



Former student appears in court after alleged arson

PEYTON MCKENZIE/CHRONICLE

By **CAT MURPHY**
News Editor

A former Quinnipiac University student arrested and expelled last month following an alleged on-campus arson was arraigned in Meriden Superior Court Monday.

Former first-year student Maxwell Mesh will enter Connecticut’s accelerated rehabilitation program after allegedly participating in a Halloween arson in a Mount Carmel Campus residence hall. The court-

monitored intervention program is designed to offer certain first-time offenders the opportunity to have low-level charges dismissed.

Hamden police arrested Mesh on Nov. 16 on criminal mischief and reckless endangerment charges after he allegedly used a butane lighter to burn a dorm room peephole in Dana English Hall, per police records obtained by The Chronicle.

An Oct. 31 police report indicates that six doors, an electrical outlet, a soap dispenser and a toilet seat in the first-year residence hall sustained visible burn damage. Police said the arson caused an estimated \$1,000 in damage.

Mesh was one of two students arrested in connection with the apparent arson.

The other, 18-year-old Dimitrios Pan-
.....
See **ARRAIGNMENT** Page 2

Mount Carmel shuttle stop gets heated, tech-savvy covering

By **CARLEIGH BECK**
Copy Editor

Quinnipiac University officials installed a new shuttle cover at the New Road shuttle stop on the Mount Carmel Campus this past week.

The new shuttle covering has overhead lights, electrical outlets, installed Wi-Fi and a heat lamp system.

“One of the things that comes to mind (in regards to students’ safety) is that it has good lighting, which promotes safety,” Chief of Public Safety Tony Reyes said.

There is also a blue light system by the shuttle stop that allows students to have immediate communication with Quinnipiac’s Department of Public Safety.

“We’re happy that the shuttle covers are in,” Reyes said. “It’s one more tool for our students and a way to keep our students safer.”

The cover features a total of eight outlets that line the bottom of the bench inside.

“(It’s) definitely very nice,” sophomore marketing major Jayna Haggart said. “I feel like my phone is always dying and my laptop too. I can sit down and actually charge them while I’m waiting.”

There was no cover at the shuttle stop — which university officials installed over the summer — until Thanksgiving break.

“The shelter was ordered at the beginning of the summer and was scheduled to be installed before student(s) returned in the fall, but the manufacturer claimed that they had trouble sourcing materials, so that delayed the arrival until mid-November,” Sal Filardi, vice president for facilities and capital planning, wrote in a statement to The Chronicle. “We waited a few days until Thanksgiving break, so we could install without disrupting students or shuttle traffic.”

Students had to stand out in the rain, wind and cold before facilities installed the glass infrastructure.

“A couple of times (I) had to wait outside the shuttle stop when all the seats (in a shuttle) were taken up and at times we had to wait out in the rain,” sophomore sport and entertainment management major Adam Shameem said. “Not only does it have the technologies, but also gives students shelter in the inclement conditions that we can have here on campus.”

The heating system comprises two heating lamps which are turned on by a green button above the benches. Once the button is pressed, the heat lamps turn on with a timer and will shut off after a certain amount of time to conserve heat.

Filardi said there is no plan to add this technology to the stops on the York Hill Campus.

“Because this was a replacement, we are not

presently looking at other shelters,” Filardi said.

This project cost approximately \$20,000, according to Filardi. This includes the added technological features.

“I think (the shuttle cover) is a good improvement,” sophomore media studies major Alyssa Palmer said. “However, I do think that there’s a lot of other issues that (money) can be put into. Everyone talks about parking, air conditioning — stuff like that.”

The Mount Carmel Campus shuttle stop has been relocated twice within the past three years. Moving the shuttle stop and adding the cover is a part of the South Quad construction plan.

“We’re looking forward to the additional changes as the construction comes to an end,” Reyes said. “As the new buildings open up, there’ll obviously be more communication about how we can improve shuttle service to those areas as well.”



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

Quinnipiac University’s New Road shuttle stop — which spent most of the fall 2023 semester uncovered — now features a covering with a heating system and Wi-Fi.

Quinnipiac holds community gathering after hate incidents

By **ALEXANDRA MARTINAKOVA**
News Editor

Following two recent hate incidents on the York Hill Campus, Quinnipiac University officials hosted a community gathering for students, faculty and staff to “provide room for reflection, community and support following the recent acts of hate speech on our campus.”

The small crowd of 30 people sparsely filled the seats in Quinnipiac’s Buckman Theater as Reena Judd, the university’s rabbi, stepped up to the podium. Most of those present were faculty, with approximately 10 students in attendance.

“I’m just really grateful you’re all here,” Judd said as she opened the gathering. “I’m not in as great a mood as I look.”

On Nov. 13, Quinnipiac University officials discovered a swastika carved into a mail locker on the York Hill Campus. Fifteen days later, officials found a second swastika in the same location.

“I reached out to Rabbi Reena and asked how we could best support her and the community as soon as I learned about the second act of hate speech that took place,” wrote Matthew Kurz, assistant vice president for student affairs — who organized the gathering — in a statement to The Chronicle.

Kurz added that the gathering took place “because it was important to create space where those who were able could come together in community to support one another and process this detestable antisemitic act of hate speech in a timely manner.”

It wasn’t a lecture. It wasn’t a presentation. Quite the opposite — the gathering was a conversation, where all attendees were encouraged to share their thoughts without any judgment.

In the dim lights of the theater, some opted to stay quiet and simply listen. Some were more vocal than others, sharing their personal pains and recent experiences.

“My heart is beating so fast,” a student in attendance shared, their voice shaking with repressed tears. “I’m waking up in the morning and seeing Instagram comments saying things like, ‘Season 2 of the Holocaust coming soon,’ and it hurts.”

Judd thanked everyone who spoke up, no matter how much or how little they shared.

“I think it’s so different seeing (a swastika) now,” another student noted. “If it was scribbled on a desk in middle school, you could say that the kid doesn’t know, they might think it’s funny for some reason. But once you get to the level of a college student, you know, you’d expect that our peers are educated enough to not make a decision to do something like that, unless they really have the hate in their heart to do it.”

Remarks like these opened up discussion among those present about the “excuse structure” that most seem to have fallen into.

“We excuse it by saying this person was young and immature, but I don’t think so,” said a member of the faculty. “You know, we get (the students) when they are 18. It’s been 18 years worth of teaching that we now have to find a way to help direct in a particular direction. I’m truly at a loss.”

Following Nazi Germany’s defeat in World

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Quinnipiac community reacts to consecutive antisemitic incidents

GATHERING from cover

War II in 1945, many European states prohibited the public display of Nazi symbols — including on the internet — and individuals violating such terms are subject to criminal proceedings.

But in the U.S., it is legal to display Nazi symbols and propaganda because of the country’s laws protecting free speech.

“To be clear, even though one can legally engage in certain behaviors, even offensive or hostile behaviors under America’s protections for freedom of speech, it does not mean that one should,” wrote Quinnipiac President Judy Olian in an university-wide Nov. 27 statement.

“These kids know nothing, and you can’t explain that,” Judd said. “And some of them, even if they are 22 and you put them on a Holocaust trip through Europe, they still wouldn’t get it. It’s a story in a history book, and if it’s too hard, you close the book.”

And yet, a few of those present at the community gathering were not Jewish themselves, but wanted to share their support.

“I wanted to go, to offer some kind of visual support to the community, that this is not something that’s okay and we need to support and protect each other,” said Jaime Ullinger, director of anthropology. “Because clearly someone who would do something like this isn’t putting themselves in the position of another person who would feel hurt by it.”

Campus officials announced the event via a university-wide email sent out a mere three hours before it started. Many of those present credited the low attendance to the last-minute announcement.

“I thought it went great,” Judd said of the gathering. “I had no expectations of people, I was terrified we’d get like five. I truly feel grateful. I feel grateful that my boss wasn’t behind me, he was in front of me on this. I think everybody learned something and that’s all I care about.”

While Judd might’ve felt that way, some students saw the situation differently.

“I, personally, felt very angry after I left the gathering,” a graduate student, who asked to remain anonymous, said. “I was hoping there would be administration there, so seeing only about 30 people, especially only about 10 students out of the 7,000 undergraduates, I just feel like the issue is not being addressed enough.”

The student also added that they felt it “definitely didn’t help that it was such a last-minute meeting.”

“It’s very hard for people, especially youth, to really empathize, and you can’t understand if you can’t empathize,” Judd said. “I understand why they want more, they want more support because they don’t want to be alone, because it’s scary and hard.”

The last-minute announcement, Kurz explained, came because officials only made the decision to hold the gathering on the afternoon before.

“With a community of our size, there is never a perfect approach which ensures every person’s schedule will align given the variety of factors which go into attending a gathering like this,” Kurz wrote.

In the Nov. 27 statement, Olian condemned harassment, group stereotyping and “age-old antisemitic or Islamophobic tropes or symbols that evoke violence.”

Quinnipiac Provost Debra Liebowitz and Chief Experience Officer Tom Ellett subsequently sent out a Nov. 29 email condemning hate speech in response to the finding of the second swastika, despite not issuing anything after the first incident.

And yet, some called for more action.

“I can remember a time here at Quinnipiac when a situation like this would lead to hundreds of students protesting on the quad and not a small gathering of allies like this,” said Scott McLean, director of the University Honors Program and a professor of political science, at the event. “I know times have changed and Quinnipiac has changed, but don’t feel like this is good enough. It’s not.”

As Judd noted, though, “there is no blueprint on how to deal with religious hatred.”

“This is a non-religious university, it’s not set up to deal with religious needs, nor is it set up to deal with religious hatred,” Judd said. “I feel that there’s nothing more that anybody can do except put up a camera, and you can’t put those up because God forbid you should see someone in the gym and then they’ll complain, ‘You had a camera while I was undressing and that’s against the law.’ Well, you know, we didn’t have a camera and you made a swastika and that’s that.”

The gathering might have been held in response to the recent incidents of antisemitic vandalism, but many present felt that the issue runs so much deeper.

Anat Biletzki, Schweitzer professor of philosophy and women’s and gender studies, shared a message from Ben Lorber, a writer for the magazine Jewish Currents.

“‘We have to take seriously the reality of clear cut cases of antisemitism, while also distinguishing between criticism of Israel and antisemitism, disagreement and bigotry, discomfort and danger,’” Biletzki said, quoting Lorber. “And I think that’s the most important quote I’ve heard during these two months.”

Underlining the distinction between anti-zionism and antisemitism, Biletzki felt, was important because recent situations have left many Muslim and Palestinian students afraid to speak out.

“They feel alone,” Biletzki said. “They are not anti-Jews, they are anti-Israel — and that is very different. It’s really, really upsetting that we don’t even know they are afraid because they are so afraid to open their mouths.”

There are many different directions a conversation about topics like these could take. As Kurz wrote, “a ‘one size fits all’ approach does not exist” for those affected by incidents like this.

“Hate is something that is educated into us,” one student said. “But it is also something that can be educated out of us.”

“Hate is something that is educated into us. But it is also something that can be educated out of us.”

– Anonymous student

ARRAIGNMENT from cover

ayotopoulos, faces reckless burning, criminal mischief and reckless endangerment charges. He is scheduled to be arraigned in Meriden Superior Court on Dec. 20.

Police said Panayotopoulos “admitted to burning QU property” but told the responding officer he was “not responsible for all the burn damages.”

A Nov. 2 police report obtained by The Chronicle indicates that investigators subsequently used video footage captured of the alleged arson to identify Mesh as a second participant.

Mesh admitted to engaging in the burning and confirmed to investigators that “it was him in the video,” according to the report.

Police said Mesh — who reportedly appeared “remorseful for his actions” — implicated a third participant in the Halloween arson. However, no other student faces charges in connection with the incident.

John Morgan, associate vice president for public relations, confirmed that both Mesh and Panayotopoulos are “no longer enrolled” as students at Quinnipiac.

“The university takes very seriously any action that could jeopardize the safety of our students,” Morgan wrote. “We will act swiftly against anyone found responsible for this or similar conduct. Vandalism and destruction are simply not consistent with the well-established culture of our university community.”

Alexandra Martinakova contributed to this reporting.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

Hamden police arrested two since-expelled Quinnipiac University students in connection with an alleged Oct. 31 arson in Dana English Hall.

Quinnipiac kicks off holiday donation season

By LILY PHILIPCZAK
Staff Writer

Quinnipiac University's Department of Health and Wellness is collaborating with the Department of Public Safety to co-sponsor a Toys for Tots drive through Sunday, Dec. 10.

There are two designated drop-off locations on the Mount Carmel Campus, one in the Recreation and Wellness Center and the other in Public Safety's Irmagarde Tator Hall office. There is also a donation box located in the School of Medicine's front lobby on the North Haven Campus.

Children in New Haven County will receive the donated items, allowing Quinnipiac students to have a direct impact on the local community.

"When we act collectively by giving to others in need, we strengthen our sense of community," said Don DiStefano, Public Safety's administrative captain. "(Toys for Tots) brings our campus community together by practicing the important values of compassion, empathy and generosity when we give to those less fortunate."

The U.S. Marine Corps began hosting the Toys for Tots drive in 1947. The program aims

to distribute new toys to underprivileged children during the holiday season. In 2022, with the help of more than 50,000 volunteers, Toys for Tots distributed an unprecedented 24 million toys to roughly 10 million disadvantaged children.

"I've been working with Toys for Tots at the various jobs I have worked at for the past 10 years," said Natalie Rivera, Quinnipiac's fitness and well-being coordinator. "Whenever I work anywhere new I try to incorporate Toys for Tots in any way I can."

Public Safety has hosted Toys for Tots drives in the past, but Rivera helped restart the initiative this year.

"It is a great way for me to personally honor my grandfather," Rivera said, sharing that her grandfather was a Marine Corps veteran and involved in charity efforts.

Both Rivera and DiStefano have personal ties to the toy drive.

"As a Marine veteran, the significance of the program for me is that it is a noble cause, rich in history and tradition," DiStefano wrote in a statement to The Chronicle. "When Natalie contacted

me, she did not have to ask twice."

The directors of the drive are seeking new, unwrapped toys for donation.

"When these families and children are going to pick them up, it adds that extra sense of magic and joy if they get something that's entirely brand new," Rivera said.

Students are asked not to donate items related to violence, such as toy guns or knives. Rivera instead suggested donating items such as coloring books, crayons, board games and stickers.

"It's a great way to add to the sense of community because you don't have to donate a lot," she said. "You could go to your local dollar store or at Five Below and grab something quick that is less than five bucks and have that be your donation. I think it's a cool way for college students to get involved in giving without really breaking the bank."

Rivera said Quinnipiac's Toys for Tots drive has received an estimated 50 donations so far.

Tami Reilly, Quinnipiac's fitness and well-being director, said donating or volunteering during the holiday season improves emotional well-

being, a sense of belonging and gratitude.

"Giving your time is just as important," Reilly said. "The Office of Student Engagement has tons of ways that students can get involved if they can't contribute to the drive."

Beyond the Toys for Tots drive, Habitat for Humanity is hosting a sock donation drive at Quinnipiac. There are four donation boxes on the Mount Carmel Campus: in the Community Engagement office in the Campus Life suite, the Student Government Association suite, the first floor of the Arnold Bernhard Library and the Honors Lounge in the Center for Communications and Computing and Engineering. There are also donation boxes near the York Hill Campus mail center.

The School of Communications is also sponsoring a winter coat drive to help local students and families at Hamden's Spring Glen Elementary School. Drop-off boxes are located in the communications dean's suite in the CCE and in the lobby of the McMahon Center in the School of Business. Winter boots, backpacks and school supplies are also accepted. The deadline to donate these items is Thursday, Dec. 12.



Quinnipiac University is hosting three holiday donation drives, including a Toys for Tots drive (left) and a winter coat drive.

Student organizations receive 60% of requested funds

By ALEXANDRA MARTINAKOVA
News Editor

The Quinnipiac University Student Government Association released its spring 2024 student organization budget, funding only half of the requested amount.

"We get a certain amount of money for the entire academic year," said Sarah Almeida, SGA's vice president for operations and a senior finance and computer information systems major. "Sixty percent of our \$875,000 was given out for this current semester, which means we had 40% left for the next semester."

SGA funded 84 chartered student organizations, associations and clubs for the spring 2024 semester, allocating \$366,054.01— 40% of the total budget and what was left from the fall semester — across 77 organizations.

In order for an organization to receive funding, it must meet certain requirements in a set period of time. Some of those include submitting its budget, meeting with an SGA operations representative and attending the Budget Weekend, a series of days when organization leaders come in and talk the SGA operations committee through the individual requests in their budgets, Almeida said.

"This time we had almost double the amount requested as we had to allocate," Almeida said. "So we had to see what we are able to allocate — cut is the wrong word here because no one is really starting with anything."

The total amount that the organizations requested was \$615,071.07.

At the end of the process, Almeida explained the operations committee submits a recommendation to the entire SGA general board and it, as a whole, votes on the recommendation.

Almeida noted that every organization on campus "can request as much as they want to." However, an organization's funding request does not automatically guarantee it to them.

The biggest portion of that budget was allocated to Quinnipiac University's Student Programming Board. SPB requested \$280,000, but SGA only approved \$146,080 for the spring semester.

SPB specifically asked for \$100,000 for its annual Wake the Giant event, stating it as its highest priority item, out of which it was allocated \$70,000.

The biggest difference between the SPB requested amount and what it was allocated was the expenses for off-campus trips, only \$6,000 out of the \$22,000 requested.

Out of the 77 organizations, only 10 got the exact amount of funding they requested.

"We look at what we can give (to the organizations) and what will allow (the organizations) to put on an event for example," Almeida said.

"We had budgetary constraints this time and we couldn't fund the entirety of the requests"

The SGA budget applies to the association itself as well. Of the \$35,200 SGA requested, the organization received \$28,875.

Forty-one organizations received between \$10 and \$1,000 less than they requested.

Asian Student Alliance, Black Student Union, Gender Sexuality Alliance, International Student Association, Latino Cultural Society, Muslim Student Association, Christian Fellowship, Survivor Advocacy Alliance, South Asian Society and Women Empowered were all among those who received between \$1,000 and \$4,000 less than requested.

The Multicultural Student Leadership Council received \$13,450 less from its \$29,790 asked.

However, seven different organizations received no funding.

Those seven are African & Caribbean Student Union, Quinnipiac Association of Minority Engineers, Quinnipiac Criminal Justice Club, Foundation for Orphans, Public Relations Student Society of America, Stitch it Forward and Quinnipiac Democrats.

"Every organization that meets all of our requirements gets automatically funded up to \$50," Almeida said. "Those organizations essentially were not able to fulfill those requirements."

Almeida also emphasized that SGA "treats every organization equally."

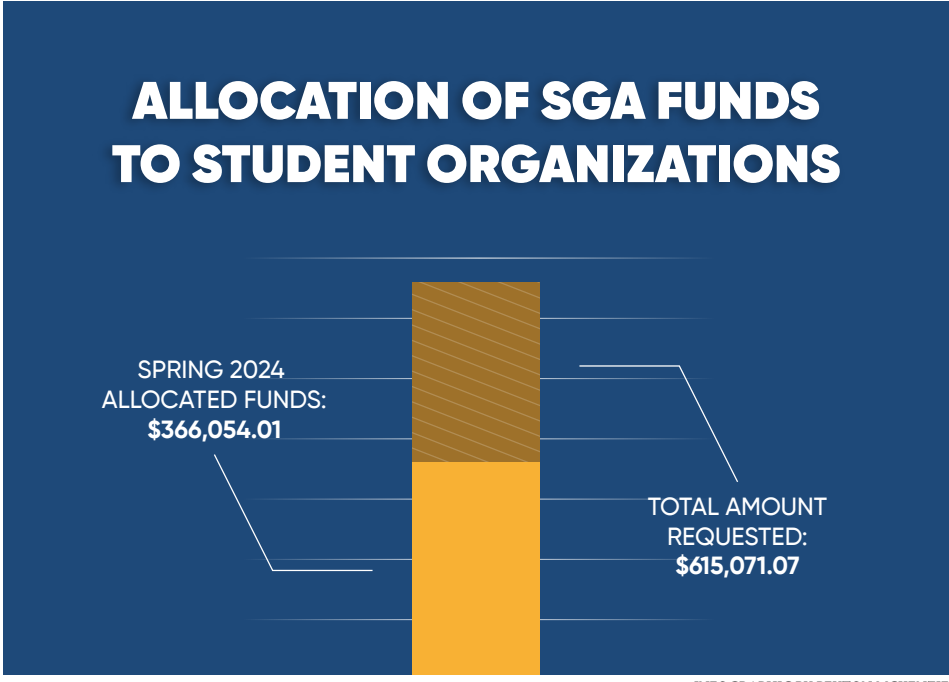
"The reason for the funding mishap was due to an internal issue on our own end, that unfortunately led to us not meeting SGA's requirements," wrote Nick Fizzano, president of the Quinnipiac University Democrats, in a Dec. 12 statement to The Chronicle. "SGA dutifully and correctly followed their well-explained procedures, and we in no way lay blame at their feet."

Almeida also said SGA has opened the special appeals process, where organizations will have the opportunity to apply for additional funding.

Both SGA-chartered and nonchartered, unfunded organizations — which includes student media, fraternity and sorority life and club sports teams — can apply for the special appeals funding, Almeida said.

During this process, organizations can request funding for up to two things out of the five available categories. These include on-campus events; off-campus events; any conference, competition or showcases; capital expenditures — which includes any item that can be used year-to-year — and other items that do not fit into any of the other categories.

Almeida said SGA allocates its budget a semester early and the budget for fall 2024 will be introduced at the end of the spring 2023 semester.



INFOGRAPHIC BY PEYTON MCKENZIE

Opinion

The future of climate change solutions is female

By GENEVA CUNNINGHAM
Contributing Writer

Hotter temperatures, severe storms, a warming ocean, drought, loss of species, food shortage, health risks and poverty — it all sounds daunting, and believe me, it is. Climate change is an existential threat to our planet.

Women-led, sustainable efforts are the solution. Women are uniquely situated to answer the call of climate change. Putting female representation at the center of climate change solutions means implementing diverse gender perspectives, making room for holistic climate changes and environmental and disaster risk-reduction policies.

Fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas are the largest contributors to global climate change, accounting for more than 75% of global greenhouse gas emissions and nearly 90% of all carbon dioxide emissions, according to the United Nations.

So what causes climate change? Generating power via electricity, burning fossil fuels to produce energy, cutting down forests, transportation and producing food all create greenhouse gases. These greenhouse gases blanket the earth and trap the sun's heat, resulting in climate change.

To mitigate the devastating effects of cli-

mate change, we would effectively need to change our energy model to more efficient energy sources, like wind, solar, geothermal, hydroelectric and nuclear.

As a society, we must also invest in women with diverse backgrounds. The majority of our infrastructures, along with our sociopolitical frameworks, have been long governed by white men. These men have not lived the lives of non-white women facing the effects of environmental racism and climate change.

Through negatively impactful policies, rules and regulations — like redlining — people of color and low-income communities are situated near sources of toxic waste, factories, major roads, highways and other sources of pollution, per Action for the Climate Emergency. These minority groups are hit the hardest when it comes to the detrimental effects of global warming.

Is the solution to diversify the energy business? On gender equality, the energy business is overwhelmingly male. Women hold 22% of jobs in energy production and distribution, despite making up 48% of the global workforce, according to the International Energy Agency.

The most common occupations held by wom-

en are nurses, teachers, secretary and administrative assistants, per the Women's Bureau. These are all low-carbon producing jobs, and they're largely underfunded due to the devaluation of women in the workplace. As a society, we should lean into more funding for these types of jobs while also encouraging women to get involved in professions aimed at solving climate change.

Investing in education, healthcare and managerial sectors where women dominate can create a path towards a cleaner and more responsible climate change policy. The World Resources Institute reports that women-led businesses are more likely to proactively improve energy efficiency, invest in renewable power and measure and reduce carbon emissions.

The climate crisis also exacerbates existing inequalities. Women face larger burdens from the impacts of climate change due to existing roles, responsibilities and cultural norms.

In many societies, women are tasked with household energy, food, water and care for the young and elderly. In developing countries, climate change can burden women, forcing them to make a longer trek for daily supplies, resulting in less time for work and a greater possibility of risk.

In the Ecuadorian Andes, Indigenous women are restoring the fragile Páramo ecosystem by using sustainable agricultural production and landscape management. Their efforts are dismantling gender expectations and empowering women to lead in decision making when it comes to climate change.

Blue Ventures, a marine conservation organization in Madagascar, works to incorporate sustainable living in tandem with sexual and reproductive health services. This approach addresses the coordinated challenges of environmental degradation, food insecurity, poor health and neglected family planning needs. Blue Ventures enables families by

decreasing crude birth rates, improving food security and uplifting women to perform important roles in resource management.

In Kenya, climate-smart agriculture centers around small-scale female farmers. By creating The Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Project, women improved their income, yields and overall well-being. Women in this program created a tree nursery which provided a new source of income, allowing them to invest the profits in dairy production. With the added funds, women can fund their children's healthcare and education without economic challenges.

Interestingly, many of these efforts began in places with less resources than the U.S. As a country with immense privilege, we need to be doing more on a policy level to amplify and center voices that are taking the challenge head-on.

Though many climate care solutions led by women begin small, they result in a ripple effect that creates several interconnected benefits for families, communities and countries as a whole.

Additionally, a VoxEU study found that countries with higher female parliamentary representation are more likely to ratify international environmental treaties, further proving that the future is female. Evidence from Women Deliver also supports that when women have secure rights and land access, they use resources sustainably.

To save our planet, we must listen to grassroots female voices that encounter the depths of the effects of climate change. The call to tackle climate change has been championed by women like Greta Thunberg, Isra Hirsi, Alexandria Villaseñor and Hilda Flavia Nakabuye.

By amplifying female voices and encouraging female positions of power, we receive thoughtful and pragmatic solutions to the catastrophic environmental problems we face — and will continue to face — unless something is done about them.



ILLUSTRATION BY AMANDA RIHA

How to cope during a not-so-cheery holiday season

Navigating grief and healing during the winter months

By LILY PHILIPCZAK
Staff Writer

The holidays are often envisioned as a time of cheer and joy, exchanging gifts and spending time with family, while drinking hot chocolate and putting up decorations. Some people look forward to the excitement of the season, others don't.

The holiday season for others, including me, can be a painful reminder of loss surrounded by those that are celebrating instead of grieving.

Since I was nine years old, I've dreaded the winter months and the holiday season. From a young age, I've experienced loss that made the excitement of the season dull. Whether it is family estrangement or going through the holidays after a loved one passed away, just know that you aren't alone.

In recent years, I've started to figure out tips on how to cope with the holiday season.

The first tip is to set boundaries with holiday events. While you may feel pressure to attend a family gathering or a gift exchange with friends, you can choose to participate in whatever you feel comfortable with.

It is important to find a balance between engaging in the festivities and avoiding overwhelming yourself. You can always commit to something and remind yourself that you can leave at any time or opt out of participating all together.

If you are worried about how people might perceive you, just know that the people who truly care about you will understand as

you navigate your grief.

The second tip is allowing yourself to feel and taking time for solitude. Built up emotions, such as sadness and anger, intensify if they are not released. Feelings are like waves, they come and they go. If you aren't willing to ride the wave, it will just get bigger and bigger until it comes crashing down.

An anniversary effect, "trauma-versary" or anniversary reaction can occur around the holiday season for those who have experienced grief, loss or trauma. It refers to a collection of disturbing feelings, thoughts or memories that return on or around the anniversary of a traumatic event.

Around this time, people experiencing the

anniversary effect might feel restless, have trouble sleeping, feel depressed or anxious, experience physical illness or even symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, per Choosing Therapy.

During this time, you can honor old traditions and memories, as well as create new ones. Sometimes feelings of guilt may arise — and that's normal. Your loved one would want you to enjoy the holidays.

If you're going through grief during the holidays, you're not alone. In fact, 35% of individuals don't look forward to the holidays because of the loss of a loved one, according to a Experience Camps survey conducted by the Harris Poll.

However, it's not easy to know how to best

help someone who is grieving. While 86% of Americans said that grief should be addressed as an important mental health issue, 70% of Americans are unsure of what to say or do when someone is grieving.

Grief is unpredictable and complicated; and people often react in different ways. When someone is grieving, you can give them their space and be a reliable listener, while offering words of comfort or help with tasks if they accept it.

I highly advise against telling others that you understand them in their grief. While they may mean well, it tends to have the opposite effect — you never really understand what someone else is going through.

It is also important to be mindful when telling someone who is grieving that they are in your prayers. For some, that is acceptable and comforting. However, unless you know that is comforting to that person, there are other phrases they might prefer.

Here are neutral, sympathetic words of encouragement for someone grieving:

"I wish you healing and peace;" "I hope you feel surrounded by love" or "I'm here if you need anything."

The smallest gestures can have the biggest impact, whether that is a reassuring hug or comforting words. If you find yourself grieving during the winter months or the holiday season, just know that you aren't alone.



ILLUSTRATION BY LINDSEY KOMSON

Opinion

How to find more solitude in a noisy world

By **BENJAMIN YEARGIN**
Managing Editor

Owning a smartphone is one of my least favorite things about the modern world. Whenever I can, I try to stay off of it.

The constant buzz of noise from X (formerly Twitter), YouTube videos pulling at my attention or even listening to music in excess makes me feel like a robot designed for consumption rather than a human being.

My dependence on social media doesn't end with leisure — it's essential for professional reasons too. I have to uphold my social media presence as a journalist with live coverage of sporting events, posting my articles and looking for breaking news — something I'm admittedly not good at — but it's also something I dislike doing.

Mr. Rogers put it well in an interview with Charlie Rose when he said, "Oh my, this is a noisy world." And he said that in 1994 — nearly 30 years ago. If Rogers were alive today, he would go deaf.

All of this technology strips away some of the most important qualities that can improve your life, work and relationships: solitude, thinking and focus.

SOLITUDE AND THINKING

Solitude is "the situation of being alone, often by choice," according to the Cambridge Dictionary. But solitude isn't lying in bed watching Netflix or scrolling on TikTok.

The most important part of it is not being exposed to outside media and/or other minds, whether that's in person, on a TV show or on social media.

Before I dive deeper into solitude and thinking, I want to say that being with your own thoughts is 100% a challenge. A 2014 study from the University of Virginia found that people would rather electrocute themselves than be

alone with their own thoughts.

And your mind can be a scary, scary place. As someone who can be incredibly anxious, I know how your thoughts can be absolutely terrifying and draining to deal with. Frankly, they can suck.

But your mind is also one of the only things that goes with you everywhere you go.

Learning how to manage your thoughts and thought patterns when you're stressed out or anxious is an extremely important tool. I promise you, it will improve the quality of your life.

Hidden feelings, thoughts or ideas will come to the surface when you spend time in solitude which can increase your self-awareness — something that's a universal positive.

I challenge you to spend at least five minutes a day just thinking. It could be on the Quinnipiac shuttle, or in your car traveling from the York Hill Campus to the Mount Carmel Campus or it could be just letting your mind wander before you go to sleep.

Two of my favorite ways to be in solitude are going for walks and meditation, which I try to budget into my days.

However, I think it's important to differentiate thinking and rumination.

The American Psychiatric Association defines rumination as "repetitive thinking or dwelling on negative feelings and distress and their causes and consequences." Rumination can lead to depression and anxiety.

When you think, try to follow a logical thought pattern and not get too caught up in one idea, unless you are expanding on it or trying to solve a problem with it.

Deep breathing, being aware of your thoughts and taking care of your sleep, diet and exercise are some things that help me combat rumination and anxiety.



ILLUSTRATION BY ELIZABETH LARSON

FOCUS AND "CONTENT"

I won't harp on focus too much, because Opinion Editor A.J. Newth touched on a lot of it in her opinion about the importance of reading.

But, it's no secret that Generation Z has little to no ability to focus, and the plethora of notifications most Gen Z members receive each day does not help.

A report by the Mott Children's Hospital at the University of Michigan found that teenagers receive "a median of 237 notifications" per day. Couple that with the negative side effects of splitting your attention among multiple things, and you have an obvious recipe for a lack of focus.

The abundance of notifications from our phones makes it nearly impossible to focus if you're attempting to work while your phone is in the room.

The best way to engage more in solitude and focused work is an overhaul of your digital life — realizing what works well and is worth your time and attention online and get-

ting rid of everything else.

Some more practical tips are to keep your phone out of your workspace and to turn off some notifications, but these are merely short-term solutions to a long-term problem.

The long-term problem is that as a collective, people care much more about "content" and short-term bursts of information than silence and deep thought.

I'm tired of having my work that I spend hours putting together fall under the umbrella term that is "content." Technically, someone's post about an NFL score and a Pulitzer Prize winning article are both "content."

There's value to be had in deep thought, solitude and focus, and we as a society miss out on great work and better relationships when we don't prioritize it.

"I'm very concerned that our society is much more interested in information than wonder, in noise rather than silence," Rogers said in the same interview with Rose.

Me too, Mr. Rogers, me too.

Pence's political demise and its impact on Republicans

By **MICHAEL PETITTO**
Staff Writer

Former Vice President Mike Pence announced and suspended his bid for the 2024 Republican nomination for president in the span of four months — and he was destined to fail from the start.

Pence had a tough battle from the get-go. On top of a crowded room of candidates seeking the nomination, he also had to deal with his old partner. Former President Donald Trump has been the frontrunner for the nomination ever since he lost the 2020 election, and his double-digit lead in the polls isn't going anywhere.

Trump's large base of loyal supporters have shown their dislike for Pence ever since he denounced the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol and refused to question the validity of the 2020 election. Pence would've had a tough time getting those voters back on his side after he distanced himself from the former president.

Toward the end of Trump's time in office, Pence's opposition and distance from Trump caused a hefty amount of Trump supporters to turn their back on Pence. Pence certainly won't be the vice presidential nominee if Trump wins the Republican nomination, and at this point, it's looking like Pence might be out of politics altogether.

Pence is also a relic of the past, as his policies mirror that of the 1980s Ronald Reagan



GAGE SKIDMORE/Flickr

On Oct. 28, former Vice President Mike Pence became the first prominent candidate to withdraw from the Republican presidential nomination race.

era of the Republican party, which most Republicans have moved on from.

Because of his old-fashioned politics, Pence had no real way of separating himself from the pack and was seen by most as a prime candidate to be the first to drop out of the race — which he was. Pence's Reaganomics-led policies served to do him no good in a modern Republican party, which is more concerned with the rise of the "woke culture" than clear-cut policy.

Speaking of policy, Pence attempted to make his campaign policies stand out from his opponents, but in the end, his policies fell flat

along with his campaign. On the issues, Pence continues to be a vocal opponent of abortion and has celebrated the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade. Pence made it clear that he was against the Biden administration's plans for China and immigration and liked to point out that Trump's policies were superior in his eyes. Unlike most Republicans however, Pence took a different approach to the war in Ukraine, opting to stand with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy until the war comes to an end.

Additionally, Pence's antiquated mindset was never going to serve him well in the mod-

ern age, had he been elected.

His history of blatant homophobia is extremely visible by just doing one Google search.

From arguing that being gay was a "choice" or a "learned behavior" in the '90s, allegedly supporting gay conversion therapy to even making a homophobic joke targeted at Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, Pence's dated beliefs were never going to make a good impression on a good number of the American people come Election Day.

It seemed like Pence never caught on with the American people to begin with, as his short-lived campaign was riddled with financial trouble caused by a lack of donations.

Pence's political "rallies" did not impress either, speaking to crowds of just 15 people by October as his campaign began to dwindle. He seemed to have seen the writing on the wall much earlier than he would've liked to.

The lack of care the voters showed to the Pence campaign proves Republicans and voters in general are moving away from the policies of the 1980s and into a new era of American politics.

Pence and his policies are better off left in the same place as his beliefs — the past. As the American political system and the Republican Party (reluctantly) move towards new ideas and generations of politicians, the Reagan-era candidates should take a backseat and enjoy retirement, which is hopefully what Pence will do now.

Arts & Life

Digging in and giving back at QU's annual holiday dinner

By JACKLYN PELLEGRINO and CHARLOTTE ROSS

Quinnipiac University hosted its annual undergraduate holiday dinner on Nov. 30 in the Carl Hansen Student Center dining hall, where students gathered with friends, ate holiday food such as turkey and pie, decorated gingerbread houses and wore festive sweaters.

The event wasn't just about the free food and photo opportunities, but also about giving back. Students had the opportunity to write letters to veterans and senior citizens for the holiday season.

Adam Shameem, a sophomore sports and entertainment management major, said that he came to the event because the whole community was together, the food was good and he could hang out with his friends.

"It kind of reminds me of Thanksgiving dinner, so you get to realize what season we're in right now and it's really good," Shameem said.

Students posed with holiday props in front of a winter wonderland themed light blue backdrop to take pictures with their friends.

Scott Kaplan, a first-year finance major, said he came to the dinner because of the food and festive atmosphere.

"It's honestly amazing ... it's been really thought about and really involved and all well set up so I've enjoyed everything," Kaplan said.

Students had the opportunity to decorate gingerbread houses with white icing and a

variety of candy, such as gum drops, jelly beans, marshmallows and peppermints.

"We just started (building the gingerbread houses) and I think they're doing pretty good so far," Kaplan said during the event.

Many students said they came to the dinner because they didn't want to use their meal points or they wanted to eat something other than the dining hall food.

"Honestly, I have no meal points and I want to take the free food," said Brendan Smith, a first-year nursing major. "So, great food so far."

The dinner provided the faculty with a rare opportunity to directly give back to students by helping them step out of their usual academic element and have a chance to relax before exam week.

Donna Balogh, assistant director of student accounts at One Stop, helped hand out the cards for seniors and veterans.

"This is wonderful ... I love to see all the students and all of the staff and faculty," Balogh said. "It's a great community thing, makes you feel in the spirit."

Maryann Reid, One Stop student service counselor, said she loves the holidays and wanted to give back and help the students.

"I see there's a lot of fun happening, but particularly this is for giving back," Reid said. "We're doing cards for seniors and veterans, so I think it's great because there's

a lot of that during the holidays and everyone seems real responsive to it."

Tom Ellett, the university's chief experience officer, served students roast beef at the dinner.

"I hope that (students) get to engage with each other, get to share some of the experiences about what happened at Thanksgiving, what their hopes are and helping each other with a little bit of tips for academics as those finals come," Ellett said.

According to Ellett, the dinner should be a

time for students to take a break.

"We also want them to have a mental health break, like a time for them just to stop thinking about everything except, here's my friends and let's chat and doing it over a meal," Ellett said. "There's nothing more important than sharing meals together."

Since finals are around the corner, the holiday dinner gave students a chance to eat good food, spend time with friends and take a much needed break from preparing for projects and exams.



NICHOLAS PESTRITTO/CHRONICLE

Chief Experience Officer Tom Ellett (left) talks to a student while serving roast beef at the annual Quinnipiac undergraduate holiday dinner on Nov. 30.

Campus glistens during holiday quad lighting

By AIDAN SHEEDY
Photography Editor

For years, Quinnipiac University students have waited in the freezing cold to count down the seconds before the Mount Carmel Campus Quad is illuminated for the holiday season. But this year was different. This time, the university offered new features and events to the students' festivities, including an ugly sweater contest, holiday trivia and even free coloring books, courtesy of the Student Artists League.

While Quinnipiac community members sipped on some rich hot chocolate and shivered from the brisk wind, President Judy Olian introduced the IceCats to help reveal the most innovative move yet. Eyes were aglow as the Arnold Bernhard Library clock tower dawned several projected colors and festive symbols for the holiday season and the crowd let out a collective "wow."



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

String lights dangle from the facade of the Arnold Bernhard Library administrative offices.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

As a new addition this year, Quinnipiac University's iconic library clock tower sported projected colors and festive symbols for the holiday season.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

Quinnipiac University President Judy Olian addresses the crowd before counting down the seconds until the lighting.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

First-year students (from left) Neely Harrington, Olivia Van Dien, Kiera Jensen and Kayla Shlugleyt stay warm by a fire with their cups of hot chocolate after the quad lighting ceremony on Nov. 28.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

(From left) Hamden Dragons teammates Dashiell Kaye, Jeffery Lightfoot and Nathan Castiline participate in the Shoulder Check movement from the #HT40 Foundation on Saturday, which focuses on encouraging kindness in contact sports.

Hamden Youth Hockey celebrates partnership with NHL-endorsed foundation

By AIDAN SHEEDY
Photography Editor

There's no more universal symbol of support than a hand on a shoulder. On the afternoon of Dec. 2, over 50 players and coaches from the Hamden Youth Hockey Association gathered at center ice, hands on every shoulder and demonstrated how these seemingly small gestures can have the greatest impact.

The 60-year-old Louis "Lou" Astorino Ice Arena welcomed a "Shoulder Check" showcase for the local hockey league aiming to educate young athletes on the importance of kindness while competing. HYHA hosted eight games with teams ages 8-14, and the message from coaches was clear — make kindness a contact sport.

"Shoulder Check means to me that if your classmate is not feeling their best or had a hard day, you can check in on them, ask them how they feel or if there's anything you can do to help them," 10-year-old Marcella Francese said after the on-ice ceremony and discussion.

Francese's teammate, 8-year-old Jackson Cain, also got the idea.

"You can check in with anyone," Cain said. "And you can make sure they feel comfortable and happy and you can check in on anyone else, even if they're not your friend, you can still check in."

Shoulder Check is an initiative from the #HT40 Foundation in honor of 16-year-old Darien, Connecticut, native Hayden Thorsen, who died by suicide one year ago. Hayden's father, Rob, launched the foundation in August 2022 and has worked tirelessly to promote the ideals and values his son held as a young hockey player and as a person.

"Each time we do one of these, it's kind of like a little hand on my shoulder," Rob said. "The idea originally comes from who Hayden was in his life when he was here as a teammate and as a friend. He was the guy who put his hands on our shoulders."

Though just over one year old, the Shoulder Check movement is gaining momentum from collaborations with NHL stars like New York Rangers sniper Mika Zibanejad and Anaheim Ducks phenom Trevor Zegras, who has deep Connecticut ties, to help embrace the goals that Hayden took with him every day of his life.

"People ask, 'Who would do what (Hayden) did?' and the answer is we all can," Rob said. "We get the chance to come out here and have these kind of moments and share them with kids and parents and coaches and you can feel the spirit there. It's just another hand on the shoulder in a different way."

Between cheering from the stands, chatting outside while waiting for Vittles Food Truck and kids playing mini stick games in the lobby, the Hamden community showed up in a big way for a cause bigger than themselves. But for Rob, The Lou held a different place in his heart.

"We were here last two years ago," Rob said. "The last time I was in this building, (Hayden) was out on the ice. So for me personally, obviously, it's a little bittersweet. But then also to see the reception, to see the parents that stuck around, we did the ceremony on the ice. That's what happens every time we do these moments, it's like you could see the joy in people's faces, and the appreciation for the message."

The event's coordinator, Mike DeFelice, has only been HYHA's president since May,

but thought this program was exactly what this town needed after attending a Shoulder Check event in Stamford, Connecticut, with his daughter, Piper.

"It was cool today because you could see kids from different perspectives because the (teenagers) are the age group you really want to focus on because that's when the mental stress usually comes into their lives," DeFelice said. "It's really important for the young ones too to start learning about it in a simpler way before they hit that stage."

The point for DeFelice was having the Hamden community at the core and providing the kids with a nurturing place to not just play hockey and score goals, but to spend time with their friends and foster lifelong connections.

"My personal goal is to bring the program

back to what it was when I was a kid," DeFelice said. "Which was a family-oriented, close-knit group of kids who grew up together from five years old and were friends for the rest of their life."

In a town overflowing with ice hockey fans — even before Quinnipiac University's men's NCAA Championship — HYHA has had several banners to raise too, yet a new movement united Hamden's hockey community because of a simple shoulder check. It's all about reaching out, checking in and making contact.

"You're not alone. And the shoulder check says, I'm right here," Rob said. "You never know when someone might need a hand, so let's go out there and put as many hands on shoulders as we can."



CASEY NEDELKA/CHRONICLE

After his son died by suicide in May 2022, Rob Thorsen launched the 'Shoulder Check' campaign just months later, promoting kindness and mental health awareness in youth sports.

Take a wild ride with 'Saltburn'

By SYDNEY KLASS
Contributing Writer

When I walked into the theater to see “Saltburn,” I expected a coming-of-age story between two best friends who spent the summer together. What I didn’t expect was an incredibly unsettling movie that would become one of my favorites.

“Saltburn” follows Oliver Quick (Barry Keoghan) and Felix Catton (Jacob Elordi), two students at the University of Oxford. Quick is the shy and quiet type; he has trouble making friends and doesn’t quite fit in. He admires Catton from afar before they end up becoming close friends.

Catton comes from an incredibly wealthy family. He was raised on an estate and hangs out with people who look down upon those less fortunate, like Quick. Catton’s friends make fun of Quick for getting into Oxford on a scholarship, but that doesn’t stop him from taking Quick under his wing. Catton’s cousin, Farleigh (Archie Madekwe), especially looks down on him.

Farleigh’s relation to Catton is the only reason they’re in the same social circle. He constantly pokes fun at Quick for being lonely and less fortunate, but he’s somewhat of an outcast himself.

Even though he’s related to an upper-class British family, Farleigh was raised in the U.S. by his mother who still lives there, and is nowhere near as wealthy as the Cattons. The Cattons pay for Farleigh’s tuition to Oxford and he spends the summer with them, simply because he has no other choice.

Quick explains that his home life isn’t great and that he can’t go home for the summer, leading Catton to invite him to spend a few months with him at his estate, Saltburn. Catton’s parents, Sir Nicholas (Richard E. Grant) and Lady Elspeth

(Rosamund Pike), welcome Quick into their home and treat him like family.

As the summer goes on, Quick becomes obsessed with Catton and his family. He sneaks around to watch their every move and feeds them lies to stay close to them. Every lie he tells and action he makes begins to unfold at his birthday party, a huge affair with hundreds of guests. His elaborate plan to work his way to the top of the family finally begins to pan out.

I was on the edge of my seat for the entire movie, especially when Quick snuck out to the garden to meet with Catton’s sister Venetia (Alison Oliver), or when he was staring at Catton in the bathroom through a crack in the doorway. I never knew what was going to happen next.

Keoghan’s performance was bone-chilling. Just when I thought something was too extreme, he went and did it, and he did it in a way that had my skin crawling. He takes the off-putting

manner of his character and turns him into a protagonist through pure charm. The way Keoghan portrays the sob story of Quick’s home life made me want to root for him, but as everything played out I was completely surprised, and somewhat disgusted.

Normally I’m not one for graphic scenes, including sexual content or blood, but with this movie they felt necessary. Some scenes did make me uncomfortable, like when Quick snuck into Farleigh’s room or when he’s mourning over a grave in quite an interesting way, but I couldn’t look away. Keoghan’s performance throughout the more graphic scenes served a greater purpose than just making the viewers uneasy – he proved the true insanity of his character.

I enjoyed seeing Elordi act in a more tame role than his recent work. Unlike his role as Nate Jacobs in HBO’s “Euphoria,” Catton was a sweet and outgoing character that genuinely

cared about his friend. Aside from “The Kissing Booth,” I’ve never seen Elordi in a role that didn’t have him playing someone toxic. It was a nice change of pace to see him portray an empathetic and caring person, especially after his recent role as Elvis Presley in “Priscilla.”

Something I disliked was the misuse of Farleigh’s character, as he felt more like a filler. He served little purpose other than to make Quick feel less than everyone else. Farleigh could’ve made for a good antagonist, especially since he was only seen as just the American cousin who had nowhere else to go and nothing more important to do.

When Quick comes into the family, Farleigh sees it as another outsider trying to take his already established place. I feel like more could’ve been done with that, such as having him take revenge, instead of just having him make fun of Quick from time to time.

One of my favorite scenes occurred towards the end, just as Quick’s plan begins to fall into place. Sir Nicholas yells while Venetia is pouring wine into a cup but she doesn’t stop, even when it begins to overflow.

The rest of the table tries to play it off. The camera quickly cuts from person to person in a way that made my heart race, along with the red lighting and sound effects from what’s happening outside. It was an incredibly unsettling scene that added to the whole severity of the situation.

“Saltburn” was an incredible movie that left me in complete shock. Every scene came together to create an ending that had me picking my jaw up off the floor. Before this, I never had any interest in psychological thrillers, but the whirlwind of emotions I felt while watching has made “Saltburn” one of my new favorite movies and I strongly encourage everyone to go see it.



ILLUSTRATION BY PEYTON MCKENZIE

Slasher films are coming back with 'Thanksgiving'

By GRACE CONNEELY-NOLAN
Staff Writer

After watching Eli Roth’s “Thanksgiving,” the only thing leftover is the need for a sequel.

“Thanksgiving” is on its way to becoming a holiday classic. The film is kicking off the holiday season with over-the-top gore, laughs, suspense and horror all in one film.

An instant seasonal watch with a campy, refreshing whodunnit mystery, this slasher film was full of entertaining, creative kills. It filled the November horror movie void, offering terror in a season filled with Hallmark movies.

Where are all the Thanksgiving movies? I can’t remember the last time I saw a film dedicated to Thanksgiving hit the box office. Roth’s “Thanksgiving” attracts multiple generations with its star quality, from Patrick Dempsey and Rick Hoffman to Milo Manheim and Addison Rae. It introduces underlying themes of goofy murders juxtaposed with local townsfolk trying to solve a mystery — a total sinister feast frenzy.

Set in Plymouth, Massachusetts, the holiday’s birthplace, this town returns to its pilgrim roots. A killer taking on the identity of the first governor, John Carver, terrorizes those involved in the stampeding of Right Mart stores in the previous year’s Black Friday disaster, which killed his pregnant girlfriend. Dressed in a pilgrim mask and hat, the silent killer targets people responsible for ruining his life, leaving him alone on Thanksgiving.

The killer’s voice was not revealed until the ending scenes, making it even more creepy. It added to the suspense and mystery, which is good because Dempsey’s horrible Boston accent would have been a dead giveaway. Even if the killer used a voice-altering device throughout

and not just towards the end, the style in how he talked could lead you to guess sooner who it was.

This year’s Sexiest Man Alive gave a surprising performance. Dempsey’s reveal made sense in the end but lacked signs of disturbance throughout the movie that he was mentally unstable or struggling in some way. Maybe a hint at a history of popping pills or anger issues would have made him a more viable option.

Going through a tragedy affects people in different ways. Still, I felt his backstory did not give him enough ammunition to create an altered personality and start to target and kill high school kids. His anger was misplaced, blaming them instead of faulting corporate America for not hiring sufficient security guards and losing control of the crowds.

The killer came up with a plan to kill those involved in the Black Friday disaster one by one at his Thanksgiving dinner, setting aside place settings for people he thought were most at fault.

One of the most brutal kills was that of Kathleen, who the killer greased up and dressed as a Thanksgiving turkey. Strapped down on the table and shoved in the oven, the killer burned her alive and served her for dinner, propped and tied up on the table.

It didn’t make sense to me that this character was the one who had the most tragic death because she didn’t have much of an impact on the storyline. Hoffman’s character, Thomas Wright, would have made more sense because he was most at fault.

Being an owner of the Right Mart stores, he was the face of the company, and the obvious scapegoat. He started his Black Friday sale a day early and held the same sale a year later that killed so many people. He would have been the better choice, but as a prominent face in Hollywood, it

is probably not a great look for Hoffman to be propped up and fried on the table like his partner.

“Thanksgiving” is rooted in the blatant greed and capitalism of Black Friday. This movie emphasized the barbarism surrounding how shallow and ruthless people can be. The beginning scenes showed the ugliest side of people as they tried to score the best deals no matter the cost. This scene pokes fun at how crazy Black Friday can be with a gory twist — people trampled to death, glass shards cutting necks, limbs breaking, all for a deal on a waffle maker.

I was apprehensive of some of the high school characters portrayed in “Thanksgiving” but was pleasantly surprised. Nell Verlaque was able to play the main character Jess, a realistic high schooler, despite being several years older and having a thinly written character development.

I also appreciate Rae’s character, who I thought might still live in the shadow of her TikTok days, but played her side character pretty well for what it was. Accurate portrayals of high schoolers can be difficult to capture, but Roth attracts a younger audience without using forced Gen Z slang, pulling in \$28.4 million in box office tickets.

“Thanksgiving’s” over-the-top gore fits the genre, sometimes to a fault. Toward the end, enough characters started to die, which stripped away storylines and lacked impact. By the end of the film, I had started to become numb to all the scary yet cliché killings.

But I liked it because it was so cheesy. To appreciate this movie, you need to like it for what it is. It is confirmed that Roth will be making a sequel to “Thanksgiving,” so audiences will have a chance to go back for seconds.



ILLUSTRATION BY SHAVONNE CHIN

The Chronicle’s Picks for 'Bests of the Year'

As The Chronicle releases its final issue of the semester, members of the editorial board share their favorite media and pop culture moments from this calendar year.

<p>ZOE LEONE Arts & Life Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Barbie"</p> <p>Favorite album: "Speak Now (Taylor's Version)" by Taylor Swift</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Shrinking"</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: Barbenheimer</p>	<p>JACKLYN PELLEGRINO Arts & Life Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Barbie"</p> <p>Favorite album: "I listen to older music."</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Ginny & Georgia" season two</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: Barbenheimer</p>	<p>KRYSTAL MILLER Associate Arts & Life Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "The Little Mermaid"</p> <p>Favorite album: "Like...?" by Ice Spice</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Jury Duty"</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: Mascara-gate</p>	<p>KATIE LANGLEY Editor-in-Chief</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Bottoms"</p> <p>Favorite album: "The Record" by boygenius</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "What We Do in the Shadows" season five</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: The cockroach at the Met Gala</p>
<p>BENJAMIN YEARGIN Managing Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "The Super Mario Bros. Movie"</p> <p>Favorite album: "Zach Bryan" by Zach Bryan</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Barry" season four</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: CM Punk returning to WWE</p>	<p>PEYTON MCKENZIE Creative Director</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Oppenheimer"</p> <p>Favorite album: "METRO BOOMIN PRESENTS SPIDER-MAN: ACROSS THE SPIDER-VERSE"</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Ted Lasso" season three</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: Gail Lewis</p>	<p>JACK MUSCATELLO Digital Managing Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Oppenheimer"</p> <p>Favorite album: "Oppenheimer Original Score"</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "The Last of Us"</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: Barbenheimer</p>	<p>AMANDA RIHA Design Editor (Fall 2023)</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3"</p> <p>Favorite album: "The First Time" by The Kid LARØ</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Daisy Jones & The Six"</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: Rihanna's half-time show</p>
<p>CONNOR YOUNGBERG Associate Multimedia Editor (Fall 2023)</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse"</p> <p>Favorite album: "Bewitched" by Laufey</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Loki" season two</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: CM Punk returning to WWE</p>	<p>EMILY ADORNO Associate Multimedia Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes"</p> <p>Favorite album: "1989 (Taylor's Version)" by Taylor Swift</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Daisy Jones & The Six"</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: Harry and Meghan scandal with begging for privacy, but then making a documentary about their lives</p>	<p>ALEXANDRA MARTINAKOVA News Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Avatar 2: The Way of Water"</p> <p>Favorite album: "Wake Up & It's Over" by Lovejoy</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Star Wars: Ahsoka"</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: "I'm Just Ken" and "I'm Just Pete" existing</p>	<p>CAT MURPHY News Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes"</p> <p>Favorite album: "Stick Season (We'll All Be Here Forever)" by Noah Kahan</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Criminal Minds: Evolution"</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: George Santos' escapades</p>
<p>A.J. NEWTH Opinion Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Thanksgiving" ("I haven't seen it.")</p> <p>Favorite album: "SOS" by SZA</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "The Bear" season two</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: Grimace shake</p>	<p>MICHAEL LAROCCA Opinion Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse"</p> <p>Favorite album: "Let's Start Here" by Lil Yachty</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Ted Lasso" season three</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: The internet-wide appreciation of Gail Lewis</p>	<p>LILLIAN CURTIN Associate Opinion Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Thanksgiving"</p> <p>Favorite album: "Silence Between Songs" by Madison Beer</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story"</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: The "Angela Bassett Did the Thing" song</p>	<p>CAMERON LEVASSEUR Sports Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Killers of the Flower Moon"</p> <p>Favorite album: "Zach Bryan" by Zach Bryan</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Man, I don't be watching TV like that."</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: When the Patriots won a game</p>
<p>ETHAN HURWITZ Sports Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Oppenheimer"</p> <p>Favorite album: "bub" by Hoodie Allen</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "I Think You Should Leave" season three</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: "Just How You Like It" charva TikTok trend</p>	<p>AMANDA DRONZEK Associate Sports Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes"</p> <p>Favorite album: "AURORA" by Daisy Jones & The Six</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Gen V"</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: Xander Bogaerts having a terrible season with the Padres</p>	<p>COLIN KENNEDY Associate Sports Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Mission Impossible 7: Dead Reckoning"</p> <p>Favorite album: "Zach Bryan" by Zach Bryan</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Succession" season four</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: CM Punk returning to WWE</p>	<p>AIDAN SHEEDY Photography Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Oppenheimer"</p> <p>Favorite album: "nadie sabe lo que va a pasar mañana" by Bad Bunny</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Black Mirror: Beyond the Sea"</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: Shohei Ohtani striking out Mike Trout to capture World Baseball Classic championship for Japan</p>
<p>TRIPP MENHALL Associate Photography Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse"</p> <p>Favorite album: "For All The Dogs" by Drake</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Kaleidoscope"</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce</p>	<p>CARLEIGH BECK Copy Editor (Fall 2023)</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Barbie"</p> <p>Favorite album: "So Much (for) Stardust" by Fall Out Boy</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "The Great British Bake Off" season 14</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: Taylor Swift's The Eras Tour</p>	<p>AMANDA MADERA Copy Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour"</p> <p>Favorite album: "For All The Dogs" by Drake</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Love Island USA" season five</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: Timothée Chalamet and boygenius pretending to be Troye Sivan on "Saturday Night Live"</p>	<p>RYAN JOHANSON Copy Editor</p> <p>Favorite movie: "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse"</p> <p>Favorite album: "Religiously. The Album." by Bailey Zimmerman</p> <p>Favorite TV show: "Loki" season two</p> <p>Favorite pop culture moment: Post Malone performing at The CMAs</p>



ILLUSTRATION BY CONNOR YOUNGBERG

Leaning into strengths

Men’s hockey gaining ‘buy-in,’ playing cohesively as season nears midpoint

By CAMERON LEVASSEUR
Sports Editor

A little more than a week after blowing a two-goal third period lead against Boston University, Quinnipiac men’s hockey bounced back with a commanding road sweep at RPI and Union in its final conference weekend of 2023.

The Bobcats outscored their opponents a combined 10-1 to secure their sixth and seventh ECAC Hockey wins of the season, barreling toward the holiday break with seven wins in their last eight games.

After a rocky stretch to open the season that had some questioning the legitimacy of the reigning national champions, the reason for Quinnipiac’s recent run of success is two-fold.

For one, the prowess of the Bobcats’ recent opponents has not been exceptional. Cornell is the only ECAC team besides Quinnipiac ranked top-30 in the PairWise. Every other conference opponent its faced thus far sits in the bottom third of college hockey.

But with the exception of an early November tie at Dartmouth, the Bobcats have dominated in conference. They’ve scored at least five goals in every win and average a margin of victory over four goals.

Fueling that offense is a cohesive transition game that was missing in stretches during the early stages of the season. Defensive zone turnovers and lackluster passing haunted the Bobcats in losses against UNH and Maine.

But against RPI and Union, their passing was crisp and puck protection was elite.

“That’s how we play every game, that’s what we want to do,” head coach Rand Pecknold said.

What makes Quinnipiac’s offense so deadly is its ability to go north to south in a flash (Look at junior forward Jacob Quillan’s national championship-winning goal if you have any doubts). The Bobcats consistently look for stretch passes on the breakout, going cross-ice or up the middle to the centerman or far-side winger rather than activating a man off the half wall.

When they do attempt board-side breakouts, it most often results in a chip off the glass or boards or a delivery to the near side winger who is already in the neutral zone.

Quinnipiac has the luxury of limiting half wall breakout attempts because its 1-1-3 trap forces a tremendous amount of dump-ins and neutral zone turnovers. This gives the puck to the defenseman as the play is still moving south, leaving room for cross-ice passes that can catch the defending team on its heels as it shifts back toward its own zone.

Take, for example, sophomore forward Sam Lipkin’s goal against RPI on Dec. 1. Neutral zone pressure caused a dump in as the Engineers went for a line change. Senior defenseman Cooper Moore skated around the left side of the net and fired a pass up to Quillan waiting at the red line. Quillan gathered the puck and dropped it to graduate defense-

man Jayden Lee, who took three strides to gain separation from a defender before sending a cross-ice pass on the tape of Lipkin for him to walk in and rip a shot bar down from the faceoff dot.

It’s not that those plays were missing at the start of the season, they just weren’t as plentiful. Overall improvement in team cohesion, boosted by the return of junior forward Collin Graf from injury, and the progression of elite level passing from the backend through November and early December has allowed this offense to shine.

That passing has improved as all six of the Bobcats primary defensemen have stepped into increasingly larger offensive roles. Lee, junior Davis Pennington and sophomore Charles Alexis Legault have been catalysts on the rush, often skating the puck out of their own zone and accompanying the play well into the offensive zone.

Likewise, turning defense into offense has helped Quinnipiac keep the puck out of its own net. The Bobcats are allowing just 1.9 goals per game this season, second-best in the country and 0.3 below their final mark from last season.

“I think right now we’re really gelling together as a team defensively,” Moore said. “We’re kind of finding our stride and everyone’s buying in. It’s looking good for us.”

Moore, a North Dakota transfer, has helped fill the hole left by the graduation of Zach Metsa and Jake Johnson, both with his

play and his leadership.

“Anyone as an upperclassman (wants to) take guys under your wing,” Moore said. “So if you see a guy with his head hanging, you know you’ve been through that, so you can tell him how to get over that. But also, bringing energy to every game. Every game is important. You don’t want to lose games in November and look back in March and think ‘What if?’”

The Bobcats only lost one game in November, setting the tone to close out the first half of the season strong against LIU this Saturday.

“We’ve still got LIU, that’s a big game for us,” Lipkin said. “And going into break, obviously go home, see the family, reset mentally then we’ll be on the ice ready to go for the next stretch. We really like where we’re at right now.”

This team is not perfect. Pecknold admits that its buy-in is “not quite there yet.” But the systems at the core of Quinnipiac hockey have seen great improvement from a roster drastically different from this time last year — and things will continue to get better.

“It’s just a process,” Pecknold said. “It’s not just our new guys, it’s our returners. Sometimes, when you win you think it’s going to be easy the next year. When you get offered an NHL contract you think it’s going to be easy the next year. But it’s not, it’s harder. But we’re getting there though, I’m happy with our progress.”



Junior forward Collin Graf rips a one-timer in the Bobcats’ 5-0 win over Union on Dec. 2. Graf has 20 points in 11 games, averaging an NCAA-leading 1.82 points per game.

TYLER RINKO/CHRONICLE

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in the pole vault, freshman Meghan Stelhorn finished fifth in the shot put and freshman Shaelyn Murphy left to a three-way tie for fourth place in the high jump.

“(DeBellis and Murphy) were really poised and ready to go,” Martin said. “They didn’t seem flustered at all to compete hard.”

During last season’s opening meet at Boston University, Smith finished 10th in the 300-meter run. This year, she placed seventh.

“(We’re) putting our best foot forward so that we can compete the best we can,” Smith said. “I’m excited to see what we can do.”

With one meet under its belt in the 2023-24 season, Quinnipiac’s upperclassmen raised the stakes for the team’s future success.

For Martin, the key to success is simple: “Build great relationships, build great culture (and) teach these younger kids exactly what it’s like to be a Quinnipiac student-athlete.”

The Bobcats are back in action Dec. 9 at the Yale Season Opener.



CWEB NEWS/FLICKR, PHOTOILLUSTRATION BY CONNOR YOUNGBERG

The never-before-told story about the Quinnipiac men’s basketball program’s interest in Jimmy Butler

By **ETHAN HURWITZ**
Sports Editor

Much of Jimmy Butler’s life has been highly publicized. From his rough upbringing to his rise to NBA stardom, people know the story of the Miami Heat shooting guard.

But before he was a six-time All-Star, five-time All-NBA member and five-time All-Defensive team selection, Butler was a zero-star recruit out of Tomball, Texas. With a population of just under 13,000, he stood out quickly. Averaging just shy of 20 points and nine rebounds per game as a senior, he was the Tomball Cougars’ most valuable player.

The thing was, colleges at the Division I level were focused on bigger name high schools and bigger name players. They seemed to ignore Butler. He would attend Tyler Junior College for a season before making the Division I jump.

Butler had a scholarship offer from Centenary College of Louisiana, then a Division-I school. That was his only full-ride offer to play at the next level. The only other mid-major team looking his way? Quinnipiac — partially.

What if he had come to Quinnipiac for the 2007-08 season? It could have happened, yet no one knows it.

“Quinnipiac showed the most interest in

Jimmy, from my perspective,” Brad Ball, Butler’s head coach at Tomball High School, said. “They seemed really, really interested and they seemed to really like him and that was a real possibility, and Jimmy wanted to pursue it.”

When the Bobcats’ program brought in a new coaching staff for that season, it also came with an expectation to find some new talent that could help spur a change in Hamden. That started with hiring Tom Moore to lead the charge. On that staff was assistant Eric Eaton, who already had prior connections within the Texas area.

“I had reached out to the high school coaches to try to find out transcripts and how good of a student they are and find out more about their backgrounds,” Eaton said. “This (Butler) kid from Tomball High School, 6’5,” 6’6” wing, was one of them.”

Despite Butler being nearly 1,800 miles away from the Quinnipiac campus and — at that point — just a scrawny slasher, he had made an impact on the Bobcats coaching staff that only had a limited amount of scholarships to offer.

“I think they liked his versatility,” Ball said. “He was really good off the dribble and his mid-range game. I mean, he’s got the best mid-range

game of any high school player I’ve ever seen.”

That mid-range game, which has been perfected at the sport’s highest level, blossomed during his time as a teenager. Though major conference colleges were not giving Butler looks, that did not deter him in his journey.

Lisa Streat, one of Butler’s high school computer teachers, always knew that he was special and that his aspirations were sky-high. Now as the school’s assistant principal, she’s able to look back at her former student and smile.

“He always said that he was going to be a professional basketball player,” Streat said. “All kids have those dreams of being in the pros, but I don’t think anybody actually believed that that was going to happen, other than Jimmy ... This was going to be his life’s mission. He made it his mission, even as a young kid.”

Quinnipiac never made Butler a formal offer or hosted him on a visit, mainly because of the limited number of roster spots the program could fill. But had he come to Hamden, Eaton was certain he would have worn the Bobcat blue and gold.

“If we brought Jimmy on a visit and didn’t take him, I probably would have to quit the business,” said Eaton, who is now the head coach at Division II Saint Michael’s in Albany.

“No, we never got to that point.”

Instead of joining Quinnipiac, Butler stayed at home, suiting up for Tyler Junior College. But the Bobcats did not give up on getting their coveted player. Despite missing out on the future NBA star in year one, Moore’s staff still stayed in touch.

“There’s a lot of people that never got as far as we did as far as recruiting because I actually had gone down the following year down to Tyler to recruit him,” Eaton said. “When I went down to the game the following year, Jimmy was killing it, right? And I went down to a game (where) he had like 25 and 14 rebounds. And I was like, well (we’re) done recruiting him.”

With his impressive numbers in JUCO, he began to make a name for himself that was growing around basketball circles. Although Quinnipiac maintained continued interest, he found a fit with the Marquette Golden Eagles in 2008-09. The rest is history.

“The past may have made him the guy he is today,” Ball said. “He ended up playing for a really good junior college coach, a really good coach at Marquette and he’s played for great coaches in the NBA. So maybe that’s the way it was meant to be.”

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Besides the Harvard game, freshman forward Anna Foley has notched double digits in each of Quinnipiac’s first six games — averaging 12.7 on the season.

Sophomore forward Ella O’Donnell achieved her career high in points (22) on Nov. 25 against Navy, and will be valuable when paired with Foley in the front court.

Around them are freshmen guards Paige Girardi, Karson Martin, Cassidy Thompson and Maria Kealy, junior guard Reiven Douglas, junior forward Grace LaBarge and Bowen.

Girardi played all 40 minutes in this past Thursday’s contest against URI, facing consistent pressure bringing the ball upcourt from the Rams’ guards. Her and Douglas handled it well, despite first-quarter turbulence in that department from the Bobcats.

“(Girardi) has been so good, but tonight she was exceptional,” Fabbri said. “That was an exceptional game.”

Despite Martin being out with an elbow injury (she’s considered game-to-game), she is arguably one of the most important parts of the Bobcats’ offense. Her presence adds an energy and quickness that’s hard to replicate, especially on transition. Her speed brings out the best in her teammates

too; Foley is able to quarterback the offense and pass the rock easier.

LaBarge struggled to start the season, shooting 27% from the field, and was benched against URI in favor of Kealy, but I view a lot of her issues as getting used to the team. She has had trouble with her defensive positioning and being in the right spots, but as she plays more and communicate more, that will decrease.

The next few games will be challenging for Quinnipiac.

The Bobcats have arguably their biggest challenge of the season, as they face Princeton on Wednesday night at 7 p.m, who was previously ranked at No. 25.

From there, Quinnipiac hosts Patriot League champion Holy Cross on Dec. 10, will have a rendezvous with Rider for its first MAAC game on Dec. 18, a Battle of Whitney Avenue at Yale on Dec. 30 and then will dive straight into conference play.

But going forward, one thing is certain for the Bobcats: they will stick to their process. They will crawl, walk, jog, run and then sprint. Following Rhode Island, Fabbri knows where Quinnipiac is and where it will continue to build heading into conference play — they’re out of the crawl and maybe walking.

“We got up on two (feet) tonight,” Fabbri said.



ZACK HOCHBERG/CHRONICLE

‘We don’t give up’: Women’s basketball fighting through non-conference play

By BENJAMIN YEARGIN
Managing Editor

The 2023-24 Quinnipiac women’s basketball team has been an enigma so far.

On one hand, the Bobcats convincingly beat Maine on opening night — which sits at 5-4 and only lost by eight to No. 16-ranked Indiana — and won a thriller in Kingston, Rhode Island, over URI, who beat then No. 25 Princeton three days later.

But on the other hand, this team got walloped by Harvard, lost a winnable game against Vermont and got swept by Navy and Towson in the Navy Classic.

If you came here looking for a prediction on the Bobcats’ future, you’re in the wrong spot. I have no clue how this team will do once conference play starts or how far they’ll go in the MAAC Tournament.

I can, however, tell you a couple things based on their recent performances.

First of all, Quinnipiac fights no matter what the scenario is. Nothing exemplifies that more than its two-point win over the Rhode Island Rams on Nov. 30.

“We are fighters,” junior guard Jackie Grisdale said after the win. “We don’t give up.”

Lose all of your bigs to foul trouble and have to play five guards against Rhode Island’s 6-foot-2-inch senior forward Mayé Touré? No problem. Sophomore guard Bri Bowen will clutch the game out with a buzzer beater to get the Bobcats the win.

Play a non-conference schedule comprised of four conference champions or co-champions with a roster that’s half newcomers? Bring it on.

Secondly, the Bobcats have improved since the Nov. 6 contest against Maine, despite what their 2-4 record may indicate. Head coach Tricia Fabbri and the rest of the Quinnipiac staff have observed the improvements first-hand.

“People were checking in, like, ‘How are you doing?’” Fabbri said on Nov. 30. “We’re great as a staff, we see improvement coming. We see the trees for the forest and the forest for the trees.”

Even following the 85-41 clobbering at the hands of the Harvard Crimson, the Bobcats improved. They held their own in the 58-53 loss to a tough Vermont squad that brought back two America East first-teamers: graduate student guard Emma Utterback and senior forward Anna Olson.

But in that same game where Quinnipiac improved in a more general sense, there was still a whole lot to work on.

The Bobcats had trouble from beyond the arc and at the free-throw line, shooting a measly 20% and 30%, respectively. They also struggled defensively, having trouble communicating and adjusting to Utterback.

“Communication is a two-way street,” Grisdale said following the Nov. 17 loss to Vermont. “That’s going to help us a lot on defense with getting through screens.”

With all of its improvements the Bobcats still need to make, I’d be remiss not to mention that they have a really solid core to build upon and have a lot of positives going for them.

It all starts and ends with their rock of consistency: Grisdale.

Throughout the first six games, the Poland, Ohio, native is averaging 15.5 points per game, 2.5 rebounds per game and 1.3 assists per game. Those are numbers that could land you on the All-MAAC First Team if you keep them up throughout the season.

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PEYTON MCKENZIE/CHRONICLE

Junior guard Jackie Grisdale is averaging 15.5 points per game through six games this season.

MAAC on track: A look at women’s indoor track and field

By AMANDA DRONZEK
Associate Sports Editor

Fall brought Quinnipiac women’s cross country to its second-consecutive MAAC Championship. In the winter months, Quinnipiac is slated to finish second for a consecutive year in women’s indoor track and field, per the MAAC Preseason Coaches’ Poll. The Bobcats tallied 179 points in the meet but fell short of Rider’s 193 points.

This year, the indoor track and field team aims to surpass that success and clinch the MAAC.

“We’re going to try to win (the MAAC) this year,” junior sprinter Rylie Smith said.

At the 2022-23 MAAC Indoor Track and Field Championships, Smith earned a state medal and set the program record 400-meter run with a time of 55.21.

“My freshman year I had a really hard time,” Smith said. “The summer before my sophomore year, I knew I had to make a change. It’s really important to build up before the season starts.”

According to Smith, head coach Carolyn Martin has adjusted preseason workouts.

“They’ve (Runners) been doing meet situation(s) at practice,” Martin said. The Bobcats are working to build endurance and maintain speed in every event.

“We lost a few staples to the team but the freshmen that came in (have) been doing well,” Smith said. “Everyone has improved so much from last year.”

The loss of Emily Young leaves a hole in the middle distance part of the team. Young competed in six seasons with the Bobcats, taking home the gold for the 800-meter during the MAAC Indoor Track and Field Championships.

However, Quinnipiac returns a handful of runners who had impressive indoor campaigns.

“This year, (we’ve) got more up-perclassmen that are taking that step to show these kids,” head coach Carolyn Martin said referencing the large returning sophomore class.

Last season, the Bobcats’ dominant 4x400 squad of Smith, then junior Alyssa Romagnoli and former freshmen Sydney Lavelle and Izzie Anzaldo won the relay in the MAAC Championships.

Then freshman jumper Erin Brennan earned first in the MAAC Championships pole vault and broke the program record of 3.46 meters.

Junior jumper and sprinter Olaitan Olagundoye placed first in the high jump, recording 1.65 meters.

“I’m trying to bring everyone together (and) always be positive,” said Smith, regarding a larger leadership role. “We’re all very close so we feed off each other’s energy.”

On Saturday, Quinnipiac began its campaign at Boston University’s Sharon Colyear-Danville Season Opener.

“(The meet) was night and day from last year to this year,” Martin said.

The Bobcats continued their success in the 4x400-meter relay with a third place finish in their season opener. This was accompanied by a handful of top-10 performances from the team. Junior Avery Jordan won the 60-meter hurdles and Olagundoye finished second in the high jump.

Quinnipiac’s new blood shined as freshman Olivia DeBellis placed third

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