

The Mount Observer

“Voices of the students of Mount Wachusett Community College”

Students’ View of Campus Safety

By Alexa Nogueira

OBSERVER CORRESPONDENT

In the wake of the Parkland shooting, many students across the country are feeling concerned for the safety of their own schools.

At the MWCC Gardner and Leominster campuses, students say that they do feel safe. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the least safe and 10 being the most safe), the average safety rating across both campuses was an 8. Many students, like Matthew Pierce, credited their feeling safe on campus to the presence of campus police. “I feel good knowing that there are police on campus,” Pierce said.

However, when asked if MWCC was well equipped for an armed intruder or similar emergency, some students felt that the college was not prepared for such an emergency. “I’m pretty sure all hell would break loose and no one would know what to do,” said Laney Jackson, who is among the majority of students who feel that MWCC is underprepared for an emergency of that nature.

Many students offered suggestions for improving safety on campus, the most common



Haley Academic Center Entrance

Photo by Jennifer Lamontagne

being the use of student IDs, increased police presence on campus, and armed intruder drills. Some students offered different suggestions, such as Michael Sullivan, who said, “I think if

students and teachers possess a license to carry, they should be able to carry in a school setting.” Another student, Dima Saadeh, offered a contrasting suggestion: “More security

during the day and at night as well. Maybe set up a metal detector system in the entrances of each campus,” said Saadeh. Individually, students rated MWCC’s Leominster campus a

7.5 out of 10 for safety, and the Gardner campus an 8.25 out of 10. The average campus safety rating among male students was 9.34, and the average campus safety rating among female students was 7.25.

#NeverAgain

Alyssa Alhadeff, age 14

Scott Beigel, age 35

Martin Duque Anguiano, age 14

Nicholas Dworet, age 17

Aaron Feis, age 37

Jaime Guttenberg, age 14

Chris Hixon, age 49

Luke Hoyer, age 15

Cara Loughran, age 14

Gina Montalto, age 14

Joaquin Oliver, age 17

Alaina Petty, age 14

Meadow Pollack, age 18

Helena Ramsay, age 17

Alex Schachter, age 14

Carmen Schentrup, age 16

Peter Wang, age 15

Rest in Peace.

Details on Campus Security in Light of Parkland Shooting

By Timothy Whalen Jr.

OBSERVER STAFF

Due to the recent increase of school shootings across the nation, it is important that all students on campus should be aware of all safety protocols, as well as policies on weapons either on their person or in their vehicles.

First and foremost, campus police are armed at all times, and on any given weekday their will be 2-4 police officers on campus, at least 1 during night hours and at least 1 on weekends. In the case of an event, upon confirmation of a dangerous situation, a blackboard message will go out to all student and faculty, similar to an emergency announcement via radio.

The new software was installed in 2016, and is designed to override all computers on campus of the threat at hand, as well as sending emergency messages to faculty and students via every



Karen Kolimaga, Chief of Campus Security at MWCC

Photo Courtesy of MWCC

listed means of communication provided to the school; cell phone calls, text messages, emergency contacts, etc.

Now more than ever, it is extremely important to update all means of communication anyone may possess via iConnect or the administration’s office.

Chief of Police, Karen Kolimaga also noted that the police force is constantly looking for ways to improve the current system.

The MWCC police force is its own department, but an extension of the Massachusetts State Police. In order to remain licensed as officers and to carry their firearms, officers are constantly training and, at the least monthly, meet the training standards of the Massachusetts State Police. It’s also worth noting that most if not all officers are either former municipal police officers or are still working part-time in municipalities. In the event of a dangerous situation, Gardner Police Department would be called in for assistance as well as the State Police and any other local municipalities that are available to assist.

The safety protocols on iConnect can be located on the left hand side, in the list of departments. Under these departments select

the link for campus police, and there is a link to a page called “active shooter,” which can inform anyone on exactly how to react in case of any emergency; fire, terrorist threat, active shooter, etc.

The responses are all the same but may slightly vary depending on the campus location. The Chief also wants to note that it is school policy that no faculty member or student is permitted to have any weapons, legally permitted or not, anywhere on school grounds, whether it be on their person or in their vehicles. Again, it is a strict school policy that must be adhered to.

It would be wise to locate these links on iConnect and go over them so every faculty member and student on all MWCC campuses are aware of all protocols and procedures in the event of any sort of emergency.

New iPhone Update Made to Prevent Distracted Driving



According to the National Safety Council (NSC), cell phone use by drivers causes more than 1.6 million car crashes across the country each year

Photo by Brianna Stevens

By Michele Walsky
OBSERVER STAFF

“At least nine drivers are killed every day because of a distracted driver,” claims the Department of Motor Vehicles’ (DMV) website. Distractions for drivers’ have varied since the invention of the wheel—horses, conversations, billboards, radios, built-in car phones, then iPods and cell phones. Technology may be partly to blame, but it is also attempting to solve the problem.

Apple’s “Do Not Disturb While Driving” app was unveiled on September 19th. According to the company website, the app allows the updated operating system, iOS 11, to run in the background and detect when the operator is driving.

The screen blacks-out, blocking texts, calls and also push notifications from games and social media, something other apps may not do, the website explained. Music and navigation still function and drivers can set up preferences to allow for emergency breakthrough calls. Parents can also set controls for their teens.

In a survey of 88 Mount Wachusett students, 43 percent reported being “serene and scenic” drivers, while 18 percent put safety first and 30 percent were self-proclaimed Speed Racers. A wedge of 9 percent said it depended on the situation.

44 percent of students admitted they do not watch the road, compared to 41 percent who do. 15 percent paid attention sometimes. The graph below shows what habits take place in cars.

Sixty-two percent of the

students have a phone application to insure safe driving. Such apps may come from a service provider like the new updated Apple iOS 11 “Do Not Disturb While Driving” or the more common hands-free system like Bluetooth or Bixby, but only 30 percent of the students actually use it.

“I love the new iOS update,” remarked nursing student Kimberly Cook, who uses Siri if she has to text. She said the new driving feature is easy to use. “The new download comes on and you have to choose to allow it or not. I believe you can go back to settings and disable. It works great!”

Another app user commented, “I use it whether I’m driving or not.”

37 percent choosing not to use their safety app said they did not want to miss emergency calls, especially students with children, while 51 percent felt confident curbing impulses.

“My phone does [have an app], but I do not use it because I worry it might think I am

driving when I am not,” said one survey taker, who raised a point against unnecessary penalties or being locked out of phone use.

A slim 12 percent confessed they either did not own a phone or did not know how to use an app.

A majority of the 38 percent without an app were not interested in downloading one for similar reasons.

“It should be more about self-control than being limited,” one pointed out. Others put their phones in the backseat or did not look at them.

“It’s something to look forward to once you get to your destination,” wrote another. “I always drive with someone so they will usually text for me.”

“I have to use my phone as a speedometer,” admitted one commenter.

A few others were not aware such applications existed but shown an interest in downloading it.

“Yeah!” one survey taker said. “Can’t trust my impulsive self.”

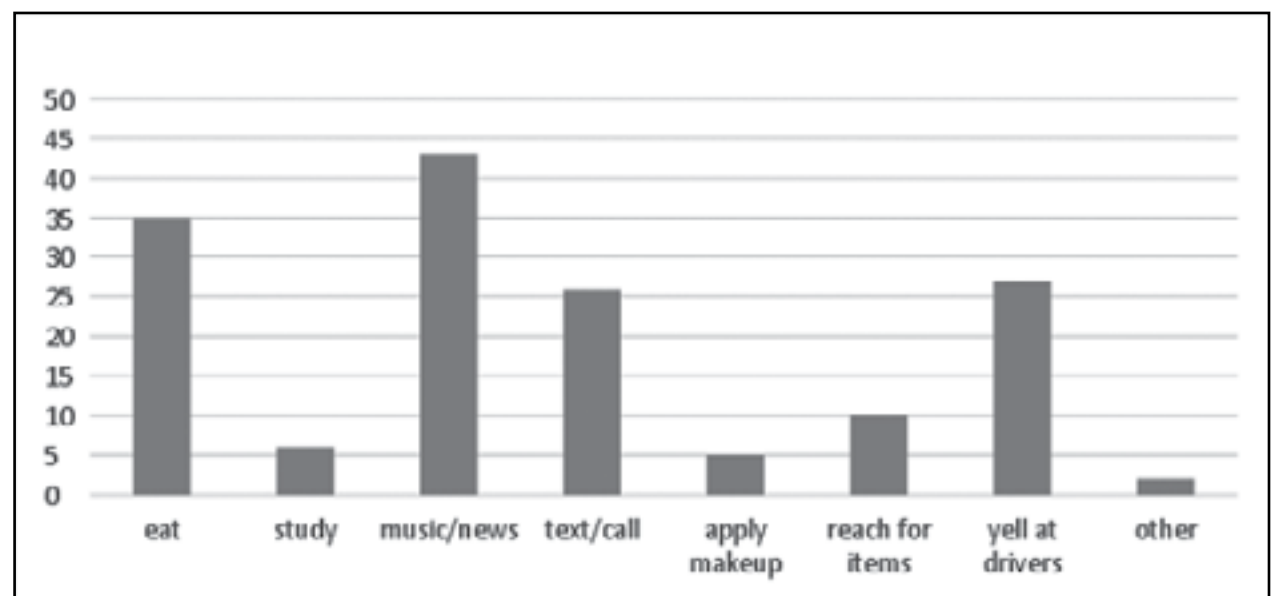
While another added, “I would enjoy that so nobody could bother me unless it was an emergency.”

“People should be encouraged to use these apps,” Professor of Sociology Julie Capozzi said. “Many do not know about them. It would be nice if the phone companies could let buyers know about these apps when purchasing phones.”

Capozzi added, “The phone is a serious issue when driving and involves many needless accidents and deaths.” She pointed to the mass.gov website for facts.

According to the site, 3,477 people were killed and almost 400,000 were hurt in crashes because of distracted driving in 2015. In April 2017, Mass.gov launched the “Drive Present” campaign during National Distracted Driving Awareness month and declared texting the most dangerous distraction behind the wheel. Looking at a

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“Distracted Driving” >>>



This graph represents the data accumulated by Michele Walsky’s survey

Graph by Michele Walsky

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Health Services Office Provides Resources for Students

By Brianna Stevens
OBSERVER STAFF

This flu season has seen a particularly aggressive strain, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Anne Schuchat, acting director of the CDC said in a telephone briefing for reporters, “This does not mean we’re having a pandemic, but it is a signal of how very intense the flu season has been. We may be on track to break some recent records.” But how can we prevent the spread of this virus if we constantly touch our face to wipe a runny nose?

Diane King, Coordinator for Health Services, said that the budget for health services cannot provide tissue boxes to every classroom. She said students can come in the office and take as much as they need. If a student brings a small plastic bag, they can fill it up to take to class with them.

King is a Registered Nurse (R.N.) with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) and is authorized to help students with many health needs. King does everything from emergency situation treatment to pregnancy tests. She even practices Reiki for students that need it. She said that the door is always open for students to get the health help that they need.



The Self Help Drawers can be found in the MWCC Health Services Office, Room 133

Photo by Benjamin Richard

King said that it hadn’t occurred to her that there would be a need for each classroom to have a tissue box because she assumed students would pack their own. She said students should take responsibility for their own health and it is the student’s own responsibility to care for themselves, but the Health Services Office is always available for students to get help.

King pointed out the “self-help” drawer in the office,

which contained generic pain medication, tissues, lotion, and even condoms. Students must be over 18 to use the over-the-counter medication in the self-help drawer, and should fill out the anonymous log of their ailments and what they used for treatment.

To reduce the risk of spreading germs and the flu virus, it is important to take symptoms seriously. According to the CDC, the keys to preventing the flu are

to avoid close contact with others, stay home when you are sick, cover your mouth and nose, and clean your hands. You should also avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth directly. This means taking a walk down to Health Services Office to pick up some tissues if you have symptoms.

The Health Services page on the Mounts website gives more information about personal care and flu prevention. It can



Diane King, Coordinator for Health Services at MWCC

Photo by Benjamin Richard



Tissue box from Room 133

Photo by Benjamin Richard

be found at <https://mwcc.edu/current-students/support/health/> or go to the “Current Students” tab on the main website, and Health Services can be found under “Student Support Services.” The Health Service Office and other services offered are always readily available for the benefit of students.

Distracted Driving

>>> continued from page 2

phone for five seconds at 55 miles per hour equals closing one’s eyes and driving the length of football field, mass.gov reported.

“Most adolescents think, *this won’t happen to me. I won’t get in a car crash*, but it’s a crucial issue,” Capozzi said.

A variety of safe driving apps are designed with teens in mind. An incentive-based app from Toyota, yet available for anyone regardless of vehicle, is called “Safe and Sound.” According to their website, by syncing the Spotify accounts of parents and teens, it blocks texts and calls once the driver exceeds nine miles per hour. If the teen speeds, the playlist pops into parent mode and blasts undesirable tunes.

Another motivation app is LifeSaver, which newly updated on October 9th. According to its site, lifesaver-app.com, the program rewards points for every phoneless drive completed. Drivers can cash in for iTunes or other prizes. LifeSaver runs by monitoring GPS and blocks texts or calls while allowing music and maps to function hands free as long as they are set up before each trip. The app alerts parents and loved ones when the driver has arrived safely or has turned off the features. Dmv.org, whose slogan is

“One distraction can steal your reaction,” invites drivers to click on a pledge to drive safer. The site also compared three other safe driving applications with LifeSaver. AT&T DriveMode can be set up to automatically on iOS or android to blocks calls and texts once the driver hits 15 miles per hour. It also lets parents know when the app is deactivated and parents can set up private prizes when safe driving is achieved.

Insurance company and vehicle manufacturer apps are designed to save drivers money but may not block phone use. These programs monitor habits like speed, braking, time of day, sharp turns and distance (shorter trips award more points). The State Farm website offers the “Drive Safe and Save” app and awards subscribers a 5 percent discount off their premium at sign-up, mailing a Bluetooth beacon to sync with it. State Farm compares data to other drivers in the same area and age bracket.

According to Progressive.com, the snap-in plug or phone app that monitors the same criteria as well are offered services. Ford’s website detailed the SYNC App Link program, “DriversScore,” which lets drivers opt to connect the program to their phones to share safe driving habits with their insurance company for discounts.

Phi Theta Kappa to Host Annual Character Breakfast

By Brianna Stevens
OBSERVER STAFF

Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) is hosting a character breakfast on Saturday, April 7 from 8:30-11am. In the South Cafeteria of the Gardner Campus. This event has been hosted by PTK on campus for 4 years. According to PTK, it is “a breakfast filled with everyone’s favorite characters, from fairy tales, cartoons, and beyond. Family fun to enjoy. Proceeds will support hunger alleviation programs in North Central Massachusetts.”

Kaitlyn Fales, PTK secretary and one of the volunteer managers of the breakfast said, “Anyone can be involved. It’s not restricted to PTK members, anyone can volunteer.”

The club is looking for many volunteers from campus to help out with the breakfast. Fales said, “We need about 30-40 volunteers from wearing costumes, working the raffle, doing ticket sales, to serving the food.” There is a set up shift from 7am-8:30am, and clean up shift from 11:30-1pm that also needs volunteers.



2016 Phi Theta Kappa Character Breakfast actors

Photo courtesy of Fagan Forhan

Volunteers will be accepted up until the day of the event, but for costume wearers, volunteers need to be collected by March 26 and 27 to be fitted for their costume. Spaces for costume wearers will be limited or unavailable after that.

Costume wearers need to stay in character and entertain the kids, as well as help serve guests. Fales said, “People dressed up in costumes are the largest amount of volunteers we need...”

We have different themes going on throughout the breakfast

like Alice in Wonderland.”

Pre-sale tickets will be available around spring break and cost \$7 for ages 12 and older, \$5 ages 2-11, and children 1 and younger are free. Tickets purchased on the day of the event are \$10 for ages 12 and older. According to Fales, “All proceeds will go to benefit local food pantries.”

To get involved, contact Kaitlyn Fales (kfales1@mwcc.edu) or Lisa Ferrara-Caron (lferracaron@mwcc.edu), who are both Volunteer Managers for this event.

To get involved with the PTK Character Breakfast, contact:
Kaitlyn Fales - kfales1@mwcc.edu Lisa Ferrara-Caron - lferracaron@mwcc.edu

Changing up the menu

By Ayana Brodeur-Edmonds

OBSERVER CORRESPONDENT

Gina Vilayphone, student trustee and founder of the food committee, said that by Fall 2018, the student body should see major improvements in the accessibility of school food.

The food committee was founded within the Student Government Association (SGA). Currently there are three active committee members. Through passing out surveys, the committee gathered the student body's opinions on the cafeteria and relayed their words to the cafeteria staff. Common responses from these surveys, according to Vilayphone, included complaints about the affordability. However, there were not many concerns expressed over the quality of the items currently on the menu.

The information from the food committee goes directly to Bob LaBonte, Lynne Franciose, and Kyle LeGrand. LaBonte is the Vice President of finances at MWCC, meanwhile Franciose and LeGrand are the head staff of the school cafeteria. Vilayphone has been meeting with the head staff for weeks, and she said the student body concerns were taken seriously.

Vilayphone said MWCC and the



Gina Vilayphone, Student Trustee and Founder of the Food Committee

Photo by Ayana Brodeur-Edmonds

cafeteria are fully co-operating and they are swiftly responding. The school wanted to make a change in the menu before, but they needed more information, which the food committee has finally provided. Progress is already in motion, with the addition of chicken nuggets to the menu.

New vending machines to cater to day and night students should arrive within the next month.

Vilayphone also mentioned a future renovation of the food corner at the student center. There is talk of new automated vending machines stocked with fresh food from the cafeteria,

and the area will be redesigned and named by the committee.

Vilayphone was influenced to start the food committee because of student concerns she received towards the affordability of food within the school. She personally believes that the menu pricing is a problem, and that it is currently not within the average student's budget.

Vilayphone has been attending MWCC for four semesters. Her major is Interdisciplinary studies, and she is a member of several school clubs. She is the founder and president of the Women of the World club, and she is a member of the Parent Support Group. She is also part of the Philosophy club. Since Vilayphone is also the student trustee, she said that she listens closely to the needs and concerns of her fellow students.

If students have any concerns over the cafeteria but do not know who to speak to, Vilayphone advised they approach the SGA and the information will be relayed to the appropriate people. Students and staff could also approach any member of the food committee or the cafeteria staff. If someone were interested in joining the committee, Vilayphone said that you have to be a member of the SGA.

To get involved with the Food Committee, or to assist the SGA in other ways, contact Gina Vilayphone at gvilayphone@mwcc.edu

Campus Transfer Counselor Sails the Caribbean



Todd Bennett, transfer counselor for the TRiO program

Photo by Brianna Stevens

By Christine Nelson

OBSERVER CORRESPONDENT

Would you take a year off and sail to the Caribbean? What about adding your spouse and three young children to life on a small sailboat? Transfer Counselor Todd Bennett, did just that. It was a dream trip complete with beauty, people, and adventure.

Bennett and his family set sail from Virginia in September 2016, then headed to the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, and the Dominican Republic. They spent about three months in each location, with one month in the Turks and Caicos. Bennett described the trip as not "touristy." Since their small sailboat could navigate areas with few tourists, such as beautiful coves, he felt they had more authentic experiences.

"Because you have time, you become close with people very quickly," said Bennett. He admitted that it was good to be around people that focused on their community. "Here in the United States, we tend to be very independent."

Bennett was happy to show his kids, ages 5, 7 and 10, another part of the world with different people and customs. He was also pleased to model healthy risk-taking behavior to them.

While the setting was beautiful, the trip was not always easy. "Two of my kids loved it," said Bennett, "while my older daughter found it difficult." He and his wife found homeschooling hard.

He admitted things got very stressful when they arrived in the Dominican Republic, a port that has no directional buoys.

He was greeted by military commanders that were yelling at him in Spanish. And then there were the days of bad weather when they couldn't sail and were forced to stay put on their boat. "But," said Bennett, "I think there is value in feeling uncomfortable."

Despite the challenges, they would do it again. "We are planning our next trip, but it probably won't be for a while."

Bennett credited his fifth grade teacher and a whale-watching field trip for inspiring his love of the ocean. A book about sailing around the world, entitled *Dove* by Robin Lee Graham, also captivated him. It inspired Bennett to take lessons and voyage his own trips.

"Share your passions, because you never know who is listening," he advised.

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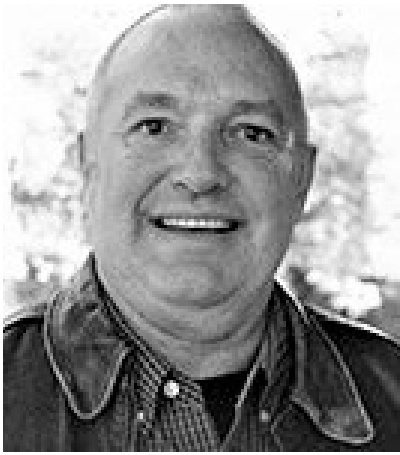
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PROFILE

Bill Nutting in a Nutshell

Service Learning Will Sample Sustainable Living in Peru



Professor Bill Nutting
July 8, 1950 – February 2, 2018
Photo courtesy of MWCC

By Michele Walsky
OBSERVER STAFF

Biology Professor William Nutting died on February 2nd. A member of the faculty since 1972, his students remember him as an enthusiastic teacher willing to give his time to help them succeed.

“From my first impression of him, I knew he expected us to be motivated,” said Jaclyn Esparza, a second-year nursing student who took microbiology in 2015. “His class was hard but he gave us everything we needed to know. We followed his lectures and highlighted the note packet he gave us. He knew who was putting in the time and he was always willing to explain and answer questions.”

“Maybe he didn’t have a Microsoft surface,” Kim Cook, another second year nursing student added. “He didn’t upload powerpoints or educate through podcasts. The old school projector and old school dictation was what he used, but he always taught to his roots and kept his students grounded. He was always searching for new stories and material. When you were able to stick around after class and ask questions or meet with him for insight into things you couldn’t understand, he lit up.”

“I was having trouble with a particular unit in microbiology,” former student Beverlee Ferreira said. “I wasn’t getting it. I just wasn’t getting it and I resigned to the fact that it wasn’t meant to be.”

But Nutting did not want her to leave befuddled.

“He stayed after class and walked me through it. That was the kind of teacher he was,” Ferreira said. She looked past the professor persona and saw the human behind the curtain. “He was adorable,” Ferreira smiled. “I told my A & P II professor this, and it somehow got back to him. He asked our class if anyone was taking A & P, and I felt so embarrassed, I didn’t raise my hand. But I could tell he was flattered by it.”

“He was funny,” Esparza recalled. “He had a lot of stories to tell, keeping us entertained.”

According to the faculty bio he wrote for his 25 years of service, his enthusiasm is something he attributed to early mentors here at MWCC. Fresh from Fitchburg State, a generic gig as student teacher in the science department sparked a love for the subject and the Mount. A foot in the door as lab technician led to a long career. Despite his credentials, in his profile he stated, “I’m simply Bill.”

Nutting earned his master’s degree in 1989 and taught evening classes. He became a full-fledged professor in the early 1990s. A catalyst behind the greenhouse’s genesis, he nurtured the project for 19 years and was also an influence for the new science wing. His zest for science has inspired students for decades, as is apparent from the array of comments left on rateyourprofessor.com.

Professor LeFrancois memorialized his friend in a seven stanza poem. The essence is featured here:

From General Biology
to Human Health to
Microbiology;
Each course in its turn, all
things drenched in biology!
Bill accomplished much in his
nearly seventy years of trying;
Courses written, Academic
Affairs handled,
Biology Chair work
satisfying!
For four decades, students
learned of microbes in their
life;
Bill guided them in their
studies, he helped them with
their strife.
To his younger colleagues,
Bill served as mentor and
advisor;
He taught about the
microscope, he demonstrated
staining, a full lab tour!
Memories of Bill will always
remain, his laughter and his
smile;
His life’s work resides in his
teaching; his lessons stretch
many a mile.
—William LeFrancois

To see the full poem, see page 11. According to his obituary, Nutting was an avid traveler, scuba diver and quilter. To read his memorial, go to Shaw-Majercik’s website at <http://www.shaw-majercik.com/notices/William-Nutting>.



Shelley Errington Nicholson, Mary Remillard, Rachel Vargeletis work in the garden
Photo courtesy of Julie Cronin

By Michele Walsky
OBSERVER STAFF

Go to college and see the world! It may sound like a pipedream but for those involved in the Cultural Engagement and International Service Club’s expedition to Cusco, Peru, it is reality.

Nine students and one anthropology professor will join Brewer Center Director Shelley Nicholson, and Associate Dean of Students Greg Clement, for a nine day trip in May. Previously soaking up Costa Rica culture twice, a change of scenery and the chance to see one of the Seven Wonders of the World—the Incan ruins of Machu Picchu—were the main reasons for choosing a different destination, the coordinators said.

Requiring a year of prep time to set the itinerary in motion, this is the third time around the block for the duo.

“It’s not just a growth experience for the students... They provide growth to the chaperones. It’s wonderful to watch the experience through their eyes.”

“Having gone two years in a row gives us the confidence in what we do,” Nicholson said, referring to organizing, “relentless badgering” for discounts, interviewing companies and finagling flight deals.

Booking their trips through the travel agency “True Nature Travel” creates a health-centered holistic approach to community service while keeping it real. Vegetarian meals, a Yoga center, and self-reflection are key components to the trip.

The trip is a mutually beneficial symbiosis. The group adheres to local environmental practices and the money spent at the destination stays in that area while the group receives once-in-a-lifetime authentic experiences.

“This is not a vacation,” Clement added. “It’s a living course. It’s challenging and physical work. [In Costa Rica] We were in the trenches building houses with adobe bricks.”

“It’s a real immersion experience,” Nicholson said. “We were cleaning monkey poop out of cages and feeding sloths. We communicated with the people and we became one with the culture.”

“Our guides were like encyclopedias,” Clement said.

“In Costa Rica, we were invited by one of the families to press sugar cane. We were pressing and drinking sugar shots,” Nicholson said.

“It’s not just a growth experience for the students,”

she continued. “They provide growth to the chaperones. It’s wonderful to watch the experience through their eyes.”

In Peru, the group plans to continue building sustainable homes, working with children and interacting with the residents. Cooking lessons from traditional Peruvian chefs and exploring Machu Picchu are also high on the list.

“We learn so much more than we give,” Nicholson summed up.

Each traveler has six months to raise \$2,200, which includes airfare, meals, activities and ground transportation. According to Nicholson and Clement, monetary gifts from MWCC’s affiliates with the Brewer Center, Alpha Beta Gamma, Student Government Association (SGA) and the Cultural Club help defray the cost.

“Students get very creative in their fundraising,” Clement said. “They set up a cupcake business, make Christmas ornaments and run funding pages. We have our famous yard sale each semester and raffle off high end items.”

After all the fundraising, they try to leave seed money for next time. “Next year we’d like to go to Iceland,” Clement said.

To find out how to apply for the 2019 trip or take part in the Civil Engagement and International Service Club, visit the Brewer Center in room 152.

By Ayana Brodeur-Edmonds
OBSERVER CORRESPONDENT

The Health Services Department partnered with the American Red Cross recently to hold a donation event called the Bloodmobile. At this event, people donated their blood to the American Red Cross either by appointment or as a walk-in. MWCC nursing student, military veteran and mother, Erin Jones, recently donated her blood at this event and shared her experience. Jones said that the wait time for a walk-in is very quick, and it only took her ten minutes to get in. Since she gives blood quickly, Jones finished her walk-in appointment in only five minutes and twenty seconds. Everybody donates at their own pace, though.

To keep the blood flowing while you are donating, Jones said that the staff makes you squeeze a stress ball every ten seconds. Jones said the most impressive part of her experience was that the technician was fantastic and they had a great conversation. Jones has been donating blood since she was sixteen years old, but she had not given blood for the last four years since she had her first child. She described that having blood drawn is not something to be afraid of, and she offered advice for anybody who has yet to donate blood. According to Jones, one technique to lessen fears is to bring a friend. because you can talk to them to distract yourself from the process. You should also make sure that you are hydrated and have eaten enough, and if you are feeling sick or woozy at all, you should not even attempt to donate on that day.

Mobile Unit Assistant Travis James

By Alexa Nogueira

Travis James is a Mobile Unit Assistant who has worked with the Red Cross for seven years, assisting at mobile blood drives. Most of his job consists of handling blood by putting it on ice so that it stays fresh and transporting it to labs so that it can be tested.

On a typical day at the blood drive, James expects to see about 30 people, although that number can fluctuate based on weather conditions or the common fear of needles and donating blood.

When asked what advice to give to people who are afraid to

donate, James said, “Don’t knock it ‘til you try it.” He suspects that the most common reasons people don’t donate blood are because they’re anemic, afraid of the needle, or afraid of how it will make them feel afterwards.

Coincidentally, James himself has never donated blood, afraid of how he will feel after the process. “I guess I have to take my own advice,” he said. “I won’t know how it affects me until I try it.”

When asked what symptoms to look for after a successful blood draw, James said, “You just have to pay attention to the details.

Watch for dizziness, color changing, getting hot, and passing out.” If you experience any of the above symptoms, James says that the best thing you can do is lay down until you feel well again.

If you plan on donating, James recommends that you eat a full and balanced meal beforehand and eat again afterwards. Eating beforehand isn’t mandatory, although it does make a positive difference in how one feels after. While eating before donating blood is not required, there are some criteria that are

To have your blood drawn, a

valid ID is necessary, as well as meeting height and weight requirements. In addition, people who come from certain countries such as Mexico or the Dominican Republic may not donate blood, due to the potential spread of diseases like malaria.

You do not need to know your blood type to donate, and most first-time donors don’t. After James transports donated blood to the lab and it gets tested, the donor will receive a donor card in the mail that will have their blood type on it, which can be used in future blood drives.



BLOOD



An American Red Cross “Blood-Mobile” mobile blood donation center

Photo courtesy of The American Red Cross

FEATURE

A Blood Drive Experience

Part I

By Zachary Pavlosky

OBSERVER CORRESPONDENT

In an act of kindness and good spirit, Massachusetts resident Linda Vaidulas donated blood at the Blood Drive event recently held at Mount Wachusett Community College. It was her third time donating blood and her first time doing so at The Mount. When asked why she was donating blood Vaidulas responded, “It’s an honor to donate. There are people out there in need of blood.” Vaidulas talked about the requirements for donating blood. Potential donors are asked if they have visited foreign countries, have a low amount of iron in their blood and their sexual orientation. Once someone is approved to donate, Vaidulas said the process takes only a few minutes. For Vaidulas, the process gets easier every time she donates. When asked if she ever got nervous or nauseous, Vaidulas joked, “Oh no, I’m not one of those people.” Vaidulas also mentioned that she has never suffered from any negative side effects after donating blood and that the medical team was very “professional” and “kind.”

Part II

By Elizabeth Jones

OBSERVER CORRESPONDENT

This is the third blood drive Linda Vaidulas has attended, the first two being in Ashburnham and Winchendon. Vaidulas explained the process she went through. Once she walked in, the nurses took her name and handed her a pamphlet with all the requirements to donate blood. After she finished reading, they prepped her by cleaning the area. The nurse then found the best vein and marked it with a black dot. Finally, they insert the needle to start taking blood. Afterwards she sat down for a few minutes in a snack area to prevent fainting. She has nothing but nice things to say about the process, even describing the people there as “nice, gentle, and informative.” Vaidulas said how important yet what a small thing it is to donate blood, “It’s an honor to give blood. You never know who’ll get it. It could be a soldier.” She added, “It’s a very small thing to do, it takes a few minutes, and it feels good to do it.”

DRIVE

Professor Donovan’s Donation Experience

By Christine Nelson

OBSERVER CORRESPONDENT

Imagine getting pricked by a needle and giving the experience a favorable rating. Dan Donovan, a professor in the Computer Science Department, recently participated in the Blood Drive and described the experience as “fabulous.” Donovan said, “I don’t have obvious veins, so they often really prick me up. Here they are real pros; I like to have a pro doing it.” Donovan has been donating his blood for twenty years. A senior citizen, Donovan donates to get the excess lead out of his blood and to help someone in need. And it is convenient for him as he lives in Sterling. Donovan said that the experience only took twenty minutes. “Initially you feel lightheaded, you lie down, and it goes away in a few minutes. I feel great for the rest of the day.”

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For More information on The American Red Cross, visit www.redcross.org.

For More information on Donating Blood, including the steps of the process, what’s involved, and where you can go to donate, visit www.redcrossblood.org.

Alumni Combats Video Game Stigmas

By Shayna Rolon

OBSERVER CORRESPONDENT

For the longest time, video games have been perceived on the surface as unbeneficial indulgences that promote violence and demote teaching anything moral/valuable. Most people look at popular franchises such as *Call of Duty* and *Super Smash Bros.*, that center around shooting and fighting and lack story, and assume that all video games are designed the same way.

Nora Gavin, an MWCC alumni who is a video game design major, wants to refute the stigma against video games and prove that they have potential to hold just as much substance as a novel and aren't always about fighting or battling.

Gavin, 23, has always had a passion for video games. She grew up playing rather nostalgic titles such as *Pokemon* and *Animal Crossing*, and never cared for video games that centered around violence. As more video games came out, she found herself immersed in games that were rich with culture and abundant in character development.

Gavin said, "One of my favorite titles, *Hellblade*, really shows the mass amount of research gamer designers do to put together a game that brings light to a darker issue and story overall. I want to make games that will not



Video games, such as the *Call of Duty* games in the stack above, are often used as examples of violent games without substance

Photo by Benjamin Richard

only inspire people, but give them a life lesson of sorts, to be able to understand the world from a different perspective."

Games such as *FireWatch*, *The Last of Us*, and *Life is Strange* have inspired her more than anything

to create video games herself. Gavin said, "Games that show the player what the real world is like, to show the world how to be more compassionate, empathetic, to stand up for one another, and be true to yourself are the types

of games that truly motivate me to produce games for others."

Her advice for current MWCC students that are also video game design majors is to, "Read as much as you can, get inspired by the stories and try to draw them

out; Focus on what will set you apart from others, how can your past experiences be brought to the table. Once you find what it is, hone your skill in it, as well as a few others that you like, let them blend together beautifully."

Stress Less: Solutions From Students Juggling Jobs

By Cassie Roy

OBSERVER CORRESPONDENT

Working through college is like pulling your own teeth, but without Novocaine, and you still have to pay for it. Many students have to pay their way through college, as well as deal with other bills. Phone, gas, insurance and car payments add up quickly. Students use a variety of ways to pay their college bills such as financial aid, scholarships, work studies, or just working a job or two.

Kayla Murphy is a full time nursing student at Mount Wachusett Community College and hopes to obtain a master's degree in the near future. She currently works as a manager at Papa Gino's full time and as a Cumberland Farms customer service associate anywhere from 25-35 hours a week.

Murphy juggles school and work by taking her courses on the same two days every semester, with an hour or so gap in between classes. This forces her to stay on campus and either study for upcoming exams or do her homework.

She deals with the stresses of college by taking "vacations" every couple of months or so, which means taking a couple of days off in a row to catch up on some much needed sleep and any missing homework assignments, leaving enough hours for her jobs.



Balancing school work and a job can be difficult for the average student

Photo by Brianna Stevens

Even with all of the debt college can put you in, some students, including Dawn Burke, do not have to pay for their classes or hold a job while they are in school. A second-year student in the nursing program, Burke takes three courses, which is almost full time. She hopes to obtain a Bachelor's degree in the future. Burke's funds come from Pell grants, a few scholarships and

student loans while Mass Rehab pays for her books. Burke doesn't work during the school year because she has two children with special needs that require numerous doctors' appointments. Going to college alone can be tough, but having children or numerous jobs can make it feel almost impossible at times.

Federal Work-Study is another way to pay for school, which

is a part-time job provided by the college. It can be on campus or off site. The Mount offers eighty to one hundred different jobs such as working in the library, cleaning the Biology Lab, or working at the Boys and Girls club. Students work 10-12 hours per week and the money earned goes straight to the student for lunch money, gas, books, or their tuition bill, with an hourly rate of

\$11-12.50 per hour, minus taxes.

The work study does not allow students to work during class times, but because the majority of the jobs are on campus or close by, the students are able to work in between classes, or when it is convenient for them. The jobs assigned vary depending on the student's skills and school schedule.

The Work-Study program has limited funds. A two year community college, according to Scott Farris, Director of Enrollment at the Mount, only receives approximately 15% of the funds for the work study program. This percentage is very low, considering an average of 60% of Mount Wachusett Community College students qualify for the work study every year. The program chooses their applicants based on greatest need. The student must be enrolled at least half-time, which is six to eight credits per semester. They need to complete their FAFSA, the actual work study applications, an interest form, and any other requested forms, which may include a CORI/SORI check. As long as the student has filled out these forms and has financial needs, they will qualify for the work study.

Gun Reform Editorial

By Brianna Stevens
OBSERVER STAFF

I am in support of the second amendment. I agree that there are people who should have guns. I am a supporter of Americans having the right to own a gun as long as they go through the right channels to obtain, register, and own that gun. I am a supporter of the second amendment.

“Guns don’t kill people” is something I have been hearing for as long as I can remember. I understand the meaning behind that phrase is the person behind the gun that kills people, but how did that person, who was intent on taking people’s lives, obtain a gun? Thoughts and prayers will not stop someone from taking another person’s life.

According to CNN, Emma González, a student of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and survivor of the Parkland shooting, recently spoke at an anti-gun rally in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Gonzalez’s speech sparked something in me that I knew was there, but had never felt so forceful and urgent than after hearing her words, “We are going to be the last mass shooting.”

I always felt activism was important, but had never actually acted on it. After listening to her words, I immediately began

searching for a way to get involved with gun reform. “March For Our Lives” came up in my search, and I signed up without hesitation.

The freedom to peacefully protest is a right in our country we are fortunate to have. We must take action to begin the talk of gun safety reform.

I am in support of the second amendment, but our children are being slaughtered by war machines in a place where they are meant to be safe, in (what was previously) one of the safest towns in the state of Florida.

The shooter was able to obtain the AR-15 in under three minutes.

“There must be standards nationwide about who can own guns because this is a national crisis.”

His defense attorney, Melissa McNeill said, “When you have the lack of impulse control that a 19 year old has, that affects the behavior that you exhibit. That’s the child that I’m sitting across from...He’s just a broken human being.” As González said in Fort Lauderdale, “We call B.S.”

I have no doubts that this man is broken, but to compare his impulse control to that of a child is beyond ridiculous. This man is not a child; he is over 18 and needs to be held responsible for his actions and for the 17 lives he ended, 15 lives he injured, and countless lives he forever changed.

I am a supporter of the second amendment, but the time for change is now. Since the year 2000, there have been 212 mass shootings in the United States. There has been a mass shooting in every corner of the country. According to gunviolencearchive.org, there have been more than 30 mass shootings since the beginning of 2018, and the number grows almost daily.

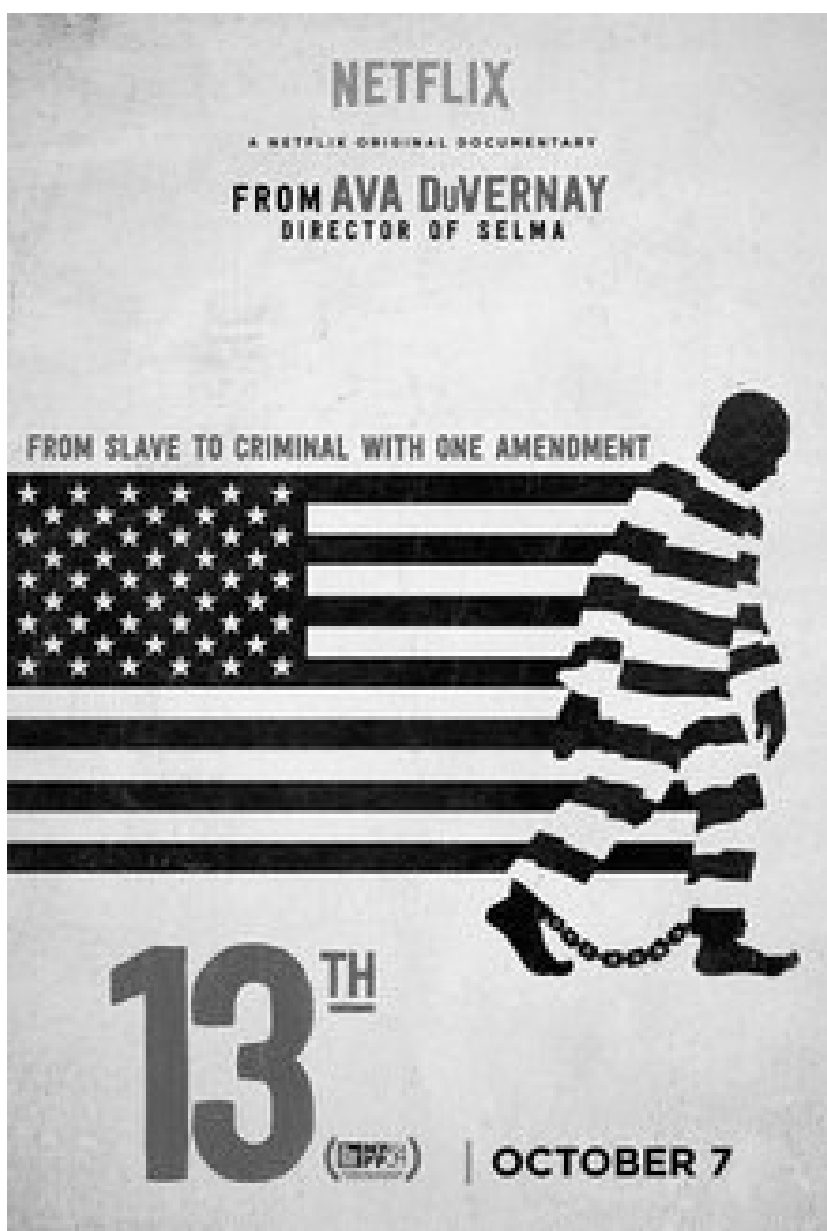
I am in support of the second amendment, but laws must be reformed in regards to guns. There must be standards nationwide about who can own guns because this is a national crisis.



Ar-15 photo taken by Mitch Barrie from Reno, NV for Wikimedia

Photo by Mitch Barrie, from Wikimedia Commons

Documentary Review: 13th



13th, directed by Ava DuVernay

Image from flickr

By Joshua Medero
OBSERVER CORRESPONDENT

13th is a documentary based on the 13th Amendment. The 13th Amendment states, “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.” All in all, it is the abolishment of slavery.

The documentary begins with a statistic by Barack Obama saying, “The United States is home to 5% of the world’s population but 25% of the world’s prisoners. Think about that.” This opening statement is something many people may not know about.

It goes on to discuss extremely controversial topics such as mass incarceration, racism, slavery, lynching, Ku Klux Klan and drug epidemics. The fact the documentary even digs into these topics is great for challenging thoughts and minds.

Having these statistics and facts laid out flat for Americans to watch will hopefully help shift the thoughts Americans may have on African Americans and their

history. It ties in with power and privilege because a white woman could easily say she was raped by an African American male and he would be beat, tortured and maybe even lynched without question.

The documentary also explains how our presidents at the time reacted to these events. President Woodrow Wilson premiered the movie “The Birth of a Nation” at the White House, which shows much about his character if he is showing a movie glorifying the KKK and deeming African

Americans as uncontrollable animals. President Richard Nixon began a war on drugs which became an actual war, yet was reduced to a rhetorical statement when President Ronald Reagan used it in speeches.

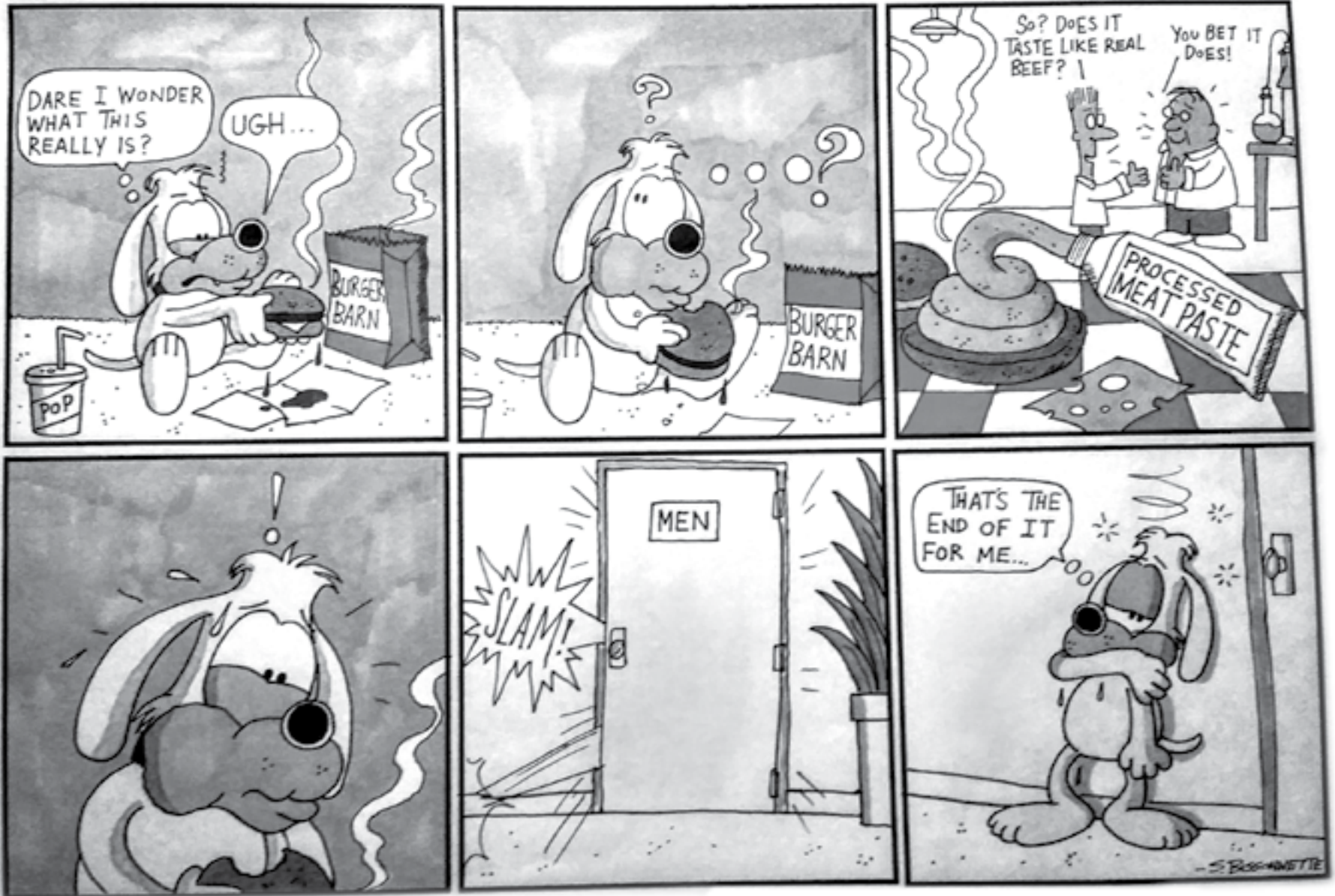
The topics talked about are powerful and touchy subjects. Not only do they explain different situations like the Emmett Till case, they also show the actual lynchings. It is sad to think people could do this to each other simply based on the assumption that they “might have” committed a crime.

All of these different events in this one documentary reflect the history in our country and it is extremely sad. I do not think this movie got as much credit as it deserved and I think it should be praised for the topics it covers. “13th” was a phenomenal film and I can not think of one negative thing to say about it. I would highly recommend it to anyone who is interested in America’s history or to anyone in general.

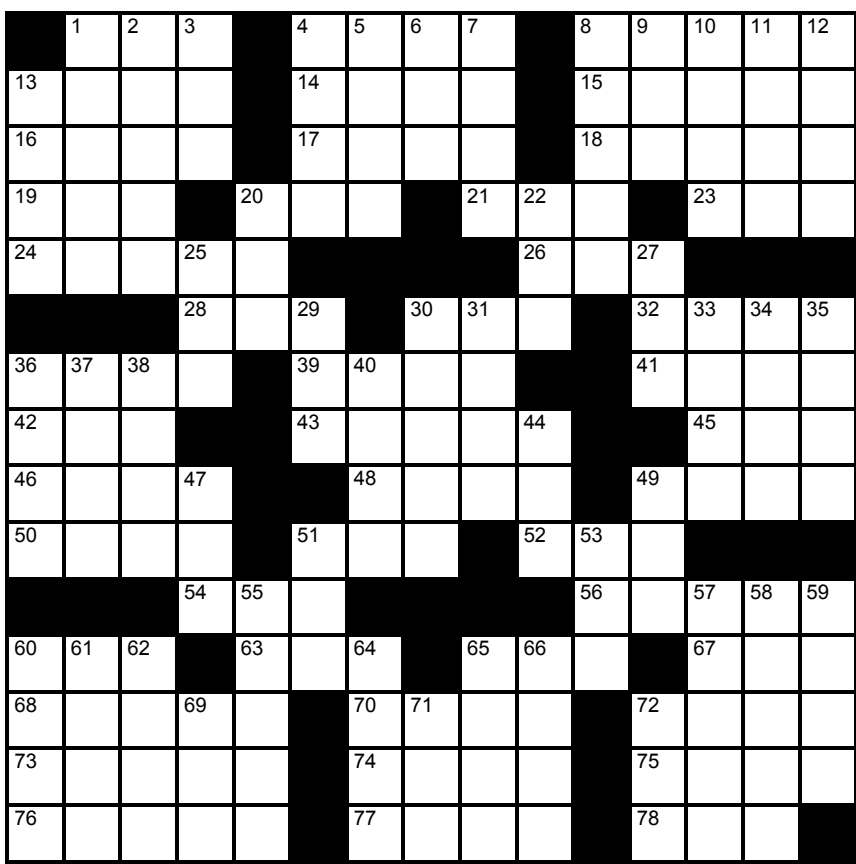
“The United States is home to 5% of the world’s population but 25% of the world’s prisoners. Think about that.”

"DAWG DAYS"

©.2010
- S. BISSONNETTE



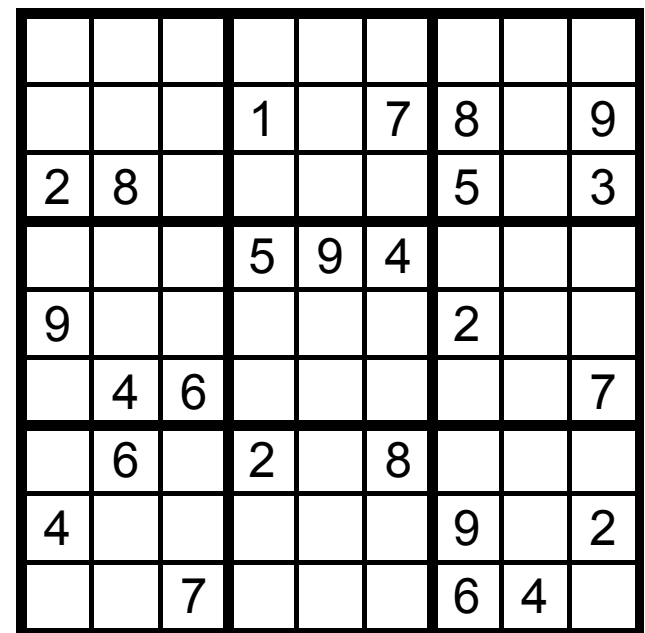
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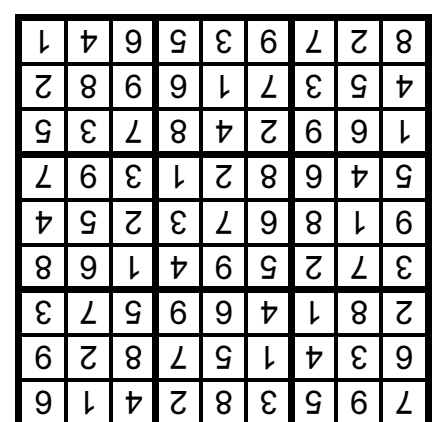
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- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Across | 41 Hilo feast | Down | 36 Pride member |
| 1 Narragansett, for one | 42 Breed | 1 Drum type | 37 Cantina cooker |
| 4 Stupefy | 43 Claw | 2 Passion | 38 Slaloms |
| 8 Molds | 45 Jar cover | 3 Okay | 40 Rubberneck |
| 13 Ruptured | 46 Medley | 4 Lingerie item | 44 Novel |
| 14 Artificial bait | 48 Rosé, e.g. | 5 Ditty | 47 Paddle |
| 15 Anticipate | 49 Writes | 6 Ashes holder | 49 School group (Abbr.) |
| 16 Aims | 50 Space org. | 7 Famed loch | 51 Resident (Suffix) |
| 17 Lodges | 51 Mamie's man | 8 Animal life | 53 Climbing vine |
| 18 Bind | 52 Humor | 9 Control | 55 Extreme |
| 19 Sense of self | 54 Groove | 10 Shower | 57 Slowdown words |
| 20 Copy | 56 Hotel employee | 11 Tiny arachnid | 58 Explode |
| 21 Go astray | 60 Nile viper | 12 Editor's mark | 59 Bar invoices |
| 23 Tennis court divider | 63 ___ Zeppelin | 13 Abound | 60 At a distance |
| 24 Mushroom | 65 Canny | 20 Barley brew | 61 Hindu garment |
| 26 Battering device | 67 Generation | 22 Indignation | 62 Mountain lion |
| 28 Tie the knot | 68 Earthquake feature | 25 Member of the flock | 64 Pigeon |
| 30 Bullfight cheer | 70 Slender reed | 27 Bag thickness | 65 Mediocre |
| 32 Rascals | 72 Ticket part | 29 Period | 66 Dregs |
| 36 Misplace | 73 Knight's attire | 30 Stan's partner in comedy | 69 Piece of land |
| 39 Eye amorously | 74 Flower holder | 31 Ponce de ___ | 71 Tavern |
| | 75 Wolf's young | 33 Stubborn beast | 72 Hot springs |
| | 76 Lasso | 34 Anguish | |
| | 77 Greek god of love | 35 Lather | |
| | 78 Likely | | |

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 1 to 9.



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Sudoku Solution



Remembering Bill Nutting

Forty-five years of service, of teaching it all;
Four decades of a life, finally a time for it to stall.
Through good times and bad, educating with a will;
Thoroughly passionate in all things, these things were Bill.

Starting back in nineteen seventy-three as
a lab tech, and moving forward;
From Technician to Instructor to
Professor all ahead toward.
From General Biology to Human Health to Microbiology;
Each course in its turn, all things drenched in biology!

Bill Nutting lived a life of joy and of much pain;
He knew happiness briefly, he faced
great sorrow and disdain.
When here at the Mount, his life was
full and vital and made sense;
His being was the classroom, his soul the lab essence.

Bill accomplished much in nearly seventy years of trying;
Courses written, Academic Affairs handled,
Biology Chair work satisfying!
For four decades, students learned of microbes in their life;
Bill guided them in their studies, he
helped them with all their strife.

To his younger colleagues, Bill served
as mentor and advisor;
He taught about the microscope, he
demonstrated staining, a full lab tour!
Bill put passion in all his work; he felt fire for every issue;
All were equally important, from new
lab design to toilet tissue!

In later years, life's struggles would
catch up and his health decline;
Bill tried to stay the course, but his
strength would only recline.
Best efforts he tried, but illness in the end would prevail;
After much struggle, Bill's life came to an
end and he moved beyond the veil.

Memories of Bill will always remain,
his laughter and his smile;
His life's work resides in his teaching;
his lessons stretch many a mile.
Bill's life was not idyllic; he failed, he
won, he tried to keep up his guard;
His final lesson to us all: judging life
is easy, living life is hard.

—William A. Lefrancois
February 13, 2018



Portrait of a Classmate by Brianna Stevens




Deer in a Field by Brianna Stevens

STUDENT LIFE

STUDENT LIFE

Get into the Student LIFE

3/1
"It's Your Birthday"
FREE Cake
South Café
12:30pm



3/5
Advocacy Day at the State House

3/6
Culture Fest Commons Area 10am-1:30pm

3/7
Film: A League of their Own
North Café
12:30pm

3/8
Bubble Soccer
Fitness Center
12pm-2pm

3/28
SGA Nomination Papers Due in by 5pm

3/28
President's Inauguration Theatre 2pm All Welcome!

3/26
CATS Programming Mtg., 12:30pm Room W12

3/22
Herstory Women's Appreciation Day
South Café
12:30pm

3/21
CATS Programming Mtg., 12:30pm Room W12

3/21
Film: The C Word
North Café
12:30pm

3/20
Pizza with the President Multipurpose Room 12:30pm

3/20
NYC Trip Tickets go on Sale at 9am! Room 151

3/19
SGA Meeting
Murphy Room
12:30pm

Spring Break
3/12-3/16

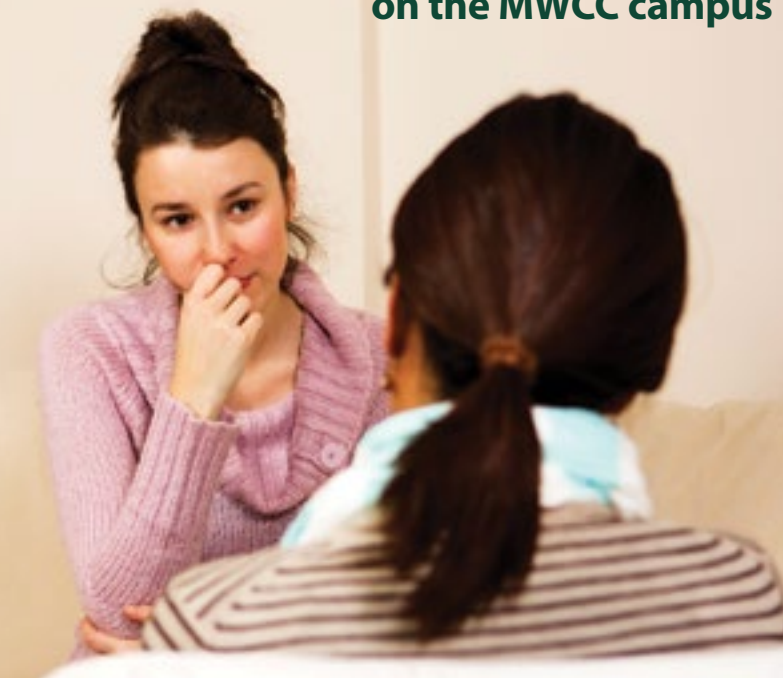
3/14
Alternative Spring Break Spend a Day Volunteering!
9am-3pm

Please see the reverse side for detailed information.
For further information or to inquire about an event, please contact the Student Life Office at studentlife@mwcc.mass.edu or 978-630-9148. Full details may also be found on the Student Life webpage at <http://mwcc.edu/studentlife/>



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INFORMATION SESSIONS

March 27th, April 12th & April 26th
Transfer Table
Mount Wachusett Community College
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

