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## News Section

### “Will you shut up, man?”



The presidential candidates' performances at the first and third debates and their unconventional dueling town hall events have disappointed Americans.

The first presidential debate of the 2020 election year was memorable, not because of the policy discussed or the points made, but because of the interruptions and bickering. The second debate was replaced with simultaneous televised town halls.

On Sept 29 in Cleveland, OH Republican nominee President Donald Trump faced Democratic nominee Joe Biden in a debate that left many of the 73 million watchers unimpressed. The debate covered six topics in fifteen-minute segments, with moderator Chris Wallace in charge of asking questions and guiding the conversation. This model proved ineffective, however, when Trump began repeatedly interrupting both Biden and Wallace. CBS News counted 73 interruptions by Trump throughout the event. This clearly frustrated Biden, who asked the President to “Shut up,” multiple times. The format of the debate was so ineffective and widely criticized that The Commission on Presidential Debates issued a statement the day after acknowledging that “additional structure should be added” to future debates, although they didn’t specify what those changes would be.

Mia Heidenreich, a liberal-leaning student at Alfred University, thinks that the debate moderator should be able to mute the candidates’ microphones so they can minimize interruptions. Heidenreich isn’t alone. Debate-watchers flooded social media with similar comments, many demanding that mic cuts become standard. Even conservative watchers, like I.T. technician Ben Grover, suggested that microphones be muted.

“The interruptions really took away from the material,” Grover said.

The chance to see what changes the CPD would make was dashed when the second presidential debate was canceled. In response to President Donald Trump’s COVID-19 diagnosis and speedy

recovery, the CPD organized the debate to be held though an online video conference. Trump refused to attend such a debate, citing the potential for his microphone to be muted as a reason why. To replace the debate Biden organized a town hall on ABC. Trump quickly followed suit, setting up his town hall with NBC at the same time.

On Oct 15, when Americans were supposed to tune into the second debate, they instead had to choose between two separate, simultaneous town hall events hosted by the candidates.

Already exhausted from the last debate, watchers were primarily focused on the candidates' behavior, although many hoped to see more policy talk. Trump was defensive and brash while Biden relied on calm, long-winded answers. Both candidates were asked to confront issues that they had dodged at the debate, which they answered with varying levels of poise. Viewers that flipped between the two events commented on the stark contrast of mood, likening Biden's performance to an episode of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" and calling Trump's frantic.

The final debate took place this past Thursday evening, and was a little more tolerable for the American public. Less people tuned in to watch the debate, but those who did again voted that Biden won the night, according to a Politico and Morning Consult flash poll.

Watchers like Heidenreich were happy to see that the mics were muted during the candidate's initial two minute responses, but were disappointed again when the two were still able to talk over one another.

A poll from the New York Times and Siena College showed that both candidates lost support because of their behavior during the debates.

"I wasn't impressed with either one of them," Grover said.

But, when voters had to choose a winner Biden came out on top. Reactions to the town halls were similar, with headlines suggesting that Biden pulled a stronger lead than he had weeks before.

Despite the ultimate failure of both events, presidential debates are still expected to be a part of presidential campaigns.

"Coming into a debate, it allows [the candidates] to be caught off guard. They can't completely prepare for it. And I think that's important, because if they're hiding part of who they are sometimes that can come out in a debate" said Heidenreich. Grover agrees, but is interested in some larger tweaks to the format.

"The questions that the moderator talks about... should maybe be discussed by a board of people," said Grover, explaining that a group of very different individuals preparing the questions would help eliminate any bias.

He goes on to endorse an idea for the candidates to present policy plans before the debate. "Take the time to go into a... thing saying 'This is where we're at, this is what I plan on doing, these

are my points' and then use the debate to go between the two," Grover said, noting that two minutes isn't enough time for the candidates to dive into any topic. After all, he said, what he's looking for in the debates is a comparison of the candidate's policies, and it's not something that he got in the last debate.

By Dale Mott-Slater

## The Haunting of Hinsdale House



Forty minutes west from Alfred University is what is touted as the most haunted house in New York State: Hinsdale House.

In the early 1970s, Phil Dandy and his wife Clara Miller moved into the McMahon Road farmhouse, built in 1853, with their children. However, the idyllic atmosphere in Hinsdale, New York quickly turned sour as the Dandy family began to experience unexplainable events.

Not long after the family moved in, objects began to move without human placement. Strange noises, scents, and apparitions of people long gone began to seep through the walls and became a disconcerting addition to the household. The Dandys called on Father Alphonsus Trabold from St. Bonaventure University to perform a cleansing, by saying an exorcism rite but was unable to complete it as the house began to reportedly shake and scream.

The Dandy family had an article published in the Olean Times Herald to learn more information about the history of the property, however nothing solid came from it.

A psychic named Alex Tanous visited the Hinsdale House with Father Trabold on multiple occasions, with one visit leading Tanous to read the house and reveal that there had been seven murders there. Tanous and Trabold had, reportedly, repeatedly attempted to cleanse the house, but to no avail.

The Dandys moved out of the house after four years of these haunting experiences. With Clara Miller writing a book about her experiences called "Echoes of a Haunting" in 2000, and with the Discovery Channel filming an episode of *A Haunting* in 2006 at the house, the image of Hinsdale House was thrust into the public eye.

The house shifted hands over the years, with no owner staying there for very long, until Daniel Klaes bought the house in 2016 and has since written a book and turned the house into a must-see experience.

Klaes says that those visiting are able to see the remnants of an old barn that used to be on the property, items used in the failed exorcisms, and an “amazing Giving tree” on top of the hill behind the house. This tree is home to theories of hangings, reportedly an extremely haunting location. This is not all the Hinsdale House will offer, however, with Klaes planning to add a museum and cabins onto the property.

“If you are interested in history and even better than that: the paranormal, this is a hotbed of both and a side of folklore,” Klaes teases, “It costs \$10-\$89 [to go] depending on the length of stay. Tours last from an hour up to an overnight [stay], if you can brave it.”

Reportedly, on multiple occasions, there has been electric voice phenomenon (EVP’s), full-body apparitions, shadow people, and object movement. Klaes, himself, has had encounters with the ghosts on the property, but tempers any consistent expectations by saying that paranormal activity is naturally unreliable, but that that should not dissuade any enthusiasts.

“Paranormal investigators and enthusiasts come to the house year-round to investigate its claims,” Klaes said, adding. “I think that at any given time you can find unexplainable energy on the property.”

By Sam Sage

## Faculty Interview – Kevin Adams



The Fiat Lux is proud to introduce a new faculty member to the Alfred University family. Kevin Adams is a new librarian at Herrick Library and would absolutely love for someone to finally come in and ask for help with a project. We had an opportunity to ask him a few questions about his experience so far and what he's looking forward to working on.

**Can you tell us a little background about yourself?**

*I studied Philosophy and History at Purdue University [as an] undergraduate. I received an honors degree in history after writing an undergraduate thesis on the Women’s March in Iran on International Women’s Day immediately following the Iranian Revolution in 1979. I then spent a few years working as a delivery driver and a server in a variety of different restaurants, which I really enjoyed. Unfortunately, the hours, pay, and benefits in the food service industry were not sustainable for me. After encouragement from peers and my family, I decided to get a degree as a Master of Science in Library and Information Science. In library school I focused on archives and special collections, marginalized voices and materials, and instruction and reference. While I did not write a thesis, I did an extensive amount of research on Soviet punk zines from the late ‘70s through the early ‘90s. Unfortunately, I don’t understand Russian, so my research could only go so far.*

**How do you like Alfred since starting your position?**

*I like Alfred! The university and the village are both quite charming. I found the summer to be super pleasant and quiet. Moving during a pandemic sucks, but it has sort of made the social elements of transitioning to a quieter and smaller area a little bit more natural.*

**What was your path to becoming a librarian?**

*I have always spent my time in libraries. From the time I was a kid, I was always eager to go. I even met my fiancée in the library. And, I really enjoy the academic research that happens here.*

**When thinking about the phrases "Fiat Lux" or "Outside of Ordinary" what do they mean to you, both in a broad university scope as well as functions of the library?**

*I cringe a bit at this type of branding, to be honest. But, the freedom and independence that I have as a faculty member really reflects the "Outside of Ordinary" phrase. With that, I have found the critical thinking and openness that already exists in the University Libraries to be fantastically welcoming.*

**What are some of your thoughts on Alfred University's archival assets?**

*To be honest, I haven't had the opportunity to delve into the archives, yet! From the brief time I have spent there, I am impressed with the spaces and organization. One day I am hoping to learn more about the history of the land on which Alfred was settled and to learn more about the settlers' relationships with the Seneca people.*

**What are some other alternative approaches to research, especially during pandemic conditions?**

*I am not sure I would call this an alternative approach, but many researchers have been using online databases for a while, and the pandemic has reinforced that pattern. I really like your use of alternative here though; something that I have been really interested in learning more about is how we can rethink research methodologies. There is a lot of great work being done on queering and/or decolonizing research methods. This work is so vital to undermining white supremacy and other backwards norms in academia, and I am really looking forward to learning more.*

**What are some things the library can do to help students that you feel like they're missing out on, or not noticing?**

*The pandemic is really wreaking havoc on what is supposed to be an exciting and inspiring time for students. I think a lot of students don't realize that the libraries are open for them to come and hang out. We have our spaces arranged for safe, socially distanced use. I know it's simple, and the libraries have had to change some of our services, but I want students to know that they can come and use the spaces!*

By Andrew Wiechert

## Why Acknowledging The Mental Health Crisis Is Extremely Important Right Now

Trigger Warning: This article includes discussion of mental illness and suicide.

In the midst of an unprecedented pandemic, an economic depression and an election year, in addition to winter coming soon, it is extremely important to be aware of the United States' mental health crisis.

The topic of mental health is still very taboo in the United States, possibly due to our capitalist culture that encourages people to maintain an image of someone who is productive, balanced, level-headed, and successful. However, the truth is that many people struggle with everyday responsibilities and interactions. According to federal statistics, one in five adults have a mental illness. The Kaiser Family Foundation reported that the number of American deaths due to substance abuse or suicide have been increasing yearly. In 2017-2018, 17 million adults and 3 million adolescents reported being depressed and 10 million adults with mental illness had serious thoughts of suicide. Despite this, less than half of those who have a mental illness receive treatment, as the high cost of healthcare is a huge barrier. Adding in the social, economic, political, and emotional challenges of 2020 has only worsened the mental health of many individuals.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, isolation, fear, unemployment, illness and death have become factors in many American lives. In a Kaiser Family Foundation poll published in August, 53% of adults in the United States reported that worry and stress over coronavirus has negatively impacted their mental health. Many reported symptoms of anxiety and depression. 34% of Gen Z adults and 19% of millennials stated that their mental health is worse now than it was this time last year, according to a report published this month by the American Psychological Association. The CDC has also acknowledged the worsening mental health crisis due to COVID-19, citing younger adults, racial minorities, essential workers, and unpaid adult caregivers as those who experience disproportionately worse mental health outcomes.

Many individuals rely on their daily routines and interactions with other human beings as a consistent, structured support in their lives. Socialization can be a distraction from internal mental struggles and a motivator to simply get out of bed in the morning. When work, school and social lives are put on hold completely or heavily compromised, many people simply do not know what to do or how to cope. Adapting to an entirely different routine and lifestyle of online, masked, and/or distanced interactions suddenly is not easy. Americans are left feeling lonely, displaced, unmotivated, frustrated, and trapped. Not to mention the fear of themselves or a loved one becoming seriously ill.

College students found themselves studying remotely online for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester. Some students are in the same situation this fall semester, while others are enrolled in hybrid classes, which consist of a combination of online and in-person instruction. Either way, online schooling is arguably far more difficult than traditional classroom instruction.

Studying online inevitably increases the amount of time one is sitting in front of a computer and therefore reduces necessary physical activity. Many students struggle with finding a distraction-free environment to work in their place of living. Shared living spaces are not the same as library study rooms. Students studying from their family home become overwhelmed with schoolwork and other household responsibilities that they would not have if they were otherwise living on-campus, such as supervising a younger sibling. BBC reported that video calls can be extremely tiring. On video calls, it is much more difficult for the human brain to process non-verbal cues including facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice. It is harder for the conversation to feel natural. Furthermore, being on camera causes one to be more conscious of how he or she appears to others.

The American Psychological Association reported that 87% of Gen Z adults in college said that education is a significant source of stress in their lives. Additionally, 67% of Gen Z adults in college said that the pandemic makes planning for their future feel impossible. Combine these challenges with the fact that they cannot play sports normally, party, or travel, and you will understand why many college students are unhappy and struggling.

Those working remotely face similar challenges to students, though many Americans are facing the challenges of not working at all. According to a Columbia University study published this month, an additional 8 million Americans began living in poverty since May. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services considers any family of four earning \$26,200 a year or less as living below the poverty line. Currently, 55 million Americans live in poverty.

Studies have shown that individuals who live in poverty, especially early in life or for an extended period of time, are more at risk for adverse health outcomes. Poverty in adulthood has been linked to depression, anxiety, psychological distress, and suicide. The Washington Post reported on a study done of the Great Recession that found with every percentage point increase in the unemployment rate, the suicide rate increased by approximately 1.6%. There is no question that the worsening mental health crisis in 2020 is linked to the economic recession.

Annually, the onset of fall and winter affects the mental and emotional state of many humans, but 2020 will be particularly challenging. USA Today reported that 5% of Americans have seasonal affective disorder – a type of depression caused by less sunlight and colder temperatures. The symptoms include sadness, loss of interest in activities, loss of energy, and changes in sleep and eating habits. Over the summer, people were able to safely gather outdoors with a lesser risk of spreading covid-19. As the case numbers increase nationally and people flock indoors to avoid the cold, there will be fewer activities and socialization opportunities to serve as necessary coping mechanisms for those with seasonal affective disorder.

Considering all of these factors, it is easy to understand why so many Americans are struggling mentally. We have all heard it before – these are unprecedented times. The United States' future is uncertain in terms of how long the pandemic and the days of masks, social distancing, and video calls will continue. The answer to that question heavily relies on the result of the upcoming election.



When it comes to breaking down the stigma America has surrounding mental health, the first step is to talk about it. Acknowledge that a mental health crisis exists and educate yourself further on what exactly is happening and how common mental illness actually is. And to those who are struggling under our current circumstances – please know that you are not alone. There is a crisis. Mental health is a widespread issue. 2020 has affected so many people negatively. Your struggles are valid.

One final statistic for struggling college students to remember is from the American Psychological Association: “Gen Z adults are the most likely to report experiencing common symptoms of depression, with 75% reporting that in the prior two weeks they felt so tired that they sat around and did nothing, 74% felt very restless, 73% found it hard to think properly or concentrate, 73% felt lonely, and 71% felt miserable or unhappy.” While all of these things are difficult to cope with, it is comforting to know that feelings are temporary and that the world will not be this way forever.

Finally, if you have not already, consider candidates’ healthcare plans, views on mental health, and strategies for handling the pandemic and recession when voting. There are Americans who need federal support more than ever right now.

Resources:

Wellness Center Counseling Services: 607-871-2300  
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

By Katie Alley

## 5 Costumes You Should NOT Wear for Halloween

Halloween is approaching very fast and now is about the time people are scrambling to find costumes. Today, I am here to break down ten costumes you should not wear due to cultural appropriation.

An Asian princess





This is more for the parents. The idea of seeing your child as a princess is beautiful but please, do not put your child in a dress that is incorrectly imitating someone else's culture. Putting your child in a Kimono not only is disrespectful to Japanese culture, but it also devalues it. Especially when actual people from Japanese descent are judged for wearing them, you cannot wear someone else's culture as a costume.

### A Gypsy

We all know cultural appropriation is wrong, but it makes it even worse when you take someone's culture and oversexualize it as a costume. Gypsies can refer to nomadic peoples of Romanian descent, but more specifically, people imagine an example of Romanian women like the one portrayed above. In some countries, the word gypsy has such a negative connotation that it is considered a slur. Please do not sexualize someone else's culture in the form of a costume.





### Maui from Moana

Now this one might be a bit of a shock because Maui is a character from a Disney movie, and you might be thinking “How can a Disney character be offensive?” Well, Maui is from Hawaii and while they are a part of the United States, they do still have their own distinct culture. Hawaiian culture was very accurately portrayed in the movie, from their clothes to even some of their beliefs in gods. Dressing up like this character is very disrespectful. Once again, do not use someone else’s culture as a costume!

### Anything that involves blackface

This should be self-explanatory. Blackface is not only cultural appropriation, but it is extremely racist and is not tolerated. Black skin is not a trend and is not a costume. Mocking someone’s skin is not funny nor should anyone tolerate it. Black people are killed daily for their skin and you cannot paint it on and take it off whenever you want. Do not wear someone’s skin as a costume!



### A Native American



Native Americans were considered savages for wearing their cultural garb. Especially when Christopher Columbus got here and killed them all. It is not fair when anyone else gets to just put on their culture as a costume without consequence. Dressing up as a Native American is one thing, but buying a cheap, inaccurate costume is a completely different realm of disrespect. Once again, stop wearing someone else’s culture as a costume.

In conclusion, culture is a special thing. It's what makes different races different, allowing them to see other's perspectives. Most cultures are curated in mainstream pop-culture because they are seen as a trend. This Halloween, let's change that. Respect other people's cultures. There's a difference between appropriation and appreciation.

Happy Halloween

By Jeanni Floyd

## AU Takes on Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM)

New York State has one of the highest demands for domestic services in the country. Cattaraugus Community Action (CCA) located in Salamanca, New York, is a non-profit organization that provides opportunities to help vulnerable people achieve economic, physical and emotional security. Currently, CCA is focusing on victims of domestic violence, trying to get people from corrupt households to reach out for help through social media. Alfred University is teaming up with CCA to get students to write short messages to these victims for the 'Dear Survivor' Campaign. These messages will be posted on the CCA's social media accounts, emphasizing that the organization is there to help anyone who might need it.

National data collected in 2019 indicates that, on a single day in New York, nearly 6,000 domestic violence survivors requested services. Since then, the requests for services across the state are becoming more complicated than ever, due to COVID-19 isolating victims in their unsafe homes. These victims can be children in the household, mothers, fathers, or anyone in an unstable, toxic relationship. By writing brief messages to these victims, they can further feel as though they matter—as though they can reach out for help without feeling uncomfortable, scared, or lost.

One quote from a message posted on CCA's Instagram states, "you may feel like you're trapped and that it's too late, but it is not. Whenever you are ready, we are here for you. We believe you and you are not alone."

By teaming up with college students, the organization can promote their cause to a broader community. Since there is no age limit on domestic violence, AU and CCA can do their part to possibly reach more people in need of help. Resident Assistants of on campus housing, club presidents, as well as some professors are sending out emails on this information, explaining how and why you should write these short messages, along with other community service opportunities containing domestic violence.

"Our hope is that someone who feels they may have nowhere to turn will read something that will encourage them to reach out. The purpose of writing these short messages is to ensure others that we are here for support—that we are here to listen and believe them. If someone suffering from domestic abuse scrolls through social media and happens to see what someone wrote, well, that could just change their life," said CCA's Prevention Education Specialist Kathlyn Harle Ramey.

If these messages continue to get posted on social media, then it is bound to help victims of domestic violence. These encouraging words can help someone feel brave enough to leave an unstable, toxic household and request services that can give them a better life, including increased self-esteem, lowered anxiety and stress levels, comfortability, and genuine stability. If you feel as though you have an uplifting and positive message that you would like to share to victims of domestic violence, please contact Victim Services volunteer Kailey Reyes at [KFR1@alfred.edu](mailto:KFR1@alfred.edu) for further information on how to be involved.

“My goal is to ensure victims of domestic abuse that it is okay to ask for help. CCA is a great organization that further promotes how to navigate healthy and unhealthy relationships, along with how to get out of them. The ‘Dear Survivor’ Campaign is a great way to reach out to these victims in a welcoming and comforting way,” said One Love volunteer Shannon Marlatt.

By Kailey Reyes

## “Quality Eats?”



Alfred University has recently made concise changes to this semester's on-campus dining. Students have been displeased at the food options and changes. Although the food situation is different, alternatives exist. Some options are new and others already existed prior to the semester. Students feel the university's menu lacks diversity. With the changes and restrictions put in place, food services gets an F from the students.

### The student's view:

Students were interviewed and asked about the current state of food on Alfred's campus. It was made clear that the student body isn't very interested in the menus presented to them. Students offered clear-cut opinions and even speculated on a few things. The quality of the food was criticized, along with what's offered or lack thereof. Some students refuse to deal with on-campus dining and cook for themselves and others.

Alfred University senior, Chynna Moultrie, elects to cook in efforts to offer students a home-cooked meal. Her menu consists of a plethora of options ranging from stew chicken to mac & cheese. Moultrie is most famous for her bestselling empanadas.

“There aren’t a lot of choices for food. I personally don’t prefer any of the food out here but mine. I am used to diversity and flavor... the quality of the food is horrible and can be much better. I feel like my customers feel the love in my food not only because it’s mine, but because it’s a better option.”

She is located at 25 West University in the village and cooks 4 days out of the week of her choosing. The dinners are \$15 and served from 7p-11p.

Other students offered similar and interesting perspectives in regards to campus food. AU sophomore Antoria Conde weighed in on the subject.

“Well, I think the food seems very limited because of COVID. I believe it’s limiting their options to offer us, it’s a hit or miss for me.” Conde went on to highlight cookies as being the best thing on the menu. Last semester she enjoyed using her meal plan to get food at Midnight, which no longer exists.

Upperclassmen encourage students to patronize businesses in the surrounding areas. Just outside of campus, Main Street includes several restaurants accessible to both campuses.

The three most mentioned spots among those who were interviewed were Duke’s Main Street Pizza, The Checkpoint Barbecue, and The Jet. Students spoke highly of the quality of food and service. Unlike on campus dining, they offer delivery and close pass at 9 o’clock.

There are modifications and differences from past semesters to the present.

#### Here’s what you should know:

The most noticeable change to the food system is the Get app. It is a mobile app that enables the student to place an order for pick up. It has the student's information installed in order to keep track of transactions and funds. This is the most noticeable change because the dining halls no longer accept the student ID/swipe card. All students with a meal plan need this app to order from Powell or to enter upstairs at Ade.

Both of the on-campus dining halls have made changes and restrictions. Ade switched from a buffet-style to ready-made food. Students can no longer scoop their own food or choose the servings. Even the silverware is wrapped up to prevent contamination. They also elected to eliminate the sandwich bar and plastic dining hall cups have been switched to disposables. Dinner runs 4-9pm, opposed to past year’s 5-8:30pm. The bottom floor of Ade once was Midnight, serving finger food and appetizers until 2 AM. It has recently transitioned to the Met which serves food until 7pm.

Powell used to be bustling with traffic on most evenings. These days there is more of an eeriness. Though there are two sit-in locations on the top floor, it is required of students to order ahead. In the past students would use their student ID/swipe card to purchase meals from a pretty nice selection. Now they offer Freshens, which is low calorie artisan food such as rice bowls and wraps. Students can pre-order from the app and it takes about 10 to 15 minutes to put it all

together and they get an email telling them their order is in. There is also a Starbucks on the top floor of Powell, open from 7:30a-2p on weekdays 9-2p on weekends. However, there is no longer dining at Powell on weekends.

Alfred University and the majority of the surrounding establishments require employees to wear a mask and gloves. There are purple stickers placed around campus that indicate students must have a mask on upon entry. The protocol is being put in place to make Alfred a safe environment. Cutting crowds and lessening hand to hand contact was important. The quality of the service remains the same in both of the dining halls. Once food on-campus stops at 9 o'clock, students are left to fend for themselves. Students may not be aware of their options but there is safe and affordable dining available to those who feel like walking a little further.

By Jamall Lewis

## Arts Section

### The Huron-Anastasia Transit

Huron had only one bus stop, placed at the entrance-exit crossroads on the edge of town. The Huron-Anastasia Transit was markedly underused. See, it was common that no one wanted to come here and that no one wanted to leave this town.

However, an autumn afternoon revealed a lone figure sitting at the bus stop. Bundled in shockingly black clothing, a monochrome appearance between the outfit and the pallid skin underneath. The figure was stationary, calm, despite the near-frigid wind pushing against them. They were old and clean, neat almost to a point.

The transit would not arrive for another hour, and yet this did not dissuade the figure. Watching, waiting, they had a quiet, sort of contemplative glee across their face: a youthful crone grin and flashing eyes. Their attention was fixed on something beyond the road in front of them, nearer to a local thicket.

They were not looking at the tree line, but somehow deeper. Something invisible to passers-by, and yet wholly known to them of which they never took their eyes from. It was the source of this calm and pulsing feeling inside.

An hour later, the only thing to disrupt their focus was the bus stopping. The door swung open, and they boarded. In one simple movement, it seemed, they had risen from the bench and settled into a seat upon the transit.

As the bus closed and pulled away from the lone bus stop, the old figure gave a single, somber nod toward the thicket.

Deep within, a grove of bodies began to decay.

By Sam Sage

## In the Woods

I had been walking with my friends  
In the woods beyond our campus  
When I became inexplicably lost.

I could not see the path ahead trod by my friends,  
Nor could the path behind give any indication it was my origin.  
The trees seemed to shift position in the wind,  
The roots drawing closer to my person,  
As I was left trying to decipher landmarks  
With one foot in front of the other  
In a sort of trance-like march  
Hoping to some divine being that I would be found.

Appearing from the brush,  
In a deer's body,  
With branching horns,  
Wrapped in creeping ivy and blossom,  
The divine being answered.  
Its eyes were deep and human,  
With an immortal understanding,  
And I felt a kindred recollection of the being,  
As if I had seen it once before.

"You are not lost,"  
It had said, drawing closer as the roots,  
"You are found."

By Sam Sage

## The Immortal's Monologue

I. Agéd

I am unbound to age, yet I have created a morbid game with myself in which I guess mine. No longer twenty, I know that to be true. I have seen too many re-volts and re-revolutions, too many conglomerate empires that bloomed and withered in a fortnight, for all of this to be just a dream. Though how I long for it to be one, one filled with premonition warnings that a fool like me could use.

"Oh, child. Live, live, you fool. The arrogance of youth will fade to melancholy if you prolong it."

How I wish that I, of the time long past, could hear my crying echoes now.



Tell him to let go of such fool-hardy notions, to drink deeply of the present and cherish it, lest you age, and you ought to age. For you will soon find yourself without the fondness of your then-present and now-past that you have lost in the war of youth you have now found yourself in.

## II. Lovers

I have loved and lost, seen my lovers lose themselves to rot and senility. Decaying into the bed where we laid, with creaking bones and paper skin that have long forgotten the waltzes that once colored the ballroom floors.

All the while, they beg me, “Make me one of you.” For surely, they believe to know my secret. My secret, my choice, a haunting spectre that watches behind me in a mirror that only I can see. This secret begets within them a sort of jealousy of which I find myself incapable of allowing to pursue further than empty promises upon their deathbed.

Fever dreams and drug hallucinations, I have become in the minds of the ill and elderly that once loved me: an Angel of Death that once kissed them and showed them the pearls of the world, whilst remaining untimely perfection.

## III. Friends

Sociality has left me desperate to find connection. Over my cursed years I have made bosom friends, true friends, of whom I will forever cherish. My collection of photographs and portraits will become warped with time, but their fire and memory will never fade so long as I live to remember them. A sickening oath to preserve the forgotten haunts my steps ‘ere I go, I see the eyes of comrades in the cityfolk or simplefolk and wonder if I am the last of them.

Through the many lives I have lived from birth to death, I have seen my companions die. Either by thine own hand or by the sword, it matters not. Valiant warriors or coquettish city men, they die, and that is all they can do.

And yet I find myself longing to hear the spirit-drunk vibrato from their aging throats as they sing old shanties or ballads, laughing as they go, spilling their drink, shouting misremembered lyrics. There will come a day where those songs are long forgotten, and I will be the last one singing.

## IV. Mourning

I stopped visiting their graves when I realized I was just as corpse as they, buried in satin and lace under the Creator’s earth that we untimely fed, all save me.

I would become no flower to be handed from gloved hand to a virgin one, nor tree to give shade to the academic or the lovers on holiday, nor weed from which a gardener botanist could pluck and chide, tossing me aside in all my mischevion that I would grow once more. A cycle of which would delight the resurrectionist in me.

I believe I dressed in black to mourn, once, but as the days and moments collide into a frenzied symphony, my mourning suit would become my day attire. I would be assured to find some calming repetition in that, that I mourn for the loss of mine own life along with theirs. I am my own funeral procession, alas I have not felt it yet.

My long-lost gaze acts as an invitation to the young and misfit, who throw themselves upon my lap and call for some pleasure as opposed to melancholy I could bestow upon them. They tease, so lost in their own mind, that it is a wonder they can find their way to my arms. I represent a pillar of some hierarchy they long to reach, a level of hedonistic self-actualization that scares and calms them.

Their souls will, inevitably, be forever embalmed in the acrylic and arsenic of the time. Their hearts become little tokens I carry with me, becoming baggage for the day the world ends and when which I am to forcefully meet my maker.

## V. After Life

God. The nights where I have locked myself away and screamed His name in horror and agony, frightened of what judgement awaits me for all I have done. Surely, I could not be fed to the Hounds of Hell, for I am already feeling their heated breath across me when I stare at my visage.

But I am too gone, too fallen of an angel to be welcomed to Heaven and receive the kiss of the Creator before settling in for the long rest. No, I will be forever cursed to an endless purgatory of which I will have to face my every wrongdoing and momentary kindness that I will be begging for by the end of it all. I will be cursed to be alone, as I have always been.

I pace, awake at the witching hours, and wish I can forget the atrocious deeds I have committed. And yet, I cannot and must force myself to feel apathy as opposed to antipathy over them. To kill those I have loved and cherished in the maintenance of this unholy addiction of mine is something no god could forgive. And, as being as close to a god, I find no timely solace in the pardoning of mine own actions.

They rot within me like the bodies I have thrown into the river.

By Sam Sage

## Touching



By Ryan Croland

## Entertainment Section

### Book Review: "Carry On"

Imagine a world where mages and magical creatures exist under our noses, and where vine references and song lyrics become spells. In Rainbow Rowell's "Carry On" that world comes to life. Complete with political critiques and a sprinkling of swear words, "Carry On" is the perfect novel for the modern-minded fantasy fan.

The story follows four young mages as they attend the Watford School of Magicks. The main character is dashing Simon Snow, a classic chosen-one trope in every way - except that he's awful at doing magic, the one thing he's supposed to be great at. He and his best friend Penelope spend their final year at school trying to find and defeat The Insidious Humdrum, a mysterious character who's creating magical dead-zones and constantly sending creatures to kill Simon. Meanwhile, Simon's roommate, Baz, whom he hates



with a burning passion, has gone missing and his relationship with his girlfriend, Agatha, becomes testy.

If this sounds a little familiar, that's because it is. Simon and Baz were characters first mentioned in Rowell's novel "Fangirl", where the protagonist wrote "Harry Potter"-esque fanfiction. Rowell loved the characters so much that she decided to write them a book of their own. While Watford may bear a striking resemblance to Hogwarts, the tone and themes of "Carry On" are more mature than in "Harry Potter." In her magical world, J. K. Rowling has faced criticism for poor racial diversity, queerbaiting, and the rigid classification of 'good' and 'bad' characters. Rowell stares these issues in the face and makes some of them central themes in her story.

Although the World of Mages is cleverly thought out and creates an exciting stage for the story, the novel thrives because of how complex the characters are. Rowell constantly examines the characters throughout the story, turning them around so the reader can see the many sides that make them up. Because the point of view changes with the chapters, readers are able to gain a clear understanding of each character's motivations and worldview. This also allows the reader to slowly piece together the mystery lurking behind the plot. The character's decisions, for better or worse, drive the story forward at a riveting pace.

The complexity of the characters also allows Rowell to explore a deeper theme in the writing; None of the "Carry On" characters are inherently 'good' or 'bad'. Instead, they all exist on a moral spectrum, where Rowell lets them move freely. This depiction is often missed in fiction, instead favoring the classic hero versus villain setup. But real life isn't that black and white, and Rowell does a great job of capturing that. By depicting relatable characters who aren't tied to a single moral standing, Rowell creates an incredibly validating experience for her readers. All of this is accomplished in a way that doesn't feel forced on the reader, but instead grows with the story.

The youthful tone and upbeat pace of this story makes it a perfect read for young adults that miss the ignorant bliss of the "Harry Potter" world they loved as a kid. It's a lengthy read, but it goes by quickly because it's nearly impossible to put down. And after you've blown through the first one, you can move on to the sequel, "Wayward Son", and look forward to the pending release of the final book in the trilogy.

By Dale Mott-Slater

## Antebellum: Exploitation of Black Trauma?

Antebellum is a 2020 horror film starring Janelle Monáe.



The movie is about Eden, a slave who's subject to violence on a confederate controlled plantation. The movie reveals that Eden's real identity is Veronica Henley, a famous author with considerable wealth before her capture and that the plantation is a civil war reenactment museum in modern times. Don't think about it too much.

If I'm being honest, the conversation around the film has been far more interesting than the film itself. A lot of people took issue with the brutality shown on screen, seeing it as gratuitous. "*Antebellum* ends up being a noxious tour of historic violence against Black folks in service of a story that has nothing novel to say about the


obliterating function of whiteness and anti-Black racism," said Angelica Jade Bastien, a critic for Vulture. In her view, the violence was a means to an end exploiting black trauma. She then concluded that it's "ultimately a travesty of craft and filmmaking with a perspective that hollows out the Black experience in favor of more horror."

It's gotten to the point where Black audiences do not want to see slavery movies anymore and it's not hard to see why. I somewhat agree with this sentiment but when I think about the number of movies about slavery (there aren't that many) and how the intricacies of slavery have rarely been depicted accurately in film, I can only conclude that we need more films about slavery. Too often details like the Tulsa Massacre, Sun-down towns, and slave rebellions are left out. I have also realized that not much care is given to outlining racist ideas themselves and how they have evolved over centuries (we also need more films on Reconstruction, my goodness).

Where Antebellum fails for me is just how unmemorable and convoluted it is as a story. A lot of it was painful to watch and a better film would have found a way to give good social commentary on not just slavery but the present black experience. Halloween is around the corner but you should probably skip this one.

By Alpha Bah

## Advertisement Section



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## Classifieds Section

### Free Furniture

*Blue rocking chair, antique green rocking chair, end table with attached lamp, small brown bookshelf made of particle board. All from non-smoking home with cats. Email [fieldm@alfred.edu](mailto:fieldm@alfred.edu) to arrange for pick-up or drop-off in Alfred.*



### Class of '61

Michael Solomon says, "Class of '61. Anyone Around?"

You can reach out to Michael through [email--msolo@aol.com](mailto:email--msolo@aol.com)

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