BECK**  
Staff Writer

Reality struck me when I turned my head to see the U.S. Capitol just a few blocks down the road.

This is it. This is what I waited for, what I worked toward. I was finally in the QU in D.C. internship program that I had been eyeing since admitted students day, more than two years ago.

I gripped the hands of strangers, who would later become my roommates, as we took in the view of one of the most iconic buildings in Washington, D.C. Not because we were awe-struck, but rather we were sliding on the ice-ridden sidewalks on our way to find Walmart.

The mid-January cold wind nipped at my face, a familiar feeling that reminded me of Quinnipiac University. However, that's where the similarities ended between Washington and my mid-sized New England school. I was not at Quinnipiac anymore. I would start to miss aspects of the suburbs that the city didn't offer as I continued with my time here.

I'll give credit where credit is due: Sleeping Giant State Park is a pretty impressive view to see when walking from class to class. But now that I've lived more than two months in this city, I still keep an eye out to catch a glimpse of the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial on my commute to and from work.

I was here to, of course, explore the city. But the heart of QU in D.C. is to get hands-on internship experience. I work in health communications as a social media intern for the National Cancer Registrars Association. These were opportunities that I never had before.

Having grown up in the white-picket fence neighborhoods of my Pennsylvania

town, I am used to my quiet walks around my neighborhood and 15-minute drives to grocery stores. Even at Quinnipiac, I'm used to hearing the quiet murmuring of students and the shuffling of shoes to Café Q. I wanted a change from these mundane routines.

Nowadays, I find convenience in walking five minutes to the nearest Giant supermarket, a familiar chain from home. But I'll admit, I've become a victim of the Trader Joe's bandwagon, a chain not close to my hometown or Quinnipiac. And let me just say, the tomato burrata ravioli is life-changing.

The quiet walks around my neighborhood and campus have been replaced with the angry honks of drivers and the deafening sound of sirens. Though I've tuned out most of these noises after being here for two months, it's safe to say I will not miss that when I leave in two weeks. I've come to appreciate quietness because of my time here.

One aspect of Washington I will miss is all of the activities and places the city has to offer. A complaint that many Quinnipiac students, including myself, bring up is the fact that there is nothing to do off campus — a pretty common complaint in my hometown too.

In Washington, I can walk or take the Metro to dozens of monuments, restaurants or any of the museums (most of which are free) with ease. Not only that, but I got to go to an MLB game and my first NBA game. When I'm at home or on campus, I have to drive at least an hour to see major league sports games. But in Washington, I can walk to them if I want to.

Though yes, I'm not thousands of miles away like most "study abroad" students are, adjusting to a city as someone who has never lived in a city was difficult. I still had to get

acclimated to a new lifestyle, new people and a new routine.

It felt like I was starting college again. That out-of-body experience when my parents left washed over me when we parted ways.

Though the city is great and I'm thankful for the experience I've had here, Washington has made me learn to appreciate some of the aspects of suburban life that myself and many others would look down on.

Sure, this city has many Michelin-star restaurants, but Funcle's Cafe and Fresh Greens and Proteins will always have a place in my heart.

During my time in D.C., I've gained a sense of independence and self-fulfillment.

With no meal plan and no dining hall, I've had to learn how to cook while making sure I'm not spending an astronomical amount of money. I figured out the Metro system and how to navigate the city with only the help of my iPhone and occasionally my roommates.

These all might seem like such simple tasks, but they're a big deal to figure out for the first time.

So as I sit here, looking out at my apartment window into the glittering Washington skyline, I can't help but think of how I was truly able to get the best of both worlds during my college years: a bustling city and a quaint suburban college town.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY CARLEIGH BECK

Beck stops by the Washington Monument when she's not working at her internship.

# April Fools takes extreme marketing to the max

By **GRACE CONNEELY-NOLAN**  
Staff Writer

This year, companies went all out to prank their consumers on April Fools Day. From cringe stunts to realistic pranks, America's brands had fun branching out and captivating their audience.

Corporations take advantage of this day to benefit from publicity and increase their social media presence and followers. By fooling customers and changing their products in interesting ways, audiences get their hopes up for drastic flavors and choices.

Some of the most popular fake roll-outs were Olipop's introduction of a sour cream and onion-flavored soda, while PepsiCo ventured into Extra Flamin' Hot milk to combat its spicy chips. 7-Eleven even launched its new hot dog-flavored sparkling water inspired by Big Bite hot dogs.

While I would be willing to try Olipop's sour cream and onion-flavored soda, in no world would I try hot dog water, no matter what brand announced it.

Most companies had fun fooling their customers, going above and beyond to draw attention to themselves.

Language learning app Duolingo's prank drummed up a lot of commotion. Known for having one of the most relevant and active social teams, there was no chance it missed this opportunity. The company announced "Duolingo (On Ice)," a new "multilingual musical" starring the Duolingo owl.

Some pranks created new potential possibilities for the companies. Specifically,

Tinder announced a new addition to its team: Vice President of Ghost Hunting. The job description is to get to the bottom of unanswered texts and understand the patterns to solve these unmatched matches and revive dead conversations. Even though Tinder admitted that this position was a joke, you can still fill out an application.

Gymbox — an English gym franchise — took a different route, launching Gympark with dog-only fitness classes, backed by statistics revealing that 54% of pets are overweight or obese. Pet owners can still get in a serious workout without leaving their dog at home. They can exercise with their dogs by practicing "furpees" and end class with tennis ball track sprints.

However, other companies received some backlash.

Oreo gave everyone a scare when the cookie brand announced a divorce. After a century of partnership with 206 flavors, the company revealed the cookie and the cream will be separate, informing fans that just the wafer and just the creme will hit the shelves on April 31. Their "separation" backfired when Mondelez International, Oreo's parent company, saw its stock drop.

This one almost fooled me because Oreo deleted all posts on its Instagram, including the history of the brand. Its only post on X, formerly known as Twitter, read, "There are no secrets or anyone to blame, we are just two best friends who met at a very young age and have grown over the past 112 years in our own ways."

But the antics weren't limited just to companies. Businessman Elon Musk joked that he would be joining Disney as its new chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer.

These April Fools marketing hoaxes went viral on TikTok for their funny and surprising reveals and opportunities. April Fools Day is a way for brands to test out off-the-wall insane ideas to see if they can potentially translate them into reality.

The most extreme pranks are done more as a strong public relations play to boost brand awareness rather than market sales. Some brands

vary in how seriously a marketing team will treat the day. Some will notify their agencies by sending them a brief requesting ideas for the day because they plan to spend millions of dollars to execute their prank, according to Digiday.

So why do we care about these stunts?

This holiday of pranks has been absorbed by brands as a marketing holiday. It's a great opportunity for companies to capitalize on new audiences and ideas for their brands, show off their personalities and get attention by proving they have a sense of humor and are willing to poke fun at themselves.



ILLUSTRATION BY PEYTON MCKENZIE

## Hitting close to home: 'The Program' explores the troubled teen industry

By **LILLIAN CURTIN**  
Associate Opinion Editor

When the trailer for "The Program: Cons, Cults, and Kidnapping" was released, my relatives, hometown friends and strangers flooded Facebook to share it. The three-episode limited series on Netflix may be another true crime docuseries for others to binge, but for me, it was personal.

"The program" the film refers to is a so-called "school" for troubled teenagers that were abused and mistreated in the name of behavior modification. I'm from Malone, New York, in Franklin County, but that's only about an hour and a half away from the school's location in Ogdensburg, New York.

I didn't realize how much this program affected my community until I talked about the docuseries with my dad.

"We were told that all the bad kids got sent to Ogdensburg," he told me. "I guess now we know why."

Academy at Ivy Ridge was a behavior modification facility advertised as a boarding school. Parents from around the country sent their "troubled" teens to the "school" to better them. Instead of getting a quality education, the students were subjected to verbal, physical and mental abuse.

The program ran from 2001 to 2009. It had 460 students enrolled at its peak.

Parents often paid strangers to kidnap their children in the middle of the night and take them to the program.

Though Ivy Ridge was ultimately shut down, WWASP, or World Wide Association

Of Specialty Programs and Schools, still has toxic and abusive programs around the world today — programs just like Academy at Ivy Ridge.

The docuseries follows a group of survivors as they work to piece together documents from their time at Ivy Ridge and hold those in charge accountable, while also raising awareness about other programs.

Not only the children, but also the parents, were manipulated to believe they were doing the best thing for their troubled children.

In the first two episodes, survivor Alexa Brand explains that when she arrived at Ivy Ridge and took her preliminary drug test, she was

told it came back positive. This didn't make sense to her because she had never done drugs. The Ivy Ridge staff wouldn't let her move up in the program until she "took accountability" for her "drug use," so she was coerced into lying to her peers, instructors, parents and even to herself that she was an addict.

Later, she found documents that proved that her test was negative all along. Her parents still didn't believe her as a result of the manipulation and lies they heard and saw, showing the long-lasting impact of the program.

Survivor Katherine Hubler's father's reaction was more kind and apologetic. He wrote to her, "Dear Katherine, I hope you hear my apologies for failing you and can find forgiveness in your heart."

However, some of those responsible for the abuse are still standing by their actions. Others are dismissive. The series shows perpetrators — knowing or unknowing — reacting to news about the docuseries and the program itself.

In the second episode, Brand speaks to an unnamed caller in a bowling alley. The caller, whose voice was edited for anonymity, accuses Brand of only targeting them, which Brand denies and says, "You are one of many that contributed to a lifetime of trauma." The person on the phones pauses before offering "And?" as the only response.

The feedback to "The Program" has been mostly supportive, yet many viewers still question why the students didn't run away. Many towns in the North Country area of upstate New York are secluded, with more acres of woods and farmland than people. There's also minimal cell service in most spots. This means that even if the victims attempted to escape, they would've easily been caught or lost, especially when most weren't from the area.

The docuseries was necessary. There are still many WWASP programs around the world today. This docuseries aimed to spread awareness, and the creators succeeded when the series came out on Netflix.

Almost everyone in the surrounding area was shocked, which serves as evidence of how these abusive programs can fly under the radar.



ILLUSTRATION BY TRIPP MENHALL

# Jenny needs to get off the block

By **KRYSTAL MILLER**  
Associate Arts & Life Editor

A media frenzy has been circling around Jennifer Lopez, also known as J.Lo, since the release of her documentary, "The Greatest Love Story Never Told." The attention to a variety of ridiculous moments has people questioning the character of this mega-celebrity.

In the documentary, which released Feb. 27, J.Lo is another example of a large celebrity being out-of-touch with their audience. It is basically J.Lo flaunting her new project, a movie and album both called "This is Me... Now."

The description of the documentary is J.Lo's 20-year journey to self-love, but it all feels inauthentic to me. After watching the entire thing, I still feel like I don't really know her at all.

The most popular clip features J.Lo with disheveled hair saying, "I like taking my hair out like this. It reminds me of when I was like 16 in the Bronx running up and down the block."

TikTok users were quick to point out that the "Jenny from the Block" — a reference to the artist's 2002 song — character is phony. Users commented, "The block deserves royalties at this point," "Jenny, it's been 84 years..." and "Ben (Affleck) has to hear about the Bronx everyday."

J.Lo went to a private high school in the Throggs Neck neighborhood of the Bronx, so people don't want to hear her talking about how rough it was for her.

Personally, I just find it cringey, but I don't

think it's anything people should be hating J.Lo over. If she wants to represent where she's from, go ahead, but actually be yourself.

The scenes in the documentary consist of the crew rehearsing for the movie and J.Lo reconnecting with her now-husband, Ben Affleck. She also alludes to the pain of her past three marriages, but does not explain why or what happened in them. Even when she does briefly bring up her past, I still don't get why she is the person she is today.

She also does not seem to respect anyone else's privacy either, because she mentions how she left a book full of love letters and emails Affleck gave her in the music studio for everyone to see. She used this book as inspiration for her current projects.

Affleck was clearly uncomfortable when describing how the staff made fun of him for it. If I was Affleck, I would be upset if my wife did something like that to me without my permission.

This documentary seems like it is more for her ego rather than creating a work of art. She is worried about no company wanting to fund it, yet still funnels tons of money into a project all about her.

She acts like she isn't rich, even saying at the end of the documentary to her crew, "I know it wasn't easy, and I know I pushed you and I expected the moon when we had the budget for like a pack a gum." My jaw dropped when she said that, because a pack of gum is not the \$20 million she spent to fund this project.

J.Lo is no stranger to being out-of-touch, especially when it comes to other celebrities.

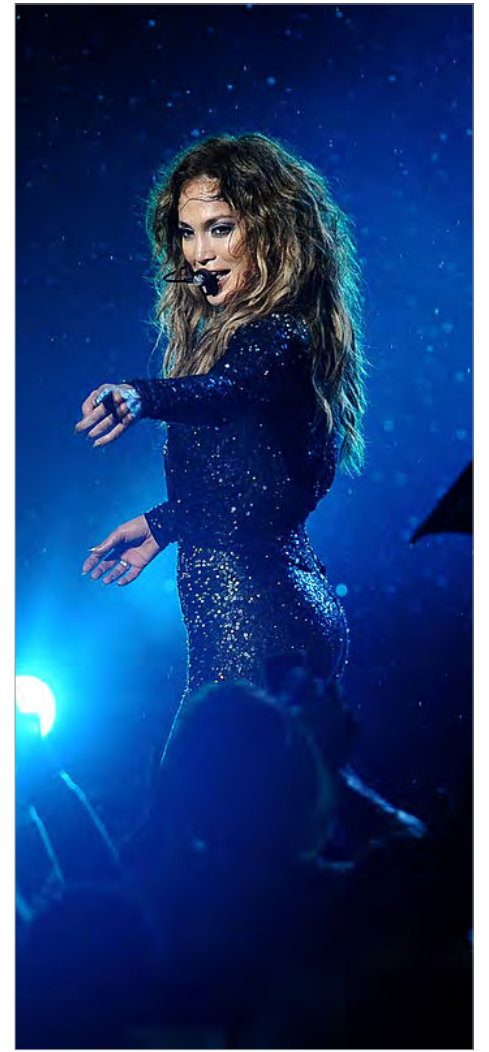
In an interview in 1998, she said she did not remember what Gwyneth Paltrow has been in, has never been a big fan of Winona Ryder's work and said Salma Hayek lied about being offered a role as Selena Quintanilla, who J.Lo played in the 1997 film "Selena: The Movie." I'm all for being honest, but bringing down other women is not it.

There's another moment in the documentary where she reached out to various celebrities in the industry to make a cameo in "This is Me... Now," but the majority of them, such as Bad Bunny, Taylor Swift and Ariana Grande, said they were unavailable.

She is seen again not respecting people's privacy. I would not want my personal phone calls to be featured in a documentary. I also think these celebrities knew there isn't much money in making a movie that is structured like a musical. The project, however, does end up featuring celebrities like Post Malone, Keke Palmer and Neil deGrasse Tyson.

These clips of J.Lo have gained traction and brought attention to her album. It was temporarily on the Billboard charts, but I have not been hearing a lot about the music itself on social media. This is supposed to be her comeback album, but I don't see this being as popular as her other albums.

Honestly, if you've seen the clips on TikTok, that was all you needed to see from the documentary. I really want to root for J.Lo because she's been a staple in the industry for so long, but it's just disappointment after disappointment. I think it's time for Jenny to get off the block.



FIRDAUS LATIF/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Famed singer Jennifer Lopez's newest documentary has people questioning the authenticity of the star.

## Pasta Eataliana Trattoria Napoletana: The next best spot in New Haven's Little Italy

By **JACKLYN PELLEGRINO**  
Arts & Life Editor

People line up daily on Wooster Street in New Haven for some of the city's most famous pizza from Sally's Apizza or Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana, but just a little bit further

down the road is another Italian restaurant that deserves to be recognized.

Pasta Eataliana Trattoria Napoletana opened in 2020 and is located right on the corner of Wooster Street. Its menu ranges from

a variety of classic Italian appetizers, pastas, main courses and desserts.

Inside, the restaurant has a quaint atmosphere filled with a few tables that were all full when I went on Saturday. Although I didn't eat in the main dining room, I had the opportunity to eat outside in a fully-covered and heated enclosure that provided the restaurant with extra tables.

Here's what I thought about the dishes I ordered:

### APPETIZERS: ARANCINI NAPOLETANI & LA BURRATA

Arancini is also known as a "rice ball" to some. In addition to the rice, it was filled with ground beef and peas. The arancini were plated with a red sauce and freshly-shaved parmesan cheese. The rice wasn't overly cheesy and heavy inside the arancini, and there was an adequate amount of filling in each of them. The shell was lightly fried and added a light crisp to the dish.

The burrata was plated with fresh arugula, tomatoes, artichokes, shaved parmesan cheese and balsamic drizzle. It was all very fresh and the accompanying garnishes made the dish almost like a salad, instead of just the burrata itself.

### MAIN COURSE: PACCHERI ALLA SICILIANA

The paccheri alla siciliana is a pasta dish in a red sauce with grilled eggplant and mozzarella

cheese. The red sauce was very flavorful, yet not too thick and overpowering. The eggplant was lightly grilled and it mixed well with the sauce. I think fried eggplant would have made the dish too heavy. My only critique would be that the paccheri — which is a thick, tube shaped pasta — was al dente, meaning that it was a little bit hard.

It was also plated in a metal serving dish that sat on top of the plate, which gave the dish a unique touch instead of just serving the pasta on the plate itself.

### DESSERT: TARTUFO

The tartufo is a classic Italian dessert that includes a hard chocolate shell filled with vanilla and chocolate ice cream and a cherry center. There were also other flavors of ice cream available. The dessert was plated with chocolate and caramel drizzle, as well as whipped cream. It wasn't too rich and I liked that it included multiple flavors of ice cream inside.

### FINAL VERDICT

Everything I ordered was delicious, fresh and included a variety of flavors that complemented each other well. The staff was also very attentive and came over to the table regularly to make sure that no one needed anything else.

Next time you visit New Haven's Little Italy, give Pasta Eataliana Trattoria Napoletana a try.



JACKLYN PELLEGRINO/CHRONICLE

The paccheri alla siciliana from Pasta Eataliana Trattoria Napoletana is a thick tube shaped pasta, paired with grilled eggplant in a red sauce presented in a metal serving dish.



### Be a Change Maker. Volunteer Today!

The Pfizer New Haven Clinical Research Unit is looking for healthy volunteers age 18-49 for a clinical trial of a study vaccine for flu. This study will look at the effects of the study vaccine compared to another vaccine which is used as a control.

You will be compensated for your time up to \$3,000\* for completion of the study, plus a bonus amount for the cost of covered travel to and from the unit.

*\*Based on 7 planned visits, inclusive of screening. Some participants will be asked to complete additional visits. These will be compensated at a rate of \$300 each.*

#### This study involves:

- 7 visits to the PCRU, about 2-4 hours each, over 7 months
- 2 doses of study vaccine or comparator vaccine/placebo

#### Don't go it alone

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# I

# VOLUNTEER

# FOR

# MYSELF



 /PfizerClinicalTrials





NICHOLAS PESTRITTO/CHRONICLE

Director of operations Dan Gooley gives a speech during his number retirement ceremony at the Quinnipiac baseball field on April 7.

## Quinnipiac baseball retires former player, manager Dan Gooley's No. 15

By **AMANDA DRONZEK**  
Associate Sports Editor

Fifty-eight years.

That's how long ago Dan Gooley dressed in Quinnipiac baseball's navy and gold for the first time.

All these decades later, "Skip" was able to see his No. 15 retired ahead of the Bobcats' series finale against Iona on Sunday.

"I was thinking about my freshman year when I started here in 1966," Gooley said in his honoree speech. "And in my wildest dreams, I would never think that in 2024 I'm going to be standing here and have my number retired."

Gooley is only the second Bobcat to have his number retired for any Quinnipiac program, with former basketball player Frank "Porky" Vieira's No. 44 being the first.

"He has 2,600 points," Gooley said of Vieira's program scoring record, which still stands today. "The other thing that people don't realize about Frank Vieira is he's the winningest basketball coach in New England. I felt like I hadn't done anything that compared to him. That's why he called me, he wanted to be here today."

And sure enough, Vieira was there, sitting "shoulder-to-shoulder" among Gooley's friends.

"I'm going to stand with all of my former players and coaches that are here," Gooley said. "Men that have dedicated their college careers here and their passion to be the best players they could, to be the best civilians, be the best students they could, and to turn around and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with them. It's an honor and I'm very proud of that today."

In four seasons as a Bobcat, Gooley set the program's career strikeout record (316) and ranks second all-time in ERA (2.47).

The ace returned to Hamden in 1977, this time as the Bobcats' head coach.

He was inducted into the Quinnipiac Athletics Hall of Fame in 1983 — halfway through his first coaching stretch with the Bobcats. Gooley led Division II Quinnipiac to 205 wins, reaching three NCAA Tournament berths and one College World Series before leaving in 1987.

Fifteen years later, Gooley rejoined the Bobcats' squad and managed the team to four successive 20-win seasons from 2004-2007.

In 24 seasons as Quinnipiac's skipper, Gooley earned 430 wins — third-most of all Quinnipiac head coaches, trailing men's hockey's Rand Pecknold (641) and women's basketball's Tricia Fabbri (516).

And if two coaching stints weren't

enough for Gooley, he returned in 2022 as the director of operations.

"There are hundreds of guys he's touched throughout his career here, while he's a coach here, while he's with me here as the director of operations here with the guys in the dugout," current head coach John Delaney said, who succeeded Gooley in 2015.

But why keep coming back?

"It's fun," Gooley said. "I love it because it's fun. It's a challenge, I mean you know you're either safe or you're out. It's either a ball or a strike. What else do you want to do in life if you don't play baseball?"

Fifty-eight years later, Gooley continues to romanticize Quinnipiac baseball.

"You don't find many people that when they wake up on Christmas Day, (who) calls 50 guys that played under him just to wish them a Merry Christmas," Delaney said. "That's the type of person (Gooley) is and the relationships he's built."

Following the Bobcats' 6-4 win over the Gaels, the veteran knows it's not time to throw in the towel with a postseason berth in the balance.

"We're not knocked out," Gooley said. "We're in the center of the ring. We're ready to go to the next fight and we'll be there."

## Graf, Lipkin sign NHL contracts

By **CAMERON LEVASSEUR**  
Sports Editor

Quinnipiac top-line forwards Collin Graf and Sam Lipkin both signed NHL contracts on April 4, leaving eligibility on the table to turn pro after three and two collegiate seasons, respectively.

Graf, identified by many scouts and analysts as the top college free agent in this year's class, signed with the San Jose Sharks after a lengthy decision-making process which reportedly involved conversations with over 20 teams.

The Massachusetts native is a dynamic playmaking winger who blossomed after transferring from Union to Quinnipiac for his sophomore season in 2022-23.

He equaled the program's single-season Division I record with 59 points as a sophomore, a top-three mark in the NCAA and enough to garner recognition as a Hobey Baker Top Ten Finalist.

As a junior this season, Graf suffered two early-season injuries that forced him to miss five games. He still led Quinnipiac in points, posting 49 in 34 games, earning him ECAC Hockey Player of the Year honors and a second-consecutive Hobey Baker Top Ten nod.

His entry-level deal with San Jose begins this season, carrying a cap hit of roughly \$942,000 and an average annual value of over \$1.2 million with performance bonuses of up to \$500,000 in years two and three of the deal.

Graf made his NHL debut against the St. Louis Blues on April 6, becoming the ninth former Quinnipiac player to play in the league. He recorded his first point the next night, a secondary assist in a 5-2 loss to the Arizona Coyotes.

Lipkin — a 2021 Coyotes seventh-round pick — inked his entry-level deal with Arizona on the same day as his linemate.

The Philadelphia native totaled 29 goals and 78 points in 78 games with the Bobcats, most memorably tallying assists on the game-tying and winning goals in the 2023 national championship game against Minnesota.

His contract, which doesn't begin until the 2024-25 season, carries an NHL AAV of over \$850,000. Lipkin has joined the Tucson Roadrunners, the Coyotes' AHL affiliate on an amateur tryout agreement for the remainder of this season. He currently has one point in two games played.

Junior forward Jacob Quillan, who centered Graf and Lipkin for much of the last two seasons, signed a two-year entry-level deal with the Toronto Maple Leafs on April 1.

The trio are the ninth, 10th and 11th members of Quinnipiac's championship roster to turn pro. Forwards TJ Friedmann, Ethan de Jong, Michael Lombardi, Skyler Brind'Amour and Joey Cipollone, and defensemen Zach Metsa and Jake Johnson all signed AHL or ECHL contracts following the 2022-23 season. Defenseman CJ McGee became the 12th after he inked an ECHL contract this week. Goaltender Yaniv Perets signed an NHL deal with the Carolina Hurricanes, becoming the first former Quinnipiac netminder to play in an NHL regular season game on Jan. 15.



NICHOLAS PESTRITTO/CHRONICLE

Gooley's No. 15 is unveiled on the right field wall at the newly-renovated Quinnipiac baseball field on April 7.

# Softball drops two of three in homecoming, finds solace amid rollercoaster start

By ZACK HOCHBERG  
Staff Writer

After starting the season with 20-straight road games, the Quinnipiac softball team returned to Hamden to play its first home games this weekend against Iona. But the homecoming didn't go exactly as planned, as the Bobcats dropped two of three games in the series.

Quinnipiac's season has been nothing short of a rollercoaster. The Bobcats started out scorching hot, notching wins in five of their first seven games. But the tides turned. The Bobcats entered the weekend on a six-game losing streak, and an 0-3 start to MAAC play.

Iona pushed the losing streak to eight as the Bobcats lost both games in Saturday's double-header against the Gaels.

So, what's the bright side? The Bobcats earned a win with a 2-1 victory to wrap the weekend series, improving to 1-5 in the MAAC.

Despite the team sitting second-to-last in the conference standings, Quinnipiac

head coach Hillary Smith hasn't lost hope.

"We just keep reminding (the team) that we believe in them ... We know how good we are," Smith said. "We're just getting in our heads a little bit and we don't know why. We've been working really hard to get out of this funk and it was so big to have this close game and be able to step up in big moments, that's what we've been looking for."

After a rough outing in Saturday's 7-1 loss, junior pitcher Sydney Horan stepped up on Sunday, throwing a complete game while striking out four Gaels.

Like the rest of the team, Horan has had an up-and-down start to the 2024 campaign, but that didn't slow her down on Sunday.

"It's about having a short memory," Horan said. "Can't think about yesterday ... Forgetting about it and knowing that today is a new day and we have to be stronger if we want to win."

Horan faced adversity late in the game, but she got out of a bases-loaded jam in the sixth, and then forced a flyout to end the game.

"I was just taking some deep breaths," Horan said. "I know that behind me is a very good field, I have a lot of confidence in our fielding ... knowing they're behind me definitely helps."

The Bobcats' ability to close out Sunday's game was a massive step forward from a day prior, where they held a late 6-5 lead, but weren't able to hold on and lost the second game 7-6.

"We focused on being calm and collected, it's not something we did yesterday, but we were able to do it today," Smith said.

If the Bobcats want to make a run at the six-team postseason — a feat they haven't achieved since joining the MAAC in 2012 — they need to get more out of their offense. The Bobcats have scored two runs or fewer in seven of their last nine contests.

However, Quinnipiac built its non-conference schedule to prepare the team to compete in conference play, facing two power five opponents (Boston College and Syracuse), while also participating in three invitational tournaments.

"This is probably the hardest schedule I've set up for them leading into conference play," Smith said. "The reason we did that is we wanted to prepare them. We wanted them to see they can play great competition and you can compete and you can win. We were hitting the power five teams, we were playing good games, we know we can compete with anybody."

The schedule doesn't get much easier for the Bobcats, as the team will once again hit the road to play multiple series against MAAC opponents. Quinnipiac traveled to New Jersey for a three-game series against St. Peter's on April 9 — winning the first two games on Tuesday — before heading further south to Maryland to meet Mount St. Mary's for another trio of games this weekend.

Smith hopes the Bobcats can take the momentum from Sunday's win into the road trip.

"Now the fun part starts for us. We get to do what we love and we get to play," Smith said. "I know we're going to take what we did here and keep building on that."



Sophomore infielder Soia Vega fields a ground ball during a 2-1 win against Iona on April 7.



Junior pitcher Sydney Horan pitched a complete game against Iona on April 7.

## Savion Lewis enters transfer portal

By ETHAN HURWITZ  
Sports Editor

Quinnipiac guard Savion Lewis has been granted an additional year of eligibility and has entered the transfer portal as a graduate transfer, Lewis announced on Instagram on April 4.

"First and foremost, I want to thank God for putting me in the position I am today and giving me the strength and wisdom to become the person and player I am today," Lewis wrote on social media. "With that being said, I am going to enter my name in the transfer portal to explore opportunities for next year, while definitely keeping the door open to a return to Quinnipiac."

Lewis started in all 34 games the Bobcats played this season and ranked third in the country in assists per game (7.3). He also set the program record for most assists in a single season and was named to the All-MAAC Second Team.

"I want to thank my family, former coaches, and all those who have helped me along my journey," Lewis wrote. "Excited to see what the future holds!"

The Dix Hills, New York, native missed the majority of the 2021-22 season after suffering an Achilles tear against Manhattan in December.

Under the NCAA legislation, a student-athlete "may be granted an additional year of competition by the conference or the Academics/Eligibility/Compliance Cabinet for reasons of 'hardship,' which includes when "the injury or illness occurs prior to the completion of the first half of the playing season that concludes with the NCAA championship in that sport."

He becomes the fourth Bobcat guard to enter his name into the portal, following seniors Nicholas Margetson and Arion Lewis, and freshman Daemar Kelly.



Graduate student guard Savion Lewis broke Quinnipiac men's basketball's single-season assist record (248) in 2023-24.

# 'LIQUID STEEL'



TYLER RINKO/CHRONICLE

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## Acrobatics and tumbling eyes national championship after first-ever undefeated regular season

By ETHAN HURWITZ & CAMERON LEVASSEUR

Mary Ann Powers has been at Quinnipiac for a long time — 26 years to be exact. She arrived before the NCATA was developed, and helped push acrobatics and tumbling into NCAA emerging status. She's coached dozens of teams and hundreds of athletes, but when asked where she would rank this year's Bobcats on her all-time list, she didn't hesitate.

"One," Powers says, raising a single finger.

"The (ESPN+) broadcasters are alumni. They just said, 'Coach, we wouldn't have made this team.'"

That confidence comes in the wake of Quinnipiac's first undefeated regular season in program history. The Bobcats clinched a seven-point victory over Gannon on Saturday, pulling ahead from the No. 3 Golden Knights in a dominant performance in the team event.

Quinnipiac dismantled the No. 3, 4 and 6 teams in the country en route to a 6-0 record, and currently sits No. 2 in the latest NCATA championship rankings as the postseason looms.

"I'm not surprised," Powers said. "This team has got liquid steel running through their veins. They just show up."

It's just the second time Quinnipiac has entered the tournament this high, the first being in 2013. The national championships, set for April 25-30, will play host to eight programs in Fairmont, West Virginia.

"This team works hard and I've never been a part of a team so dedicated and so willing to put it all out there," senior base Tiffany Zieba said. "I'm really lucky to have them as sisters."

Zieba — who won a quad tumbling individual national title last year — is part of a large veteran class. With 14 seniors and graduate students, the Bobcats have the foundation set for the program's first national championship as a team. They remain one of three teams across all three divisions without a loss in 2024 (Baylor and Limestone).

"This team is ready to go," Powers said. "There has been a village behind this team ... they just wanna put the Q on their chest and do the best they can."

Standing in the Bobcats' way is the aforementioned Baylor, the NCATA juggernaut with

an unblemished 8-0 record and looking for its ninth-straight title. The Bears — undefeated since March 2021 — have ousted Quinnipiac in every NCATA Tournament since 2017, including each semifinal since 2019 and the 2018 championship meet, the Bobcats' last title appearance.

So how is senior base/tumbler Farrah Chernov preparing for a potential revenge bout?

"Just taking it day by day, practice by practice," Chernov said. "We always tell ourselves ... have fun with it. This is a sport that we all chose for a reason, to enjoy it, have fun. Every day we come into practice, we tell

each other 'Take it easy, don't rush it, have patience with yourself. Trust yourself (and) trust your teammates.'"

Chernov was on last year's quad tumbling unit with Zieba that won a national title. In fact, she was one of 16 Bobcats to claim an individual trophy. The championship experience is important, but there's a bigger goal in Powers' sight.

"All that individual stuff comes (down) to that (final) two and a half minutes," Powers said, referring to the team event. "We got to play like we have nothing to lose."

**Quinnipiac Acrobatics & Tumbling Season Victories**

-  262.580 - 220.770
-  272.840 - 232.920
-  275.595 - 263.945
-  275.420 - 270.440
-  270.825 - 261.480
-  277.610 - 270.345

INFOGRAPHIC BY PEYTON MCKENZIE



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Head coach Mary Ann Powers (center) watches the team event during a meet on March 23.