

THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER, SINCE 1977

What Happens When a Camel Gets Covid?

JIMMY CORK
STAFF WRITER

The thought has crossed the mind of every on-campus student at Connecticut College, even the ones who follow every rule to a tee: "what happens if my test comes back positive?" Though the administration has been relatively upfront

about their general process of dealing with COVID-positive students, there is still a certain degree of mystery surrounding what quarantine on campus is really like. I conducted a Zoom interview with Sarah Hall, class of 2024, the first student to test positive for COVID on campus this year, in hopes of getting some insight into the process.

Why don't we start with you finding out the results of your test?

I woke up on Saturday after arriving on Thursday and my roommate was like "Oh I got my test result, it was negative", and I was like "Hm" and then I pick up my phone and there's a call and I'm like "Oh no. This is not good." So I called back and it was the doctor and he basically was like "Yeah, you've got COVID" and he starts listing off the isolation stuff and he says that one of my options is to go home except I'm from Portland, Oregon so getting on a plane is not exactly the best option so they tell me that a nurse will be waiting for me to take me to isolation so I started packing. It was a little hectic, I guess.

They pull up with a van right?

Yeah and you put your stuff in the back-back and then you get into the back seat and there's a glass thing in-between you and the driver.



Connecticut College

Article continued on page 5.

Exploring Our Haunted Campus

BROOKE SPONZO
STAFF WRITER

It's October—the weather's getting colder, the sidewalks are coated in a layer of crunchy autumn leaves, and the chapel bells are sounding a bit spookier and a bit sadder with each passing day. But this year we don't really need Halloween to come along and frighten us, for the unpredictable climate of our everyday lives seems nightmarish enough. The spooky season is upon us nonetheless, and it'd be rude not to embrace it. Last issue I covered Conn's nearest neighbor—the Deshon-Allyn House and its unsettling collection of Victorian dolls—so this week I figured I'd introduce some additional members of our supernatural camel community. Yes, you'll be getting a run down of all Conn's notable ghosts and ghouls. Whether this inspires you to believe our campus is haunted or not? I'll leave that up to you.

My idea for this article was sparked by a 2018 film project created by Chris Thompson '21 and Khyents Lee '21 titled "Paranormal Security," in which the duo interview the Thames Society of Paranormal Investigation's Director Shamus Denniston to gain insight into New London ghost hunting. As part of my research I also read the 2009 *College Voice* article by Nora Swenson '12 titled: "Campus Safety Officers Reveal the Most Haunted Places on Campus." Both of these wonderful pieces happen to be quite chilling, so maybe don't go looking into them at night if you're easily frightened.

I was particularly interested in seeing how and what paranormal rumors persist on campus from year to year and why Conn has so many of these peculiar tales to tell.

To start with the ghost I've heard the most about: allow me to introduce Claire, the spirit of an old woman said to haunt Palmer Auditorium. Swenson's article discusses Claire at great length, however she refers to this same theater ghost as 'Ruth'— I'll

Article continued on page 9.



Brooke Spozzo

IN THIS ISSUE

NEWS

6

The Outbreak of Single-Use Plastics
Kerin Krasnoff

13

World of Virtual Yoga
Maggie Hayes

ARTS

OPINIONS

10

The Remote Student Experience
Catja Christensen

3

U.S. Mens Soccer Abroad
Sam Maidenburg

SPORTS

Letter From the Editor

JOZETTE MOSES
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Yesterday morning I woke up to my alarm, stuck a bagel into my non-regulation toaster, made myself a Chai tea, and sat down at my desk for what I call the “Being a Liberal American update”. I tuned into *The Times Daily* Show podcast, followed by *WSJ* What's News podcast, reviewed a Times article on the Democratic strategy to defeat the Supreme Court nomination, and before 10 o'clock, I made the almost self-sabotaging decision to tune into the hearing nomination of Supreme Court Nominee Judge Amy Coney Barrett.

In all honesty, I have never been particularly interested in politics, let alone any politics involving Donald Trump. When Trump was elected in 2016, I was living abroad in France, on the precipice of the voting age. My host parents, seemingly more interested in the U.S. election than the simultaneously occurring French election, couldn't go a day without reminding me that if “Les américains ont élu Trump, ils sont vraiment fous.” But when they heard me cry in my room when I learned that Trump had won on a Wednesday morning at 4am, they made me my favorite meal and didn't dare say his name for the rest of the year.

Since then, I've adopted a similar mindset when it came to politics in the era of Trump. I avoid any and all conversations involving his name. Why tune in? Everything said, Tweeted, or recorded seems so unbelievable and outlandish, that you would think we'd entered a reality show called *Undermining American democracy*. We've been paraded across the international world as a democratic joke, and Republicans are yelling at Democrats with the same intensity as Kim yelling at Kourtney. We live in an era where Republicans have to distinguish themselves from Trump supporters, and Democrats have to explain to Trump supporters why Black lives should matter. While this is not my America, it truly is Trump's.

So, this morning when I pressed play on the hearing nomination, I couldn't help but recall the Presidential debate, which Moderator Chris Wallace, had supervised as if he were speaking to kindergartners. Although, these kindergartners happened to be two white men in their 70s, and the big one couldn't hold a candle to the rationality of a six year old. During the hearing, I listened while Democrats argued for the Affordable Care Act, and Republicans continued to push the notion that Barrett would be discriminated against because of her Catholic faith. But, yet again, no party could stop talking about Trump.

Here at *The Voice* we can't stop talking about him either. (Although, most of us would like to.) In his last days in office, I hope we can shed some light on recent events, such as the Sept. 29 Presidential debate, his recent Supreme Court nomination, and the legacy of Ruth Bader Ginsburg which threatens to be dismantled on Oct. 26. We also hope you can occupy yourself with articles on our campus's own civic engagement efforts and COVID cases, reflective on our current national crises.

While the most self-serving option through this election and nomination would be to make a Chai tea and pull the covers over our head, we might wake up to a world we can't recognize. As much as I'd like to avoid hearing Trump's name in conversation or on my feed, I'd rather be engaged for the next 21 days, than disengaged for the next four years. •

THE COLLEGE VOICE

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Americans Abroad: The Next Generation of US Men's Soccer is Thriving in Europe

SAM MAIDENBERG
SPORTS EDITOR

Culminating in the failure to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, the state of the US Men's National Team has been rapidly declining over the past decade. In order to make amends and qualify for the upcoming 2022 World Cup set to take place in Qatar, the squad was in need of a massive overhaul. The recent injection of young talent onto the world stage has made for a promising future for American men's soccer.

On Thursday, Oct. 1, Sergino Dest became the most recent American soccer player to sign for one of Europe's top clubs, as Barcelona completed a sizable 20 million euro deal to bring the young American to one of the most prestigious clubs in the world. He made his debut for the Spanish giants three days later. Dest, who is only 19-years-old, will leave the Netherlands and his former club Ajax to join forces with some of the world's best soccer players, namely Lionel Messi. Dest will also join Konrad de la Fuente, a 19-year-old Miami native who has been with Barcelona since the age of 12 and has recently made his professional debut for the club.

Dest's big money move caps off a successful summer for U.S. Men's soccer, as fellow American Weston McKennie joined Cristiano Ronaldo, Portuguese soccer legend and one of the best to ever grace the game, at perennial Italian champions, Juventus. While Dest and McKennie have joined two of the world's biggest clubs, respectively sharing the field with Messi and Ronaldo, a slew of other young Americans have also found success at top clubs around Europe.

Having made his U.S. Men's National Team debut at 17-years-old, Christian Pulisic has now played 32 matches for the national team, scoring 13 goals and contributing 8 assists. At only 22-years-old, Pulisic is now the captain of the national team. He has universally been hailed as the one to revive US Men's soccer. Last summer, the Hershey, Pennsylvania native was bought by London based club Chelsea for \$73 million, the largest sum ever paid for an American player, and burst onto the premier league scene with nine goals and four assists in just 26 appearances during the 2019/20 season. Following his breakout season in London, he was given the number 10 jersey which often signifies the best offensive player on a given team. Pulisic has led the revival of US men's soccer and has justified his massive transfer fee.

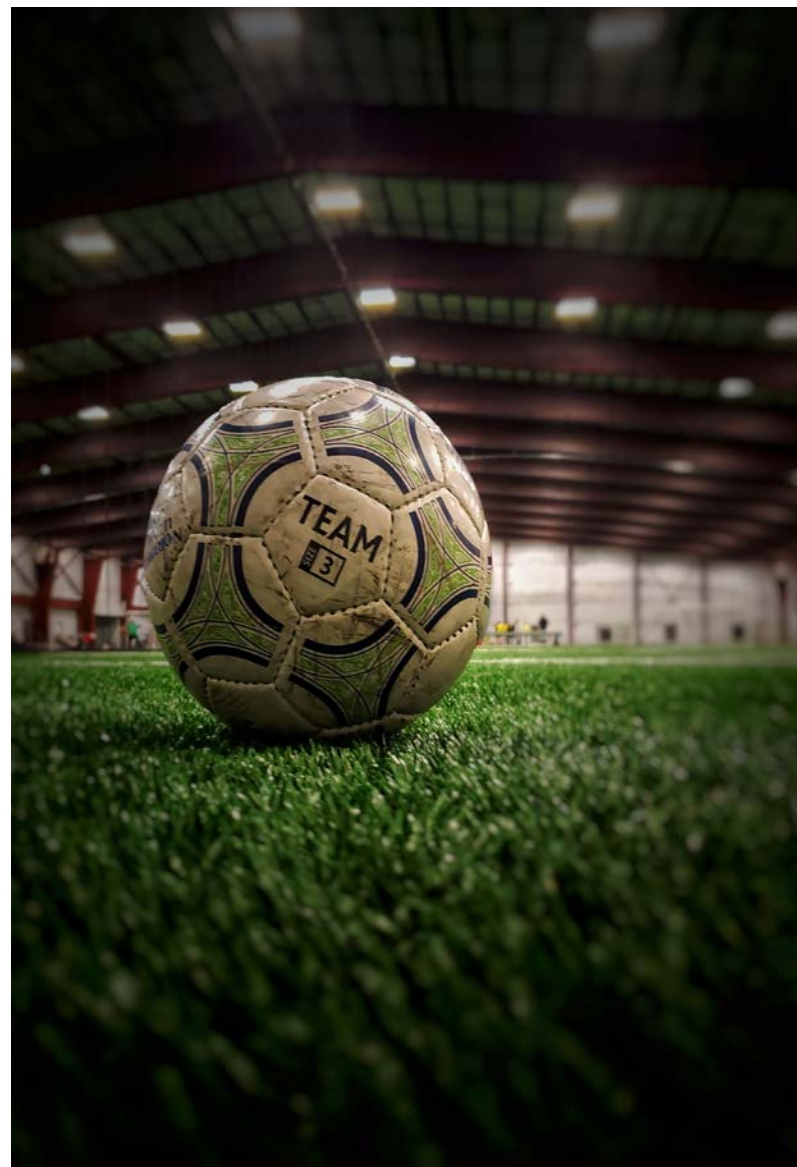
The recent success of American players abroad has been strongly linked to Germany, as the Bundesliga—one of the world's top men's soccer leagues—has provided a platform for many young players to establish themselves. While Pulisic and McKennie both started their professional careers in the Bundesliga, 17-year-old Gio Reyna, the son of former U.S. soccer legend Claudio Reyna, found recent success in Germany with Pulisic's former team, Borussia Dortmund, one of the best teams in the German Bundesliga over the last decade. Born in 2002, Reyna is likely younger than any enrolled student at Conn, and has begun to break into the starting lineup of Dortmund. On Saturday, October 3, Reyna marked his best performance to date, contributing 3 assists in Dortmund's 4-0 against SC Freiburg.

Tyler Adams, Josh Sergeant, Timothy Chandler, John Brooks, and Chris Richards joined Reyna as the six Americans featured in the Bundesliga so far this season. The connection between U.S. Men's soccer and Germany started with the arrival of coach Jurgen Klinsmann, who coached the U.S. Men's national team from 2011 to 2016. Klinsmann, a native of Germany, began to foster a relationship between the U.S. Soccer Federation and various German clubs in an attempt to provide his young American players with the opportunity to gain the experience of training with top European clubs in order to further their development, with the end goal of improving the overall quality of his squad. This link is also bolstered by the ease in which Americans can obtain work permits in Germany and from the lingering presence of American soldiers in Germany from the wars of the 20th century.

While qualifying matches for the 2022 World Cup began in June of

2019, the schedule has been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S., which plays qualifiers against other nations in North America, Central America and the Caribbean, will participate in an eight team round robin with other qualifying nations. The three nations which accumulate the most points from the qualifying matches will gain a berth in the World Cup, while the fourth place team will enter into an intercontinental playoff round.

The U.S. Women's National team are the defending Women's World Cup champions, having secured victory in 2019 at the tournament's most recent edition in France, and have set the standard for what U.S. soccer can achieve. Their historic success includes four out of eight Women's World Cup titles ever, as well as four Olympic Gold Medals. Conversely, the Men's best World Cup run was in 1930, reaching the semifinals of the tournament's first ever edition. They have since never progressed past the quarter finals, which they have only reached once. It would take quite the turnaround for the Men's team to achieve similar success, but they have proved to be on the right path due to the early impact of their promising young players. •



Unsplash.com

Are Genetically Modified (GM) Mosquitoes the Answer?

ABUBAKR EL SOBKY
CONTRIBUTOR

Mosquitoes have been a major cause of deaths and illnesses around the world for decades. In fact, mosquito-borne diseases are estimated to account for over

1 million deaths each year. The number of mosquito-borne cases from deadly viruses, such as Zika, West Nile, yellow fever, chikungunya, and dengue, has been steadily rising in U.S. states and territories, reaching a staggering 150,842 cases in 2016. With so many lives hanging in the balance, people are in urgent need of an effective solution. Since the available vaccines are only partially effective and challenging to develop, countries primarily rely on broad-spectrum insecticides to curb disease spread. But these insecticides are costly and could have detrimental effects on humans, non-target animals and insects, and the environment. Rising to the challenge, scientists have indeed made strides towards addressing this critical issue. After several years of research and dedication, scientists in the Oxitec biotechnology company have developed genetically modified (GM) mosquitoes, millions of which the company plans to release in the Florida Keys in 2021 and 2022. This proposal has already won federal and state approval.

Oxitec patented a technique known as RIDL (Release of Insects carrying a Dominant Lethal genetic system) for developing a strain GM Mosquitoes called OX513A, an altered form of *Aedes aegypti* which is genetically engineered to contain a dominant gene that would render its offspring unable to survive, thus, reducing the population of disease-transmitting mosquitoes. To provide non-experts with an easy, cheap method to release the mosquitos, Oxitec developed tiny water-soluble capsules that contain male larvae of the GM Mosquitoes. When placed in water, these capsules release sterile male mosquitoes, which only feed on nectar and do not bite, as opposed to female mosquitoes, which bite, and, thus, transmit disease. This project seems promising, but is it really the answer?

According to Kevin Gorman, an Oxitec scientist, the company has released millions of GM Mosquitoes in the Cayman Islands and Brazil over the years. One of the trials in an urban area of Brazil resulted in a 95% reduction in the population of *Aedes aegypti*. The impact has even gone beyond pilot trials: officials in Piracicaba, Brazil employed the technology to cut down on mosquito-borne cases in a neighborhood of 5,000 residents, which is now being expanded to house over 60,000 people. Moreover, multiple governmental agencies have already underscored the safety of Oxitec's project. Despite facing severe opposition from environmental groups, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has enthusiastically approved the release of Oxitec's GM Mosquitoes after years of investigating the potential health and environmental impacts of Oxitec's GM Mosquitoes. The US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has also concluded that the likelihood the GM mosquitos will have adverse effects on the environment, human health, or animal health—such as increasing disease transmission or causing mosquitoes to develop antimicrobial resistance—is extremely low and that the estimated associated risks are negligible.

Yet Oxitec's plan to release GM Mosquitoes has prompted a sweeping backlash from the public: more than 240,000 people have already signed a change.org petition disapproving of Oxitec's experiment. Scientists have also cautioned that it is the unanticipated outcome which is most concerning. "You have no idea what that will do," said Barry Wray, director of the Florida Keys Environmental Coalition.

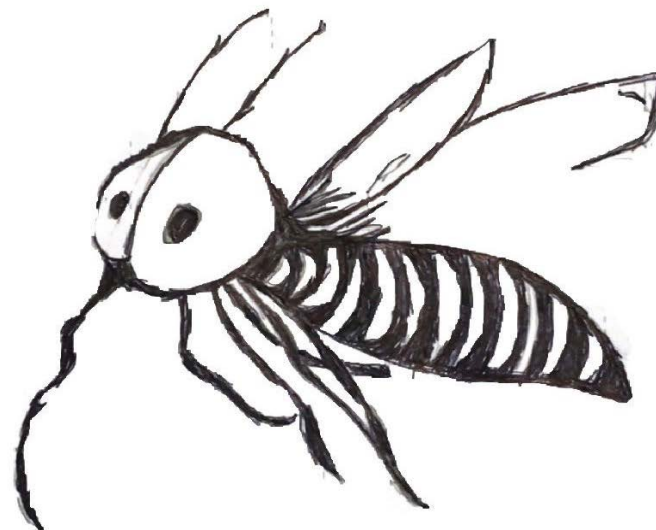
According to the same Associated Press article, Max Moreno, an expert in mosquito-borne diseases at Indiana University, raised concerns regarding

the potential environmental impacts of the GM Mosquitoes: "An ecosystem is so complicated and involves so many species, it would be almost impossible to test them all in advance in a lab." A group of researchers from Yale University took genetic samples of the mosquito population in Brazil, months after the company released the GM Mosquitoes. They found that, although the numbers of mosquitoes in Brazil plummeted after the release of the GM Mosquitoes, they bounced back up after only 18 months. They also found that a small portion of the native population had retained genes from the GM Mosquitoes. It seems that OX513A's offspring are able to survive and breed. Nature Research suggested that the genetic mixing has resulted in "more robust" mosquito hybrids.

However, the paper received an Editorial Expression of Concern, stating that it had no data in support of the claim that the mosquito hybrids are more robust than the native population in Jakobina, Brazil. The Expression of Concern also stated that "data included in the article indicate that the number of hybrid individuals rapidly declined post-release."

Moreover, Senior author Jeffrey Powell, a professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Yale University, said that these newly emerging mosquito hybrids pose no known health risk to humans. Nathan Rose, head of scientific and regulatory affairs at Oxitec, also said that the company is not surprised by the results, but rather by the speculations and misleading claims that were made. He also said that lab tests had shown that approximately 3% of the GM Mosquitoes' offspring had survived and that the company was very clear about this before it conducted similar projects in Brazil, Malaysia, and the Cayman Islands.

Are GM mosquitoes the answer? Even if their release in the U.S. shows initial success, no one can be sure what effects this is going to have on the local environment in the long run. Given that *Aedes aegypti* is the primary vector of deadly diseases that cause thousands of deaths annually, and that the project's potential positive outcomes could be tremendous, it is definitely worth a shot. •



Leelah Klauber

What Happens When a Camel Gets Covid? (Cont'd.)

Article continued from front page.

ask what you wanted. You would get to choose a hot dinner. You couldn't get a hot breakfast or lunch, just a sandwich, salad or cereal. The food wasn't always excellent. It would get delivered around 5 o'clock. But honestly I had pretty moderate symptoms so I lost my sense of taste and smell pretty fast so it didn't really matter if the food was good because I didn't really want to eat anyway.

How long did your symptoms last?

The first day I got the call, I didn't really have any symptoms and then the next day they started and it lasted for probably four to five days. I got pretty congested and felt pretty sick. I still can't smell very well. My taste has come back but my smell kind of comes and goes. It's really kind of dull. Also my energy has been kind of low but just in terms of feeling really sick and congested, that was probably four to five days.

And, you were at the Ridge for two full weeks?

It wasn't actually two full weeks which was nice. Basically it's ten days from when you test positive. For me, I went there on Saturday but then I only had to be there ten days from Thursday so I was there for about a week and then I got my roommate sick so she came with three days left and she was put in the same Ridge. The last three days were nice because I had company.

What was it like leaving the Ridge and going back to your room?

It was definitely weird. Being a first-year, I had basically been on-campus for a day and a half and then went to the Ridges so everyone had kind of figured out where everything was and had started meeting people and I was just known as the COVID girl. It was definitely a bit of an adjustment but it was at least nice that I didn't have to worry about getting sick anymore.

What's it been like seeing some people on campus throw caution to the wind?

Honestly, it is a bit frustrating sometimes. I tell my friends that if we get sent home after I got COVID the first week, I'd be a little annoyed. Personally, I wasn't too worried about getting it over the summer but the after effects of coming back to athletics while dealing with all the COVID symptoms has

been a lot harder than I thought. I understand people wanting to be able to hang with their friends, but at the same time it can be frustrating because they don't always understand how serious it can be.

So do you have any thoughts on how you might have gotten it?

I'm pretty sure I got it from travelling. I had to go on two planes to get here. I was worried that I had somehow gotten my entire floor sick when I found out.

Is there anything else you want to talk about that I haven't asked you about yet?

The hardest part for me has been afterwards. I just came from practice and it's a really hard time breathing. That's been the hardest thing. Since Conn has such a large student athlete population, I wish more people understood how it wipes you out. I'm on steroids to help with my lung inflammation and also have an inhaler cause I get winded just from doing some jogs around the field. That wasn't really something I used to think about. We always hear about the younger people not really being affected by this. Even though I was sick, that wasn't really the worst part. It's definitely been that it's still lingering now in my everyday life.

Alright last question, are you allowed to order food in quarantine?

My roommate and I ordered Panera one night. I don't know if that's allowed, but hopefully it is because I just said it. The dining hall didn't have soup or anything and both of our throats were hurting so we ordered Panera. I think that's allowed.

Did you give the delivery guy a heads up that you had COVID?

Oh yeah, we told them to leave it on the sidewalk and then we came and got it. We let them know not to come near us.

Though Sarah was the first student on campus to test positive for COVID, she was not the last. At the time of this article's completion, there are ten active student cases on campus. Please remember to follow the social distancing guidelines set by the administration. •

Pandemics of the Past

MAGGIE HAYES
CONTRIBUTOR

Taking a Look Back in Time

Many people have said that the tumultuous year that is 2020 could be something taken straight out of the plot of a dystopian movie, with the threat of the COVID 19 pandemic taking over the lives of many people. Movie or not, human society is no stranger to global pandemics, with records of multiple throughout history. Yet until recently, the idea of a disease being a threat to everyday life seemed to have disappeared from modern worries, with people in developed countries settling with confidence in modern science. If we take a look back to the pandemics of the past, there are actually similarities between human reactions then and now. From medieval times to the 20th century, human society has grappled with both the threat and the aftereffects of global pandemics.

The Black Death

It's hard to think of pandemics and not think of the Black Death. From 1347-1351, this medieval plague took an estimated 75-200 million lives, which was between 17% and 45% of the entire global population at the time. Though there are multiple types of plagues associated with this pandemic, the majority of cases came from the bubonic plague. Caused by bubonic plague bacteria, the bubonic plague primarily spread itself through

infectious fleas. These infected fleas then spread it to rats, who then transmitted it to humans.

The name "Black Death" came from the shocking symptoms of the bubonic plague. Black sores caused by internal hemorrhages, known as buboes, covered the body, and swelling of the groin and lymph nodes also took on a dark color. The bubonic plague also caused a high fever and joint pain, and it was often fatal after only 72 hours. Though the Black Death swept through the entire world, it's well known for the effect it had on medieval Europe, taking a total of 20 million lives. In terms of treatment, European doctors at the time were at a loss. Sanitation was so poor that carts full of bodies in the streets became a common sight and contracting the infection was thought of as a death sentence. People would flee their homes at the sight of illness, and the increased travel only led to the disease spreading even further.

Before the infections even began, medieval Europe was already struggling with a plague taking their livestock, crop failures and famine, and the after-effects of the 100 Years War. After everything that had happened already, many people in Europe were just in awe of the chaos the plague brought on them. Some claimed it came from the supernatural, others blamed it on sinners, or claimed the Black

Article continued on page 7.

The Outbreak of Single-Use Plastics

KERIN KRASNOFF
CONTRIBUTOR

Since the worldwide lockdown in March, the use of single-use plastic has skyrocketed due to disposable masks and gloves used to protect ourselves from COVID-19. Due to high demand of protective personal equipment (PPE),

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimates that the global market for disposable masks will total around \$166 billion in 2020, which is up from around \$800 million in 2019. Specifically in Wuhan (the origin of the COVID pandemic), hospitals produced “240 tons of single-use plastic-based medical waste” per day. Accordingly, if this observation holds true anywhere else, the United States “could generate an entire year’s worth of medical waste in 2 months.” However, there is one often overlooked component of daily life that is contributing to the massive use of plastic worldwide: restaurants and dining halls. Specifically at Connecticut College, when entering any dining hall on campus, the use of plastic is inevitable. You are given a plastic bag, a plastic container, plastic cups and multiple plastic utensils to choose from. For people who are more sustainably-conscious, it is difficult to avoid the huge heap of plastic when getting food.

As a matter of fact, countries were committed to putting a stop to the use of plastic and to finally move to more sustainable options pre-COVID. For example, 200 ministers at the United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA) agreed in the beginning of 2019 to significantly reduce the use of single-use plastics over the span of the next decade. Unfortunately, the United States was not on board with the proposal and aimed to weaken the text. However, these plans were put to a halt. Now when comparing the amount of waste produced in Thailand during “normal times,” there is a 15 percent increase, from 1,500 tons to 6,300 tons of plastic waste per day. Since people are encouraged to stay at home, more people are turning to plastic alternatives for safety as well as convenience, especially when ordering food for delivery or takeout. Unfortunately, the consequences are increasing plastic demand. For example, during Singapore’s 8-week lockdown, out of 1,100 residents from a survey, the use of plastic-packaged take-out meals and J home-delivered groceries contributed to an additional 1,470 tons of plastic

alone. That is equivalent to the weight of 92 double-decker buses. To make matters worse, in California, Governor Newsom lifted the plastic bag ban (established in 2016) in April over the concern that the virus can spread through reusable bags, putting a dent into sustainability efforts.

The issue of plastic waste also hits here at Connecticut College across the four dining halls open on campus. On Oct. 2nd in a Zoom meeting, I spoke with Ingrid Bushwack, director of Dining Services, about following state health guidelines and how that impacts sustainability efforts during a pandemic. When asked about the challenges that she faced when creating a new dining experience during a pandemic, Bushwack responded, “Every challenge you can imagine we faced.” One of the challenges mentioned was the transitioning period. “The current level of service that we are providing right now basically goes against everything that the dining department has worked over the last 10 years to actually accomplish and improve on as far as our offerings of food, how we offer the food, the level of service that we put into the college community.” I then asked Bushwack about the extent to which the dining halls have remained sustainably-conscious. “In the first 2-3 weeks where we had to package absolutely everything in advance, that was a little hard because each one of [the students] has different preferences with our food... so there is food waste and plastic waste combined. Since we have moved to the current system that we have been doing, coming in and picking what you want to go into the container, has greatly reduced the food waste.” Evidently, there has been a major improvement in the dining halls since dining halls moved to the current system, Bushwack notes “a 50% decrease in the amount of plastic containers that [dining halls] are purchasing right now” since the beginning of the semester. Moreover, Bushwack then went into detail about possible future projects to make getting meals more sustainable. “Part of the first step is that we need to have some more of the service restrictions loosened by the [state] health department and through state guidelines which so far really hasn’t happened too much... So for right now, it’s a little tough for us. We haven’t been doing a ton of planning yet.”

Over another Zoom meeting on Oct. 2nd, I spoke with Margaret Bounds, Assistant Director of Sustainability, about the Office of Sustainability’s possible involvement with working on sustainable alternatives in the dining halls. When asked about whether or not the concerns about the amount of plastic in the dining halls has been brought to her attention, Bounds responded that “the waste created by the packaging of takeout food, like the plastic containers and paper containers and what’s recyclable from that” and “the concern about how much food waste is being produced” has been brought to her attention by students. Bounds then went into detail about the extent that the Office of Sustainability has been in contact with Dining Services. Bounds responded, “We spoke with Dining over the summer. One of the issues that we partnered with them on is the reusable bags that are available now. I think that they had an issue getting them in time for the start of the semester so that is why there were plastic bags for a little while, but hopefully now students are picking up their reusable bags.” When asked if there a sustainable solution to get meals while keeping students and staff safe, Bounds responded, “We are working right now to get the water bottle filling stations to be turned back on so you will be able to fill your reusable water bottles in the library, Cro, and Fanning at those bottle fillers” as well as possibly “some tweaks in the packaging that [the Office of Sustainability is] looking at.”

Unfortunately, it seems that Connecticut College has little control over efforts to be sustainable right now due to the state guidelines as well as the health code, but there are still ways that students can change their individual actions to be more sustainable. I asked both Bushwack and Bounds about certain approaches that they would recommend for sustainably-conscious students to take when getting meals in the dining halls. Bushwack emphasized the importance that students should use a reusable bag. “Some students have brought their own reusable bags,” Bushwack continues to say, “The only other thing I could think of would be the better students are at having us package the hot food into one single container [rather than in multiple containers], then there are less of the disposable containers going into the trash.” From Bounds, she suggests making sure that “you are only taking the food that you are actually going to eat and then when you are done, disposing of the packaging properly. The plastic clamshell containers are recyclable as long as you empty them of food so

Article continued on page 8.



Jozette Moses

Pandemics of the Past

Article continued from page 5.

Death was a trick of the Devil. Others followed old prejudices and placed the blame on Jews, going so far as to attack them; many

Jews ended up fleeing to Poland as a result.

The Spanish Flu

The H1N1 influenza A virus appears to share the symptoms as the typical flu—coughing, fever, nausea, aches—but in a day, a healthy 20-year-old would turn blue from suffocation when their lungs filled with a bloody substance. The Spanish Flu, as it came to be known, is estimated to have killed 20-40 million in just 1 year. What made it so dangerous was that it targeted healthy, young people, as opposed to the regular flu which was the most dangerous to the elderly and young children. While the Spanish Flu did not last as long as other pandemics, the rapid spread led to 1/3 of the global population getting infected; this virus killed more people in 1 year than in 4 years of the Black Death, with a mortality rate of 2.5%.

Although its name came from Spain, the Spanish Flu did not originate there. The first cases were actually on a military base in the state of Kansas, but with the first World War raging on, it received little attention. Spain was neutral in the war, so when their numbers grew, and their king became infected, the country became the focal point of the reports on the sickness, and the nickname “the Spanish Flu” was born. World War I also contributed to the spread, due to massive movements of troops and the horrible conditions in the trenches. More Americans died of the flu overseas in 1918 than in actual battle, and when troops returned home, they brought the sickness with them.

Once the flu broke out in the United States, the rapid spread overwhelmed hospitals. Many doctors had gone off to war, either dying overseas or tending to sick troops, so treatment of civilians had to fall to medical students, and emergency hospitals were created to take in more patients. Even United States President Woodrow Wilson contracted the disease. Public health departments took strict measures to contain the spread of the flu. Gauze masks were distributed to be worn in public, stores were closed, funeral attendance was limited, and some towns required certificates to enter. Those who ignored the ordinances had to pay steep fines, and they were enforced by police officers. The American people were willing to give in to strict government control if it was said to be for the good of the country.

See Anything Familiar?

It may be hard to look at the medieval disaster that was the Black Death and see any similarities to what we face now with COVID-19, and to be fair there are many glaring differences. Yet, the people’s reaction, particularly the blaming of others, is something we have definitely seen in the U.S. The people of Europe blamed the Jews for their suffering and that led to attacks. In the U.S. many people blame Asian Americans for COVID-19 spreading from China, and this has also led to harassment and attacks.

There are many more similarities when we look at the Spanish Flu and compare it to the coronavirus. Both targeted healthy people, both caused many hospitals to reach their limits, and in both cases news coverage focused on one country or area as the culprit. On the other hand, a more interesting difference between the Spanish Flu and COVID-19 was the reaction of the American people. The Spanish Flu took hold when WWI was finally dying down. The surge of nationalism from the war led to the American people being more comfortable with strict governmental control and more willing to follow the guidelines given to them. We see almost the exact opposite with American reactions to coronavirus. People use their rights as American citizens as an excuse to choose whether or not to follow guidelines as they believe their own personal rights outweigh what would be good for the nation as a whole. It’s interesting that in an age of constant and instant information, many people are still underestimating how devastating a pandemic like this one can be. Human society shares both similar and completely different reactions to global pandemics throughout history, and maybe the past can help the present get through these times. •

What's Next After the Death of Ginsburg?

GRACE ROBINSON
CONTRIBUTOR

News of Ruth Bader Ginsberg’s death on September 18th filled many Americans with feelings of deep sadness, loss, grief, fear, and terror. Pancreatic cancer took the life of a beloved 87-year-old Supreme Court Judge and forced us all to ask the question: “What Next?” Instead of being able to honor her life and mourn her loss, the country suddenly had to switch their focus on the future of fundamental rights under such Constitutional Amendments as Roe V. Wade and the Affordable Care Act.

With Justice Ginsberg on the Supreme Court, Republicans held the majority 5:4. Appointed for life, Justices rule the bench with no worries for re-election. Because of this, anytime a party is able to get a nominee onto the court it is considered a substantial victory. The Trump administration is attempting to push through their nominee before the 2020 presidential election. If they succeed, the Republicans will have a 6:4 majority. This would sway the Supreme Court’s power significantly in favor of the Republican party, as it is unknown when another seat will become vacant or which party will be in office at that time. The Democrats would then require two more seats to win a majority. In the upcoming season the Supreme Court will most likely re-evaluate Roe V. Wade and the Affordable Care Act.

Within hours of her death on a Friday evening, Senator and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell made a bold, public statement assuring the public of his intent to have President Donald Trump’s nominee receive a vote on the Senate floor. To be successful in that effort, it would require a vote within two months. Not surprisingly, Democrats were outraged when they heard this, as just four years earlier McConnell barred President Barack Obama’s Supreme Court nominee when there were nine months until the 2016 election. McConnell claims that it is a different situation, with the White House and Senate ruled by the Republicans...but is it really?

In 1796, George Washington warned Americans in his farewell address of the dangers of political parties, or what he called “political factionalism,” creating a mindset where citizens could become more focused on beating each other than placing the best people in office. McConnell has proven President Washington right with his double standards of his own president. McConnell is pushing hard and fast for President Trump’s Supreme Court nominee because he is afraid of losing his party’s majority in the upcoming election.

McConnell’s logic rests on the assumption that the United States government is set up for a change of heart when there is a switch in the party majority. The law is intended to stay the same no matter who is in charge. In 2016, McConnell set a precedent that during the last few months of a President’s term that the President should not be allowed to nominate a Supreme Court Justice. However, when the tables turned and his party had the opportunity to place one of their own in the Supreme Court with substantially less time on the President’s clock, they nonetheless decided to break their own precedent by nominating a Justice. President Trump’s Supreme Court nominee, Amy Coney Barrett, is a conservative judge. She clerked with the late Supreme Court judge Antonin Scalia. In a case where the constitution does not address the topic of concern, she believes in allowing the states to decide how to rule for themselves, rather than make a country wide decision. Though she has not explicitly said it, it is most likely that she will vote to overturn Roe V. Wade. In a New York Times poll of residents from Maine, Arizona, and North Carolina—taken prior to Justice Ginsberg’s death—53% thought that Biden should choose the next justice.

The irony in this case is that you can see both parties using each other’s rhetoric to argue their points. In 2016, McConnell stated that “the Senate will appropriately revisit the matter after the American people finish making in November the decision they already started making today.” Here the Republicans use the argument of the election to postpone a vote. Bringing the issue back to the people is a common strategy for withholding a vote in an election year. It’s so common, in fact, that Vice President Joe Biden used the same rationale in the first 2020 presidential debate to delay the replacement of Ruth Bader Ginsberg. “The election has already started, tens of thousands of people have already voted, and so the thing that should happen is we should wait, we should wait and see what the outcome of this election is, because that’s the only way the American people get to express their view.”

What seems to be the reoccurring fatal flaw with political parties, is—just as President Washington predicted—that they are more focused on putting in their own people in power than with electing the best person for the job. And in the process our citizens suffer, and in this case in particular, there is a serious risk that fundamental rights will be taken away from the American people. •

Our Campus Voting Information Hub, Camels Vote

LEELAH KLAUBER
LAYOUT EDITOR

In light of the upcoming Presidential Election, Camels Vote, a nonpartisan voting and civic engagement initiative emerged during this Summer to promote student voter participation throughout the campus community. The initiative was established in 2018 through the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, an advocacy group which strives to institutionalize voter and civic engagement on college campuses. NESAC Votes was later created out of the ALL IN Campus Challenge, as a way of garnering voter interest from students and establishing a competitive dialogue among the NESAC schools.

In the 2018 midterm elections, the college's student voter rate was 40.5%, Camels Vote, supervised by Angela Barney, Assistant Director of the Holleran Center and Camels Vote ambassadors, Jozette Moses '21 and Julia O'Connell '21, have set a goal of increasing the voter rate by 20-29% during the upcoming election.

I spoke with Moses and O'Connell, who began this summer as voter engagement and education interns and are still working hard to educate students on the most effective ways to vote at the polls or through mail-in and absentee ballots. "I think the pandemic has made it harder to access that [voting] information, but I think it's also changed the ways through which we access the information, which is starting to benefit young voters", said Moses. She discussed the accessibil-

ity of online platforms, particularly their recent Instagram account (@camelsvote) and website. Their Instagram account, which posts weekly, is filled with information about upcoming state voting deadlines, general voter information, and discusses voting history and disenfranchisement. Through both platforms, they hope to remedy the widespread confusion around voting on Conn campus. "One of the biggest [barriers] we've seen, not only through from the research we've done over the summer, but through our direct messages on Instagram, is that a lot of young people just don't have correct, accurate information or they just lack information about voting in general", said O'Connell.

On the week of Sept. 21, Camels Vote hosted National Voter Registration week, a holiday celebrated with a goal to register as many new voters and spread information on the importance of voting. This year, Camels Vote had programming every day of the week, from Kahoot games to speaker discussions with voting advocates. Each of their events focused on getting students' questions answered and were followed by drop-in hours with Camels Vote student volunteers, where personal inquiries about voting could be addressed directly. Amidst the pandemic, volunteers stressed the importance of voting by mail-in ballots if you're at home, and absentee ballots if you're away from home. Beneficial advice as COVID cases have increased in New London from 5 to 154 since students arrived in late August.

When asked what specific words they would like to share with the Conn community about the importance of voting, Moses acknowledged the privilege she had as an ambassador, and largely a student at a higher education institution. "When we're learning about this information, as a young person, who has the opportunity to be at a private college where you can get those resources easily, it's important to pass that information down to family and friends." O'Connell discussed the relevance of representation saying, "I think trying to educate yourself and inform yourself on specific dates and what it means to vote in general doesn't necessarily change the structure of our society right away, but it can help on a smaller scale. I think that's something to remember because a lot of young people are definitely disappointed and also feel like there are not a lot of people who are in politics who represent them. So, just remember that voting can help a lot in certain ways, even if it's locally."

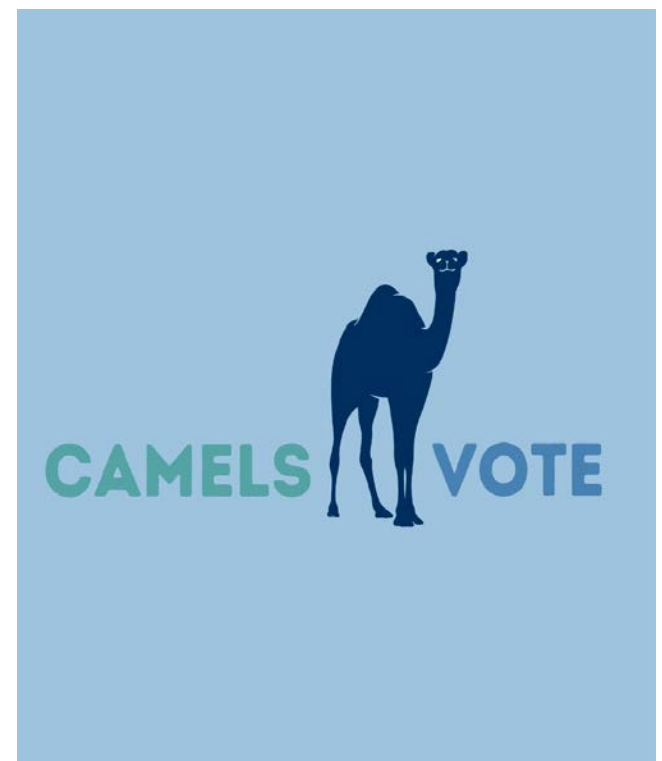
Camels Vote is making a lot of progress to help Conn students learn about the voting process. The ambassadors foresee another campus-wide event within the coming weeks and have been asked to speak at Conn Votes, a panel discussion of students, staff, faculty, alumni, and trustees, speaking on the importance of voter engagement within the upcoming elections. The event will take place on Oct. 15 at 6pm. So, DM the Camels Vote Instagram (@camelsvote) for any voting questions! •

The Outbreak of Single-Use Plastics

Article continued from page 6.

if you can sort of go through and separate the packaging, that's a key one."

For now, it seems that using plastic on a day to day basis will be unavoidable. In the long run, there is no way to be sure what this means for reusable items in the future. Due to the response of the pandemic, "the global plastic packaging market size is projected to grow from USD 909.2 billion in 2019 to 1012.6 billion by 2021." Sydney Harris of the Plasticsphere podcast (episode 8), believes that it will be a challenge to convert the consumers' mind back to reusable products. Especially since reusable packaging has been associated as spreaders of COVID. Harris states, "those kinds of social norms are very hard to undo-it took a very long time to get to where we were before the virus in terms of social acceptance of reusables." Bounds shared these concerns with me in regards to dining on campus. "The way that I am trying to look at it is this year is obviously going to be a little bit of a step back in terms of waste goals, but we can maybe use this time to figure out some things in the future. Like, do we want to have composting in the future? Like we don't have a ton of takeout on campus, but how can we make 'grab and go' better for the future when we reopen from Covid and make sure that we are not stuck with this sort of mode going forward." Globally, things do not seem optimistic from a scientific standpoint, British scientists warn that in just 20 years, an estimate of 1.3 billion tons of plastic could end up in the environment, that amount of plastic could cover the area of the United Kingdom 1.5 times. However, there is some small form of hope; more and more companies across the world are aiming to become more green by decreasing their plastic waste and to learn to recycle properly, meaning that the EU's goal (as referenced before) to make 10 million tons of plastic reusable by 2025 can still be achieved. As Bounds simply put it at the end of our interview, "It's a tough time for waste for sure, but we are all doing the best that we can." •



Camels Vote

The Debate Debacle

ELORA ROY
NEWS EDITOR

Interruptions, misleading claims, childish bickering, and missed opportunities characterized the first presidential debate of 2020: another unfortunate night for the history books. Presidential debates serve an important role in communicating candidates' views on current political issues to the public; the first televised debate was held in 1960 between Kennedy and Nixon, and by 1976, they became an American tradition. The events of a recent Tuesday night, however, invoked chaos in lieu of clarity, and disgraced the decades-old custom. Between petty jabs at character and exaggerated statistics from both candidates, one of the most shocking moments of the night came at Trump's refusal to condemn white supremacy.

When asked by moderator Chris Wallace whether he outright condemns white supremacist groups, Trump "continued to say words, and to say nothing." A summary of the full exchange is as follows:

Wallace: "Are you willing, tonight, to condemn white supremacists and militia groups and to say they need to stand down?"

Trump: "Sure, I'm willing to do that. But I would say almost everything I see is from the left wing, not from the right wing. I'm willing to do anything. I want to see peace."

Wallace: "Well, then, do it, sir."

Biden: "Say it. Do it. Say it."

Trump: "What do you want to call them? Give me a name, give me a name."

Wallace: "White supremacists."

Biden: "The Proud Boys."

Trump: "Proud Boys, stand back, and stand by."

In a time of long overdue awakenings over racial injustice, our president has prioritized his own desire for reelection over calling out extremist groups. His call to "stand back, and stand by" was perceived by members of the Proud Boys as permission to continue committing acts of violence. Many members of this far right, Western chauvinistic group are known Trump supporters and rejoiced over his comments on Twitter. In response to Trump's comment that "somebody's got to do something about Antifa and the left," Proud Boys founder Gavin McInnes wrote, "Yes sir, Proud Boys standing by." Knowing that racial unrest is rocking the very roots of our nation, and that such violent, extremist groups idealize Trump's lack of disapproval, it is absolutely imperative that he watch his words at least once. Wallace's question left no room for interpretation, but Trump's priorities lay with preserving the few votes from violent individuals rather than fundamental humanity.

While groups like the Proud Boys might seem too radical to be an immediate threat to national security, the F.B.I. director has stated that "racially motivated violent extremism," primarily from white supremacists, constitute a majority of domestic terrorism threats. Although this election has been competitive, it is quite hypocritical for a president who prides himself on law and order to stoop to depending on ballots casted by potential terrorists. Additionally, downplaying these threats is both misleading and dangerous. It perpetuates the tendency for the public to remain complacent that racism no longer exists in America, and enables these extremist groups to continue committing horrific acts of violence.

Ultimately, the issue with Trump's refusal to condemn white supremacy is not because left-wing "anti-fascists" are truly more dangerous, or that right-wing "racially motivated" violence will most certainly destroy this nation. The fundamental problem with his remarks lies with misusing his voice. On Trump's interruptions throughout the debate, Megan Garber writes in the Atlantic, that they say "with blunt efficiency, that your voice is not as important as the voice of the person who is talking over you." Over the course of the night, Trump silenced the necessary voices of his moderator, who sought to ensure a fair conversation, his opponent, without whom debate and discourse would be impossible, and the American people, without which there can be no president, and no power or platform to abuse. He had but one chance to interrupt the voice of hatred, but he blew away the opportunity. •

Our Haunted Campus

Article continued from front page.

refer to her as Claire here but know that the names are synonymous. In 2011, Swenson updated to her piece, in light of a paranormal lecture hosted by professor T.J. Wellman where she further explained the history behind Claire. Essentially Claire was a long time patron of the space who would often be spotted in her upper balcony seat long after she passed. Her estate donated many of her belongings to Conn's theater department and much of the older gold jewelry in the department's costume stock is believed to have originated from her.

Even with more research, I was ultimately unable to turn up a last name for Claire/Ruth. On the site GhostsOfAmerica.com, one person has reported seeing 'Ruth' in 2008, and refers to the ghost by that name. Though I could not find any details regarding a Palmer guest that went by either name, there's certainly a consensus that an elderly woman is a frequent figure of the auditorium. I have to wonder what she thinks of the on-going renovation.

Another occurrence that seems to be prevalent in all three texts I examined is something Swenson labels as "The Arboretum Scream." This sinister sound, which Campus Safety and police have responded to over the years, seems to have no origin and changes location faster than a person might be able to. Swenson's sources attribute it to witchcraft or to convicts who were hung on Gallows Lane. Thompson and Lee's video however, as well as a 2011 article by *Patch* titled "Spooky New London," clarify that only one person was ever sentenced to death by hanging on the road: a woman who tried to hide an out-of-wedlock affair by attempting to kill her infant child. The *Patch* article, which dedicates a whole subheading to Gallows ("Creepy Lane Speaks For Itself") adds that most residents won't walk the street alone or at night, and that even during the day pedestrians feel as though they're being watched or followed there.

From Swenson's two articles, I got the sense that Conn was quite frankly super haunted: that it's a place where lots of people have had lots of different paranormal experiences. I wanted to look into why that was. Although I'll admit I don't know too much about paranormal studies, I do know that ley lines are really important features in terms of pinpointing where supernatural activity might occur. Essentially, a ley line is this invisible energy source that connects spiritual places within a state or country. An increased amount of ghost encounters are said to occur along such sites. Trying to find if and where any ley lines in Connecticut were took a good chunk of research-- they're certainly not mapped well. But I did find an article by *The Day* that had an interesting finding. In 2015, Tim Cook penned the piece "Gungywamp Keeps Its Mysteries" in which he describes an archeological site in Groton that colonialists historically believed was a space used by pagans to tap into the energy of a ley line running through the area.

I couldn't find any information regarding which direction this ley line was thought to run in, though it's possibly north-south because they do tend to connect haunted places and going in that direction, it would hit the New London Ledge Lighthouse, which is known to be haunted by its former lightkeeper Ernie and has been visited by the reality show *Ghost Hunters*. However, if the ley line were to run east-west, it would directly cross campus and explain a lot of our paranormal happenings. There's also some debate on how wide ley lines are, with folks believing them to be anywhere between a few feet to a few miles across. So even if it doesn't run straight through Conn, we might still be sitting within its borders.

One last thing I'd like to bring up, though it's not been confirmed to necessarily be haunted: is the fact that a cemetery lies on Connecticut College property. I happened to come across it this past week while hiking behind the AC and was very curious to know the history behind it. It actually took me quite a while of Googling to locate any mention of this spot online. Eventually though, I was able to find a record of it in a 2016 report by the college Arboretum titled: "The Mamacoke Conservation Area." It's not even a sub-header in this 48-page paper, but I was willing to dig. My results? This spot was a family burial ground from 1751; in 1815 a part of the cemetery was washed away in a storm and in 1840 an additional part of the space was removed to make way for the construction of the neighboring railroad track. Today only three headstones remain, but they're vivid and intact enough that happening upon them in the woods, I knew right away what I had stumbled into. This whole site was actually examined in 2009 by a group of visiting archeology professors, who used radar technology to find that it contained a total of 41 grave locations.

So, the more you know... the better? The way I like to look at it is that it's really incredible that our tiny campus is packed with so much intriguing history. The two Swenson articles and the "Paranormal Security" video are absolutely awesome resources if you're interested in learning more about Conn-dwelling ghosts. Listing all the spooky tales from camel's past and present would simply take more than a single article to cover, so I highly recommend checking those out. •

Home Sweet Home: The Remote Student Experience

CATJA CHRISTENSEN
CONTRIBUTOR

As the end of the first module of classes draws near, many students prepare for a schedule shift following finals. For some students, however, their schedules have shifted even more significantly; remote students around the country and the world have grappled with attending completely virtual classes, navigating time differences, and missing the physical campus community: their second homes. I spoke with Lovisa Werner '22, Lea Almasso '23, and Gordon Caldwell '24 to learn more about their experiences so far.

Each made the decision to study remotely based on many factors, such as travel, finances, lifestyle, and practicality. For Lovisa, traveling back to her home in Stockholm, Sweden in the spring was nerve-racking; flights were canceled, and international travel was hazardous due to health risks. "I felt like during times like this, I wanted to spend more time with my family," she said. "There have also been statements from the Swedish government about not advising travels to the United States right now, and the flights have been very limited." Similarly, Lea, studying from her home in Jordan, felt that traveling to the US was not worth the troubles and risks. Initially intending on returning to campus, she changed her mind when she received the new schedule and saw that most of her classes were remote. "It was a smart decision financially because I saved on travel, food, and dorm expenses," which underscores the major factors that concern students.

The limited campus food options were one reason that Gordon returned home to Redding, Conn after beginning the semester on campus. "There wasn't much to do," he recalls. "Everything had to be online, and it felt like the only socializing that wasn't just sitting on Tempel Green was on Zoom." First-years like Gordon have been especially impacted by the restrictions on campus, as meeting new people and getting involved in clubs and activities is more difficult than in years past. "I miss being able to talk to new people, even with the restrictions," he noted. With online Orientation and virtual FYS common experiences, many first-years have struggled to foster deep friendships past Zoom squares or distanced meetings outside, and as the weather grows colder, meetups will only grow more difficult. These limitations in tandem with homesickness and overall transitioning to college life result in some on-campus students feeling that remote learning may be a better option for them.

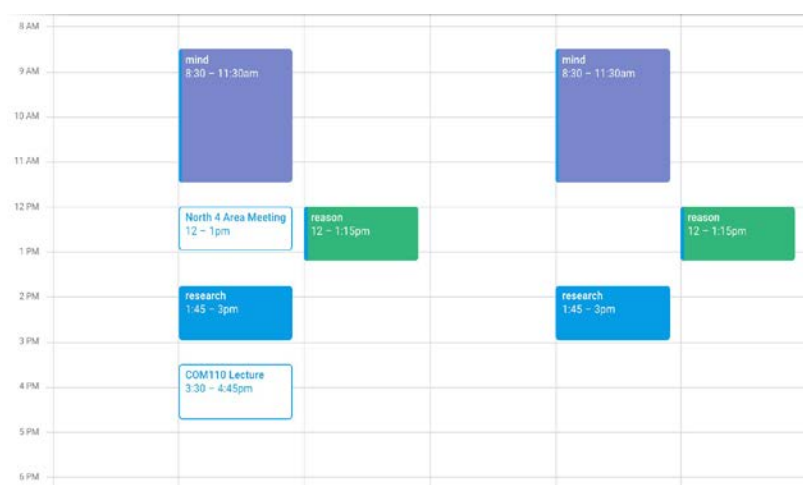
Lea had her first year abruptly cut short in the spring, and now that she is studying remotely, she said, "I feel like I'm missing out on a huge chunk of my college experience by not being with my friends on campus, but I know this is a hard time for everyone, and I'm thankful that I am able to take classes online." Lovisa has embraced the highs and lows of social media, noting that seeing all of the pictures and videos on social media can dampen her mood. She reflected, "I found it very important to acknowledge those feelings and be open about them. Once I started talking about it more to friends and family, I found ways to turn those sad feelings into something good and hopeful." Zoom has become a "best friend," as she not only uses it for classes but also to stay connected to friends and the campus community.

The transition to remote learning has been relatively smooth for all three, and, as Lea pointed out, the spring semester allowed for students and faculty to adapt to online learning resources. Although there are still occasional technology mishaps, the faculty have been accommodating for students in various circumstances. Lovisa tackles a 6 hour time difference, while Lea grapples with a 7-hour difference. For Lovisa, "[professors] have frequently checked in to make sure I can access everything from home... and have even made extra office hours in the morning, especially for students in other time zones." Lea observed that the spring semester prepared her for starting the year remotely, but the time differences have strained her productivity because she is tired during the day and must adjust to new deadlines. "Due dates tend to be confusing because I live in a very different time zone, meaning if something is due at midnight, it's due at 7 AM for me. Sometimes, I miscalculate and end up missing deadlines." In addition to academics, she notes that clubs, applications, and meetings have been difficult to balance, saying, "Not being on campus and trying to stay engaged is really hard!" Conversely to the two, Gordon does not have a time difference to consider,

and the transition has been easier for him. "It's just school, but instead of being in person, you just stare at a computer."

Student engagement for all three has been significantly limited, but they remain hopeful for the future. They all concur that although online learning has been manageable, being back on a traditional campus is more desirable. Nonetheless, classes shouldn't just be "manageable;" many students chose to attend Conn because of the resources and benefits of living on a residential campus, and remote learning only provides the basics for education. Regarding the new schedule, Lea said, "If I am not able to go back to campus, I still hope that we have full semester classes because module classes feel very rushed." She is determined to keep up with her education as best she can, but she also admitted, "Honestly, I don't think I'll be able to continue with remote classes because they don't feel genuine." The uncertainty of the global situation makes planning for the future feel even more intangible, and remote learning may continue for longer than students desire. Gordon said that "I would love for it to be a normal college experience, but that's probably not going to be the case for a long time," which is an unfortunate reality for many first-years starting out with an unconventional college experience. "My dream or biggest hope would be to be able to go back to campus," Lovisa confessed. "I miss being on campus and spending time with friends. I hope that the state of the world might be a bit more stable regarding the pandemic. It is hard to say, who knows where we will be in January? It is difficult, I think, to live in this uncertainty. If I have to do another semester remote, then I will. However, my hope is to be back on campus."

At the midpoint of this first semester, the uncertainty is palpable: COVID cases are rising on campus, and Dean Victor Arcelus sends out constant emails containing data on the campus situation and the impacts students have on the New London community. Though the campus was off to a hopeful start, these updates question how sustainable the regulations are and if we will ever be able to return to a "normal" college lifestyle. Surveys regarding plans for the Spring semester allow students to express their frustrations to the administration, but desires to return to campus and regain freedoms are so dependent on the global health crisis. International students will have to consider their own country's guidelines in addition to the US government, and travel expenses may not be worth it if Conn cannot offer the same benefits of in-person learning as in the past. Additionally, remote students lack the community engagement and socialization that is just as important to college life as academics, and Zoom events can only provide so much connection. Only time will tell, but for students both on and off-campus, all we can do is focus on our studies and stay safe. Taking precautions and following the CDC COVID guidelines are key to ensuring a better, healthier future and a return to in-person learning. If we prove that we can manage our campus bubble, we may be able to reunite with all of our remote students and welcome them back home. •



Leelah Klauber

Amy Coney Barrett, an Endangerment to Human Rights?

PETER GATTUSO
CONTRIBUTOR

Within days of President Trump nominating Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court a widespread narrative developed, painting Judge Barrett a threat to basic human rights. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) stated “President Trump has once again put Americans’ health care in the crosshairs.” Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) responded to Judge Barrett’s nomination with “We cannot let extremists take us back to the time of back-alley abortions,” while Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) declared the nomination represented Republicans’ “long-sought goal of repealing the Affordable Care Act and ripping away health care from millions.” These statements on Judge Amy Coney Barrett do not accurately convey her judicial philosophy or intent. A Justice Barrett would not result in the Affordable Care Act to be struck down, *Roe v. Wade* (1973) to be overturned, or take away constitutional equal rights from the LGBT+ community, or anyone for that matter.

In 1992, a U.S. Judge critiqued *Roe v. Wade* (1973) in a law review article, stating the decision “invited no dialogue with legislators. Instead, it seemed to entirely remove the ball from the legislators’ court.” This judge was Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Justice Ginsburg was of course an advocate for personal freedoms, in regard to a woman’s right to choose. However, Justice Ginsburg recognized the fault in *Roe v. Wade*, in which the Supreme Court overstepped its role of a constitutional check of legislation, to become the legislators. Now, none of this is to say that *Roe v. Wade* should be overturned, because it shouldn’t. Rather it set a dangerous precedent of the judiciary acting as legislators. A Justice Amy Coney Barrett is likely to follow this philosophy that *Roe v. Wade* shouldn’t be overturned, but would likely rule against further abortion-related cases which serves as legislation, as that power is reserved for the legislative branch, not the judicial branch. At a luncheon in 2013, Amy Coney Barrett said this about the future of *Roe v. Wade*, “it is very unlikely at this point that the court is going to overturn *Roe*, or *Roe* as curbed by *Casey*. The fundamental element, that the woman has a right to choose abortion, will probably stand.” *Roe v. Wade* will not be overturned in the near future. Even if I am wrong, and a Justice Barrett votes to overturn it, there are simply not five total votes to overturn it; Justices Breyer, Sotomayor, Kagan, Roberts, and Gorsuch have made it clear that they are against overturning *Roe v. Wade*. That right there is a majority of the Supreme Court. Furthermore, Justices Alito and Kavanaugh are unlikely to cast votes to overturn it, referring to the case as “warranted respect” and “precedent”, respectively.

In September, just two weeks before Judge Barrett’s nomination, she served on an eight-judge panel in a mock court of *Texas v. California* at William & Mary Law School. Judge Barrett’s

decision is unknown due to the anonymity of the panel. However, five of the judges ruled that only the individual mandate of the Affordable Care Act, which punished those without a healthcare plan with an added tax, was unconstitutional, but allowed the rest of the law to remain. The other three Judges would not have heard the case as they argued that the defendant states didn’t have a standing for the lawsuit. None of the Judge’s rulings would have resulted in anyone losing their healthcare. In fact, none of their rulings would have made any changes to the current law, as the individual mandate was nullified in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. Again, as *The Dispatch’s* David French phrases it, Judge Amy Coney Barrett represents “evolution, not revolution.”

Now before I go on, let me state an obvious, yet necessary claim. No one should be fired or discriminated against based on their sexuality, or any other identity. However, in some cases it is protected by the First Amendment, in terms of both free speech and freedom of religion. Based on Judge Barrett’s originalist judicial philosophy, I would predict her to rule in favor of free speech and/or religion in cases such as the upcoming *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia*. This does not mean Judge Barrett is an advocate of discrimination based on sexual orientation, but rather that it is not protected in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII bans discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin, but does not refer to sexual orientation. Many will respond that sexual orientation ought to be protected by civil rights, which is a fair argument. However, that is the duty of the legislature to accomplish. For the Supreme Court to implement that would be an overreach of powers and would set a precedent which would allow the judiciary to create laws, dangerous because judges serve for life and cannot be held responsible by the people.

Noah Feldman, a liberal professor at Harvard Law, argues that Judge Amy Coney Barrett would make a great Supreme Court Justice due to her ability to judge on constitutional interpretation, and not on her personal beliefs. In Feldman’s *Bloomberg* oped, he writes “Regardless of what you or I may think of the circumstances of this nomination, Barrett is highly qualified to serve on the Supreme Court. I disagree with much of her judicial philosophy and expect to disagree with many, maybe even most of her future votes and opinions. Yet despite this disagreement, I know her to be a brilliant and conscientious lawyer who will analyze and decide cases in good faith, applying the jurisprudential principles to which she is committed. Those are the basic criteria for being a good justice. Barrett meets and exceeds them.” Feldman supports Barrett, despite their conflicting ideologies because he understands that the judiciary differs from the rest of government in which they base their decisions on their interpretation of the Constitution and precedent cases. The political views of a Justice should become irrelevant

everytime they put on the robe. A core purpose of confirmation hearings is to determine whether the nominee will do so. However, as seen in the political smear campaigns of prior nominees Robert Bork, Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch, and Brett Kavanaugh, opposition arises not from concerns of their qualifications for the Supreme Court, but from concerns that the nominee won’t advance their political cause. While politicians initiated this behavior, its largest proponents are prominent celebrities and those with large audiences. In response to Judge Barrett’s nomination, HBO’s Bill Maher called her a “f**kin’ nut” and said she was “Catholic. Really Catholic. I mean, really, really Catholic—like speaking in tongues.” Perhaps most egregious was activist Ibram X. Kendi’s sickening response to a tweet about Amy Coney Barrett having adopted two Haitian children, “Some White colonizers ‘adopted’ Black children. They ‘civilized’ these ‘savage’ children in the ‘superior’ ways of White people.” I point this out not to vilify anyone, but rather to illustrate the harmful consequences of politifying the Supreme Court.

At the first presidential debate, when asked about the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett, Joe Biden stated “I’m not opposed to justice, she seems like a very fine person.” Although Biden and Barrett share different political ideologies, Biden recognizes the judiciary shouldn’t become a political tool. I think people regardless of political affiliation agree that judicial nominations shouldn’t become demagogic attacks on every part of their lives, but rather a final job interview to determine if they will set aside their political views, and judge from a non-political perspective of the Constitution. •



Tenet: Probably Not Worth Killing Grandma For

ELI CHRISTOPHER
ARTS EDITOR

So, through ways that I'll be keeping as secret as the actual movie, I recently managed to see *Tenet*. Now, if you've been living under a rock, which in turn is kept under a *Truman Show* style dome, which in turn was blasted into the depths of space to serve as some sort of last refuge of remaining human life, the world is on fire, and movie theaters are struggling as studios continue to pull and delay new films to avoid COVID related box office failures. *Tenet* is really the first major studio blockbuster to be released exclusively in theaters since the pandemic began, and although its aspirations were to be a sort of savior of the multiplex, it unfortunately is more of a cinematic canary in a corona ridden coal mine. People really just aren't ready for movie theaters yet.

Aside from box office results which aren't too bad considering the circumstances, what is the film actually about? And how does it measure up not only as a movie, but also as something worth risking your health for? *Tenet* is director Christopher Nolan's first film in a little over three years, and has been described as "Bond on acid," as it's more or less a spy movie, but heavily integrates science fiction concepts and Nolan's trademark style of messing with time.

Nolan is truly a unique filmmaker, especially in the modern era of blockbuster filmmaking. He may be the pinnacle of an exciting cross section between big budget action entertainment, as well as artistic auteurship. He may also be the only director out there making completely original, high concept action films that both feel like they were made by an actual person (rather than a studio team), are at least on the Oscar's radar, and (under normal circumstances) guaranteed to make bare minimum half a billion at the international box office. *The Dark Knight*, *Inception*, *The Dark Knight Rises*, *Interstellar* and *Dunkirk* were Nolan's past five films before *Tenet*, and each was a critical and financial success. *Tenet* however, is somewhat of a disappointment. Every single "Nolanism" has seemingly been turned up to eleven, and it makes it definitively one of the weaker films in his catalogue.

Let's break the flaws down on two levels. The first is maybe the more surprising, which is the technical. I'll go as far as to say that Christopher Nolan's films

are typically immaculate on the technical side of filmmaking. Collaborating with cinematographers like Wally Pfister and Hoyte Van Hoytema usually make Nolan movies look breathtaking, they are edited prestinely, and Nolan is dedicated with an admirable conviction to the use of practical effects. If a stunt, shot or set piece can be done for real rather than with CGI, that is the way he prefers to do it. Sadly with *Tenet*, most technical components are just a touch less sharp than usual. While the movie looks very good, I wouldn't say great. While it's cut well, I wouldn't say it accents the tension as well as *The Dark Knight* or *Dunkirk*, nor does it help the audience's understanding of what's happening like *Inception*.

And perhaps most disappointing is the sound design. Christopher Nolan movies usually have near flawless sound design, and have on at least three occasions won Oscars for it, but here it's way over done. In certain sequences it functions up to this high standard, but far more often than can be excused is the sound design so blaring, that it not only distracts from the movie, but actually kept me from being able to understand what characters were saying. With all that said, I was at least relieved that the stunt work, visual effects, and score were all still fantastic. Shoutout to composer Ludwig Göransson for stepping up and filling the nearly unfillable shoes of Hans Zimmer while he worked on *Dune*.

On a story level *Tenet* also suffers. As I mentioned, a reviewer for *Empire* called *Tenet* "Bond on acid," and I think this is true (No Mom, relax. I haven't done acid... without you). However, it may be more true than intended. The big sci-fi factor, and what makes *Tenet* unique is its use of "inversion." Inversion is basically when things move backwards through time, while everything else continues to move forward. If you saw someone who was inverted doing the "Cha-Cha slide," you would see them criss-cross, slide to the right, then slide to the left. The Village People would be spelling "ACMY." You get it. And as expected, this stuff is a total mindf**k. The best way I can describe what it's like to watch the inversion sequences is similar to how your brain feels when you're watching something in another language without subtitles. You get the drift based on visual cues

Article continued on page 14.

MGK Ditches Bars for Bass Guitar

NEFERTARI PIERRE-LOUIS
CONTRIBUTOR

When Eminem demolishes your career in a single verse, you unfortunately have to find work in another field. I assumed Machine Gun Kelly would try his luck in bartending or perhaps even real estate, but it appears he's made zero arrangements to flee the music scene. The terms of banishment, enforced by Slim Shady's fatal savagery in "Killshot" and "Not Alike," urge Kelly to retire...effectively immediately. However, the Cleveland rapper pulls an unexpected stunt by placing himself in a nearly forgotten genre: pop punk. His clever move allows both parties to win: Eminem can proceed to peacefully destroy his own career with each new angrier than ever album release and Kelly can finally ditch his ineffective rap routine for potential success as a singer. That being said, I admire both artists and my mere opinion does not put a dent in their obese wallets. I simply write with the intentions of respectfully sharing my unbiased opinions of the ex-rapper's newest project: *Tickets To My Downfall*. I'm no connoisseur of sound, but I've got two ears and an open mind, so why not.

The high-adrenaline punch of the album's first song, "Title track," will have you questioning whether the year is 2020 or 2003. MGK abandons his fast-flow rap tongue and adopts gnarled vocals to give us the angsty lyrics known to pop-punk's best. The breakdown bridge catapults you right back into the era of Blink-182, which isn't surprising considering their drummer, Travis Barker, has his claws all over the project as producer and percussionist. Barker is no stranger to this sound, he's a 2000s legend, which is why MGK has to keep pace. Surprisingly, he appears to do just that, only, we can't reward too much praise towards what is undoubtedly a copy-paste effort overlaid with subtle hints of personality. *Tickets To My Downfall* is fraught with easily detectable influences and clichés. The last thing a respectable artist wants to do is foray into the realm of pop-punk

only to sound like a great-value edition of the band's who built the empire. For Kelly, adding a dash of substance to his lyrics could go a long way. A 30-year-old man singing "I'll grow up next summer" is kind of ridiculous, everyone knows that line is reserved for teenage boys making noise in their parent's garage. Machine Gun Kelly should avoid shapeshifting into a carbon copy of peak pop-punk idols in their prime. A heated debate between satisfied fans of the ex-rapper's new sound and cringing Blink-182 diehards who can't swallow the project's "offensive resemblance to 00's rock," is already boiling online. If anything, I'm sure we can all agree that the majority of the population has been deprived of pop-punk for what feels like decades. This explains why MGK's album hits some of us so hard, like a pill, in which the symptoms include nostalgia and a longing for the reckless days of our youth. In truth, *Tickets To My Downfall* reminded me of much better times, so my first instinct was to latch the hell on, regardless of its major flaws. To dive into specifics, tracks like "Concert For Aliens" and "Jawbreaker," have strong anthem-like choruses that are worth bouncing around to. We can credit Travis Barker for the phenomenal production, which successfully managed to get several aggressive head bobs from me. Kelly has undoubtedly succeeded in emulating the manifold qualities of the punk sound we know and love, but he desperately needs to break through bounds and swap the safe cookie-cutter stuff for something rebellious and personalized. History shows that the greatest musicians are hailed for their abilities to produce organic music in a world full of generic, follow fashion wannabes; in this album, Kelly is a wannabe. Moving forward, Trippie Redd contributes his own distinguished style to the project's sixth track, "All I Know." Clocking in just over two minutes, this collaboration works unsurprisingly well regardless of whether or not the song is actually enjoyable (it's not).

Article continued on page 14.

Finding My Focus in the World of Virtual Yoga

MAGGIE HAYES
CONTRIBUTOR

It seems that yoga has become a trend in the time of COVID-19. While the low cost and convenience of at-home yoga has certainly contributed to its rise in popularity, perhaps the most important thing that the practice can do for us in this day and age is relieve stress. It's no secret that COVID-19 is as much an infodemic as it is a pandemic, which is why anxiety has become so prevalent in our day-to-day lives. Yoga can help us cope with the concerns, uncertainty, and poor mental health that so many are experiencing as a result of the pandemic.

I am just one of many individuals around the world who began to gravitate towards yoga during quarantine. Practicing first thing in the morning became an essential part of my daily new routine. At first, it was simply a way to move my body before breakfast. But I slowly realized that I was feeling better on the inside, too. The mindfulness which I cultivated helped me cope with the sadness I felt over the abrupt end to my senior year of high school, as well as the uncertainty that I felt about transitioning to college.

When I arrived at Conn, I was thrilled to see virtual yoga class offerings during orientation, and I continue to be impressed with the quantity of these offerings. It shows that the College is committed to helping students maintain their physical and mental health during these challenging times. There are, however, drawbacks to virtual yoga. For me, the added layer of technology, which is prone to malfunction, takes away some degree of the peace that I seek when I practice yoga. Additionally, I find that attempts to maintain some sense of a yoga community online just doesn't beat the feeling of personal connection that I get at an in-person yoga class.

When I logged in to Zoom for a class from the Find Your Focus Yoga Series on a particular cloudy Friday evening, each of these drawbacks was evident to me. I was the only student in the class, and while it was nice to receive individualized feedback on my form, I felt that I had to remain 100 percent "plugged in" and engaged with the instructor. The practice felt performative, which made it difficult to fully relax and tend to the wellness of my mind and body. In addition, that flawed technology piece was certainly at play as the instructor and I had difficulty communicating during the class. Yoga is meant to be a fluid experience, but the numerous interruptions in internet connection made



that flow nearly impossible.

That said, this virtual yoga class was not a total bust. By some stroke of luck, the connection remained stable during the last few minutes, which are always my favorite. It is in these last few minutes that yoga instructors usually share a take-home message, a snippet of wisdom which the students can carry with them long after their physical practice. In this particular class, the instructor touched on the idea of fluidity between poses, remarking that "it's all about what's inside the sandwich." Yoga is about connection: that of your hands and feet to the ground, your mind, body, and spirit, your being to those around you and your greater purpose in life. The instructor reminded me to be kind to myself, that I "don't have to work that hard," and that the more I focus on the external, the more I burn away what's inside.

What you get out of participating in this yoga series will be different for each person. Though I did not enjoy the technology issues and lack of fellow student participation, I can say that the class certainly contributed to the maintenance of my own wellbeing in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. It allowed me to move my body and leave with some food-for-thought. I remain pleased that Conn makes these small efforts to help students remain physically and mentally healthy during this unprecedented semester. I believe that these opportunities have the potential to positively impact individual students and the campus as a whole.

In closing, I want to share with my fellow yogis my love for Adriene Mishler of Yoga with Adriene. If you are a part of the yoga community, you've probably stumbled across her YouTube channel. Here, you can find a variety of pre-filmed home yoga classes, complete with regular appearances by her dog, Benji. Adriene's videos launched me into my personal yoga journey back in March, and I haven't looked back. I fell in love with her "find what feels good" approach through a 30 day yoga challenge--of which she has posted many--and continue to practice with her almost daily. If you, too, find yourself discouraged by the lack of community and technological interruptions that are prevalent among virtual yoga classes, I highly recommend Adriene. She manages to do away with the complications while fostering an unbelievably strong yoga community. I always leave her classes with a happy body and a happy mind, which, these days, can be hard to come by, but are nevertheless important. •



Jozette Moses

Young Adult Novel Creates Discussion on Latinx Experience in Higher Education

ELIZABETH BERRY
ARTS EDITOR

I have always believed in the power of fiction as a way to unpack current events and understand social issues. Which is why I was excited when Professor Andrea Lanoux, Slavic Studies Professor and Director of the

Toor Cummings Center for International Studies & the Liberal Arts (CISLA), announced that we would be reading Connecticut College class of 2001 alum Jennifer De Leon's debut novel *Don't Ask Me Where I'm From* as part of our IS 401 course this semester.

The book tells the story of 15-year-old Liliana Cruz, a first-generation student whose parents are from Guatemala and El Salvador. She is selected to transfer from her high school in Boston to a predominantly white high school in a fictional suburban town in Massachusetts through the Boston-based desegregation program Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO). Liliana wakes up early every day to take the bus from Jamaica Plains to Westberg High where she navigates code-switching and microaggressions BIPOC students often experience at a Predominately White Institution (PWI), while also managing the news that her father has been deported to Guatemala. In a little over 300 pages, De Leon discusses the political backdrop of Trump's efforts to build a wall to thwart immigration, while also telling a moving coming of age story of a Latina girl who finds her voice.

De Leon grew up in Framingham, Massachusetts with her parents who are immigrants from Guatemala. She graduated from Conn with a major in International Relations and is the editor of the book *Wise Latinas*, Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at Framingham State University, and a Grubstreet instructor and board member. De Leon visited Conn on Tuesday, Sept. 29 for a virtual discussion via Zoom put on by CISLA, Hispanic Studies Professor Jennifer Rudolph, Professor Hubert Cook of the English department, and students Lorena De Leon '22, Kairis Aridai '21, and Alex Rodriguez '22.

De Leon began the discussion by listing questions she was asked while studying at Conn including: *are you Hispanic? Can you help me with my Spanish homework? What tribe are you from? Where are you from?* The last question is central to the novel *Don't Ask Me Where I'm From* and set the tone for the excerpt which De Leon read from her book. The selected scene takes place in Liliana's history class when her teacher, Mr. Phelps, asks students about their opinions on a multilingual world. Up to this point, Liliana has been silent in the class as she knows that if she shares her perspective she will become the sole representative for the entire Hispanic community. However, the statements made by her classmates prompt her to explain that U.S. states including Florida and Colorado take their names from words in Spanish, exemplifying how Spanish was spoken before English in what would become America.

This dialogue opened a Q + A session coordinated by students De Leon, Aridai, and Rodriguez. Aridai asked De Leon how a young adult novel may romanticize the experience of a BIPOC student attending a PWI. In response, De Leon explained her goal was to write the story of one Latina girl, but she

is aware that there will be readers who will think Liliana's story is the sole experience of Latinx students. Professor Rudolph, who hopes to teach De Leon's book in a future course, added in an email: "there is a rich history of Latinx authors using the coming of age narrative format to write on Latinx identity" as this genre allows for identity exploration, however, there is danger in pigeon-holing a work.

Rodriguez began a discussion on how BIPOC students navigate white spaces. De Leon expressed that she did want to suggest that BIPOC students must leave their communities and go to a white space in order to succeed. Although Liliana attends a PWI, she also finds her voice in a local writing center: 826 Boston.

Similar to Liliana, De Leon also navigated different racial spaces while at Conn, finding herself code-switching between identities to assimilate: "I was too white for [my] Latinx friends, but did not fit in with [my] white friends." De Leon felt she had to be "white Jenn" to survive, relying on trips to the AC and journaling like Liliana to unpack these emotions. De Leon expressed how it is easier to navigate a PWI and other white spaces when you are white-passing, but there are not enough spaces on campus for BIPOC students to navigate these experiences. While De Leon was at Conn, the student body "was white, white," but the reality is that this is still true today. In fact, the average Black student enrollment is 17 out of 459 in the classes of 21 to 24 according to a post on @blackvoicesconnoll2 from July 14.

On a similar note, Professor Cook asked De Leon about her drive for discussing education institutionalism through the eyes of a young Latina woman. De Leon believes education can be a place where we reinvent ourselves and discover confidence and empowerment. Professor Cook agreed and wrote in an email: "a student's life can represent the locus of so many investments from loved ones and negotiations with competing systems of power. I valued that De Leon's novel was thoughtful about how a student can find her own voice through it all." Although an educational institute is the setting of the novel, the selective school program is not the only place Liliana finds her voice.

The conversation shifted to CISLA, one of the academic centers at Conn which has been called out on @blackvoicesconnoll as catering to the white student experience. A space to explore a culture and language is what CISLA is supposed to be for students, but aspects of elitism and being another predominantly white

space on campus hinders many students from applying. De Leon, who was a CISLA scholar and conducted her internship in Lagos, Nigeria, expressed during her visit to our IS 401 class on Wednesday how she felt intimidated by CISLA but also found her people in the competitive program.

Both the event open to the entire student body as well as the conversation among the graduating class of CISLA scholars this year revealed the shortcomings of pedagogy at a PWI such as Conn. De Leon's novel is a way to begin to understand what it means to walk down a hallway in a PWI as a BIPOC student. I encourage you to read *Don't Ask Me Where I'm From* and reflect on your own and with others the revelations you may uncover. •



Elizabeth Berry

Tenet: Probably Not Worth Killing Grandma For

Article continued from page 12.

and context, but if you focus too hard on it for too long your brain will start to hurt. This is another visual language. At one point, this movie's version of "Q" basically says a line that's blatantly more intended for the audience than the characters: "Don't try to understand it, feel it," and this is basically your only hope of getting through the movie. At a certain point you have to just say "F**ck it," and kind of accept all the commotion on screen like a wave washing over you. Only then could I start to think it was cool.

But inversion is clearly supposed to mess with your head. I can accept that this is supposed to be somewhat confusing, just as components of *The Prestige*, *Inception*, and *Interstellar* were. What I don't find excusable is that even the non inversion related majority of the plot is just as incomprehensible. Whereas those other three movies more than adequately explain their stories and more complex concepts both verbally and visually, *Tenet* struggles to do either. I sincerely could not tell you the plot of this movie other than that some characters are good guys, some are bad guys, and the good guys need to stop the bad guys from doing the bad thing, and all of them are occasionally messing with time. Maybe that's all you're supposed to need, but I certainly didn't feel satisfied.

By the same token, my brief character descriptions are just about as much as the movie gives you for character personalities or motivations. Even our main star, played by John David Washington (who actually is the son of actress Pauletta Washington! His father also acts) has no name and is only referred to as "The Protagonist." While this trope can be cool with characters like "The Bride," "The Driver," or "The Man with No Name," here it only frustrated me as I continued to try and find any coherent information, or any sort of character to latch on to. And while stars Washington, Robert Pattinson and Elizabeth Debicki act well, do plenty of cool stuff, and look great doing it, they don't have much to do as characters other than move through the plot—whether forwards or backwards. Debicki is the only one with even a shred of palpable motivation, but it's a basic one at that. Kenneth Branagh's generic Russian villain is, again, well acted but overall a bit cartoonish. His motivation more or less is one that'd come from that one s**tty kid your parents made you invite to your elementary school birthday party and would cry when you'd get a present and he didn't. These characters are half an archetype each at their most complex.

Perhaps my expectations were too high for not only a film from a director I love, but also my first theater experience in six months. *Tenet* is a good movie, it's just not as good as it could, or perhaps should have been. If it serves one purpose, let it teach Nolan what things he does too much, and what things he should work on. While there's plenty of sick stuff, I think people would rather watch *The Dark Knight* for the tenth time, or *Inception* for the eighth than watch *Tenet* for a second. Give this one a singular watch, but wait for it to go on streaming—or until we're safe again. I appreciate, and to a degree even agree with Nolan's commitment to the moviegoing, full cinematic experience, but it'd be easier to agree if the movie was better. Keep yourself and the ones you love safe. Stay home. Give Nolan some motivation to make something awesome again. •

MGK Ditches Bars for Bass Guitar

Article continued from page 12.

Redd is widely known for his own unconventional swagger, so the flavor and flow he drizzles over the track is helpful and on par. "Lonely" gives us reason to believe that the Cleveland rapper is capable of producing a story. The dismal lyrics glaze over strings and percussion as Kelly becomes completely vulnerable to express his father's death in July. The song is overflowing with channeled pain that pushes through in voice cracks and rasps. If Kelly can continue to reveal himself with the raw passion he musters for "Lonely," then there might be a place for him in pop-punk after all. The album's final track, "Play This When I'm Gone," concludes the project on a heartfelt note. Kelly is not one to sugarcoat his inevitable demise: he dedicates this song to his daughter. Unfortunately, it's awful, but MGK succeeds in communicating his deepest sorrows in a meaningful way. He's a great father to his daughter and we simply can't hate him for that.

For his freshman attempt in the beloved genre of pop-punk, Machine Gun Kelly did a decent job. The crippling downside of *Tickets To My Downfall* is its indisputable unoriginality coated with a thin layer of cringe. Of course, we all know that pop-punk has a distinct sound, but Sum 41 is not Blink-182 and Blink-182 sure ain't Green Day. MGK has a lot to improve on in terms of finding his own footing in the genre, but I'm sure he'll be happy to know that we won't be purchasing tickets to *his* downfall after all. The guy is clearly just having fun; congratulations on reaching your first No.1 album on the Billboards chart!



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