

The Mount Observer

“A voice for the students of Mount Wachusett Community College”

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Community College Student Faces Negative Stigmas

By Brianna Stevens

MWCC student, Rebecca “Beckuh” Carmosino spoke about the stigmas of going to community college as opposed to a traditional four year school. Carmosino is currently taking business courses. She went to Holyoke Community College last year, and took music courses at Keene State.

Carmosino said, “I feel like I’m more prepared for the real world because I actually have financial responsibilities and I have real world experiences in jobs rather than quick summer jobs.” Juggling an education and a job, or other responsibilities is the biggest difference between community college and four year institutions.

When asked about the difficulty of classes, Carmosino said, “They’re pretty consistent across the board.” She quoted one of her professors who teaches at community college and a four year school, who said they used the same materials for each class. She said, “You have the same amount of work as four year colleges, but you have so much more on the side.”

Carmosino explained the stigmas she believed before attending community college. She said, “Before I went to

community college, I got the perception that it was lesser than four year school, like a continuation of high school, that it wouldn’t be as hard as a four year school, or that people who go to community college aren’t as smart as people who go to a four year college, but I definitely don’t believe that now.”

She said sometimes people at four year institutions will say community college is “like High school 2.0,” and people think they’re better educated because of that belief.

Carmosino recalled, “One time I had a professor at Keene State tell me, ‘This might be acceptable at Community College, but it’s not acceptable here.’ That’s the only time I’ve ever felt belittled for going to Community College.” She takes music classes at Keene State for free because they needed a bassoonist, and she volunteered, so she is getting credits for playing for them.

Community college students use their real life experience to make wise decisions. Carmosino said, “Those people want to save money. They’re actually more intelligent because they’re saving money by living at home.”

She said she believes some people think they can go to community college for a cheap education. She looks at her education as inexpensive, and said, “There’s a huge difference between cheap and inexpensive. Cheap is bad quality, and inexpensive is you’re not paying a lot for it.” The quality of a community college education is the same as a four year institution, but less expensive. The idea that community college is “cheap” is harmful to students who want to better themselves, and be financially savvy about it.

Carmosino said, “Community college is regular college, with the added stresses of adult responsibilities.”



Photo by Benjamin Richard

Rebecca “Beckuh” Carmosino

Simple Hashtag Sparks Overdue Conversation

By Arielle Whitaker

Following the accusations against Harvey Weinstein, actress Alyssa Milano created a call to action on social media. On October 15, she tweeted, “if all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote ‘me too’ as their status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem.” She then followed this tweet with another, “If you’ve been sexually harassed or assaulted write ‘me too’ as a reply to this

tweet.”

This hashtag has been an incredible voice for victims of sexual assault, the bravery and intelligent thoughts shared have been moving. I fully support this movement, but it is slightly flawed. Although we have seen posts from men giving words of solidarity, this hashtag keeps the issue of sexual violence on women and not the men who commit these acts.

We need more men to come forward and expose the truth

and the offenders behind sexual assault because, without it, we are left with just the sad stories. We have seen time and time again that the accusations given by women regarding this issue are rarely taken seriously. I think if more men came forward to out the offenders and send the message that this is not okay, then the matter would not be taken so lightly.

These posts have been empowering, uplifting, and passionate but it continues to

keep the personal details and stories of sexual harassment and assault in the spotlight, while the offenders continue to hide in the dark.

The hashtag caught like wildfire and the responses were overwhelming. Within two weeks there have been 1.7 million tweets across 85 countries using the hashtag “me too.” Milano commented on the huge number on twitter saying “standing side by side together our movement will only grow.”

Women all over the world participated on both twitter and Facebook. Some simply shared the hashtag while others were brave enough to tell their story. Other celebrities, alongside Milano, joined in as well. Including Lady Gaga, Debra Messing, Evan Rachel Wood, Sheryl Crow, and Sarah Hyland. Although every post is appreciated, seeing public figures use their public platform

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“Simple Hashtag” >>>

Transgender Student Struggles to Find Family Acceptance

See Page 3 for Statistics

By Jennifer Lamontagne

Some people are born in the wrong body, lacking the parts they feel define them. The struggle to become who you were meant to be can be a long, challenging road.

Michael Dean, age 20, a second year MWCC student, knows this struggle all too well. Dean is trapped in a body that has never felt quite right and forced to live in secrecy, because his family would never accept their daughter as a man. Dean

is not allowed to live fully out in the open as the gender he feels he was born to be.

Dean's parents are very conservative and would disown him for his choices to be openly transgender. Dean identifies as a pan romantic, a sexual male, despite being born female. Dean states, "Feminine felt fake, felt like an act, cheap character of what my parents expected me to be, not who I am."

With the support of good friends, Dean has taken steps to

a long journey into transitioning into who he is, like using his male name out in public with friends and school, changing his wardrobe, and binds his chest when out. In the future, when he is able to be open about his choice, Dean plans to legally change his name, have surgery to remove his breasts, and take testosterone hormones. He has no interest in going all the way with reconstructive genital surgery, as he has no desire for sex.

The biggest struggle in transitioning that Dean faces is recognition of the gender he is. It is a constant struggle he and the transgender community face daily during the process of transforming. Dean tries not to let it get the best of him.

On campus, Dean is free to be who he is and loves that he is accepted and called "Dude" and terms that are more masculine more often than not. "I'm safe presenting as male without getting questioned as to why."

Dean states, "I love being out. It's not stressful, it's not a balance of well planned lies. It's just me being open and honest."

Dean lives day to day in a dual life, one of a puppet and one of freedom to live the way he is happy. He is striving to be free from the door that is stuck half open. Dean believes that most if not all of his family will most likely disown him, but with the support of his close friends, he will be fine with or without his family.

MWCC Student Quits Smoking Pot Before Class

By Brianna Stevens

A student at MWCC smoked marijuana before class regularly, but realized that his grades were suffering. The student said, "It almost took over my life." He said he would smoke before every class at one point. "All of them, didn't matter. The classes I didn't care about, didn't need, I tried to keep it that way but eventually it just became so routine."

The student told about his journey from his first four year school, and explained the reason

he started smoking before class was because he was depressed. He said, "I did suffer from depression when I was younger, and then I noticed when I started smoking pot when I was like 18 years old that it started to go away, and then when I was at school and realized that I was more depressed, I started smoking more." He said that smoking would reduce depression and subside anxiety before classes, so to achieve the state of mind he needed in order to go to class, he would smoke before.

He said, "I definitely would go in, take all the notes in class, pay attention like a normal student would, but then I'd go back to my room, open up my notebook and have no idea what I wrote down." He would feel more mentally engaged, but when trying to study, he realized that his brain did not retain any of the information.

The student was faced with the reality of the situation when he applied to transfer, but he did not get in. "When I left [my previous school] and didn't get into UMass Amherst, I told myself I needed to start getting my life straight." That is when he came to MWCC.

He said, "I definitely feel like coming [to MWCC] was a good change and definitely needed," as a life check. He stopped smoking before class completely because he realized it actually

was not helping him succeed.

He said, "You're not gonna do better in classes, there's really no positives. You're still not in the same state of mind as you would be if you were sober in class, paying attention, getting all that information in your head, looking at your notes and remembering them from class."

"Other people say it calms them down and help focuses them, but I don't believe that. Some people say that but then you look at them and they're barely getting by."

The student is on the right track to getting into UMass Amherst, and plans to do so as soon as possible. Looking back, he said, "I really wish I didn't do it" because he felt like he did not take anything from his previous education at his first school and wishes he had just been able to wait to smoke.

Image by Christopher Thomas



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Editor in Chief:
Joshua Needham

Assistant Editors:
Brianna Stevens
Kelly Cacciolfi
Iheb Klai

Social Media Editor:
Joshua Needham

Staff Photographers:
Jennifer Lamontagne
Benjamin Richard

Graphic Designer:
Thomas Hill Jr.

Contributors:
Arielle Whitaker
Rachel Aster
Cassie Roy
Meghan Doyle
Michele Walsky

Adviser:
Susan Goldstein

Address:
Room 344, MWCC,
444 Green St.,
Gardner, MA 01440

Telephone/E-Mail/Website:
978.630.9260

mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu
www.mountobserver.com

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Simple Hashtag

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for social change and injustice is refreshing.

Although it is heartbreaking to see how many responses were given, and to know there are so many more who have been harassed or assaulted but chose not to participate, it is also empowering. I feel inspired to provoke real change when reading these stories and witnessing the truth be exposed.

It is important to know that although sexual assault is more common towards women, men are not exempt. There were men

who partook in the hashtag and shared their own personal stories of sexual violence. This issue is prevalent everywhere, at all times.

The biggest shock that came with this hashtag, besides how many participated, was who participated. We hear of sexual violence all the time and know it exists, but seeing people we know like our sisters, neighbors, friends, co-workers share their story online was even more eye-opening and heartbreaking.

MWCC Food Pantry Battles Student Hunger



Photo by Thomas Hill Jr.

MWCC recently opened its new Food for Thought Campus Pantry for students in need.

By Iheb Klai

College and university administrators and leaders around the country are realizing that students are among the millions of Americans who experience food insecurity, or a lack of resources to obtain nutritional food. That is why the food pantry office was established at Mount Wachusett Community College, to help students struggling with issues like food insecurity and homelessness.

“We just opened it 3 weeks ago, it is a brand new initiative. We got a combination of support from the staff faculty, student and outside non-profit organization,” said Shelly Nicholson, director of the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement.

The main purpose is giving out snacks, prepackaged meals and other food items to students in need and it is located in the Gardner campus, room 192. “All donations we have here coming from outside people but mostly people from the Mount. Also, we got help from United Way, which is a non-profit organization and until now we have 30 students signed up so far,” said Jana Murphy, Southern New England Campus Compact AmeriCorps VISTA.

In the United States, 33,000 students at 70 community colleges in 24 states are struggling with food insecurity and homelessness. This indicates that two out of three community college students are food insecure

according to The Wisconsin Hope Lab.

To sustain it, the food pantry in MWCC is working through donations, both in-

“Food donations have always been an important part of our student support network – even before the Food Pantry.”

kind and monetary, also with fundraising efforts. It has also partnership with Gardner CAC, which is a non-profit covering food needs for students living in Westminster, Templeton, Ashburnham and Hubbardston.

“Food donations have always been an important part of our student support network – even before the Food Pantry. MWCC has hosted Thanksgiving Meal drives, SGA food drives, condiment drives for veterans and other non-perishable food drives to support our students who are food insecure and local agencies that provide these services to our students. With the new Food Pantry, we are using these efforts to help them maintain a robust supply of

products.” Jason Zelesky, dean of students at Mount Wachusett Community College.

The number of food pantries in college campuses is exploding, “there are other MA community colleges that have food pantries, and this is not an uncommon service for campuses that may have a high number of students who report being food insecure.” Zelesky said.

Thank You and Farewell to MWCC

By Kelly Cacciolfi

June 14, 2016 changed the direction of my life forever. I thought for the worst because I felt so defeated. I no longer was going to go to work everyday at my dream job. Little did I know then, the amount of sheer determination that was about to hit me. I began looking into getting my college degree or certificate. I had no idea where to begin, which, led me through the doors of MWCC on a Fast Start day and before I knew it, I was sitting with Professor Sue Goldstein and began to plan out my future as a full time non-traditional student.

Today, I prepare to walk across the stage in May with my Associates Degree in Liberal Arts and Communication and a Public Relations Certificate but, will be done officially in December. I would not be here without my advisor, professors, librarians, the administration, or my peers. I would like to take the time to say thank you for helping me regain my sovereignty.

Michelle Contey, my advisor was absolutely amazing with all the guidance and patience during my time here. Without her direction and resolve to making sure I could take the right classes and even getting a waiver when necessary, I would not be here. I thank you!

To all my professors, I cannot even to begin to express the amount of knowledge I will be taking with me onto my next journey. The list of names would be too long to write you all in. But I am leaving with 66 credits and that's a lot of professors. My professors helped me find my voice, regain my confidence, start to think more critically and they all had patience with me because



Soon-to-be Graduate Kelly Cacciolfi

Photo by Jennifer Lamontagne

I graduated from high school 25 years ago. I will receive my degree as a transformed woman. I have found myself here at the Mount, and I thank you!

The library staff is an amazing resource for those who attend the Mount. They helped me learn to research again and use the library system; they ordered so many books for me, and they are

so encouraging with any and all research work. What an incredible staff we have that helps students and professors daily with any library needs. I thank you!

To the administration, I thank you for I would not have had such a successful time here at the Mount without those working so hard to make our College the best it can be. Also, with taking

two Journalism courses, this has led me to meet so many of you and I am thankful to have had that opportunity. I thank you!

To my peers, we are doing it! I will miss so many of you. Having the chance to sit in classes with all different age groups showed me how to be more open minded and to really listen to everyone's thoughts. I thank you!

So, as I walk across the stage and receive my Associates in Liberal Arts and Communications and my Certificate in Public Relations, I will be leaving a transformed woman. A woman who is no longer defeated but one who has her sovereignty.

FINISH WHAT YOU STARTED!



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Tuesday, February 20, 2018, 8:00 am - 2:30 pm

Wednesday, April 18, 2018, 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Wednesday, May 9, 2018, 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm



588 Longmeadow Street Longmeadow, MA 01106 800.782.7284 ext.1235 transfer@baypath.edu

Student Discovers the Joy of Travel

By Rachel Aster

Travel is often seen as something that only the rich do while on vacation, staying in 5-star hotels on resorts. I had the same opinion of travel coming from a lower middle-class family and having our yearly vacation be a two-hour drive to the Lakes Region in NH.

It wasn't until I became an adult that I realized the world was my oyster and world travel is something that does not have to cost a fortune. Since coming to this realization, travel has been my outlet from stress, depression and has helped me dramatically with anxiety.

Nothing made me more anxious than finding myself in Iceland at 4 a.m, trying to rent a car, fighting language barriers and no credit card. By throwing myself in uncomfortable situations, my day to day anxiety largely decreased.

Based on a 2017 article from *PsychCentral.com*, people are at their happiest when they have a vacation planned and are also more positive about their health, economic situation and general quality of life. I have found this true on so many levels in my own life.

Having a trip planned is the difference to me between feeling



Aster going on a snorkelling adventure.

Photos by Rachel Aster

trapped and feeling free. The day to day stress of life seems so much less when you know you are a week away from hopping on a plane and exploring new lands.

I was in a depressive slump after my father suddenly passed away when I was 21. The world felt so empty and pointless, I was tired of looking at the same environment every day.

One day, my younger sister asked me if I wanted to spontaneously fly to Hawaii and do work exchange at a hostel with her for 3 months. Of course, my answer was yes.

That was 4 years ago, I have since traveled to Iceland, road tripped the entire West Coast, been back to Hawaii and am planning a summer Machu Picchu hike. The world seems brighter and my head, clearer.

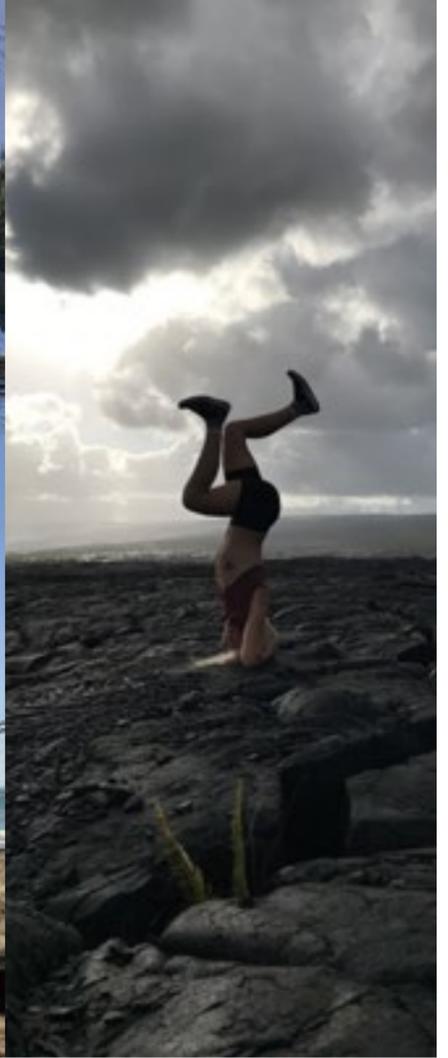
Although I do not make a lot of money, traveling can be affordable for anyone if you aren't picky. I have stayed at many hostels, Airbnb's, and camp sites just to be able to get the adrenalin rush of foreign lands.

My mental state has never been better and I plan on continuing to explore as much of the world as possible. My advice to anyone who is questioning going on a trip: you are much more likely to regret the things you don't do versus the things you do.



Skateboarding down the road.

See Page 6 for More Photos from Rachel's Adventures in Travelling!



Photos by Rachel Aster



Mount Wachusett
Community College
Beautiful Like a Rainbow

MWCC STUDENTS ARE LIKE FLOWERS, GROWING AT THEIR OWN PACE. CURRENTLY, ON ALL MWCC CAMPUSES, 11, 122 STUDENTS. ON THE GARDNER, MA CAMPUS, THERE ARE USUALLY ANYWHERE FROM 3,000-5,000 STUDENTS, COMING FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE, ETHNICITIES, AND VARYING AGES. MONICS CAYAYNE-ROBINSON IS A GATEWAY STUDENT WITH TIME TAKING COLLEGE CLASSES AND HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES. ANTHONY POWELL IS GETTING HIS GED LATER IN LIFE. DEEJ GINTER IS HERE TO TAKE A FEW CLASSES. THE COLOR AND DIVERSITY OF STUDENTS HERE ON CAMPUS ADDS TO THE BEAUTY OF MWCC.

"Faces" Photo Project by Jennifer Lamontagne

MWCC Student Visits Island in Portugal



Image courtesy of Nicole Chavez

Nicole Chavez visits Portugal

By Cassie Roy

Azores, Portugal is a beautiful island filled with massive hydrangeas and friendly stray cats. This is where Nicole Chaves, a student at Mount Wachusett Community College, visited to see family for ten days over the summer. This is her second year attending the Mount and she is currently majoring in Liberal Arts and Sciences.

The trip was Chaves's high school graduation present from her family. It was the first time she went out of the country to see where her father grew up and

visit her cousins, distant cousins, an aunt, and her father's childhood friends. She travelled there with her mother, father, and older sister Danielle.

The island Azores is made up of small villages surrounded by hills and deep valleys; all these villages are color coordinated. For example, in the village she stayed in, the houses were for the most part, white and green, which was their color scheme. Not all houses comply with the color scheme rule but for the most part all of the houses will be the same colors.

While staying on this island, Chaves and her family hiked many of the 100+ trails that wind through the thick forests. During these hikes, they walked past huge cliffs, near waterfalls, and ran into goats, stray cats and dogs, and a lot of friendly cows.

Thanks to the overabundance of farm life on the island, the meat is always fresh and tender. Fruit and vegetables grow wild so they are all organic; they don't use harmful chemicals or pesticides on the crops like we do here in the U.S. Even the milk is better in Azores. Chaves

described the milk as creamy and thick; it doesn't need to be refrigerated until it has been opened. Their diets in Portugal is naturally better than ours in the U.S because of how easy it is to find local and fresh meats and fruits and vegetables.

After arriving home in late August, Chaves decided to keep in touch with her aunt and some of her cousins that she had grown close to over the two weeks that she was there. She does this mainly through texting and calling, considering all of her family members are closer to

her father's age or older, which ruled out social media.

During the interview Chaves noted that the biggest difference from life here in the U.S and life in Portugal is the people. She described them as a very laid back, relaxed people; they acted as if they had all the time in the world. The other differences were the landscapes, especially the colors.

She said, "while on the hikes, the colors are more vibrant in all directions, oceans, greenery, flowers, just colors everywhere."

Come Work for Us!

Interested in becoming a member of the *Mount Observer* team?

Contact us at mountobsercer@mwcc.mass.edu.

Work Study positions are available to those who qualify! See Scott Farris in Admissions for details.

Is it Too Early to be Merry?

By Michele Walsky

Happy Hallow-giving-ismas! In the hostile takeover of pumpkin spice everything, candy corn and plump packs of fun-size chocolates flirt with back-to-school notebook sales. At the faintest nip of fall, eggnog cozies up to the coffee creamer.

If you ran into CVS for sunscreen this summer, I hope you did not topple the Hallmark display of Christmas ornaments. Yes, they come out every July. I love the holidays but slow your roll, Mister!

It is bad enough the four seasons are bi-polar. Now big business punts us through the last quarter of the calendar faster than a Hail Mary field goal attempt.

Why must Christmas suffocation come earlier every year? Let us extinguish the jack-o-lanterns and gobble up turkey before jingle bell ads overload our subconscious. Must catalogs choke mailboxes and so many charities infest our wallets?

This merchandising malarkey has been around for decades. The proof lies in the 1974 cartoon special, "It's the Easter Beagle, Charlie Brown." The Peanuts gang ascends a department store escalator only to discover displays decked out in holly green and red. Sally cracks a joke about it but the funny part is, this premature phenomenon was not obnoxious back then. Comic creator Charles Schultz must have been a time traveler. Either that, or he planted the idea into store plan-a-gram artists everywhere.

You know who gets the short end of the peppermint stick in all



Christmas Decorations put out in late-November.

Photo by Benjamin Richard

this? Tom Turkey. As the middle child of the holiday trifecta, even his day is unstable. Nobody could be bothered to lock down a date for him, for goodness sakes. Sure, he gets football, a can drive, Snoopy special and a major parade but his limelight is overshadowed by the big belly and beard as he rounds Herald Square.

Worst of all, he is deliciously devoured! Left in his wake are wishbones, exhausted cooks, family fights, pots and pans and indigestion. Before the Tums can take effect, early bird shoppers flock for deals.

Do we really need a day set aside to remind us to give thanks? We should do that on a regular

basis, anyway. If the holidays have you hyperventilating, fear not. Here are a few tips to combat celebratory stress and still have a good time.

First of all, it is not the law. We do not have to buy into the greed. Instead, focus on the deeper meaning. Pick and choose what fits best for you. If it helps, plan ahead. I know people who are super organized and have their Christmas shopping done by August. Apparently, it is entirely possible to achieve this without carols piping, hens a laying, crude commercialism, and Black Friday trample-thons.

I am no such creature. I do not like shopping much as it is. Every year, I toy with the

idea of gathering for fun events instead of acquiring more stuff. However, sometimes I do get a head start. Begin early by tuning into your loved ones for clues. Or if desperation strikes, scroll Facebook for a list of their favorite things. Support local 'mom and pop' shops as much as possible. If you are not in the mood to fight long lines, order from the comfort of cyberspace instead. While online, unsubscribe from unwanted catalog mailing lists. And if all else fails, gift cards are easy peasy.

If your looming "must-dos" are longer than the naughty and nice list, divide them into digestible bites. Tempting as it

is, we are not at the mercy of every tradition. As much as I treasure my eclectic ornaments, there have been recent Yuletides where we put up our fake pre-lit tree and called it a day. Pace yourself, then delegate tasks. Narrow down a few feasible favorites or perhaps none at all. You can make up new ones, too. Sometimes simple spontaneity creates the most joy.

Now that you outsmarted all the non-Noel nonsense, relax, put your feet up and sip some pumpkin spiced eggnog lemonade. We will be surfing the escalator into Christmas again soon enough. We might as well enjoy the ride.

The Adventure Suites Experience

By Cassie Roy

Ever wondered what it would be like to spend a night in a cave, or a movie theatre?

That's exactly what I was able to do when I visited Adventure Suites in North Conway, one of the top ten themed hotel rooms in the world according to their website page.

This hotel offers eighteen different themed rooms such as Victorian spa, roman rendezvous, and a wine cellar. All of these rooms range from \$219 a night at their cheapest room all the way to \$1,000 for a night. The price of the room

also varies depending on the season, if it's a weekend or weekday, and how big the themed room is. The hotel offers complimentary popcorn and fresh cookies every night, breakfast, and over two hundred movies that can be rented out at no extra charge at any time.

These themed rooms go all out. If you stay in the Cave room like I did, then you will be surrounded by beige rock-like walls with cavemen drawings on them, fur blankets and rugs, and small tunnels and hide-outs in the walls. The Showtime room

that I stayed in is themed as a movie theatre with giant couches that convert into beds; this way you can fit up to eight people total in the room, a popcorn machine, and a projector that's hooked up to a DVD player that projects on the wall in front of the couches and the actual bed. The hotel's official website has thorough videos of every room so you can tour them before you make your decision.

Certain rooms also allow dogs; in fact eleven out of the eighteen total rooms are dog friendly and they offer three different type of dog packages that will

be waiting in your room when you arrive.

This intriguing hotel is located at the base of the White Mountains, where skiing and hiking are their main outdoor attractions. They even offer free skiing during the snowy months for those who have always wanted to learn.

When I visited Adventure Suites in August, I stayed in the Cave room and the Showtime room, which is just an awesome giant movie theatre themed room. When I checked in, I was greeted by a friendly woman who gave my boyfriend and I

a tour of all of the rooms that were unoccupied at the time, then brought us to our room where she showed us how to work everything in the room and allowed us to ask any questions that we needed to.

The weather in the White Mountains when I was there was cool, damp and gloomy, which made it the perfect time to take long hikes up the Mountain, explore new paths, and take some awesome photos. Overall, Adventure Suites is an awesome getaway for a romantic weekend or a small vacation with the kids.

Arcade Fire Concert in Toronto

By Rachel Aster

Arcade Fire had a strong finish to the North American leg of their current tour for their new album, *Everything Now*. The last two shows of the tour took place at the Air Canada Centre in Toronto, Ontario on November 3rd and 4th with opening band and local Toronto legends, Broken Social Scene.

The Montreal based band made quite the entrance setting up the stage as a wrestling ring and entering with the announcement of each member and their height and weight as done in a wrestling match. The core 7 members of the band had this entrance for every show of the tour to ensure they could interact with their fans, high fiving them as they entered the stage.

You could see the band glowing as they entered the stage and opened the show with their new single and title track, "Everything Now." It was a strong start to the show and carried the excitement of the grand entrance they had made.



Photos by Rachel Aster

Lead singer Win Butler and his wife and band member Regine Chassagne each had intimate encounters with their fans during the concert. Butler

walked through the crowd and into the stands while singing, allowing fans to give him a pat on the back. Chassagne danced under a disco ball with of a sea

of fans during their dance hit and title track from previous album *Reflektor*.

The lightshow and smoke machines added excitement

and intensity during the two-hour concert. The vocals and instruments were evenly heard throughout the venue due to the setup of the stage being in the center of the room. The band had back to back rotating drum kits that were used to keep all four sides of the room engaged.

Arcade Fire is known for respecting their fans and their opening bands. Butler could be found both nights standing front and center in the crowd listening to the opening band. Butler does this to encourage fans to acknowledge their opener choice and to show respect to the bands they choose.

The show ended with one of their biggest songs and fan favorite, "Wake Up." They exited through the crowd once again, each member playing an instrument and gleaming smiles bringing the high energy show to a satisfying close.



Image by OpenClipart-Vectors

Under The Sun Review

By Meghan Doyle

Documentaries are intended to provide an audience with factual records and reports on the subject matter. However, when you're filming in one of the most controlling countries in the world, you don't always get a choice on what you can shoot. In this case, Zin-Mi and her family appear to be perfect example of an ordinary North Korean family. The only problem is that none of it is true.

Released in 2015, the documentary *Under The Sun* was filmed under strict government supervision. It was released by Icarus Films and directed by Vitaly Mansky, who was allowed only a small crew for filming.

The film follows the family of Zin-Mi, a young girl who is ready to join the Children's Union of North Korea. It begins with wonderful excitement on all sides. This is interrupted

when director Vitaly understands this was not intended to be a real documentary, but rather a propaganda film scripted by the North Korean government.

"The situation with the film *Under the Sun* was very unnatural because they set up these completely unrealistic scenes right in front of us in plain view, distorting what was actually happening," Vitaly explained in an interview with *Visions du Réel*. "But we strongly felt and believed that in the end, even the distortion of reality was itself a portrayal of reality."

"*Under The Sun*" does give us a bit of insight into what life is like for a citizen in North Korea, what it really shows is the power governments can exert on its people to create illusions. Vitaly's brilliant way to get around such a suffocating filming environment was simple; shot the entire production process.

Up until the point of the movie where Vitaly begins to film between takes, it's quite easy to mistake acting for truth. The moment that the government official calls cut for the first time and urges the family to "...act naturally, like you do at home," the illusion is shattered. Then you can begin to appreciate the

many layers this movie has to offer.

One spectacular part of the film they were able to capture was the little girl Zin-Mi's expressions in between takes. As a child, it's apparent on her face she has conflicting emotions about this entire situation. We get to see her go from a scripted and fake personality to her true self.

However, the film itself is very slow moving. You watch some scenes multiple times until the government officials are satisfied with their levels of joy and patriotism. While this factor does contribute to the overall point of the movie, it also makes it easy to lose focus.

From the crying face of Zin-Mi, who cannot think of anything happy at the end of the film, to her sleepy classmate struggling to keep his eyes open during a veterans' war stories, between takes. *Under The Sun* is a pristine and nearly unedited piece that demonstrates the terrifying power of totalitarian government over those forced to live inside it. This movie doesn't show horrifying events inside of North Korea, but rather how they attempt to do to block any knowledge of it.



Poster © Vitaly Mansky

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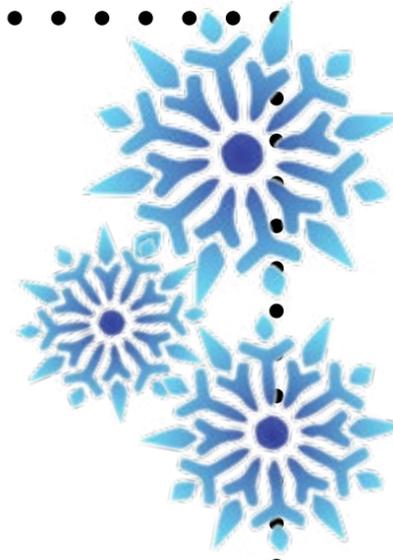
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- Dec. 4 - SGA Meeting / 12:30pm / Murphy Room
- Dec. 5 - CATS programming meeting / 12:30pm / Room W12
- Dec. 6 & 7 - Winterfest Fair
- Dec. 11 - It's Your Birthday Celebration / 12:30pm / South Cafe
- Dec. 12 - CATS programming meeting / 12:30pm / Room W12
- Dec. 13 - Film: "The Music of Strangers" / 12:30pm / Murphy Room
 Staff/Faculty vs Students Basketball Game / 12:30pm
- Dec. 14 - Star Wars Day / 11:30am / South Cafe



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