

## Assisting First-Generation College Students TRIO SSS Continues a 30-Year Tradition

By Josilyn Straka  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) has a program for students called TRIO Student Support Services (SSS), which includes Visions and Rx programs. Their aim is to assist first-generation college students striving to earn a degree and have been doing so for more than thirty years.

Sara Williams, former Program Manager of TRIO SSS, hopes to meet all needs of students by providing academic advising, professional tutoring, transfer counseling, and

offering personal support. These programs also loan out equipment such as laptops and offer workshops and seminars.

Williams said the most popular and most requested service is professional tutoring. Students are provided with weekly one-on-one sessions. She said, “students come in for tutoring and leave making a connection with someone because they are meeting with the same person; they get to know you, you get to know them.”

continued on page 4  
“TRIO Support” >>>



Photo courtesy of MWCC

## Disguised in Your Own Skin Former Student and Psychology Professor Discuss Imposter Syndrome



Photo by Markus Spiske from Unsplash

By Skyler Elliott  
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Many students face a time at some point in their lives when they feel uncomfortable in their own skin. Imposter Syndrome holds no prejudice when choosing its victims: race, age, gender, culture, physical

ability, or level of intelligence, imposter syndrome isn't picky, and it can affect anyone.

Imposter Syndrome can be displayed in several forms, showing itself through symptoms of perfectionism and isolation, as well as established or recurring feelings of not belonging. It can also cause one to feel as if they don't deserve the achievements that they have worked for. Someone with imposter syndrome may also feel as if the accomplishments they have achieved are not good enough.

Julie Capozzi, a Psychology Instructor at MWCC, explained that even “though the imposter phenomenon isn't an official diagnosis listed in the DSM, psychologists and others acknowledge that it is a very real and specific form of intellectual self-doubt.” She described

that some of the impacts this syndrome can have on people are that “imposter feelings are generally accompanied by anxiety and, often, depression.” Imposter syndrome can hit students hard and can even make confident students doubt their abilities.

Walter Bouchard is a former college student who majored in “English with a concentration in creative writing.” During the interview, Bouchard described the way he was passionate about the courses he took. Bouchard mentioned that he “enjoyed poetry classes, both literature and creative writing [and that] those classes are what made [him] attracted to [his] eventual major.”

However, Bouchard also had his own experience with imposter syndrome.

Though he may have chosen

a major that he was interested in, Bouchard still said he felt “like other people [had] their lives and [their] agendas so much better put together than [himself].” Elaborating further, he explained that “sometimes it can be hard to imagine [himself] being successful at long-term roles or projects.”

When students experience feelings like this, Capozzi said that “good time management and mindfulness techniques are very helpful in reducing [the] stress [that can be associated with imposter syndrome].” This can help to break down bigger long-term projects into smaller, much more manageable ones, and it can make big decisions easier to tackle because they will be less intimidating in approach.

continued on page 2  
“Imposter Syndrome” >>>

### PREVIEWS

#### From Alaska to the Mount

Assistant Chemistry Professor, Dr. John Sirois, has just begun his first semester at Mount Wachusett Community College after moving back from Alaska, where he taught the past five years.

For the full article, see page 5

#### Benefiting From Technical Education

Students entering college after high school graduation have many challenges they have to face and decisions they have to make.

For the full article, see page 3

#### Review: Don't Worry Darling (2022)

I'd Worry, Darling.

For the full review, see page 6

Comics: see page 9

Events: see pages 10-11

# A Garden of Benefits

## Student Shares His Thoughts on Plants and MWCC's Green Society



Photo courtesy of MWCC

### The MWCC greenhouse located on the Gardner campus

By *Skyler Elliott*

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Whether it's bright colors on beautiful flowers, a touch of green for a hint of calmness, or even a garden full of delicious fruits and vegetables, student Derrick McConnell said he "highly recommend[s] adding plants to your everyday life."

McConnell is a student who has participated in some of the meetings held by MWCC's

Green Society and mentioned that "they often would meet in the greenhouse located at the college campus."

When he would attend these meetings, McConnell said, "they would discuss and perform different levels of greenhouse maintenance." While doing so, they would also talk about the various "ways that [they] could increase the amount of recycling being done." McConnell also

mentioned that "[they] would discuss how [they] could increase awareness about global warming by finding better ways to recycle."

McConnell explained that he gardened when he was younger and "always found it to be interesting." He described gardening to be "an enjoyable experience [because] it adds a sense of responsibility to your life."

This act of being nurturing towards something living like in other ways as well. Beyond just helping an individual to develop responsible habits and tendencies, McConnell discussed some of the other benefits that can come from taking care of a garden or nurturing some house plants.

He said that "in return for nurturing your houseplants, they provide you with good air quality by filtering the air around them through the process of photosynthesis." Through further discussion, McConnell also described the ways he feels plants are therapeutic.

McConnell explained that he "feels like just an amateur when it comes to plants, [and that] sometimes they don't always grow the way [you] would like them to, but the act of taking care of them feels relaxing and rewarding."

The Green Society at MWCC explores all of these benefits and more. McConnell said he

believes that "working in a greenhouse is a great way to learn more about plants."

The only requirement for membership that the club has is that an individual must have some relation to the school in the sense that they are a student, a faculty member, or a previous alumnus of the college itself.

If you find yourself interested in the natural world of plants, you should reach out to The Green Society and ask when they are planning to hold their next meeting. All of their contact information can be found on the MWCC website and through [iconnect.mwcc.edu](http://iconnect.mwcc.edu) on InvolveMOUNT.

The Green Society is listed in the groupings of organizations. When you locate this section, click on "Green Society," and you will be brought to their contact info as well as more information on the club.

# Imposter Syndrome

>>> continued from page 1

Capozzi also suggested that students "plan for the future but [that they shouldn't] let it dominate [their] actions." She stated, "Feeling proud of accomplishments no matter how small can increase [the] positive energy felt [by an individual]."

There are times, though, when those accomplishments may not seem like they are worth celebrating. Bouchard, for instance, "had classes in subjects that were very interesting to [him, but] wound up apathetic toward [them] because the instruction wasn't engaging or challenging."

He mentioned that one of the biggest issues he faced when it came to feeling successful in his college courses was that "[he] felt like in any class, if [he] was motivated to succeed, [he] would do well. But some classes it felt like the professors wanted to be there less than the students

[and] that's when [he] was prone to struggle."

For Jorge Echevarria, though, comfort comes with ease.

Echevarria is a 28-year-old military veteran who was previously enlisted in the Army National Guard. He is also a local resident of Gardner who actively tries to engage with his community. He is someone who has "always felt comfortable in [his] own skin."

This, of course, may mean different things for different people, but when it comes to describing his experience in the military, Echevarria explained that he "never felt more at home in [his] life as it gave [him] something [he] never knew [he] needed. [Which was] a platform [for him] to grow how [he wanted]."

He said that "the training [he] received was very much like anyone in college" and emphasized that "you're the

only person who can push you." It's up to you to create your own network of support that will help you to achieve your goals.

Echevarria offered some advice on establishing a support system. He suggested that "when you're a long way from home, you have to be able to trust any and every number of people with you to have your back, basically making you a family."

Imposter syndrome may cause others to fixate on expectations, and Capozzi reminded students that "sometimes we hold back on developing what we want to become due to [the] pressure of 'shoulds' [crafted by our impression of the expectations in our surrounding society]."

However, Echevarria suggested that regardless of society, if you need support, you should "always ask for help, because you're not alone and [there is always] someone in need of your [help as well]."

## Have a Story to Tell?

If you've got the scoop on the latest community news, feel free to contact our editors about adding your voice to the *Observer* crew! To reach out, send an email to:

[mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu](mailto:mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu)

# Searching for Stress Management Solutions

## Could Joining Clubs Help Students Destress?

By Eoin Haggerty

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Melissa Manzi, the mental health counselor at the Mount since 2011, has found that gaming for students “is a way to destress.”

However, she also found that it can be destructive behavior if not managed correctly. Manzi said, “I would say when a student comes to me about gaming, it’s that it’s a problem or interfering with their studies.” She added, “Many are not aware of how much time they are spending. Some students have to take it out of their day because they can’t stop.”

Chemistry student Samuel Thieme typically spends his time outside of school playing games,

watching videos, listening to music, and walking around his neighborhood. He said he finds that these distractions help with stress from school, help get his mind off of things, and to take a break. “Trying to do everything in one unbroken sitting is exhausting,” Thieme said.

Although he enjoys games with a learning curve, he finds that any type of game can be a good distraction. “If I can spend my time not doing schoolwork, then it helps with distracting me from the stress,” Thieme said.

However, even taking games out of the equation, Thieme explained he finds himself putting off assignments until or occasionally after the due date. “To be honest, I struggle with

that,” Thieme said. “My plan is usually to do things [ASAP], but I never really actually do that.”

Gaming is not the singular issue for most students Manzi has had appointments with. She said she believes that students throw out behaviors that are beneficial to them, like walking or going to the gym, so that they can go to school and their other obligations. “If they integrate it into their schedule, they would find it helps with stress,” Manzi said. “The biggest problem is lack of time management, which inevitably causes problems with school.”

Manzi said she believes that students should belong to a club or community, with clubs helping students who aren’t

necessarily outgoing or social. Manzi said, “connection is the most important thing you can do for your mood, and we all need to feel connected.”

Kathy Matson, head of Student Life since 2016, had been looking into an eSports club before COVID-19 and attended a meeting going over the logistics and benefits of such a club. During COVID-19, there were small events set up online for students to participate in, but it was not yet a club. After these events had taken place, Matson went looking for an advisor for the club, reaching out to the IT team at the Mount.

Now officially a club, Matson said tournaments have been an overall success and that students

who were at the last one have said “they would absolutely join another tournament” and it “was [a] great [way] to meet new people.”

Matson said that students should look into joining a club if they want a distraction from school. Matson also explained that clubs could be a good way to manage school-related stress, as students can meet new people who have similar interests.

“We have this so students can meet informally, whether it’s related to their major or not,” Matson said. “It helps build connections with people that they might not just get necessarily from the classroom.”

# Benefiting From Technical Education

## How Vocational Studies Help Students Prepare for Life After High School

By Mikayla Barrett

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Students entering college after high school graduation have many challenges they have to face and decisions they have to make. However, students who have graduated from a technical high school have eliminated some of these challenges and decisions by gaining the knowledge they need to face them.

Technical high schools combine traditional academics with classes that focus on honing the skills of a particular trade. Each school only has a couple of dozen trade shops, but each can lead to hundreds of different careers.

Students in a technical high school specialize in a trade of their choice to learn the skills that would allow them to enter a career field after graduation. Those that continue their education at a post-secondary institution have an arsenal of

knowledge that they can apply to their studies.

Amanda Fales, a 2019 graduate of Nashoba Valley Technical High School, attended because she “wanted a challenge” in her

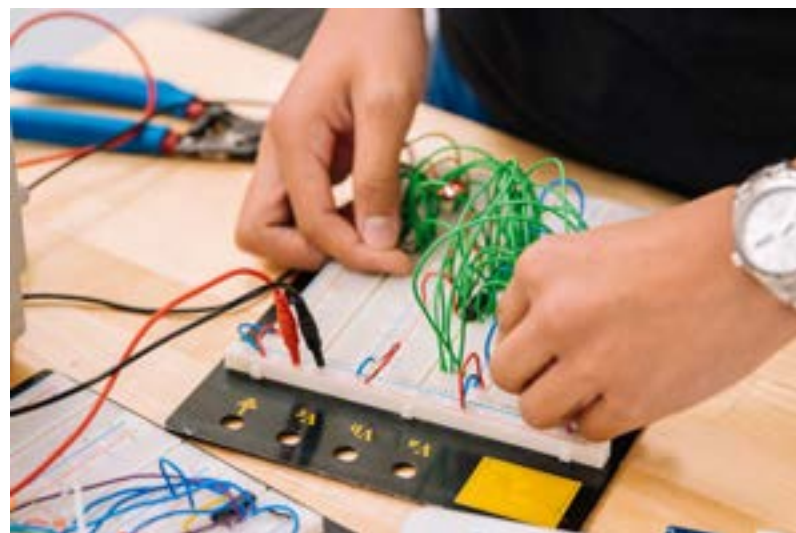


Photo by Jeswin Thomas from Unsplash

schooling. She is a hands-on learner who thrived with that approach to learning presented at Nashoba Tech.

Hannah Bean, a 2020 graduate of Montachusett Regional

Vocational Technical School, attended because she wanted the “preparation for the real world” that the school offered students. She stated that the school gave her a “good transition from

“wasn’t for [her].” She enrolled at Mount Wachusett in the fall of 2020, studying liberal arts and global and cultural studies. Attending a technical high school does not mean students have to go into the trade that they select. Fales is proof of that. She enjoyed learning the skills in the health assisting field but realized that she wanted to learn more about helping people in other ways. The technical education taught Fales about responsibility and collaborating with a team, both valuable skills necessary for her future. Ms. Bean stated that the technical experience taught at Monty Tech helps build the “foundation and experience” to work in a professional setting. Ms. Bean was a graphic communications student at Monty Tech and is continuing her education in graphic and interactive design at MWCC. She said that the design program

academics to trade.”

Fales was a health assisting student who then went on to nursing school in the fall of 2019. After a couple of semesters, she realized that this pathway

at her high school prepared her exceptionally well for her classes in college.

Ms. Bean stated that she “Already knew how to use the software” that was being taught in the class. In addition to already knowing the skills, theories, and terminology that students learn in the graphic design program, this prior knowledge “helped [her] have a better and easier time in class.”

Ms. Bean said she believes that “Going to a tech school prepares you for the real world.” The curriculum can build “the foundation and experience” for workers, she said. Bean also stated that “most students go to college not knowing their major,” but in a technical high school, students get to explore their options which often leads to finding their path in life.

continued on page 5  
“Technical Education Benefits”  
>>>

# U.S. Immigration Court Dates Delayed Indefinitely, Hopeful Immigrants Held at Bay for Years

## Political Activist Explains the Pain in Waiting

By *Bushrah Namirimu*  
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

U.S. immigration courts have hit a historic backlog jam not seen in decades, generating multiyear delays for immigrants seeking asylum, according to a report by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC).

According to a Jan. 18 report from TRAC Immigration, there were almost 1.6 million “pending cases...at the end of December 2021...the largest in history.” TRAC also reported that “wait times” for an asylum claim hearing were averaging “58 months or just under 5 years.”

Now at the end of August 2022, there are almost 2 million pending cases, where 750,000 of these cases, according to a Sept. 27 New York Times article, are



Photo by Fabian Fauth from Unsplash

regarding asylum.

When political activist Hidaya Othieno (under an alias) decided to flee her home country Kenya to the U.S, she never anticipated that it would be over ten years before she would be granted asylum or even have her case heard by the immigration judge.

Othieno, who ran from Naivasha, Kenya, after several alleged assassination attempts by what she suspected were government agencies, said that she left behind five children, including a newborn baby girl who is now twelve years old. She said she was a widow by the

time she ran out of the country, so her children were on their own without a parent.

Forty-six-year-old Othieno expressed her disappointment in the U.S government regarding how slowly issues concerning asylum have been handled. For the last ten years or so, every time Hidaya received mail, she would feel a pang of hope, imagining that her life could now begin. But each time, there was disappointment – it wasn't her asylum decision.

“It's like I'm stuck; my life is frozen. It has no meaning at all. I wanted to regain my freedom, but I am not free at all,” Othieno said. She added that her mental health had suffered greatly during the years she has waited for a decision. Every year, people come to the United States seeking protection because they have suffered persecution or fear

that they will suffer persecution.

This caseload is one that has continued to climb through both Democratic and Republican administrations, according to the TRAC report. This report explained that when President Bush became president in 2001, the number of backlogged cases was 149,338. However, TRAC said that “by 2008, the backlog had grown substantially and continued to grow under President Obama [and]... accelerated under President Trump.”

According to the Human Rights First (HRF) organization, “the asylum office backlog grew to more than 386,000 pending applications by the end of fiscal year 2020, with the highest number of pending applications from Venezuela.”

## TRIO Support

>>> continued from page 1

In the wake of the pandemic, the TRIO faculty needed to make changes to continue to serve students. They now offer all services via online and or Zoom. Williams said this is a positive change, as before this, they only served students at the Gardner campus. Williams said, “this has allowed us to open up services to all TRIO students, before we would prioritize Gardner students. We can now meet with any student anywhere.”

In order to be eligible, a student must meet one of the three criteria for the TRIO SSS programs; they are as follows: a person is considered a first-generation college student where neither parent has a four-year degree, a student has a limited income background, or a student has a documented disability.

TRIO SSS is grant funded by the US Department of

Education, and they are required to document how the students are eligible and how they can be served, according to Williams.

When asked what the difference is between the Visions

and Rx programs, Williams said Visions serves students in non-healthcare majors, and Rx focuses on students in healthcare majors. Between the two programs, they serve four hundred twenty students per academic year, which is nineteen percent of the students who actually qualify for the program.

Justina Johnson, a student at MWCC and enrolled in the Visions program, said, “It is

convenient for me to be a part of the seminars and workshops via Zoom, although I am looking forward to attending in-person events soon.” If a student cannot make it to the scheduled Zoom,

they are recorded and posted on Blackboard.

Johnson said she heard about TRIO when she attended the Marty Expo virtually. She said she appreciates that she can get ahold of her advisor easier and receives a response back promptly. Her advisor helped her with timely paperwork and helped her get her books in time for classes to start.

Johnson said she attended the

scholarship seminar virtually. It was helpful to her because it informed her regarding the essay portion when applying for the scholarships, and it was easier for her to complete the process.

Johnson said, “I think it's great that this program works with first-generation students because I am that student, I did not know what to expect in my first semester at MWCC and I had TRIO in my corner and that's a good thing.”

Williams said they try to accommodate all students and wants services available to all. Whether a student is sick or has no transportation, they could do a meeting on their lunch break and not have to miss as much work as they would if they only had the option of being on campus. According to Williams, “A student can just hop on a Zoom, get what they need done and then get back to what they were doing.”

Williams also said, “Faculty understands we are complex

people, and we want to feel connected to something, students find that they have an advocate,” within the TRIO office.

Now that TRIO is operating in the first semester with in-person classes, Gloria Correa, the new Program Manager in the TRIO office and Director of the TRIO Program Gaurav Khanna noted, “There is a lot more traffic through the office.”

Khanna said that he is seeing more students in-person as opposed to virtual. “There was a time you were not able to have chance encounters, but now if you see a student in the hallway, you can start a conversation,” Khanna said.

Correa said, “Student's still have access to virtual meetings, but most of their tutoring appointments are in-person this Fall. When asked if he thought the virtual feature would be phased out any time soon, Khanna said, “It is here to stay at least for the near future, then I think it will depend on demand.”

# From Alaska to the Mount

## Meet MWCC's New Chemistry Professor, John Sirois



Photo courtesy of John Sirois

By **Maddie Willigar**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Assistant Chemistry Professor, Dr. John Sirois, has just begun his first semester at Mount Wachusett Community College after moving back from Alaska, where he taught the past five years.

Originally from Massachusetts, Sirois moved away from home after completing his master's degree. From here, he continued his education at the University

of Rhode Island (URI), where he obtained his Ph.D., and Oregon State University (OSU), where he completed his post-doctoral fellowship.

After his fellowship at OSU, Sirois said he wasn't quite ready to make his way back to New England as he was still eager to learn from different people and places. This led him to apply to many teaching positions in various parts of the world, to which Sirois decided on

Matanuska-Susitna College in Alaska.

Being many miles from home, Sirois said video games played a significant factor in remaining connected to his family. "The only reason I was able to be so far away for so long was because we all played online video games together pretty regularly," Sirois said.

However, even before moving to Alaska, Sirois said he always knew he would return home,

and that he did. After teaching at Matanuska-Susitna College for five years, Sirois wanted to move back to Massachusetts be closer to his family.

Having just come from a community college, Sirois knew he wanted to remain teaching at a school of this size, which was one of the reasons he was drawn to the Mount. On top of this, he explained that MWCC seemed "receptive" to how he wanted to teach students and that they trusted his previous work with students.

"I am fortunate that I was able to work in a beautiful place like Alaska with excellent faculty members. I learned a great amount during my time at Matanuska-Susitna College, and I am excited to share my experience with our community at MWCC," Sirois said.

One aspect of his experience that Sirois was excited to bring to the Mount was organic chemistry, which he was not able to teach at his previous college despite it being his favorite class. Sirois said, "It just explains everything around you. It's the chemistry of living things, so you can really just appreciate the world a bit more when you

understand the basics of it."

Sirois takes opportunities to appreciate the world often, as most of his hobbies involve outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, backpacking, skiing, and walking his two-year-old lab mix. He has also recently started homebrewing, which Sirois said has a lot of chemistry behind it.

However, despite his interest in chemistry, Sirois said he didn't always know he wanted to be a professor. "I'm a first-generation college student, so I was just figuring it all out by myself," Sirois said. After signing up for his undergraduate degree, he said the first few years of college were challenging, but that eventually, he was able to "get the rhythm of things and... pull [his] head up and look at the future."

During undergraduate school is when Sirois said he "fell in love with the field," as he was able to get more involved with lab work. Coming from a family of chefs, Sirois said, "I felt completely comfortable in the lab since I sent most of my life until then working in kitchens

**continued on page**  
**"New Chemistry Professor" >>>**

# Technical Education Benefits

>>> continued from page 3

Brian Bean, a graduate, and instructor of Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School, teach graphic communications, the same program he graduated from. After 18 years of working in the field of graphic communications, he returned to his roots to teach students the trade that he is passionate about.

Mr. Bean prepares his students to be able to enter a career right after graduation. He teaches them about customer service and running a business alongside technical skills.

As a teacher, Mr. Bean stated

that vocational instructors play a vital role in their students' lives. They are "parents, friends, and counselors" as well as teachers. The students who attend are all "misfits in their own ways" but find family among each other. Bean said that "anyone fits in" at a technical high school.

One of the many stereotypes that revolve around technical education is that vocational high schools are the place where "you send students who are not college material," Mr. Bean reflected. However, this is false because though students can transition to a trade right after graduation, many of them continue their

education to receive a degree.

Throughout their high school career, students learn that "the academics become more important" than their trade skills, said Mr. Bean. To excel in a trade, academic knowledge must be applied.

Both Nashoba Tech and Monty Tech use an alternating schedule. One week is for academics, and the other students work in their technical areas. This method is beneficial because students receive the same education as a district high school student but with the added knowledge of a trade.

These skills allow students

to "step right into a career," stated Mr. Bean. Many technical instructors teach business and workplace skills alongside their trade skills. Ms. Bean reflected on her experience learning how to run a business. She stated that at Monty Tech, the graphic communications shop does "live jobs where they create products for non-profit organizations." This helped them get "experience working with customers."

In addition to learning workplace skills in the classroom, students also have the opportunity to put their learning into action on Co-Op. As a junior, Fales went out

into the workforce, working at a long-term care facility. She enjoyed the experience and said she "was glad to use her skills and get the experience working with patients."

Ms. Bean said that attending a technical high school is one of the "smartest things you can do." The education that a trade school gives students helps prepare them for life after high school. Mr. Bean stated that vocational high schools "are some of the most superb schools in the area with high average testing scores compared to district schools."

## Creative Writing Blue Horse

By Mandy Limbaugh

After *Blue Horse* by Franz Marc

The blue horse leaps  
as the multi-colored sky  
illuminates his friends.  
In a sapphire glow

they run and play  
with no care in the world.  
Red and yellow stormy sky,  
streaks of white shooting down.

Three heart-shaped indigo bodies  
nipping at each other,  
bucking and kicking,  
running through blades of grass.

The gentleness of these  
magnificent animals,  
angels sent from God.  
The beauty above us.

## City's Lullaby

By Maddie Willigar

After Aron Wiesenfeld's "Study for Night Reading"

These windows are a frame  
to the rain that paints our city like  
Van Goh: dressed in monochromatic  
blues and flickering skyscrapers that  
bleed and swirl on a concrete canvas.

I wonder how many nights I've  
spent watching it streak down  
my windows, water staining glass  
the same way I let tears fall  
down and sting my cheeks.

Or how many nights I've spent  
sitting in the shadows, staring at  
an open book of letters you wrote,  
the way I observe homesick people  
phone home on these moonlit streets.

I've spent too many nights waiting  
for you to come back through the  
door the way blue night glow hugs  
me as I sleep; the city lulls me into  
dreams of the people we once were  
and the people we can't be.

# Review: *Don't Worry Darling* (2022)

## I'd Worry, Darling

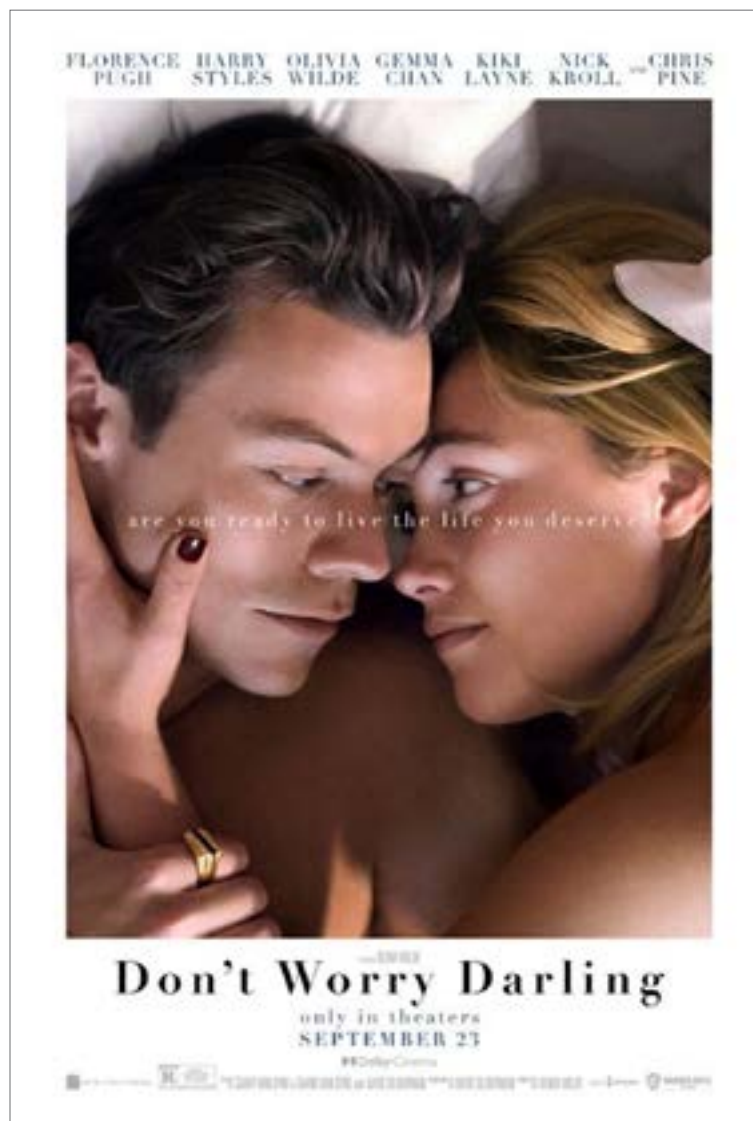


Image from IMBD copyright Warner Bros. Pictures

By Gabriel Velez

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

*Don't Worry Darling*, directed by Olivia Wilde, takes place in Victory: a 1950s-styled city in the desert, where the men go off to work on new materials while the wives stay at home. They cook, clean, and support the men who change the world. One of these wives, Alice (played by Florence Pugh), begins to question the pleasant town they live in, and the world around her seems to get a lot more confusing and terrifying as a result.

Having loved Wilde's strong directorial debut, *Booksmart*, which I thought was clever, full of heart, and hilarious, I was incredibly excited by *Don't Worry Darling*. This film stars Wilde, Pugh, Harry Styles, Kiki Layne, Nick Kroll, Gemma Chan, and Chris Pine.

Though I liked the trailers, the cast, and the concept of the film, I, unfortunately, found myself really disliking *Don't Worry, Darling*. I found it a bit too ambitious, with none of the explanations.

The film is a mystery, with the whole film following Alice as she slowly realizes what's going on with Victory, particularly what's going on with Frank (played by Chris Pine). However, very few of the questions she asks are answered. There are many horrifying and unusual things that happen in the film, and none of them are particularly explained. As a result, none of the resolutions are satisfying.

The entire ending is unexplained. I can't go into those details due to spoilers (I also think you should see the film yourself to come to your

own conclusions), but in my own opinion, none of that final act quite worked for me. The ending was so brutally unsatisfying that it had my theater laughing. Think the ending of *The Empire Strikes Back* if the answers weren't satisfying or if they didn't leave you wanting more.

Luckily, the film does have great bright spots. The acting is mostly fantastic (we'll get to you, Harry), spearheaded by a jaw-droppingly good Florence Pugh. Get this woman an Oscar nomination; she is so great in this film. Pugh perfectly sells the discomfort, sadness, and confusion that Alice goes through. In my eyes, this is her best performance.

The costume design is also great, and the cinematography by Matthew Libatique was really excellent. There's a car chase in the third act that was really well filmed. It's a very well-put-together film, with solid editing and fantastic direction. However, I think the real problem here is the screenplay. The intrigue is there, but none of the answers are satisfying or properly explained.

An unfortunate casualty of the film is Styles; he's just miscast. None of his deliveries quite work. Shia LaBeouf probably would have been better suited to this role. I don't care about any of the drama that this film is associated with, and luckily the film does seem pretty disconnected from all that, but I just couldn't help thinking about what LaBeouf would have done. Styles does what he can, but I don't know if he was quite what was needed for this role.

Overall, I wish I could have enjoyed this film more. It's not well thought out, and though it is a really solid production, the sloppiness and baffling ending really hold it down. I'm sorry to give this a 4/10.

# Review:

## *Barbarian* (2022)

### Intense, Surprising, and Not at All What I Expected

By Gabriel Velez

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

The film *Barbarian*, directed by Zach Cregger and starring Georgina Campbell, Bill Skarsgård, and Justin Long, centers around Tess (played by Campbell), who decides to stay in an Airbnb as she prepares for her job interview in Detroit. However, when she arrives, not only does the key not work, but it turns out the Airbnb is double booked, and something sinister seems to be lying underneath the surface.

That's all I'm going to say about the plot of the film. I did not really know much about the film before seeing it. I knew the basic premise of the Airbnb, but I did not know anything else outside of that. This was thankfully so because this is a really intense and scary film for many reasons.

The performances here are all exceptional, with Campbell being the standout. The film is fantastically directed by Cregger, who seemed to do everything he possibly could to create something effectively creepy. By shooting at a smaller aspect ratio, choosing to keep everything rather locked off and still, and choosing when to use handheld or anything frantic with the camera, all created a creepy atmosphere that the film never exits.



Image from IMBD copyright 20th Century Studios

However, I will say the film has some ineffective humor and poor writing choices at the end of the film. I won't spoil what, but it seemed the writers put themselves into a precarious position where the only way out was to do something rather unbelievable. It solved the problem but left me personally a

bit unsatisfied. However, the film did not stop with the surprises. I was constantly surprised and tense at almost every turn. Overall, I really enjoyed *Barbarian*. It is a really solid horror film that I hope can do well for itself. If not in theaters, then hopefully on Hulu at some point. It's an 8.5/10 from me.

## ATTENTION:

*The Mount Observer* is looking for spooooooky contributions throughout the month of October.

So send your HORROR-THEMED reviews, poems, short-stories, photos, artwork, or news items to

[mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu](mailto:mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu)

to be featured in our Spooktacular Halloween Section!

## My Thoughts

By Josilyn Straka

I hear the rain tapping monotonously on the metal roof just outside my window, I lay there trying not to hear the excruciating thoughts of my unexpected departure

The way I interpret the gray colored sky is unsoundly disparate, agonizing in pain like anguish with no sympathy, Thoughts of my unexpected departure

The empty feeling that is felt, sadness wrapped around me like a blanket heartache halo's my hollow heart, Thoughts of my unexpected departure

Thankfully, that was a lifetime ago, I now let the sun hit my face for as long as I can stand it, there are no longer thoughts of my unexpected departure

## The Pebble Frog Poem

By Rachel Geer

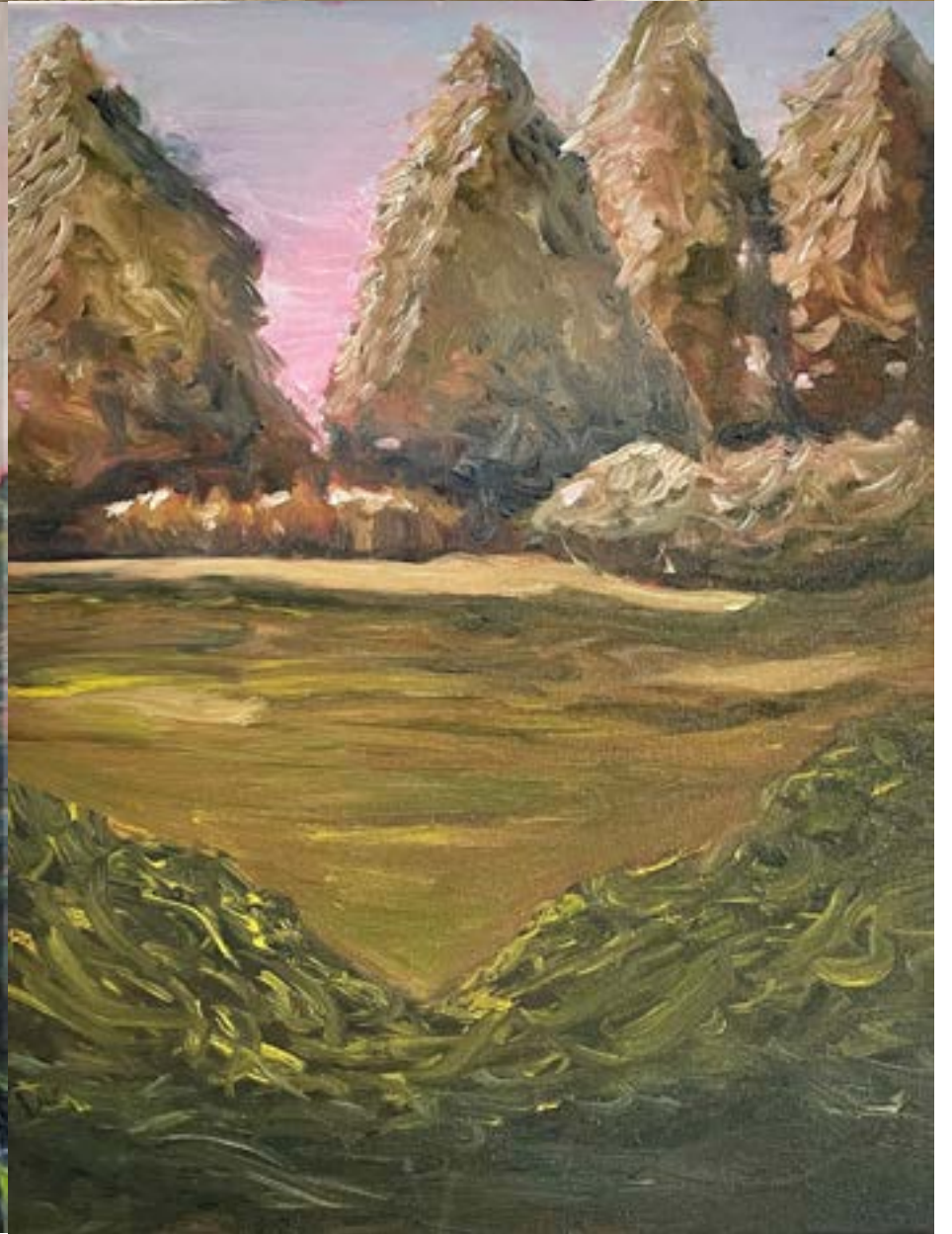
The pebble frog, small, round, grey curls itself into a ball, looking, for all the world, like a pebble before casting itself down the steep of its mountain home.

It gives gravity, and vector dynamics, control. A little Anti-Sisyphus, the frog's goal is to reach the bottom with as little fuss as possible. It bounces off even sharp surfaces without injury.

When the ground levels off enough (friction overcoming momentum), it uncurls, unharmed, OK with its new surroundings.

A girl is not like a pebble frog. When she missteps, she'll not roll safely, efficiently downhill. She'll bleed all the way down and lie, stunned, on the rocks where the ground levels out and the friction from her bruised body overcomes gravity's pull. She'll stagger when she stands, OK with her new surroundings anyway.

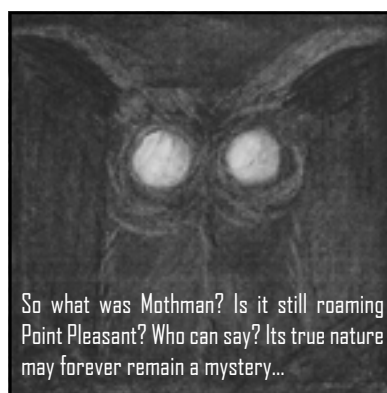
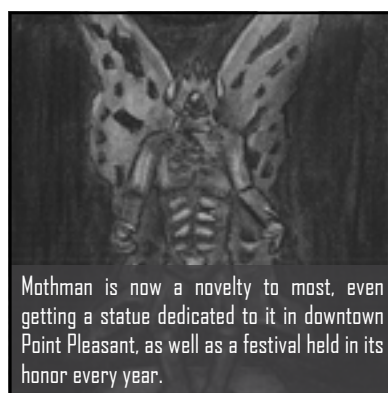
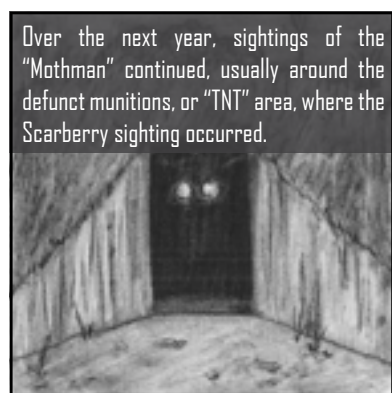
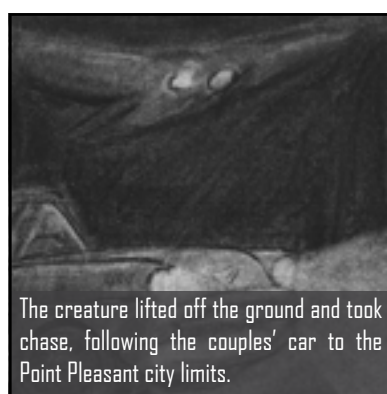
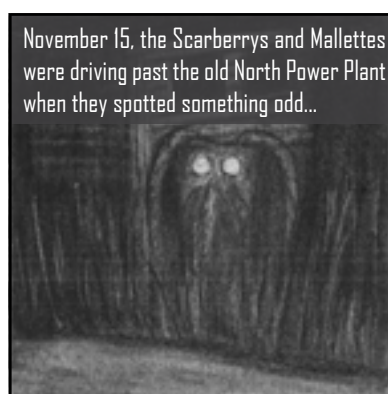
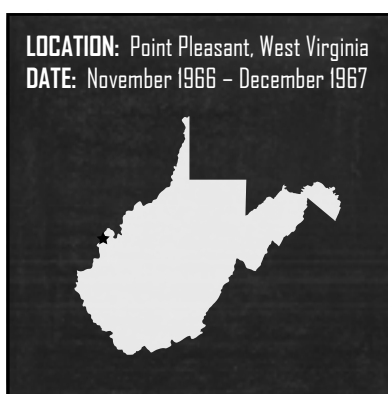
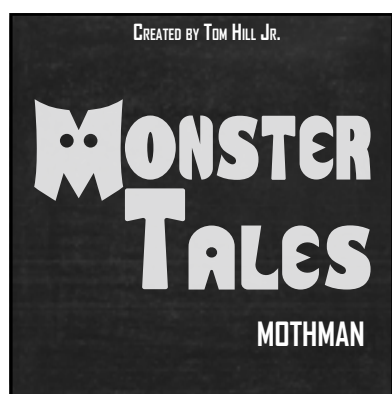
After all, if the mythical Malfeasant had had his own way, he'd have come down the mountain long ago and let that boulder be.



## ART ON CAMPUS

Changing exhibitions of student work from all art courses occur throughout the semester in the upper lobby gallery space behind the box office. Currently on exhibit is student work from Drawing I, Painting II, Two-dimensional Design, and Three-dimensional Design. Come take a look at what the students have been working on this semester!





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# New Chemistry Professor

>>> continued from page 5

for catering companies with my family."

Upon completing his bachelor's degree at UMass Dartmouth, Sirois took some time off schooling to work in "industry." Here he worked as a field technician for a few months before switching to work as a forensic scientist. Working in these fields brought to light how much he missed the challenge of academics, prompting Sirois's return to UMass Dartmouth for his master's, and then to URI for his Ph.D.

Though during this time, Sirois thought research and lab work was what he would pursue after college, he began to see a different spark towards the end of his graduate studies. With new undergraduate students coming in each semester, Sirois soon realized that he really enjoyed mentoring and working with them and that this was what he wanted to do.

"Teaching...has been the only job I've ever had where every semester and every day I wake up and I'm just super excited to see what happens," Sirois said.

He explained that even though he has taught the same classes for a long time, every semester is different. This variety is one of his favorite parts of teaching.

Sirois said another one of his favorite parts is helping students understand and use the difficult concepts he teaches, as well as the direct communication and "dialogue with students." Before coming to the Mount, Sirois had been teaching entirely online since the pandemic. Coming back in person, Sirois explained, being able to work with the students made things so much

"more real."

Yet, the most challenging part of being a professor, Sirois said, is determining how to "convey" or break down these complex concepts in a way that students can understand. Sirois noted that the "traditional lecture system" often provided by colleges worked great for him. However, he recognized this might not be the case for everyone else, so the hardest part is learning the differing needs of others so he can accommodate them.

Sirois advised all students to communicate with and ask

questions to their professors as this allows professors to gauge where they are struggling. Sirois explained that he remembers being afraid of asking questions to his professors as a student, but now that he is a professor himself, he sees a whole different side of it where he is waiting and willing to help.

"Professors are people too," Sirois said. "We want to talk to you; we want to help you, and the sooner you start that dialogue, the better."

Have your own thoughts on a TV show, film, book, or video game?  
Write a review and send it to [mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu](mailto:mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu)  
It may just end up in our next issue!

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# Involvement September Events:

- October 6: "CHIBBI- Spoken Word Poet and Artist." 12:30-PM-1:30PM  
South Café & Zoom <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8149546>
- October 6: "Rx & Visions (TRIO SSS) TEAS Workshop." 12:30PM-1:30PM  
Room 258 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8277762>
- October 11: "Rx & Visions (TRIO SSS) Transfer Application Basics." 12:30PM-1:30PM  
Room 258 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8277763>
- October 11: "The 5 Must Know Tips for Nurses: To Feel Prepared and Confident When Working with Domestic Violence Victims." 12:30PM-2:00PM  
Room 115& Zoom <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8132366>
- October 11: "Abuse in the LGBTQIA+ Community." 2:30PM-4:00PM  
Room 115& Zoom <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8131075>
- October 11: "SGA Biweekly Meeting." 6:00PM-7:00PM  
Zoom <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8147424>
- October 11: "JINDO- BINGO with a Beat." 7:00PM-8:00PM  
Zoom <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8130849>
- October 12: "Stay on Track." 9:30AM-10:00AM  
MWCC Walking Track <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8314838>
- October 12: "Art Club Meeting." 12:30-1:30PM  
Old Room 172 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8437346>
- October 12: "Ping Pong Tournament." 12:30PM-1:30PM  
Gardner Campus, <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8314831>
- October 12: "CRU Club Weekly Fellowship." 12:30PM-1:30PM  
Room 309 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8353096>
- October 12: "Inflation- Gas Prices & the Importance of Voting." 12:30-1:30PM  
Mutli-Purpose Room H171, Room 115, and Zoom <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8321931>
- October 12: "Rx & Visions (TRIO SSS) Academic CPR." 12:30PM-1:30PM  
Room 258 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8277764>
- October 13: "Rx & Visions (TRIO SSS) Monthly Activity." 12:30-1:30PM  
Room 258 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8277765>
- October 13: "Take the Keys Tour- DUI Simulator." 10:00AM-2:00PM  
South Café <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8150147>
- October 14: "Student Organization Annual Training." 9:00 AM-3:00PM  
Multi-purpose room, Room 115, and Zoom <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8153465>
- October 17: "CATS Programming Group Meeting." 12:30-1:30PM  
W11 & Zoom <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8147362>
- October 17: "SAGA Meeting." 12:30-1:30PM  
Room 357 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8381377>
- October 17: "An Empty Place at the Table: Domestic Violence Memorial." 8:00AM-4:00PM  
Commons Area Hallway <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8153563>
- October 18: "Transfer Fair." 10:30-1:30PM  
Commons Area <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8392934>
- October 18: "Rx & Visions (TRIO SSS) Self-Care Workshop with Melissa Manzi." 12:30PM-1:30PM  
Room 258 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8277766>
- October 18: "JINDO- BINGO with a Beat." 12:30PM-2:00PM  
South Café & Zoom <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8130850>

**October 19: "Stay on Track."** 9:30AM-10:00AM

MWCC Walking Track <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8314839>

**October 19: "Art Club Meeting."** 12:30PM-1:30PM

Old Room 172 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/events?customdate=Fri Oct 14 2022 00%3A00%3A00 GMT-0400>

**October 19: "CRU Club Weekly Fellowship."** 12:30PM-1:30PM

Room 309 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8353097>

**October 19: "Tricks & Treats Virtual Game Show."** 12:30PM-1:30PM

South Café & Zoom <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8150165>

**October 19: "Open Gym Day."** 5:00AM-9:00PM

Mount Fitness <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8314826>

**October 20: "Financial Literacy Workshop: Topic TBD."** 12:30PM-2:00PM

Multi-Purpose Room & Zoom <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8153689>

**October 20: "Ask an Advisor: Academic Planning for Spring '23."** 12:30PM-1:30PM

H107F Atrium (Old 125G) <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8392929>

**October 24: "Let's Get Ready for Registration!"** 12:30PM-1:30PM

H107F Atrium (Old 125G) <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8392927>

**October 24: "Rx & Visions (TRIO SSS) Test Taking."** 12:30PM-1:30PM

Room 258 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8277767>

**October 24: "CATS Programming Group Meeting."** 12:30PM-1:30PM

W11 & Zoom <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8147363>

**October 24: "Open Gym Day."** 5:00AM-9:00PM

Mount Fitness <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8314827>

**October 25: "Rx & Visions (TRIO SSS) Academic CPR."** 12:30PM-1:30PM

Room 258 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8277768>

**October 25: "SGA Biweekly Meeting."** 6:00PM-7:00PM

Zoom <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8147425>

**October 25: "JINDO- BINGO with a Beat."** 7:00PM-8:30PM

Zoom <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8130851>

**October 26: "Stay on Track."** 9:30AM-10:00AM

MWCC Walking Track <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8314840>

**October 26: "Art Club Meeting."** 12:30PM-1:30PM

Old Room 172 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8437348>

**October 26: "Rx & Visions (TRIO SSS) Memory & Learning."** 12:30PM-1:30PM

Room 258 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8277769>

**October 26: "CRU Club Weekly Fellowship."** 12:30PM-1:30PM

Room 309 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8353098>

**October 27: "Rx & Visions (TRIO SSS) Good Habit Building."** 12:30PM-1:30PM

Room 258 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8277770>

**October 27: "Scaryoke."** 5:00PM-9:00PM

South Café <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8150218>

**October 31: "CATS Programming Group Meeting."** 12:30PM-1:30PM

W11 & Zoom <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8147364>

**October 31: "SAGA Meeting."** 12:30PM-1:30PM

Room 357 <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/event/8381378>