

# The Tamarack

Our college. Our news. Our voice.

Naugatuck Valley Community College

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Waterbury, Connecticut

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## A World of Welcome

Thomas Ackerman



NVCC's fourth Fulbright Scholar, Aguibou Bougobali Sanou, or "Bouba," of Burkina Faso, is settling into his home for the year, in Waterbury, to teach African Contemporary Dance, and Dance History and Appreciation. The scholar, having traveled and taught worldwide, is hoping to learn, just as he is thrilled to be teaching, in the United States. "In my home, artists don't know how to write their names," Sanou said. "For me, it's really important for people to learn art at school, and it's also important for artists to go to school."

Having lost his parents at a young age, and later, his son, when doctors on strike refused to treat him, Sanou said these experiences—in addition to his school director mandating he make a hard choice—caused him to become dedicated to dance. "[The school director] said you have to decide to make art or to work in an office," Sanou said. "I was so frustrated. Usually parents pay for the school fee, and he never saw my parents. I'm the one who comes here to pay. Because I want to go to school, it's why I work."

After participating in workshops from 2006 to 2012, Sanou established a solo performance, in memory and inspiration of his son,

in conjunction with the controversial U.S. execution of Troy Davis. "I asked myself why can humans decide to kill each other. We are not the ones who give life, so why can we take it?" Sanou added, "How can I transform my anger into something good?" This is why he choreographs dances around topics. Coming from a country with less freedom of speech and expression, he chooses to comment on issues, like the death penalty, through art.

Dean Waldemar Kostrewza and others are partnering with area schools to host Sanou. These include Waterbury Arts Magnet School, University of Hartford, CCSU, Connecticut Ballet, and even the University of Northern Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). "[The scholars at NVCC] have heralded something we really wanted to develop, and the President really wanted to develop, an International Center for the Arts," Kostrewza said, referring to the impressive artistic presence on campus. In a written statement, President De Filippis shared that "At last count, NVCC reported 47 languages spoken among our students," adding, "We value our rich diversity and celebrate the beauty of

other cultures." Sanou will certainly add to that cultural wealth.

Kostrewza explained Fulbright scholars must teach, perform community service, and practice their scholarly craft. Sanou, who dreams of opening an international school of his own, couldn't be a better fit. NVCC was interested in finding a West African dance professor, and Sanou had connections—friends and colleagues in our vicinity, including a guest lecturer of music and dance at Yale—who knew what NVCC was looking for, and that Sanou wanted to teach in the U.S. So, it was fortuitous when CT Ballet recommended Sanou to NVCC.

Earlier, in India, the scholar met fellow Fulbright, Lily Janet, Director of Dance at UNCG, who studied in Burkina Faso. Janet connected Sanou to a Fulbright colleague who was to visit Burkina Faso. The scholar introduced Sanou to then-U.S. ambassador, who became a supporter. Soon after, Sanou created one of Africa's largest dance festivals,



"In-out," boasting around 80,000 participants.

Megan Boyd, NVCC's Assistant Professor of Dance, finds African dance surprisingly accessible to American students, because of the prevalence of Africana in modern American culture. She said, "American concert dance tended to come

from a European history. Yet, our contemporary American culture is full

of African history." At NVCC, the only CT community college offering a degree-granting dance program, Sanou will work with students, preparing them to perform and compete, including at November's 5x5 Festival, featuring collegiate and professional ensembles.

Austin Gonzalez, of NVCC's Terpsichorean Dance Ensemble, anticipated his first class with Sanou. As he and club president, Alexandria Angle, stretched outside the brightly lit choreography lab, Gonzalez remarked, "The more dance styles that come into the studio, the better...when we perform, it makes people want to study at our school." Angle added African dance feels different, with specific meaning to each movement. "When using our arms, he said to look at our arms, because we want people to look where we're looking," she said.

The class laughed with Sanou as he searched for the right English words, at times, spoke French with students, and teased them by choosing a new song for each student. Students created their own dance movements, representing words of their choice, such as "hide," "hope," or "pursuit."

"We're delighted to have him here," Dean Lisa Dresdner said. "I think he will enrich not just our arts and dance programs, but the lives of everyone who gets the opportunity to connect with him and his family."



Photos Courtesy of Aguibou Bougobali Sanou

## Depression Awareness Month

Alexander Wilson



Depression, meet Hobby. Hobby, meet Suffering. I'd like to think my experience with depression is just a phase. The problem with that? This "phase" has controlled my life for over a decade. I can't remember a time when things were different. I grew up feeling hopeless, worthless, and suicidal. However, that's not all depression is.

Depression is staring at a wall in complete silence, the only sound is you screaming, "I don't care" in your mind. It's watching

people pass by, thinking none feel the way you do. It's feeling pain when you grin because you can't remember the last time you actually smiled. It's wanting to stay in bed all day because you don't have energy for anything else. It's putting on a mask, even when texting your friends, so they won't see your real feelings in your words. It's insisting, "Everything's fine," when really, it's not. It's saying "no" to the most wonderful activities, things you've always wanted to do, because you're certain you'll ruin them.

Depression is making little mistakes, then crawling back into bed over them, claiming you'll try again tomorrow, knowing you won't. It's remembering what once made you happy, longing to do it again, but not doing it because you no longer have the interest or motivation. It's hating the apathy—hating not caring—but being unable to do anything about it. It's wishing no one would notice, while hoping someone will, because that'd mean you're still a person.

Depression is not some little thing "everyone goes through as a teenager;" it's not just

the hormones talking." It's real, a painful and powerful mental illness. It doesn't just go away. It haunts you, and taunts you, tracking your every move. Infiltrating your entire existence.

It's different for everyone, of course. Like all mental illnesses, the symptoms are very diverse. Some may experience excessive crying—seemingly for no reason at all—or tremendous weight loss or gain. Others will constantly talk down on themselves, feel hopeless and unworthy, even when something good happens.

As for managing these symptoms, some can get by with occasional therapy, or engage in other non-medicinal activities such as exercise or journaling. Others need medication and weekly therapist visits. It's not as simple as throwing drugs at a person, either. Some suffer depression so severe that multiple intervention types are needed. I know people in that category. It appears I am among those people. I'm currently on my second type of medication; the first didn't work for me. While this one seems to help my anxiety and ADD symptoms, I still

struggle with depression, especially suicidal thoughts.

I used to be proud I was "coping so well." My idea of coping was not what my psychiatrist said it should be. I thought, because I hadn't killed myself yet, I was fine and didn't need help. When I finally caved and agreed to see a psychiatrist, I realized how wrong I was. He made me recognize just how much I was suffering, and that my life didn't have to be this way. I didn't think my life could get better. Then it did.

Like I said, I'm still struggling. It's still taking a lot of effort to revisit hobbies I missed out on when I lacked the energy to take care of even my most basic needs. My hobby was always writing. I called myself a writer when I was younger because I wrote so many different things in my spare time. I was that nerdy child who enjoyed writing narrative essays in school, telling fantastical stories at every opportunity.

Then things started losing their appeal. Writing became a chore. It's not quite that it

## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



## New Challenges Await Friends

Who am I? Why am I here? These are some of the questions we find ourselves asking from time to time. The answer is not as simple as "I am so-and-so." In fact, the true answer is cultivated by the company of people that surround us. Moreover, the friends we keep shape our views on life and enhance our daily experiences.

Aristotle once said, "Friends are a single soul dwelling in two bodies." When it comes to ourselves, the perspective is warped. We find ourselves sometimes being either too hard or biased in the critique we give ourselves.

Have you ever gone to a different country, and the passenger seat is switched with the driver's seat? Suddenly you notice your take on the view is a little more refreshing, or somehow more interesting. Similarly, that is the beauty of having a close friend give you feedback that won't focus on trying to please you. In fact, a true friend will always tell you the cruel truth (but kindly) in any matter.

Everyone is impressionable, and no one is an exception. If you find yourself wanting to be artistic, then consider surrounding yourself with those who love art. If you want to be athletic, then try surrounding yourself with those who love to play the sport your heart desires. You get the point.

Friendships often start with the necessity of utility. We may come across people in our lives that mutually benefit each other. Whether it is the need for company or the wish for help in a work area, these interactions may remain small, may not develop completely, or may dissolve after a falling out.

Other types of friendships may be simply for pleasure. These types of friends could last for a long time, during which, you enjoy each other's company. You hang out, you have fun together. Still, the bond may not deepen; this may never become your go-to person, your confidant.

Finally, the virtuous friend is the best type. The one who helps us grow over time, and vice versa, through meaningful discussions. They support us through hard times. They are the type of friend who supports and challenges us in many facets of life—regardless of our bullshit. These friends last a lifetime. Seek these people in life because they bring out the best in us as we inspire each other to do more.

Finally, I leave you with another quote from Aristotle, as he has written two whole chapters on the topic of friendship. "It is natural such friendships are infrequent, such friendships require time and familiarity." Take time for such friends. It will be time well spent.

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



## Can you find it?

This month, we've featured another picture of an area of campus you probably pass countless times each week. But can you correctly identify it? Submit your answer to tamarack@nv.edu for a chance to win a \$10 Dunkin Donuts gift card! Winner will be chosen randomly from correct entries received.

## Crew 3000

### Continued Conservation Efforts

Mitchell W. Maknis



Photo Courtesy of Crew 3000

Crew 3000 is a non-profit organization specializing in coral restoration. During its eight years in operation, the Crew has accumulated many like-minded people from across the globe who share the intent of preserving our oceans. Over the years, Crew 3000 has solidified a unique and effective method to repopulate Staghorn coral. Crew creates coral farms from sustainable coral fragments that they replant into the reef. The Crew's methods have proven fruitful with established coral farms in Mexico, Roatan, Saint Lucia, and Punta Cana.

During the last week of June 2018, ten members of Crew 3000 gathered in Cozumel, Mexico, hoping to establish a new coral farm in the area. However, after the first few dives, the conservation group made a heartbreaking discovery. The coral reefs around the island were bleached and drained of life. After an evaluation by Crew 3000 President, Dr. William Zarillo, and Vice President, Professor Larry Maknis, it was determined that any effort to establish a coral farm in this area would be in vain.

While the Staghorn (hard) corals were in dire straits, there remain a plethora of soft corals to sustain ocean life. Although Crew members were relieved that the soft corals seem resistant to the ever-changing oceans, they were disheartened that at this time there is no known method to successfully reintroduce Staghorn coral to the waters around Mexico. This unfortunate turn of events should serve as

a reminder of the seriousness of declining conditions of ocean life.

Nevertheless, Crew 3000 continues to strive to preserve our ocean's ecosystem. The Crew continues to vigilantly watch their already established coral farms and transplant grown fragments back into the reefs. They also continue to scout new locations and establish new farms with the hopes that the water conditions in these areas will be favorable.

Recently, Crew 3000 embarked on a trip to Grand Cayman to assist in a coral farm already established by conservationists. In Grand Cayman, they built a new coral tree and cleaned the algae from existing trees. Algae cleaning is a service that must always be well-maintained for coral health. Working alongside another organization in order to expand the work already being done is just one more way Crew 3000 assists in keeping ocean ecosystems alive.

Rising water temperature has made an adverse and undeniable mark in the ecosystem of our Earth's oceans. Cozumel, once known as "the diver's island," is becoming a barren waste of hard coral that are either dead or dying. However, despite setbacks in Mexico, Crew 3000 is continuing to fight for our oceans. To better understand Crew 3000 and the scope of their mission, please visit [www.crew3000.org](http://www.crew3000.org) and their social media outlets.



Photo Courtesy of Crew 3000

## 5th District Face-Off

David Pacheco

With midterm elections around the corner, and a new generation of voters ready to exercise their rights, many are left questioning: Whom should I support? Why do I support them? Who is even running? In Connecticut, there are five congressional districts. Waterbury's 5th District stretches from Meriden and New Britain, westward to Danbury, encompassing the Farmington Valley, Upper Naugatuck River Valley, and the Litchfield Hills. This will be the theater where Waterbury native, Jahana Hayes (D), will attempt to launch her political career against Manuel "Manny" A. Santos (R).

Hayes' youth was fraught with adversity. Having a mother battling drug addiction, Hayes lived with her grandmother, becoming a mother at 17. However, this did not stop her from earning a master's degree and becoming an educator. Her dedication to community earned her the 2016 National Teacher of the Year award. It was this same dedication that drove Hayes into politics.

Manuel Santos came to the U.S. at only five years old. Living under an oppressive, authoritarian regime in Portugal, he was raised in a home with no water, no electricity, and five siblings. After high school, he served four years of active duty during Operation Desert Storm, fighting for the liberation of Kuwait. Santos, who had been on the local town committee, was

asked to be a placeholder as mayoral candidate for Meriden. When he decided to run on the Republican ballot in 2013, he won, becoming the first Republican mayor of Meriden in 30 years.

Although Hayes and Santos have different backgrounds, one cannot refute these backgrounds are as relatable as they are compelling. Each candidate wishes to push CT forward, though they approach key issues from different perspectives.

Santos and Hayes both acknowledge Connecticut's economy is failing, but they differ on how to fix it. Santos proposes reasonable regulation on businesses and pro-job legislation to facilitate business investment and growth. He will cut unnecessary spending and oppose tax increases. Hayes, on the other hand, believes supporting training programs in community colleges and trade schools is crucial to the state's economy. She would also like to focus on the gender pay gap between men and women and women of color. Hayes is also in favor of raising the minimum wage, raising the question of impact on small business in CT?

Regarding the Second Amendment, Hayes supports measures against straw purchases and universal background checks. She also champions "No buy, No fly" legislation, or banning those on terror watch lists from purchasing guns. Hayes supports an assault weapons ban (with assault rifles or automatic magazine-fed rifles currently illegal in CT). Santos

## SGA PRESIDENT



## Happy October!

October brings so many fun, exciting, and spooky things! The Student Government Association has planned so many great events for the month of October. You'll find yourself busy almost every day; I know we will be!

If you're interested in joining a club, but you're not sure which club you want to join, swing by Cafe West on Wednesday, October 3rd for our annual Club Expo. It's a chance to meet members from many of the clubs here at NVCC and get a sense of what each is all about. This year's Club Expo theme is "Battle of the Bands," so come enjoy complimentary food and music, and sign up for a club or two.

The next day, Thursday, October 4th, is our very first Karaoke Power Hour in Prism Lounge! It's happening from 12:30 - 2:00 p.m., and it's a great chance to show off your karaoke skills—or, if you're not into the spotlight, just listen to those who love to perform. The second Power Hour will take place on October 18th, same time and place.

October also means midterms, but that's okay, because the Academic Center for Excellence has you covered with "Waffles for Success" happening on October 10th from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. in the ACE (E500). Enjoy free waffles, juice, and coffee as you prepare for your midterm endeavors.

While we're talking academics, on October 10th, our Fall Transfer Fair will be held in Café West. For those looking into transferring, stop by at some point between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to gather some essential transfer information. You'll also have the chance to meet representatives from several four-year schools. Maybe you'll find the perfect fit!

Don't forget to sign up for the Blood Drive on October 15th. Who knows, maybe your donation of blood will be used to save someone's life. Finally, we close out the month with our annual Halloween Party on Wednesday, October 31st from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in Café West. Come enjoy free food and music, and don't forget to wear your spookiest costume. There will be prizes!

As always, if you have any questions or any concerns, we're here for you. Just swing by the SGA office in S516, or call us at 203-596-2185.

Tabitha Cruz

would push for a tougher gun crime policy. What both candidates lack is a clear position on mental illness and what drives criminals to act.

On healthcare, Santos calls for repeal of the Affordable Care Act, aka Obama Care, to allow insurance agencies, doctors, and hospitals to compete for people's business, theoretically bringing the cost of healthcare down. If the Affordable Care Act cannot be repealed, Santos offers two alternatives: block grants, where the federal government provides set funding to states based upon number of beneficiaries. This could lead to states picking up the tab and/or even lower quality care. The second possibility is reorganizing eligibility of enrollees by IRS filing. Hayes supports a single-payer healthcare system, also known as universal healthcare. Though this would, in theory, create more equitable healthcare for all, adopting and funding such a program could place the cost burden on taxpayers.

Both candidates support immigration reform. Hayes and Santos each call for a clear pathway to legal status and ask for permanent residency for DACA recipients and their families.

Although this provides readers with a brief overview of the candidates and their policy proposals, we encourage you to investigate in depth. For more information on Jahana Hayes and Manuel A. Santos visit, [jahana-hayes.com](http://jahana-hayes.com) and [santosforcongress.com](http://santosforcongress.com). Voter registration information is available in Prism Lounge. Don't forget to get out and vote on November 6th!

# The Tamarack

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## EDITORIAL

### Going Hungry

Did you know hunger and school don't exactly mix? There are a lot of hungry students these days, and that really sucks. The food pantry the campus supports is a small blessing; at least, no one needs to disturb the quiet library with stomach growls or take a test on an empty stomach. Hungry people like us are still going to have to work harder, though.

It is a difficult road to graduate, find a good job, and maybe start making just enough money to help stretch those food stamps—I'm sorry, I mean SNAP "benefits"—wouldn't want to give people the wrong idea about the nature of need.

It might surprise you to know that for some of us who have to use food stamps, it can be a terrible burden. Having to worry about the judgements from "well-meaning" family members. "If you just worked harder you wouldn't need assistance." Gee, thanks for that awesome tip. Why didn't I ever think of that before? If I just drop out of college right now and start working as CEO of a company, all of my problems will be solved!

It's also a burden to have to use food stamps at the grocery store. Yes, I am buying a lot of junk food. No, I do not like junk food, but it is either that or a single piece of fruit for five times the price. I have a very limited budget, and these crappy potato chips will be all I'll have to eat for the rest of the week.

Sometimes, it's easy to help someone we don't know because we can convince ourselves their hard problems are for reasons that only affect them. When it's someone close to us, it becomes hard not to think, That could easily become me in a far shorter period of time than I am comfortable with.

Well, it can happen; it sucks, and it bothers me that the help we receive must be anonymous, so we don't make anyone else feel scared they might be next, or worse, angry that charity is being wasted on "lazy college students who should be working harder, not leeching off the system."

This is a pretty bleak picture I'm painting, but it's the reality for too many of us, as we fight toward that rainbow at the end of our educational journeys. Truth is, there's more struggle than laziness here. Not that it really matters to some of our current political leaders, who have an obvious problem with truth.

## Depression Awareness (cont.)

wasn't fun anymore, but I could only write when I was at an extreme low point. That was the right kind of inspiration to get me to pound out a poem on my phone's tiny keyboard, and post it on my blog, to move past the darkness—not that the darkness ever really left. It was always there, lurking.

I never did most of the drastic things in my poems. However, I'm not ashamed to admit I've engaged in a lot of self-harming behaviors. It's difficult moving past these things when some were almost like an addiction—and the only way I could feel something. Now I have much better coping skills, courtesy of a string of therapists. I also have a loving boyfriend who reminds me constantly: "Love can't cure depression, but it can make life easier until you're better."

I can finally step back and realize how bad my life was at my lowest. What I thought was a good point in my life was usually not. Every "joke" about wanting to die just made everything worse. Once I stopped making those remarks and took my boyfriend seriously when he told me positive things about myself, things started turning out okay.

I'm finally getting back into writing, and not just edgy, depressing poetry. I'm slowly working my way back into my novel. I've been writing more love poems. There's negative poetry, too, poems I write to my ex, who I'm still trying to get over. Everything's

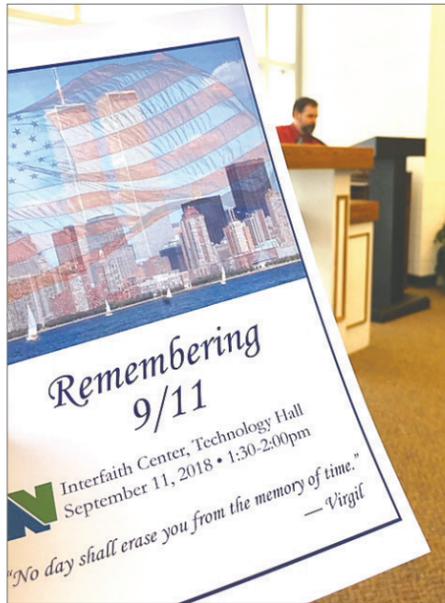
a process. It doesn't happen overnight. Not every solution is a good one. But I encourage you to reach out if you see someone struggling. And if that someone is you, get help. I protested help for ten years. Don't wait that long. You can—it will—get better. Much better coping skills, courtesy of a string of therapists. I also have a loving boyfriend who reminds me constantly: "Love can't cure depression, but it can make life easier until you're better."

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I'm finally getting back into writing, and not just edgy, depressing poetry. I'm slowly working my way back into my novel. I've been writing more love poems. There's negative poetry, too, poems I write to my ex, who I'm still trying to get over. Everything's a process. It doesn't happen overnight. Not every solution is a good one. But I encourage you to reach out if you see someone struggling. And if that someone is you, get help. I protested help for ten years. Don't wait that long. You can—it will—get better.

## Solace in Numbers

Tamarack Staff



Photos Courtesy of Steve Parlato

The second Tuesday in September, a group, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators gathered for NVCC's commemoration on the 17th anniversary of the tragic events of 9/11. While those in the Tech Hall Interfaith Center united in sorrow over the events of that dark day, what became most clear was the comfort to be found when grief is shared.

From Dean Gager's welcome to the heartfelt recollection of President De Filippis, who shared her memories of being in New York on 9/11, the spirit in the room was one of

fellowship in loss. SGA Secretary Abimelec Salgado and Vice President Ana Cruz shared their perspectives on how the 9/11 attacks shaped their young lives, in Salgado's case, leading him to CT.

Three members of the CAPSS staff each brought a special offering to those present. Samuel Johnson led the group in a brief prayer and shared his own experience of finding hope and renewal on that fateful day; William Carleton provided music, including a moving rendition of "America the Beautiful"; and Bonnie Goulet recited a poem, a touching tribute to first responders, as part of her closing remarks.

As the event concluded, Dean Gager asked the assembly to focus not only on those lost, but to give thanks for those present, for a community that truly cares. Filing out of the Center, participants stopped to share a hug, to shed a tear, to recognize and appreciate the consolation of community.



## Raising Voices, Raising Awareness

Nikki McGary

The Social Justice Series provides events grounded in a social justice framework, offering a safe space where students, faculty, staff and administrators come together, engage in respectful dialogue, embrace diversity, raise awareness, and cultivate critical thinking. The semester kicked off with "Raising Voices, Raising Awareness: A Panel of Local Activists,"

featuring Jered Bruzas (Shelter Director for St. Vincent DePaul Mission); Chamay Morales-James (Founder of My Reflection Matters); and Robert Goodrich (Co-Founder of Radical Advocates for Cross-Cultural Education, RACCE). Broadly speaking, and in this context, activism refers to promoting positive social change. Each panelist shared how they became involved in the work they do, positive social change they would like to see in society, and challenges they encounter.

Chamay Morales-James focused on the importance of promoting healthy racial and ethnic identities. She told of being in a store with her daughter and realizing the products didn't reflect her, saying, "I couldn't even find a brown baby doll in 2011." She emphasized the trauma racism causes, and discussed how systemic and widespread racism has been proven to negatively impact kids' mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. My Reflection Matters provides educational tools and resources for students and teachers to promote healthy racial and ethnic identities and development. Morales-James stressed the importance of discussing race with children.

Robert Goodrich engaged the audience with a rallying cry: "When We Fight, We Win!" He began by acknowledging his own white privilege allows for him to be an advocate,

activist and "aggravator" who has had the "honor of getting arrested" multiple times over the last year while defending immigrant rights, promoting policy change, and challenging multiple forms of systemic racism (careful to point out these efforts were crafted in collaboration with lawyers). Goodrich discussed the disparate treatment of minority faculty and students.

RACCE sees education "sitting at the intersection of oppressions." For example, RACCE fought to eliminate exclusionary disciplinary actions (such as suspensions for Waterbury preschoolers), because they recognize suspensions were disproportionately aimed at children of color, and, over the long run, such disciplinary actions contribute to the "school to prison pipeline."

Jered Bruzas said, "We should not think of people as homeless. They are human beings experiencing homelessness." He challenged the audience to think critically about stereotypes society has about homelessness, sharing a story of a man in his shelter who used to work on Wall Street, had a stroke, and lost his house and car. Bruzas boldly said his goal is to end homelessness in Waterbury, and close the shelter, so, "I'd be out of a job." He reminded the audience about the humanity in us all, concluding by saying "Even the littlest things can make a difference. Even smiling at one another can make a difference."

The Social Justice Series will offer two October events:

"Shaping Our Thoughts: The Miseducation of the American Mind" (Mon. 10/8 at 12:45 PM in L501)

"Voting Rights. Or is it a privilege? And/or a responsibility?" (Tues. 10/30 at 11:10 AM in L501) Contacts: Nikki McGary (nmcgary@nv.edu) and Kathy Taylor (ktaylor1@nv.edu)



Photo Courtesy of Nikki McGary

## Happenings @ Other Colleges

Alyssa Katz



### Dartmouth College

October 11th, New Hampshire's Dartmouth College will host a lecture by Art History Professor Mary Coffey. She'll discuss Jose Clemente Orozco's "Epic of American Civilization (1930s)," which depicts the impact of indigenous and European peoples on North America; industrialization; and the horrors of the Mexican Civil War and WWI. Coffey will ask the audience to consider Orozco's Mexican heritage, in lot of today's attitudes toward immigration. She will also talk about two of his other artworks, "Two Americas" and "Modern Industrial Man."

<https://news.dartmouth.edu/events/event?event=52061#.W4qtYc5KiUk>



### Chapman University

California's Chapman University will host Dr. Betty McMicken on October 3rd. McMicken's lecture, "Born without a Tongue: Are Speech and Swallowing Possible?" focuses on her specialized area of speech-language pathology, essentially speech therapy following the impact of disease or disfigurement on the organs of speech. McMicken is celebrating 50 years of clinical practice, has won multiple prestigious awards, and has published over 70 research papers. In addition, she's presented nationally and internationally on post-rehab treatments of head and neck cancer, neurological swallowing disorders, stuttering, and congenital aglossia.

<https://events.chapman.edu/53276>



### Sarah Lawrence College

Sa'ed Adel Atshan, a Palestinian human rights activist, will give a lecture at New York's Sarah Lawrence College, October 15th. Atshan's lecture, "Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique," will delve into LGBTQIA identities, while focusing on his areas of activism. Atshan, a member of the LGBTQIA community, has conducted research on the politics of humanitarian aid in the Palestinian region.

[https://www.sarahlawrence.edu/news-events/events/2018-2019/2018-10-15-queer\\_palestine\\_and\\_eid221428.html](https://www.sarahlawrence.edu/news-events/events/2018-2019/2018-10-15-queer_palestine_and_eid221428.html)



### Kent University

At Ohio's Kent State University, October is disAbility Awareness Month. Instead of focusing on disabilities, the focus is on the "ability," despite limitations, to have a full and rewarding life. According to a statement, "...d' is intentionally lowercase to emphasize people's ability rather than disability." The goal is to promote awareness and inclusion of people living with disability. Last year featured service dogs on campus, a national depression screening day, a panel discussion where all the panelists were deaf. Love Your Body Day, and a panel educating on neurodiversity and autism acceptance also took place. Last year's spotlight event was "Kent State of Accessibility: Learning, Living, and Working with a Disability at Kent State." This day was packed with events highlighting resources on campus for people with disabilities, as well as faculty, staff, and students personal stories of living with disability and the importance of inclusion.

<https://www.kent.edu/sas/disability-awareness-month>

## The White Paper Invitation

Thomas Ackerman



CSCU President Mark Ojakian has invited each CSCU institution to contribute to a "white paper," which will inform the incoming Governor's administration, of the higher education needs in our state. Ojakian's letter to the 12 community colleges, four state schools, and Charter Oak, calls for student, faculty, and staff input. The paper could help determine how deep cuts will be, and what programs and entities should be prioritized. The consolidation plan, "Students First," is on the minds of those contributing.

NVCC Professor Delwyn Cummings, who teaches environmental science, serves on the Faculty Advisory Committee, reporting to the Board of Regents in Hartford. He also serves on the Finance Sub-committee.

Cummings said the groups are discussing implementation of a low-completer policy, as one measure of cost savings. The policy would create policy to determine whether certain costly programs, with low graduate rates, should continue. "In a large organization, you want to cut down situations perceived as political," he said. "If you have a solid policy, that's the best way to do it, so everyone is on an equal playing field."

The consensus for a long-term goal is to reduce costs, which are largely associated with pensions and insurance costs. The "Students First" idea was proposed to avoid campus closures, by reducing administrative personnel. President Ojakian has emphasized the importance of maintaining campus autonomy in that process. The tentative schedule for consolidation is 2023, and CSCU is working with the accrediting institution, New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), to methodically approach the date.

SGA President Tabitha Cruz said community colleges are often last to be considered in a budget—and the first to be cut. Cruz serves on the Student Advisory Committee and Institutional Planning Council, which, she said, are concerned with the long-term outlook. She hopes students are, too. "If students don't care about who gets into office, they shouldn't later complain about who cuts what," she stated.

Short-term agenda items include hiring a company to help speed the processing of student financial aid requests. There is also work

planned to consolidate data systems for each school, as a step to make general education credits of equal credit value, throughout the state. Additionally, there is potential for multi-million-dollar renovations to Kinney Hall, and interviews for a new Chief Financial Officer, which should begin taking place this semester, according to Cummings.

Dean of Students Sarah Gager, employed at NVCC since 1993, said change is inevitable, but that it shouldn't necessarily be viewed as negative. "If it's done with the right purpose, and for the right reason, and it's done with enough feedback to drive and direct the change, it can often be good," Gager said. She and Cruz also voiced hope students will respond to surveys, dispersed at student events, to include questions regarding what work and internship opportunities would be most valuable to students, as well as what they view as the most vital student services.

Gager doesn't consider the budget a political issue, saying, "We're not the only state dealing with this." Gager also said, in recent years, NVCC administration has made conscious efforts to conserve, including simple measures, like carpooling to events, and teleconferencing, rather than attending meetings in person. Gager added her office has cross-trained staff. "We get creative," she said. "When we have a peak event, like registration, with 200 students requiring support, and three staff members, they're going to wait a long time." At a time like this, employees in the area work where there is the most demand. "Does it cost more money? No."

The 2017 CSCU financial statements predict CT Community Colleges will "confront significant fiscal challenges requiring fundamental changes in the years ahead." The statement added the factors having the greatest impact are "projected flattening and declining numbers of high school graduates...lower enrollments, and the continued fiscal challenges faced by the State of Connecticut, resulting in decreased state funding."

State issues, including pension and salary costs, are the largest budgetary concerns. Referring to President Ojakian's assessment of the gubernatorial candidates and their potential impact on higher education, Cummings said, "He's looked at their public statements to try to make some conclusions. While Lamont may be more of a known, being from the same party and having affiliations with Governor Malloy, neither candidate has been very specific."

With continued uncertainty, statewide and within the CSCU system, NVCC community members are encouraged to participate in the creation of the White Paper. As President Ojakian said at September's All-College Meeting, the new administration won't give us what we need unless we clearly state what that is.

complete end to creative efforts by the NVCC community. A music rehearsal for *Little Shop of Horrors* was held in a makeshift rehearsal space; at least one Drawing course met outside on the campus grounds. And it's a given Administration, Maintenance, Public Safety, and IT were working long hours to figure it all out.

Then there was *The Tamarack*. With tight monthly deadlines, our staff simply couldn't afford to miss an all-important Wednesday editorial meeting. So, after some quick email scrambling, it was agreed: those who could would convene at the Waterbury Barnes & Noble at 2:00 PM, Wednesday, September 5th. Surrounded by shelves of books, and with the frappuccino maker whirring noisily, we hunkered down and put together this month's rundown. It's proof that, regardless of weather, lost sleep, or in this case, lack of amenities—like electricity and an office—the good folks of *The Tamarack* are always on the job!

## Honoring Adjuncts

### A Warm Welcome

Joshua Halsband



Photo Courtesy of Joshua Halsband

I have been teaching English and ESL at NVCC since 2012. I've also taught the First Year Experience class here, and I teach at other institutions as well. My hobbies include photography, reading, writing, stamp collecting, playing Scrabble and Pandemic.

If you are reading this article, then you are likely a student at NVCC and are on your way to fulfilling your academic and career goals. You have decided to take concrete steps to change your life and the lives of your family through your commitment to education. Your dedication is admirable, and my colleagues and I are here to guide you along your journey.

Full-time professors, part-time instructors, and all members of the NVCC community want you to succeed in your educational and professional pursuits. We're committed to teaching you the concepts and skills you need to flourish in your courses and prospective occupations. Your obligation is to be prepared and enthusiastic. Our collaboration—students, faculty, and administration—are the ingredients that lead to our collective accomplishments.

As you have noticed, the students, faculty, administration, and support staff come from diverse backgrounds. If you have a specific academic, career, or social interest, you can find people in the college who share your same curiosities. Use the resources available online and throughout the Waterbury and Danbury campuses to meet with peers and college employees with whom you can initiate friendships and connections.

In my time here, I've seen the students who have the highest degree of academic success are those who invest in their studies and equally engage in the college community. These students are enthusiastic about working in pairs, small groups, and with the entire class. Outside class, they participate in their departments' activities and join clubs. They go on college-sponsored trips and take advantage of the job and transfer fairs held throughout the year. The most successful students attend events not just as they get closer to graduation, but starting from their first semester. In this way, they learn what the current situation is, what they need to study and accomplish, and what the future might hold for them educationally and professionally.

Therefore, I suggest you reach out to various members of the NVCC community and ask questions, engage in discussions, and partner with your instructors and classmates. As Stephen R. Covey wrote in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989), "Put first things first," and this means, for you, that you should focus on your education and making meaningful connections within NVCC.

On a personal note, I am always looking for some new challengers to play Scrabble and Pandemic, so if you'd like to play—or, for help getting in touch with some of the NVCC resources I mentioned—feel free to contact me at [jhalsband@nv.edu](mailto:jhalsband@nv.edu).

## No Stopping Us

Tamarack Staff



As you likely know, the second week of the semester had a bit of a hiccup. With a major power outage affecting nearly the entire campus, classes and activities were cancelled—via an evening alert on September 4th—for Wednesday and Thursday. With power on in Founders Hall, Friday and weekend classes were relocated to that building.

But, wait! The official closure didn't put a



**CAPSS CORNER**

**What's the Plan?**

Sue Houlihan is an Academic Advising and Retention Specialist in CAPSS.

Fall is one of my favorite times of year, filled with so many new and exciting things, especially on the NVCC campus. A new school year brings numerous possibilities: new goals and new opportunities. By definition, community colleges offer courses leading to an associate's degree. Two-year degrees are often a springboard for students intending to transfer to a four-year institution in order to pursue a bachelor's degree. Advisors are here to help with that burning question, "What's next?" Assisting students with information they need to be successful in their personal and professional development is one of an advisor's many roles.

If you're planning to transfer to a four-year institution, there's a lot to think about. Which colleges offer the program you're interested in? Will your new school accept your NVCC credits? What if you don't know what you want to study? Your advisor can work with you to ensure a smooth transition by creating an individual transfer plan. We recognize applying to college for the first time is complicated enough, but with little consistency in transfer policies from school to school, the process of transferring from a two-year to a four-year college can be dizzying.

Transfer policies can change from year to year, but advisors and transfer coordinators are kept up-to-date on these changes. Credits earned at NVCC can be transferred to most four-year colleges and universities. Many public and private institutions offer different articulation agreements. Articulation agreements between two- and four-year schools ensure an associate's degree will satisfy all freshmen and sophomore year general education requirements. Be sure to consider transfer programs within the CT State College & University System. With over twenty CSU Pathway Transfer Programs, NVCC allows students to complete associate degree programs that transfer without hassle to all CT State Universities, and Charter Oak State College, offering their major. Upon completion of a two-year degree, students in these programs are guaranteed full junior status and can complete a bachelor's degree in their major without losing credits.

NVCC offers additional ways to help with this next step. Transfer counselors from Central CT State University, Southern CT State University, Western CT State University and UCONN visit campus regularly. Stop by the CAPSS office in Kinney Hall (K520) to set up a one-on-one appointment with a transfer counselor. Over thirty schools will set up table visits throughout the semester. October 10th we'll host our annual Waterbury Fall Transfer Fair, with transfer counselors representing close to forty schools throughout New York and New England. The Danbury Transfer Fair will be October 17th. November 7th we'll offer transfer workshops on topics such as the application process, need-blind applications, how to choose the right school for you, and creating an effective timeline to help keep you on track.

Don't forget to meet with your advisor regularly. We're here to help!

Susan Houlihan

**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 emailSGA@nvcc.commnet.edu.



**Between the Bookends**  
*News from the NVCC Library*

By Jaime Hammond



Photo Courtesy of Max Raul Egusquiza

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

Welcome and welcome back, NVCC community! The staff of the NVCC Library have been working all summer to prepare for the fall semester. While we do take some time off, we also do a lot of work behind the scenes over the summer. This summer, we made the NV Search page easier for you to use by simplifying the options and adding a way to limit by "physical" and "online" items. You can check it out at [library.ct.edu/nvcc](http://library.ct.edu/nvcc).

Another improvement we made this summer is in the library space in Danbury, located in the Multipurpose Room (D201). We added a big, beautiful poster that highlights all the services we offer to Danbury students, and we installed a new workstation that will help students connect with a librarian for research help. Try it out!

A few other updates made over the summer:

- Your books will now be renewed automatically! The only exceptions are textbooks and items requested by other library users. After 3 weeks, if no one else needs it, you automatically get 3 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.
- We also added some new resources! Radiologic Technology students will be interested in the NetAnatomy database, and Horticulture students will want to check out Global Plants. We also have lots of new books. Visit [www.nvcc.libguides.com/databases](http://www.nvcc.libguides.com/databases) to see what we've got for you.

We've got some fun events coming up- we hope you can join us!

**Thursday, October 11th 10:30 - 12:30, D201 (Danbury Campus)**  
Meet "Max" in Danbury Meet Librarians and learn about our services.

**Wednesday, October 24th 10:30-1:00, Outside L523**  
Get Informed! Learn about the Library's resources that can help you keep up with current news and issues this election season.

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@nv.edu](mailto:library@nv.edu) and we'll help you with whatever you need. Once those group projects and research papers start to roll in, you can reserve a group study room or book an appointment with a librarian on our website.

We hope your semester is going well- and stop by the library soon!

**FACE IN THE CROWD**  
**Love on a Plate**

Jennifer Frontiero

Sundays at St. Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen are very special as people connect and bond over food. Think about how powerful food memories are. If I asked you to describe your favorite meal growing up, you would not only recall the dish itself, but the person who prepared it, the smells in the house, the sounds going on in the background, what it felt like when you had your first taste. You may be getting a little hungry just thinking about it. I certainly am.

As a service and community-oriented person since childhood, I wondered what the "Service Learning" part of my role would look like as I began coordinating and working with volunteers from the NVCC community at the St. Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen. My professional experiences in catering, management, and cooking education had me well prepared for the actual work of preparing meals with these individuals, but where would I be using my skills to facilitate learning in relation to the work I would be doing?

It turns out learning just happens organically. The conversations at St. Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen on Sundays, huddled around the prep table cutting a 50-lb bag of carrots or mopping the floors, are what brings the "Service Learning" element to my role. We talk about societal factors contributing to poverty and food access. We tell stories about our lives and why we personally feel drawn to serve. We talk about our families and connections to the community. We share wholeheartedly, not only our time and skills, but our diversity. It's beautiful to see people bond



Photo Courtesy of Jennifer Frontiero

**"We are there to serve the people, but in doing so, we really serve our souls".**

in this way. We are there to serve the people, but in doing so, we really serve our souls.

People come into the Soup Kitchen for a variety of reasons. We aren't there to judge why someone is there; we're there to create a positive food memory. We're there to welcome anyone who shows up to enjoy the meal we have prepared. We're there to serve love on a plate, because love is always the secret ingredient.

I look forward to getting to know the Naugatuck Valley Community College students and faculty in this special way. We would love for you to come and be part of our Sunday Service. I am looking to schedule both groups and individuals to come and support with prep, service, and light cleaning. If you're interested, please connect me at [jfrontiero@nvcc.commnet.edu](mailto:jfrontiero@nvcc.commnet.edu).

**Center for Teaching**

**Paper and Pen and the Power of Notetaking**

Prof. Sandra Eddy

Professor Sandra Eddy is a faculty member and chairperson for CIS/Business Applications in the Business Division at NVCC.

So, you've been in school for a few weeks. Maybe you've even taken a test or written a paper. Please answer honestly. How are your class notes going?

The discipline of notetaking can be lost in the first few weeks of school, when the practice of notetaking should be ramping up into full swing.

**Can you be convinced to take notes?** Maybe! Many studies show notetaking positively impacts success. The more comprehensive, accurate and detailed *your notes*, the better results you'll have in your classes. If that seems obvious, look around *your classrooms* and observe notetaking. If someone takes extensive notes, do not hesitate to ask that classmate to discuss techniques and strategies. Maybe you can share notes! If you want more information, refer to the following article in *Psychology Today*: "Using Psychology to Boost Your Grades: Taking Notes, Note-taking isn't About Transcribing, it's About Processing Information," by Nancy Darling, Ph.D.

**The computer, yes or no?** Research suggests taking notes by hand provides much deeper learning and a more lasting impact than typing notes. If you love the computer, I suggest you use it to type your notes after class. This practice gives you the added benefit of writing notes and performing a second transcription on your computer. Before tests, review both the handwritten and typed notes. If you need further exploration on this topic, read: "The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard, Advantages of

Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking," by Pam A. Mueller & Daniel M. Oppenheimer.

**Will you listen to your peers?** Week two in one of my classes we had an informal discussion about notetaking. Here are tips from NVCC college students on notetaking.

- ✓ Have a notebook and pen ready at the start of each class.
- ✓ Write down all key points; then give details under each point.
- ✓ Do pre-note taking when reading before class.
- ✓ Highlight all subjects / use an outline format for notetaking.
- ✓ Write down what you DON'T know or understand and get clarification.
- ✓ Stay organized.
- ✓ Write down examples as they will help you remember the point given.
- ✓ Use indenting to make notes more readable.
- ✓ Use multiple colors to offset information.
- ✓ Rewrite your notes (great time to use more color).

The web has abundant information on notetaking. I suggest Dartmouth College's Academic Skills Center website: <https://students.dartmouth.edu/academic-skills/> as an excellent starting point. The site has clear videos and excellent resources to increase or hone notetaking skills. Share thoughts on notetaking with others and don't hesitate to ask questions and follow up with professors on any information that may be unclear. Bring your notebook up after class and get that question answered. It will make a difference. I wish you all a successful semester!

**Join Us!** ON-CAMERA REPORTERS photo editors ILLUSTRATORS  
writers EDITORS AD SALES REPS sound specialists  
**We're Looking For** VIDEO PRODUCERS bloggers photographers PUBLISHERS  
marketers VISUAL ARTISTS

**No Experience Necessary!! Meetings: Tuesday 2:00 - 3:00 pm, S519 // [tamarack@nv.edu](mailto:tamarack@nv.edu)**

## Putting Yourself on the Page

Joe Steele



Creative Writing Club members (l to r): Andrew Robinson, Gwenydd Miller, Joe Steele, and John Ryan.  
Photo Credit: A helpful NVCC student.

Calling all writers! If you've got a mind for stories or enjoy venting onto the page in order to stave off existential dread as much as I do—look no further than Naugatuck Valley's "newly officialized" Creative Writing Club! Do you enjoy forcing others to listen to your ideas while enjoying the process of other people picking apart your heart's purest expression and telling you exactly what's wrong with it? Me too! That's why here at the Creative Writing Club, we strive to provide a supportive environment for writers to share their work, and to help them hone their skills through use of constructive criticism.

All writing is welcome here, whether it be bad poetry, cheesy love songs, short stories,

tall tales, boring screenplays, weird fan fiction, or the first chapter of your magnum opus—we wanna see it! If you're a writer at sea, looking for a new home, I say to you: "Give me your tired ramblings, your poor first drafts, your huddled English majors..."

Even if you don't have anything written to share, we'd love to discuss our work and your writing interests with you and hear your input! Everyone here is committed to helping make each other's writing as good as possible, so if that sounds like something you'd be interested in, stop by room S517 in the Student Center, Prism Lounge, from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. on Mondays and/or 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Thursdays. Hope to see you soon!

### Creative Writing Club

Mondays  
2:30 - 4:00  
S517

Thursdays  
3:00 - 4:00  
S517



Connect. Develop. Succeed.

**NJIT**  
New Jersey Institute  
of Technology

[info.njit.edu/transfer](http://info.njit.edu/transfer)

## PTK Column

### Introducing the Honors Society



Irira Hoxha

Hello, everyone! My name is Irisa (Iris), and this is my 4th semester at NVCC. So far, my interaction at the campus with a lot of different people has made me a happy student who does not only go to class, but also reaches out for a variety of opportunities that are offered at the campus.

If you are a hardworking student, and you want to get involved in projects, you might want to learn more about the PTK Honors Society. PTK, which stands for Phi Theta Kappa, is the world's largest and most prestigious international honor society for two-year colleges and academic programs.

Students are invited via letter when they are officially eligible to join PTK. The eligibility requirements include a GPA standard and having at least 12 credits from NVCC. One impressive fact is that 90% of Phi Theta Kappa members complete their associate degree and transfer to a four-year college or university.

When I received the letter, I felt excitement about the fact that my effort towards education were starting to pay off. Being considered an honor student made me feel proud of myself, more confident, and also, it was quite a big motivation to keep up with the good work.

More than that, members of PTK have access to nearly \$90 million in scholarship funds. The best part of this is there are scholarship opportunities available for every step of the college career, from associate degree to master's degree. If money is not your issue as a student, then leadership comes next.

In addition to being a member, if you choose to serve as an officer, you get to learn more about how to plan and run a meeting or a workshop. Moreover, you get to practice your public speaking with people who want you to succeed. You will spend time with and be mentored by our two PTK advisors, Prof. Lisa Kaufman and Prof. Greg Harding.

Here is a brief introduction to the PTK officers of NVCC:

President Erica Crabe is currently majoring in the Legal Assistant/Paralegal Studies program. Her ultimate goal is to get her Juris Doctor and become an attorney.

Vice President Egzon Dauti is in the Cybersecurity program after earning a bachelor's degree in Business Economy overseas. His short-term goal is to get a certificate in CompTIA Security and CompTIA CASP.

Five-star Officer Anthony Rosa, is studying Respiratory Care. His goal is to earn a bachelors in this major and work for a children's hospital.

Treasurer Irira Hoxha—yes, that's me!—is currently majoring in Accounting and has a certificate for Advanced English Proficiency. My long-term goal is to pass the CPA exam and have my own license.

I am looking forward to seeing you all in the PTK meetings. Cheers to a great semester!

## Crystal Bees

Brandon Smith



Photo from left to right: Customer's daughter with PTA students, Deena Allard, Brandon Smith, and Kristen Marcano.

The PTA Program's Crystal Bees Fundraiser this summer was the first event hosted by the Class of 2019. This night was full of bowling, arcade games, and more; Crystal Bees in Southington was nice enough to let us use ten of their lanes for our friends and family. We had a large turnout, with 64 guests attending to support our program, making it a huge success. All our guests enjoyed the fun events we'd planned for

**...the "Most Valuable Bowler" was the daughter of the customer who'd waited so patiently for the rest of us to finish."**

them throughout the night, including a "Most Valuable Bowler" trophy presentation.

Unfortunately, with the large number of guests in limited space, Crystal Bees' regular customers weren't able to have their own lanes to themselves. Two customers came in for a mother/daughter bowling night, but weren't able to get their own lane. Crystal Bees offered a free arcade card as an apology, but she wasn't able to bowl until we were done because we took up the majority of the lanes.

Once the night calmed down and everyone had a chance to bowl, we decided the "Most Valuable Bowler" was the daughter of the customer who'd waited so patiently for the rest of us to finish. Because we were the reason they couldn't bowl earlier, it was a perfect opportunity to reconcile with them. They were caught completely off guard and the mother was brought to tears when we presented the trophy to her daughter. I was admittedly caught off guard with how happy this made her and her daughter.

Instead of leaving that night being thought of as the students who took all the bowling lanes and wouldn't let them bowl, this customer left with the impression that the PTA Program at Naugatuck Valley Community College believes in doing the right thing. We didn't do this with the intention of gaining recognition for the school, but we were all represented in a positive way, and this is how we strive to be viewed. All it took to make someone's day was a simple trophy and the urge to demonstrate our social responsibility to give back.

## NVCC Promotes the Vote!

Tabitha Cruz / Tamarack Staff



Constitution Day was once again celebrated at NVCC. This year, Monday, September 17th saw spirited competition in Café West as three teams battled it out in the Constitutional Trivia Contest. Team SGA, featuring Secretary Abimelec Salgado and President Tabitha Cruz, took the top spot. After two rounds of trivia questions, contestants and guests enjoyed pizza provided by the SGA. NVCC President Daisy Cocco De Filippis was on hand to join in the festivities, presenting the six contestants with a copy of the book, *This is Our Constitution*, by Khizr Khan. Civic engagement was also at the forefront as several Voter Registration Parties took place through October 1st at various locations across campus (ACE, Café West, Kinney Hall).

## 1998: A Very Good Year

Matthew O. Spence

1998 was a time for recovery in rap, having lost 2Pac and Biggie in the previous years. As recovery goes, the year didn't disappoint. OutKast released their third album, and arguably their magnum opus *Aquemini*. Its authentic, trippy, avant-garde-like production, featured standout tracks, such as their often imitated but never duplicated "Spottieoootieopalicious" and the classic outro track *Chonkyfire*.

DMX made Hip-Hop history, becoming the first rapper to release two albums in the same year, *It's Dark and Hell is Hot* and *Flesh of my Flesh*... and have both go platinum within that year. Being gritty, gutter and dark, both albums brought a new wave and new fresh air within the industry, essentially poking a hole in the "Bling Era" of rap, which isn't the most appreciated time in Hip-Hop.

Lauryn Hill released her iconic solo debut, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*, in 1998; then the world stopped, and it was all eyes on Lauryn. Like *Gangbusters*, she released her album to highly critical praise and went on to break records, including being the first female rapper to have a #1 album in the country; even outside of Hip-Hop she has garnered phenomenal accolades including being the first female artist to win five Grammy Awards in one night, including "Album of the Year" and "Best R&B Album," leaving an indelible stamp on rap and in music history.

Adding to list of firsts, Big Pun released his debut album *Capital Punishment* and went on to become the first Latino solo rapper to go platinum. Another notable event needs to be clarified regarding Jay-Z's legacy. Mr. Carter got his breakout moment with his third album, which he's referred to as his *Off the Wall*. With *Vol. 2... Hard Knock Life* he received his first #1 hit with the title track "Hard Knock Life"; people forget Jay-Z wasn't as big as he is now when he first released *Reasonable Doubt*.

Two record labels, Rawkus Records and Cash Money Records, got the moment of truth in this year of rising moments. Rawkus Records gained their shine, when 2 Brooklyn MCS, known as Black Star released the debut LP, *Mos Def and Talib Kweli Are Black Star*, which, 20 years later is not only regarded as one of the greatest underground rap albums, but one of the greatest rap albums of all time. Rawkus Records is now hailed as an important indie rap label.

As for Cash Money Records, Hot Boz member, Juvenile, released his debut LP, *400 Degreez*, with New Orleans Bounce hits, like "Ha" and "Back That Thang Up". After that, came abundant hits, with Cash Money Records now hailed as one of the most important rap labels ever. Finally, the Beastie Boys released their Monty Python-referencing, coffee connoisseur, futuristic production-filled, *Hello Nasty* LP, winning the group their first Grammy Awards, in 1998, a very good year.

## Last Gasp

Tamarack Staff



Photo Courtesy of Prof. Sandra Eddy

By the time this issue hits stands, we'll be in week six of the semester. The last monarch will have flown for now. It will officially be autumn. That's fitting; after all, we refer to this as the fall semester. But as we hurtle through midterms

and brace for icy mornings, take a moment to reflect on summer. Sure, there were long stretches of brutal heat and humidity, wild storms, but there was sweetness, too. Drinking in those late sunsets, savoring an extra scoop of maple walnut. And yeah, butterflies. So breathe in those summer memories. Winter's coming.

## Abrazos

Special to *The Tamarack*



On September 24th, as part of the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, a screening of the powerful film, *Abrazos* (Hugs), sponsored by the Hispanic Student Union, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and the Max. R. Traurig Library, was presented in the Waterbury Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital Community Room in Founders Hall. The documentary's director, Luis Argueta, was in attendance and took questions from the audience following the screening.

According to the website of the production company, New Day Films, "*Abrazos* tells the transformational journey of a group of U.S. Citizen Children, sons and daughters of undocumented immigrants, who travel from Minnesota to Guatemala to meet their grandparents—and in some instances their siblings—for the first time."

**"In the process of filming several of my most recent documentaries, I have witnessed the negative consequences of family separation which is caused by a broken immigration system. The ones most affected by the separation are the children."**

Luis Argueta

With the immigration travesty currently taking place on our southern border, and the plight of undocumented families a hotly debated topic, it was an excellent opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of these American-born children caught in the cross-hairs. Argueta has said, "In the process of filming several of my most recent documentaries, I have witnessed the negative consequences of family separation which is caused by a broken immigration system. The ones most affected by the separation are the children."

NVCC's Library, co-sponsor of the September 24th event, has purchased copies of *Abrazos* and secured the rights to screen the film at the College. This could provide faculty and students who were not able to attend an opportunity to engage in thoughtful discussion about the film and the immigration crisis. For information on the film, contact Karlene Ball, ESL Coordinator at [kball@nv.edu](mailto:kball@nv.edu). To borrow the film or arrange a screening, contact Library Director Jaime Hammond at [jhammond@nv.edu](mailto:jhammond@nv.edu).



## alumni SHOWCASE



Mickie Page Dorado

## Second Chances

The first thought I have when reminded of Mattatuck Community College is second chances. Education gives us the chance to reinvent ourselves, to take ourselves to a new place. The College's name has changed, but the ideal is still the same: meet each student where they are with quality, affordable education. My name is Mickie Page Dorado, and I graduated from Mattatuck in 1988—on my second time around.

Although college was always the expected step after high school, going away to a traditional 4-year university was beyond the comprehension of my 18-year-old self. Mattatuck welcomed me with a barrier-free enrollment process and a price tag I could afford. I enjoyed my first time through. I was challenged by thoughtful professors and enjoyed my time in the tiny converted classrooms that served as our theater.

However, a fulltime, dead-end job, a social life, and other distractions found me cutting back on classes each semester, until I no longer made time for school. "I'm young, I'll get back there," I said to myself. When I

woke up one morning, six years later, it hit me. Is this what I want to do with my life?

Still unsure of what I wanted, I knew going back to school was a step I needed to take. Once again, Mattatuck was there for this now-older student. This time was different; I was there for me. My grades were important. Every A mattered. I was inspired by my 73-year-old geology lab partner, who taught

**"Education gives us the chance to reinvent ourselves, to take ourselves to a new place."**

me we are never too old to learn. After three semesters, I was able to combine my credits from my first tour and graduate. I now had a way to move on to a four-year university.

Life took me first to Florida, and then to California, then to Texas. I found a job in the finance industry, and today I am the Chief Operating Officer of a small, but growing company, CRF Solutions. I see myself in so many of the young people who come to work for us. I always encourage them to make time to work on themselves. Often that means attending our local community college, even if just one class at a time.

I've been married for 27 years to someone who shares my passion for both the arts and sports. Our amazing son is a newly commissioned Army officer. My love of research found me back in the classroom to complete the education required to become a licensed private investigator. My hobby is helping reunite long-lost family and friends. We love to travel, having visited 47 states and 23 countries. This spring we'll take our second RV trip through Europe. When we're not exploring the world, playing the augmented reality game *Ingress*, you can find us cheering on our beloved Dallas Stars hockey team. It's been quite the journey from Waterbury, and Mattatuck was the perfect launching point.

## How Our Gardens Grow

Steve Parlato



Photo Courtesy of Steve Parlato

Sometimes, a seemingly random decision provides unexpected learning. This was the case one September Friday. I wasn't scheduled to be on campus that morning, but made a last-minute choice to stop by. On a whim, I opted to park in the garage, rather than Kinney Lot. As I steered into the level two parking bay, flashes of red and neon green caught my eye. Whether feeling particularly inquisitive—or subconsciously aware of potential Tamarack content (let's be honest, that's always on my mind)—I decided to investigate. The bright red wasn't a tower of Coke cans; that high-key green not some exotic foliage plant.

My attention was captured by something much richer: a quartet of hardworking horticulture students. I approached, a bit hesitant for fear of being scolded for tromping through mulch, and was instead met with friendly hellos. When I introduced myself and asked to take a photo, this industrious group happily complied. That's when I saw a chance for a mini-interview, and these folks had plenty to share.

Mason Deblois briefly put aside his shovel to discuss his landscape aspirations post-NVCC. Shaking his hand brought a

vicarious sense of accomplishment through old-fashioned physical labor. Hannah Winzler described gently correcting a person she overheard cautioning a friend never to eat anything growing on campus "because of pesticides." I was impressed to learn the beauty of NVCC's gardens is fully organic—no pesticides in use (Not to encourage indiscriminate munching). Megan Barrios, whose interest lies in herbal remedies, foresees a future using medicinal plants to heal plant diseases. Pretty fascinating. Finally, Mary Horan displayed an artistic perspective, describing landscape design as using nature as a canvas.

I forget exactly what brought me to campus that day. However, I will long recall this brief exchange. It reminded me of the hard work and dedication of so many students, their creativity and passion for their disciplines, and yes, the budding futures waiting to be discovered around NVCC's every corner.

Note: In future issues, we hope these students will contribute Horticulture Department news. If you're an NVCC student (or faculty member) with news from your discipline, contact us at [tamarack@nv.edu](mailto:tamarack@nv.edu).

## Revolutionary Rhythms

### R-E-S-P-E-C-T for a Queen



Aretha Franklin, Queen of Soul, passed away on August 16th at age 76 from pancreatic cancer. The funeral processions lasted for a week, with the actual funeral held on September 2nd. Politicians, music stars, and many other big names were present. Among the celebrities who attended, performances were given by Ariana Grande, Faith Hill, Chaka Khan, and Jennifer Hudson, who honored the Queen of Soul. Former President Bill Clinton, who was a big Franklin fan, was also in attendance.

Former Presidents Obama and Bush had been asked to deliver eulogies at Senator John McCain's funeral that same day, but sent letters to be read during the funeral. Additional attendees were Stevie Wonder and Smokey Robinson. Elton John, Barbara Streisand, Rod Stewart, Mariah Carey, Don King, Tony Bennett, and even the family of James Brown all sent their well-wishes.

Fans were also given the chance to say their goodbyes during the preceding week. Viewings for fans went on all week, starting at Charles H. Wright Museum of African-American History, then to the New Bethel Baptist Church—the same church where her father was a reverend and where she first started out singing gospel. Finally, the official funeral was held at the Greater Grace Temple, where Aretha had actually performed at Rosa Parks' funeral in 2005.

A string of 100 pink Cadillacs escorted Franklin to the church that Saturday where

the processions were held. The Cadillacs, of course, paid tribute to her 1985 song, "Freeway of Love". Franklin's impact, however, stretched far beyond catchy tunes and her soulful voice. She not only established her presence as a woman—a proud Black woman—she was an icon, a symbol of empowerment, liberation, and civil rights.

Yes, Aretha Franklin was much more than just a talented performer with a once-in-a-lifetime voice. As Reverend Al Sharpton mentioned, "Aretha Franklin was not only an unparalleled artist, she was a civil rights activist and freedom fighter...She was the soundtrack of the civil rights movement." While her career at times was rocky, and she experienced some low points personally and professionally, she made a lasting impact. As people continued to give their speeches—from those who were involved in her life, either from the church, her music career, or personal life—they often referred to Franklin as a symbol of civil rights. Her voice alone, as they mentioned, was "vital to the civil rights movement."

Author and sociologist, Michael Eric Dyson, stated that Franklin "...represented a soul music tradition...that really dug deep into the roots of gospel to tell the world the agonies, the ecstasies, the joy, the griefs of what it meant to be a woman, a Black woman, a woman struggling for self-definition and humanity in a culture that refused to acknowledge our existence." Aretha Franklin's gospel roots carried her over into pop, which led to her becoming a force for female empowerment and a symbol of civil rights. One of her most powerful songs, a cover of Otis Redding's "Respect," became her signature and an anthem for equality. While she will truly be missed, it is comforting to imagine the Queen of Soul has claimed her heavenly crown.

Alyssa Katz



## SFX Makeup Artist, Tyler Green

Gwenydd Miller



Photo Courtesy of Tyler Green  
Tamarack writer, Gwenydd Miller in full SFX makeup and costume with Green.

Halloween is almost upon us! People have many reasons for enjoying this season. Some love pumpkin spice, others candy. For some, it's the one chance to decorate the house in a way they wish they could keep it all year long (that's mostly me). Then there are those who live for the costumes, the opportunity to transform into some fantastical creature for one night. The tradition of dressing up for Halloween is by far one of my favorite things about this time of year. Just imagine, there are people who do it for a living.

Tyler Green was a finalist on season 6 and semi-finalist on season 11 of Face Off, a special effects makeup competition show on SyFy Channel. Tyler was one of my favorite artists on the show, and I only cheered him on more once I found out he was from Litchfield, CT. Most people ask him about his time on the show, but you can look up facts about that online. In a brief interview, I wanted

to show people more about him and what led him to Face Off in the first place.

Tyler explained he's been interested in special effects (SFX) makeup since he was a little kid, saying, "I loved monsters and was curious as to how they were created." One of his biggest inspirations was Jim Henson's movie, Labyrinth. It was his interest in how creatures in films such as Labyrinth were created that led him down the path he took. He then knew, without a doubt, what career he wanted to pursue.

With Halloween approaching, Tyler offered tips for low-budget costumes. His biggest advice was to be innovative, and to up-cycle. "What could be junk to someone might be a treasure for you," he said. He added you can save a lot by finding what you're looking for at thrift stores. Having studied

with Green, I can say he's an approachable, creative, all-around wonderful person, with true passion for what he does. I'm sure any of his students would agree.

Tyler Green has a studio in Litchfield, offering all sorts of SFX classes, from creating latex scars and bruises, to building prosthetics, and mask-making. Classes, ranging from beginner to advanced level, usually meet for ten weeks. For those with busy

schedules or long commutes, he offers one- to three-day weekend workshops. Interested in learning more about SFX makeup? You can view further information or register for a class at TylerGreenFXStudio.com. New classes are starting this October, November and December. Happy Halloween!

**"I loved monsters and was curious as to how they were created."**

Tyler Green

## Cape Fear

Steve Parlato



Photo Courtesy of Steve Parlato

There's one in every neighborhood. That family whose electricity bill skyrockets come December, whose Christmas display rivals Magic Kingdom décor. Less common is a house like the blue Cape on Edgewood Avenue, which, come mid-August each year, begins to resemble something from the mind of Stephen King or George Romero. Though I anticipate the appearance of classic movie monsters on the front lawn at 345, I often find myself wondering: What sort of people invest time, energy, and likely a good amount of cash, to turn their home into a House of Horrors? And perhaps more importantly, WHY? This year, I decided to find out.

Idling at the curb, I made my decision. Rather than a quick drive-by photo, in investigative journalist fashion, I'd ask some questions. Luckily, as I edged up the walk, ignoring the decorative KEEP OUT sign, I encountered—not a knife-wielding maniac (though a few were present)—but a smiling face. That face belonged to Sean Andrews, half of the mother/son duo responsible for transforming this front yard into a spooky spectacle each year.

Not only did Andrews welcome my questions, he immediately called his mother, Arlene

Savago, out to join us. Anything but ghoulish, these two were the embodiment of enthusiasm and hospitality. No surprise, considering they welcome around 500 trick-or-treaters to their property in an average year.

Curious how they started, I asked if horror's always been an interest for this family. Sean explained he's a major league horror fan, which led to the decision in 2014 to fill their yard with monsters, serial killers, and ghostly specters. His personal favorite is Michael Myers—and yes, he'll be in attendance when Halloween (2018) opens October 19th. Arlene opts for the classic tall, dark, and hairy, saying with a laugh, "[Wolfman] is my guy. He doesn't give me any crap!"

With such attention to detail, I inquired how long it takes to complete the display. Sean surprised me, saying, "Usually just one day. And we try to add something new each year." Most figures were purchased on eBay or at stores like Big Lots and Dollar Tree. A savvy shopper, Arlene stockpiles discount supplies come November 1st.

Carefully avoiding dismembered body parts, I crossed onto a small area of grass to photograph this dedicated team. As they posed for the camera, I asked a final question, the one that brought me to this zombie-infested lawn: "Why do you do this?" When a smiling Andrews replied, "It's all for the kids," I smiled back, feeling a bit like a kid myself. But Halloween will do that.

If you visit this Waterbury treasure on Halloween, prepare for an immersive experience: eerie music, fog, and a projection of dancing ghosts. But expect long lines; people are dying to see it.

## Good Grief! Autumn's Sincerely Awesome Veggie

Jane Courlet



Photo Courtesy of Jane Courlet

The intoxicating scent of pumpkin spice has been wafting over counters and filling coffee cups for weeks. Though last month did not feel much like fall, the ubiquitous orange globes were already being shown for prizes at county fairs all around Connecticut, and now have infiltrated grocery stores, front steps and window sills in time for the falling leaves.

How did the pumpkin, a member of the *cucurbita* family that includes squash, gourds and cucumbers, become the superstar of October? For starters, it is plentiful. Pumpkins, which are native to North America, grow readily on every continent on the planet, except for Antarctica. In our climate, 80% of the crop comes to maturity in October. Pumpkins are not only good-looking, they're packed with fiber and vitamins, from their tasty flesh to the nutty seeds. They make delicious additions to every course of our meals, from side dishes to desserts.

If you celebrate Halloween, the pumpkin has a huge part to play. How many of us still stand over the uncapped squash, up to the elbows in stringy glop as we hollow out Jack-O-Lanterns? The array of creepy, clever, and downright artful carvings seems to grow each year. The origins of the Jack-O-Lantern include a macabre story from the British Isles of a man who tries to trick the devil, dies early, and is not wanted either in Heaven or Hell. He is sent into the darkness to roam the earth with but a lone coal burning in a carved-out turnip—or potato, or beet—to light his way. Pumpkins, it turns out, are much easier to carve. Washington Irving penned a spooky, fun reimagining of this tale in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow".

On primetime television this month, you'll be able to view "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown," the delightful 1966 Halloween special featuring Linus, that perennial optimist, who swaps Tricks or Treats for an all-nighter in the sincerest pumpkin patch anywhere, awaiting the mysterious Halloween overlord, the Great Pumpkin. Good to note: the slinky, iconic soundtrack, composed and performed by jazz pianist Vince Guaraldi, was recently remastered and will be released, on CD and digitally, October 5th.

If you're out and about, there are TWO Connecticut pumpkin festivals, both on October 20th: "Pumpkin Fest," in nearby Plainville, and "The Great Pumpkin Festival," in Putnam, located in the state's far northeast "Quiet Corner," a great excuse for a road trip! So grab your pumpkin spice chai, your pumpkin bars, pull on your black and orange clothes, and enjoy the pleasures of October's most versatile crop.

RECENTLY  
READ

Beowulf

A terrifying fiend stalks Heorot, the mead-hall of King Hrothgar. For twelve years the Danes lived in fear, and yet, no warrior proved capable of standing up to this hellbeast. That is, until the great Geatish warrior Beowulf heard of Grendel's ransacking ways.

Yes, this column is devoted to the oldest known piece of English literature, the epic, Beowulf. You might have played the video game or watched one of the many movies of this poem, but try to remember, when has a movie made from a book ever proven to be just as good, or even better? Most of the time, the book is better than its film adaptation. I will make this review quick, because, like the poem itself at only 3182 lines, there doesn't need to be a lot of wasted words on such a heroic adventure.

Beowulf shows up to the Shielding's mead-hall Heorot, talks tough to prove his manliness, rips Grendel's arm off, drinks for a while, kills Grendel's mother, drinks some more, and goes home with Hrothgar's thanks and a bunch of treasures as reward. That wasn't so bad was it? I hope not, because there is a lot of story I left out I want you to read. If you want to know what the details are, or how it ends, harass the librarians until they cough it up.

Beowulf is one of—if not the—oldest works in English known to man. Let me clarify it is written in Old English, but there are many translations into Modern English. Sadly, it has only ever been partially translated because the only known copy at the time was almost destroyed in a fire some three hundred years ago. Words have also become smudged, and let's face it, the Germanic origins of Old English used words and letters that simply have not made the journey of a thousand years.

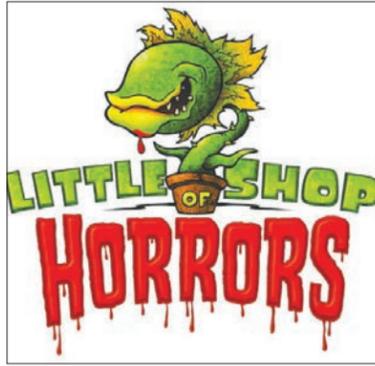
Read Beowulf, and you will soon see a culture that is very different from our own. There are performers in the poem called "shops" (pronounced shawps). Why are these important people left nameless when most of the other characters are not only named, but are given a family tree? Almost every time Beowulf is mentioned, it starts something like this, "Then Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow" (pronounced Edgetheow). Nameless are the ones keeping Beowulf alive and heaped in glory. Why? In our modern times, we honor and respect those in our culture who make our stories come alive, maybe not as much as I would like to see with some authors, but we definitely know who they are.

Beowulf is important in so many ways, and not only because it's an oft-assigned book in high school and college English Literature classes, but because it is a tale both familiar and alien. It is a culture that existed long ago, preserved by a different culture also long gone, yet it still plays a role in shaping our lives and cultures to this day. Give it a read and find out for yourself, but don't just take my—admittedly many more than intended—word for it.

Chris Gordon

Preparing to  
Open Shop

Gil Harel



Beginning November 15th in the Mainstage Theater, NVCC's musical theater program will present Little Shop of Horrors. This run will include four performances: Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights at 7:30 PM, and a Sunday matinee at 2:00 PM.

The role of Seymour Krelborn, the down-on-his-luck, clumsy, and frequently mistreated protagonist of the story, will be played by Gerald Mullings. Seymour begins as a humble and naive floor-sweeper in the Skid Row Florist Shop, but his fortune changes radically when he discovers an exotic plant during a strange solar eclipse.

Seymour's boss, played by Cole Lopes, is the overbearing Mr. Mushnik, a man with a sour attitude and a penchant for klezmer singing. Though he treats Seymour with disdain, Mushnik warms to him as his exotic plant proves to be a boon for business.

Rounding out the staff of Mushnik's shop is the sweet-natured Audrey, played by Hannah Lavergne. Though she, like all the characters, lives in the slums of "Skid Row," she yearns for a life filled with modest comforts: "Somewhere That's Green."

Audrey's boyfriend, played by Tim Halligan, is the sadistic sociopath, Dr. Orin Scrivello, a dentist who pursued his profession so he might make a living while inflicting pain on others. This nefarious dentist has a fondness for leather and getting high on the nitrous oxide he keeps handy everywhere he goes.

As the plot develops, we learn Seymour's plant is not an inanimate object, but a loud-mouthed Mephistophelian being with a taste for blood. Seymour, due to his secret love of Audrey, names his beloved plant "Audrey II." This role will be sung by Jalon Copeland.

Serving as the story's proverbial Greek chorus is an ever-present trio of sharp-witted street urchins, who sing in challenging, tightly-knit 3-part harmony. These roles will be performed by Teagan Gavin (Crystal), Kat Lynch (Chiffon), and Jennifer Beveridge (Ronette).

This talented cast is augmented by a vocal ensemble including Anna Doucette (WSKID Radio Announcer), Brianna Mattingly (Mrs. Bernstein), Liliana Lopez (Patricia Martin), Jonathan Small (Skip Snip) and Nick Panella (Florist Customer). In addition to the vocalists, dancers (Fallon Dignan, Haili Peruccio, Larissa Deoliveira) and puppeteers (Taylor Jasmine, Kate Kelly) will help bring Audrey II to life.

This show will be directed by Professor Sasha Bratt, and is under the musical direction of Professor Gil Harel.

FACE IN THE CROWD  
Committed to Service

Janel Abdul-Lateef

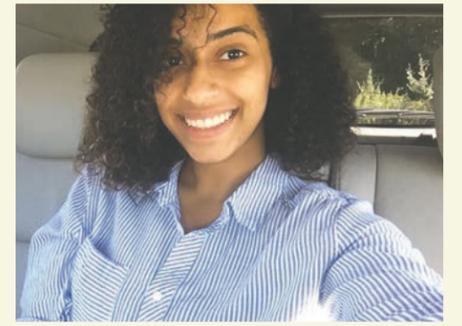


Photo Courtesy of Janel Abdul-Lateef

My name is Janel, and I would like to introduce myself. I am the new AmeriCorps Vista member, connected to the Connecticut Food Justice Project. The Food Justice Project is a nationwide movement to address hunger and health disparities. Food insecurity is becoming increasingly acknowledged as an issue that not only impacts our community, but also impacts our schools, including higher education. Food Justice focuses on the vital issues of racial and class inequities that connect back to low income communities and their lack of access to healthy food options.

My role at the NVCC Student Food Pantry is to focus on increasing food security for our students, and to explore bringing additional support services on campus to help our students feel safe, secure, and able to meet their educational goals. I will be going out into the community to make new connections that will support our project, as well as bring awareness of food insecurity that many NVCC students face.

As a college student myself, I know how hard it is to be on campus and be hungry. The Student Pantry is very important to me and

is a project I am excited to join. Throughout the year, I will be working with the Student Food Pantry Committee to explore new ideas that will help the pantry grow.

Along with Terry Latella, I will be starting a new student club, Students for Food Justice. A member of that new club will be chosen to serve on the Student Food Pantry Committee alongside faculty and staff. If you are interested in joining the club, please email me at jabdul-lateef@nvcc.edu.

I'm excited about joining the NVCC community as we increase access to food and community services and make our Student Pantry an even more welcoming environment for our students. I look forward to meeting many of you over my next year of service.

## Little Waves, Big Splash

Steve Parlato



Like every life, every book represents a journey. In the case of *Little Waves*, the "Tiny Memoir" published by English Professor Kate Pelletier in September, the journey began in Kate's childhood. She reached a significant point along the path, last October at Confluencia. Pelletier first shared the series of personal vignettes, the heart of the book—stories of the wounds of her childhood and adulthood—with the audience present for her reading at the October 2017 literary event. Though this was her first public reading, she handled it with aplomb, and the audience was moved both by the content she shared, and her courage in doing so.

From there, the seed of an idea—to turn these personal musings into a healing guide for readers—blossomed. As friend and colleague, I was delighted by Kate's vision: to

turn the intimate autobiographical piece into a published work. Impressed, but not surprised, by her commitment and vision in putting it together, I was excited to claim my copy.

Talking with Pelletier about her impetus to share this work with readers, one thing was immediately clear. Publishing *Little Waves* came from Kate's characteristic wish to fill the world with positive energy. This drives her in all she does, whether as an English professor, practitioner and teacher of yoga, or as a friend. Some core beliefs she shared with me include the idea that "Everyone deserves sacred space to process their emotions. We can provide sacred space for ourselves and others once we learn how to accept and ultimately love ourselves unconditionally." Pelletier reminded me, "We are always worthy of love, especially our own."

When I asked how this concept motivated her to share the details of her own trauma on the page, she answered, "Emotional trauma is what keeps us from truly evolving; when we start to look at our underlying patterns of thoughts and behaviors, we can see what needs to be acknowledged, felt, and healed. Our healing does not depend on anyone else's permission, including the people involved in the trauma itself." She continued, "Healing doesn't mean we are 'cured' of our issues; it means we know how to work with our triggers and emotions skillfully."

With sincere congratulations, the NVCC community joins Kate in celebrating the arrival of *Little Waves: A Tiny Memoir*. The book, available in paperback or e-version, may be purchased online.

## Paranormal Dad

Gwenydd Miller

Many people have family members or friends who are interested in ghosts, but having a parent who studies the paranormal takes it to a different level. David Miller is a paranormal researcher in Watertown, CT; he has two daughters who attend NVCC. One of them even writes for *The Tamarack*. That would be me. My father has been studying theology, parapsychology, and all things supernatural since college. Due to this, I've had an interesting upbringing.

Dad started sharing a lot of details about his findings and stories that I recall

in bits and pieces from my childhood. I grew up learning that salt and iron were actually believed to repel ghosts, and not just on TV. Cemeteries traditionally had iron fences for that reason. I learned how to address potential spirits: be respectful because you don't want to anger a spirit, and always say, "Goodbye," so they won't follow you home.

As a teenager I used to go with my father to check out cemeteries before he and his ghost hunter friends conducted an investigation. I seem to find myself in cemeteries a lot, actually; they've never been scary places to me, like most people make them out to be. My father explained that if there are such things as ghosts, they'd

more likely be hanging around the place they died, not the place they were buried. Cemeteries are a place where spirits are supposed to find peace. This is all theoretical, of course; none of it can be proven. However, we haven't been able to disprove it either, which is why it is still an area of research. Growing up with a father who's a paranormal researcher was an odd upbringing indeed, and it's fun around Halloween to hear all sorts of my father's stories. I'd like to share one of my favorites.

When my father was a child he felt an unsettling presence in his bedroom. Years later, while in college, and already studying the paranormal, he came back from university to stay in his old bedroom. One night, he

had a dream that something was in the room with him. He used what he had learned to banish the spirit, and in his dream, a portal appeared in the middle of his bedroom floor and sucked the spirit away.

At that point, he was awakened by a loud bang, followed by swearing from his mother's room across the hall. He found out later the bang had been the sound of his mother's crucifix falling off the wall for no reason and breaking on the floor. After that, he never felt that presence again.

Coincidence? Or something more? As Hamlet says in Act I, Scene V of Shakespeare's tragedy, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

## Earth Matters

### Microbursts of Damage



Alyssa Katz

In addition to the Kiluea volcanic eruptions beginning in May on Hawaii, there was also a spread of activity in May in Connecticut that was unexpected and catastrophic. In mid-May there was a series of tornado/micro/macrobust activity that barreled its way through the state, causing immense damage within half an hour.

Looking out my office window that day, it seemed it was just going to rain. Suddenly, the power went out, and a horrendous storm erupted. Sirens were wailing everywhere. Going home, the road looked fine until I got on the highway. Trees were down everywhere. Some snapped in half, others uprooted. Powerlines crisscrossed the main roads, trees were on top of houses, through roofs and windows. It was mayhem. As the days went on, it was reported and confirmed that a microburst and macroburst had hit the area, and not one, not two, but four tornadoes, had blazed through the state. New Fairfield, Southbury, Brookfield, and Newtown were reported as the worst hit. Five months later, these and other communities are still dealing with the residual damage. So, what are these strange phenomena and how do they happen?

A microburst is a column of downdraft wind usually contained within a thunderstorm. As a thunderstorm begins to form, hail and water droplets become suspended in an updraft, until it is weakened by evaporation, cooling, or sinking air. As a result, the core of the storm cannot hold onto it any longer, and the rain and hail are released, plummeting to the ground and expanding in multiple directions. Winds can exceed over 100 mph, the equivalent of an EF-1 tornado.

While most of the state regained power the following Sunday (ours came back Saturday afternoon), the damage caused by this natural explosion is still affecting many people, several months later. According to Eversource, the damage done during this storm surpassed the damage caused by Hurricane Sandy. 1800 telephone poles and over 288 miles of downed wires resulted from this storm. The town of Hamden and Sleeping Giant State Park saw severe damage, with the park's hiking trails still closed.

While my Newtown neighborhood was fortunate to avoid significant damage, others were not as lucky. Some had trees fall on their cars; some had to replace broken windows or even roofs. There were families who couldn't leave their homes or driveways, trapped by downed trees and wires. In some cases, entire homes were lost.

Power may have been restored, and debris taken away, but people are still suffering. Some still await insurance companies to assess the extent of damage to cars, businesses, and households. As this issue goes to press, the catastrophic damage from Hurricane Florence continues to impact thousands. Nature's destructive power is stunning, when delivered via violent storm.

## Tamarack

EDIT MEETINGS

Tuesdays 2:00 pm, S519  
ALL WELCOME!!

## Public Safety Department



Routine Number, Ext. 58113.

Emergency Number Ext. 58112

The department is staffed:

24 hours per day • 365 days per year

## Readers Respond

Dear Editor,

Thank you for publishing "Finding Identity in Our Heritage," by Gwendydd Miller, and thank you to Miller for sharing this personal piece of her identity journey. I, too, have a strong interest, a curiosity of my ancestry...of cultures, backgrounds, history and languages. The diversity of people in this world is simply astounding. To know about one's family heritage and ancestry is something that helps us develop character, along the way to finding who we truly are.

My priorities always lay in the curiosity of self-discovery, I often wonder who I would've been had my parents not eloped [but instead] stayed in their home countries. My mother is from Brazil, and my father from Honduras. They met here in the U.S., making me the first American-born [member] on both sides of the family.

Thanks to my parents' backgrounds, I was born with an advantage, being brought up in three languages fluently, those being Spanish first, Portuguese second, and lastly, English. This early knowledge inspired me to learn even more about other cultures I may be a part of, as well as pursue a career in linguistics. I still aspire to one day fluently speak as many languages as possible. I simply couldn't choose a concrete and consistent career; I want curveballs with new information and mysteries. I love the idiosyncrasy all humans come from and are capable of creating.

~ Sincerely, Samantha Zlara Rodriguez

Dear Editor,

I was thankful I read Alexander Wilson's "Welcome, Newbies!" Being a scared freshman this year, this article helped me realize college isn't as scary as it seems. Wilson mentions many tips and tricks for freshman, such as, learning how to make friends, how to talk to your professor, and tips for getting enough sleep, which I took to heart. In a way, Wilson made it seem as if he was an older sibling giving tips on how to succeed at Naugatuck Valley, which made me more at ease and made me feel like I can succeed. I hope Wilson's article gets attention from many other freshmen like myself. I know I was not the only one who was nervous, shy, and wanted someone who could give us tips and make us feel like we can do it, which Wilson did wonderfully.

~ Sincerely, Abby Holton

Dear Editor,

In the September Alumni Showcase, Jahana Hayes emulates a perfect role model for "inner city kids." Through her hard work and

dedication, she managed to prevail against life's misfortunes and proudly graduate from Naugatuck Valley Community College as well as Southern Connecticut University, earn National Teacher of the Year, and [she may] become the first Black Democrat to represent Connecticut in Congress.

As a graduate of Kennedy High School, I saw Jahana Hayes [recognize] potential in everyone, despite demographics. Many students lose faith in pursuing higher education because financial expenses are daunting, forcing them to settle for jobs and not careers. Jahana Hayes' accomplishments give confidence to students who are from impoverished neighborhoods, students who have no time to think about where they are going to be five years from now because they have a family that needs support.

Although I am not speaking of myself, I know many who really face these issues, and it can change one's perception of the importance of education. This is where the world benefits from individuals such as Jahana Hayes, ones who can enlighten the minds of the reserved or closed-minded, positively influencing their decision on pursuing careers which benefit society as a whole. Therefore, I write this as a thank you letter to the "Alumni Showcase" editorial for choosing Jahana Hayes and her contributions within the community to represent success in Waterbury, Connecticut.

~ Sincerely, Antonio Arrindell

Dear Editor,

"The N.E.R.D from Neptune," by Matthew O. Spence, has opened my eyes on the career of someone in the music business. I have not heard much of Pharrell Williams in the past. Yes, I have listened to his top hits and seen him on The Voice. However, I always wonder if there is more going on with artists than what I see and hear on TV or the radio. Pharrell has set fashion trends, produced top songs, [created] his own label, and has inspired so much of the music I know today. This article caught my eye because there is more to a career than what we see from a public point of view. I could have assumed Pharrell was taking a vacation or working on recording some songs. But I had not thought of the possibility of what work he was actually up to. I'd love more interesting articles like this one to be portrayed in The Tamarack, giving people in Art majors more of an inside look on what possible outcomes and work can come of becoming an artist. Although I would have liked to see some more information on Pharrell's background before the fame, I really enjoyed the informative career information.

~ Sincerely, NVCC Student

## A Celebration of Love

Alyssa Katz



To finish out my busiest summer ever, I attended a wedding last month between my cousin, Julia,\* and her fiancée, Brianna\* (Bri). I'd never been to a same-sex wedding before, so I didn't know quite what to expect. Would they follow tradition? Would the ceremony be modernized? Come to find out, it was a mixture of both.

The ceremony was held outdoors at a farm. While it was a cloudy day with morning drizzle, the rain held off, and we were able to witness the joining of these two women in

matrimony. Julia and Bri each had their own bridesmaids (along with a few men), and each had her own maid-of-honor. As they both came down the aisle, Bri and Julia were accompanied by both sets of parents who gave them away. Instead of both wearing dresses, or one wearing a suit and the other a dress, my cousin and her fiancée opted to wear white two-piece suits; Bri's featured a vest, while Julia wore a lacey top. Both looked beautiful.

The ceremony, officiated by one of their friends, was not much different than any traditional wedding. The vows they recited spoke of their pride in each other; their intention to laugh at each other, with each other, and at themselves; to be faithful; to support each other; and most of all, to love one another. Once everything was said and done, they were announced as the new Mrs. and Mrs. Bri Johnson.



Photos Courtesy of the Katz Family

At the reception, held inside the barn, Julia and Bri's first dance was not overly romantic, nor fully playful. They started out dancing close and then broke out into a routine they'd choreographed together. The speeches given by the maids-of-honor focused on how Julia and Bri met, and how their relationship progressed over time. At most traditional weddings, there is a father/daughter dance. This reception was special in that it featured two.

While it was a small wedding, Julia and Bri were surrounded by friends and family who came to celebrate their marriage, to show their support. As I looked at all those in attendance—their smiling faces, their cheers when the couple kissed—I was moved to see how loved and supported they are. In the end, this wedding was like any other—a union of two loving partners. It exceeded any expectations I had, and I'm so happy for them as they start on their new journey together as wife and wife.

\* For privacy, names have been changed in this article.

## Thank You All

Tamarack Staff

As we search for a permanent replacement for the creator of "Thank You All," Chris Gordon, this month's column is a bit different, featuring grateful thoughts from two of our newest staff members, David Pacheco and Chris Soto.

As a first-year student, and as a first-time writer for *The Tamarack*, I have to say I was nervous about college. With the current political landscape looking like it does, I was afraid I would be judged for my ideological views. It's worrisome to say you are proud of certain political values when those with similar values are misrepresented or misconstrued. I was happily surprised to find peers, professors, and club members all welcoming and willing to have civil conversations. To be surrounded by a supportive community focused on the pursuit of knowledge is reassuring and motivates me to continue my own pursuits and dreams. So, thank you to all faculty, staff, and students for being open-minded and willing to accept conservatives, such as myself.

~ David Pacheco

I'm grateful for many things about NVCC. I've had some good times attending the College these past years and have some great memories. There are many courses, people, and resources to appreciate. But the one thing I love most about NVCC is the resource that has helped me out the most, the Academic Center for Excellence. The ACE has allowed me to like math again. When I go to the ACE, the tutors are very helpful and more than willing to assist students. Last semester, I took my first math class in years, and the ACE helped me so much I was able to excel. I would recommend the ACE to every student. The tutors have also assisted me with Biology and English in the past. Thanks to the ACE, I've felt better about myself academically. I now believe I'm capable of getting good grades in all my courses.

~ Chris Soto

If you'd like to share your own feelings of gratitude for some element of your NVCC experience—a helpful staff member, or a supportive classmate or faculty member, for example—contact us at [tamarack@nv.edu](mailto:tamarack@nv.edu).

### 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.

## Anticipation Anxiety

Chris Gordon

Have you ever experienced the growing dread and anxiety that come from anticipation? It would probably be a safe bet that, between college semesters, everyone has experienced that fear as new classes, harder classes, advanced classes inevitably grow near. Good news, everyone: that is normal behavior; you're not going crazy. And doesn't the relief from the anxiety feel awesome now that we're a month into this semester?

By now you must have recognized your classes are not the soul-crushing, demanding three-hour torture sessions you envisioned; at least I hope you have. If not, I pity your mortal soul, my friend; I offer a feeling of good will and luck as you try to survive. Seriously though, we'd each do well to take a moment and reflect on our expectations as opposed to our reality in class. I spent a good portion of summer in dread over making the move from NVCC to WCSU. I couldn't help myself, I feared my hard work here would be seen as merely a minor investment of time once I arrived at a university.

I was happily wrong. Are my classes hard? You bet! Are they impossible? Only if I let them become impossible. What I feared then is what I now know I must work on to succeed this semester, doing the right type of work. At NVCC, I got used to the essay-driven classes I took, but in WCSU my courses aren't focused as much on essays to address the work. All I have to do is adjust to new ways of studying, and that is not so hard. Such is the way of all things, to not let new challenges drag us under.

If you find studying challenging but not overwhelming, you can assume you're in the right class, that you earned your place, and you'll rise to this new task. That's how it should be. After all, the best games get harder as you continue to play, to quote a long forgotten character from South Park. Take a moment to think back on what you feared about your courses, and why you felt that way. There could be many reasons for your anxiety. Maybe you didn't study as hard as you should have the previous semester, or took on too much work or activities that interfered with homework? Remember those fears, work to reduce those underlying issues this semester, and stay positive. You also won't be working alone.

I have the sneaking suspicion professors are on your side. Maybe there are some out there who want to see you fail, but I haven't met any yet...and I took a wide range of classes and met a large group of professors. Whatever drove your fears in the past are an important aspect of what you think, deep down, you might have done wrong. Seek out the pros who have been there and are ready to help you succeed.

You'll likely find the buildup of anxiety and dread over a new event is worse than the actual event. It's such a common occurrence they made it a cliché. Embrace and examine your anticipation anxiety; it shows you care about what's to come.

## Getting Personal about Depression

Name Withheld



"You should see a therapist."

I've heard these words a lot. I've grown so tired of that statement being thrown at me—by my mom, my doctor, the internet, my friends...

and so on. I did see a therapist for a while. I saw several. And it helped, but not enough. I just don't like sitting there having to pay someone to listen to me. It sometimes felt like I was paying someone to be my friend, and when those "friends" broke my trust, I was done with it. That being said, I would never advise anyone not to see a therapist. In fact, I'd encourage it. Therapy really works, and it benefits so many people, but as I've found, there is more to recovery than just therapy and pills.

I've been struggling with depression since I was thirteen, and I've only just begun discussing it openly this past year, seven years after diagnosis. It's not an easy thing to talk about. I suppose some people are afraid it makes them look weak, or that it is a burden to others, but honestly—and speaking from experience here—those thoughts are a bigger burden on the person thinking them than on anyone else.

Out of all the therapists I've seen, and all the pills I've taken, nothing has helped me more than the people I know on a personal, rather than clinical, level. When recovering from depression, sometimes it's the everyday relationships that hold the most weight, depending on the relationship—and the cause of the depression, of course. I believe this is because friends listen and support you not as a job, but because they care. If they don't, they're not your friends. I was lucky, and I am still lucky to have friends willing to listen and help me through those tough times.

One of the biggest issues I've faced is when people don't recognize the condition, or pass it off as the person "just being sensitive." Depression is a real illness and in some cases is debilitating. There were days when I wasn't able to get out of bed, or do homework or any of the things I wanted to, and if anyone says that's my fault, they're mistaken.

October is Depression Awareness Month, and for someone struggling with this affliction, probably the scariest thing to do is admit it to the people they love. There is a fear of being seen as weak, being pitied, or even worse, the fear of not being believed. There are many who don't realize the severity of depression or how it can affect people they care about. Medical help can be essential for someone suffering depression, and it's worth it, but we should not devalue the little things. While therapy is beneficial, sometimes a personal relationship can also make a huge difference.

## Queer Code Coming Out of the Closet

Alexander Wilson



You'll hear many different phrases regarding coming out of the closet. Some people are "closeted," meaning they are not open about their sexuality or gender identity. Others are "out," meaning they've told people around them how they identify as something other than heterosexual or cisgender. A small percentage of people have "one foot out," meaning, in certain situations, they are out of the closet, while at other times they're still closeted, usually for their own protection.

Coming out of the closet is a scary thing. There is no grand gesture to tell everyone in your life you're gay. Believe me, that would be wonderful. Instead, you have to assess the situation and evaluate the best way to come out to individual people in your life. You're left constantly wondering how someone will react.

In this heteronormative society, it's truly hard being anything but straight. People often ask the most awkward questions about it—or even offensive ones. Tell someone you're gay, and they may suggest you just haven't found the right [insert "opposite" gender here]. Tell them you're bi or pan, and they may say, "Pick a side. You're just being greedy." Sometimes we go back into the closet because of these reactions; it's safer than being out.

You can't just tell someone they "need to come out" because "life will be better that way." For the vast majority of LGBTQIA youth,

coming out can be dangerous. There is a risk of getting kicked out of the house, "interventions" to set us straight, and constant questions like "Why can't you just give it a chance?" Do we ask you to give being gay a chance? No. So why on earth would you ask that of us?

If you're among the population that watched Love, Simon when it hit theaters earlier this year, you may remember the line, "It doesn't seem fair that only gay people have to come out. Why is straight the default?"

If you're straight, you might not understand the significance of this line. It's a question many queer people have asked themselves. Why should we have to come out when no one else does? Why are we presumed to be cisgender and heterosexual until we tell people otherwise?

Many of us didn't get to explore our sexualities and genders until we were past our adolescent years, which really doesn't seem fair. So if you see one of us in the hall with pride pins or funky hair or looking like we're in middle school all over again, give us a break. We're finally out of the closet. We just want to live our lives like everyone who had a chance to grow up in confidence. We didn't. I'm still trying to remember I can't dress in superhero boxers all the time since I didn't get the chance as a kid. Let trans women and femme-aligned people wear their floral skirts and colorful makeup. Let trans guys and masc-aligned folks wear their snapbacks and cargo shorts.

Remember, just because I'm out and proud, doesn't mean everyone is. Listen when we tell you who we are and are not out to, and never out someone without their permission. It's their safety on the line, not yours.

Until November, here's to tolerance, acceptance, and cool, colorful hair.

**Signing off, Alexander the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad gay.**



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Contacts: Professors Nikki McGary (nmcgary@nv.edu) or Kathy Taylor (ktaylor@nv.edu)

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## Chappelle and Rap

Matthew O. Spence



Dave Chappelle is hands-down one of the best comedians of our time, if not, the best comedian of all (but that's debatable). Laying the groundwork with standup specials, Chappelle established his legacy with his classic and beloved sketch comedy program, Chappelle's Show, which gathered a huge fan base, especially within Hip-Hop culture.

Hip-Hop has gone on to express love for Dave, and the feeling is mutual with him as well; Dave has expressed his love for rap throughout his career. On Chappelle's Show, there were numerous skits revolving around an underground rapper who's deaf in one ear, hip-hop moguls promoting out-of-the-ordinary products, and so on. The show also had appearances and cameos from rappers and hip-hop moguls, including frequent guest/performer Yassin Bey, who then was known as Mos Def, Q-Tip of A Tribe Called Quest, Redman, and RZA & GZA of the Wu-Tang Clan.

During the entire series (excluding the three lost episodes), many musical guests performed at the end of show; these performances were extraordinary. In fact, in a season 2 episode, Common and Kanye West performed their song, "The Food"; that performance went so well, Common used the live version from the show on his critically acclaimed 2005 *Be*, instead of the original studio version of the record.

Kanye West made his first television performance ever on Chappelle's Show, performing "Two Words," featuring Mos Def and Freeway. In 2005, Dave Chappelle held a block party in Brooklyn, N.Y. with performances by Black Star, Common, The Roots, Kanye West, and Erykah Badu, reuniting The Fugees. This was documented in his film, *Dave Chappelle's Block Party*.

On Rap's end of the bargain, many rappers have gone on to reference Dave Chappelle and Chappelle's Show on multiple occasions. These include Lil' Wayne, J.Cole, Ghostface Killah, Tyler, the Creator, and so on. Most notable, is the show's most famous sketch, "Charlie Murphy True Hollywood," in particular, his story involving run-ins with legendary funk singer, Rick James. A notable reference to this is from Earl Sweatshirt in his verse on the Danny Brown song, "Really Doe," where he says, "I'm at your house like, 'Why you got your couch on my Chucks?'"

Over ten years later, Dave Chappelle is back in the light, and the love continues to spread. At the 60th Annual Grammy Awards, Dave Chappelle won Best Comedy Album, but he was also part of Kendrick Lamar's opening performance, giving quick speech interludes. And fittingly, he was the one to present the Best Rap Album award (but he first gave a shout-out to one of his favorite groups, A Tribe Called Quest, who people say were snubbed). It's clear that after 20+ years in standup, Dave Chappelle not only has a place in comedy, but a place in Hip-Hop.

## In Praise of Immigrant Contributions to Our Great Nation

Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D.

An edited version of the following appeared in the *Waterbury Republican American*, Sunday, September 16, 2018.

The sometimes unchallenged noise about immigration coming from the White House has touched me and so many others personally and profoundly. The noise warps and too often alters the general perception of the roles immigrants have played--and continue to play--in building our great nation. It is a matter of concern to me and many others throughout Connecticut's communities, particularly our immigrant families, friends, and neighbors.

I was honored recently to be named among this year's four inductees to membership in the Immigrant Heritage Hall of Fame at ceremonies to be held September 27 in Southington. I and my fellow inductees join a distinguished list of immigrants to Connecticut whose contributions span education, business, religion, government, and community service. Established in 2013, the annual event heralds diversity among ethnic origins and geographic locations.

The celebration reminds us about the rich benefits we have received from immigrants in art, history, literature, music, fashion, and medicine, to name just a few areas of contribution. It doesn't take much effort to see these substantial contributions. Yet, some deny their value or their very existence.

Instead, they wrongly blame immigrants for poverty, crime, societal decay, and our financial problems. I point to articles in the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, and other publications that refute such broad-brush accusations, unfounded exaggerations and misrepresentations. "Facts," as Christopher Dickey pointed out in *Newsweek*, "do run against conventional wisdom."

For example, what do the most prosperous and safest cities have in common? Crowded cities, teeming with immigrant labor translate into prosperity for the great majority. In his article "Immigration Makes America Great," Matthew Yglesias says George Washington, a founder of our nation, believed in a radical strategy to make this country the "...wealthiest and strongest on Earth--It made America great. Immigration."

Yglesias considers economic studies by David Card at University of California, Berkeley and Giovanni Peri at University of California, Davis that present a correlation between those states with low foreign-born population rates and the decline of their economies. It is something worth considering in Connecticut, where there is still room for the growth and improvement to be offered by first-generation immigrants and their young families.

A comprehensive review of years of research, *The Times* reported in March, found an overwhelming majority of studies concluding that either there was no correlation between crime and immigration, or "a beneficial one, in which immigrant communities bring economic and cultural revitalization to the neighborhoods they join."

I have spent some time reflecting on what

it means to be an immigrant who is and has been for many years an American citizen. I have lived the truths about the quality of life in immigrant communities. I have seen the value immigrants bring to this generous nation.

In the current popular debate, fault lines are drawn around undocumented individuals and their families, or those whose special permission to live here, granted more than a decade ago, will soon expire. The overwhelming majority have lived productively in our state and nation for decades, are business owners, community volunteers, enmeshed in and contributing to the betterment of our communities in countless ways. Surely, in the tradition of our immigrant land, determining how best to achieve a path to citizenship for those whose preference is to stay is in our national interest, and ripping families apart is not.

It's all personal with me. Despite the exploitation of immigrants in some American labor markets, my Dominican Republic family couldn't find work for anywhere near the compensation they received in the United States. Despite the challenges of funding for higher education, my immigrant family found support in The City University of New York whose talented and generous faculty believed in us. My immigrant husband and I graduated. Despite the odds against sustaining a small business, my family kept the doors open and succeeded. Hard work and opportunity helped with each challenge we overcame, and we were able to educate our children, all three published scholars and professors at universities in different states today.

Each semester I observe similar strengths among the students at Naugatuck Valley Community College where I proudly serve as president. Hundreds of immigrant students apply their resolve to pay for college, work two jobs, raise families, and still complete their degrees or certificates. Their numbers have grown remarkably so we can report more than ten thousand graduates in the past ten years, and over a thousand awards granted at each of the last seven commencements. They contribute to the economy by staying in Connecticut, paying taxes, and improving their lives and our communities.

As we consider the noise about immigrants and the shameful propaganda against them, let us recall the American dream in our motto, *e pluribus unum*, (out of many, one)--a nation formed of many. Following our Native American predecessors, we are a nation formed by immigrants: recent immigrants and descendants of immigrants whose strong, powerful contributions come together with the purpose of continuing to sustain the greatness that is America.

This has been my story. When given the opportunity, celebrate the contributions of immigrants to our great nation so this best of all possible worlds will be there for our grandchildren and their grandchildren in turn. Our collective voices can rise high above any opposing noise.

## That's What She Said



Jessica Ney

### Stop the Blame

Last month rapper and pop icon Mac Miller died of an overdose.

At 26 years old, he had nothing but potential. Unfortunately, he had a disease and lives in a culture that perpetuates drug use. His fans, needing an outlet, quickly used blame, and pointed that finger at Ariana Grande, an ex-girlfriend of Miller. They claimed she was selfish, and that his death was her fault. It got to the point that Grande removed herself from social media.

This is a cultural issue. The fact that it targets a woman, yet again, is a feminist issue. Addiction is a gray area in our country—for no other reason than we refuse to talk about it and educate people. Addiction is a disease. Doing drugs is a choice. The difference with addiction is there is a visceral need for the object of the addiction. There are facilities to help with withdrawal for a reason. There are treatments for a reason. Only a part of addiction is mental.

Sure, Mac Miller probably struggled emotionally after his breakup with Grande, and that pain may lead an addict to use, but that doesn't make his death her fault. Just like anyone who is in a relationship with an addict, an abuser, or simply someone who is the wrong fit, the choices that person makes after a split are their own. Every person deserves happiness and freedom, and often, being with a person who is unable to care for themselves or value their partner (because of addiction or other factors) is exhausting. One can only carry another person for so long.

Ariana Grande is grieving with the rest of us. She worked hard to mend what was broken in Miller, like most people, who want to see their partners healthy. Now more than ever, people need to stand together in solidarity, to go forward together. Mac Miller's passing, like that of anyone lost to addiction, is a tragedy. And though it's a hard reality, we must face it: like a diabetic who refuses insulin, an addict who refuses treatment will likely succumb to their disease. We need to stop blaming the family, the partners, even the person with addiction. We need to open our eyes. Unless people work to become more open and understanding, until we stop glorifying drug and rape culture these problems will persist.

According to DrugAbuse.org, every day more than 115 people die of overdoses in the U.S. Despite the media blitz, Mac Miller was just one. Ariana Grande is only one person. They could be your neighbors, your friends, your family. Be a friend, be available. But realize no one is responsible for saving someone who won't accept help. Offer support; stay healthy yourself. Be aware, be available. Sometimes that's all we can do.

## Equal Rights for All (Beings)

Cameron Nichols

I love Halloween. It's a fantastic time of year, when humans don costumes and roam darkened neighborhoods adorned with jack-o-lanterns, fake spiderwebs, and gravestones. Old and young may enjoy the festivities; however, they're missing the true meaning of Halloween. This is a time to remember the spooky folk who live among you, and recognize how awfully stereotypical your costumes are.

I'm a vampire, and truthfully, some of your costumes are just dreadful. Don't get me started on that *Twilight* nonsense. We aren't always pale, you know. True, we can't go out in the sun, but vampires come in all colors. Garlic doesn't actually make us sick, either. In fact, garlic's a

natural anticoagulant. It actually makes it easier to drink blood. Notice I didn't say "suck" blood. Most of us get our blood from reasonable sources. We also don't need much of it to survive. And the fangs? Just offensive. If you studied my smile, you wouldn't even notice my incisors are longer than yours. Just chill with the "Dracula" costumes; wasn't even a real vampire.

It's not just vampires. I've got a couple wizard friends who laugh at your wands and robes. Hogwarts isn't real, guys, and neither is the concept of a magic spell. They just reweave the energy of the universe to suit their needs. The only wizard I know who actually wears robes

is my mentor, Zachariah, and he's probably over 600 years old. He can do whatever he wants.

I suppose most of your inaccurate ideas about spooky folk spring from your media doing such a terrible job interpreting our side. Ghosts aren't looking to haunt and torment you. They just want some company. They're stuck here on earth through no fault of their own, so cut them some slack. It's understandable that they moan.

Werewolves also can't control their transformations. Yes, they change at the full moon, but sometimes it happens during the day, depending on when moonrise and moonset occur. Whatever preconceptions you have about elves, forget them, they're wrong. All wrong. Unicorns aren't as rare as you think; you're just unobservant. Ditto mermaids, centaurs, and nymphs. Cyclops stick to the mountains in warmer climates, while giants do the

same in cold.

I hear you talking all the time about "human rights". Well, what about spooky rights? We're here on this planet, just like you. Don't we deserve rights, too? I should be able to walk down the street and not have to change course just because someone's wearing a crucifix. When werewolves have to call out sick once a month, they shouldn't have to deal with being accused of playing hooky. Wizards shouldn't have to pretend to be magicians to make a living doing what they love. Nor should they have to shun the spotlight because they've exceeded normal human lifespan. Keanu Reeves doesn't count. That man's a legend; he can be near immortal however he pleases.

Seriously, have some respect when celebrating Halloween. It's not just about candy. And try to be a little more sensitive to us that have to live in hiding.