

The Mount Observer

"Voices of the students of Mount Wachusett Community College"

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15 YEARS

2020

PREVIEWS



The Second Wave Hits Hard

Throughout the pandemic, many restaurants have closed their doors for good, but some have been able to push their limits to stay open.

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Counseling Woes

According to licensed clinical social worker Lisa Archambault, one important aspect of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic is that it has introduced numerous difficulties for people who would like to receive counseling.

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Review: The Haunting of Bly Manor

With the Halloween season in full throttle I have had the chance to watch *The Haunting of Bly Manor*, the predecessor to Netflix's hit horror and drama series, *The Haunting of Hill House*. *The Haunting of Bly Manor* is a series that will leave horror fans longing for more, and I enjoyed this series in the worst ways possible.

For the full review, see page 9

Not Just a College

MWCC plans to prioritize key programs following lower enrollment

By Dylan Quigley

ASSISTANT EDITOR

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous trips and events were canceled and there was little that anyone could do. As the current semester is steadily moving along with remote learning, faculty and staff are trying to figure out a plan to keep from losing programs and jobs in the next academic year of 2021-2022 and one of the biggest obstacles to that goal is the current enrollment rates.

MWCC President James Vander Hooven said the faculty and staff expected a drop of enrollment rates maybe around 10-12%. However, this semester showed a 15% drop in enrollment. Vander Hooven said that he feels that one reason is that many students are parents and with K-12 learning being remote as well some parents



Photo courtesy of MWCC

might not be able to make the time to further their education. Also, with unemployment rates increasing many students just might not be able to afford to

enroll.

President Vander Hooven said that it is clear that MWCC isn't just a college but also a childcare center and more. The

campus includes the Garrison Center for Early Childhood Education, a food pantry (Food

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"Low Enrollment" >>>

Preparing for their Survival

Local business doing their best in the face of COVID-19 wave 2

By Kristopher Madden

ASSISTANT EDITOR

With cases of COVID-19 rising and cold weather pushing outdoors patrons back inside, Bay State business owners are preparing for the worst but hoping for the best. While many business's policies have been updated since March to include the proper wear of masks, state mandates have not been implemented or heavily

enforced by law enforcement.

This leaves local business owners like Gary Riello, owner of Anytime Fitness in Worcester struggling to enforce the rules within the confines of their own businesses.

"It would be great if our state or federal leadership would mandate masks so it's not the responsibility of guys like me to make people wear them, but here we are," Riello said.

Riello several times during the interview had to tell gym patrons to wear their masks, a policy he has posted throughout his gym. Riello added, "It's a hard place to be as a business owner but I've gotta(sic) look out for my clients. Keeping them safe and healthy is what's gonna(sic) keep this place open, and I want people to feel safe here."

In preparation for the second

wave that experts say is already upon us, Riello has installed 25 plastic barriers between the equipment stations in Anytime Fitness. He has plans to rearrange the floor plan of the facility in the coming weeks to accommodate more space for patrons to move without having to break social distancing. In addition, he's ordered 4000

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Low Enrollment

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for Thought Campus Pantry), a cafeteria, a library, and a theater. All of these programs have staff employed there and students who count on them. Vander Hooven stated that these are all essential programs that he doesn't want affected severely by the outcome of COVID-19.

President Vander Hooven and his faculty team have spent the last three years making a financial reserve for the programs

and staff at MWCC and he says that this reserve ensures that no funding is being cut for the 2020-2021 academic year. For the 2021-2022 academic year Vander Hooven and his team are planning and discussing what they can do or what they may need to do to protect some of these programs.

One person on President Vander Hooven's team is Jason Zelensky the Dean of Students. Zelensky said that with winter and flu season approaching more

problems may occur that the MWCC community will have to deal with. So far the spring 2021 semester will be 85% remote and 15% in-person, with the in-person portion involving mostly the nursing program and certain science labs.

"Winter will be tough. Spring it will get better, and, hopefully, by fall 2021 things will be even better," said Zelensky. He continued that he is ready for anything but is trying to stay positive for the next academic

year.

Zelensky pointed out that high school seniors this year might want to stay close to home if they go to college in fall 2021 and they might choose community colleges that are local to them rather than university. This would increase the enrollment for college's like MWCC, which would in turn help protect programs like the Garrison Center for Early Childhood Education and The Food for Thought Campus Pantry.

Each day brings a new problem for faculty and staff and their most important priority is to keep students safe and continue the education of students. With winter coming so is the flu season and the CDC claims that with the winter and the flu there can also be a second wave of COVID-19. President Vander Hooven and his team are working daily to make sure that if we need to go full remote again, we can, and that each and every student that does have access to campus is safe.

A Tide of Animals

The pandemic has caused a huge upswing in pet adoptions

By Kristopher Madden

ASSISTANT EDITOR

When the pandemic hit our country in March, many people were forced into solitude by quarantine. To battle loneliness, scores of them turned to an option that they hadn't explored before - getting a pet.

Many people who hadn't had the time to invest toward a pet in the past have taken the plunge and adopted for the first time leading to new adventures with a new best friend. Months passed and bonds were formed but with the economy forcing much of the workforce back into traditional business places, many new pet-parents are having to reconsider their options regarding their new fluffy friends.

"I got a dog in March, when the quarantine first started," said Marta Hernandez, a dental assistant from Westminster. "I'd never had a dog before, because I grew up in an apartment that didn't allow pets. My uncle had this beautiful German Shepherd that I adored growing up, and when quarantine started, I decided to finally get a dog for myself. It was the best decision of my life, he really made lockdown much easier. Now that I have to go back to work, I found him a doggy daycare, but we miss each other during the day. It's an adjustment for both



Image by huoadg5888 from Pixabay

of us because we got used to spending our days together."

Others, like Michael Hevey, an HVAC student from Groton, planned ahead in his first adoption. "I knew we couldn't be in lockdown forever, so I got a cat," Hevey said.

"Everything memes have ever told me is that cats are fine on their own, and the internet didn't lie to me. I got a cat because I knew if I had adopted a dog that he'd give me those sad eyes every day before work or school, so I got a cat that can be independent enough to be alone for the majority of the day, but

still be happy to see me at the end of the day. I don't have anything breakable, so I'm not worried about him knocking stuff off my shelves. But he really made staying home a lot more fun and we had a great time getting to know each other before life mostly went back to the way it was."

Jacqueline Billings, volunteer at the Worcester Animal Rescue League says that their shelter has had a sharp increase in adoption rates that has yet to taper off. "I think a lot of people wound up adopting a dog because it gave them a reason to be outside,"

Billings said. "Even when the dog parks in Worcester closed, people still went out with their dogs, doing the stuff dogs need to do. They need to go on walks, they need to exercise, they need to be outside. Dogs are like flowers that sniff you back, so they need the sun or they get depressed and they help keep people from being depressed too."

"If COVID-19 has benefited anyone, it's our furry friends. I don't remember this place being this empty in a long time." Billings went on to say, "At the start of the pandemic in March,

the Worcester Animal Rescue League experienced a sudden spike in adoption cases, at some points clearing the shelter so that all of the animals were adopted."

Billings is a bit wary of this sudden uptick in adoptions, however. "The thing about the pandemic is that a lot of people adopted pets on a whim, and for a lot of them that was probably the best whim they could have followed through with, but it brings into question the reality of fitting animals into our regular lives," Billings said. "They're ready to love you when you get home from work because they require that attention. They're our responsibility and we've gotta[sic] be held responsible for that."

"It's amazing that so many people are taking this opportunity to explore adopting, but the best thing people can do is to plan ahead for it," Billings cautioned. "The pandemic changed a lot of things for Americans, including the way we go to work and for some of us a dog or a cat is the best thing we can do, and for others we need to make sure that we take into consideration the needs of their new fur babies, because they're a parent now and that animal needs them."

Local Business

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packs of masks, available in his vending machine alongside pre-workout and protein shakes.

"I'm doing my very best to offer as many ways for people to stick to the rules, including posting them all over the place so no one can say 'oh I didn't know'," Riello said.

Sorana Gotej, marketing manager for That's Entertainment in Worcester wishes more people would take the pandemic seriously.

"It's a matter of wanting comfort over safety," Gotej said. "I'd say ninety percent of our customers come in, wear masks and follow all of the rules, because that's what we need to do to stay open and they want us to stay open. We need customers to follow the rules so that people don't get sick."

However, Gotej also said that she has had troubles with people who refuse. Gotej said, "The remaining ten percent are why we've had to actually hire a 'comic-store bouncer', as silly as that sounds, to both enforce the number of people allowed inside at once and to enforce everyone

will continue to offer curbside pickup, mail-order and even in some cases no-contact delivery."

"We've been very proactive about enforcing mask requirements and social distancing because being open for business is a privilege not a right right now," said Gotej.

guidelines and says it doesn't stop there.

"Businesses have always had to change and adapt with the times and the only difference here is that it's not to meet the demands of the consumer, it's to meet necessary health measures in the face of a global pandemic,"

working and requires clients to wear masks as well. He changes his gloves and sanitizes his tools, workstation and chair between clients.

"The amount of clients I have in a day? That's the amount of capes I go through," Daley said. "One cape per client, no sharing. That's the way it's gotta(sic) be. I wash every one of them every night so I can be open the next day. It's just one more thing we gotta(sic) do to keep our clients and our families safe. It's important to us that we find the best way to make it work, and whatever changes we have to make to stay in our livelihoods, that's what we'll do. The ones that want to stay successful will anyway."

"But whoever lets us keep the lights on, be it the customers or the government, that's who we need to listen to."

— Michael Daley

wearing masks the right way in our store."

That's Entertainment has a solution in place for those sorts of customers. Gotej said, "And if anyone can't follow the guidelines, we've had to put in place we still offer, and

The service industry has made significant changes to the way that they operate in the face of the pandemic that many are still getting used to. Michael Daley, a hair stylist out of West Boylston, has had to adapt his business practices in order to meet state

Daley said. "But whoever lets us keep the lights on, be it the customers or the government, that's who we need to listen to."

Daley's workstation is surrounded by a plastic sheet and he wears rubber gloves and a mask the entire time he's

The Second Wave Hits Hard

Restaurants are finding difficulties with COVID-19 and the winter

By Kyle Eaves

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Throughout the pandemic, many restaurants have closed their doors for good, but some have been able to push their limits to stay open. Two small restaurants, one located in Peterborough and the other in Jaffrey, New Hampshire, tell their stories about how each restaurant has performed since quarantine and what's made a difference.

TwelvePineisasmallrestaurant located in Peterborough and last week the owner George Neal shared some of his thoughts on how his business has been affected quarantine. "Business has been slow and it's hard not to lose any money." Neal said, "Even with full capacity limits I can't sit everyone inside without breaking guidelines and at that points I'm still losing money."

Neal explained that outdoor seating and mobile orders

were the only new additions since COVID that has kept his restaurant in business. He said that after the quarantine order, he started to lose the most business and money, but now with the state being mostly open again, people are willing to come back into restaurants and spend their money.

When asked about the winter season approaching and the loss of outdoor seating, Neal said, "I haven't figured anything out for that yet. By that point I am hoping to be able to sit most people inside just to survive those months until it's nice outside again."

In Jaffrey, a small restaurant named Sunflowers Café admits to struggling during the pandemic and even now.

"Keeping good and reliable staff has been the hardest factor for us," Owner Carolyn Edwards said. "We already had a small spacious restaurant with outdoor



Image from sunflowersnh.com

Sunflowers Café in Jaffrey, New Hampshire

seating to accommodate people, but most of my waiting and kitchen staff were college kids and part time employees."

Edwards said the restaurant had to lay off most of their part time help when this virus first

became an issue, but with the full intentions of hiring them all back when they were allowed to open again. By the time Sunflower's Café was able to open, most of their past part-time help had either acquired new jobs or were

no longer in the area because of school. When asked about the winter months, Edwards said that they might not even be able to stay open for another month without any help.

Associating Yourself with the SGA

The SGA is making the most of our new, remote environment

By **Dylan Quigley**

ASSISTANT EDITOR

The switch to remote learning has impacted everyone involved on the MWCC community, but one aspect of campus life that has been deeply affected by the change to remote learning is our Student Government Association (SGA). The SGA is responsible for governing student interests, being an advocate for student voices, and providing support and recognition to student organizations, and they have not been idle.

One thing that the SGA has been focusing on this semester is the Student Emergency Loan Fund (SELF), which helps students in a financial predicament be able to continue schooling. The Student Emergency Loan Fund is more needed now than it has been before, and it is being heavily utilized.

Student Trustee Vanessa Hill, who has been attending via *Zoom* the State Student Advisory Council meetings, said that the Advisory Council is pushing to change a couple rules for Massachusetts colleges.

First off, for a few years now

colleges and universities are starting to see the benefit in Open Educational Resources, as well.

The State Student Advisory Council is also trying to get the Student Trustee bill changed so that part-time students can serve as a student trustee for

“The Student Emergency Loan Fund is more needed now than it has been before, and it is being heavily utilized.”

– **Dylan Quigley**

there has been a push to get Open Educational Resources for all Massachusetts college students. Last year MWCC was one of the schools leading the charge in petition signatures for Open Educational Resources, and with COVID-19 forcing schools to make the most of remote learning a lot of other

their school. Before COVID-19 this was a popular opinion for community colleges like MWCC, but now that COVID-19 has made a lot of students in universities part time as well there is more focus on trying to get the Student Trustee bill to be changed and allow a part-time student to serve as student

trustee.

Jason Zelensky, the Dean of Students at MWCC, is holding a Dean Drop-In office hour where he and the students discuss a topic that is picked for the hour meeting. In October they talked about technology and how to use and utilize the technology we have to succeed in remote learning. The Drop-In hour was recorded and can be found on MWCC’s website.

Kathleen Matson, an advisor for the SGA, has been planning this year’s winter fest with the rest of the officers in the officers’ video meetings and they already have a few things planned. First, Winter Fest is going to be mostly raising money for the Student Emergency Loan Fund which is in need and there are already a couple good events planned for the month of December.

One event is on December 1st

and it is a trivia night hosted by the STEM program and Alpha Beta Gamma. The trivia will be held on *Kahoot* and hopefully a *Zoom* chat room can be set up. The second is Winter Fest on December 16th, there will be tickets you will have to buy to attend Winter Fest and the purchase of the ticket puts your name in a raffle to win a prize. For more information about Winter Fest, you can contact Kathleen Matson.

The SGA impacts a lot about student life and if someone wants to learn more they can download the minutes of each SGA meeting from their page on *InvolveMount* and while you are there RSVP for the next SGA meeting and sit in on the excitement.

More or Less Screen Time

COVID-19 has greatly impacted the social media usage of students



Image by Today Testing from Wikimedia Commons under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license.

By **Yamari David**

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

The effects of social media usage can differ, depending on what kind of media you consume, how much of it you consume, and what it’s used for. When COVID-19 made its entrance in March, it changed the way users engaged in social media. According to two students from Mount Wachusett Community College, discovering small businesses and a closer connection to the family has led

to their increase or decrease of social media.

Makaylah Howard, a Business Administration major has two media sharing network accounts and uses social media to stay connected with friends and to support small businesses. She claims her social media usage has decreased since the pandemic came about because she spends more time with family, due to being home the majority of the time. This has positively affected Howard because she

has been able to re-engage in relationships at home that have grown stronger.

Before the pandemic, Howard was constantly working and never had time to connect with her family. She admits that before she would use her phone to go on social media more often when she was out of the house because it was a habit to scroll through different feeds. Since she has been able to spend more time in the presence of others she cares for, said that she doesn’t find it necessary anymore. She just doesn’t have that same urge to scroll through her phone like before.

“The pandemic has allowed me to take a second to pause and cherish those around me and it truly has been nice to have more time with my family and not social media,” Howard said.

Tatiana Martinez, a Biology major, has six media sharing network accounts and says that she uses social media to post

pictures of trips she’s taken, follow her favorite actresses, support small businesses, and for entertainment purposes. Martinez’s social media usage has increased since COVID-19, especially with the platforms *YouTube* and *TikTok*.

According to *The New York Times*, the traffic on multiple

“The pandemic has allowed me to take a second to pause and cherish those around me and it truly has been nice to have more time with my family and not social media.”

– **Makaylah Howard**

social media networks has gone up an average of 15.3% for *YouTube*, 16% for *Netflix*, and 27% for *Facebook*.

Through the increase of social media, this has positively

affected Martinez due to the small businesses she was able to discover and fall in love with.

This is not a unique phenomenon. In one of the blogs written in *Tinuiti* by Tara Johnson, she wrote, “*TikTok* is not only a completely fresh and unique opportunity for people but also for small and large brands. The impact brands have on culture will eventually lead to an impact on business. By connecting with the community on a creative level, you’re able to tap into new audiences who may not be active on other platforms.”

DBL Jewelry and Audacity Cosmetics are two of the main businesses Martinez has purchased from since her discovery.

“My discovery of these small businesses had a positive impact on me because I was able to find new products I loved while also having a positive impact on the businesses because I was able to give back,” Martinez said.

PROFILE

Counseling Woes

COVID-19 introduced new difficulties to the world of counseling

By Aidan Lane

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

According to licensed clinical social worker Lisa Archambault, one important aspect of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic is that it has introduced numerous difficulties for people who would like to receive counseling.

Archambault, speaking from her practice in Worcester said that the main effect of the pandemic is the marked increase in the desire for therapy - so much so that she claimed to be denying upwards of 20 clients a week, at the worst of times. And because she is a solo operation, it is hard to find other practices or therapists to reference to people who are unable to obtain counseling, a problem doubly compounded by the fact that this is an incredibly busy time.

"It's more than I can do right now [...] it's really hard to get a therapist," Archambault said. "It's hard to get a good fit and

have someone call you back in a timely manner."

Not only is finding therapy made difficult, but the actual act of counseling is made very different from pre-COVID times. Although, not all of this change is bad - those who found it difficult to get to sessions, or preferred telehealth, now can have an easier time finding counseling and getting insurance to pay for it, too. Although, that coin does have a flipside - Archambault said that many clients live with other people, and those people may now be able to listen in to information that may otherwise have been kept secret.

"People leave because there is no privacy in their house," said Archambault.

There is also the object of childcare and other previous obligations that many clients need to attend to, not to mention the aspect of people in abusive relationships seeking aide. And,

while the subtle facial cues are still there and still readable, they are harder to decipher as they can be mixed up with issues of connection.

Archambault said that to students who want to seek therapy, she advises them to talk first to a professional on campus; many campuses have a licensed counselor on-site. Presently, Mount Wachusett students who would like to receive counseling can find resources at <https://mwcc.edu/current-students/support/counseling/> or may e-mail Melissa Manzi at M_Manzi@mwcc.mass.edu, with the word 'counseling' in the subject line.

More generally, Archambault advised students to, "enlist the support that you have, take care of self-care... there's strength in asking for help. There's uncertainty, but we'll try to figure out a way to get through it."



Image from Psychology Today

Lisa Archambault, licensed clinical social worker

Stressed? Overwhelmed? Feeling Down?

If current events are leaving you feeling hopeless, or you just feel you need to talk, for any reason, feel free to contact Melissa Manzi at m_manzi@mwcc.mass.edu or check out her Mental Health Minute videos at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cwifl9n1WUs&feature=emb_logo

OPINION

More Curse than Blessing

Some students have found online courses deceptively challenging

By Seth Farley

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

With fall classes well underway, millions of students and teachers across the country have begun to grow accustomed to online classes. While some students may be thriving in a remote learning environment, the majority have struggled and have become overstressed.

When the COVID-19 pandemic first erupted in America

back in March, the education system had to make quick and drastic decisions on how to handle the rest of the school year. Ultimately, the pandemic forced millions of students into a remote learning experience. Students are now required to join a Zoom meeting instead of attending class. Classwork and assignments are now just due dates and communication between student and teacher ais at an all-time low.

Joe Murphy is a sophomore attending Fitchburg State University. Like most college students, Murphy switched to online classes back in spring. "It wasn't that bad of a transition at first," Murphy said. "A lot of my classes got easier," Murphy added. "I would get an assignment e-mailed every week or so, and not much else." The immediate switch to online learning did not impact him as much. Murphy said, "It didn't

really have an effect on my grades at all."

That all changed with the start of the fall semester. With the vast majority of Fitchburg State's classes being done remotely, Murphy was only able to fit 2 on-campus classes into his schedule. "I've started to realize that my in-person classes are easier to manage than my online classes," Murphy said.

He noted that he is not doing as well in his online courses since

he is not getting in touch with his professors nearly as much. Although he is confident that he can get through this semester, Murphy is afraid that the lack of help in his online classes could negatively affect his grades.

Leah Clark, a sophomore at Montclair State University in New Jersey, has had a similar experience. The pandemic

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"Online Course Trouble" >>>

A Precarious Concept

A student's opinion that 'herd immunity' will only lead to more cases

By Alexander Ruehlicke

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

The idea of herd immunity is an appealing one indeed. However, so far, the pros and cons are purely hypothetical. There is no substantial evidence to prove that it works. In fact, all the evidence we do have points toward it doing more harm than good.

Herd immunity is a form of indirect protection from a virus caused by the populace having developed an immunity to it by means of previous infection, thereby reducing the likelihood of infecting those who do not have immunity.

As we all know, the last six months of quarantine have been a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic in an attempt to minimize the rate of new infections, or "flatten the curve". The projected goal of social distancing is to prevent the populace from engaging in activities that would put them at

unnecessary risk of contracting the virus, which in-turn would lead to fewer cases.

With herd immunity, the strategy is quite the opposite. Social distancing measures would be lifted, businesses and schools could reopen, and anyone outside of the high-risk population would be encouraged to expose themselves to the virus. Ideally, this would result in a majority of the population being immune to reinfection.

As students of MWCC, the 'herd immunity' mentality would mean a return to in-person classrooms, access to the school's facilities, and the ability to hold social gatherings on campus. While all these benefits are no doubt ideal for students, there is one outlying factor involved: friends and families. Most of us interact with, or at least know, someone who is in the high-risk age group.

By going about our lives normally with the goal of herd

immunity in mind, we would effectively be carriers of the disease, leading to further infections among the elderly. New evidence shows that the high-risk age group does not benefit from the immunity gained by prior contraction of the disease.

According to a *CBS News* article on October 14, an 89-year-old Dutch woman died from COVID-19 after having contracted the virus for a second time. This has sparked a debate in the medical community as to whether immunity is obtainable through past exposure to the virus.

It's not just the elderly at risk of health complications due to COVID-19, either. The CDC reports that anyone with a pre-existing condition or autoimmune disease is at extreme risk when it comes to contracting the virus.

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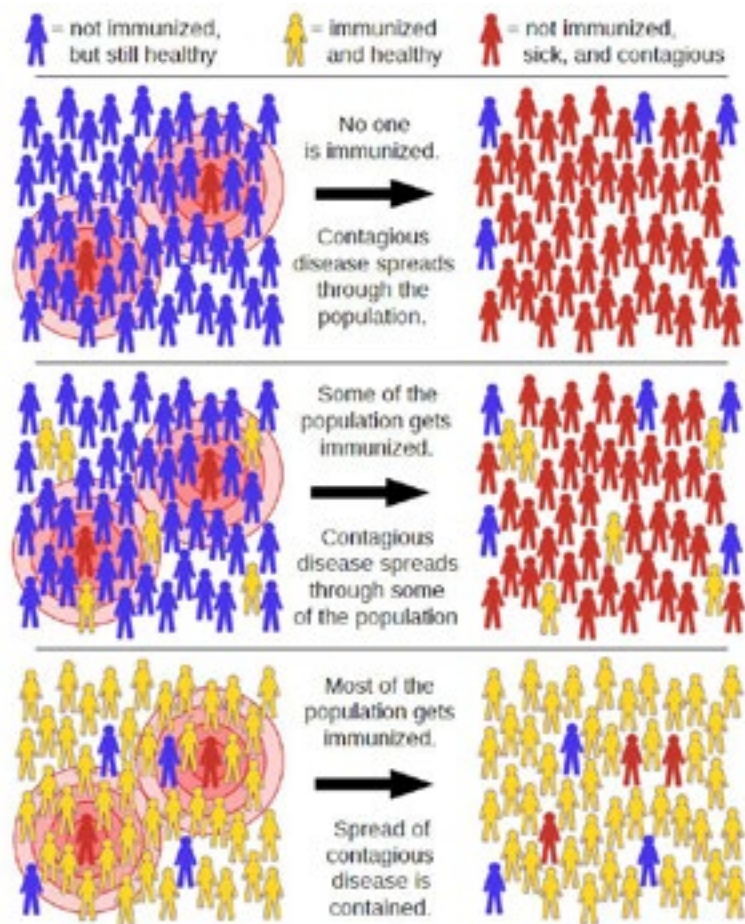


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A graphic depicting the idea of "herd/community immunity." "The top box depicts a community in which no one is immunized and an outbreak occurs. In the middle box, some of the population is immunized but not enough to confer community immunity. In the bottom box, a critical portion of the population is immunized, protecting most community members." Whether this system would work to protect against COVID-19 is still under debate.

An Alright Attempt

Facebook's recent bans were too little, too late



Image by Kvarkil from Wikimedia Commons under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license.

By Nicholas Papini
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Facebook's recent bans of content involving Holocaust denial and the conspiracy group

QAnon is a good move, but it's also too little too late for Facebook.

Facebook has long been a source of disinformation for citizens the world over. It has never been more blatant, however, as it has been in the past 2 election cycles. Facebook was not unaware of these problems, and Mark Zuckerberg, co-founder and CEO of Facebook, has made public comments supporting it as free speech in the past, specifically citing Holocaust denial.

On October 12, Facebook made a move to limit that

misinformation by banning Holocaust denial posts on the website. In Mark Zuckerberg's public statement regarding the banning, he said that he feels that this ban strikes the correct balance between full free speech and control of the spread of misinformation.

Previously, on October 6, Facebook banned any sort of content supporting and spreading the message of QAnon. QAnon is a group which believes that President Donald Trump is a hero fighting to save the world from a cabal of Satan-worshipping cannibal

pedophiles, all obviously Democrats, who control the country through the use of their deep state government.

Facebook also recently made the move on October 13 to ban ads that discourage the use of vaccines, perhaps one of the most prominently spread pieces of misinformation on the site. This, however, does nothing to help the numerous children who were not vaccinated due to how incredibly widespread the myth that vaccines can cause autism is.

These moves are a good thing, but the fact is that for a long

time, Facebook gave these fringe groups a platform to spread their message. The fact that the site can no longer be used to sow doubt in the minds of the public is only a good thing, but the damage has largely been done.

Facebook and other social medias may have banned QAnon from their platforms, but they will just migrate over to a new one. There are enough members of this absurd conspiracy that they will comfortably migrate to a competing social media site

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"Facebook Bans" >>>

Let Your Voice be Heard!

Send your stories, poetry, artwork, photography, or other content to mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu

Precarious Concept

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This includes obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

Even the low-risk population isn't entirely protected from long-term health effects after contracting the virus. According to an August 2020 article in *The New York Post*, a healthy 20-year-old man with zero pre-existing conditions contracted the virus and has since been facing near-debilitating complications in the months after his recovery.

But where the two opposing

methods of 'social distancing' and 'herd immunity' come into conflict is the matter of which costs more lives.

The leading arguments on the side of herd immunity are being made by an organization called "The Great Barrington Declaration". This team of infectious disease epidemiologists and public health scientists have created a petition for the public to sign with the intention to draw awareness

to the downfalls of social

distancing. They argue that the combination of fewer hospital visits, vaccinations, cancer screenings and deteriorating mental health are contributing to an increasing death toll among the general public.

Arguments are also being made that due to less hospital visits than usual, private hospitals are making less money and are therefore cutting funds that would otherwise be used for staffing, medical equipment and patient care. Many believe

this, combined with a receding economy, only worsens the public health effects being felt by so many at this time.

I believe that if we put our trust in the idea of herd immunity at this time, we will be suffering through the consequences by having an increase in cases, a higher death-toll, and complete overload of our medical system.

Not only is the evidence in opposition of herd immunity being effective in any way mounting, but the mere fact

that we don't yet know the effectiveness of the COVID-19 antibodies proves that we cannot just rely on hypotheticals to decide our policy as a society.

Whether or not herd immunity is a viable option at this point clearly requires further research of the disease and how it affects people who have previously had it. Until then, the lifting of social distancing guidelines will only add to the strain felt by our society, as more and more people will become infected.

Facebook Bans

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that is laxer towards them, with all of the exponential growth that *Facebook* allowed them.

Holocaust denial has no place in present times, and the fact that *Facebook* defended its place on their website was a concern when they made their statement in 2018. It's a relief that *Facebook* has removed their platform, but they will also comfortably migrate towards neo-Nazi communities.

Facebook's ban of ads discouraging people from getting vaccinated is perhaps the most baffling of their most recent moves. The myth that vaccines can cause autism has spread using the website for years, with no moves from

Facebook to prevent its spread.

Moreover, the website's ban is not targeted at preventing the spread of the misinformation wholly. It is only banning ads that discourage vaccines.

The only thing that would make this make sense is if *Facebook* is making moves to prevent the spread of the misinformation in preparation of a future vaccination for COVID-19.

Overall, none of *Facebook's* recent bans will have any long-term impact on the conspiracies that they are trying to prevent the spread of. By and large, this is the direct result of *Facebook* allowing their website to be a vehicle for spreading that same information for such a long time completely unchecked.

Online Course Trouble

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forced her to move back home to New Hampshire where she has had to take on a fully online class schedule.

"Being a music major while doing online classes has been really difficult," Clark stated and added that she has had a hard time connecting to her work. "Making art through a screen is very debilitating and requires even more energy than before," Clark said.

Clark had to stick to all online courses this fall. And despite having a heavy schedule with 10 online classes, Clark is not worried that it will affect her grades. "I'm not worried about my

grades really. The only thing that has really been affected is my motivation. Taking 10 classes and staring at a computer screen is very taxing," Clark said.

Although most may prevail through online learning, many students are likely to see a decrease in their grades as the year goes on. A study held by Columbia University and reported by *Harvard Business Review* showed that students taking a course online rather than in person can decrease their course persistence by 7 percentage points, meaning it could affect their final course grade by over 7 points.

Review

Review: Corazon De Frida

New cantina brings a unique Mexican flair to Cambridge

By Jordan Paskell

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Located at 1287 Cambridge St, Cambridge, a newly opened, traditional Mexican restaurant brings authentic food, tasty drinks and a unique atmosphere to the city. Corazon De Frida Cantina serves a variety of authentic Mexican dishes, including a brunch menu on the weekends which provides customers with

additional, satisfying options.

Upon my arrival, I was greeted instantly by a friendly hostess who showed me to my table in the outdoor patio. The tables were set at least 6ft apart, if not more, on the blocked off street in Cambridge. The set up was comfortable; there was enough space for servers and customers to walk through without having to squeeze by, nor could I overhear conversations around

me. The speakers outside played traditional Mexican music which went nicely with the decor outside to set the mood.

Right as I was seated, I was served fresh, warm, crispy tortilla chips with a salsa verde and a regular salsa. Both salsas were full of flavor and booming with fresh tomatoes and peppers and they had just the right level

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"Corazon De Frida" >>>

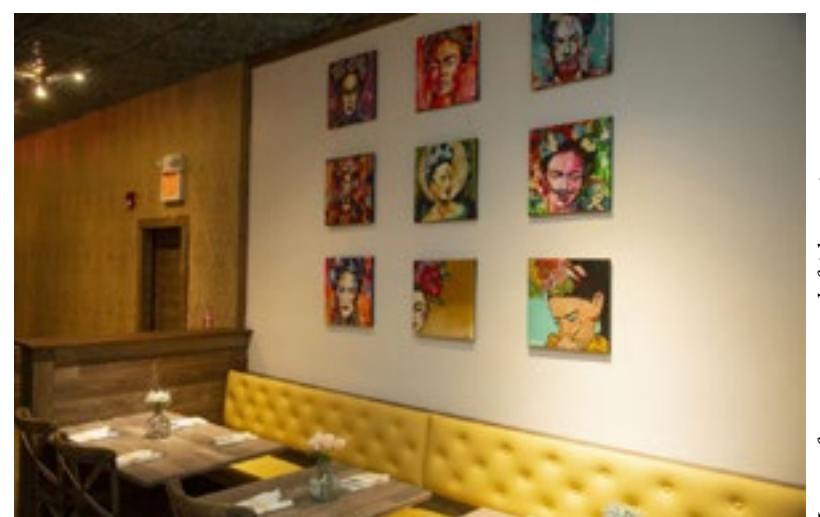


Image from corazondefridacantina.com

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The MWCC Creative Writing students are utilizing their poetry as a creative outlet for their frustrations. Here are some shining examples of those emotions being released in the form of a Sestina. Regarding the Sestina, MWCC Professor of English Michelle Valois said, "The sestina is a French form that is believed to date back to the 12th century. It has six 6-line stanzas and a concluding 3-line stanza. The six words that end each of the lines of the first stanza are repeated in a different order at the end of lines in each of the subsequent five stanzas. In the final 3-line stanzas, the six words are all used with one in the middle of each line and one at the end."

A New Way of Life

By Josilyn Straka
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

We started living this different life, one that is lonely, one we are not used to, trapped in our own home, it's quiet, solemn. This new way of life, I do not like this feeling, of being confined, locked up, I cannot think beyond this. We hear what's going on in the news, giving us anxiety. It is what we have come to know as quarantine.

So what do we do during this time of quarantine? I need to get out of this feeling of loneliness. I understand I need to be safe, but having anxiety heightens mental illness, and the quietness is not helping. I am left alone to just think of what this is doing to society, how everyone else is feeling.

The poor are only getting poorer, the scared feeling of how people will feed their children. Quarantine, Why now? Is this real? You have me thinking If there is a cure and you're not sharing it. Lonely You ask? You want me to be quiet And not ask questions. You want me to feel anxious,

you want me to be under your power and the power of anxiety is more than I prefer to handle, I'm guessing there is no care how I'm feeling.

Let's think about the children for a moment, the quiet whispers of them asking mom why they cannot interact during quarantine.

Their feelings of confusion, the loneliness only makes for fidgety souls, what are they possibly thinking

during this time, praying and thinking how can we get through this, slow this feeling of anxiousness, no restaurants open, no churches open, how do we keep from feeling lonely?

Social distancing at it's worst, that feeling of worry regarding a need for products and food. Quarantine, I feel like screaming, I do not want to be quiet,

children being homeschooled, they do not want the quiet, they want interaction and friends. They shouldn't have to think About wearing a mask everywhere they go during this "quarantine", Can be scary, like a nightmare, and oh the anxiety! This Feeling, of repetition, I need to get away from being Lonely,

I had to find a way out from feeling lonely, An activity, like writing, to make me feel better which helped with the anxiety.

Night Time

By Kayla Cormier
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Night-time instills a certain quiet
A breathless, cold, and stark silence
The stars above line the skies
The moonlit world that never dies
It's either you have the love of the nocturnal cities
Or you're of those who sleep but miss its beauty

Those who rest miss its beauty
Those who don't miss the quiet
All of us live in these cities
That never know the meaning of silence
In the mourning what we love often dies
Replaced by beautiful, big, burning blue skies

When the clouds cover the skies
There is no light to illuminate the beauty
It feels like everything lit by moonlight, dies
All that's left behind is the painful quiet
Like owning a busy household that has found its silence
Somehow, a life that is only known by those who don't live in cities

Where night-time doesn't exist, only in cities
Manmade lights fill the starless Skies
There is endless sound and never a moment of silence
Concrete, skyscrapers, and pollution hide her beauty
Life a constant buzz, never quiet
If feels like we can never rest until each of us dies

It's so hard for us when something dies
We try our best to keep busy like the cities
We run away from the night time quiet
We only want sunlight in the skies
Because we run from things that remind us of life's beauty
That you only really notice when you've experienced the opposing silence

When we run from its silence
The ability to know ourselves dies
We don't have time to be alone with ourselves, and we miss our own beauty
We don't know what it's like to have a break from the advertising in the cities
It tells you to buy, that you are broken, that your life must be constant blue skies
But in the nighttime, alone with your thoughts and yourself, there is peaceful quiet

The silent, stark, and sometimes painful quiet
Of the star and moonlit night-time skies
Only those who choose to see it get to, even in the cities.

REVIEW

Review: The Haunting of Bly Manor

Netflix's horror sequel is best in all the right ways



Image from IMDB, copyright Netflix

By **Angela Risotti**
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

With the Halloween season in full throttle I have had the chance to watch *The Haunting of Bly Manor*, the predecessor to Netflix's hit horror and drama

series, *The Haunting of Hill House*. *The Haunting of Bly Manor* is a series that will leave horror fans longing for more, and I enjoyed this series in the worst ways possible.

The second season of the series was released on October

9, perfectly lining up with the haunting season underway and has been consuming the minds of horror fans across the nation.

Director Mike Flanagan has worked on several notable horror films such as, the *Ouija* series, *Hush*, *Oculus*, as well as several more that have received recognition in the film industry.

Danielle "Dani" Clayton, portrayed by Victoria Pedretti, is a young and lively schoolteacher from the United States who has decided to turn over a new leaf in the United Kingdom upon receiving a new job as the caretaker for two children at Bly Manor. During her stay, an eerie aura settles over the manor and as each day passes, so does a new apparition into her life.

As a connoisseur of subtle horror, this series gave us just that. The beginning fed us a poignant atmosphere that sets up the unsettling introduction of the two children and housekeeper at the manor. From there Dani connects with the rest of the staff and starts to catch on to the bizarre behavior that the children first hid from her.

Dani, a persistent teacher with experience in the stubborn

child field, tries to correct their behavior before realizing that it is too late. As the series continues, a fresh break from the horror is with her love interest Jamie, who is the groundskeeper at the estate. This series felt like a breath of thick, cold, moist air. It had me holding my breath, watching between my fingers, hands erupting in numbness from the emotion that filled my chest nearing the end of the series. I cannot remember the last time that a series as made me feel as much as I did within the short time span.

The show's blue hue and cool tone it presents to us as the audience sets the atmosphere as eerie and uninviting—*dreamlike* is a good word I would like to associate that feeling with. Set in the 1980's, the stylist makes it very apparent with how the characters dress as well as their speech and undertones of their voices.

Compared to *Hill House*, *Bly Manor* had more exposure and natural light, but only in the sense that more scenes are shot outside; otherwise, the inside of the manor is just as dark and gloomy as *Hill House*, a perfect

setting for the ghosts of plague doctors and former caretakers to roam the halls as they please. In terms of diegetic and non-diegetic sounds within the series, there is not that much of the latter. There is a narrator in the beginning of the series who is essentially explaining the show to some friends around her as a 'ghost story,' but her voice only makes an appearance once or twice as non-diegetic sound.

As the case is with the first season, the series touches nonchalantly on lesbian relationships in a way that does not feel forced by the director; as someone who is a part of the LGBT community this issue tends to come up quite often, especially with sapphic characters and relationships.

The Haunting of Bly Manor had me feeling suppressed emotions of desolation and dread, but also dazed and rattled all at once. A show that is able to expel such dark emotions from an individual deserves so much more recognition and attention from media outlets and review sites across the world.

Corazon De Frida

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of spice. Not too much, but just enough to enjoy it. For an appetizer, I ordered Guacamole to go along with my chips and a server came over with a guacamole cart and made it fresh right in front of me. He brought out a stone bowl used to mash foods, a Molcajete, and he mashed the avocado, mixed in onion, tomato, cilantro and lime juice and served it to me.

The portion size of the guacamole was enough for 2-3 people. I was satisfied after a couple scoops. It was \$8 for one generously sized bowl. Their appetizers range from \$6- \$16.

For dinner I ordered the El

Mero Mero Burrito. This is a massive burrito full flavor, stuffed with rice, refried beans, achiote chicken, and chorizo; the outside of the burrito is drizzled with creame, queso sauce and topped with pico de

gallo. The burrito was served hot, to perfection and was also aesthetically appealing. For \$16, the amount of food inside this

burrito left me satisfied and I was able to take plenty home. For an alcoholic beverage I ordered a pineapple- jalapeno margarita. It was served within five minutes. At first glance the drink was colorful, a yellow

overall it was sweet and slightly spicy, exactly what it identifies as. The drink was \$12, about average for drinks in the city.

The patio had 4 servers throughout the night. It was pretty busy, with most tables

consisting of parties of 3 or more. My server was on top of everything, from refilling my water, to getting my plates out

to me quickly, to making sure I was satisfied with everything. My tab at the end was just under \$40. I paid and went home with my leftover Guacamole and half a burrito for the next day.

Overall, Corazon De Frida deserves five stars for bringing authentic, freshly made Mexican food to the city. For a generous amount of fairly priced food, and a unique experience such as guacamole made tableside, this is the place where families can have fun and friends can get together for tasty drinks!

"My server was on top of everything, from refilling my water, to getting my plates out to me quickly, to making sure I was satisfied with everything."

— Jordan Paskell