

# The Tamarack

Our college. Our news. Our voice.

Naugatuck Valley Community College

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Waterbury, Connecticut

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## Exploring CT's Freedom Trail

Jane Courlet

John Brown's birthplace, John Brown Road, Torrington. Photo Courtesy of Cornell University

Lighthouse Archaeological Site, located in Barkhamsted's People's State Forest.

A replica of the Freedom Schooner Amistad.

Boston Trowtrow gravesite located at Norwich's Old Burying Ground.

The Amistad Memorial located at 165 Church St, New Haven. Photo Courtesy of Amistad Committee Inc.

All photos courtesy of [ctfreedomtrail.org](http://ctfreedomtrail.org) unless noted otherwise, map from Google Maps

*Half-hidden in nearly every town and city, the sites of the Connecticut Freedom Trail remind us history is not inscrutable, but alive and ready to teach and inspire.*

If you haven't used the excellent online resource, The Connecticut Freedom Trail ([ctfreedomtrail.org](http://ctfreedomtrail.org)), February's Black History Month is the perfect time to learn about and visit important sites in the lives of African-American men and women in the Nutmeg State.

Few symbols of triumph over slavery are as recognizable to CT residents as The Amistad, a Spanish schooner carrying 53 Mende tribal captives from their home, now Sierra Leone, bound for enslavement in the Caribbean in 1839. Cinque, a Mende leader, led an onboard uprising, leaving all but two of the ship's crew dead. When Cinque demanded the vessel be brought to Africa, The Amistad was instead navigated by stealth to Long Island Sound,

eventually docking at New Haven Harbor. The Mende survivors' ensuing legal battle and eventual victory captured the world's attention, and was detailed in the 1997 film, *Amistad*.

A modern Amistad replica is docked in its New Haven homeport, where it is sometimes open to tours, and occasionally out on educational voyages in area waters. A three-sided monument to Cinque stands at 165 Church Street in New Haven, in a metered parking area near the site of the original building where he and his fellow Mende were jailed. The Amistad Center for Art & Culture, located in Farmington, where the case was tried, offers seasonal walking tours of Farmington locales where the Mende lived.

Torrington was the birthplace of abolitionist John Brown, whose zealous mission to ignite a slave rebellion shook awake people of every color and mind to the possibility of war. In 1859, Brown led a raid at a federal armory in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, hoping to supply

slaves with weapons and ammunition to overcome their oppressors. His actions led to several deaths, including that of his own son. He was hanged for treason, insurrection and murder. His Torrington homestead, on John Brown Road, was a popular tourist spot until it burned down in 1918. Historical markers currently surround the remaining foundation, and there has been talk of building a model of the home.

Gunntown Passive Park, an open space in Naugatuck, was where a slave named Tobiah risked his life trying to foil a kidnapping. He was a witness for the prosecution and later freed from slavery after his service in the Revolutionary War. Besides a plaque, there is nothing to see at the park, but there is plenty to think about.

Lighthouse Archaeological Site, located in Barkhamsted's People's State Forest, was founded in 1740 by Mary (Molly) Barber, a white woman from Wethersfield whose father disapproved of

her marriage to James Chaugham, a member of the Narragansett tribe from Block Island. This haven in the woods, included in the National Register of Historic Places, existed for people of mixed race ancestry for 120 years.

Norwich's Old Burying Ground houses a grave of distinction, in the back section, belonging to Boston Trowtrow, Black Governor of Norwich from 1770-72. For a time, African Americans, elected by both free and slave, wielded governance over their communities. Incidentally, this cemetery also contains the grave of Benedict Arnold's mother. An interesting counterpoint to the idea of fate vs. free will: her grave is well-marked; one must scour rambling plots to find the Governor's resting place.

These are just a few of many places to explore CT Black History. Half-hidden in nearly every town and city, the sites of the Connecticut Freedom Trail remind us history is not inscrutable, but alive and ready to teach and inspire.

## Shutdown or Tantrum?

Alexander Wilson

December 22, 2018, President Trump made the bold decision to partially shut down the government. This is the third shutdown in his presidency, only two full years into a four-year term. As of January 24th, the government had been shut down for 34 days. This beats the record, making it the lengthiest government shutdown in history—all because our president hasn't gotten the funds he wants for the United States/Mexico border wall.

A primary point to note is the majority of individuals Donald Trump is trying so hard to keep out of the country do not cross the southern border in the dead of night. In fact, one of the biggest causes of what Trump likes to call "illegal immigration" occurs when people overstay their visas. Another presumption is that immigrants would not find other ways to enter America. Building a wall won't prevent air or water travel. Immigration aside,

let's consider why the government shutdown is such a big deal.

Logically speaking, the president is essentially holding the country hostage. As of this writing, America has been in this situation for over a month, with no solution in sight, as Trump insists he will not relent until he gets his wall. He's decided to allocate five billion dollars to this project, reneging on his previous promise that Mexico would pay for the wall. It's interesting to consider the cost of the shutdown could easily exceed the proposed cost of the wall.

Approximately 800,000 government employees are affected directly. Some have been told to stay home; others are forced to work without pay. Social security remains unaffected, as well as Medicare and Medicaid. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, commonly known as food stamps) has funding—for now. February benefits were paid out early to compensate for the shutdown. However, there may not be enough funds to get through until March. Many families will be affected, as they rely on these benefits. Food banks are seeing more people lining up for assistance.

Several government agencies are experiencing cuts in funding, to the point they can hardly function. The US Department of Agriculture is able to continue inspections on meat and poultry, but the Food and Drug Administration is unable to keep up inspections of processed foods and produce. We recently saw a nationwide recall on romaine lettuce potentially infected with E. coli, due to insufficient regulations already impacted by Trump's administration. Future effects on food safety could be worse, with fewer workers available, and even fewer willing to work without pay.

The Transportation Safety Administration (TSA), notorious for long airport wait times, is getting even slower. Though expected to work without pay, many agents are calling in sick, leaving fewer available for security checks. And while they have been promised back pay once the shutdown ends, that won't pay bills piling up now.

The Environmental Protection Agency had funds rescinded, and labs closed, with little notice. National Parks have either closed or remain open with limited access. With few rangers patrolling, and bathrooms locked, garbage and waste has piled up, polluting

the parks. Even Trump's own Secret Service employees are working without pay. With the nation on the brink of financial crisis, numerous proposals have been made to the President, but—short of a wall—nothing seems likely to bring an end to this standstill.

Recently, a picture went viral of a gleeful President Trump showcasing an array of fast food presented buffet-style on White House silver platters. He boasted that, due to the shutdown—a problem he created—he'd paid out-of-pocket for this "feast" to celebrate Clemson University's College Football Playoff National Championship victory. It begs the question: Should a man who considers cold "hamburders" worthy of praise continue to run, or rather, not run, the country?

While average Americans face crises—struggling to make ends meet, to put food on the table, to pay bills—Mitch McConnell continues to block any proposals Trump might be prompted to sign. As he continues to insist on a wall (stopping just short of holding his breath), Trump is at once a pawn of the GOP, a dictator, and a menace. Can we survive much longer under this tyrannical rule, and is bullying really the way to "make America great again"?

## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



## Today's Special

Often, we encounter situations where pushing to get results is counterproductive.

You may find yourself doing everything in your power to get the result you want, but still end up short in the grand scheme. It feels like you have your priorities straight, yet the world has its own plan that takes different avenues.

You say to yourself one day, "I'm going to learn to cook pineapple chicken." Then, the day arrives to do the deed, but you never end up doing so. Delving deeper into your intentions, you contemplate, it's not that you're incapable. It's that the powers that be have metaphorically thrown something else on your plate, you'd have never imagined.

It may be your cousins have arrived unannounced, and they're craving Italian instead. Or perhaps your significant other suddenly needs to be taken to the hospital, and nothing else seems as important. Nevertheless, the pineapple chicken learning will not be taking place this day. So, what do you do?

You could choose to go where life takes you from that point, but the important aspect is the need to return tomorrow. Each of us develops a calling from within, but starting something new or different is difficult—not just because one must humble oneself, having no prior knowledge in the field, but also because, every time one does try, life happens.

It's ironic; tomorrow you awake feeling unproductive after a long night hosting those cousins. Or you're exhausted from a night in the ER with your partner. Since your body has a near-empty tank of desire to do anything, the TV seems the perfect escape to wander your mind into bliss. Yet, when you turn it on, you find Gordon Ramsay teaching how to make the most perfect pineapple chicken dish even a top chef would eat off the ground.

It's frustrating no doubt to find when we want to do something we can't, but then it's offered up on a plate when we leave it alone. This example happens time and again; however, some of us lose our elasticity to get off that couch and follow along from the kitchen.

The same could be said about college. Some assignments, like that essay due a little while ago, may not have been completed. A professor says she will accept a late submission with a loss of points. In both scenarios, you must develop the resilience needed to follow through—to try, try again tomorrow despite fate's sway to make you forget—or else settle for producing an entrée you weren't expecting.

Regards,  
Alam Khan  
Editor-in-Chief  
tamarack@nv.edu

## Celebrating a Job Well-done

Tamarack Staff



Wednesday, December 12th, Tamarack staff members old and new gathered to celebrate another successful semester. The pizza-based celebration was well-attended by current staff members, as well as visiting alumni. Professor Parlato, advisor to the newspaper, thanked his staff for their excellent work, and encouraged them to get ready to do it all over again come spring. Pictured Front Row L to R: Alam Khan, Christopher Gordon, Matthew Olivares, Nicole Hayes, Rich Bosco, Gwenydd Miller, and Irisa Hoxha. Back Row L to R: Mitchell Maknis, Steve Parlato, Tom Conte, Andre Williams, and Christian Cruz.

## Center for Teaching

## Staying the Course

Dr. Patricia Pallis

Dr. Pallis, a longtime Center for Teaching Committee member, is a past CFT Teaching and Learning Consultant. A Professor of English, she is currently Humanities Chair in the LABSS Division.

As a member of NVCC's local Center For Teaching, I get the opportunity to meet with other faculty to think and talk about teaching and learning. The opportunity to have these conversations is meaningful and has a significant impact on how I teach and interact with both my colleagues and students. Recently, I've been thinking about that post-mid-semester period of the spring semester and how challenging that can be. Poet T.S. Eliot said that "April is the cruelest month" in *The Waste Land*, and while he wasn't writing about the spring semester, he could have been.

I've always thought the spring semester is more challenging than the fall semester. I'm not sure why that is. It may be that the spring semester starts in the cold of winter. It may be because everything felt possible in September because it was a new academic year. I don't know, but I do think having a successful spring semester is all about being positive and building good habits early on.

So... why think about April in February? There's a good reason to think about it. If you're anything like me (now and when I was an

undergraduate), the start of the semester is always exciting (even in January): new classes, new faces (on both sides of the desk), and a fresh start. I am full of energy and ready to go. And that energy usually sustains me well through mid-term (especially because we have the promise of a spring break in March)—even though the workload can get heavier. And May is easy—the end is in sight. May is full of possibilities: the sun is warming things up, nature astounds us with more shades of green than I ever think possible, students are graduating and moving on to new opportunities, and summer is right around the corner.

But there is April, and that's the part of the semester when we have to persevere. We need to keep at it—even when we don't feel like keeping at it. Because April also brings the promise of May and the end of another successful semester.

So what I'm planning on doing is building good habits now. I want to stay organized and focused so I know what I need to accomplish when things get busy. But part of that good-habit building is going to be about being positive. I'll avoid the pressures of April by facing them with a willingness to get the work done and to be better than I was when the semester started. I plan to have a really good semester, and I hope you do too!

“...having a successful spring semester is all about being positive and building good habits early on.”

## SGA PRESIDENT



## Brand New Start

Happy February, and welcome back to a new semester! I hope you all had a great and restful break, and that everyone is ready to get back into the swing of things. As February brings love, the SGA brings plenty of events as well as SGA meetings.

Starting things off, on February 5th, the SGA will be hosting a speed friending event from 12:30 - 2:30 PM in Café West. I'm sure you've heard of speed dating; well, we're giving it a new spin with speed friending! It is a great way to meet new people and make new friends in a fast-paced environment. If you're interested in attending, and would like to register before the event, send an email with your information to NV-SGA-President@nvcc.commnet.edu.

Also this month, is our annual Valentine's Day Party on Thursday, February 14th, from 11:30 AM - 2:30 PM. There will be free food, as always, as well as fun competitive games that you can play to win a free gift card. Also at this event, we will be selling Valentine's Day Gift Baskets and goodies, so don't forget to bring a dollar or two to get your loved one—or yourself—a gift!

The start of a new semester also means Student Government Association meetings will begin again. Our first meeting is on February 6th at 4:00 PM in room L501. SGA meetings are open to everyone, and students are encouraged to attend.

If you wish to join the SGA as a senator and have not put your application in, it's not too late. Bring in your petition as soon as possible and we can get you on the following week's agenda. The SGA is also looking for a new Treasurer; if you wish to get more information on what the job entails, you can visit the SGA office in room S516 or email us NV-SGA@nv.edu.

Furthermore, follow the SGA on Instagram @NVCC\_SGA or Twitter @NVCCSGA to stay up to date on the latest events on campus! Of course, if you're not on social media, you can always look at the monitors around campus and check your student email for announcements about events.

I look forward to seeing everyone this semester, and I hope you have a wonderful and successful month!

Best Regards,  
Tabitha Cruz

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The department is staffed:

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## Made in China

Alam Khan



There's a lot happening in world politics. Each day brings tension between nations pushing and pulling for their sovereign interest.

Often times, it's hard to hold those accountable who have more power over weaker countries. Moreover, who has the right to meddle in other's issues when they should instead be focused on their own? Or how much should one be willing to go in to a faraway country, spending resources, to keep those accountable from doing wrong?

The truth is, it's difficult enough keeping our own in check. As a result, it may require deeper thought for these questions when looking into recent events taking place in Xinjiang, China. Some like to call it indoctrination; some prefer its better-known name: *brainwashing*. The problem is it has happened before.

Opposite to the *Little Red Book*, by Mao Zedong, during the Communist uprising,

indigenous Muslims—Uighurs, Kazakhs and other ethnic minorities of the region—are being forced to throw away their Qurans. Reports from a variety of media outlets, including *The New York Times*, illustrate concentration camps in modern-day 2019. The examples seem as if they were plucked from a science lab, with people treated like rats in cages, experimented on to cure a new disease.

Those who have made it out describe the daily ordeals of not being allowed to eat and being forced to renounce their identity, so they would be considered faithful citizens of the Chinese Republic. When detainees *do* get to eat, they are served meals of pork and alcohol—in violation of the Quran—supposedly intended to “cleanse and rinse the body of any residual disloyalty.” Each day consists of classes with forced rebuke of religion and culture.

Participants who comply are rewarded with appreciation and approval. From being

punished through force, or pressured by peers to conform, it is not hard to see why one would just play along until reprieve. Unfortunately, once people have been “Made by China,” they are then taken into forced labor with no pay, used to support new production businesses being developed in the region, backed by government support.

Taking a step back, it's not that this goes on without disapproval by human rights officials, and other governments, including the U.S. It's that it keeps happening time and time again. And it always takes too long to help those who need it most through meaningful action. China is a big country, casting an even bigger shadow on other countries, including the U.S., because we rely on each other economically. The next time you make a purchase, check the bottom. As you read “Made in China,” consider that back East they are also casually “Making Ethnic Cleansing”.

# The Tamarack

"Standing, like a resolute tree, as your source for news."

## Editorial

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## Tamarack EDIT MEETINGS

Tuesdays 2:30 - 3:30 pm, S519  
ALL WELCOME!!

## EDITORIAL

### Beyond Ignorance

Most of us take for granted that we get to live our lives without complaint from anyone. I will emphasize MOST, not all by a long shot. There are members of society marginalized in horrific ways because of traits those in the "accepted" majority will not take time to understand. To call it racism, sexism, genderism, or any other "ism," feels like it is putting a "positive" spin on ignorance.

The Tamarack is dedicated to reducing ignorance, which is why we are proud of our award-winning columns, namely, "That's What She Said," by alum, Jess Ney, and "Queer Code," by Senior Staff Writer, Alexander Wilson (not yet an award-winner, but the SPJ Awards happen in May, and "Queer Code" didn't exist last year). While the majority of feedback is positive, there will always be that small segment dedicated to remaining ignorant.

In November, The Tamarack received a response from one reader concerned about "Queer Code" and its goal of educating readers about issues faced by members of the LGBTQ+ community. The specifics of the objection are irrelevant; they mostly amount to "I don't want to learn about this; it's easier for me to remain ignorant."

What is important is this reader made it clear he believed anyone who is transgender is not a person. To be clear, this reader used the word "it" to refer to people who don't fit a very narrow gender definition. To paraphrase again, "If you won't conform to my definition of person, you will not be treated as a person." As a white, heterosexual male, that attitude offended me deeply. I can only imagine the hurt and rage it would induce in someone to have their humanity casually revoked in this way.

To deny the humanity of individuals different from you is unacceptable. If you want to remain ignorant, that's your choice, but I refuse to validate your narrow, bigoted view as "just another opinion". I have better things to do, like support my friends who happen to be transgender, or gay, or unique in some other way you consider inhuman.

I admire the strength it requires to live truthfully in a world containing people so aggressively hateful they would hurt or kill a person simply for being themselves. There have been moments I've made offhand comments that hurt people I care about. I've apologized sincerely, and we've moved forward as friends. It is such mistakes—and the learning that comes from them—that makes us better people.

I cannot force anyone to like "Queer Code," "That's What She Said," or any of our other socially relevant articles intended to educate readers about people they might not ordinarily get to know. However, I choose to learn about people, not dismiss them as irrelevant or inhuman. I urge you to do the same.

## A Fond Farewell

Mitchell W. Maknis



Photo Courtesy of Tracey Maknis

As spring semester begins, NVCC's familiar hallways and classrooms feel somewhat barren. After more than two decades, charismatic Professor William H. Foster III has retired. Most will agree, he demonstrated a genuine display of affection for those around him, starting with his infectious smile. Before Professor Foster cleared out his desk, I was fortunate enough to sit down for an interview and gain insight into his life and career.

Born in Philadelphia, PA, Professor Foster has been writing since the age of eight, even then, incorporating his love and appreciation of family values into his works. Foster elaborated on how his family was, and still is, a form of comfort. Together, they stood strong and protected one another against the modern horrors of violence and racism.

Foster had never dreamed of leaving the comfort and security of his family enclave until, at age 14, he was awarded a scholarship to Amherst Regional High School in Massachusetts. Foster's family urged him to pursue this opportunity, and, hesitant at first, he realized people were counting on him to make a life for himself and to become something his parents were unable to be. He continued his education at the University of Massachusetts, and through diligence and hard work, earned a master's degree in English.

After his time at UMass, Foster traveled to Detroit, then Washington D.C.; putting down roots in Connecticut around 1980, he's resided here ever since. Foster established himself as a copywriter for *Weekly Reader* but eventually left the company and went on to work in part-time

positions at various firms. Then, an acquaintance of his wife's inquired if Foster had ever considered teaching English.

After that fateful encounter, Foster began as an adjunct at NVCC. He fondly recounted his first bewildering experience early in his tenure. It seems he walked into his classroom to find a room filled with students. After giving a brief introduction, he was perplexed when half the students left the classroom when they realized they were attending an English course!

Following that initial moment of disillusion and a brief adjustment period, Foster grew acquainted to his new position, by wholeheartedly tackling the adventures every new semester brings. It wasn't long before he became a fulltime professor. Over the years, Prof. Foster has experienced a variety of lessons he has striven to pass on to students. He was even able to incorporate his life experiences into NVCC's academic program, creating courses such as Graphic Novel as Literature and Self Defense.

Throughout his career, Foster's work has been published in journals and graphic litera-

**"have an open mind, make a goal, and find someone you can work with as opposed to someone you can't."**

*Professor William H. Foster III*

ture. A playwright, he has performed speeches both nationally and internationally. However, after dedicating more than twenty years to NVCC, Foster has reached a point where his personal projects need to be finished. He wants to focus on work he hasn't had the time to get to while teaching.

Foster states he's not anxious over what the future holds; he knows his personal work will take its proper place in his life. Although students and faculty who have become accustomed to Foster's presence must adapt to his leaving, they might find solace in the fact that he's now able to share his whimsical and kind nature with the rest of the world.

Foster solemnly advises those new to the college campus to "have an open mind, make a goal, and find someone you can work with as opposed to someone you can't." He urges students to take time spent at NVCC to learn what they can and cannot do, to better prepare themselves for whatever the future may hold. On behalf of *The Tamarack*, which he successfully led as faculty advisor, we thank Professor Foster for his support and knowledge, and wish him all the best.

## Cocoa and Caroling

Tamarack Staff



Photo Courtesy of Kathleen Chesto

The holidays wouldn't feel complete without beautiful music, hot cocoa and homemade cookies. Thanks to members of the NVCC Music Society, there was no shortage of these three essentials. On December 8, 2018, seven Music Society members met to bake cookies for the "Cocoa and Caroling" event the Society held at Founders Hall to close out the fall semester. The baking, the cookies, the peppermint hot cocoa, and the caroling were all a great success.

## Celebrate Black History!



### Campus-wide Black History Month Activities

#### Soul Food Cinema

**When:** Tuesday, February 19 @12:45pm-2:05pm

**Location:** Café West

#### Black Migrations: A Discussion

**When:** Tuesday, February 26 @11:10am-12:30pm

**Location:** L501



## College Happenings

Alyssa Katz



### UMass Amherst

February 5th, UMass Amherst hosts a day-long event, "Understanding the Forces that Drive Us Apart: A Symposium on Polarization". Not only will it educate on social and political polarization, but it will also offer opportunities to overcome it. The day will start with the history of hate in the historical perspective, followed by a keynote address. Various activities will carry on throughout the day, including a documentary film, and the day will end with an evening keynote address.

<https://www.umass.edu/events/understanding-forces-drive-us>



### Temple University

From January 7th - February 28th, Pennsylvania's Temple University will present a photo exhibit depicting the separation of family during the Korean War. The exhibit will be displayed at the Paley Library, and the photographer/filmmaker, Laura Elizabeth Pohl, will discuss her work at the library on February 7th. The exhibit is interactive, each piece including a phone number one can call to hear the story behind the piece. "A Long Separation" stems from the artist's interest in North Korea and the Korean War.

<https://events.temple.edu/last-chance-a-long-separation-exhibition>



### Carleton College

At Minnesota's Carleton College, February 13th, the three major religions, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, will be set to music with vocalists and musicians depicting the Hispano-Arabic Middle Ages, an important and also devastating time in the three Abrahamic faiths. The concert, "The Rose Ensemble: Music from the Land of Three Faiths," which offers "an exploration of language, spirituality, and cultural exchange in Christian, Jewish, and Arabic musical traditions in late medieval Spain," will feature improvisation, exotic vocal styles, and ancient traditions.

[https://apps.carleton.edu/community/events/?event\\_id=1739709&date=2019-02-13](https://apps.carleton.edu/community/events/?event_id=1739709&date=2019-02-13)



### Clemson University

South Carolina's Clemson U. celebrates Black History Month by recognizing the struggles and achievements of African Americans as well as promoting the diversity of Black identity. This year, the theme is "#BlackEffect: Melanated & Educated." Several events are lined up, including learning the history behind the creation of Black History Month, African American history, and cultural events such as dance. Additionally, there will be opportunities to research one's own ancestry using the library's genealogy resources. The end of the month features a keynote address by Grammy award-winning music producer David Banner, who grew up in Mississippi and has been a voice for social justice. To finish out the month, a film series on seven French women of African descent features their stories of racism and social injustice in French society.

<https://www.clemson.edu/centers-institutes/gantt/multicultural-programs/blackhistorymonth.html>

## Legendary Chef, Carole Peck

Robert Pinto



Photo Courtesy of Good News Cafe FB Page

Driving through Woodbury, you'll see a bright orange sign for "Good News Café," owned and operated by Carole Peck since its inception in 1992. Peck has been in the culinary world since age 15. As a chef, she lived and worked across the U.S. before establishing her legendary restaurant. I had the pleasure of interviewing her recently.

When asked about her culinary inspirations, Peck replied, "I like Lidia Bastianich; she came from an interesting and hardworking background. Before Lidia, I got inspiration from Alice Waters."

Regarding her early days in the food business, Peck said, "I started by working for Howard Johnson when I was 15 in Newburgh, New York. I attended Newburgh Free Academy; my inspiration for going to the Culinary Institute was my high school guidance counselor, Mrs. Woods. She informed me the Culinary Institute was beginning to accept women, so I took her advice."

She continued, "I came from a middle-class background" and "lived in many different and interesting places before opening Good News Café. When I lived in New York City, I was the first chef to introduce the Mediterranean diet into the New York culinary market. Times were different; most people would only go out to eat on special occasions."

Peck shared that "It was a long road from the Culinary Institute to Woodbury. None of it was planned. Being a chef, you tend to move around a lot. I've lived and worked in New York City, Miami, and Hilton Head Island, to name a few. I have a chef who's been part of my team for 30 years. His name is Gonzolo. We go way back. He has a strong attention for detail, and he does not like to waste food. We do not waste any food here at Good News."

Peck's favorite thing about Good News Café, is "I get to work for myself...both a blessing and a curse. I cater to my patrons' needs, offering gluten-free and vegan options. I believe in the French way: being frugal while still creative in the kitchen. If my baker, Annie, is on vacation, I'll go in and bake. I really like being hands-on and creative. If my chefs ask for advice, I'll gladly give it."

When asked her thoughts on Food Network cooking shows, Peck said, "Well, I get called to do sally the time. I refuse. I think it's ridiculous. Don't get me wrong; I like and support competition between chefs, but when you have it on TV and the grand prize is \$10,000, I think it's the wrong setting for that kind of competition." Peck added she's "Not a fan of [brash chefs like] Gordon Ramsay. I don't agree with his methods. I prefer the cooking style of Anthony Bourdain. It's a shame he passed away. What a loss to the culinary world."

Peck surprised me, sharing that 22 years ago she originated Lobster Mac & Cheese dish. She said, "It is everywhere now. Many have tried to copy me, though none have succeeded. I stay true to form with all the dishes I create. With the Lobster Mac & Cheese, you have to use just one cheese, the right amount of cream, plenty of lobster. I get the lobster from Maine. Everything at Good News Café is made from scratch, each food item utilized to its fullest potential."

For a culinary experience like no other, visit this one-of-a-kind establishment. The Good News Café is located at 694 Main Street South, Woodbury. For reservations, call (203) 266-4663.

## Veteran's Voice We Take Care of our Own

Rick Bellagamba



Many men and women returning from deployments have difficulty adjusting to a nonmilitary environment. Some will develop depression soon after discharge, while others may not be affected until years later. PTSD may haunt a soldier for many years – many for the rest of their lives. Their troubles can affect their home life or their performance in the workplace. A military veteran is twice as likely to turn to drugs or alcohol compared to a civilian when depressed.

However, the good news is veterans in need can get help from the VA, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. No veteran will ever be turned away, no matter how many times they need to ask for help. Even civilians can get help from any veterans' hospital at any time.

The VA health care system has some of the best doctors and nurses in the country, including in Puerto Rico. The VA has some of the most up-to-date medical equipment in the country. But there are far more veterans seeking care than there are beds, so it can be frustrating for a veteran to wait to receive an appointment for normal preventive care that fits their personal schedule. Emergency care, however, is never delayed.

The VA has a large out-patient care program. Psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and peer specialists are available if needed or requested. All of these individuals are committed to providing the best care for our nation's veterans.

So if you are a veteran struggling with addiction of any kind, or if you feel depressed or anxious, seek help. If you know a Veteran struggling with mental health issues, depression or anxiety, support them and help them get treatment. I know firsthand how the system works – I get treated for depression and alcoholism. I'm not afraid to show my weaknesses, but I have asked for help, and I receive it unconditionally at the VA. Remember, it takes a warrior to have the courage to ask for help.

## Social Justice Series

### Change and Challenges

Nikki McGary and Kathy Taylor

The Social Justice Series continues this spring with a series of upcoming events; the semester-long theme is *Change and Challenges*. The spring 2019 event schedule is as follows.

**FEBRUARY: On Thursday, 2/7, at 12:45 PM, in A507, Dr. Gilad Harel will host "Music and Social Movements".** Join Dr. Harel as he discusses music and its connection to protest, political movements, and civil rights with a focus on select figures in music history who represent different eras and musical idioms.

**MARCH: On Tuesday, 3/5, at 12:45 PM, in K714b, The Center For Teaching will present "A Social Justice Focus: How to Create Collaborative Teaching Opportunities Across Disciplines".** This CFT workshop will identify social justice topics that can relate to multiple disciplines. Participants will work in pairs or triads to discuss how a select social justice topic relates to their individual courses and create a lesson plan that allows for collaborative teaching opportunities across disciplines. We will also discuss ways that the Social Justice Series and CFT can support your future collaborative efforts.

**APRIL: On Tuesday, 4/2, at 11:10 AM, in L501, join us for "Colonialism: Did it end?"** as Aguibou Bougobali Sanou, NVCC's Fulbright Scholar in Residence, speaks on colonialism, its continuing practice, and its impact around the world.

## Honoring Adjuncts

### Problem/Solution

Rosemary Simko



Photo Courtesy of Rosemary Simko

My name is Rosemary Simko, and I have been an adjunct at NVCC for 13 years. I have most recently settled into teaching ENG 096, Introduction to College English. It is both a satisfying and frustrating experience.

For many students, this is their first college coursework, whatever their age. Many are the first in their family to attend college. Some

**So much of what I teach  
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For every problem, there is  
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embrace the transition; others struggle. As an instructor, I teach students the course material, but also how to navigate the independent nature of college life. Juggling the demands of attending class, completing assignments, sharpening their English language skills, working a job, and often caring for family can be daunting.

This scenario is what shapes me as an instructor. I give students the tools to be successful in not only my class but in others as well. Learning to study in a developmental class is as important as learning to write a well-developed essay. Students will hopefully leave my class with the skill to annotate material to better comprehend it. This gives them an active learner mindset. Taking responsibility for their own education is key. So much of what I teach are techniques to simplify the learning process.

Statistics point to a greater chance at academic success when students pass developmental courses on their first attempt. That is extra incentive for me to reach my students. Our semester mantra is problem/solution. For every problem, there is most definitely a solution, especially here at NVCC.

I want to be sitting on students' shoulders when they've moved on to higher level classes and are struggling. I'll be there reminding them, "You can do this." And most importantly, I want to be sitting on their shoulders as they walk to get their diploma, reminding them, "I knew you could do it!" With all the successes, and even the challenges, I love my job as an instructor here at NVCC, and I especially love the diversity of the student population. I often learn as much from them as they learn from me.

When I'm not grading papers, I'm likely to be traveling off the beaten path with my husband of 31 years. When I'm home, I look forward to visits from our two grown sons and an excuse to cook them a favorite meal.

### Loved it? Hated it?

Send us your letters in response to articles, features, and profiles in The Tamarack. Limit them to 200 words and email them to [tamarack@nv.edu](mailto:tamarack@nv.edu) with the subject line READERS RESPOND. Letters may be edited for length and grammar.



## CAPSS CORNER

### Find Your Voice

My last name, Goulet, is one many people associate with the famous actor/singer, Robert Goulet. I'm often asked if I'm related. Rather than simply saying no, I respond, "No, but I sing just like him." This, of course, is a claim my children would refute, since they've had to endure years of listening to me sing around the house.

When I think about Robert Goulet, the first thing that comes to mind is the power of his voice, and the impact it has when he sings songs with a meaningful message. Along with his singing career, Goulet has had roles in many musicals. The most memorable one for me was his portrayal of Don Quixote in *Man of La Mancha*. His booming voice, coupled with the powerful words of the iconic song, "The Impossible Dream," left a lasting impression on me. While I must admit I don't have Robert Goulet's innate vocal talent, I do like to think I represent the power of his voice when I use mine to advocate for or support others.

The transition from high school to college, or entry into higher education later in life, can be a confusing time. Many students haven't yet discovered the power of speaking up and advocating for themselves. I tell students one of the most vital things you can do to ensure your success in higher education is to "find your voice." Whether it's raising your hand in class, asking questions about your degree or curriculum, speaking up if you don't understand the process of financial aid, asking for help when struggling on an assignment, or participating in a conversation about a social justice issue, the power of your voice can help ensure you are successful as possible in college.

Speaking up for yourself and using your voice to ensure you reach your goals is not always easy. This may be more difficult for some than others, but I've never seen detrimental effects when someone asks questions or advocates for themselves in their educational experience. Once you've found your voice, I then challenge you to use it not only to help yourself, but in service of others, as well. Share the power of how speaking up or asking questions has benefited you; then, encourage your classmates and peers to find their voices too. I look forward to hearing your voice and what you have to say. And if you can sing a tune, I'd like to hear that, too.

Regards,  
Bonnie Goulet,  
Director of Student Development Services

## Between the Bookends

### News from NVCC's Library

By Jaime Hammond



Photo Courtesy of Max Raul Egusquiza

### A Great Start

Jaime Hammond is Director of Library Services. She loves being a community college librarian and wants you to ask her obscure questions.

Welcome back to another great semester, NVCC! The library staff is excited to see you after a quiet winter break.

Over the break, we added some new resources you'll definitely want to check out:

- **Audioblocks, Storyblocks, and Videoblocks:** These media collections are perfect for you DAT majors! Download audio, image, and video content for use in your own creations.
- **Ovid Nursing Journal Collection:** Now Nursing students can access *The American Journal of Nursing*, *Nursing 2019*, *Home Healthcare Now*, *Nursing Critical Care*, and *Nursing Made Incredibly Easy!* all from on or off campus!

These databases, plus many more, are available through the databases page: [www.nvcc.libguides.com/databases](http://www.nvcc.libguides.com/databases), or through the library catalog: [library.ct.edu/nvcc](http://library.ct.edu/nvcc). Enter your myCommNet username and password for off-campus access.

### A few reminders:

- Your books will be renewed automatically! The only exceptions are textbooks and items requested by other library users. After three weeks, if no one else needs it, you automatically get three more! You can always check to see what you have out by logging into your account at [library.ct.edu/nvcc](http://library.ct.edu/nvcc)—look for "Sign In" and use your myCommNet ID and password.
- Log in with your standard myCommNet ID! To log into any library database from off campus, you will now use your standard ID (INCLUDING the @student.commnet.edu part) and your regular password.
- The library now lends sports equipment! It might be too cold to borrow the bocce, badminton, or volleyball sets right now, but it will be warm soon enough! In the meanwhile, chess and checkers are also available.

### Mark your calendars for these exciting events:

- ✓ 1/24 Hot Chocolate for the First Day of Classes! All day in L523
- ✓ 2/4 to 2/15 "Blind Date with a Book" all day in L523
- ✓ 2/14 "Love Your Library" all day in L523
- ✓ 3/5 "Films Spotlight" 5th Floor Library Entrance, Waterbury 10:30 AM – 1:00 PM
- ✓ 4/7 – 4/13 National Library Week!

Remember, the NVCC Library has a copy of every textbook on reserve in Waterbury AND Danbury. We're open 7 days a week, you can contact us via text (203) 951-8189, phone (203) 575-8024, or email at [library@nvcc.edu](mailto:library@nvcc.edu), and we'll help you with whatever you need. Once those group projects and research papers start rolling in, you can reserve a group study room or book an appointment with a librarian on our website.

We hope you have a great start to the semester, and stop by the library soon!



## FACE IN THE CROWD

### Introducing Christopher Dabbo

Kathleen Chesto

The Music Department at NVCC is highly dependent on the gifted adjuncts who teach private lessons. Since most students know them only as familiar faces floating around the fifth floor of the arts building, we thought it would be a good idea to introduce them. It may give those students harboring a hidden desire to play an instrument the impetus to explore the notion.

Chris Dabbo has taught at NVCC since 2005, primarily as a piano teacher and an accompanist. He also teaches group classes at Norwalk Community College, piano lessons at The Music Shop in Southington, Connecticut, and does freelance studio work, performing and accompanying.

Chris began teaching himself piano at the age of nine, transferring what he was learning on the clarinet to the keyboard. He describes those early years in this way. "As far as I can remember, I was fascinated with the piano, the sound, the physical structure, everything. Any time someone played the instrument, whether it was someone on television, the radio, a music teacher, or my father, I became entranced by what I was hearing and seeing. It amazed me that such magic could happen just by knowing what keys to press. I was itching to learn." He started formal lessons when he was 10.

Chris got his undergraduate degree in music performance from the Hartt School of Music at the University of Hartford. Hartt had offered him a scholarship and it seemed like a good fit for the type of education he wanted. His concentration was in classical piano literature, pedagogy, and accompanying.

For his Master's degree, he focused on jazz and studio music at the University of Memphis Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music. He felt the degree would be more aligned with his experience as a working musician. His time at U of M gave him the opportunity to perform with well-known musicians in the jazz and R&B genres and to tour and record



Photo Courtesy of Christopher Dabbo

with the Ghost Town Blues Band. These experiences have given NVCC an incredibly well-rounded piano teacher.

When asked who inspired him musically, Chris responded, "My musical inspirations and influences include so many. They would be, of course, my music teachers first and foremost. Others would include Mozart, Beethoven, Chick Corea, Bruce Hornsby, Billy Joel, Oscar Peterson, and Art Tatum, just to name a few."

What Chris enjoys most about teaching is the satisfaction of knowing he's been able to guide students toward their goals and help them develop their minds and musical abilities. He finds teaching reinforces and strengthens his own knowledge and skills. Students of Chris describe him as patient, kind, and an "awesome" instructor. He does more than teach how to play piano. He teaches how to make music.

Dabbo's hopes for the future involve continuing to connect and share part of himself through teaching and music. In his words, "Although it sounds a bit utopian, or delusional, my ultimate hope would be to contribute something to this world, especially within the field of music, that can be carried on from generation to generation."

Chris lives in Waterbury with his wife, Leah, and Ziggy the cat. He is the proud uncle of two beautiful nieces and a nephew. NVCC is proud to claim him as an adjunct.



## Fresh Ink

Naugatuck Valley Community College's Literary Journal

### Call for Entries: poems, short stories, art

**Deadline: March 1, 2019 11:59 p.m. via email**

- Up to five individual works will be considered from any writer or artist.
- Each prose and poetry entry may not exceed 1250 words in length.
- 2-D representations of any art genre will be considered.
- Only electronic text submissions are accepted in .doc, .docx, or .rtf file formats.
- Graphics accepted in hi-res .jpg or .png formats.

Cash prizes awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each category. All graphic entries will be considered for our cover competition. Cash contests open to current NVCC students only. Published authors and artists will be awarded with copies of *Fresh Ink* 2019.

All entries must be submitted via [Freshink@nvcc.commnet.edu](mailto:Freshink@nvcc.commnet.edu).

- Each entry should be submitted, separately, as its own attached file.
- Each file name should match the work's title.
- No identifying information should appear on entries. (No name, address, or any other contact information.)
- In the corresponding email message, along with the list of your works' titles, include your name, address, telephone number, email address and, if relevant, NVCC student ID number if you'd like your work entered into the contests. NVCC STUDENTS MUST SELF-IDENTIFY!

Contact Information: Jeannie Evans-Boniecki, PhD.—Fresh Ink advisor

[JEvans-Boniecki@nvcc.commnet.edu](mailto:JEvans-Boniecki@nvcc.commnet.edu)

### FRESH INK 2019

intends to be a commemorative  
50 year edition

SO

If you are an NVCC alumnus or if  
you know any NVCC alumni who  
have published previously in

**FRESH INK** aka **DIMENSIONS**

PLEASE CONTACT ME AT  
[FRESHINK@nvcc.commnet.edu](mailto:FRESHINK@nvcc.commnet.edu)

OR

With your Spring 2019  
submission, **NOTE THE DATES  
AND YOUR LEVEL OF PAST  
PARTICIPATION WITH THIS  
PUBLICATION IN YOUR EMAIL.**

*Any assistance in recreating the  
journal's 50 year history will be  
appreciated.*

## Spreading Warmth

Prof. Chris Rempfer



The Center For Teaching once again wrapped up the fall semester in cozy fleece. In fact, this year, CFT's annual scarf-making event was expanded to include members of both *Fresh Ink*, NVCC's literary journal, and the Music Society. Students, faculty, and staff participated, sharing poems—both original and published—celebrating themes of the holiday season. The A Capella group performed, as students joined faculty and staff to make scarves and share lunch, coffee and dessert. When all was said and done (and sung), volunteers had made more than 80 scarves and collected donations of hats, gloves, and socks to be distributed to Waterbury-area individuals in need by Acts 4 Ministries.

## Meaningful Conversation

Gwenydd Miller

Today, there are many problems facing our society, from racism to misinformation, economic crisis, and sexual assault. These are merely a few of the many and growing list of social problems we face. The Social Justice Series, organized and conducted by Prof. Nikki McGary and Prof. Kathy Taylor, offers regular events tackling these topics and others. I've participated in several Social Justice Series events, and have heard nothing but good feedback from attendees. This is not surprising, considering, they offer pizza, soda, and good discussion on important matters.

Past events have covered an array of topics; for instance, just last semester, lectures focused on voting rights, misinformation, and healthy relationships. The latest Social Justice Series event, "Conversation Starter: How Will I Make a Difference?" was held November 28th, in L501. The theme of this conversation, "Change and Challenges," was designed more or less to inspire people—or to help them inspire themselves and each other—to create positive change in the world.

The Conversation Starter was probably one of the most impactful Social Justice Series events I've attended yet, especially in the way the discussion involved participants. All who attended were asked to pick two social issues from a list of over 70, then choose one they feel strongly about to discuss with another participant. Attendees were asked to identify causes for the social problem as well as possible solutions. Not only was there information gained,

but ideas were created and awareness broadened. I doubt anyone walked out of that room without having gained a new understanding and a fresh perspective.

During the activity, Professor McGary and I discussed the problems faced by the LGBTQ community, and identified some causes, of which there are many. It was interesting hearing about the other issues being discussed. Some pairs addressed climate change, racism, and rising healthcare costs—and those are just the ones I remember. Another question was asked after we finished discussing causes of the problems, one that was posed before we even walked into the room: "What can I do to make a difference?" The answer agreed on was to do many small things—and to continue discussing the issues—because these efforts add up.

The Social Justice Series will hold at least one "conversation starter" per semester. I look forward to the next one. Other mind-opening Social Justice Series events are planned for spring, to be held in L501. These events usually include a lecture with participation encouraged from those who attend. While subjects are sometimes hard to deal with, they focus on issues that need to be discussed in order to raise awareness, especially here on a college campus. After all, how will we create the future we want to live in, if we don't understand the obstacles? Keep an eye out for flyers on upcoming Social Justice Series events. Join in; add your voice!

## Love on a Neurological Spectrum

Mark Kacyrat



With greater awareness and acceptance of autism spectrum disorders (ASD), comes

and think they're a robot." The reality is individuals on the autism spectrum express emotions and feelings differently. In fact, studies show people with autism may have greater emotional capacities that may not be obvious to neurotypicals—as explained by autism advocate, author John Elder Robison. It's important to keep in mind, that as a spectrum disorder, the characteristics mentioned may vary widely between individuals.

newfound attention on laudable strengths of people with autism. However, misunderstandings of disabling aspects of the condition persist. Autism is known as a "spectrum" disorder due to the wide variance in strengths and weakness of people sharing common traits. Such traits involve differences in social communication and interaction, versus the "neurotypical" mind characterizing most humans.

This disabling characteristic of autism has likely fueled a longstanding myth, that people with autism are uninterested and/or incapable of romantic and intimate relationships. Recent research says otherwise. A 2016 report from the *Journal of Clinical Psychology* found most high-functioning adults with ASD are indeed interested in romantic relationships. Difficulties with social skills, as opposed to lack of interest, present barriers for people with autism to find love.

As reported by *The Atlantic*, attention has focused on young children and early intervention, overlooking teens and adults with the condition. This is especially true regarding building romantic relationships. The publication adds that common autistic characteristics of social communication and interaction, "inherently go against typical dating norms." Understanding and deciphering, body language, facial expressions, and other social cues are major challenges for those on the autism spectrum. Aversion of some on the spectrum to crowds, and sensory issues (including sensitivity to certain lights and/or levels and types of noises) can cause discomfort. Breaking the touch barrier can also present problems.

Most importantly are ways in which people with autism express feeling and emotions. To neurotypicals, many people with autism appear to lack emotion, empathy, thus being unable to love. WrongPlanet.net founder, Alex Plank, states "A lot of times someone will go out on a date with someone on the spectrum

Behaviors such as flirting may seem natural for neurotypicals, but can be mystifying for the atypical mind. People with autism can learn navigation of social skills minefields that come with dating and romance. However, myopic emphasis on young children with autism is partially to blame for lack of appropriate and effective supports and services. UCLA's Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson emphasizes "Early intervention can significantly improve the outcome, but kids grow up, and we don't have the proper services." Laugeson is director of UCLA PEERS, a program that teaches social skills to teens and adults on the spectrum, including skills needed for dating and romance. Another side effect of focusing on children is that romantic relationship experience on the autism spectrum is understudied. This is something the 2016 *Journal of Clinical Psychology* report begins to address.

The report involves an experiment with a total sample of 229 higher-functioning adults with autism. The average age of participants was 35; males comprised 40% of the total sample. Results showed 73% of participants indicated romantic relationship experience, while only 7% were disinterested in romantic relationships. As stated by the researchers, "... social relationships are nevertheless seen as an essential domain of quality of life for people with as well as without disabilities, and social participation is seen as an important aspect of quality of life for ASD individuals."

ASD advocate Kirstin Lindsmith, in an NPR interview, shared her difficulties navigating the dating scene, stating, "I briefly dated one of my best friends... we just sat next to each other and ate sandwiches, and it was very awkward." This may illustrate that finding love can be difficult for those on the spectrum; however, it is clearly not impossible. Despite unique challenges, people with autism have found love. Many have married and had children, proving love is possible for all human beings.

### Food Pantry 5K Run/Walk

**Save the Date!**

Join the NVCC community right here on campus for our 2nd Annual Food Pantry 5K Run/Walk on Sunday, March 24th, 2019, at 10:00 AM.

Please consider joining us or donating!!

\$5.00 registration fee for those under 25 years old.

\$25.00 registration fee for those over 25 years old.

Find our RACE page online at:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/CT/Waterbury/NVCCFoodPantryFundRaisingRunWalk>

# ON THE RISE

## with NJIT

### INSTANT DECISION DAY every Thursday at NJIT

All transfer students can contact Anthony Jackson for dedicated support - [tonyj@njit.edu](mailto:tonyj@njit.edu)

Office of University Admissions [njit.edu](http://njit.edu)

**NJIT**  
New Jersey Institute of Technology

## Life Is Strange

Christian Cruz



Photo Courtesy of Square Enix

Forget zombies; this episodic adventure game is quite the interesting one. It starts off as an average, high school drama where the main character, Max Caulfield, is labeled as a troublemaker

but also an introvert. She tries to tread carefully, but then a traumatic event happens where someone close to her dies.

Max then discovers she has the power to reverse time and change events by going back in time. At first, it is a basic friendship/love story about a friend and Max trying to save her troubled best friend, Chloe Price, from dying. However, the universe is not very kind to them. This game bases changing events through time travel as an inevitable fate, meaning, if Chloe is meant to die, she will indeed die, no matter how many times Max prevents the death from occurring. It will just continue to occur, and Chloe doesn't help by putting herself in precarious situations due to her rebellious nature.

The player easily gets sucked in by this premise, just wanting to do right by Max, trying to save her best friend with this newfound power. However, with great power comes great responsibility, and most gamers will naturally want to see how their choices affect the overall ending. In other words, it's tempting to use the power a little more than necessary. Another factor is Chloe's influence; because an eventual goal is to reconcile with her, it's easy to follow along with her bad behavior. The game kind of puts the player in this damned-if-you-do-damned-if-you-don't situation, encouraged to go along with what Chloe wants.

She's Max's best friend, so the player wants to do right by her—without creating this time paradox that's affecting the universe because of the refusal to let her die as fate has demanded. Time travel is such a tricky subject to nail because we have no way of knowing what ultimately will or should happen, if we prevent certain things from occurring. This game deconstructs the concept in a way that feels very real, but also a little outlandish. On the other hand, gamers get to deal with an amazing story, feeling like they're in control of Chloe and Max's fate with the ability to manipulate time to change certain outcomes—whether for better or for worse.

## New Year, Same Old Same Old

~ Christian Cruz

The concept "New Year, New Me" has always baffled me. It is as if people believe throwing their hopes and dreams onto one night will cause a dramatic change.

Change is a word everyone uses so loosely, yet it is so hard to accomplish! We all believe change is achievable, and it is!

But only in Moderation.

Wishing for a brand new car is unachievable.

How about you wish for a better paying job that can help you obtain that car? Wishing for more hours at work is fruitless. How about you show your worth through your work and the hours will come.

Baby steps are the keys to success. Showing up every day no matter the weather, your health, or circumstances are the steps in the right direction. "New Year, New Me" is a concept full of hope and not enough doing.

How about we change that.

Or should we all inevitably stick to doing the same old, same old?

## Love and Depression

Tamarack Staff

Depression is a topic widely addressed in today's world. It is probably the most common mental illness in our society and others. Love is something not commonly thought of when it comes to depression, but depression really is highly linked to love in either one way or another. No one can deny there is a strong connection between the two. Breakups aren't an uncommon cause for depression, and especially around Valentine's Day depression can heighten. I know I've felt that way. Kudos to those singles who can get through a Valentine's Day without feeling a bit down.

The thing about depression is it's hard to make those connections other people have. People struggling with depression may have low self-esteem. That can lead to the idea that they aren't good enough to be loved; I've seen it happen. That thinking can lead to mistakes that spiral into even deeper depression. Of course, love can also be a "cure" for depression. Everyone says a relationship won't make everything better, and they're correct, but love can make things easier. While it's no substitute for medication, a good relationship can make one feel better than pills.

The hard part is finding the right relationship for the right reasons. It's sometimes better not to look for love, but be open to it. It sounds cheesy, but somehow it's true. Finding love is not easy. There can be many fumbles on the way to the right person. It helps to find someone who's been through similar things and would be able to understand.

I guess I'm saying you need someone on equal footing situation-wise; otherwise, things could fall apart, and you'd be right back where you started. The reasons I say that relationships do make things better are: (1) If the depression is caused by a sense of loneliness, building a relationship is a no-brainer; (2) Relationships raise overall mood due to a hormonal response; and (3) They can help motivate people to help themselves and get them outside into the world.

Of course, another side of the coin is the struggle not just to find love, but to let themselves love another. Some people may feel that they would drag down their partner, and it's hard for them to make connections as a result. Others may feel numb, which can make it hard to want a relationship or to develop feelings for others. That's something to be aware of when potentially dating someone struggling with a condition such as depression. Depression shows itself in many different ways, and it depends on the person.

There's no real advice to be given on the subject, unfortunately, nothing that can't be refuted or rendered irrelevant by different situations. The advice I was given while looking for love was not to try too hard and keep an open heart—which frankly sounds like a greeting card. But for those who find it hard to let others in, it's not that simple. Hopefully, they find someone who can change that.

## Upcoming Coffeehouses!

Kathleen Chesto

This spring semester, the NVCC Music Society will host three Thursday evening coffeehouses: February 28th, April 11th, and May 9th. All will be held in the Playbox Theatre, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. The public is welcome, admission is free, and coffee and cookies will be served.

These coffeehouses are meant to showcase the ongoing work of students in the music department. Past events have included a variety of vocal and instrumental acts, performances by Fermata the Valley, the Music Society a cappella group; the barbershop quartet; and Sol Fa So Good, the music theory jazz ensemble.

A new semester could mean new vocal ensembles taking the stage. All music has been live, with Dr. Gil Harel providing accompaniment for many of the soloists.

Earlier coffeehouses have been well-attended, lighthearted, supportive, and fun. Participants and audience members alike have frequently commented on the strong sense of

community, and the affirmation given to each participant, whether an experienced soloist, or a novice making a performance debut.

A sign-up sheet for the spring coffeehouses will be posted on the door of the music office, room A504. Deadlines for sign-up are February 21st, April 4th, and May 2nd, for the February, April, and May coffeehouses, respectively. Each solo performer is limited to one song or piece, and all music must be performed live. Accompaniment is available if sheet music is provided in advance.

All students are welcome to perform, but the music department reserves the right to place caps on the number of performers if the performance roster is becoming too large. Be sure to sign up early; spots tend to go quickly!

For three evenings of music and fun, set aside the dates now and be sure to join us in the Playbox. Music, camaraderie, and refreshments await!

## I'd Like To Thank The Academy, And The Internet?

Ryan Martins

By the time you're reading this, the 91st Academy Awards nominations will have been announced, and celebrities will be rehearsing acceptance speeches. Despite the vogue, self-celebration, and "who-are-you-wearing" focus of the season, this year's Oscars (as with every year) have made for interesting cultural commentary.

Kevin Hart has stepped down as host, after his mea-culpa towards his hateful tweets of the past. In turn, there is a possibility this year's Academy Awards will be host-less for the first time in nearly three decades. Despite a missing master of ceremonies, though, film recognition has become more and more diverse within the Academy.

African-American directed films like *Blackkklansmen* and *Black Panther* earned nominations at the Golden Globes and are most likely to be considered by the Academy as well. Not to be forgotten, Barry Jenkins' *If Beale Street Could Talk* will no doubt be nominated for Best Director and Best Picture. In spite of increased diversity, however, this year's roster has been quite bland in comparison to years in recent memory.

Like Jenkins, though, another young and friendly rival makes his return to the Oscars in hopes of the Best Picture slot. Damien Chazelle (*La La Land*, *Whiplash*) and his Neil Armstrong biopic, *First Man*, have hopes for Oscar credence. Yet, the film hasn't performed as well as expected commercially. In fairness, Chazelle's strengths have been shown in musically-driven films, not space exploration. Ironically, the best bet for the majority of Oscar wins may very well be Bradley Cooper's music driven flick: *A Star is Born*. The Gaga-Cooper fusion, a remake, has earned nearly universal acclaim commercially

and from critics and moviegoers alike.

My focus for this year's Oscars, however, isn't on the nominations and contenders. Instead my sights have been specifically on one film. Alfonso Cuarón's *Roma*, a foreign language, Netflix-produced film has been getting tremendous attention this year, winning Best Picture and Best Director at the Globes. Its success has me thinking back on 2016's *Manchester by the Sea*. That Amazon Studios-produced drama was drowned in praise and double-dipped in award nominations, much like *Roma*. But recognition isn't the only thing these two have in common. Both films had extremely limited theatrical releases, then were quickly available on their respective streaming platforms. The outcome? Fewer and fewer physical moviegoers and many more "Netflix-and-chillers".

This pattern, though still premature, underscores a large worry in Hollywood. How long will brick-and-mortar theatres still stand? Streaming services like Netflix and Amazon are no longer rookies, but are quickly becoming large producers, of not only popular films, but films receiving artistic and technical awards. With this newfound success, it won't be long before streaming studios eschew movie theatre releases altogether. There's definitely time before physical theatres become as scattered as vinyl record stores, but like the TV or MacBook you might watch the Oscars on this year, there's a real chance big studio releases could shrink from a 50-foot screen to however large they make televisions these days.

You can watch the Oscars this year on ABC, or on a plethora of online "live" streaming platforms. You can also watch this year's contenders and nominees on a big screen—like, in a movie theatre.

## Underwater Adventure

Gwenydd Miller

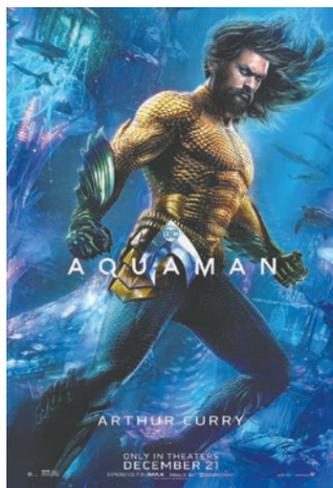


Photo Courtesy of Warner Bros

As last year came to an end, the movie, *Aquaman*, was released. I admit, I had my

doubts, considering what I'd heard about the comics. That, and I have never been a fan of DC movies. However, after watching the trailer and hearing my friend's recommendation, I couldn't help but go see it. I honestly loved it. It did not have the feel of a superhero movie, at least not the way I'm familiar with them. In fact, just watching the movie, I probably wouldn't have realized it was based off a comic; it felt so individual and clean.

It did not lack in plot, character development, or humor. At its roots, it is a story we have heard a million times. It starts with a forbidden love; a king is raised in a humble setting, and then we're presented with a reason they must struggle to get the true king on the throne. It's practically a retelling of the legend of King Arthur, who pulled the sword from the stone. Judging by the fact that the main

character is named Arthur, I don't think that was in the least bit accidental.

My friend who saw the movie with me commented on the music. The songs used to highlight the action and emotional scenes were all good choices. The special effects were impressive. Filming a movie with that many underwater scenes could not have been easy. There were times it looked a bit fake, but nothing too serious. I have to say my favorite part of the movie were the visuals, and I'm not talking about Jason Momoa without a shirt—though that was not bad either. The colors, the lighting, the overall picture were just gorgeous.

The way they handled the two worlds, land and ocean, was captivating and immersive, and it did truly feel alien in nature. The character development came mostly due to interactions in an unknown world from both ends. This is basically all just a lot of words to say *Aquaman* is a good movie, and definitely worth seeing.

## Revolutionary Rhythms

### Prince of Soul

Alyssa Katz



From childhood through high school, Marvin Gaye mastered the piano and drums, and found peace in music, but his performances were only limited to the church. It was in the late 50s when he joined a group called the New Moonglows, where he developed a taste for R&B and doo-wop. It was through that group that Gaye got the attention of a producer at Motown Records, which started his career.

Starting out at Motown, Gaye wasn't exactly producing records; he was instead more involved in playing drums or piano for recording artists, including Stevie Wonder and the Supremes. In 1962, his first single, "Hitch Hike," was released, reaching the Top 40. Throughout the 60s, Gaye recorded more solo hits; two of his best of the decade were duets with Diana Ross. "Can I Get a Witness?" and Mary Wells, "I Heard it Through the Grapevine". Another of Gaye's biggest hits, with Tammi Terrell, was "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" and also "If I Could Build My Whole World Around You".

Inspired by the political unrest and violence of the Vietnam War, Gaye released "What's Going On?" in 1971. Despite the riskier

creative direction, the single—and album of the same name released that year—became an instant hit. This allowed Gaye to take more risks while still retaining his Motown following. It also gave him the chance to branch out on his own and produce his own music, paving the way for artists like Stevie Wonder and Michael Jackson to do the same in later years.

The next year, Gaye recorded one of the most well-known love songs of all time, "Let's Get It On," which became a number one hit. He spent the majority of the 70s touring and working with the Miracles and Diana Ross, and did not release another album until 1976. In 1982, signed to Columbia Records, Gaye began work on his final album, *Midnight Love*, with the lead single "Sexual Healing," a huge success for his comeback.

Unfortunately, success didn't prevent Gaye's lapse into depression and issues with substance abuse. In the early 80s Gaye reluctantly moved back home; however, he and his strict father clashed, with their fights sometimes getting violent. In 1984, during one of those fights, Gaye's father shot and killed him. He was later convicted of manslaughter. Three years after his death, Marvin Gaye was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Gaye's biography states, "Creating beautiful art from a troubled life, Gaye again and again brought his vision, range and artistry to the world stage. At the end of his career, he admitted he no longer made music for pleasure; instead, he said, 'I record so that I can feed people what they need, what they feel. Hopefully, I record so that I can help someone overcome a bad time.'" Though his life ended tragically, Gaye's musical legacy continues to inspire.

Alyssa Katz



## Artist Allie Briggs

Mitchell W. Maknis



Photo Courtesy of Allie Briggs  
This illustration, "In Flight," by Allie Briggs, is a stunning example of her fantasy realism.

Art is subjective. Whether displayed in a gallery, in literature, or at comic conventions, art speaks to each viewer individually. Artist Allie Briggs, a New England resident, has turned her passion for art into a career in freelance illustrating. Briggs is someone who brims with creativity; to me, her distinctive artwork evokes a sense of intrigue.

When asked how she would define her career in freelance illustration, Briggs answered jokingly, she "makes pretty pictures people can't think of by bringing their ideas to life." She further elaborated, "However, that doesn't look very impressive on a resume." Briggs is a freelance illustrator who specializes in "fantasy realism or stylized realism in visual storytelling."

Her enthusiasm for drawing has existed since she could hold a box of crayons, illustrating her works wherever and however she could. Her family, recognizing her passion, encouraged her to pursue a career in the arts. This path led her to a vocational high school;

after, she attended RISD, Rhode Island School of Design. Initially, she pursued classes specializing in graphic design. However, after eight weeks, Briggs felt she didn't want to limit her options. She tried an illustration course and immediately knew this was exactly what she was looking for.

Graduating in 2013, Briggs landed a temp position at Hasbro Corporation as a prototype model painter. This job required Briggs to meticulously match physical paint colors from assigned spreadsheets by the company's designers, ensuring products were painted correctly before being mass-produced. During her Hasbro tenure, Briggs worked on well-known products, such as *My Little Pony*, *Mr. Potato Head*, *Beyblade*, *Jurassic World*, and *Transformers*. Briggs thought Hasbro might be a place she could stay, learning the craft of business in a company she admired. However, with corporate temp positions, Briggs, explained, more often than not, employees are cycled out sporadically. Although disappointed this opportunity didn't pan out, she continued in temporary corporate positions in graphic design, utilizing her skillset to make ends meet.

Since quitting her job to pursue freelance work fulltime, she has illustrated numerous pieces. In between illustrating book covers and other odd-jobs, Briggs' mainstay is commissions, and she tailors each job to her client's desires. Briggs confessed the reality of freelance work is that commissioned pieces pay more than her personal work, causing her studio to be filled with her own unfinished pieces.

Briggs hopes with the launch of her new Patreon page, she'll be able to commit more time to her personal projects, specifically her story: *Dragon Descendants*. Briggs elaborated on her lifelong fascination with dragon mythos, a mythology ingrained within many cultures for centuries. Briggs wishes to capture this eternal folklore, creating a world she feels "people will resonate with."

To see more of the art of Allie Briggs, check out her website: [www.alliebriggs.com](http://www.alliebriggs.com) or her Patreon page: [www.patreon.com/alliebriggsart](http://www.patreon.com/alliebriggsart). To contact Briggs for commissions: [alliebriggsart@gmail.com](mailto:alliebriggsart@gmail.com). Or find Allie on her many other social media platforms.

## Roseanne sans Roseanne

Alyssa Katz

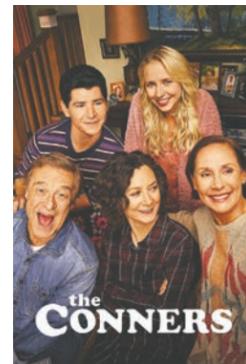


Photo Courtesy of ABC Television

After Roseanne Barr's racist tweet in May got the reboot of *Roseanne* cancelled, the "premiere" of *The Conners* on October 16th had fans utterly curious. With ratings significantly

lower (10.3 million viewers) as opposed to the record breaking 18.2 million of the reboot's premiere, it aligned with the season finale's ratings at 10.5 million. However, how many of those viewers were simply itching to know what happened to Roseanne's character, and how many intend to keep watching?

In May, Roseanne made an offensive tweet attacking Valerie Jarrett, a senior advisor to former President Barack Obama. The tweet stated, "Muslim brotherhood and planet of the apes had a baby=vj"—the "vj" referring to Jarrett. Barr apologized for the offensive remark and the tweet was quickly deleted. However, ABC took action, cancelling *Roseanne*, which had already been renewed for a second season before the season finale aired. In addition, other networks immediately removed reruns of the original series from their broadcasts.

*The Conners* premiere, October 16th, found the Conner Family grieving over the loss of Roseanne. As mentioned in the season finale, Roseanne underwent her knee surgery, which seemed a success. At first, her death

was attributed to a heart attack in her sleep. However, a coroner's report found Roseanne's death was caused by opioid overdose. Initially, the family didn't believe it, until they discovered medications stashed around the house, some of which weren't even prescribed to her. Roseanne's addiction to opioids, an underlying issue last season as well, mirrors the current U.S. crisis.

After the premiere, Barr was upset at how the writers killed the character she created. She said the "...opioid overdose lent an unnecessary grim and morbid dimension to an otherwise happy family show." Co-star Lecy Goranson, who plays Becky, had mixed feelings following the premiere, and about Barr's comments regarding her character's death. Goranson said, "I don't know what show she's referring to, but I've never seen our show as a happy family show...I think our show is funny. I think that it's real..." For Goranson, the series—which follows a working class, middle-American family with varying political viewpoints, trying to make their way in life—has always striven to depict "realistic scenarios and realistic relationships, which is why the death of Roseanne's character may have hit Barr...hard..."

Reviews have been mixed following the premiere. Some find it's not the same without Roseanne; others find the reboot is trying too hard. Still others think the spin-off is more in line with the original series. Roseanne signed over rights to the show—she has no ties whatsoever—in order for the spin-off to carry on. The real question is how *The Conners* will fare without America's self-ordained domestic goddess.

## alumni SHOWCASE



Hayes is pictured with MacArthur Fellow, Claudia Rankine, during the Yale poetry professor's visit to Wesleyan to discuss her book, *Citizen: An American Lyric*, chosen as the summer 2017 common read for students in the First Year Matters Program.

### Nicole Hayes

## Engaging with Success

I'm Nicole Hayes, an alum of NVCC's class of 2017. As I near completion of required/pre-req courses for my bachelors degree—a double major in African American Studies and Psychology—I've begun searching for graduate programs and looking into potential employment opportunities that align with my degrees.

NVCC prepared me for this success through the breadth of courses offered for my major and the extracurricular activities in which I took part. My Wesleyan application stood out, showing my investment in my education, as I excelled in mandatory courses for my major (pre-nursing) and chose

to explore courses outside my major, such as Women's Literature and African American History (both 200-level electives).

My application also displayed my interest in activism as I was Black Student Union President and Senior Staff Writer for *The Tamarack*, contributing several social justice-focused pieces. Most importantly, NVCC faculty and staff encouraged me to think outside the box and explore all avenues of academia.

I was also encouraged to apply to private universities which are well-known for awarding large financial aid packages. It's important to make connections with faculty because most applications require letters of recommendation. Without support from NVCC's faculty, I don't believe I would be where I am in my higher education experience.

As the only NVCC transfer student at Wesleyan University, I want to represent our community college well. Many CC students don't consider applying to certain universities because of classism and rigorous workloads. Both of these are very REAL, but they are survivable. It's about believing you deserve to be there and managing your time wisely to enhance your chances of success.

Another incentive for me to do well at Wesleyan is my continued relationships with NVCC President Daisy Cocco De Filippis and her assistant, Beth Monchun. Throughout my time at Wesleyan, President De Filippis has asked for updates on my progress, to ensure NVCC is preparing students for academic success in any environment. I've had several lunch dates with the President, Monchun, and Professors Parlato and Petitfrere—who all continue to be proud of my success.

I encourage current NVCC students to become part of the institution. For students planning to transfer, lack of involvement on campus can be an acceptance deal breaker. Therefore, it's important to join clubs and take advantage of opportunities offered. Through these, you will grow as a person, while adding worthwhile achievements to your resume.

RECENTLY  
READ

*Becoming*  
by Michelle Obama

**“My father, Fraser, taught me to work hard, laugh often, and keep my word. My mother, Marian, showed me how to think for myself and to use my voice.”**

~ Michelle Obama

I voted for Barack Obama. I was one of the ardent fans saying “Yes, we can.” I studied his political platform and followed his speeches on YouTube. But I never really knew Barack Obama until I read *Becoming*, by his wife, Michelle.

Having read her story, I am more than her fan. I am in awe of this amazing woman and her incredible journey from a poor Black neighborhood, through eight years in an inner-city public school, into the halls of Princeton and Harvard, the offices of a prestigious Chicago law firm, and eventually into the White House. Whatever your feelings about our former president, however you might disagree with his policies and his governance, it is impossible not to admire his wife.

Michelle Robinson grew up on the Southside of Chicago, in an upstairs apartment, sharing a tiny bedroom with her brother. As a child, her greatest ambition was to own a house of her own with stairs, two floors for one family. Her father worked for the city’s water treatment plant and battled progressive multiple sclerosis throughout her childhood. Her mother was a stay-at-home mom, active in the PTA and every aspect of her children’s education.

Through the warm, loving anecdotes of her childhood, the reader is given the image of a young girl taught to use her voice, to stand up for herself, to believe in the correlation between dedicated effort and success. In her own words, “My father, Fraser, taught me to work hard, laugh often, and keep my word. My mother, Marian, showed me how to think for myself and to use my voice. Together, in our cramped apartment on the Southside of Chicago, they helped me see the value in our story, in my story, in the larger story of our country. Even when it’s not pretty or perfect. Even when it’s more real than you want it to be. Your story is what you have, what you will always have. It is something to own.”

At the same time, she was surrounded by societal limits placed on her because of her gender and race. As a successful young lawyer she was once asked why she had never considered attending the University of Chicago. She responded she grew up knowing it was a school for rich, white kids. The depth of that sense of discrimination is highlighted when she explained she applied to Princeton because she believed it would be “more accessible.”

Obama shares her stories of Princeton and later, Harvard Law School, learning to “fit in” in privileged, white society, and eventually landing a high-salaried position with a corporate law firm. During her second year with this firm she was asked to supervise an intern in his first year at Harvard Law School, a brilliant, scholarly man with an unusual name, Barack Obama.

The second section of the book is the story their courtship, Michelle’s discovery of her own desire for community service, the birth of their family and the soul-searching decision for Barack to run for president. Standing somewhat on the edge of that decision, she shares the depth of her struggle and her fears with the reader in gripping detail.

Suddenly, we are propelled into the White House. While the most historically informational section, I found this to be the least satisfying. It lacks the depth of reflection found throughout earlier chapters. The author admits in the preface she has not yet had space to reflect on her years as First Lady.

I hope when she has done that reflection, she will write another whole book on the White House Years. I’ll be first in line to buy it.

Kathleen Chesto

## Fallacies Abound

Christopher Gordon



There’s a disturbing trend in media, and in the wider realm of personal interactions, concerning fallacious arguments. Google identifies fallacies as “mistaken beliefs based on unsound arguments and reasoning.” They’re making effective communication next to impossible. As a self-reflective individual, I’m happy to listen to critiques of my work, so I might create a more effective product. I’m only human; I make mistakes, too. I’m willing to discuss any reasonable argument against one of my pieces, provided it is in fact reasonable. In the December 2018 *Tamarack*, a reader’s response attempted to point out flaws in my logic. Unfortunately, there is not much coherent logic in that response.

This reader introduces an argument not within my original November piece, “Ignoring Red Flags”. I made it clear third-party allegations are not part of my stance. I acknowledge I took a bit of a tangent regarding said third party, which makes me guilty of a “red herring”. The response was not about my tangent, though; it was an attempt to set up a “straw man” argument that would be easier to refute. The straw man was ineffective, as the argument against it does not hold up, making this a case of missing the point of their own straw man.

The response wanted to highlight why Justice Kavanaugh responded in such an erratic manner, during testimony to Congress, which could be a fair point. The problem with this argument is it was not Kavanaugh making the claim, but the reader alone. Without a link to Kavanaugh publicly stating his position on his behavior, this argument becomes an “appeal to probability” fallacy.

Two major fallacies espoused in this response are using a “weak analogy” to support an “appeal to pity”. This response asks readers to imagine being in Kavanaugh’s position. However, no one person will likely have the same reaction as another. What isn’t a fallacy is we should all strive to be on our best behavior, even when under stress. How I might respond under the same stress is irrelevant. Some leeway is acceptable with bad behavior, but Justice Kavanaugh went beyond even unacceptable angry reactions.

The claim that Dr. Ford’s polygraph test never being made public is indicative of wrongdoing is also a fallacy, an “appeal to consequences”. This leads to another fallacy, the “circular argument,” as in, “He didn’t do it because there’s no proof he did.” Well, there’s no proof he did not do it either; that’s why a third investigation would be necessary. The fact two had been completed already is irrelevant because allegations against him were not made until after those first. While presuming innocence is imperative, and accepting someone’s word a crime has been committed is not helpful, neither is accepting one’s word that no crime was committed. This is a fallacy known as a “false dichotomy,” reducing an argument to only two conclusions.

Both might be telling the truth, both might be lying; these are not mutually exclusive. Justice Kavanaugh would have an easier time proving his innocence by having another investigation looking into the claims against him. This falls under the fallacy of “onus probandi (burden of proof),” but Justice Kavanaugh has much to lose by the fallacy of “hasty generalizations” from the public, and this might be the best way for him to overcome them.

Please continue responding, pointing out flaws in my logic. I enjoy reviewing my stances in order to have as sound a philosophical outlook as possible. I’d also like to know if any professors reading this would consider forming a debate club, so interested students can work on creating more sound arguments.

Find further information on fallacies at: <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/fallacies/>

FACE IN THE CROWD  
Transported by Music

Terrance Griswold

Hello, I’m Professor Terrance Griswold. I’ve been teaching at NVCC for nearly five years, in two departments. In Digital Arts and Technology, I instruct on acoustics and sound design, principles of sound recording, and electronic music. I also teach private woodwind lessons in the Music Department on a trio of clarinet, saxophone, and flute.

Outside NVCC, I work for a non-profit called “Kids Empowered by Your Support (KEYS),” based in Bridgeport. KEYS provides free musical instruction for underprivileged communities and schools in the Bridgeport district. I currently have a studio full of 25 kids who would not regularly be able to have music lessons.

Beyond teaching, I perform with symphony orchestras in the Greater New England area, perform recitals, and give lecture/master classes at other colleges, sprinkled with an occasional off-Broadway production in NYC. Furthermore, I also repair woodwind instruments and do graphic and sound design on the side. My particular skillset is tailored to thrive in the 2019 gig economy.

After completing my Bachelors in clarinet performance at Wichita State University in Wichita, Kansas, I married my best friend and partner in music-making. We packed up and moved to Ithaca, NY, where we both completed our Masters in instrumental



Photo Courtesy of Terrance Griswold

performance. Searching for work brought us to Connecticut, and we’ve been loving it ever since. Growing up in rural western Kansas where cattle easily outnumber humans 300:1, younger me would never have imagined I would grow up to be a musician living on the East Coast. My story proves how music can literally transport you.

My studies have taken me abroad, have taught me resilience and humility, given me discipline, but most of all have instilled a greater sense of awareness and empathy. I plan to start working on a doctorate in the near future. This is something I hope to accomplish while still being able to serve the NVCC community, a community I have grown to admire and respect.

## Public Enemy Number One?

Ryan Martins

Reporters and the news media are an enemy to the people. *The New York Times* is failing. CNN’s ratings are drowning. The press is dishonest, corrupt. The news is fake. How fake? 80% fake. Yes, according to our current president, “Much of our news media is indeed the enemy of the people.” Strong words. Ironically, the term “enemy of the people” was coined by Hitler’s propaganda minister and used extensively by Joseph Stalin.

This accusation from the sitting president echoes a much bigger animosity towards the press. Journalists have been under intense scrutiny in the past few years, from being castrated by the current administration, to being shot at in their own newsrooms, and even being mutilated in a consulate. Are these attacks signs that journalists are truly “enemies of the public”? Or, perhaps, there is a more nuanced explanation for the vile spit at the press, and the divide in America between journalists, the president, and the public.

Historically, journalism has been an institution fundamental to American democracy, serving as a watchdog, an excavator of truth, and a check-and-balance to those in power. In politics and the corporate swamp, journalists have been accountable for presenting events truthfully. For years, this led to a booming newspaper industry, public trust in the press, and even a president who favored reporters over some of his own administration.

Today, however, the industry is painfully adapting to growing technological advancements, the current president *clearly* isn’t a fan of reporters, and according to the Pew Research Center, over 60% of Americans think news articles and stories are biased and/or inaccurate. What changed?

In print and broadcast journalism of late, Americans have been fed a sad diet of near-exclusive political commentary and speculation. The 24/7 news cycle treats breaking news as if it were an ESPN segment, and political debates are now a televised spectacle. Unbiased, objective reporting has been replaced by news personalities and quickly-published, often politically-slanted stories.

This biased reporting makes for distrustful consumers, this sentiment spreading from average homes to the White House, feeding—and fed by—the piping hot vitriol from the

current administration. Despite the indefensible treatment of journalists here and around the world, though, it wouldn’t be unfair to say some of this animosity towards the press has been warranted.

**In order to be “well-read,” it’s important to read pieces that lean opposite to what one believes. After all, accurately informed readers make for more civil and relatively painless communication.**

As readers, though, it teaches everyone a good lesson and reminds us to monitor carefully what media we take in. Reading objective, true-neutral news sources and choosing a handful of respected print newspapers help to inform oneself accurately on current events, untarnished by editorial slant.

Yet, segregating oneself to a select few writers or a solitary news organization is dangerous. As a nation, a mentality has formed that shouts “the other side is wrong.” Voters from both parties turn to news outlets that agree with their views, heightening pre-existing political beliefs, yet this only drives the left and the right further apart. In order to be “well-read,” it’s important to read pieces that lean opposite to what one believes. After all, accurately informed readers make for more civil and relatively painless communication.

The press itself has quite a bit of work to do. In order to earn America’s trust, it must take time to pause and reflect on its influence over readers and viewers. The power the press holds must be cherished, with truth and readers’ trust as priorities.

In 1985, John Seigenthaler, Editorial Director of *USA Today* stated journalists shouldn’t “brush aside and ignore real concerns the public has regarding the credibility of newspapers and television.” Thirty-four years later, reporters would be wise to follow that same advice. America needs a true neutral to anchor the public, to provide a reliable source of truth and integrity. If not the press, who will take their place?

## Earth Matters

### No Hoax



Alyssa Katz

Since his election, President Trump has proposed several EPA proposals which are geared to reverse efforts taken by former President Obama during his two terms. Some of these proposals include the Clean Air and Water Policies and the Endangered Species Act. Additionally, our current president thinks that climate change is a hoax. In his viewpoint, America's air and water qualities are some of the best they've been in years, yet he wants to increase the use of fossil fuels and doesn't find endangered species an important topic.

Looking at the Clean Water Policy, Obama extended protection of federal lands to smaller bodies of water, like rivers, lakes and streams. Now, one can understand these smaller bodies of water connect to larger bodies of water, so whatever is washed up in those waters is carried to those larger bodies. If Trump reverses protection of these smaller branches of water, then there's potential for carrying far more pollution into the larger bodies of water, including contamination of sources of clean drinking water.

When asked about climate change, Trump literally responded, "I don't believe it." According to *The NY Times*, "In almost two years since taking office, Mr. Trump has denied the scientific reality of climate change and taken aggressive steps that will increase emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases—despite unequivocal scientific evidence that those pollutants are warming the planet to dangerous levels."

There is scientific evidence Earth's climate is in fact changing—most likely due to human activities. If actions are not taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we can expect more intense storms, more frequent wildfires, hurricanes, droughts, and so on. Trump's actions will clearly have long-term effects on Americans' health and our economy.

As for cutting down on greenhouse gas emissions, Obama's Clean Power Plan in 2015 aimed to reduce emissions released from power plants by 32 percent by 2030, with an estimated 365 metric tons of carbon dioxide potentially prevented from entering the atmosphere. Trump's Clean Energy Rule only estimates a 1.5 percent decrease of emissions by 2030. Under Trump's plan, gas emissions could be an estimated 12 times higher than under Obama's plan.

Additional Obama policies Trump is counteracting involve the levels of car exhaust released and monitoring of methane—which is far more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>, as it traps more heat. Following up on the Paris Climate Agreement, Trump cannot officially withdraw the U.S. for two more years, but he still has no intention of rejoining, while virtually every country in the United Nations has agreed to take part and reduce emissions.

Endangered species of plants and animals are also on the chopping block under Trump's new proposals. The Endangered Species Act is 45 years old and has made great effort to protect wildlife in danger of extinction. But with Trump intending to loosen these laws, many species are at greater risk. *USA Today* states, "Some of the most at-risk species include giraffes, red wolves, sea turtles, California condors and West Indian manatees."

Climate change is no hoax; conditions will only worsen if we don't act now. What will the future hold for America—and the rest of the planet—if these short-sighted proposals are passed? The current administration seems unconcerned.

## Advice for a New Semester

Andre Williams

The beginning of the semester is a time many students feel refreshed and motivated. That's why it's the perfect time to look at your habits and routines to get yourself organized, and set yourself up for a successful semester.

Many of us know too well the stress of being a college student, especially during mid-terms and finals. Assignments pile up rapidly, and it's easy to fall behind. Once this happens, it takes great effort to catch up, and even if you do, you risk burning out. This is why one of the best things you can do is take preventive measures to reduce the risk of unnecessary added stress.

When it comes to organization, make sure you have all the tools you need for your classes. This includes textbooks, notebooks, stationary equipment, and a laptop or computer. Many of these are available in the school bookstore. If you don't have a laptop or computer, there are computers for student use throughout the school, in the library and computer labs. You may also rent a laptop for free, courtesy of NVCC's library.

Another thing you may find beneficial is creating a schedule, using a planner, calendar, or notebook. There are many apps, such as Google Calendar, for those who prefer using their phone or computer. Some specifics to add to your schedule include deadlines, and times during the week you can fit in studying and assignments. You can also add times and locations of your classes, and even your professors' office hours, so you'll have them on hand if you run into problems throughout the term.

Make a good first impression on your professors by showing up on time, participating in class, and don't be afraid to briefly introduce yourself after class. Establishing good relationships with faculty is helpful because you'll feel more comfortable approaching them later if you have questions or need help. Make sure to write down their email addresses, too, in case you need to contact them.

If you run into trouble with an assignment, you should contact your professor with questions, or even head over to the Academic Centre for Excellence, a great resource, offering free on-campus tutoring in a variety of subjects. According to NVCC's website, "77% of students who visit the ACE on a regular basis earn a full letter grade higher than students who do not visit the ACE," so utilize this great resource!

Lastly, the start of the semester is the perfect time to reflect upon and improve study habits. If you've been doing well, there may not be much you'd want to change; however, if you've not performed as well as you'd hoped, don't be discouraged! Look at this semester as a fresh start, a new beginning. If you've made past mistakes, you can learn from them, in order to avoid them happening again. Look at your habits and routines; consider changes you can make to improve your overall chances of success.

These are important steps; when you study effectively, efficiently, and have healthy habits, you're less likely to fall behind and burn out. Best of luck, fellow students. Wishing you all a successful semester!

## Join a Club!

Andre Williams



Photo Courtesy of NVCC website

Joining a college club is an excellent idea for a number of reasons. You'll get to meet new people, learn important life skills, and expand your knowledge through the sharing of ideas with others. If you're not already in a club, here are some reasons you should get involved.

One reason you should consider joining a club is it's a great way to make new friends. While there are many advantages to attending community college, such as affordability, one disadvantage is that, as a result of commuting, it can be more difficult to get to know your peers than if you attended a residential university. One remedy is to become active on campus by joining a club. Doing so allows you to meet many students from all different backgrounds and perspectives.

Another great thing about this is people you meet will be a community, sharing the same interests as you. This is helpful because when you surround yourself with others as passionate as you are about your interest, hobby, or cause, it can be an excellent motivator and opportunity to learn new things.

Club membership is also a great way to get involved on campus. When you join a club, you'll have the option to participate in college/club events and meetings. You may also be given responsibilities, like leadership positions, and you'll even be able to participate in Student Government Association (SGA) meetings. This means you'll have more of a say about things happening on campus.

Another important reason you should join a club is you'll learn and develop useful life skills, such as time management, communication, and leadership qualities. These are some of the reasons employers and universities love to see campus involvement on resumes and applications. It makes it clear you're someone who can apply what you learn in class to real world scenarios. Plus, club experience can translate to useful job skills, like being comfortable working in teams.

Personally, joining *The Tamarack* and the Creative Writing Club last semester has been invaluable for me for all of these reasons. I've found it easier to meet new people, I've learned important life skills, and being surrounded by people who share the same interests as me has been extremely helpful in keeping motivated. I've learned a lot from other club members and have been exposed to opportunities that would not have come my way had it not been for joining these clubs.

I encourage all students to take a look at the clubs available and find one that interests you. For more information regarding clubs—including potentially creating a new club—head to the SGA Office, Room S516 in Prism Lounge on the 5th floor. There, you'll find leaflets with club information and SGA officers who'll answer your questions.

### For Information On Clubs

SGA OFFICE, S519  
Prism Lounge

## That's What She Said



Jessica Ney

### Sisters of Color

Women of Color: Women of Change, Women of Courage, Women of Creation.

It's time to flip the switch on how people think of Black women. There is so much untapped potential and unrecognized power in this community. This month, I want to celebrate the strides being made by WOC, to celebrate the uniqueness and influence of these women, who climb over a hundred obstacles every day. You transcend the stereotypes placed on you. You can do whatever your hearts wish; you have the ability to follow through on your dreams.

The media has finally begun to accept, and even celebrate Black womanhood. There have been extreme successes in film, including *Black Panther*, *Fences*, and *Hidden Figures*. Even Netflix has joined the masses with its movie, *Nappily Ever After*. Black girls are seeing themselves represented in ways their adult counterparts never were. Across all spectrums of life, in a million different forms, Blackness is going strong. Because of women like Michelle Obama, Lupita Nyong'o, Maxine Waters, Danai Gurira, Oprah Winfrey, Kimberly Bryant, Beyonce, and many more, the tides are shifting, important conversations are starting.

This month, while we celebrate Blackness in America, I want to remind you that—despite this progress—there is a long road ahead. For the Black women out there, struggling for recognition and acceptance, I hear you, I see you. And I know I'm also a part of the problem. As white women, we need to see and use the privilege given to us blindly. Black lives do matter, and there is a clear and distinct disparity whites are lucky enough not to experience.

For that reason, we need to take part in the daily battle, not merely join this month-long celebration. We need to encourage, uplift and stand beside the Black community. We need to open up to the messy, the shameful and the unacknowledged parts of our history. We need to ask questions, rather than being afraid to admit we don't know. We need to stop the spread of fear and ignorance, and instead, listen to the concerns of our Black sisters (and brothers). It's beyond time for us to recognize the capabilities and contributions of this incredible community.

Change is never easy or comfortable, but it is necessary. Our world seems more toxic every day. Thankfully, women of color have begun taking control of the script, writing in parts for themselves, breaking down barriers and demanding their needs be met. The work is not finished, and it may never be, but great strides have been made, building a foundation for those to follow. All girls have reason to celebrate. During this month, and beyond, let's remember to be thankful for what makes women of color unique, thankful for the Black community, as they continue making history—and shaping our future.

## Beyond Attraction

Alexander Wilson

February is notorious for its mid-month commemoration of love, Valentine's Day, that popular showcase for affection, when people shower their significant others in gifts, kisses, and maybe a little something more once the lights go out. It's a nice time for many couples. It's an even better time to remind us what love is. Love cares not about the gender of those involved. It's as much a holiday for gay couples as for straight couples. It's also a celebration of

platonic love.

Sex isn't a requirement for a relationship to survive. There are other ways to be intimate as well, like cuddling under a blanket sipping cups of cocoa, giggling at a movie. Or sitting at the dinner table, favorite meals steaming hot, candles or not. Intimacy can also mean late-night conversations, delving into deeper topics, and getting sleepier, with every chime of the clock.

These are all valid ways to spend time together, whether in a consensual sexual relationship, or being with someone and not having sex at all. Asexual people exist, and they're in relationships just like everyone else. Valentine's is just as much a celebration of their love. The same goes for the aromantic community. Maybe they don't stick to the

conventional aspects of a relationship either, but it's still a holiday for them.

There are also those in relationships that aren't exclusive to two people. There are open relationships, polyamorous relationships of every kind. It's not considered cheating, and it's not being greedy. It's a consensual relationship, just like any other. There is just as much love in these relationships as there is in a committed monogamous relationship. Love isn't exclusive to specific limited numbers.

Yes, February 14th is a chance to acknowledge love in all its forms. Love is cute, sappy, awkward and challenging, and so many other things. Whatever type of love you share this Valentine's Day, rest assured it adds to the overall meaning of this celebration of love.

## Thank You All

### Advising Heroes

Kathleen Chesto

While the rest of us have been enjoying winter break, the people in CAPSS have been working overtime, Saturdays and evenings, trying to help students get settled into the spring semester. When I visited their offices the second week of January, there was a student at every desk and the hall was lined with those waiting to speak with an advisor.

The difficulties were myriad: students transferring from other schools, students needing to settle spring schedules, students needing help in deciding what courses they needed for their major, and several still trying to figure out what that major would be. There were students with disabilities seeking support, and students still struggling with admissions.

In the midst of all the organizing tasks were the more difficult problems of helping students who had failed or were on probation. Much of the work at CAPSS is directed toward empowering students, helping them in the transition from high school to college, teaching them to advocate for themselves.

There are placement tests to be administered for the general academic students and TEAS, Tests of Essential Academic Skills, for the nursing program. Plus, the office will just be recovering from this flurry of pre-semester activity when it will face the transfer season in early March.

We want to say "Thank you" to all those wonderful people at the desks in the CAPSS offices. Thank you for every weekday, every late night, and every Saturday. Thank you for your guidance in navigating the seas of admissions and transfers. Thank you for your patience with our often bewildered and sometimes incompetent stabs at shaping our own educational futures. Thank you for the wizardry often involved in making all of our courses fit into one schedule. Thank you for your gentleness and support through our failures, your encouragement to move beyond them, and your support in our efforts to try again and try more effectively.

Those of us who have been sitting at your desks and waiting in your hall and deluging you with emails want you to know how much you are appreciated.

## SPEAK UP

Are you interested in where your Student Activities Fees are spent? If so, voice your opinion at NVCC's Student Government meetings held every Wednesday, 4-5 p.m. in L501, across from the Library. For more information call 203-596-2185, stop by S516, or email [SGA@nvcc.commnet.edu](mailto:SGA@nvcc.commnet.edu).

## Communal Strength

Christopher Gordon

Spring 2019, the start of a new semester. I don't know about everyone else, but I'm excited to start the education process once again. Last September, I wrote an article advising against letting difficult situations defeat you. Hopefully, I inspired a few of you to make fall 2018 successful. It was my first semester at Western Connecticut State University, and I'm proud to share I achieved all A's. Though I'm pleased my hard work paid off in the end, I was not always so confident in my abilities.

December was a stressful time. In a spiral of self-doubt and depression concerning my grades, I worried I might not have worked hard enough, and therefore would not pass my classes with anything like good grades. I'm not talking B range; I mean D and below. I was telling everyone I might get B's, but inside I was positive I was failing. I had a few setbacks on tests, was overconfident, and did not study as hard as I should have. This led to a self-esteem crisis that fed on itself. It interfered with my study time, causing more setbacks. Thankfully, these setbacks occurred after midterms and did not impact my overall grades. I buckled down and aced all my finals.

I want to share this with all who struggle with depression and self-esteem. My time at Naugatuck Valley Community College has been remarkable, filled with academic and social successes. I even earned a very competitive scholarship to a great university.

In my very first article for *The Tamarack*, I wrote about the most important part of NVCC, the concept of community. My story is one of perseverance and triumph over my natural state of self-criticism. It is also a story of community. I was not alone with my failures. I made the conscious effort to listen to others when they praised my triumphs. Community is what makes the difference.

There are many reasons a person chooses to go into a service field such as psychology. Mine is connected to the story I'm sharing now. I was bullied and isolated when I was in elementary, middle and high schools. I was made the "Other" for reasons I neither know nor care about at this stage. I did not reach out for help and was left behind. Thankfully, I caught back up when I sought help. Now I observe everyone around me, looking for signs of isolation or dejection, and I make reasonable efforts to be inclusive and accepting. I like to believe I am proof that being depressed does not have to be a permanent situation.

If you are feeling depressed or anxious, feel free to contact me via *The Tamarack*, and I'll make time to talk with you, not as a counselor, but as a person who has been there and understands you. Definitely reach out to professors and friends to share your burden. You are not alone; we are stronger together.

## Queer Code

### Tackling Transphobia

Alexander Wilson



Being transgender isn't easy, having to transition in a workplace, at school, in places people see you before and after. Then again, it's almost better that way, rather than the alternative. They still know me, Lex, the person. They've taken time to learn about my personality, who I am.

It's those who don't know me that hurt the worst. Sometimes, they don't even see a human. I understand I have a less conventional life path. Regardless, that doesn't mean I'm not a person. I've been ridiculed to my face and behind my back. I've heard, seen, and experienced it all. That doesn't stop it from hurting. Somehow, people find new ways to poke my self-esteem.

In the past year, I've been laughed at for confirming what a customer called me. I finished his transaction by saying, "Have a good day." He replied, "You too, sir. Wait, ma'am." When I told him he'd been correct the first time, he laughed. He then relayed the conversation to someone on his phone. It took quite a bit of willpower not to break down crying right there. My coworker told me I handled the situation well, but afterwards, I wanted to punch the desk.

Another situation at work occurred when I wasn't even on the clock. It was around 10:00 PM, and I was waiting to drive my friend home. I was standing to the side, chatting with some of the cashiers and key-holders. A customer used one of the self-scan lanes, then left quickly, looking fairly suspicious as she did so. I moved to talk to my friend who was monitoring the self-scans, and we joked about the situation. Moments later, the customer came back to return some items. One of the cart pushers told me later what the woman had said.

After making a fuss about her return items, she said, referring to me, "He, or she,

or whatever... was staring at me, making me uncomfortable." Anyone who knows me knows I don't stare at people. I look around at various points in space, because I cannot stare. It should also be noted she knew I was an employee, even if I wasn't in my uniform at the time. She singled me out, managing to turn me into something barely human—because she could. I got a good laugh about being called a whatever; that was a new "insult" to me.

Then there's the recent email *The Tamarack* received, criticizing some articles we printed in a previous issue. According to this person, transgender people should, essentially, be denied their rights because the Constitution protects "males and females". Another incorrect assumption is: anything that isn't male or female becomes "it". Funny, I didn't realize I stopped being human because I don't conform to people's notion of who I am. Put me in a line up. I look human, just like everyone else.

A final note to the person who wrote in: your grammar was so beyond incomprehensible that I, an "un-clever Liberal transgendered it," had difficulty keeping up with your rhetoric. It did not compute, as you so eloquently put it. If you'd like to find published medical evidence stating I'm no longer human, I would love to be informed. Until then, I refuse to let people define me.

I've always taken issue with terms like transphobia, homophobia, or xenophobia, possibly because, from an intellectual standpoint, "phobia" is not the right suffix. A clinical psychology term, it refers to fear of a specific object or situation. People who are transphobic aren't afraid of us. They hate us. They want to see us conform or burn. To them, we're sub-human, for not following social constructs that don't match who we are. I'll fight until my dying day to educate people. If it comes while I'm still young because I pissed off the wrong bigot, so be it. At least I'll know I've made a difference.

Respectfully,  
Alexander, who is, in fact, fully human

## Readers Respond

Dear Editor,

During my time attending NVCC I have always seen flyers throughout campus offering Narcan training at school. While some may see the drug as counterintuitive to fixing the opioid crisis our nation is currently dealing with, I believe the drug is indeed lifesaving and a good way to help those struggling with this addiction. The article, "Narcan Training: Two Hours Well Spent," by Thomas Ackerman, does a great job bringing awareness to the opioid crisis we currently have in Waterbury and how Narcan helps those experiencing an overdose.

I sadly did not even know the severity of opioid addiction in Waterbury; after reading this article, I am most likely going to attend the next Narcan training session held at school. Ackerman states, "Some colleges with the CT Healthy Campus grant funding have been resistant to allowing trainings, despite appropriate faculty having certifications." It is very crucial that people receive training to help those experiencing an overdose; by removing the negative stigma that comes with opioid addiction and treating it as an illness that requires immediate medical care, we may hopefully lower the death rates and overdoses happening throughout our country.

~ Sincerely, NVCC Student

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