

February 15, 2021

News Section

The Future of Sports at AU



Just last week, positive COVID-19 cases almost doubled from the previous week. Data shows that 85% of these positive cases came from student athletes here on campus, further postponing all extracurricular and sports activities for another 10 days, leaving students and faculty frustrated and worried about what the future of AU holds.

As a lot of people on and off campus have been wearing masks, keeping a social distance, and abiding by all COVID-19 rules and regulations. Others have not, preventing AU from having another successful semester, with cases almost twice as high within 3 weeks of the Spring semester than all last Fall semester. Are students too comfortable with the pandemic and last semester's success to realize that COVID-19 is still an issue? Or do they not realize the stakes they're putting both their sports seasons and campus in?

"I believe student athletes are the role models of our school," said Sophomore Matthew Hibbert. "I find it shocking that most positive cases are from us, considering all of us want to compete and practice this semester. I know for myself, I'm dying to get back to the tennis courts and be with my teammates again."

Because of the rising cases, AU President Zupan has decided to postpone all sports and extracurriculars until February 16, however, at the rate we're going, both students and faculty believe all sports seasons could get cancelled for the remainder of the semester, along with the possibility of campus getting shut down completely.

"The last thing I want is to get shut down again. Online classes aren't even the worst of the situation, I just want my season back. I hope everyone learns from these rising cases and decides to take it more seriously, otherwise we're all going home," said Hibbert.

There is still plenty of time to get back on track and start taking COVID-19 seriously, along with wearing face coverings and always keeping a social distance. If all student athletes come together and agree to make wiser decisions, then the future of both sports seasons and campus staying open is hopeful. The future of AU stands in both athletes and students' hands.

“I will continue to have faith in AU and our student athletes, but students, in general. I believe we have the power to keep our school open and have another successful semester if we all contribute and come together as one,” said Hibbert.

By Kailey Reyes

A Neighborhood Crisis

On Friday, Jan 29, RPD responded to a family disturbance. The child, a 9-year-old girl, was expressing signs of a mental health crisis, reportedly showing the intent to harm herself and her mother.

Tasked with calming the individuals down and getting the girl mental health assistance, footage of the RPD shows violent verbal and bodily language, with the girl thrashing in the arms of the unnamed officers as they attempted to escort her to the police vehicle.



Regarded as noncompliant and complaining, she is warned that she will be pepper sprayed. While the girl is not in the state of mind to be taking direct threats as orders, she was seen as resisting arrest, and subsequently maced.

“It’s terribly sad to hear about incidents like these. My heart goes out to that little girl and her family. The little girl, herself, had to remind the officers: “I am a child,” when told to “stop acting like a child,” according to reporting in the *Washington Post*,” states Dr. Karen Porter, a sociology professor at Alfred University.

The footage, released quickly into the public, disturbed and upset many viewers who called for action against the officers. Reminiscent of the homicide of Daniel Prude in March 2020, which continues to fuel disparity toward the police department, Rochester citizens took to the streets to protest the perceived negligent action. The mother of the 9-year-old girl is reportedly planning to sue the city.

“The Rochester PD has a long and ugly history of racial bias and now, it seems, treating mentally ill adults, in the case of Daniel Prude, and even children, as criminals,” continued Dr. Porter. “I am hopeful the new Police Accountability Board in Rochester will get a chance to weigh in and provide leadership and guidance on these critical issues regarding urgently needed police reform.”

In response, Monday, February 1st, 2021, Mayor Lovely Warren suspended the three officers involved with the case. Warren claims this is the minimum of what the officers will be faced with, pending further investigation.

This is another incident in a growing public identification of mental health unpreparedness on behalf of police departments across the country. Requests for mental health professionals to be on-call for these incidents are not new developments, however cases over the summer of 2020 and early 2021 have exacerbated them.

“There needs to be additional training in de-escalation and non-violent crisis intervention,” Dr. Danielle Gagne, a psychology professor at Alfred University said. “In general, police departments are charged with maintaining order [and] upholding laws—they are dedicated to ‘protect and serve,’ and many join the force from a genuine desire to make their community a better and safer place. They willingly walk into myriad [of] situations that could jeopardize their lives at any given moment, and so are trained to respond quickly and decisively. However, [...] often their instinct is ‘kill or be killed,’ leading to responses that are sometimes grossly out of proportion to the perceived threat.”

Mayor Warren, on February 5th, 2021, has proposed reforms for the RPD. Warren, focused on protecting the sanctity of human life, is planning to rectify the situations that have caused Rochester, and its police department, to be scrutinized.

“There is a greater [need] for mental health awareness and intervention than ever before,” said Dr. Danielle Gagne, continuing in regard to campus, “First, we need to fund our mental health services fully. We need more counselors—we have far more students seeking mental health than we have counselors available. Our current counselors are doing their best—many have heavy caseloads, and the number of students in crisis is increasing as COVID-related factors create additional stress[ors].”

Alfred University, and in that same vein the whole community of Alfred, has resources for those in need, and they are waiting to expand in order to create a safer environment for those experiencing mental health concerns or crises.

By Sam Sage

The American Coup

On January 6, 2021, over two thousand people took to the United States Capital to protest the results of the election. Ex-Vice President Michael Pence was put in charge of counting electoral votes to verify that the winner of the election was in fact Joseph Biden and not Donald Trump. After he did so, two thousand trump supporters stormed the capital in rage.



Many people have described this incident as an American Coup, meaning that the people attempted to overthrow the government because of a decision(s) that were made that negatively affect the citizens of the country. However, the reasoning for this attack was not because of unjust decisions but is simply because one of America's most controversial presidents lost both the popular vote as well as the electoral college vote.

Given that Trump has very enthusiastic supporters, he told the Proud Boys to "Stand back and stand by" meaning to wait for further instruction, thus insinuating that they would all come together to attempt to change the results of the election. After months of conservatives denying the very simple results of the election, they took to the capital to protest in honor of their president. Not only did these rioters break into the capital but they stormed in with the Confederate flag. A flag in which thousands of people have died to keep out of the capital since the Civil War when confederates succeeded from the United states because Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. The Confederate south fled the United States because most of their income was based on slave labor. In summation, Conservative's only riot when they do not get what they want.

During this riot at the capitol, many government officials were left to hide in their offices. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) describes the experience as traumatic by saying "This was the moment where I thought everything was over". Luckily because of a hero named Eugene Goodman rioters were not able to do much damage. Goodman was singlehandedly able to direct the rioters away from where most government officials were hiding and possibly saved their lives. According to AOC, since then the capital has been on surveillance to protect those working there.

After the riot, Ex-President Trump called these rioters "peaceful protesters" on his now deleted twitter account which is another reason for his pending impeachment. Overall Trumps refusal to condemn white supremacy is the reason behind this incident which put lives at stake. Especially considering in an investigation it was found that the thugs that breached the capital had zip ties on them implying that they were going to be taking hostages.

As of currently there have been not breeches of safety of current President, Joe Biden and current Vice President Kamala Harris. Though they might not be perfect but they might handle these situations better than Trump.

By Jeanni Floyd

Opinion Section

Graduating from the Electoral College

Prologue: A Blindingly Bright Future

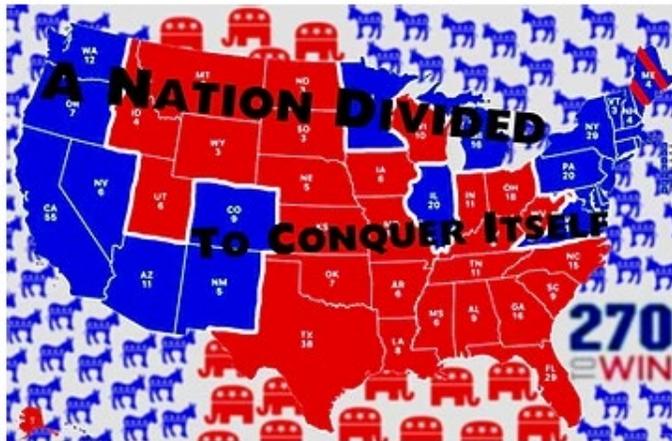


There has been a growing controversy in recent years about the sustained use of the electoral college to nominally elect the president. The symbolism of this tradition has not been without its consequence; the current iteration brings to a national stage, problems of gerrymandering, methodical voter disenfranchisement, and nigh irreversible antagonistic population relations. When only a few states actually decide the vote for the immediate Election, it can be difficult to see what actually matters in an election (both for the ones voting, like a yin deep within a particular state's yang, and for the nominee's platform, pretending to be a yang in a few states of yin).

Every time we see a campaign fought to win Ohio or Pennsylvania, the question really shouldn't be who happens to collect enough votes to win these historically indecisive states, but if the cracks running through these states (-Cayahoga- v -Jackson, Putnam, Crawford...-, -Philadelphia- v -Jefferson, Bedford, Potter...- 'Lesser' New York v 'Greater' New York [City v State]) adequately represent the underlying issues that require a vote to be decided, an election that could potentially be the nation's victory. If right now the only answers the vote gives us are: (1) 'My state has a population dense enough to precipitate into a City which thinks itself the main problem', or (2) 'My state has not yet developed enough to have such an intriguing City consuming our attention', then is this really something that needs an election to be asked about (look at it this way, other than States mid-swing and Texas, do we really expect or want more of these cities to develop. Will New York's vanity allow for these competitors to crop up in the South? Will Los Angeles' lust leave these Midwestern souls untouched?).

When we distrust the Electoral College, we feel something is wrong with the way we have divided this country. Independent of politics, it's only natural that a Conservative and Liberal force occupy a country (at least as far as they are so crudely pointed to), they work together to fill out the dimensions of our shared society (The Conservative supports the Liberal Schemes, the Liberal manipulates the Stiffened Conservative), so for what reason have they been so purposefully pitted against each other in the political arena? What is the problem that lies at the heart of our political assumptions?

Scene 2: A Nation Divided to Conquer Itself



Since our government's inception we have kept the voter intact, by dividing the state, allowing voters to vote freely, but also by leaving the burden of carrying out democratic decisions (in the way they were supposedly intended to be carried out by someone) to representatives (and their representations). But what effect does literally dividing the country like this have on the public consciousness? Weren't the nation's founding children astutely aware that the divisions of the states *is* what would allow for an imperfect division to persist.

To give temporary political shelter to the cowardly dissenting masses (if the politicized individual finds they are not strong enough to stand in the torrents of acidic spit native to such a turbulent political system, then in their haste they may take shelter in a leaky state, the eternal dampness of their spirit will soak them with fear, fear of finally weathering the ill-temperaments outside themselves long enough to gather the materials needed to make an umbrella out of their ideals, out of hope these political junkies wait in their news bunkers for the day that America is over and only they remain, but I did not come here to live in the ground), creating a buffer between the voter and the vote (if what constitutes the state is not the people, but how the people are ordered, then narrowly the people will believe they have no true means of control over their State [through the use of a wider knowledge] which is thinly controlling everyone [via it's assumptions] a control that is complete only *in* its narrowness [That the state *is*, where the people are *not*, and the people are all over the place]), allowing for an opinion that detracts from the good of the whole (the removal of 'Self-Realization' *in* the Election).

Scene 3: The Birthplace of Democracy



If we wish to reform the way we vote, from indirect to direct, then we must consider seriously how we would get there. How can we have an election where one candidate runs on invalidating their presidency, and are not elected a paradox (or else tyranny if a candidate were to do this without disclosing what electing them would mean)? Why would a party present a candidate that moves to legitimize referendum politics over party politics (Where the party's position is not secured by constructing a platformed candidate that wins about half the votes, but by providing an option that wins about half the votes)? Who can we elect that would listen to the people, but isn't bound to their office? It doesn't seem likely that the system would pose a question that destroys itself. It is impossible for us to elect something outside of the system.

In the midst of this confusion, other questions cloud our view. Why is immediate power given mainly to the indecisive wholes (Swinging States), and stripped from indecisive individuals (non-partying voters)? Why is indefinite power held by centers of intellectual production (primarily New York, and California), and why does this power flow down throughout its base (its constituent parts). Why is the infinite potentiality of the voter forced to first reduce itself to a binary question (albeit flagrantly coloured), and then pressed further down into a singular choice along state lines? If the voter is supposed to have any real power, shouldn't it be direct? The Democratic spirit starts to emerge from these frustrations, but to be cut free from stone, we must ask around it, for it. Why was the voter first tied to the state, and their decision subsumed by the state? Why in the moment of freedom's recognition as absolute, is it immediately linked to humanity's greatest oppressor and enslaver. What is the relation of the free, to their most burdened creation?

If we're looking for the answers, then it is important we don't pry with too much reckless scrutiny at the Democracy of America, since it was already known to be what will emerge from a freeing government. To focus solely on whittling away at this fledgling democratic spirit, would only have us chip it, wroughting an imperfection. Instead, we should look to the mold in which it was poured. And why the U.S., was in fact, a Republic.

THE STUDENTS ARE TIRED



The COVID-19 pandemic is not slowing down, the spread is not stopping, and quite frankly, the students are exhausted.

When COVID-19 hit campuses in March 2020, students all over the nation were abruptly forced to leave their campuses and head home. We were all forced to learn how to juggle school, a *global pandemic*, and home life at the same time. When the Fall came and we returned to campus, each student took on a workload that was seemingly larger than any previous year. This included a lot of work for a shorter semester, and no breaks. Online learning has been treated as if it's "easier," or something that we have a handle on. We do not.

We are tired. A vast majority of students have been stuck inside through this pandemic. This has resulted in stress on our minds and bodies, causing fatigue, and breakdowns. Please stop accusing all of us for the few that have caused a spread of COVID. No, we have not adjusted, we're just trying to do our best to make it work. This "new normal" still feels nothing like "normal". On top of this we are reminded daily how faculty jobs will be lost, and others will be affected if we do not stay on campus. I am asking that the students be cut some slack.

Our wellbeing is tired. Getting out of bed each day is hard, going to sleep is even harder as our projects pile up day after day. We stare at screens all day long and after zoom class ends, it is hard to sit there even longer to complete homework. We cannot get fresh air as it is often cold and dreary, and we do not have access to the facilities for activity to relieve some of this stress. We have toughened up, and we are not asking to be given an easy way out, but please understand that we are far from thriving in the environment we have been placed in. We cannot wait to get out.

Many of us do not leave campus as we do not have the means to do so, nor do we have the time. But on campus the food services offered are limited, facilities are closed, and academically, there is a lack of tutoring for those who are struggling. Our interaction with others is so minimal that we do not meet new people, we do not make new friends.

Just this semester alone, which we are just shy of a month into, I have heard from multiple students; "I have never felt more tired" and "I do not know how to make myself feel motivated right now." Because of these feelings we have, our work is affected, and this will ultimately affect our grades. We are not faulting you either. No one can fix what has

happened, this pandemic is a struggle for all of us every day, it challenges us mentally, physically, and emotionally, but I assure you the majority of us are doing our absolute best.

This is not a blame game, we are not blaming you, so please stop blaming us.

By Krystina Gauer

Entertainment Section

The Perfect Winter Playlist: Late Nights



Ever since I heard The News by Party Next Door, I have been obsessed with recreating the dark atmosphere that song creates. That was in late December of 2019 when it was cold out and I was driving back home. I added a few songs here and there but the playlist began to take form in 2020. The first few tracks are far more energetic compared to the rest of the tracks, spacey, psychedelic, and more lively. They would make you want to turn up in the whip, at least that's the hope. The following tracks are more alternative R&B with dark undertones, the ones that make you reminisce about your exes. The last handful of tracks close out the playlist in a succinct way. I tried not to delve too deep into the method behind the

madness because I want the listener to be the judge of the tracks and most people will probably listen to it in shuffle anyways. This is all to say I tried to bring together songs with a similar dark aesthetic but there's some variety. Here are some of the artists that make an appearance on the playlist: Kid Cudi, Travis Scott, The Weekend, Drake, Giveon, Denzel Curry, Brent Faiyaz, H.E.R, SZA, and Summer Walker.

Link to the playlist:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/7l4ranaENvAX8nWT5SfcuV?si=cjrXbFUbRuCwE78qEkC-zQ>

By Alpha Bah

Film Scoop: Malcolm X

It is safe to say that even in 2021, Malcolm X is still one of the best biopics ever produced. It brings to the screen so many of the iconic moments in the autobiography of Malcolm X, which can be attributed to director Spike Lee, whose signature filmmaking style makes the visuals gel perfectly with the story. There is no going around Denzel Washington's

performance in this film. He does not merely imitate Malcolm X, he embodies him..From the fiery speeches, to the presence and appearance, Denzel's performance is Oscar-worthy. Everyone in this film is phenomenal including Angela Basset as Betty Shabazz, Delroy Lindo as West Indian Archie, and oddly enough even Spike Lee as Shorty.

This is not to say the film is perfect because, after all, it is a dramatization of the book. Most of the changes were understandable but some bothered me more than others. The character Brother Baine is an amalgamation of various figures in the book, most prominently the fascinating man Malcolm X meets in jail called Bimbi. Brother Baine is the one that convinces Malcolm to join the Nation of Islam in the film but in real life, it was his brother Reginald. Most of the family members that Malcolm relied on are left out of the film. I understand why they did not make an appearance but not having his half Sister Ella was a bit odder to me. The other thing that I thought was missing from the film was Malcolm's commitment to pan-Africanism after he finished his Hajj. In the book, he visits various African leaders and begins to articulate a vision that encompasses the liberation of black people all over the world. This more internationalist view is very important to highlight in our world right now with the way Black Lives Matter has been amplified all over the world.



With all that said, I really enjoyed the movie because despite how some details are left out, the movie is mostly in line with actual history which is surprisingly not a common thing in biopics. It's captivating, thought-provoking and it reminds me of all the many times I have read the autobiography.

Alpha Bah

Arts Section

Bird Shot (Part 1)

The steel front door almost closes behind me. It's the one Ron installed a month before the divorce, and it never closes properly. It squeaks when shoved into its place and I think of his stupid polo shirts every time I kick it like a mule and yell for the kids.

"Get down here and help bring in these groceries!" I shout. Linda answers first and I listen to her steps on the rotting floor boards, up in the attic. She temporarily leaves her post to wake up her brother.

"Mark! Get up! Oh yeah—those dreams about Liz from Biology are never gonna happen, you mutant freak!" I hear her yell. She has my sense of humor. The buttstock of the shotgun knocks on the ceiling above his bedroom, her hair draping down through the opening in the hallway ceiling.

"He's sound asleep, Linda. Earplugs! Just get down and do it, please," I tell her. A jug of vegetable oil lands on the kitchen table like I was lugging my bowling bowl back to the rack. Two bags; backpack and frontpack. It's like carrying another kid around. I fill them with the things nobody wants, the off-brands, or more accurately, the no-brands. The leftover regime over in Albany made a deal across the border with Ontario. Most of the basics are in both French and English. Needless to say, I home-school the shit out of Mark. The countless food labels get us most of the way through French class, but I'm still putting the pieces back together for History. Mark was still potty training when it happened.

There's only five of us still working at FoodPlus so it goes without saying that I get first dibs when an old federal supply truck happens to roll through town. All the labels look exactly the same, leaving desirable condiments and spices hiding in the cracks of high-fructose corn syrup nourishment.

My friend—eh, more like an acquaintance from high school, Rita—works there with me. Work is a strong word for someone who mostly stares at the people in the bread-line. She pecks her comments at them like a seagull. Customers know it's her when they see the outdated gas mask from Vietnam and the yellow dish-washing gloves. She always tells me, "No power, no gas. I'd hate to heat a pot of greasy oil over the fire just to have something different to eat. Gotta stay fit and healthy these days, Patty." When she relieved me at the end of my shift tonight, she looked down at the oil and then back up at me, the dark lenses of her gas mask staring back, dead inside.

I told her to get over it. I wanted to say, "I hope your family is eating something with enough taste, something that isn't government issued," but then I remembered her husband and two daughters were in Florida when it all went down. An entire marching band competition – gone.

"Look, Rita," I said. "Mr. Fredericks turned the freezers off months ago, almost a year before we lost power. So, those pigeons we've been eating – they taste just like chicken when you put your mind to it," I told her. Again, a dead stare from the non-functioning gas mask. She hisses and wheezes like Darth Vader. More and more every single day—I want to jam a can of Cheesewhiz in the fitting where the air filter goes.

I take my backpack off and lower it onto the table like when I was still changing Mark's diapers in this house. Ugh. This really used to be *Ron's* house. He bought it before we met. He never took care of one part of it. Not one gutter. The nice part is he's not here for me to verbally lay into. My effort of bringing up tasks that needed doing was once futile, and is now never questioned because I am, in fact, Mark and Linda's mother—and they have to do what I say. I can tend to *my* house and he'll never have any arbitrary input about something he will never lift a finger for anyway. Win-win.

Inside the pack is a ten-pound bag of rice—rice obtained in a trade for toilet paper. Don't ask me. It was Linda's idea. She always says she saw it coming on Instagram; the panic. I turn up the lantern in the corner and look outside at the grill. I've used it and cleaned it more times in the past year than Ron ever did in our twenty years of marriage.

Upstairs, I hear Linda pump the action on the shotgun and yell at Mark again. Outside on the deck, I make a neat pile of coals on the tray of the Weber. I can't help but imagine my ex-husband spending an entire Saturday and a whole bottle of lighter fluid, trying to get it lit. He has to be dead by now. Dead, or someone's sex slave. I haven't decided yet.

I'd like to believe Mark's not like his father. I like Mark. Ron bought him a stupid pellet gun for his birthday before he disappeared two weeks later. Something straight out of *A Christmas Story*. I'd really like to shoot Ron's eye out right now. Good thing is—Mark gets a lot of use out of it, and it basically puts some form of “poultry” on the table. Mark hunts, I cook, and Linda shoots at any potential looters creeping around the house. We have a good system. We have the luxury of living a nice, long walk down the road from FoodPlus—but if someone saw the amount of Comfort-Soft piled up in our basement—we'd be dead.

My son trudges down the stairs in some size elevens he doesn't quite fit into yet. Bootlaces covered in dirt fall under the step of each foot, taunting me with the threat of sending him crashing down the stairs.

"Tie your boots, Honey," I tell him. "And go brush them off outside."

"Pigeons, again? Mom, come on. Please!" he whines. His index finger digs for crust in the corner of his eye as he yawns the second word, sounding more like, "Ah-yen?" Linda runs down behind him, skipping the last few steps and stomping her feet at the bottom. She sticks her head over his shoulder, using the shotgun to lean against his back.

"We could eat *you* instead..." she whispers.

Linda helped me fry the pigeons while I tended to the ears of corn on the grill. Her little brother took over watch, and we listened to him talk to himself out of the open transom window, the sound gliding down to us in the kitchen. We kept stopping to smile and breaded the pigeons with stale crumbs we'd been collecting in a jar. But – not the kind my mother-in-law would dry out on purpose, using a loaf of Italian bread. They're just crumbs from the last month. I sent her upstairs to sneak in a nap before sunrise. We're driving to Pittsburgh tomorrow to see about a lead on a generator. Kids need to do homework, and Mama's out of candles.

I open the window above the sink the rest of the way and scrub the bottom of the pot with steel wool, looking down the road at the stop sign that turns onto the state highway. A rusty square rod of uni-strut still holds it up, the red octagon riddled with bullet holes. Not the kind some good ol' boys made with a shotgun while driving around drunk at night. No one

drives drunk anymore, or even gets drunk unless it's off home-brew. No one drives at night either. The stop sign barely shows the S or the O anymore. I still laugh every time it reads back to me the letters, 'T...P'.

I think of the Charmin stockpile in the basement and what happened to the last soccer mom who thought she was being sneaky, her minivan looking more like a cheese-grater than an automobile. I traded two comfort-rolls to Rita for a pack of cigarettes her husband doesn't know about. For all Rita knows, they came from the half-dozen allotted to each person back when the National Guard still made rounds to each county.

The lighter I use for the grill sits on the window sill, its plastic wrapper more red than the rusted sign outside. I light the cigarette, trying to pull it while at the same time, trying to let out some sort of sigh for that woman. How many times did they shoot the van?

And then all the other collateral damage in the neighborhood; Mrs. Wallace's lawn jockeys or our neighbor Cindy's stone bird bath. All of it crumbled apart like someone left the sprinkler on, a sprinkler that shoots eight-hundred lead rounds a minute.

I remember that night, screaming over the gunfire outside, telling Mark and Linda it'll be okay. I wrapped my arms around them, holding on to the twenty-gauge, the barrel restricting them like the safety bar on a roller-coaster. I thought about the stop sign and just kept yelling that word when everything else sounded too ridiculous to be happening to us.

I look down at the sink, draining slowly because of the grease, and back up at the sign. Tomorrow, we're not stopping. We'll bring the toilet paper. We'll just keep going until there's something to eat, something to trade for besides rice and pigeons.

(To be continued in the next issue)

By Andrew Wiechert

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