

The Mount Observer

“Voices of the students of Mount Wachusett Community College”

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10 PAGES

MWCC Menstrual Equity Concerns

Pizza with the President Event Shines Light on Period Product Availability at the Mount



Photo by Sora Shimazaki from Unsplash

by **Sam LeMay**
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

The Pizza with the President event, held last November at the Mount, became a platform for a crucial discussion that had perhaps been overshadowed by the daily bustle of campus life: the accessibility of period products in the women's bathrooms and the lack thereof in the gender-neutral bathrooms. Currently, most women's restrooms on campus appear to require a 25-cent fee for machines that dispense period products.

The issue at hand is the

spontaneity of menstrual cycles—a biological occurrence that often chooses its own timing, catching individuals off guard during a quick visit to the bathroom. “Usually, I bring stuff with me, but [sometimes] I forget,” said MWCC student Elise Stone when asked about her experience. Many people don't habitually carry period products with them at all times, resulting in an issue when faced with the sudden onset of menstruation.

For some, the scenario of having to walk back to one's bag to retrieve both the necessary

product and/or a quarter, all while dealing with the discomfort of unexpected bleeding, is not only inconvenient but also potentially embarrassing. “I once had a student on the first day of class ask for a product, and neither of us had a quarter. I walked around trying to figure out on the third floor where they might go and went around discreetly trying to see if any others had something that might help,” said Professor Katie Fuller. It is a situation that can be hard to navigate, even in an educational environment that

strives to create a supportive and inclusive atmosphere.

Another issue raised was the lack of resources in gender-neutral bathrooms. “The fact that there's nothing in those bathrooms is really surprising,” said Associate Professor of English, Jessica Kuskey. She also feels that this could cause students to miss valuable class time. “Classrooms are on the third floor,” she explained, “bathrooms on the first, then you have to

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“Menstrual Equity” >>>

Supporting Every Student

Senior Mental Health Counselor Leeanne Hadsel's Commitment to Student Wellness

by **Elysian Alder**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Leeanne Hadsel stepped into the role of mental health counselor at Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) in the fall semester of last year, following a vacancy left by the previous counselor's departure in the spring semester. With over a decade of experience in behavioral health and a background in trauma-informed care, Hadsel brings not only a wealth of knowledge in her field but also a special connection to the Mount, considering it an integral part of her personal success. Having taken classes at MWCC in the past to complete her remaining credits after experiencing difficulty at a traditional 4-year school, Hadsel stated, “The Mount provided the very-needed second chance

to believe in myself and my desire to be educated. It was such a privilege that opened up a lot of doors for me. So I'm excited to become a member of the community again and work with students that have faced adversity and are trying to educate themselves and better their lives.”

Hadsel worked in law enforcement in a jail diversion program for 2 years prior to landing her role at the Mount, and she continues to serve as a negotiator for the Franklin County Special Response team, actively engaging in crisis intervention and de-escalation efforts with a central focus on destigmatization. “I was the first female to be appointed to the program, and I recently completed an FBI-sponsored negotiator training program,”



Photo courtesy of Leeanne Hadsel

Leeanne Hadsel, MWCC Senior Mental Health Counselor

stated Hadsel. “I'm really passionate about that work; when people are in crisis, they call 9-1-1. That's just what happens, right? Until we promote 9-8-8 and the other behavioral health

hotlines, people still call 9-1-1, so because law enforcement therefore becomes the point of access for treatment and

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Let's Go on a Trip

MWCC Prepares for Upcoming School Trip to Iceland



Photo by Sam Quek from Unsplash

Diamond Beach, Iceland

by **Katie Holgerson**

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Have you ever wondered what studying abroad opportunities MWCC has to offer for its students? Well, this year students at MWCC have begun to prepare for their upcoming trip to Iceland in May 2024. Students will leave on May 16th and stay in Iceland until the 23rd. This trip is organized by Professors Michelle Valois and Heather Conn, who have planned an exciting and fulfilling experience for the students.

This will be the second year that MWCC has offered the Iceland trip. Discussing the inspiration behind choosing Iceland as the destination, Valois explained, "I was with Professor Conn at the meeting, and she teaches geology, and I love mythology. And I don't know who said it first. I think she said, 'I've always wanted to go to Iceland,' and I said, 'Oh my God, I'd love to teach about Norse mythology.'" Students

had the opportunity to enroll in a course taught by Valois and Conn, focusing on Iceland, its geological structures, its history, and its mythological views. This course serves as a foundation for students before going on the trip.

Some students are eligible to receive a scholarship to attend the trip from MWCC after completing the course. Valois outlined the requirements for

applying for the scholarship, stating that students need to have received a grade of B or higher in the course and maintain a GPA of at least 3.0. However, students who wish to participate in the trip without taking the course are also permitted, provided they have completed at least 12 credits at MWCC. Without the scholarship, the trip costs approximately \$3,800.

"...when you're in [a place] where English isn't people's first language or the currency is different or the customs are different, I think you just grow so much and you learn so much about yourself."

– Michelle Valois

Menstrual Equity

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grab a product from the food pantry... That's really bad." The existing solution of obtaining period products from the campus food pantry presents its own set of challenges. While the pantry does stock these essential items, the lack of clear signage in restrooms across the campus renders their location largely unknown. Consequently, someone facing an unexpected menstrual emergency may not be aware of this alternative recourse, exacerbating the difficulty of the situation. During the Pizza with the President event, President James Vander Hooven expressed genuine surprise upon learning about this issue for the first time. "I had no idea this was an issue," he admitted. During the event, it was revealed that the applicators for the only tampons that are provided by the current

vending machine are made of cardboard, an aspect that may add an unnecessary level of discomfort to an already challenging situation. With this newfound awareness, as discussed during the event, there is an opportunity for systematic improvement. A collective effort from both the student body and administration can be mobilized to enhance the system, ensuring that period products are readily available in women's and gender-neutral bathrooms. Modernizing the means of obtaining these products to make them convenient and free from financial barriers is a key consideration. Additionally, efforts should be made to publicize alternative locations, such as the campus food pantry, where these essential items can be accessed discreetly and without the need for payment.

travel, particularly when you're in [a place] where English isn't people's first language or the currency is different or the customs are different, I think you just grow so much and you learn so much about yourself. And I think they'll gain confidence."

Students will also get to visit a lot of fun attractions to go to and activities to partake in. They will have the chance to go hiking and witness beautiful waterfalls, climb glaciers, and even take a boat trip to visit Diamond Beach. Valois further explained that students will be able to witness a phenomenon called "calving," where they can hear the glaciers melting, something caused by global warming.

Some preparations that students are making include obtaining their passports, a process which Valois and Conn help with as they have funding to help pay for the application process. Students

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"Trip to Iceland" >>>

Want to join in on the fun yourself? Check out the new MWCC Mobile App at <https://mwcc.edu/campus-life/mwcc-iconnect-mobile-application/> and get started!



Supporting Students Trip to Iceland

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support, I think it's paramount that trained professionals are embedded in that capacity so that we can bolster the resources that are directly available."

Hadsel's journey into the field of mental health was catalyzed by deeply personal experiences and a desire for understanding and compassion. "My extended family has a lot of mental health concerns, substance misuse, things of that nature," explained Hadsel. "Originally, I wanted to know more about myself and my family, about why this happened, but I feel really inspired to employ that knowledge in a way that improves the lives of other people."

Following her time as a student at the Mount, Hadsel eventually went on to study at Johns Hopkins University. In her doctorate studies, she focused on the intersection of trauma and mental health and the ways that adverse childhood experiences inform future mental health presentations. "I think that in our culture, people believe that folks with a mental illness are weak-minded, or people who are addicted to something lack willpower or they're bad people. And it's really important to me to reconstruct that dialogue, to change the way that we perceive mental illness and addictions, because there's nothing wrong with you. You're likely behaving in this way because something happened to you. And I'm just really inspired to understand it deeply and to know more."

A cornerstone of Hadsel's approach when it comes to supporting the Mount's community is meeting students where they are, both physically and emotionally. Understanding the multifaceted nature of mental health challenges, she offers a variety of resources and access points to ensure that every student can feel supported. "Our college community does a really good job of advocating, but that's something that I'm continuing

to find ways to enhance: the promotion of help with seeking self-care. We need to get better at getting better," noted Hadsel. "Wellness is just as much a part of your success as showing up for class."

From traditional cognitive behavior therapy to mindfulness practices such as meditation and breathwork, Hadsel ensures that her counseling approach is tailored to each individual's unique experiences and preferences. Through a partnership with Christie Campus Health, MWCC also offers access to a service called Be Well The Mount, providing 24/7 access to counselors, telehealth visits, and a crisis line, ensuring support is readily available. Additionally, the Mount provides tangible spaces like a wellness room, furnished with amenities for relaxation

inherent in her role and how taxing it may be, Hadsel emphasized the need for honesty and self-awareness in managing her workload. "I also go to therapy," she admitted candidly. "I would be kind of a hypocrite if I didn't access the resources that I preach, but I have the Insight Timer app on my phone. I listen to meditations. I do breath work. I legitimately practice what I work with other people on because I personally found that those skills help. I find that I do my best work when I'm taking care of myself, and that means prioritizing my own wellness, setting boundaries, saying no, asking questions, being vulnerable with myself and with other people, even though that can be deeply uncomfortable."

Hadsel is working to make mental health resources readily available to all students on

“Wellness is just as much a part of your success as showing up for class.”

- Leeanne Hadsel

and mindfulness, available for students and connected to Hadsel's office. "It's a really nice space just for people to quietly check in with themselves," she said.

Hadsel recognizes the diversity within MWCC's community, however, and understands that everyone has unique lived experiences that may influence the support they need. "I would consider myself very culturally humble and willing to learn," she explained. "But regardless of anyone's identity or background, I want to learn about you and your experiences and align what I'm doing in a way that honors your individual experience."

Acknowledging the challenges

campus. Through initiatives like text-based scheduling, where students can simply text the word "help" to her direct line at 978-630-9292 to receive a link to a calendar to pick an available date and time that works for them, and collaboration with student services, Hadsel aims to make accessing support as easy as possible. Students have multiple options for scheduling appointments, including text messaging, online scheduling, or visiting Student Services for assistance. Appointments can be arranged for virtual or in-person sessions, and Hadsel is available at both the Gardner and Leominster campuses as needed.



Photo by Robert Bye from Unsplash

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also will prepare by packing the necessities they will need while on the trip. Valois explained, "Iceland's a very wet country. It's not like it doesn't rain hard, but it can be like a day like this. And it suddenly rains and then it suddenly stops and the sun comes out or it's sunny and it drizzles and I know we were just always wet." Therefore, students will need rain jackets, rain pants, and waterproof hiking boots.

Valois confirmed that students over the age of 21 are also allowed to venture to bars if they wish, provided they conduct themselves respectfully. This is important for students to follow as it could damage the schools reputation and future trips may not be allowed if students do not follow. During their stay, students will be accommodated in a hotel in Reykjavik and may even have the opportunity to stay in a guest house in the countryside, as Valois mentioned they have done in the past.

Some memorable moments from the previous trip include visiting a penis museum, which Valois described as hilarious and enjoyable. Valois also highlighted the amazing camaraderie from students as she explained seeing instances of students supporting one another,

sharing belongings, and assisting whenever someone needed it.

Cody Nathanson, a student who attended the trip in the previous year, described his favorite moment to be with one of the bus drivers in Iceland who was telling him about his experience in the country, saying, "...his job was working in the police force of Iceland. He was telling us about the politics of Iceland, how there's an actual pirate party in Iceland right now—with the Jolly Roger and everything. It's hilarious because they're like the right-wing version of what we have here." This proves the potential positive interactions students may gain while they stay in Iceland.

Oren Cohen, a Professional Writing major, who is attending the trip in spring explained the reason he wants to go on the trip because he has "always enjoyed learning about and reading about mythologies...Iceland is a really cool country, so going there is huge for me."

In conclusion, students can anticipate a fun and fulfilling experience if they choose to attend the Iceland trip. Valois also mentioned that the next trip will be to Paris, France, organized by Professor Fuller. Therefore, students are encouraged to seize these affordable opportunities for enriching experiences abroad.



Thinking About Taking a Hiatus from Your Education?

by *Lexi Gallagher*

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Studies show that approximately 40% of college students do not complete college within six years. Many students take breaks, change paths, take a gap year, or otherwise decide to take time away from pursuing higher education.

Mount Wachusett Community College student Destiny Grimes, along with many other students across America, decided to put her education on pause for a handful of reasons. “I took a break after the winter semester when my grandmother passed away because it was really hard on my mom,” said Grimes. “I wanted to give my mom the time and space to grieve, so I started working full-time to help support and take care of our family.”

Many factors cause students to take breaks. “College is a great opportunity to get a head start in whatever career you choose, meet new people, and learn a lot about the world. However, the cost is the biggest downfall for someone that struggles financially,” said Grimes. “As much as you may love to further your education, college classes and materials are expensive—not to mention the time and energy it takes to manage school, work, health, and a social life.”

Ashley Fletcher, a part time Academic Counselor in the Office of Advising, Career, & Transfer at the Mount, says it is common for students to take these breaks for many reasons. “From my thirteen years in the field, it is not an uncommon practice for a student to need to

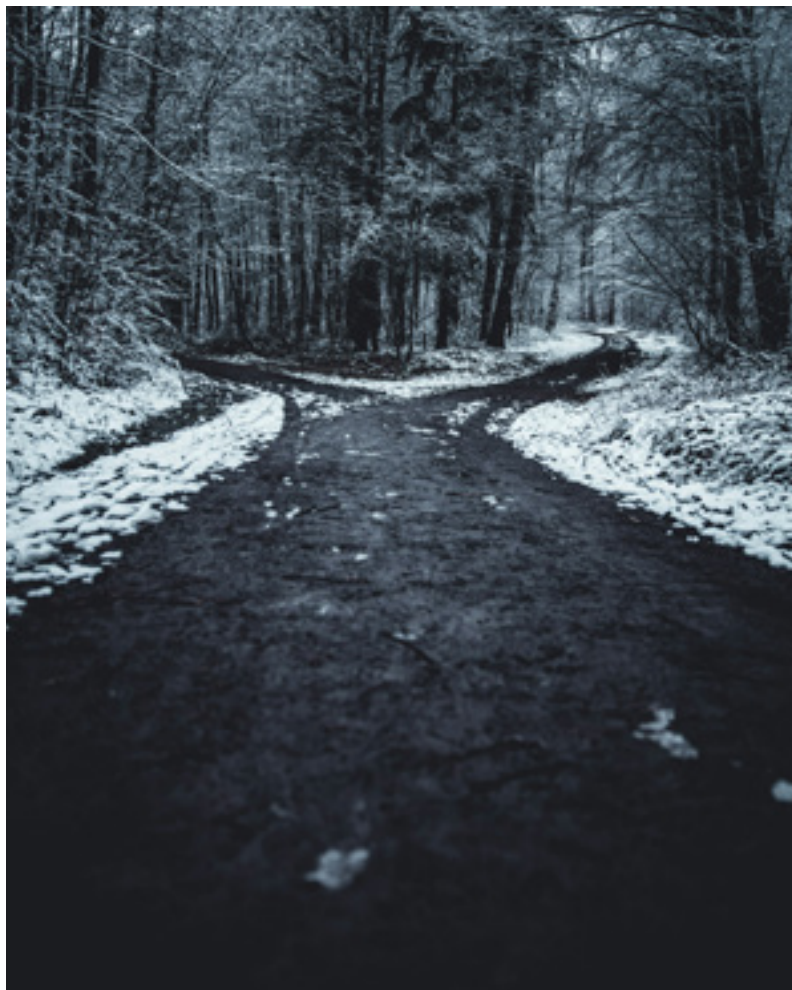


Photo by Oliver Roos from Unsplash

...breaks are okay, and being a person who knows what they need and has the ambition to make a plan before they continue is something to be proud of.

take a break due to unforeseen life events or major transitions. These breaks can be as short as a semester, or as long as 5 or 10 years,” said Fletcher.

But with that said, most cases Fletcher has seen have been goal oriented. “Most students who take a break are doing so because it is necessary and want to

continue achieving their goal,” said Fletcher.

Fletcher herself did not always have her exact plan and found herself taking a year off after her bachelors’ program. “I was a first-generation student, so working in a college environment was an unknown concept to me,” she shared. “I took a year off between my Bachelors and Masters to work in the field before I found myself missing the energy and mentorship of the college environment. Then I decided to pursue my master’s degree.”

Journalism Professor at MWCC, Katie Fuller, also found herself changing paths—and doing so often. “I thought I might become a lawyer after my undergraduate, but two years as a paralegal showed me I was not really into office work or the 9-5 lifestyle,” said Fuller. But a hiatus was the thing she needed to put her on the right path. “The best thing I did was take a professor’s advice about taking a break after my undergraduate. I took time off for five years before going to graduate school. In some ways that time felt like another kind of education all its own,” she said.

Fuller believes that breaks are okay and that you can still make it a point to learn and grow. “Remember one day you might feel grateful for what you perceived as a failure or things not going the way you want. It is during those times we learn the most about ourselves,” she said.

But both Fuller and Fletcher believe that taking a break means planning for it, too. “Prioritize what it is you need during that

time. Whether it is mental health help, rest, a job, time to think,” said Fuller. “Make a plan for it.”

Fletcher echoed the importance of a pre-break game plan for students, stating, “The key is for a student to have a stronger game plan in place for when they return.” This plan should include check-ins, a timeline, and milestones. It offers support and helps students reengage with their academic journey. Fletcher acknowledged the uniqueness of each student’s path, however, saying, “Everyone’s journey looks different.”

And Grimes acknowledges the struggles of her position and how she has the ambition to overcome these struggles and choose herself over everything else. “It will be hard, but I do plan on going back to college as soon as possible in order to start focusing more on my own dreams and ambitions,” said Grimes. “I need to do this for myself.”

But the key thing that student Grimes, Professor Fuller, and Academic Counselor Fletcher can all agree on is that breaks are okay, and being a person who knows what they need and has the ambition to make a plan before they continue is something to be proud of.

“Don’t feel bad if you do not excel in the ways society intuitively you should. It is better to do well at less than mediocre at a lot. And remember: have self-compassion,” urged Fuller. “You are not your setbacks.”

Join the *Mount Observer* crew and get your writing, photography, artwork, or reviews out into the world! Or maybe take on a behind-the-scenes role and help run the *Observer*’s website or social media. Whatever your interests, you can find a place on our team!



Your Head’s in the Game

Princess Yeboah’s Success

by *Jordan Chila*

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Princess Yeboah arrived at the Mount in the fall semester of 2023 with the tough decision to make about whether she wanted to pursue a creative future in writing or a clinical career in nursing. Yeboah grew up in Baldwinsville and attended Monty Tech in Westminster for high school. Yeboah, a basketball enthusiast and person of faith, made her family very proud when she graduated in the

in shop had an influence on the change in major because of the independence I had and the fast pace of the work.” Yeboah feels this really helped gear her towards the fast-paced environment of journalism.

At 17 years of age, Yeboah participated in Mount Wachusett Community College’s dual enrollment program. She attended a sociology class offered by MWCC in the afternoons a couple of times a week and felt

of Grace church in Gardner. When the pandemic struck, Yeboah felt isolated and distant from everyone. She turned to her faith in God, stating, “He gave me a light then.”

Yeboah grew up in her faith and church, finding it essential in her daily life. Her faith in Jesus has shaped her into the woman she is today, and she believes there is a “very drastic” difference in who she was before Jesus became a presence in her life.

During the challenges of COVID, Yeboah found that one of the biggest hurdles in life was making friends. Often feeling shy, she did not converse with her peers and felt isolated at school. Coming to MWCC has improved Yeboah’s experience in forming friendships. She appreciates that the college atmosphere provides room for independence, allowing people to not feel pressured to form friendships in an unnatural way. “We don’t need to rely on other people to be our friend. You can be your own person and do your own thing,” she remarked.

Another important aspect of Yeboah’s life is her family. Growing up with three brothers, her father, and mother, she has experienced support, fun, and happiness. Her parents, who are from Ghana, have experienced different cultures, having once lived in Italy. Yeboah wishes to



Photo courtesy of Princess Yeboah

Princess Yeboah

travel to Italy to see what they have experienced. Her most memorable experience with her family is her graduation, where she felt their support and encouragement. “My parents were the happiest, and I was happy for myself too for accomplishing that big goal.” Yeboah has achieved many goals, from graduating to conquering challenges of friendship and diving into college life. She is exceptionally determined and has brought this determination to MWCC.

“We don’t need to rely on other people to be our friend. You can be your own person and do your own thing.”

– Princess Yeboah

spring of 2023. Initially, she had a strong desire to join their health technologies program; however, Yeboah ultimately ended up taking business technology.

Yeboah praises her shop teachers for making her business technology experience a memorable one. She stated, “I had some of my best memories in that shop.”

Could the influence of this experience be what pushed Yeboah into a major in journalism? Yes, it was. “I definitely think my memories

this was a positive way to earn college credits and fast-track her college degree. Yeboah was also an avid basketball player. During basketball, she learned discipline and focus as a defensive player. “You have to really have your head in the game,” Yeboah stated. According to her, these skills on the court helped set her up for success in school.

While basketball has been such an influential aspect of her life, Jesus is the most influential person. She practices Christianity and attends Mission

Involve

MOUNT

Explore Mount Wachusett Community College

GET INVOLVED!

Want to join a club or participate in a community event? Then visit InvolveMOUNT at <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/> and get started today!



For more website-exclusive tech articles, visit www.mountobserver.com/category/technology/!

CES 2024: Coding Simplified



by **Kent Yang**
STAFF WRITER

Photo by Jefferson Santos from Unsplash

Kicking off this year is the biggest tech event of the year, CES 2024, also known as the Consumer Electronics Show. CES is an annual trade show typically held at the Las Vegas Convention Center, featuring the latest advancements in consumer technology. It all began in 1967 in New York City when organizers held the first CES. Among the 200 exhibitors were notable attractions such as pocket radios and TVs with integrated circuits, which were groundbreaking at the time and contributed to drawing in over 17,000 attendees. Since then, the CES has continued to serve as a global stage for innovation. Fast forward to modern times, there are now over 4,000 exhibitors and 130,000 attendees who attend CES yearly. Some recognizable exhibitors are Amazon, AMD, Caterpillar,

Google, Hyundai, IBM, Intel, John Deere, Lenovo, LG, Mercedes-Benz, Panasonic, Reddit, Roku, Samsung, Sony, and the list goes on. Since there are over 4,000 exhibitors, covering each and every one is not feasible, but the most significant innovation for this year can be highlighted. With that said, the topic is coding. Traditionally, coding involves writing lines of code where the programmer must understand complex problem-solving, algorithms, data analysis, data structure, and more. By taking what needs to be done and translating it into computer languages such as Java, Python, HTML, C++, logic can then be implemented into applications and programs. Amid the recent surge of AI usage in the tech industry within the last several years, a Low-Code Movement has also emerged, which uses AI assistance for coding tasks and workloads. In a partnership by Amazon Web Services and Mendix, the future of coding could mean no coding at all. Matt Wood, the VP of Technology Amazon Web Services, spoke at a keynote during CES 2024, stating: “The programming language of the next decade is not going to be the traditional way that we’ve been writing code. It’s just going to be a natural language. You’re just going to describe what it is that you want the system to do, and it will interpret it automatically. And that’s an incredibly democratizing and incredibly exciting opportunity to reinvent every product and process.” To Wood’s point, Professor Jeffery Thompson, Associate Professor of Physics and Mathematics at Mount Wachusett Community College agrees.

“There will be a change in the job market and what skills that one needs to bring, but programming will not die, it will become different,” they said. “The current stage of AI, has neural networks, where a computer is given data and suggests a pattern in it. Somewhere, that pattern has to be validated as being good or bad, usually by human interaction. Coding is changing, and it will not look the same a decade out from now, but people will need to code the AI, train the AI, quality test the AI, fix the AI code. There will be a place for people in this...as of now.” The future of coding could be as straightforward as issuing instructions to the system, which then generates the corresponding code. This process is like using a translation app like Google Translate to converse in another language. However, it’s crucial to keep in mind that AI is only as good as the information it is being fed. Like human nature, mistakes may occur but can be rectified over time. When and if this system rolls out, even the everyday average Joe or Amy will be able to “code.” This will be a major game changer. As humans, we’re built to question things, explore, and imagine. If anyone can code, the possibilities could be limitless. Addressing the challenges of our modern world demands tapping into our innate abilities as critical thinkers, innovators, and engineers.

Creative Writing

(This was from a writing prompt:
knows which way the wind blows)

Woke

By Desiree Leader
Tired of ‘splainin’
to old white people, like me
that nobody’s sayin’
our lives don’t matter...
nobody’s sayin’
only black lives, only black lives matter -
not white,
not blue,
but black lives matter,
too.
The value of our lives
has never been called into question -
but black lives,
black lives matter.
Black lives matter, too.

Have your own opinions on current events, hot-button issues, or events on campus?
Write an opinion piece and send it to mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu
It may just end up in our next issue!



Option 1
Just Travel

ALL MATRICULATED
MWCC STUDENTS,
18 OR OLDER AND IN
GOOD STANDING,
ARE ELIGIBLE TO
TRAVEL.



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SUCCESSFULLY PASS
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SCHOLARSHIP.

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CONTACT:

- Katie Fuller: kfuller10@mwcc.mass.edu
- Candace Shivers: c_shivers@mwcc.mass.edu





Challenging Justice

Death Note Review



Image from IMDB, copyright Nippon TV

by Sam LeMay

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

“Death Note” is an anime that toys with the audience’s perception of justice and judgment. The main character, Light Yagami, also known as Kira, blurs the line between protagonist and antagonist. He introduces a twisted sense of curiosity as he explores his vision for a new world.

The 37-episode anime debuted in 2007, directed by Tetsurō Araki (“Attack on Titan”) and adapted from Tsugumi Ohba’s successful manga series by the same name. “Death Note” has also been adapted into a light novel series, several live action films and series, a video game, and a musical.

The story follows Light Yagami, a high school honors student who discovers a notebook with the power to kill anyone by simply writing their name in it. Motivated by a desire to combat injustice, he uses the notebook to systematically eliminate criminals.

In the beginning, Light’s actions seem justifiable; he’s killing murderers and people who have committed horrible crimes. Soon, though, he becomes obsessed. He begins killing

those who have committed smaller, less threatening crimes along with innocent people who he believes are in the way of him becoming God.

This begs the question, what is a true form of justice? Sure, Light killed the criminals, but he didn’t do anything to change why the crimes happened in the first place. By killing them, he only instilled fear into the population, leading to a drastic drop in crime rates. By the end of the series, once Kira is no longer a threat, crime rates skyrocketed again.

At a certain point in the series, the conditions inside a prison were shown, where crimes continued to happen regularly within the jail walls. It became clear that imprisonment alone wasn’t enough to put an end to criminal activities. Kira understood this and viewed killing as the only means to make the world a better place.

The concept of justice has been debated for centuries without a universally agreed-upon answer. “Death Note” does a great job at prompting reflection about societal ideals, and sparking a new discussion about how crimes should be judged and the appropriateness of the death penalty.



We asked you to “Share the Love” and submit your notes of affection for those around you. These are the results:

Happy Valentine’s Day to chocolate everywhere: milk chocolate, dark chocolate, white chocolate...I love you so much. I’ve always loved you. I could never share you.

Everyone knows that WE are a PERFECT match.

XOXO

Your better half,

“Strawberry”

— submitted by Tami Morin

I want to share the love to Kimberly Kayser, my advisor, for showing genuine care towards all her students. She has truly made my college experience so much better, and I am forever grateful to her. Additionally, I would like to share my appreciation for the tutor center. Their commitment to helping students is appreciated. Especially Jen, who consistently goes above and beyond to understand the academic needs of students.

With love,
Sabrina Alonso

— submitted by Sabrina Alonso

I’d like to share my heartfelt appreciation to everyone who’s been part of the Mount Observer newspaper since my first submission in 2022. The paper has been a haven for creativity, exploration, and learning, not just in journalism but in writing as a whole, thanks to the compassion and open-mindedness of all involved.

I want to give a lot of love to our advisor, Professor Fuller, who has consistently shown me much-needed encouragement—personally, creatively, and academically. Her valuable insights, advice, and resources have not only helped me but have also helped to nurture the growth of every member of our team.

Despite being a small team, we are also a mighty one, and I am constantly inspired by the ideas that are shared among us and the support we show one another.

Love from,

Elysian Alder

— submitted by Elysian Alder



COMICS

CREATED BY TOM HILL JR.

MONSTER TALES

LIZARD MAN OF SCAPE ORE SWAMP

LOCATION: Lee County, South Carolina
DATE: 1988

Late one summer night in 1988, 17-year-old Christopher Davis reportedly suffered a flat tire on his way home from work.

As he was changing the tire, he said that he spotted a large figure approaching him.

Fleeing in his car, Davis says the red-eyed lizard man gave chase and jumped on his roof. It quickly lost its grip, however, and fell off. Davis never saw it again.

Two weeks later, the police responded to a call about a car damaged in Browntown, apparently attacked with teeth and claws.

While similar cases around Scape Ore Swamp led some to posit the lizard man as the car-munching culprit, others believe it was more likely to be a bear.

Investigator Alicia Lutz may have found the "lizard-man's" identity. Apparently, a local farmer had a run-in with a young man fixing a flat tire, scaring him off as he approached.

Despite these hypotheses, for certain monster lovers the lizard man's true nature will forever remain a mystery...

And so the MONSTER TALES return to the dark from whence they came. Perhaps some day they shall return, but for now they remain content lurking just out of sight.

Time to make room for other stories...

New comic series starts March 2024!

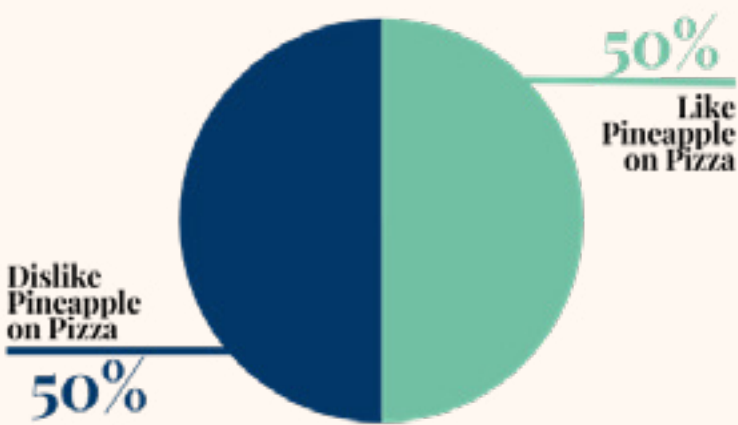
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The Mount Observer Polls presents

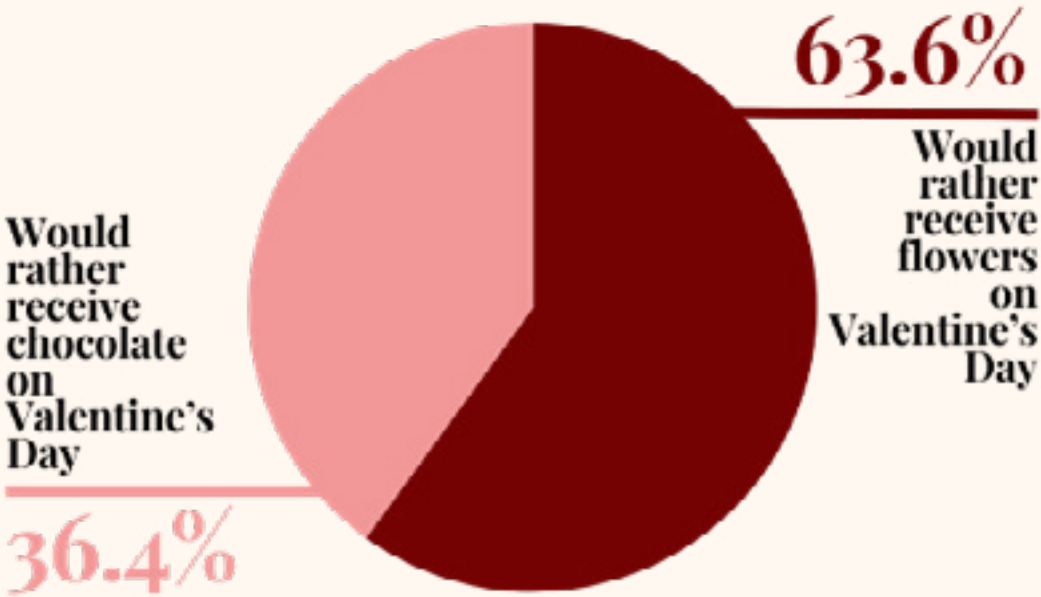
Your Thoughts

Interested in giving your thoughts in the next poll? Follow the *Mount Observer* on Twitter (@MountObserver) and Instagram (The Mount Observer)!

Yes or No to Pineapple on Pizza?



Would you Rather Receive Chocolate or Flowers on Valentine's Day?



Do you Prefer Dunkin' or Starbucks?





InvolvementMOUNT Events

**Monday, February 26 2024 at 12:30 PM EST to
Monday, February 26 2024 at 1:30 PM EST -
Therapy Dogs on Campus @ Student Center**

**Monday, February 26 2024 at 12:30 PM EST to
Monday, February 26 2024 at 1:30 PM EST -
Pizza with the President @ W101**

**Monday, February 26 2024 at 12:25 PM EST to
Monday, February 26 2024 at 1:25 PM EST -
Cru Student Fellowship Meeting @ Gardner Campus | H385**

**Monday, February 26 2024 at 12:30 PM EST to
Monday, February 26 2024 at 1:30 PM EST -
SAGA Meeting @ Room H361**

**Monday, February 26 2024 at 12:30 PM EST to Monday,
February 26 2024 at 2:00 PM EST -
Dance Team Meeting @ Room A110**

**Monday, February 26 2024 at 4:00 PM EST to
Monday, February 26 2024 at 5:00 PM EST -
Musicians at the Mount Meeting @ Room A110**

**Monday, February 26 2024 at 5:00 PM EST to
Monday, February 26 2024 at 6:00 PM EST -
The Mount Observer Meeting @ Zoom**

**Monday, February 26 2024 at 7:00 PM EST to
Monday, February 26 2024 at 7:30 PM EST -
Dental Hygiene Club @ Zoom**

**Tuesday, February 27 2024 at 7:00 PM EST to
Tuesday, February 27 2024 at 8:00 PM EST -
JINDO- BINGO with a Beat @ Zoom**

**Wednesday, February 28 2024 at 12:30 PM EST to
Wednesday, February 28 2024 at 1:30 PM EST -
Only Fans, Dynamics of Power & The Sex Trade @ S105 Murphy
Conference Room**

**Wednesday, February 28 2024 at 12:30 PM EST to
Wednesday, February 28 2024 at 1:30 PM EST -
Green Society Meeting @ Greenhouse**

**Wednesday, February 28 2024 at 12:30 PM EST to
Wednesday, February 28 2024 at 1:30 PM EST -
STEM Club Meeting @ Gardner Campus | Room H338**

**Wednesday, February 28 2024 at 12:40 PM EST to
Wednesday, February 28 2024 at 1:30 PM EST -
Art Club Meeting @ Studio 1 East Wing Art Gallery | A104**

**Thursday, February 29 2024 at 12:30 PM EST to
Thursday, February 29 2024 at 1:30 PM EST -
The Movement - Black History Month Event @ South Cafe**

**Thursday, February 29 2024 at 5:00 PM EST to
Thursday, February 29 2024 at 6:00 PM EST -
Black History & Women’s History Month Performance @ South Cafe**

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Editor in Chief:
Elysian Alder

Assistant Editors:
Vana Mangiarelli

Staff Writers:
Kent Yang

Graphic Designer:
Thomas Hill Jr.

Contributors:
Desiree Leader
Sam LeMay

Katie Holgerson
Lexi Gallagher
Jordan Chila

Adviser:
Katie Fuller

Address:
Room H353, MWCC,
444 Green St.,
Gardner, MA 01440

E-Mail
mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu

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