

# The Mount Observer

“Voices of the students of Mount Wachusett Community College”

## Are We There Yet?

Study abroad program expands education for students



Photo by Greg Clement

A previous adventure taken by the MWCC Study Abroad Program.

By Rachel Williams  
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Tracy Betts Sarefield, Study Abroad Staff Assistant, said the new study abroad program will provide students and faculty with opportunities to travel and further the curriculum on an international level.

Sarefield explained that one reason for the new program was to give the students easier access to traveling abroad through their studies. The new program is doing its best to give the students what they are asking for to have the best ability to study abroad.

The program is incorporating abroad learning into average classes. Sarefield explained that if a faculty member would like to take a trip abroad with

their class to help further the learning, they can.

For example, an arts teacher could incorporate a trip to Italy inside his/her semester's curriculum with their students to study the arts for a week in a new environment with different types of art.

According to Sarefield, any student needing a requirement that can be fulfilled with a class studying abroad can take the course as long as they meet the standard requirements. Students must have a GPA of 2.5 and good academic standing. The cost of the class is the same as any other class. The extra fees will come from plane fare, housing, and meals while on the

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“Study Abroad” >>>

### PREVIEWS



#### A Day of Art

Thursday, April 25th saw two annual artistic events take place; the Sculpture II Bronze Pour, and the GID Student Showcase Awards Ceremony.

For the full photo spread, see pages 8-9

#### Kicking and Screaming: Student talks about her love of karate

Marie Rodriguez, Business major, practices her karate skills when she's not studying for classes.

For the full article, see page 5

#### Wizard of Cosplay

Being part of the Character Breakfast fulfilled my childhood dream of dressing up and playing the part of Ariel, The Little Mermaid.

See pages 6-7

#### Letters to the Editor

See pages 12-13

## Have a Great Summer!

## Showing Up is Half the Battle

Senator Brewer Encourages Students to Stay Educated and Involved

By Aisha Schor  
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

A group of students and faculty had the opportunity to meet and chat with Massachusetts Senator Stephen M. Brewer about a variety of topics and current events facing young people today.

Topics discussed ranged from environmental protection programs and habits to the importance of voting, and even why showing up to your 8 a.m. class could benefit you in the future. Though Brewer wanted to get everyone's perspectives and opinions, he had a strong message to convey to the students in attendance. He kept coming back and reiterating the quote, “The world is run by

those who show up.”

The quote and the message behind it was the overall theme of the afternoon discussion. Brewer wanted to hear about students' thoughts on what societal issues they felt needed to be addressed, why they were important, and how students could take steps towards solving them. The takeaway was that being aware, reading news, talking to people, and being curious about current events was an important part of becoming a more educated and active member of society.

Brewer wanted students to know that the first step to change was being willing to

continued on page 2  
“Half the Battle” >>>



Photo courtesy of MWCC

Massachusetts State Senator Stephen M. Brewer

# Culture of Personality

## Annual Cultural Festival celebrates diversity



Photo courtesy of MWCC

Professors Kenneth Takvorian and Lawrence Nfor converse at the Cultural Festival

By Rachel Fortier

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Lisa Williams, Assistant Director of Strategic Enrollment and Chair of the Diversity Committee, expressed what she believes is the true definition of diversity leading up to the Cultural Festival.

“A lot of people see diversity as just race,” said Williams. “But it’s not - it’s culture. It’s how you live, people themselves; it embraces so many things.”

This will be the fifth annual Cultural Festival and Williams’ third year running the event. About twenty students pick something they think represents diversity and make a display. The fair is set up in booths like a science fair.

There is music, food, and a variety of displays. Students are allowed to walk through the

festival and talk to the people running the booths.

Last year they had barbers come in to give free haircuts to students. This year there will be a live band with some “excellent drummers,” Williams stated.

To sign up to run a booth, students must visit Williams and explain to her what they plan on doing. Each student will be assigned a table where their work will be on display.

In the past, students designed their displays by representing the culture of a country of their choosing. “I tell the students to think outside the box. I want to see something different,” stated Williams.

“The reason I love diversity so much is because it’s celebrating the differences in all of us,” said Williams. “We

learn from the differences among us. If everyone was the same, it would be too boring.”

The next diversity event is the President’s Diversity Award competition in the fall. It’s a scholastic achievement award. This award provides a student with a free class if they write a paper or make anything creative to express diversity.

“I would love to see some sort of a Diversity Counselor at this school, someone to be here for the students with any issues they may have no matter race, culture, or gender,” said Williams.

The Cultural Festival will be held on April 30 in the South Cafeteria.

## Study Abroad

>>> continued from page 1

abroad trip.

Sarefield explained that although she was not able to study abroad because of limited access, she wished that she had been able to because of all that can be learned during the time away.

Sarefield said that skills like cultural sensitivity, coping skills, tolerance, personality management, and leadership are just some of the skills that students learn while on the adventure. She has also seen students come back from the trip more focused on their learning and knowledgeable about the strengths they have within themselves.

“The trip is very powerful for students,” said Sarefield.

Sarefield encouraged students who might be interested in the program to talk with others about the opportunities. She is glad to answer any questions that students might have and hopes that they will also talk to advisors and other students who have taken trips abroad. “Although it is not talked about often, studying abroad is very common,” noted Sarefield.

Sarefield is excited for this new opportunity for students. The next trip in the study abroad program will be to Peru in 2020. If you would like to contact Sarefield to discuss the program, her email is [tbettssarefield@mwcc.mass.edu](mailto:tbettssarefield@mwcc.mass.edu).

## Half the Battle

>>> continued from page 1

show up. “You have to be willing to show up, that’s how change happens,” said Brewer. He also wanted students to see that change can start small, challenging everyone at the table to say one thing they could do in their everyday lives to be more environmentally conscientious.

Also discussed were students’ thoughts and perspectives on educational debt and student loans. The topic was popular as it was close to home.

Many agreed that student debt would inhibit young people from progressing with their lives, inevitably affecting society’s economy as a whole.

Brewer kept the discussion casual and comfortable allowing students to facilitate and take the conversation where they wanted. Some students talked about their personal stories, while others listened or tried to learn about new ways to get credible news, or how they could register to vote.

Brewer ended the conversation by reiterating, “we’re all in this together.” The MWCC Brewer Center plans to host more chats like this in the future. Students looking to join the conversation should talk to Shelley Nicholson in the Brewer Center.

**Let Your Voice be Heard!**

Send your stories, poetry, artwork, photography, or other content to  
[mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu](mailto:mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu)

## PROFILE

# Courtney Rousse: Developing Her Career

## Photography major shares her plans for the future

By Aisha Schor

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Courtney Rousse, a photography major, enjoys practicing and learning more about photography both in her free time and through a variety of classes at MWCC.

Though she appreciates and enjoys many styles of photography, Rousse's heart lies with nature photography. "I love nature photography, that's what I'm known for," Rousse says. "I know photography is not an easy job. . . but my dream job is to be a National Geographic photographer. There's a lot of steps but I know I'll be submitting my pictures to some nature magazines in the future."

"I submitted one of my pictures to the Lunenburg Sentinel" Rousse also added. "That was my first published photo, I still have the cutout."

Rousse will be graduating

from the Mount in May with a certificate in photography. In the meantime she says she plans to continue working while she builds her photography portfolio, "I'm planning on working for USPS or UPS and having photography as my hobby, that way I also have something more supportive."

Rousse has always had an interest in photography. Even as a young girl, she recounts, she loved to take pictures on her disposable camera of family vacations.

Rousse's passion for photography really started taking off after her mom purchased her a small digital point and shoot camera for Christmas when she was ten. "When I was little my mom got me a camera because I was using the disposable ones... so when she got me my first camera that's when it all started. I don't know, I just loved it and

kept taking pictures," she says.

Rousse has since graduated from her old point and shoot, and now uses a Canon DSLR which she loves. Though she has always enjoyed photography, she didn't think of making it a part of her career goals until this past year. The Canon, a more professional camera, helped her see her potential.

"That's where it all started. I even switched my major, that's when everything became more real, I guess. Photography has always been my thing but I had never really made it a thing."

Rousse's photography style has matured as she's learned, practiced, and become a more thoughtful photographer. "I used to hate taking pictures of people," she says, "but once I learned how to, it actually became more fun, especially when you have someone who wants to take pictures as much as you."



Photo by Courtney Rousse

Tampa, Florida 2019

# One Degree Hotter

By Casey Merritt

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Sean Krieger, Conner Garrity, Blake Denmark, Christopher Jerszyk, Tremaine Pinnock, Madison Afonso and Camilo Almarales are all continuing their education after graduating. Each student gave a shout out to a professor who inspired them during their time at MWCC.



**Krieger:** I'm hoping to transfer to Fitchburg State University for a bachelor's in Environmental Earth Science. One professor at the Mount that's inspired me is Kara Roche because she made writing easy despite my disability in it.



**Garrity:** I'm going to Fitchburg State University where I plan on continuing my film degree there. The professor that inspired me is Ben Mertzic. Professor Mertzic helped me build my own little video/film production.



**Denmark:** After the Mount, I'm hoping to transfer into Mass Art and major in Illustration. Professor Thomas Matsuda inspired me because he was a 2D artist before moving into sculpture.



**Jerszyk:** I'm going to continue going to the Mount to get a second degree, but I'll also continue working at the company, Wide Angle. Professor Peter Olzak inspired me because the amount of work he put into getting to where he is and the field he is in is the most inspirational.



**Pinnock:** My plan is to transfer to Johnson Wales University in Rhode Island in Culinary Arts for a bachelor's degree. Professor Gunn inspired me because the minute I got here, she was the person who would motivate me and put me in positions that would better myself.



**Afonso:** I plan on going to Fitchburg State to become an English teacher. I came to MWCC for a few reasons, but the main reason was because I didn't know what I wanted to study for. My English 101 professor, Susan Blake, inspired me because I liked the way she would teach, and I've always enjoyed English.



**Almarales:** After graduating, I'm going straight to work as a freelance artist/muralist. Professor Thomas Matsuda inspired me a lot because he helped me through each class, always encouraged me to do my best, and set me on a path to create murals.

# Gateway to Success

## Graduating student recommends the Gateway program

By *Eliana Mello*

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Rachel Williams is in the Gateway program and advises future Gateway students to stay focused, study hard, and ask for help when needed.

For those in the program, it's important to attend the Gateway orientation. At the orientation, Williams met with advisors and other students in the program. She said this made her feel less nervous about attending college.

Williams said one benefit of becoming a Gateway student is that the program gave her more time to work while attending class. She is able to choose what time her classes are rather than needing to be in class for seven hours a day like in high school.

"I like that it gives you more

free range on your school work," Williams said.

It was difficult for Williams to work and attend school last semester because she was taking five classes. She said it's important to focus and stay on top of your school work, especially if you are also working.

Williams' advice to those in the program is to visit the tutors and ask teachers for help. Williams said at least one person in the program attended the class she was in. This allowed her to ask her peers for help when she didn't understand something.

She recommends the Gateway program to future students because she felt it better prepared her for college. Williams learned more effective ways to study and became more responsible.

She said it isn't like high school where teachers remind you every day of the work you have to get done.

"It allows students to get an idea of what college is like

**"It allows students to get an idea of what college is like before paying for it."**

**– Rachel Williams**

before paying for it," Williams said.

She also recommended this program because it allows

student to get ahead of their college career. Students are able to earn their high school diploma while obtaining college credits so when they transfer they don't need to take as many classes.

Williams said she had difficulties when some teachers in the Gateway program still treated it as a high school class rather than a college course. She said this made it difficult at times to get the full college experience.

Williams attended ninth and tenth grade at Mahar High School in Orange before transferring to the college. She said it was somewhat of a big change but her friend went through the program with her, making her feel more comfortable.

Williams has earned free college credit towards an

Associate's degree and will receive her high school diploma when she graduates in May. These college credits will be transferred to Westfield State in the fall where she will major in Early Childhood Education.

For more information about the Gateway program visit

<https://mwcc.edu/academics/k-12/programs/gateway/>

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**SPRINGFIELD**  
COLLEGE



PROFILE

# A Sketchy Profession

## Art student gives advice to her fellow artists



Lane’s goal is for students to see her as an inspiration to continue doing what they love and to not give up on their dreams. “The reason that I’m majoring in art is because I want to do what I love and I think that if it’s something you’re interested in, go for it. You’ll get more practice through it and practice is what makes you a better artist,” said Lane.

One tip Lane offered for fellow artists is for them to publish their work in the literary magazine, *A Certain Slant*. By publishing in the magazine, art students are getting their names out.

Lane first became serious about art in middle school, saying, “I took an elective and started doing projects. I’ve always drawn since I can remember, though.” Her way of gaining inspiration for her work

came from her surroundings. “I draw the environment, the people around me, and nature,” said Lane.

Lane’s favorite piece is hanging up in President Vander Hooven’s waiting area. It’s an ink and ink wash landscape of a stream off a bike trail she found in Ashburnham. “I’m very proud of the fact that it’s displayed,” said Lane.

Lane’s favorite medium is ink and graphite. She likes the different values and sharpness she can get. Lane also loves working with black and white, saying, “I don’t think color is my strong suit and I like the overall look and feel that black and white has.”

What Lane doesn’t like is what she struggles with. She has problems with color and 3D art.

Currently, Lane’s not taking out of bronze and soapstone any drawing classes, however, she is taking ceramics and sculpture. In ceramics, she is making large pots and animals for sculpture. Lane will be graduating in May and will transfer to a college in Boston to pursue her artistic dreams.



Photos by Casey Merritt

(Left) Lane working on her frog sculpture for class.

(Above) Jackie Lane’s artwork hanging in the president’s waiting area.

By Casey Merritt

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Jackie Lane, Art major, shared advice to help other artists find their medium.

# Kicking and Screaming

## Student talks about her love of karate

By Aisha Schor

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Marie Rodriguez, Business major, practices her karate skills when she’s not studying for classes.

Rodriguez has been attending weekly karate classes for a year, and has managed to earn her yellow belt. “Karate always interested me as a kid,” said Rodriguez.

Rodriguez explained how the test to graduate from a white belt to a yellow belt was “intense” and “took two hours to complete.” She added that if you couldn’t keep up “you would fail instantly and be sent home because the official test afterwards was even worse.”

Rodriguez has seen improvements not only in her karate skills but her athleticism in general and said she feels,



Image from PublicDomainFiles

“stronger and more in shape.” She has also become an expert at squats and can now do push-ups. Her favorite moves to do in class are blocks, using her arms and legs, and punching.

Rodriguez explained that one of the most difficult parts was preparing for the classes saying, “Getting my body used to stretching was the hardest.” She also said she believes anyone can

take up karate. “I wasn’t in shape before starting,” said Rodriguez.

Rodriguez hopes to try for her orange belt this summer and wants to continue with karate saying she will likely “take more classes in the summer when academics are less intense.” She may even try to compete in the future and work towards earning her black belt.

Rodriguez is pursuing her bachelor’s degree in business. This is her third year at MWCC and is concentrating on marketing and international business.

Rodriguez will be completing both her associate’s degree and part of her bachelor’s degree through MWCC’s Bachelor’s Completion Collaboration program (formerly called the 3+1 Agreement).

The program allows qualified students to complete three of their four years at a community

college and one year at a four year institute. Upon graduating, Rodriguez will have completed her bachelor’s degree in business through Nichols College. Rodriguez is very satisfied with the program saying, “it offers convenient schedules and is more affordable.”



# Where the Wild Things Are

## Graduating student talks about upcoming Costa Rica trip



Photo from Pixabay

Students will be working on a beach/ocean clean-up in Costa Rica.

By Rachel Fortier

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Araya Richard, Liberal Arts and Sciences major, is gearing up for a missions trip to Costa Rica in June.

“Normally, we will be doing a lot of heavy lifting,” said Richard. “It’s going to be a great experience for everyone involved and, from what I’ve heard, the past trips really helped these communities.”

Greg Clement, Assistant Dean of Student Services, has helped students prepare for what they will be exposed to culture-wise. Richard stated, “I feel it will be different talking about it and actually being there.”

They will take part in a beach clean-up, do volunteer work at a school, as well as work on

an animal sanctuary to help out different animals that inhabit the area.

“This is something I am most excited to do,” said Richard. Some of the animals they will

Richard said, “I’ve always loved doing community service in my own community, so it’s going to be really nice to go to a different community with a different culture and help them

Richard. “I’ve done them before and it’s going to be a lot of heavy lifting and hot with the constant temptation of going swimming.”

For recreation, the students will scuba dive on a yacht, surf, parasail, horseback ride up a volcano, and try ziplining. “I cannot wait to go scuba diving,” said Richard. “I’m also going parasailing and maybe horseback riding up the volcano.”

Richard is interested in other cultures, which is one reason why she participated in the Cultural Festival in April and exhibited information about female warriors around the world. She explained what it is like to live in the six most dangerous countries for women. She also explained what the laws are like, why it’s so dangerous, and what people

are doing to help.

“I’m excited to get all this information out there,” said Richard. “Not a lot of people know what’s going on in these countries and, if they do, they’re not fully educated on what’s going on with the women specifically.” Richard will transfer to Merrimack College, majoring in Social Justice with a concentration in Global Justice and Human Rights, where she plans to continue making a difference in the world one step at a time.

“I think it’s good for people to explore different cultures outside of their homes,” said Richard. “It’s important to understand how other cultures live so we can get a better understanding of each other.”

**“It’s going to be a great experience for everyone involved and, from what I’ve heard, the past trips really helped these communities.”**

**– Araya Richard**

get to interact with sloths, giant snakes, monkeys, and other exotic animals.

include get things done.” “I am least looking forward to the ocean clean-up,” said



Image by Arturo Sotillo on flickr <https://www.flickr.com/photos/whappen/673029449>

## PROFILE

# Protect and Serve

## Campus chief of police explains school safety protocols

By *Eliana Mello*

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Karen Kolimaga, Chief of Police and Public Safety, said while it is difficult to keep the school safe due to the open campus environment, there are resources and precautions available for students, staff, and faculty.

The challenges Kolimaga and her staff face is the open campus. Since the campus is open to the public, it is difficult to regulate those entering and exiting the school. To combat this, at least one police officer is on campus 24/7 and security cameras are situated around the school.

For students, there is an active shooting “Run. Hide. Fight.” video on iConnect under campus police. The video shows what to do during an active shooting scenario. There are other important documents on iConnect, including an Active Shooter Response Guide and an Emergency Procedure Poster for the Devens, Leominster, and Gardner Campuses.

“It’s important to prepare for any emergencies,” Kolimaga said. “It prepares you to react in a more natural way.”

Kolimaga also said to not only focus on what is provided on iConnect, that students and faculty should do their own research in order to be more prepared. This can help students and faculty learn how to react in different scenarios and to feel safer on campus.

A few times each semester there is an optional professional day for staff on what to do during an active shooting.

“There is an opportunity each semester so people have availability,” Kolimaga said.

If an incident did occur, faculty and students would be alerted through iConnect, Blackboard, text, or alertus boxes around the school. The alertus box has speakers and a screen to relay messages to those in the school in case of emergencies. The system is also able to take over computer screens to give emergency messages.

Emergency phones are situated at the end of main hallways and act as walkie talkies to a campus police officer. To contact a campus police officer during an emergency, dial 1111.

For students who are being harassed on campus, the campus police investigate and connect the individual with the proper resources for their particular situation.

The campus police can also help obtain a harassment order from court and are able to help those getting harassed outside of school as well.

Kolimaga’s two biggest tips for those worried about their safety is:

“One, they need to be a stakeholder in their own safety and prepare themselves for various emergencies so they don’t have to worry so much. Two, be a good bystander; if you see something, say something.”

If more information, contact campus police. For general calls, call 978-630-9150 and for emergencies, call 978-630-9111.



Photo courtesy of MWCC

Chief of Campus Police and Public Safety Karen Kolimaga

# Far or Near, Volunteer

## Civic Center helps students build lifelong skills

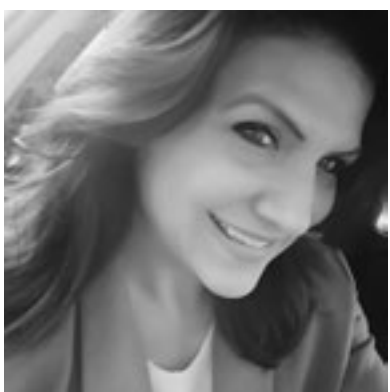


Photo by Carlos M. Mendoza

Tami Morin

By *Rachel Fortier*

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Administrative Assistant Tami Morin explained why giving back to the community by volunteering is important.

“It’s important for students to be civically engaged in the community because...it helps improve their skills,” said Morin.

Morin has worked at MWCC for over thirteen years, where she also received her Business degree. She is also a Phi Theta Kappa alumni. Morin works in the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement which helps to provide service learning and both career and volunteer opportunities. It is also the main location of SOS (Students Serving Other Students).

“The SOS Center helps many students with transportation, childcare, food, and security among other things,” Morin stated.

The Food Pantry, Morin explained, is a resource that provides all students the opportunity to obtain twenty items a month, no matter their financial situation. As long as you are a student enrolled in

**“The SOS Center helps many students with transportation, childcare, food, and security among other things,”**

**– Tami Morin**

an accredited course, you are eligible to use the pantry every month.

According to Morin, in order to sign up for volunteer work, students need approval from the Civic Center which can help find work that fits their schedule. There are multiple volunteer hours available through events and clubs that go around campus.

Various part-time work positions are also provided around campus. “In different offices, there are many positions they can do,” Morin stated.

“My favorite thing to volunteer for here is the Character Breakfast,” said Morin. “Although Phi Theta Kappa did not run it this year, it was extremely successful.”

Morin and her daughter both volunteered for the breakfast

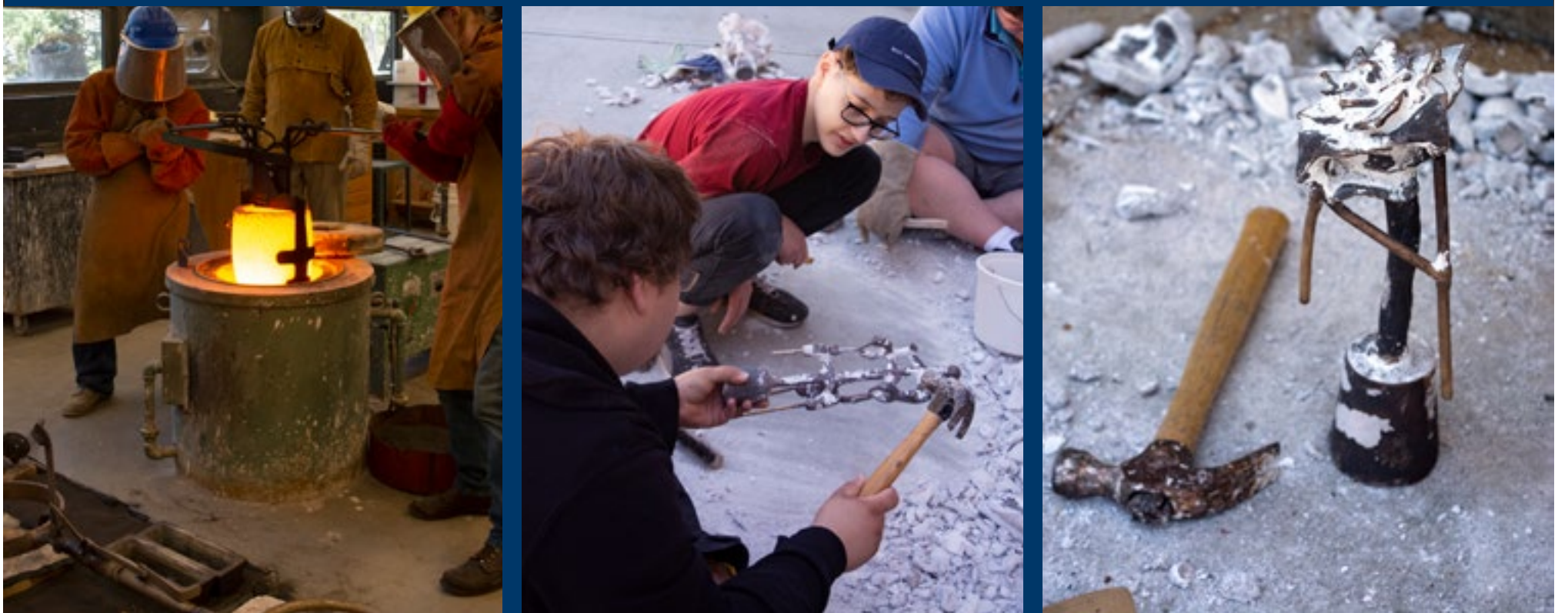
event. She delegated as her daughter hopped around as the White Rabbit from *Alice In Wonderland*. Morin said, “I think more people should volunteer in events like that. You get to have such a great time and make children so happy.”

**Editors Note: As of the time of printing, Morin will no longer be working in the Brewer Center and is now located in the Access and Transition/Gear Up office.**



# A Day of Art

**Same Day Sees Annual Bronze Pour and GID Student Showcase**



*Photos by Betsabee Torres*

(Left Page) Professor Tom Matsuda oversees the Sculpture II class as they perform their annual bronze pour. The bronze is heated in the kiln, then a two-person team removes the metal from the flame and pours it into the students' molds, packed in sand. The excess bronze is poured off into ingots for use next year. The molds, once cooled, are taken outside to be broken open and reveal the bronze pieces inside. These are then cleaned, the sprues removed, and they are sent off to be sand-blasted.

*Photos by Betsabee Torres*

April 25th also saw the opening of the annual GID (Graphic & Interactive Design) Program's Student Showcase. Graphic design pieces were submitted by students and sorted into categories. Each category was then judged by an outside panel of 10 artists and designers. The finalists for each category are now displayed in the hallway between the main lobby and the Admissions office. Each category had rewards for Honorable Mention and Best of Category, as well as an overall Best of Show award (won by Gina Khouth [pictured top left, receiving award from Professor Constance Porter] for her piece *Basic Snack Lounge Menu* [pictured below Khouth]).

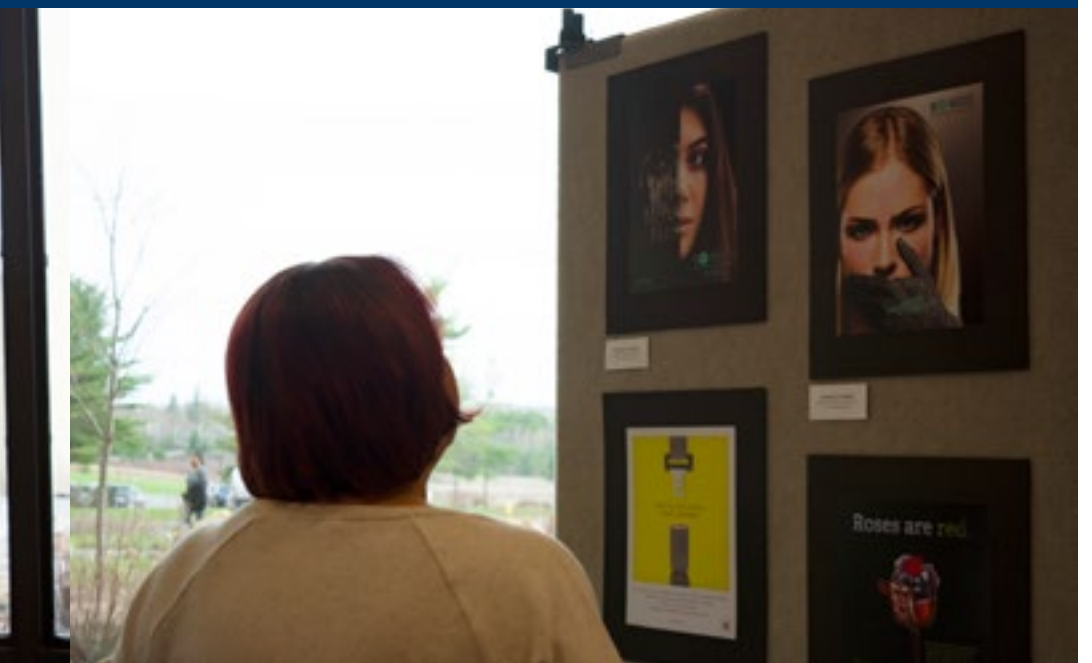


# FEATURE



DAILY SPECIALS	
<b>SUNDAY</b> PB + Popcorn & a choice of a Juice	\$9
<b>MONDAY</b> Brownies Bitty & Basic Hot Chocolate*	\$10
<b>TUESDAY</b> Grape + Nuts, Cornal Delight, & any choice of a Fountain Soda	\$14
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> Crave 2.0 & Ethereal Ice Cream*	\$8
<b>THURSDAY</b> Mocha Munch, Cocoa & Honeyglow Buttermilk Tea*	\$17
<b>FRIDAY</b> Steak, Varsity & Tostitos*	\$14

\* Items not available all the regular menu.



# A Crash Course in Discourse

## An Intro to Effective Political Discussion

*By Dylan Hatch*

*OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR*

Our nation faces a crisis unparalleled since the secession of eleven states. It is not due to economic instability, disease, nor terrorism, but an ideological threat; one which combats every American who looks at the news in agitation.

With national controversies arising more frequently than ever, our nation's deep cultural divide is becoming increasingly apparent with each passing exchange. Democracy welcomes dissent; thus, we should see much of our cohort as incorrect or misguided. However, our democracy approaches endangerment when we begin to view dissenting Americans as not only false but illegitimate, less worthy of a vote, or essential to silence. The last decade proves American society's capabilities to reach this point.

In times such as these it is vital that we, the electorate, acknowledge our role in mending social divides. The promises of democracy are ultimately fulfilled not through institutions or economics, but rather through our society's collective adherence to democracy's most fundamental principles: communication, tolerance and compromise.

This article hopes to uncover more of the democratic mindset through the practice of speaking with dissenters; hopefully teaching readers how to productively communicate with the ominous "other side," as well as how to understand their perspective and embrace them as your national cohort.

Although much grander work is undoubtedly needed, the first step in addressing our social crisis comes down to individual citizens doing their parts - even if it just means going out and listening to fellow Americans.

### **Reevaluate Your Goals**

It is pivotal when entering any political conversation to evaluate exactly what you seek to gain from the interaction. Sometimes, the goal of conversing isn't necessarily to change the other person's opinion, but more to gain their perspective and perhaps share your own. Keeping this in mind, we should try looking at friendly dissenters as a resource to learn more about the perspective of others and get a grander view of our nation's ever so divided political landscape.

Thus, when you hear a belief which contradicts your own, it shouldn't be interpreted as an attack, but rather an invitation to explore their perspective. Try to understand not only their views but their background, their home, and their culture: all the factors which have shaped their beliefs. This humanization of the 'other side' can be difficult once we are submerged in our echo chambers, but the process ultimately contextualizes their views and allows us to build sympathy despite ideological differences.

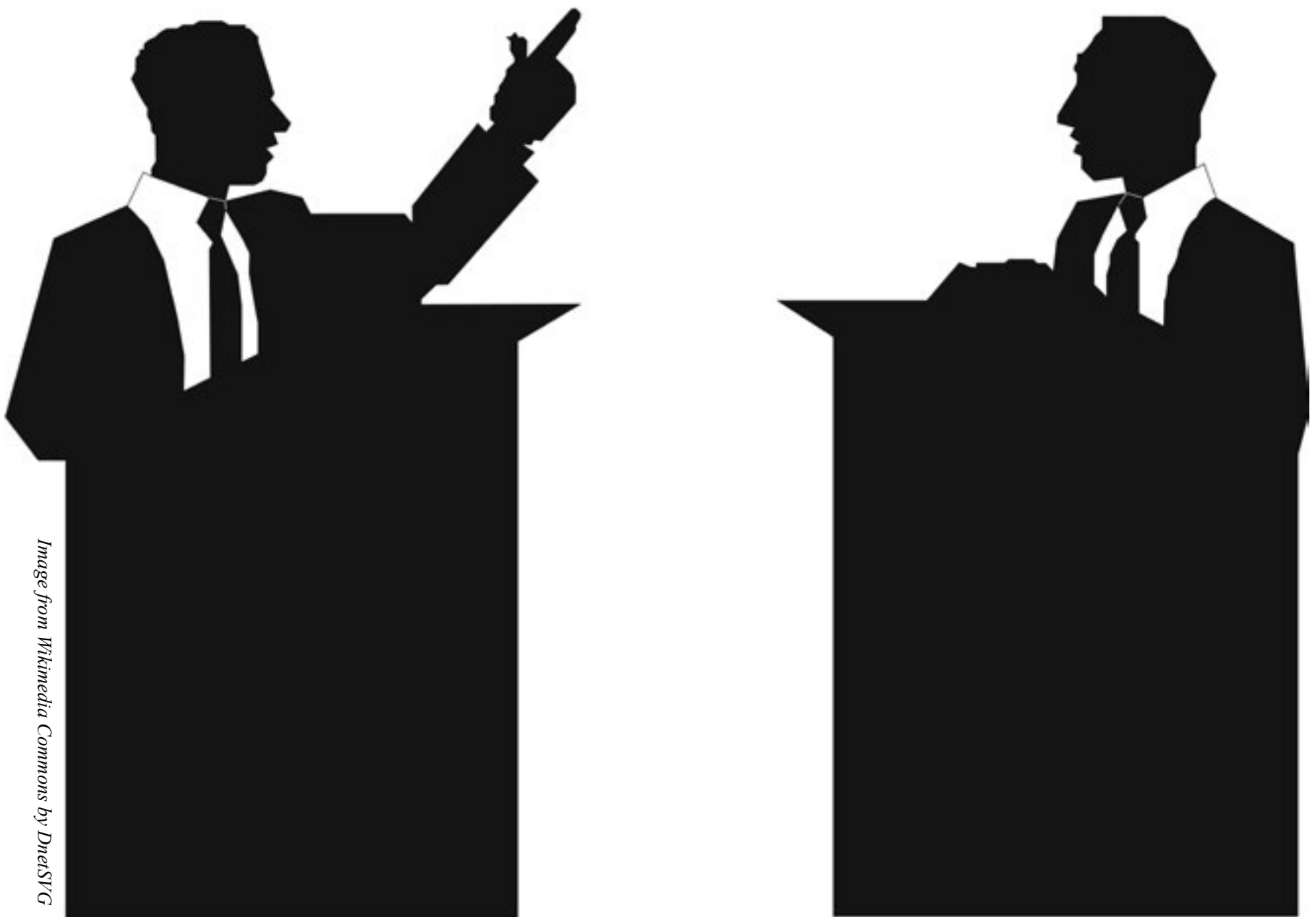
### **Listen and Respond Respectfully**

It is also crucial that you listen to dissenters rather than talk, and when you listen, do so openly and honestly. You will likely be amazed at how much respect and attention is reciprocated once someone is mature enough to start giving it. When it is your time to speak, consider your wording carefully before giving your reply. No matter how incorrect you may perceive your friend to be, disrespect and negativity will only escalate the conversation to a point where nothing can be learned on either side. Small differences such as minor word choices and tone can make an incredible difference in how you're perceived. Again, your goal is to learn more about their perspective and then share your own, so a condescending comment will achieve nothing but to lessen cooperation and trust.

### **Ask Sincere and Thoughtful Questions**

One must consider what specific information they seek to gain from asking questions. Too often, I hear my peers ask something such as, 'How can you stand knowing that your side is tearing apart the country?' or 'Doesn't your side know how to use basic facts and logic?' Questions such as these, no matter how sensible they may seem to the asker, are not sincere in their attempt to learn more about the issue or the nation. The first question, for instance, reiterates a sense of division, implies that the other person agrees that their side is 'tearing apart the country,' and features wording which is sure to draw offense.

Instead, asking something such as 'Do you worry that your party's ideas of XXX and XXX may be furthering political divides?' may be more constructive as it is worded respectfully, makes few assumptions, and is clear in what it's asking. The ability to ask truly respectful and constructive questions to those who disagree is a significant asset in both a democratic citizen and a communicator in any field.



*Image from Wikimedia Commons by Dnestsyrg*

# The Wizard of Cosplay

## Student talks about volunteering at Character Breakfast

By Rachel Williams

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Being part of the Character Breakfast fulfilled my childhood dream of dressing up and playing the part of Ariel, The Little Mermaid.

The Character Breakfast is a fundraiser for the Alpha Beta Gamma Honor Society, with some volunteers from the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, and is an annual event.

I have been in love with Disney ever since I was little. As a young girl, my dreams were to play The Little Mermaid in Disney World and, even though that will not happen in my real life, I was able to do so at the Character Breakfast.

After noticing flyers for the event, I was excited to learn that I could volunteer to help. I had never done anything like it but thought it would be a fun, new experience. I had done theater in high school and knew that dressing up as a character was right up my alley.

When I first got to the event, I helped the other volunteers and



Photo by Nicole Wetherby

Students and faculty dress up as characters to host the annual Character Breakfast.

coordinators set up the South Café as a character world. Tables were decorated with lollipops, balloons, and blow-up animals, like elephants, penguins, and chickens. There were sections of the room with backgrounds that represented stories, such

as *Alice In Wonderland*, Disney princesses, a pirate ship, superheroes, and the *Wizard of Oz*.

There were also three tables in the front with raffle prizes that ranged from Easter baskets to full-size bicycles for children.

There was a projector playing Disney songs and other festive children's music and videos.

My costume consisted of a purple corset with gems and fabric that created a look for seashells and a tight long green skirt with two fins on the end to

create the tail. Since I already have red hair, I did not need to wear the wig. The costume was beautiful and perfectly created to resemble Ariel.

Seeing all the little kids run straight over to me yelling "It's Ariel!" was such an exciting moment. Not only did I get to take pictures with just about every child at the event, I got to interact with them too.

One boy had me follow him around to get his face painted and play different games, like throwing a bean bag through a hole. At one point, I ran a game with the kids that involved throwing rings around pegs. After seeing how excited they were and how hard they were trying to win, I let them get a prize because it wasn't about winning, it was about playing and having fun.

The event was creative and fun for all involved. The food was delicious and everyone in the room seemed to have smiles on their faces. To me, this was a great fundraiser because it brought people together to laugh and smile.

# A Mission for Fair Admission

## The college admission bribery scandal affects community college students

By Aisha Schor

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

The college admissions scandal is disappointing and discouraging to the many students nationwide who make the genuine investment and commitment to attend college. It hits particularly hard for community college and non-traditional students given that the obstacles they have to overcome to continue their education are often greater than the average student.

Over the past few weeks it has been investigated and proven that numerous well-known celebrities and wealthy parents

are willing to cheat and scam the system to get their children accepted into elite colleges and universities across the country. Some take the route of bribing SAT/ACT test proctors into changing their children's answers/test scores. Others falsely claim their children play varsity sports, getting them admitted through fake sports scholarships.

Rachel Fortier, a student ambassador and Media Arts major, said, "I grew up with six siblings, and none of them felt like they could ever make it into college, myself included. So I felt very disappointed to see that

other people don't have to work as hard as I do to get into their dream school."

With a passion for TV production and stop-motion animation, Fortier plans to transfer after completing her associates degree. "I have applied to multiple schools. Michigan School of Art and Design, Emerson School of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, and L.A. Film School. Any one of these would be amazing, but for the exact career path in stop-motion I want to take, I hope Emerson accepts me."

Like many high school and community college students who

want to transfer and get accepted into college, Fortier is working hard to build a portfolio and get involved on campus to elevate her chances of getting accepted. "Hopefully, I can gather up enough portfolio work to help me get into my dream school," said Fortier. "I am currently working on a stop-motion movie, as well as a horror movie. Both are hard, but in their own ways."

This scandal also demonstrates the great imbalance of wealth and higher education and is a reminder that privilege, opportunity, and therefore success, often have little relationship to hard work. Fortier also spoke to how she felt

about the scandal, saying, "To be honest, I'm not surprised at all; I'm sure this has gone on for a long time. The fact that they can solve their problems with money isn't a shocker." When asked about why she thinks the issue is getting so much publicity now Fortier said she believed it was in part generational. "I think the thing about our generation is that we are more outspoken which can be good and bad, but at least we're giving our culture a voice. I think that's why it's getting an uproar now because our generation is seeing flaws in so many things and we're finally speaking up about it."

# Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I'm writing to respond to the article, published in the April 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of *The Mount Observer*, titled "Socialism and Women in the Workplace."

One of the assertions in the article is that socialism is responsible for the lack of progress women have made achieving management positions in Scandinavian countries. A quick Google search does seem to confirm that not many women in the countries listed have been promoted to these positions, but the argument that socialism is responsible is not convincing.

The implication in the article is that women have a better chance of being promoted to executive positions, including CEO, in our capitalist system. But that's not the case. According to the NY Times, as of May 2018, there were only 24 women CEOs of the Forbes 500 companies, a figure that is down 25% (from only 32) the previous year. Women still only make 79 cents for every dollar a man makes and African-American women make less, 63 cents, according to HuffPost.

It's also difficult in our capitalist system for women to break the glass ceiling and enter the boardroom of American companies. Last year, California passed a law to do something about this and became the first state to "require publicly traded companies to have at least *one* woman on their board of directors," according to an NPR report.

So there doesn't seem to really be much of an advantage for women in our capitalist system.

It's important though to state one other fact: there are no socialist countries in the world and there never have been. Not in Scandinavia, not anywhere. Countries that have representative democracies, with a hierarchy of leaders, cannot be socialist because socialism gets rid of hierarchies in government and in business.

In fact, from our perspective in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where our "democracy" is for sale to the highest bidder, socialism is extreme democracy. It is a leaderless system, a system that replaces a hierarchy with a form of direct democracy like citizen assemblies. The closest we have to it is the Town Meeting, but even that's a very crude analogy. For socialism to exist in America, there would need to be a new constitution.

The article however also misrepresents socialism and I think that's an equally important point here.

I think the error is in the way socialism is understood in this country. In fact it may be the most misunderstood term in our lexicon. The term socialism has been used by totalitarian governments, like Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, for propaganda because socialism is a synonym for democracy. The phrase democratic socialism, often used today, is actually redundant. It's like saying democratic democracy.

Unfortunately throughout history it wasn't only totalitarian governments who co-opted the term socialism. Its propaganda use was a convenient tool for capitalists in America too.

So what does socialism mean then?

Looking for a "neutral" source I consulted my *American Heritage College Dictionary* 4<sup>th</sup> edition and found this: 1. Any of various theories or systems of social organization in which the means of producing and distributing goods is owned collectively or by a centralized government that often plans and controls the economy.

The first part where the means of production are owned "collectively," that is by the workers, is accurate. The second half about centralized government is propaganda.

Disappointed, I decided to find a less neutral source, and maybe let the socialists define themselves which they rarely get to do.

I found this from the Socialist Labor Party, Mtn. View California: "Socialism does not mean government or state ownership. It does not mean a closed party-run system without democratic rights. Those things are the very opposite of socialism."

And this is from the Democratic Socialists of America: "The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) is the largest socialist organization in the United States. We believe that working people should run both the economy and society democratically to meet human needs, not to make profits for a few. We are a political and activist organization, not a party."

This means democracy everywhere, not only in government but business as well. In a socialist system, capitalist corporations would be replaced with workers co-operatives, businesses that have no hierarchy, no leaders, no CEO, no BOD, no shareholders, no executives—only workers and the workers would own the business together, which is what collectively is supposed to refer to.

One of the strongest proponents for socialism today is Richard D Wolff, Professor of Economics Emeritus at UMASS Amherst, a self-described Marxist economist.

In his Youtube lecture, "Socialism for Dummies," Wolff stated, "In any American audience to even say let's talk about Socialism gets scary vibrations surging in the room" because the term has become a "taboo" in our culture.

Wolff traces the history of the slurring of the term socialism back to the post WWII era when capitalists in America began to undo the gains of the New Deal. This included demonizing organizations like the Socialist and Communist parties and labor unions. They wanted to destroy the left so something like the New Deal, which raised taxes on corporations and the rich, could never happen again. And they have been largely successful, even today.

In his book, *Democracy at Work: A Cure for Capitalism*, Wolff describes a very compelling and comprehensive vision of how the economy might be transformed to work for the 99%. And it's a socialist idea. He argues for the development of a co-operative sector of the economy to rival the private sector by creating Workers' Self-Directed Enterprises, a kind of workers co-op 2.0. The idea is that WSDEs could end the boom and bust crisis cycle of our economy, create more income and wealth equality and install a "genuinely democratic distribution of power among individuals inside both their workplaces and their communities."

Ironically if this were to be implemented, women would gain more than they have now in Scandinavia or America because, though there would be no CEOs, they would be equals, co-owners of the companies they worked for.

In many ways capitalism has failed not only women but all of us. It has corrupted our politics with dark money, created the greatest wealth and income inequality since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it has given us climate change, as a by-product.

But the taboo around seriously discussing socialism is itself significant. And this goes against one of the key objectives of a college education which is to challenge personal and cultural assumptions, research and examine the facts, and make informed decisions.

And that too is something socialists would support.

David Wyman  
MWCC English Professor  
Member DSA

Dear Editor,

Re: "The MWCC Commute: You Won't Get Far on Foot" (The Mount Observer, March 6, 2019)

In this article, you put a spotlight on the lack of available public transportation to many individuals here at Mount Wachusett Community College. I often see students waiting around at the various MWCC campus bus stops, but I rarely see the buses themselves. It was unknown to me just how dire the situation was.

Growing up in an urban city for many years, public transportation was heavily relied upon. Between taking the bus to get to school and the train to get to work, I understand the struggle of being reliant on punctual and convenient transportation. However, it quickly became apparent that the city did not care what time school started or what time people's shifts at work were. Those that could not work in harmony with the bus and train schedules were forced to walk, regardless of the weather. It seems as though many students attending MWCC face this problem on a

regular basis, and their walking distance can be quite daunting.

One plausible solution to the issue of nearly half the MWCC students living in cities with no access to public transportation between their homes class is for the school to develop its own bus system. The school could also create stops in each of the surrounding cities in which students live. This would no doubt drastically increase school fees, but this transportation expense could be subsidized by first requiring students who wish to use this service to sign a binding financial contract in which they pay a set amount for their term of schooling. This could potentially prevent students who have no use of this service from paying for its implementation.

I am happy to hear that something is being done to address this problem. Students struggling to find a way to and from their classes that reach out to the Dean of Students' Office or the SOS Office are hopefully given reasonable accommodations to resolve their transportation issues until a solution is found.

Sincerely,  
Joseph Noe, MWCC Student

**STUDENTS**

# Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I'm writing in response to the article "The MWCC Commute: You Won't Get Far on Foot" in The Mount Observer published March 6, 2019.

As a student who commutes 13 miles from Jaffrey to attend one class at the Gardner campus two nights a week and 29 miles to commute for a class at the Leominster campus two afternoons a week, I believe a carpooling program would be a useful resource for students at MWCC. I'm traveling through many major areas daily, potentially passing by others struggling to even make it to school. With so many out of MART bus territory, it would be comforting to have alternate travel options. Without a backup plan, an unexpected car repair or breakdown could affect attendance. For those relying on public transportation, missing the bus could mean missing classes. Creating a physical or online carpooling board to post current class times and transportation needs can open the doors to students helping students. This would naturally bring a sense of community and trust among classmates getting to know each other on the ride.

Together, we will be doing the environment a favor by cutting down on emissions. Maybe multiple people are commuting from the same area on the same schedule, and there is the potential to set up a carpooling plan, cutting down mileage on vehicles and money being spent on gas. If a smart system and trust can be established, we can support MWCC with the most vital resource that we have, each other. No student should be left out in the cold.

Sincerely,  
Hillary Traniello, MWCC Student

Dear Editor,

Re: "Can't Sleep, Must Tweet: Limiting Screen Time" (The Mount Observer Opinion: February 6, 2019, Volume 13 Issue 3)

As a student, employee, and mom, I found this article very interesting and helpful. I agree strongly with everything that was stated in the article. Screen time does affect people in many ways. As stated by the reporter, it disconnects people from the real world. There have been times where I would be piled up with homework and instead of focusing on that, I would use my phone instead. I learned about the screen time app on the iPhones from reading this article.

I took that into consideration and looked into the app a little more, and honestly, I was a little disappointed in myself. I use social media way too much and instead of focusing on what's important, I use my phone to distract my mind. I have a bad habit where once I wake up before even getting out of bed, I go straight onto social media. After reading this article, it made me realize that I need to limit my screen time and focus more on what is important rather than focusing on what everyone else is doing. Thank you for publishing this article and encouraging MWCC students like myself to challenge themselves to cut down on screen time.

Sincerely,  
Marielisa Rodriguez, MWCC Student

STUDENT LIFE

Get into the **Student LIFE** Game of

*Spring 2019 Leadership for Life program* - a series of eight short presentations or service opportunities on topics that will help you feel more comfortable and be successful at MWCC. From the first one in January to the last one in April, *Leadership for Life* will help you. Upcoming workshops are being held: January 30, February 6, 20, March 6, 14, 20, April 3, 17. Most workshops are held from 12:30 to 1:30 pm in the Murphy Room. For more information: Contact Sarah Savoie in Student Services at [ssavoie7@mwcc.mass.edu](mailto:ssavoie7@mwcc.mass.edu), 978-630-9855 or stop by room 141.

**Intramurals**

**Pick-up Basketball** - Tuesdays, 3pm-4pm

**Open Gym** - Come try out all that the Fitness Center has to offer. Use the equipment, try a class, or swim in the pool. On the following dates: 4/1, 4/9, 4/17, 4/25, 5/2, 5/7, 5/13, 5/14, 5/15.

**Intramural Soccer** - Thursdays at 12:30pm

**Pool Tournament** - Begins on 4/1 with a round at 12:30pm in the Student Center and ends on 5/1 with the final round at 12:30pm in the Student Center.

**A Walk in the Park - Geocaching** - 4/29-5/3

Visit the five-geocaching sites for a chance to win prizes and relax while enjoying the outdoors. See Health Service for details.

**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](mailto:studentlife@mwcc.mass.edu) or 978-630-9148. Full details may also be found on the Student Life webpage at <http://mwcc.edu/studentlife/>

5/8 Spring Fling Outside South Café 11:30am- 1:30pm	4/1 SGA Meeting Murphy Room 12:30pm	4/1-4/5 Empty Place at the Table, Commons Area	4/2 CATS Programming Mtg.- 12:30pm Room W11	4/3- 4/4 SGA Elections VOTE On-line	4/3 Recharge, Regroup, Relax: Cl Gong Murphy Room 12:30pm	4/3 Evening Student Pizza 4:30pm	4/8 SGA Meeting Murphy Room 12:30pm	4/8 Stress Less - Learn to Meditate North Café 12:30pm & 1:15pm
4/9 CATS Programmin g Mtg.- 12:30pm Room W11	<p><b>4/10</b> Pizza with the President 12:30pm North Cafe</p>							4/9 CATS Programming Mtg.- 12:30pm Room W11
4/30 Culture Fest South Café 11:30am- 1:30pm	<p><b>4/11</b> It's Your Birthday Celebration, 12:30pm, South Cafe</p>							4/10 Pizza with the President 12:30pm North Cafe
4/30 CATS Programming Mtg.- 12:30pm Room W12	<p><b>4/13</b> NYC Trip Pre purchased tickets required.</p>							4/11 It's Your Birthday Celebration, 12:30pm, South Cafe
4/29 Stress Less - Learn to Meditate North Café 12:30pm & 1:15pm	4/26 Tea Time Speaker Series TBD	4/25 Club Recognition Luncheon, Gardner Museum, 12-1:30pm	4/24 Film: Ocean Heaven North Cafe 12:30pm	4/23 CATS Programming Mtg.- 12:30pm Room W11	4/22 SGA Meeting Murphy Room 12:30pm	4/18 Earth Day, South Café, 11:30am - 1:30pm	4/17 Creating Realistic Goals in an Era of Uncertainty Murphy Room 12:30pm	4/16 Film: Eating Animals Multipurpose Room 12:30pm

STUDENT LIFE

# Milk and Cookies Masquerade

## A student's tasteful take on being yourself

By Michele Walsky

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

"C'mon, Oreos, be yourself," my teen daughter exclaimed down the aisle last spring. She has a point. How are we supposed to be brave and love who we are? How do we teach our kids it is okay to be your quirky self if America's Favorite Cookie is waffling on who they are?

Now, I am not abhorring Oreos (No hate, just ate...a bunch) and I admit I have not tried most of the madcap mashups. I just appreciate its humble beginnings. But hey, at least the funny flavors shake up a shopping trip. The first crazed culprit we spied was **Hot & Spicy Cinnamon Candies**; you know, the Red Hots you used to sprinkle on cupcakes or give out with school valentines? Hiding next in sheep's clothing was **Peeps!** Um, hate to break it to you Oreo, but that gig is already taken. And the same goes for jelly beans' newest sidekick **Carrot Cake!** I wonder if the Trix rabbit would fall for those.

For years we have witnessed the integrity of Oreo's OG slipping away. I understand it is bandwagon marketing and we all want to spice things up now and then. After all, spreading out with diversity and new experiences is how we grow. But Oreo may be having growing pains.

First **Double Stuff**...genius. Double yum. Who doesn't want more o' the stuff when our teeth scrape off the cream? Fluff enuf said, until we recently were treated like the cream-of-the-crop when **The MOST Stuff** pied the ceiling this year!

And sure, include the **Chocolate Filled** and the **Golden Oreos**. Go ahead, mix



Photo by Betsabee Torres

Entire store shelves can be filled with the various flavors of Oreo.

and match those. All good, still sane. And let us be festive with those colorful **Holiday** creams. And when life hands you ...you know...well, the **Lemon** ones are tartfully smart.

**Peanut Butter**...Okay, I can see the merge. It makes sense, especially after the 1998 remake of *The Parent Trap*. Fess up—you dunked your original Oreos into a jar when you watched, didn't you? My son and I sure did.

But then it starts getting ridiculous.

**Birthday Cake**...Eh, sounds a bit like jumping on the ice cream man's bandwagon, but the kid is a fan. Oh, **Berry Burst Ice-Cream**? I spoke too soon. Impostor! **Marshmallow Crispy**? Step off Rice Krispy

Treats turf, please. (After all the arm-breaking trouble of stirring the mix, we deserve the real thing!) Two we *have* tried: **Banana Split** and the results were, err, split. Daughter liked it, me--bleh, not with bananas over it. And **Neapolitan**, I thought it would be good, but also sickening. Again, it is hijacking the freezer. Are you a cookie or a mouse? Or maybe a frozen mousse?

And in the summer, **Watermelon**? The produce section is right there when you walk in! Just sayin'. Then there is **Cookie Dough**. Okay, getting back in the right lane. Then this happened: **Cookies and Cream**. Um, they are just humoring us, right? Perhaps that is what they

have been doing all along, but I'm glad Oreo did some soul-searching with that one.

Now we are on a roll... **Cinnamon Bun**. Probably good but I am not sure I want chocolate slamming down and power wrestling with the taste. Nothing beats a warm pastry converging into a cinnamon center. Alright, you got me on this next one. We did splurge and buy the **Dunkin Donuts Mocha**—twice! Delicioso, but very sweet! It would go great with milk or, ironically, coffee. Perhaps they are trying to rally cookies for breakfast? I admire their moxie.

There are a whole slew of surreal fusions I could not possibly cover without writing another book. A friend just

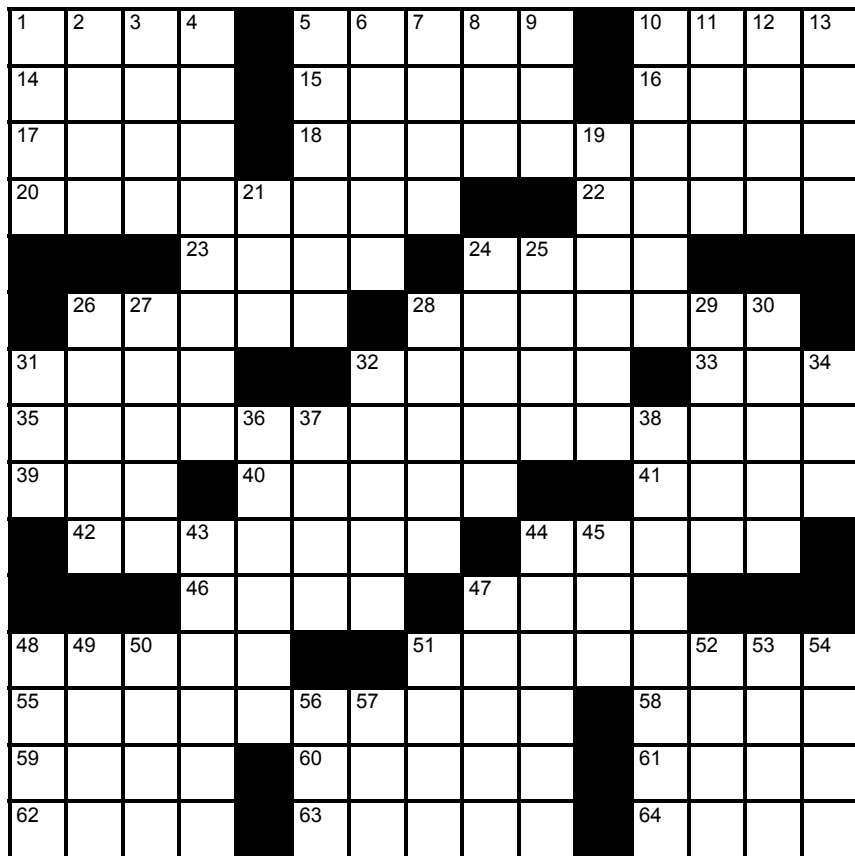
reminded me about **Pop Rocks!** I like the retro nod to the eighties, but a snack foaming at the mouth? Maybe the effect is lost in the cookies and cream. Last year, our graphic designer, Tom, enlightened me on a **Mystery** flavor that was **Fruity Pebbles**, which was not hard to pull over anyone's eyes.

Trying on coats of many colors to find the right fit and flair is admirable and necessary except when it is used as camouflage. When all is said and done, or when the cookie crumbles, we should stick to our strengths, our roots, our original fillings. Be proud. Is that not the moral to every story? You are great the way you are, especially a classic who does not need to change at all.

## Come Work for Us!

Interested in becoming a member of the *Mount Observer* team? Contact us at [mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu](mailto:mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu).

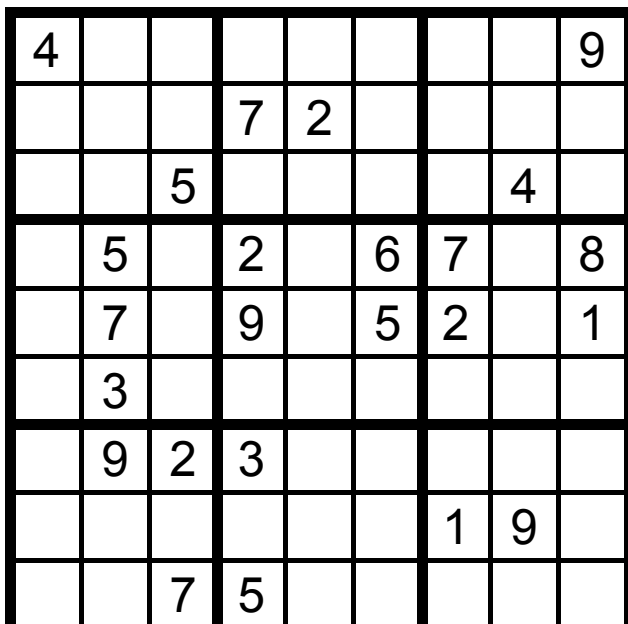
Work Study positions are available to those who qualify! See Scott Farris in Admissions for details.



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- |                                      |                                   |   |                                  |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Across</b>                        | <b>39</b> Nothing                 | <b>Down</b>                               | <b>27</b> Saunter                |
| <b>1</b> Most beneficial             | <b>40</b> He was floating ___     | <b>1</b> Nail                             | <b>28</b> Implied                |
| <b>5</b> Cupolas                     | <b>41</b> Head (Fr.)              | <b>2</b> Monetary unit                    | <b>29</b> Olfactory organs       |
| <b>10</b> Clothes                    | <b>42</b> Serving trolley         | <b>3</b> Goulash                          | <b>30</b> Fatty                  |
| <b>14</b> Comedienne Buzzi           | <b>44</b> Nervous                 | <b>4</b> Expression of gratitude          | <b>31</b> Human race             |
| <b>15</b> Duck                       | <b>46</b> Fill to excess          | <b>5</b> Create                           | <b>32</b> Capture                |
| <b>16</b> Thought                    | <b>47</b> Leg part                | <b>6</b> Kilns                            | <b>34</b> Three (It.)            |
| <b>17</b> Domain                     | <b>48</b> Month                   | <b>7</b> Horse                            | <b>36</b> Townsfolk              |
| <b>18</b> Performing under a window? | <b>51</b> Lunch holder            | <b>8</b> Dutch commune                    | <b>37</b> School subj.           |
| <b>20</b> MLM followers              | <b>55</b> Low hardy shrub         | <b>9</b> Political title (Abbr.)          | <b>38</b> Went to                |
| <b>22</b> Penalties                  | <b>58</b> Woman, to a '30's hood  | <b>10</b> More orderly                    | <b>43</b> Orientals              |
| <b>23</b> Barrels                    | <b>59</b> Adolescent              | <b>11</b> Norse deity, ruler of the Aesir | <b>44</b> Terminals              |
| <b>24</b> Skin                       | <b>60</b> Frontiersman of note    | <b>12</b> Protein molecule                | <b>45</b> Original monetary unit |
| <b>26</b> Textile                    | <b>61</b> Promised land           | <b>13</b> Droops                          | <b>48</b> Brokers                |
| <b>28</b> Pubs                       | <b>62</b> Word partitions (Abbr.) | <b>19</b> Anew                            | <b>49</b> Quarry                 |
| <b>31</b> Note from the boss         | <b>63</b> Gr. letters             | <b>21</b> Constellation                   | <b>50</b> Fishing gear           |
| <b>32</b> Wise guys                  | <b>64</b> Lairs                   | <b>24</b> Beeper                          | <b>51</b> Footwear               |
| <b>33</b> Away                       |                                   | <b>25</b> With (Fr.)                      | <b>52</b> Entreated              |
| <b>35</b> Lawyer on the run?         |                                   | <b>26</b> Pay a bill                      | <b>53</b> Prayer word            |
|                                      |                                   |   | <b>54</b> Army VIPs              |
|                                      |                                   |   | <b>56</b> Recede, like the ocean |
|                                      |                                   |   | <b>57</b> Suffering              |

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 1 to 9. There is only one possible solution.



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**THE MOUNT OBSERVER**  
**VOLUME 13, ISSUE 8,**  
**May 1, 2019**

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**Printer:**  
Graphic Developments Inc.

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36th Annual Regional High School Art Exhibition & Competition  
April 2 - 19 Reception & Awards: Thurs., April 11 at 6-8 p.m.

**48th Annual MWCC Student Art Exhibition**  
*Work from all foundation & advanced art courses*  
**May 14 - 24**  
Reception: Wednesday, May 15 at 3:30-6 p.m.  
Camilo Almarales, *Owl Joeg*, 2018, painting, 48 x 108 in. >

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OR

Come see us in our office in  
**Room 344!**

# Connecting Through Social Gaming

## Students get together to play video games in the Student Center

By Daniela Perez

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Playing video games at the student center is one of the ways students from different departments can come together to pass time.

Dominic Cannavino, Business major, plays *Dark Souls 3* with his friend Bryce Harper, Law major, while they wait to attend their next class. "Life is too serious and video games help me relax," said Cannavino.

Jacob Hull, Biotech major, also spends time at the student center playing video games. His favorite games to play are *Mortal Kombat X* and *Jump Force*. Despite his enjoyment of video games, Hull doesn't hesitate to put down his controller and enjoy some time away from the screen when his friends want to hang out.

All three students play video games and have become friends through gaming in the student center. They play seriously while



Photo by Daniela Perez

### Students making use of the "game center" in the Student Center

also goofing around with the character creator.

Students bring their own game consoles down into the student center. Everyone is welcomed to

come down to hang out and play some games. The students even encourage others to join in.

Cannavino said that he leaves his game console at the student

center while he goes to class. He doesn't mind if people play his games while he's away. He trusts that people will respect the property of others.

Cannavino does not let video games get in the way of his responsibilities. He will go to work and complete his chores before playing video games. However, he admits that he may spend too much time relaxing when he's at home. Cannavino believes that video game addictions come from "grinding" games.

*League of Legends* is an example of a grinding game where players have to play for hours in order to progress in the game. Many players spend real money on these games so they can advance faster than their competitors.

"I used to be addicted to video games," said Hull. "I have over 1,000 hours logged on *Skyrim*." Hull goes to the campus gym whenever he is not working or playing video games.

The students would love to see a video game club be created in order to be able to game with their friends and get to meet new people.

# Join the Family – Review: The Sopranos



Image from mezclaconfusa on flickr

The Sopranos copyright HBO

By Conner Garrity

Observer Contributor

It's been over twenty years since *The Sopranos* debuted. There is one lingering question: Does the show still hold up today?

*The Sopranos* premiered back in January 1999. The mob show was a hit and is considered one of the best television series ever. The show centers around a New Jersey mob boss Tony Soprano as he deals with drama

surrounding his family and his "work." On top of that, Tony suffers from panic attacks and mental health issues which stem from his upbringing.

The show broke new ground for television, adding a cinematic element to a television show. The show decided to hire unknown actors for each role. Leading actor James Gandolfini's biggest role prior to playing Tony Soprano was in the film *True Romance* where he played a hitman.

Another standout element of the show was its use of long narrative. *The Sopranos* treated viewers to a cinematic story that played out in an intricately layered manner each week. Tony's parenting style is one of aggression. When his son A.J. begins to act up and lashes at his mother and hurts her, Tony rushes over and pins A.J. to the

wall with his hand around his throat as if he's one of Tony's gang members.

The linear narrative also serves the killing off of main characters very well. Such a moment occurs at the end of season two and, no spoilers, it was engaging, visceral, and dramatic.

Tony Soprano being an anti-hero allowed for a different kind of storytelling. It gave more human qualities to a character that most people probably shouldn't be rooting for. This is, after all, a story centered on a mafia family and their sordid criminal activities, but *The Sopranos* was so much more than that.

Throughout the show, Tony spends time in his therapist's office where he talks about his childhood. During one episode, Tony recalls the time he saw his father chop another man's finger

off which, the audience learns, is what triggered his first anxiety attack.

*The Sopranos* is a show about a mob family; it delves into one man's struggle with being a father and a husband, as well as the turmoil that surrounds his professional life and his increasing mental and emotional instability.

Is *The Sopranos* a show for you? It depends on what you're looking for. Though viewers see Tony as a tough mob boss and a hard knock father, it's only a facade and his true colors soon begin to show.

Just over twenty years later, *The Sopranos* still has a large, rabid fanbase. So if you're curious as to where the Golden Age of Television began - grab a cannoli, turn on HBO, and lose yourself in *The Sopranos*.