

# The Mount Observer

“Voices of the students of Mount Wachusett Community College”

## Resources for Students as Finals Week Approaches

By Lvov Mhyana  
JOURNALISM I

The most stressful time of the semester is coming right up. We all know it's difficult to take care of yourself during this time, but there are a few things you can easily do to keep yourself healthy to improve your performance during tests, and improve your memory while studying. Here are some on-campus resources to calm your mind and get yourself more prepared for finals.

Melissa Manzi, the on-campus College Counsellor/LICSW at the Mount, said, “Focusing on using your body to help manage stress is [an] area I emphasize with students. What you put in your body including food and substances and how you move your body will make a difference in handling stress. ... Any type of relaxation exercise such as slow breathing, meditation, [or] listening to music, can provide moments of relief and again the energy you need to keep going.”

Manzi explained the risks of missing sleep: “Lack of sleep is the number one unreported health concern to primary care physicians. [It] not only affects your physical/emotional health but your brain function as well.” She offers students assistance



Gretchen Gonzales studying in the library.

Photo by Benjamin Richard

in putting together sleeping schedules that work for them. She welcomes walk-ins while she's in her office. Manzi's office is room 140 on the Gardner campus.

Nancy Regan, the on-campus Hiking Club Director suggests hiking. “The benefits of hiking are not only for the obvious physical reasons, but also for your mental health as well. The Hiking Club is a great way to meet friends, relieve stress, anxiety and let

go of your worries and enjoy the natural scenery. The great outdoors has a calming effect on the mind and body,” Regan said.

She started the hiking club in 2014, saying, “I realized how many students needed a way to relieve stress and anxiety.” How to join?

The Hiking Club can be found on iConnect under “Clubs and Organizations.” On this page there are the times the club will be meeting

(usually twice a month), and Regan's email address.

Anne Goewey is the Yoga I Professor on the Gardner campus, and she also gives yoga classes at the MWCC Fitness & Wellness Center. Goewey said, “Taking a yoga class at the Fitness Center is a great way to relieve stress--there are a variety of teachers and styles and times to choose from.” The class schedules and descriptions are on the MWCC Fitness &

Wellness Center's website.

“If taking time to go to a class causes stress in this busy time,” Goewey offers, “students always have available the greatest tool for stress relief--their breath. Here are some ways to use the breath to calm down: Bring your awareness away from your stressor to your breath as it is, feel it wherever it shows up in your body, begin to gently lengthen each exhale until your breath has slowed to a more normal pace, return awareness to your breath any time your breathing begins to race and regulate it through lengthening the exhale.

Jared Swerzenski, Director of the MWCC Fitness & Wellness Center announced, “In support of all MWCC students during final exams, the MWCC Fitness and Wellness Center will offer all students with a valid college I.D. free admittance to the Fitness Center during the week of final exams.”

“Students can choose from a variety of activities with over 70 group fitness classes a week, a six-lane Olympic sized swimming pool, three full-sized indoor basketball courts, two regulation size racquetball courts, as well as state-of-the-art weight training and cardiovascular equipment,” said Swerzenski.

## The Biggest Dress For Success Fashion Expo Yet

By Ayana Brodeur-Edmonds  
JOURNALISM I

Bigger than ever before, MWCC's annual Dress For Success Fashion Expo made its return on March 21. The event is usually held by the Parent Support Group club, but this year they joined hands with SAGA (Sexuality and Gender Alliance) and WOW (Women of the World).

Taylor Rameau, president of the SAGA club, explained the importance of SAGA's role in the event. She said that PSG (Parent Support Group) invited the club to “add the LGBT aspect.” Rameau clarified, “LGBT is a big aspect because there are so many people in the community and PSG wants to help everyone as much as they can.”

SAGA ran an informational table for the event, Rameau stated. The club offered pamphlets about interview tips that also provided information on LGBT and non-LGBT rights of employees. Rameau explained the importance of the pamphlets saying, “LGBT

rights are something that not everyone thinks of. Students will learn their rights which is extremely important to know.”

The SAGA club also provided “Thank You” cards to attendees to send to employers after an interview. Rameau said that the gesture is something that “not many people think to do.” In addition to the cards, there were papers with the format for “Thank You” emails.

Rameau also provided some insight on how WOW and PSG contributed to the event. Members from Women of the World modelled professional clothing and assisted students in picking professional outfits. The Parent Support Group club made sure that the event went smoothly, and they provided the racks of professional clothing.

According to Rameau, students were given the chance to learn how to dress properly and they could purchase professional clothing at low prices. Rameau said, “Sadly, some people lose

their job opportunity because they are not dressed properly.” Free professional headshots were offered at the event. Headshots can be used for LinkedIn profiles and resumes. Hair and makeup touch-ups were also available to attendees.

The Dress For Success Fashion Expo is separate from the Career Fair. For the Career Fair, Rameau explained, “Networking is the most important part of the Career Fair.” She explained that the Fair has events such as assistance with resumes and networking. Since the Expo is not allowed to interfere with other events, they are not able to provide the same opportunities.

The Fashion Expo ran from mid-morning to mid-afternoon, and all students were allowed to attend the entire time. For the final hour of the event, Dress For Success was opened to the general public. Rameau said she loved the event because, “it not only benefits the students but it benefits anyone who wants to participate in the community.”



Taylor Rameau, president of the Sexuality and Gender Alliance.

Photo by Ayana Brodeur-Edmonds

## Professor Expresses the Consequences of Plagiarism

By Zachary Pavlosky  
JOURNALISM I

Michelle Valois, a Creative Writing and English professor, shared her thoughts and experiences with plagiarism, and why she thinks students resort to plagiarizing.

When asked how she views plagiarism, Valois said, "It's important to treat it seriously." Valois stressed that, if caught, it shouldn't be "just about punishment" but also "about education." If a student is caught plagiarizing, Valois believes it is more important to teach that student why what they did is wrong rather than punishing them outright.

In the sixteen years that Valois has been teaching at MWCC, she has only had one experience with a student who plagiarized material. An entire poem had been printed from the internet and the student turned it in and claimed it as their own work.

The poem was instantly recognized by another student.

"The poem wasn't even that good," said Valois. "The internet has made plagiarism very easy, but it has also made plagiarism easier to detect."

When asked why she thinks

students go out of their way to plagiarize, Valois said, "I think it's time...Many of these students have families, jobs and social lives outside of school."

She also thinks that some students "sell themselves short" and "just want the grade."

Valois's plagiarism policy for her Creative Writing class states, "Using the words of someone else without giving credit is plagiarism. Students who cheat or plagiarize will receive an 'F'." According to Valois, a student who is caught plagiarizing "won't flunk the course" but "will flunk the assignment." A first-time offender will flunk the assignment but will be let off with "a warning." However, they will flunk the course if they are a "repeat offender."

Valois believes that the best way to dissuade students from plagiarizing is to offer them "unique assignments."

Currently, students in her Creative Writing class must write four different poems in four different styles. Students have the freedom to craft those poems however they want. Valois says that it is the best way for students to "unleash their creativity."



Michelle Valois, Creative Writing and English professor.

Photo by Brianna Stevens

## Commit to the Commonwealth Commitment Program

By Zach Pavlosky  
JOURNALISM I

Transfer counselor Sarah Pingeton provided details on the Commonwealth Commitment Program, how beneficial it is for students, and the steps that are being taken to broaden eligibility.

Pingeton described the Commonwealth Commitment Program as "a statewide initiative where students can transfer to a four-year university." There are currently 12-15 active students enrolled in the program. Pingeton said, "It's a program that students have been really interested in...I think it represents a good opportunity for students."

The colloquially named "ComCom" is not for all students,

however. As of now, only full-time students may enroll in the program. However, Pingeton stated that part-time students would become eligible in Fall 2018. When the program was first launched in Fall 2016, only Biology, Chemistry, Economics, History, Political Science and Psychology were available as eligible majors. The Fall 2017 semester welcomed the arrival of ten additional majors including, English, Liberal Arts, Business and Computer Science. Pingeton noted that more majors will become eligible in Fall 2018.

The program is open only to Massachusetts residents and students must also maintain a GPA of 3.0 or above.

Once enrolled in the program, students enjoy a host of benefits. According to the program's

"From what I've seen, the improvements with 'ComCom 2.0' will address many of the pitfalls that came with the initial rollout of the program."

application form, students will have a freeze on tuition and mandatory fee rates from when

they enter the program at a community college and until they graduate from the transfer university of their choice. They will also receive a 10% rebate off frozen community college tuition and mandatory fees at the end of every successfully completed semester, as well as a full transfer of credit.

When asked about the future of the Commonwealth Commitment Program, Pingeton was optimistic, saying, "From what I've seen, the improvements with 'ComCom 2.0' will address many of the pitfalls that came with the initial rollout of the program." Pingeton was referring to the program requirement of being full-time, as well as the small selection of

majors. Fortunately, both of those issues will be rectified in the future.

For more information on the Commonwealth Commitment Program, visit <http://www.mwcc.edu/academics/advising/transfer/macomcom/>

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

Wednesday, May 23, 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Wednesday, June 6, 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm



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PROFILE

# Author Tells the Story of Professional Female Baseball Player

By Elizabeth Jones  
JOURNALISM I

Baseball, America's favorite pastime, has a way of bringing people together. For Martha Ackmann, it connected her to a woman who may have been left by the wayside of history. That woman was Toni Stone.

The life of Toni Stone is the subject of Martha Ackmann's book *Curveball: The Remarkable Story of Toni Stone the First Woman to Play Professional Baseball in the Negro League* which was discussed in a presentation at the Athol Public Library on March 23 supported by the Humanities Project at MWCC. As the title suggests, Ackmann detailed the struggle Stone faced throughout her life and career as an African American woman playing professional baseball.

Ackmann became interested in Stone's life once she began brainstorming for her next book idea. Ackmann had settled on the subject of baseball, as she always loved it and played it throughout



Author Martha Ackman at 2005 Women's History Month Celebration, Book signing of "The Mercury 13"

Photo courtesy of Wikimedia

her life. When she began researching Stone after hearing her called the "female Jackie Robinson" by baseball historians.

However, Ackmann struggled to find information on Stone in all the usual places one would do research. When detailing this experience Ackmann said,

"The lack of info had little to do with her as a player, but a hell of a lot to do with racism and sexism." This did not stop Ackmann and she proceeded to get her information in a more personal way such as contacting people who knew Stone. Stone, born Marcenia Lyle

Stone (1921-1996), not only faced racism that was commonplace in the 1940s to 1950s, but sexism from her teammates. In both her presentation and the book Ackmann told a story of situations where both of these discriminatory behaviors were shown to Stone. While Stone and her team played games in the Jim Crow South, they struggled to find places to stay at night that allowed African Americans which meant they usually stayed in boarding houses.

Ackmann explained that those running the boarding houses assumed the worse when they saw a large group of men with only one woman getting off the bus. Due to her teammates having prejudice against her because of her gender, none of them stood up for her and explained the situation. This scenario was just one of the many Ackmann told in her presentation.

When asked what about Toni Stone inspired her the most, Ackmann simply responded, "Her perseverance."

*Curveball* is also being adapted for a theatrical release next year.

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# Dogs on Campus are Not Here to Eat Homework

By Michele Walsky  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Do you have a canine classmate? It may seem surprising but according to Amy LaBarge, Coordinator of Disabilities, there are three service dogs registered with students this semester. If you happen to share desk space with man's best friend, remember, this is not a pet show.

As usual with schools, there are rules. Only service dogs are allowed on campus, as per Jason Zelesky, Dean of Students. Therapy dogs (and emotional support animals) are not permitted. It may be confusing to tell the difference between the two types of certified dogs.

Service dog Luna is a superhero. When the black lab mix dons her vest, she must remain alert to perform tasks for Elizabeth Gilbert, a dual-enrolled high school senior. Gilbert wears a knee brace for muscle/nerve problems and has crowd anxiety.

Off-duty, Luna is Gilbert's mild-mannered pet who loves squeaky toys and going for runs. And her beginnings are even more humbled. Little did Gilbert know rescuing Luna at a shelter five years ago would result in Luna rescuing her.

Gilbert dislocated her knee cap while home alone last summer and could not get up. Out of



Student Michael Young's service dog, Oscar, looks officially handsome in his vest.

Photo by Michael Young

desperation she called Luna over for help. To her amazement, the dog braced herself for Gilbert's grip. When her knee would not heal and revealed a mobility condition, she knew Luna possessed the personality to become a service dog.

"Training wasn't hard. We watched YouTube and handler videos," Gilbert said. "Through trial and error, treats and playtime reinforcements, we shaped what worked best for us."

Luna provides steadiness for

balance and senses Gilbert's impending panic attacks, whether by chemical release or Gilbert's tendency to freeze up in congested areas. "She will guide me through crowds and lead me through exits."

Gilbert said the attacks happen less often now because of Luna's "blocking" technique—a preemptive move by the dog physically standing between the handler and the anxiety trigger.

But Luna is not perfect. She is still fine-tuning her new profession. "Luna still has little mistakes

because they are not robots," Gilbert pointed out. "She was a pet first so she still can get sniffy. She's curious but not enough to break her stay."

Gilbert started classes in the fall of 2017 because her high school had both physical and emotional barriers. She receives mixed reactions when people see her with a service dog. The majority exclaim, "A dog!", "Oh, how cute!" and "Can I pet her?"

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"Dogs on Campus" >>>

# Terrific Partners: Meet Collene and Puma

By Christine Nelson  
JOURNALISM I

You may have seen Professor Collene Thaxton and her service dog Puma together on campus, both at Gardner and Devens. You may even have Thaxton as an instructor, as she is a Professor of Nursing. Thaxton has Type I diabetes. Puma is a service dog; his job is to let Thaxton know when her glucose levels are too low or too high. I was lucky to interview them both while Puma was off duty.

## Why did you decide to get a service dog?

I have had Type I diabetes for many years. But I have a tendency to push myself to my limits. You don't always feel it when your glucose levels are off. My husband also started travelling more with his job. We decided that I needed more support. Puma arrived into my life on September 24, 2015.

## How does Puma help you?

Puma detects my glucose levels by smell. If a level is too low or too high, he will get my attention by raising his paw to me. He reminds me to stop, take a break, and check my glucose levels. He can also detect my glucose levels while I am sleeping. If they are off, he has been known to pace and drool.

Puma can detect a problem with my glucose levels *before* my glucose monitoring equipment can. This gives me more time to make corrections to my blood sugar. It fascinates me how accurate he is.

## Puma, how should other people treat you while at school?

Ruf. Please don't touch or pet me. I am working and I need to focus on Collene. Also try not to bump me in the hallways. Thanks.

## How does he act at school?

He is very well behaved; he never barks. My students know to ignore him.

## Puma, do you work 24/7?

Ruf. No, Collene gives me breaks for exercise. I love exercise, especially swimming and frisbee.

## What are the challenges of having a service dog?

I have two other pet dogs (also labs) at home. And one is an alpha personality. When Puma first arrived, one of our dogs bit him on the mouth. Eventually we worked it out and they peacefully live together now. Also, a service dog requires constant training (done by me) to keep his skills sharp. I do a lot of training during the summer time

because that's when we have more time. He comes back from the summer a new dog. Playtime is a great time to do training. Currently we are working on the task of "find it", which involves finding a frisbee in the woods.

## Where did Puma come from

Puma was trained to be a diabetic service dog for the first two years of his life. He was trained by the organization SDWR (Service Dogs by Warren Retriever Labs). And he has the patches to prove it! SDWR specializes in training dogs for a variety of health challenges, such as epilepsy, autism, PTSD, and diabetes.



Professor Collene Thaxton with service dog Puma

Photo by Christine Nelson



## Did you know...?

### School Policy on Service Animals

Students who need the assistance of service dogs must register through Amy LaBarge, Coordinator of Disability Services, in room 142.

According to Jason Zelesky, Dean of Students, pointed to the school's policy found on the college's website, which states:

- Service Animal Documentation Consistent with state law, all dogs on campus shall:

Possess an animal license in compliance with Massachusetts law;

Be properly immunized and vaccinated

Wear a current license and rabies vaccination tag.

- It is recommended that a service animal wear some type of recognizable symbol identifying it as a service animal. However, there is no requirement for documentation to prove that the animal has had particular training or is a "certified" service animal.

-It is permissible for the College to make the following inquiries in order to determine whether an animal qualifies as a service animal:

Is the animal required because of a disability?

What work or task is the animal trained to perform?

Zelesky said, "Our policy is clear as to what is and is not permitted on College property and it follows the ADA law. It is designed in accordance with other colleges/universities and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). Also, service dogs who exhibit threatening or disruptive behavior can be removed based on our policy and the law."

Zelesky added, "It is not legal to require a person to show proof that a service dog is certified, licensed or trained as a 'condition for entry.' That is a discriminatory question. MWCC asks students who are bringing their animal into the classroom to ensure that the animal has been properly vaccination and does not pose a health concern to the other participants," he said. "All dogs must be licensed in the City of Gardner, so we can ask for that proof."

To read the school's full policy, go to:

<https://mwcc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Service-Animal-Policy-and-Form.pdf>

## Dogs on Campus

>>> continued from page 3

"Sorry," Gilbert said. Service dogs on duty must never be touched nor distracted. On occasion, people will attempt to talk directly to Luna. When Gilbert declines, saying it will divert the dog's attention away from the handler's needs, most people understand. But she has also received a few aggressive responses, going as far as threatening Gilbert or Luna. Sometimes people become angry and cast judgment on Gilbert for having a service dog.

"Don't put down someone with a service dog just because you can't see a disability," Gilbert advised. "They aren't there for everyone else. They are there to focus on their handler and do their job."

She also stressed asking permission before taking pictures and to never let your children run up to a service animal.

"Treat both the handler and the service dog with respect," Gilbert said.

Even if therapy and emotional support dogs are not allowed on campus, they still have merit. The emotional support animal comforts one person while the therapy dog serves a community, such as hospitals, nursing homes or special reading programs.

Oscar, a nine year-old Great Pyrenees is a certified therapy dog but he didn't start out that way. The tall, white dog resembling a sheepdog's silky cousin was

rescued at age five by student Michael Young and his wife. Oscar's comforting skills were discovered by accident two years ago when he destroyed a screen while breaking out of the house to look for his owners. Because of this separation anxiety, Young, an interfaith pastor and counselor, began taking him to work at The Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center.

"Oscar's presence kept veterans calm," Young said. "He would roam around so the office gave him a job."

When Oscar found his calling, he was not yet certified. Young inquired over the phone and was told Oscar wouldn't pass because of a disability that prevents him from sitting.

"His temperament and presence, especially around anxious and traumatized clients, showed he would do an excellent job, so we registered him online and bought him a vest," Young said. "Therapy dogs are good listeners and he likes to be petted. He loves hugs. Children have used him as a pillow."

Oscar has also played receptionist by alerting Young when a client had come in.

Whatever role working dogs are providing, they are proving to be essential companions. And what lucky dogs they are, not having to fill out a W-2.

PROFILE

Local Author Hosts Body Intelligence Event on Campus

By Elizabeth Jones  
JOURNALISM I

This semester, there was an event hosted by Joseph Cardillo, PHD held on campus. Cardillo is an author and inspirational speaker. He has been included as an expert in former professional football player Michael Strahan's book *Wake Up Happy*.

In his presentation, Cardillo focused on ways to utilize energy on a day to day basis. These include using acupressure points, music, and positive images.

While showing the acupressure points, Cardillo had the audience participate in a demonstration on how to access these acupressure points. Cardillo also shared that his favorite was what he calls the "bubbling well" in the middle of the bottom of the foot.

Cardillo's next point was to show how people can use music to either relax or be energized. "Music and sound are great ways to influence brain waves,"

Cardillo said, "Your brain attaches to sound or the song." He described how the beats per minute (BPM) affect your energy.

Songs with BPM less than 100 are more relaxing, while those on the other end of the spectrum are energizing. Cardillo also said that listening to familiar songs from your past can help you remember if you listen while studying. Cardillo even said, "Certain sounds will heal a broken heart."

Finally, Cardillo brought the previous points together with images. He explained that listening to relaxing music, looking at a picture that shows a fond memory, while accessing an acupressure point is the best way to release positive chemicals in your brain like dopamine and serotonin.

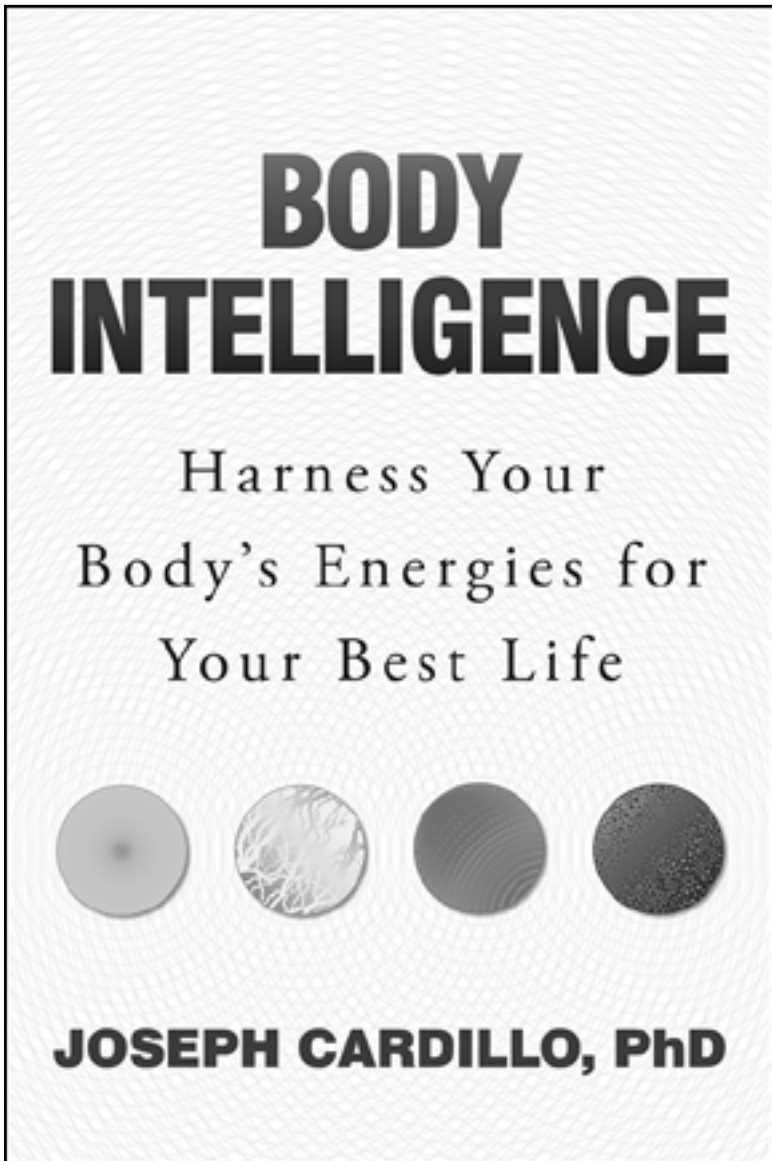
Throughout the entire presentation, Cardillo provided handouts to go along with his segments. Melissa Manzi of the Counseling department introduced

Cardillo and discovered him at Greenfield Community College. In saying why she brought Cardillo to campus, she said, "I'm always looking for ways to improve students health."



Dr. Joseph Cardillo Author of Body Intelligence, and inspirational speaker.

Photo courtesy of Siobhan Connally Photography



Cardillo's book, the subject of campus event.

Photo courtesy of josephcardillo.com

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# MARCH FOR OUR LIVES



Taken at the Boston March for Our Lives Event on March 24th, on the Boston Common

Photos by Brianna Stevens

## Boston March for Our Lives Expresses Outrage

By Christine Nelson

JOURNALISM I

A student-led March for Our Lives in Boston attracted tens of thousands of people to the Boston Common on Saturday, March 24. The March, which combined energy, outrage, defiance, and determination, denounced gun violence in America and urged for far stricter gun control laws.

Thousands of students started the March at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School in Roxbury. Marchers walked two miles down Columbus St. and arrived at the Boston Common for the rally, chanting “Enough is enough.” A sea of people and signs on the Common greeted the students with cheers, clapping, and music.

Speakers told of all forms of gun violence in America, not forgetting the 96 people who die every day from gun violence, or how communities of color are disproportionately affected. Students’ fear that they will fall victim to a shooting was palpable. Speeches by students implored people to get involved and to vote.

Leonor Muñoz, survivor of the February shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, gave an emotionally raw speech with her sister Beca, a student at Northeastern University, about their grief.

Graciela Mohamedi, a Marine veteran and physics teacher,

severely criticized the idea of arming teachers in her speech. She commented that police officers have a 20% hit rate. And asked, how are overworked teachers supposed to do better?

A March volunteer, Orianna, a Junior at Wheelock College, commented, “I grew up with school shootings being the norm. I remember hearing about Sandy Hook and crying. It kept happening over and over. Thoughts and prayers are not enough. I’m here because lives matter. I want the government to make a change. Listen to the students.”

Julian Diego Lopez-Leyva, a 19-year-old student at Bunker Hill Community College, was the March’s leader. Nearly all volunteers for the March were students.

A woman at the rally, Lisa Arlington, age 61, commented, “As my generation is aging, it is critical that these young people are at the helm. I’m encouraged. They are the future.”

The March was peaceful. Small groups of counter protestors were separated from March participants by the police. No arrests were made.

The Boston March was a sister event to the central March for Our Lives in Washington D.C. and one of at least 800 events across the country and around the world.



# Students Encouraged to #WalkUp vs. #WalkOut

By Alexa Nogueira  
JOURNALISM I

On the one month anniversary of the Parkland, Florida school shooting, multiple students chose to take part in the national protest that is #WalkOut. The national walk out took place on March 14 at 10 a.m. and lasted for seventeen minutes, to honor the seventeen people who were killed on Valentine's day.

Jodie Katsetos, a sixth grade teacher at Arcadia Middle School in Oak Hall, Virginia, heard about the proposed walkout and offered an alternative message, #WalkUp, which has since gone viral.

#WalkUp encourages kids to walk up to their peers who are usually alone and offer them company, or walk up to an adult and thank them. In Katsetos' post, she encourages students to #WalkUp instead of #WalkOut.

"I am adamant about it staying positive on both movements, #WalkUp and #WalkOut," Katsetos stated. "I'm not pushing either. I made those suggestions

as alternatives to walking out and just an everyday reminder to include others and be considerate, which is something that I talk about with students each day."

However, there's something a bit contradictory about titling a poster "#Walk Up Not Out" and then going on to say that one isn't pushing for either movement.

#WalkOut was a protest organized by the survivors of the Parkland shooting to advocate for gun control and to show congressmen that if they will not make change, America's youth will. It is a dedication to the lives lost in a horrific school shooting, and a promise to make change so that no other community will have to endure what Parkland has. It is a positive message.

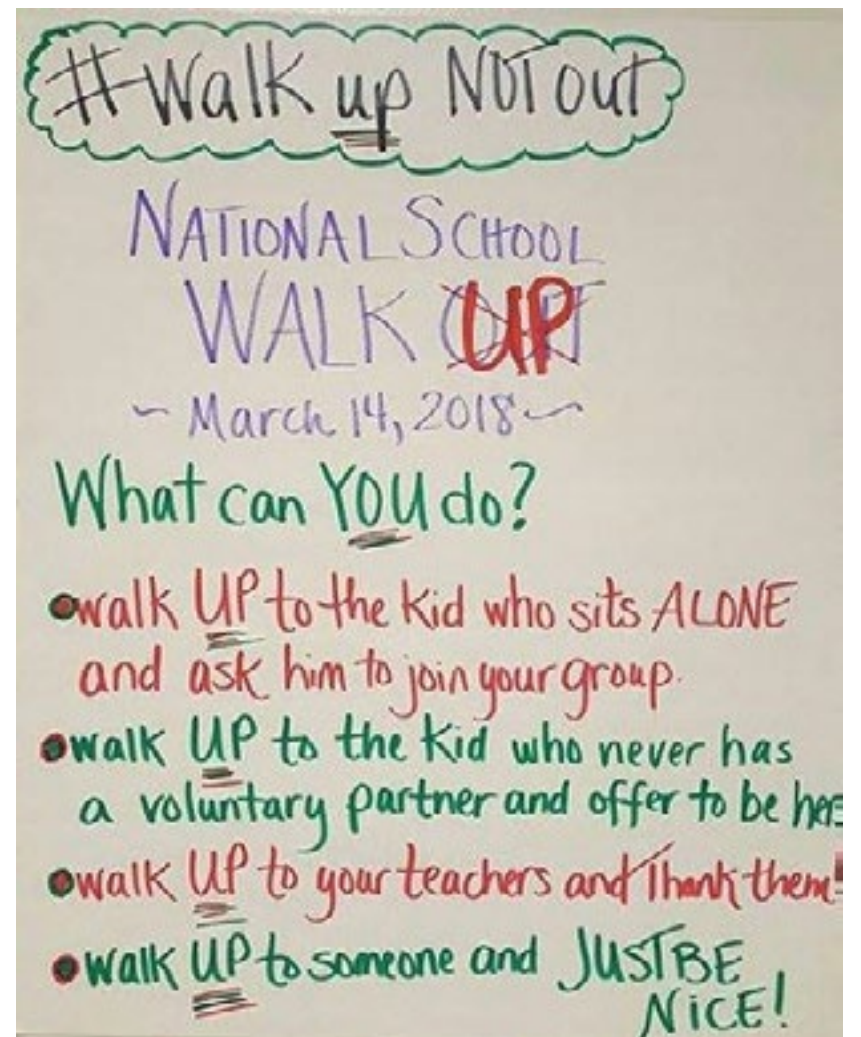
#WalkUp tiptoes around the topic of gun control and seeks to put a band aid over a bullet hole. Kindness is not a hashtag, nor an event that takes place in once a year. Kindness is a choice that must be made every day, and it should not be treated as a counter movement

which blames survivors for what happened because they weren't nice enough to the man who shot them when they had the chance.

We need to teach American children to be kind and empathetic every day, not just when it's convenient for them, like on the month anniversary of a school shooting. Additionally, American adults have a responsibility of intervening in bullying situations and playing an active role in the mental and emotional health of students. Of course, we also need gun control.

#WalkUp should not be an alternative to #WalkOut. Students everywhere, from elementary school to college, can do both.

Although #WalkOut has passed, there is still time to go to March For Our Lives, another event organized by the survivors of the Parkland shooting, which takes place this Saturday. So, #WalkUp to the quiet kid, lonely kid, or anybody else, and invite them to march with you, because kindness is not an alternative to gun control.



The original poster that Jodie Katsetos attached to her viral Facebook post.



# Gun Violence Addressed by Editor in Chief

EDITORIAL

On March 24, the March For Our Lives was held in Boston as a sister march to the one in DC. This is not a Republican vs. Democrat issue anymore; it is an American issue because American people are dying every day due to gun violence. I fully acknowledge that gun violence is not the only way that Americans are dying, but it is the issue at hand currently, so please keep the texting and driving statistics to yourself. This is about gun violence in America.

The time to change federal laws needs to be now to protect current and future generations. The change I want to see is legislative change to make it more difficult for individuals like the Parkland shooter to get guns.

I am not proposing that every law abiding citizen has their guns taken away because that would violate the second amendment. I want to see certain modifications like bump fire stocks made illegal because in my opinion, they are 100% unnecessary for a citizen to have.

I understand completely that just taking these things away won't

make it impossible for people to get, but it would certainly be more difficult. I don't want to see any more school shootings like Parkland, Sandy Hook or Columbine in my lifetime.

I don't want to go to school in fear that my campus could be next. It's an American crisis that needs to be addressed and maybe if enough people tell Washington the changes we want to see, they'll get something done. I support the second amendment, but there needs to be changes made to protect all American citizens.

There have not been any federal gun reforms since 2005 and there needs to be. This isn't opinion anymore, the fact of the matter is, children are dying and our government has discontinued any talk of reform. I can't cite specific legislature that I want changed, but I can give ideas about what I think is going wrong.

I'm not saying that anyone with a gun is evil and I'm not suggesting to take all guns away. The rate at which gun violence is occurring should be alarming to every U.S. citizen. The government has failed more than just in Parkland.

What about the ex-airman who

was dishonorably discharged but somehow still owned a gun and murdered 26 innocent members of the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, TX? What about the millionaire that modified his guns so he could kill as many concert goers in Las Vegas as possible, firing more than 1,100 rounds from his suite on the 32nd floor, leaving 58 people dead and 851 injured? What about the 18 year old who just lost his mother and has been struggling with anger and depression? How do we ensure that people like this can never own guns?

I can't give any answers, but I can say that shootings get their name because they involve guns. The solution to this is not to provide more people with guns. NRA boss Wayne LaPierre said, "To stop a bad guy with a gun, you need a good guy with a gun." But that just sounds like someone trying to sell two guns.

Our answer lies in the words of the late great Martin Luther King Jr., "Hate begets hate; violence begets violence; toughness begets a greater toughness. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love."



Taken at the Boston March for Our Lives Event on March 24th, on the Boston Common

Photos by Brianna Stevens

# You Drew *What* in Art Class?

## A Mother's Perspective on the World of Nude Modelling

By Michele Walsky  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

I was typing alone in the newsroom when the S.O.S arrived. "Save me," the text dinged. It was my daughter. "We have a nude male in drawing class!"

Amy's discomfort was obvious and my mind immediately flew into Mom Mode.

My baby has been subjected to male nudity; call the authorities!

How can a man pose nude for a class in this techno-age when sexting is illegal? How does this get a pass when we are hypersensitive about sexual harassment?

My initial reflex was to protect her. When my reaction calmed down, I did what I usually do when pondering an issue. I walked around it from all angles, throwing logic at it. A) This is college. B) She is 18 years-old. C) She is an art

major. D) The human form is art. E) The art department has female models too. F) The students are supervised. G) The models do not approach the students. These reasons settled my mind.

My dad was an artist and I come from a creative family. I appreciate originality and imagination plus I have always been fascinated with the human body. Having studied Anatomy and Physiology, I love the intricate cogs ticking inside us.

After class, we talked about it on the drive home. Amy was less intimidated when the woman modeled. Why? I suspected familiarity played a role, and what I hoped was a positive connection stemming from a healthy mother-daughter relationship.

"The female would chat while the male scratched himself

and stared at us," she replied.

So then I was back to my initial alarm. The woman seemingly gave off a friendly, more natural vibe while the man's alleged behavior bordered on perverted.

Maybe the model had an itch, or was just the quiet type. The students were in a safe environment with the instructor in the room.

Was this my daughter's perception based on her uncomfortable view of men? Was the issue of modeling safer when it was a woman? A nude is a nude, except for dangling parts.

When I don't understand something, nervousness takes over. The unknown is an abyss and until I fill it with knowledge, I am reluctant to explore its depths. So I do research.

As a journalism student, I interviewed Art Professor Tom

Matsuda to help unmurk the waters. As a parent, we could all do the same. A discussion clears up a muddled mind.

"Nude modeling has been accepted in all college level art curriculums," Matsuda assured. "Drawing the body has been accepted in history, all the way back to the Renaissance."

I was relieved when he told me the college does background checks when hiring the models, just like any potential employee. He also said he excuses students who are opposed for religious or personal reasons only if they are *not* art majors. For anyone obtaining an art degree, he explains the necessity of nudes.

"It helps students overcome the stigma of trying to be perfect. It frees the artists more," Matsuda said. "The human figure is the

most exciting, but hardest to draw. Any change in the pose, a movement in the muscle, changes the whole drawing. If you can draw a human figure, you can draw just about anything.

I knew the body was admired for beauty in the art world. Just stroll through a museum or the internet.

We are all born naked, so there should not be shame. We do not have to assign sexuality to it. Just as medical students see the body as a remarkable machine, art students draw it for its beautiful complexity.

Amy understands this, yet from the first day the male model showed up, she considered bolting from class.

But she took the professional route. Now that she has had several sessions with nudes, if it is the male's day, she draws fast.

# What Inspires Models to Pose Nude?

## Inside the Minds of Nude Models

By Michele Walsky  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Would you bare it all for the sake of art? Terri Mullen is one of several portrait models the art department employs and she has been sitting for MWCC students for nearly a decade. As an artist herself, she says it is a way to stay in the art scene.

"I get an education every time I'm in a class," she said. "I get inspired to work on projects I've abandoned."

But that is not what draws her in.

"I went into modeling to liberate myself," Mullen said. "The body is art as a form. It's something beautiful, not something to be exploited."

Dealing with body issues and a personal crisis, Mullen admitted she got into modeling by accident. After two years at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, she returned to Massachusetts and posted flyers for odd jobs around Concord to help pay the rent. She was contacted by a sculptor finishing her master's who asked Mullen if she had ever modeled. Mullen had not, but the woman sounded legit and the pay was good, so she gave it a try. From there, the artist introduced Mullen to other art groups. Her professional reputation led to other modeling gigs for solo female sculptors, which led to the deCordova Museum in Lincoln.

"It was for a well-known sculptor and the first time in front of a group, so I was nervous," Mullen said. "But when I arrived, I was relieved it was just for the face."



A portrait of one of the models, printed by permission of the artist and model who wishes to remain anonymous.

Artist: Amy Page

The next sitting, however, was not.

"The first time being naked in front of men, I thought, 'Oh, god!' But the artists were always so nice and professional; they made me feel relaxed," she revealed.

Having a long-standing rapport with art professor Tom Matsuda at The Mount has helped her feel comfortable too. "He is so patient and dedicated, he knows how to use materials in the poses

to capture slow movement with fabrics," Mullen said. "He has a way to loosen up the class."

While the instructors choose most of the postures, Mullen sometimes adds her own flair to the mix. "I have some understanding to make it interesting, but there's a play between the degree of challenge with the artists and myself."

But that does not mean she becomes a contortionist. "I find a

balance of something easy to hold [a pose and/or an object] but not too difficult for myself." Even though Mullen stays fit, she explained if a pose is hard to stabilize, she will start shaking and it throws off the whole drawing. For each class, she will gauge the audience for their ability and get a feel for the atmosphere in the room.

There have been awkward times when beginners make cat calls or tried to flirt. When that happens,

Mullen centers herself and focuses on her job. "I don't pay attention to anything on the outside."

Sometimes she receives thanks from serious students after a sitting. Shrouded in their gratitude, it is a gift Mullen treasures. It resonates the reasons she poses nude in the first place.

Bill Hurley, 55, is a former financial advisor from Billerica who has been modeling nude for nearly seven years. But his reason is not art-related.

"It's a diverse mix of odd jobs and keeping my head above water to make a dollar," Hurley revealed.

Rather than tangle with corporate ladders, he said he prefers employment on a more personal level with an even exchange of services. With modeling, he feels he provides students and teachers with "a vessel for their work."

Answering an ad for Montserrat College of Art in Beverly and Gordon College in Wenham opened doors for creative ways to make a living. Word of mouth from the art community led to other modeling jobs which is how he landed in room 181 at MWCC.

Sometimes challenging poses cause aches and pains, despite working out three to five days a week. So when he has the choice, Hurley picks athletic poses to help stretch the muscles.

During his first nude session, he admitted to feeling nervous. "But then I realized we all have a body," he said.

Hurley hopes his relaxed and uninhibited vibes help the students feel more at ease, too.



# Deborra Stewart-Pettengill's Gallery Talk

By Alexa Nogueira  
JOURNALISM I

Deborra Stewart-Pettengill is a South Carolina native who specializes in abstract art. On Thursday, March 1, she held a Gallery Talk for her art exhibit at Mount Wachusett Community College.

The Gallery Talk had a big turnout, which consisted of art students working in 2-D and fans of Stewart-Pettengill who had visited the exhibit several times throughout the week.

The event itself was hosted by Joyce Miller, a professor at MWCC who runs the college's art gallery.

Stewart-Pettengill's passion for art began when she was four years old with a red clay bank in her backyard, where she would



From left to right: *Sway*, *Alluvion*, and *Undulate* by Deborra Stewart-Pettengill

Photos by Alexa Nogueira

sculpt and mold things out of clay. She would later grow up to become a sculptor with a love for pottery and sculpted for 30 years after graduating from college.

She changed her focus to abstract art after being invited to a residency in Ireland, where the only material she was able to work with was tarlatan, which is a gauzy

cloth strengthened with starch.

While in Ireland, Stewart-Pettengill worked extensively with the tarlatan material, imagining the motion of

water as she manipulated the tarlatan with her hands.

When she returned from Ireland, she abandoned the tarlatan material and began to work with aluminum wire mesh, which is stiffer. The pieces in her exhibit at MWCC were all exclusively made with aluminum wire mesh. The black and silver pieces are her earlier works, while the colored pieces are more recent.

Stewart-Pettengill attempts to catch a different mood with each piece, and often finds herself feeling inspired by the weather and things that she finds in nature.

Each piece has a different inspiration; she is influenced by the force of water, motion, stasis, working together as a unit, pulling apart and working alone, and "defying gravity".

# Local Artist Robert Osborne Shares Life Experience



Artist Robert Osborne sits at his desk (where it is)

Photo courtesy of [www.robertgosborne.com](http://www.robertgosborne.com).

By Christine Nelson  
JOURNALISM I

Imagine buying and selling works of art by artists such as Rubens, Degas, Sargent, O'Keefe and Vermeer.

Robert G. Osborne, a local contemporary artist from Athol, did that for 35 years in New York City and recently shared highlights and advice from his career as an art dealer, museum director, and artist.

Osborne showed slides of noteworthy artwork he bought and then later sold.

A smaller Rubens illustration (c. 1632) that mirrored the master's paintings was sold to University of California, Berkeley. "I was very proud of this one," Osborne said.

There was also the O'Keefe painting that was far different from her vibrant flowers or New Mexican landscapes.

In *East River* (c. 1928) O'Keefe depicts grey smoke-stack factories

peppering the shores of the river.

A Johannes Vermeer painting Osborne bought, *A Young Woman Seated at the Virginal* (c. 1670), was criticized for a flaw in painting technique.

Osborne had trouble selling it. Many years later someone else sold it for \$30 million dollars. "The art market is very different today than when I was a dealer," Osborne said. He retired from buying and selling artwork in the 1980's.

Osborne advocated for the value of an art education. "It teaches total concentration and absorption to create personal statements,"

Osborne said. It also gives you a "good eye" that can be applied to a number of different jobs, including various types of design, illustration, teaching, art critique, auction house work, and museum work. "Many museums will hire young people as art installers, handlers

and guards," Osborne added.

He spoke highly of the several art classes he took at MWCC—just a few years ago. "I loved working with young people and having an intellectual relationship with teachers," Osborne said. He added, too, that the MWCC library is a "major asset", with a great cross section of art books.

Osborne encouraged graduates to move to an area that has a strong art center. "I recommend New York City, but I realize I am biased," Osborne said. "Then go to art museums on a regular basis to develop your eye."

He encouraged students to visit the many art museums here in Massachusetts.

Selections of Osborne's work will be exhibited in the East Wing Gallery this September.

For samples of his work, go to [www.robertgosborne.com](http://www.robertgosborne.com).

# Black Panther Claws Its Way to the Top



Marvel Studios' Black Panther

Image via [http://www.impawards.com/2018/black\\_panther\\_ver3.htm](http://www.impawards.com/2018/black_panther_ver3.htm)  
Copyright Disney and Marvel Studios

By Maurisa Weld  
JOURNALISM I

Marvel Studios' *Black Panther* has struck a controversial debate in the U.S. The blockbuster has become a Hot Topic, creating arguments especially on social media as some say the movie is racist. The movie set in a fictional land in Africa, Wakanda, and is said to be the first black super-hero movie. Fans argue that it is just that: a superhero movie. While others say there is a hidden meaning of racism towards the white community.

Joseph Hollenbeck, a student at Fitchburg University, shared his belief. His argument was that the only two white characters throughout the movie were portrayed in negative ways. The

first being the main super villain, and the second being weak and ignorant. "Claus" (pronounced "Claw") is introduced as an American and his duty as super villain is to steal the resource-*Vibranium*, from the people of Wakanda. Hollenbeck suggested that this course of action refers to the historians of America bringing slaves over, stealing their culture.

However Meaghan Doiran and Terngu Nomishan defended the movie. Doiran, a Gardner High School graduate, said, "what about all the movies made in the 20's?" She explained that movies made in America for several decades were "point blank" racist to black people. "The fact that some people have an issue with this movie is mind blowing. If white people

think it is racist to have an entirely black cast...I think *that* is racist."

She went on to say that even today movies set in America will either have a white majority cast or even entirely white. She said that it is due to the setting; the most populated ethnicity in the U.S are in fact white.

Terngu Nomishan, a comic book fanatic, agreed with Doiran. He said that the movie based on the Marvel comic character takes place in Africa, so it would only make sense to have African characters.

Nomishan, of African decent, said that the only hidden meaning of *Black Panther* is celebration of culture. The characters wear traditional African clothing and jewelry.

If you have seen the movie you surely noticed the man with the large plate in his lip. "The lip plate is actually very common in African culture. The movie shows authentic culture, it's a body modification. It seems scary to other culture's but it's actually the same exact thing as gauges." His reference is to the large holes in the ears of many young Americans today.

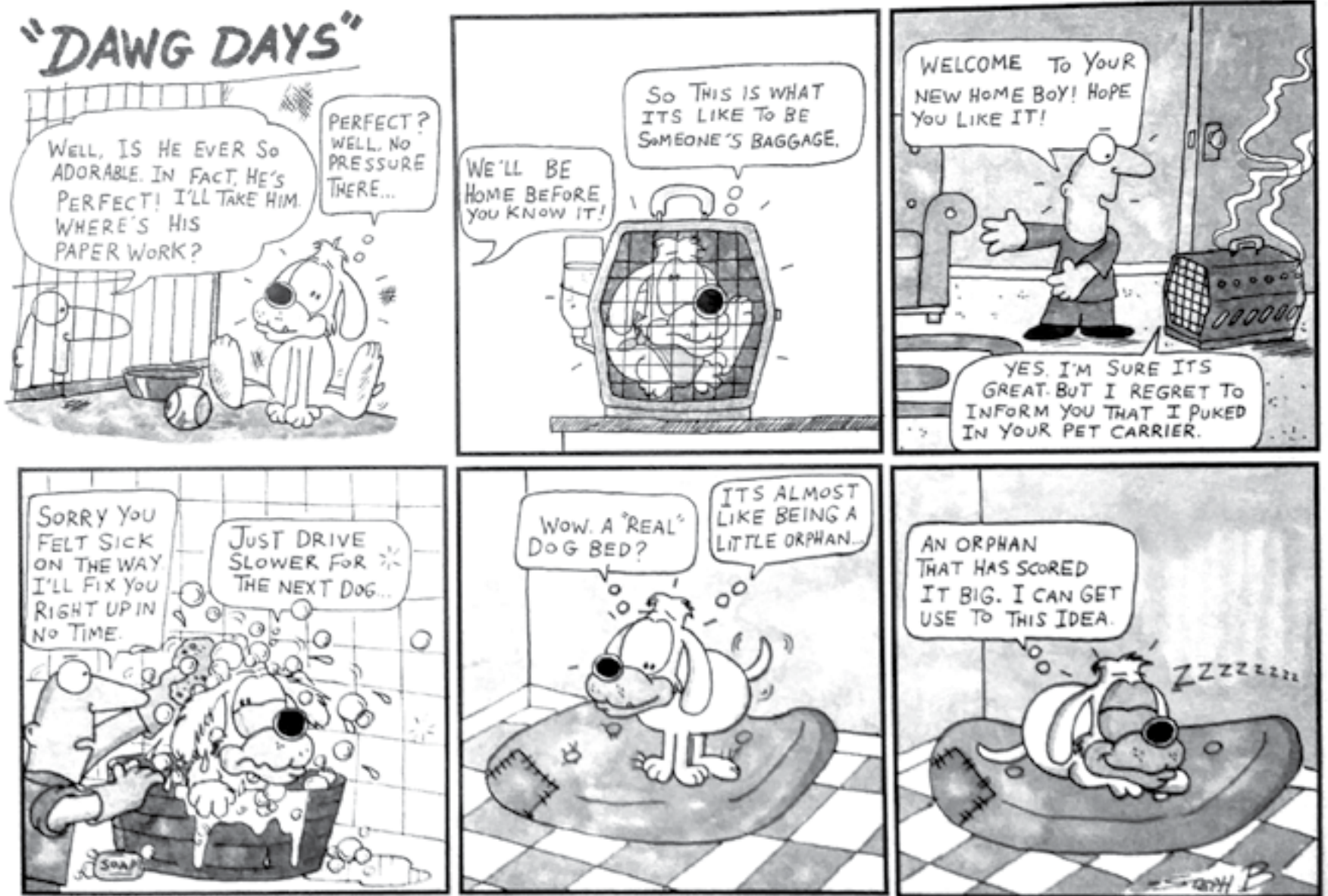
Nomishan ended his argument with another interesting observation. He said that not a single female character had straightened hair.

With the movie being a blockbuster, it can teach black women to embrace their natural hair like the strong women of Wakanda.

# "DAWG DAYS"

©.2010  
- S. BISSENETTE

## COMICS



## POETRY

### The Art of War

James Pelletier

War is born on the diagonal  
no space for symmetry  
no place for proportion  
nor stillness of balance.  
The clatter of jagged edged  
compositions  
juxtaposed contrasts  
and oppositions:  
these are the strokes  
that make their mark  
on prints of black and white  
and colors on canvases  
that march their way  
into the collections of  
History.

### Tattoo Haiku

Brian Dickens

Go get a tattoo,  
bold print across your  
forehead,  
reading, "bless this mess."

### Old School

Michael R. Young

An old house decomposes to my left. On my right, a Victorian schoolhouse stands in proud obsolescence, its arched stone doorway ascended to by grand stone steps. The silent ghosts of bygone children clamber upward toward silent school bells, scowling hall monitors and musty rooms. Blackboard erasures have left their chalky marks, pounded on stoic brick walls. The halcyon days of the three "R's" and recess have given way to short term memory loss. But I still remember Dotty Evan's blonde braids, blue tipped, as she sat at the desk in front of me. Her hair just barely reached the inkwell in my graffiti-carved, flip-top, oaken writing desktop.

Where is she now, my grade school heartthrob, the hop scotching girls and the boys of spring baseball? Where are we all and soon to be – still above or beneath the newly greening grass?

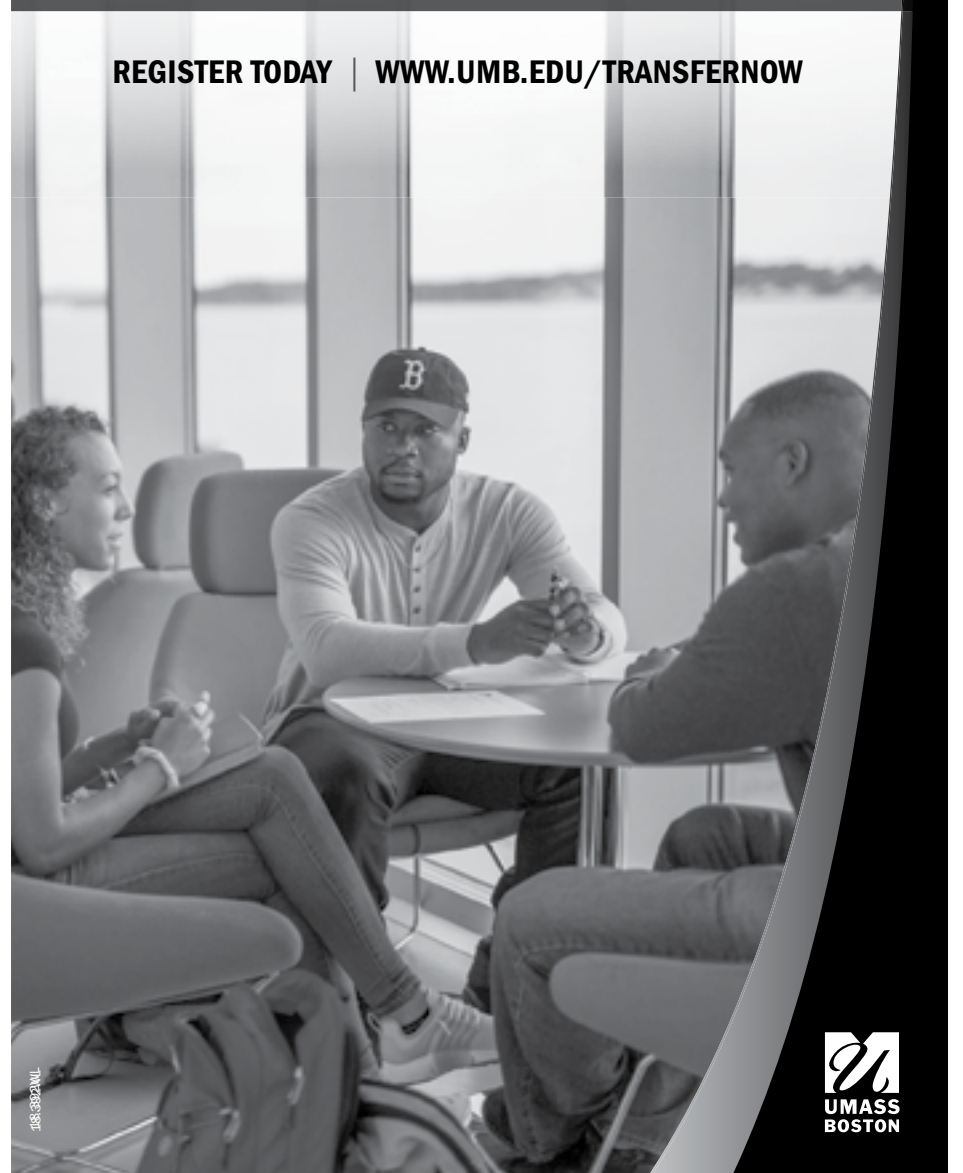
We were the bowing daffodils, the persistent crocus.

Now, what feeds them?

## UMass Boston Transfer Open House 2018

Saturday, May 5 | 9 a.m.–noon

REGISTER TODAY | [WWW.UMB.EDU/TRANSFERNOW](http://WWW.UMB.EDU/TRANSFERNOW)



*This sampling appears among other student poems, prose and artwork in our literary magazine's 2018 edition of A Certain Slant.*

*Grab your free copy at our book launch party on April 30th and listen to the authors read their work. Stay tuned for flyers around campus.*

**STUDENTS**

**Woman's Appreciation Day Musical Performance**



Photo by Jennifer Lamontagne

By Jennifer Lamontagne  
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mackenzie Clement from Woburn MA is a 16 year old performer. Clement is just like your average 16 year old and enjoys hanging out with friends in her free time. According to Scott Clement her father who was there helping states, “she has been performing at events since she was 5 years old”.

Clement has done many shows and events including performing the National Anthem a few times for the Boston Bruins. She has also performed at the Hard Rock Café a few times as well as many other places.

Clement attends the Berkley summer music program in the summer on a scholarship. She is also planning on going to Berkley for music when she graduates from high school. Clement is also working on recording an album.

Clement is on social media. Check her out and support this up and coming local musician.

**Green Society's Upcoming Events**

By Christine Nelson  
JOURNALISM I

The Green Society Club is offering spring events with their mission in mind. “The Green Society’s focus is on raising environmental and sustainability awareness. Our activities include volunteering at several local festivals, co-sponsoring Earth Day activities, and holding an annual spring plant sale,” said Tom Montagno, professor and club advisor.

**Earth Day, Thursday, April 19 11:30-1:30**

Joe’s Crazy Critters will return this year with animals, such as alligators, turtles, and snakes. Learn more about bees with the Worcester County Beekeepers Association. The National Audubon Society will also promote their events and classes. Other vendors will also attend.

**Plant Sale, May 7, 8 and 9, Greenhouse**

The Green Society’s main fundraiser will offer a variety of herbs, vegetables, and flowers (annuals and perennials) for sale.

The club also sponsors scholarships for Natural Resource degree majors. The club’s earned money contributes towards two scholarships, \$250 each, every scholastic year. Applications for the Natural Resource scholarships are **due by May 23** and can be found at [www.mwcc.awardspring.com/application](http://www.mwcc.awardspring.com/application).

The Green Society meets every Thursday at 12:30 in Rm S101. Everyone is welcome.

**Looking Ahead to Fall**

The Green Society will volunteer at the annual **North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival** on September 29 and 30, held in Orange. Here they help out with the festival’s composting program, enabling the festival to end up with just 2-3 bags of garbage, despite the 10,000 people that attend the festival.

The club also volunteers at the **Red Apple Farm Thanksgiving Festival** in Phillipston. It is held the weekend before Thanksgiving. The festival celebrates the bounty of Massachusetts harvests and offers food, games, and events for everyone.

Look, too, for a **Plant Sale** shortly before the holidays. Last year the Green Society sold amaryllises.

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STUDENTS

# Mount Chitchat

By Jasmin Ruiz

Students around campus from all different paths of education, all the way from non-traditional to dual enrollment, were asked to in one sentence describe their experience at the Mount. This is what they said.



**Alison Ralls**

*Pathways student  
Fourth semester*

“I definitely don’t regret joining Pathways.”

**Oluwatosin “Tosin” Ashaju**

*Graphic Design  
Fourth semester*



“My experience at the college has been phenomenal, amazing, and a really great place to begin my college experience, partly because of the effective jobs of teachers and staff.”



**Kathia Rosa**

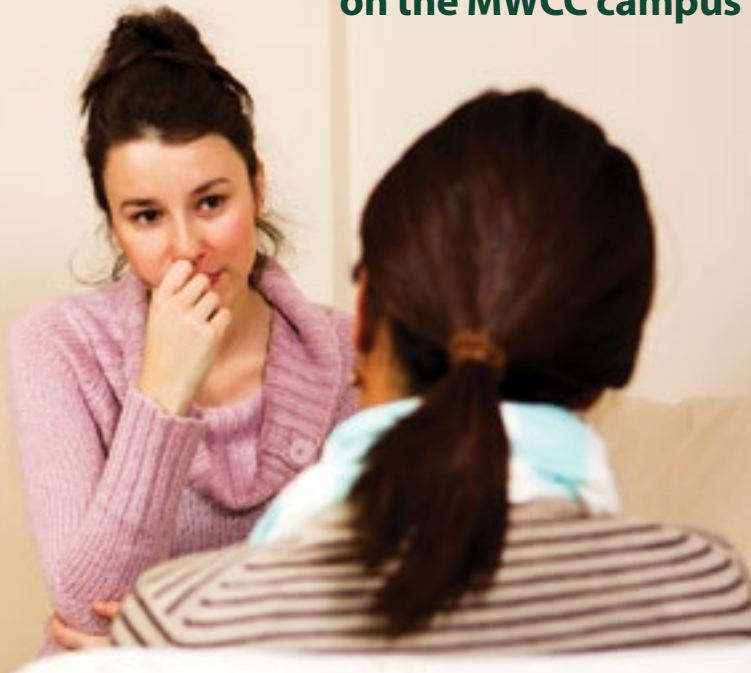
*Business Administration  
Seventh semester*

“It’s been quite the journey, but the Mount has helped me grow from a teenager that didn’t care much about school to a determined young woman.”



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#### INFORMATION SESSIONS

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10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Transfer Table  
Mount Wachusett Community College

