

The Official Newspaper of Alfred University

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## “Be Flexible”: An Interview with Dr. Michele Hluchy

Sam Sage, Editor-in-Chief

### How long have you been a part of the Alfred University faculty?

I have been a faculty member in geology and environmental studies at AU since 1988, so, 34 years. When I retire in May, I will have been here 35 years.

### What has been a highlight of your career, teaching or otherwise?

When I came to AU, one of my goals was to involve students in research projects as undergraduates, because that was an important part of my undergraduate experience. I would say the highlight of my career was to involve well over 100 students in research projects during my time here. We started having an undergraduate research poster session in ENVS in the 1990s and that evolved into the university-side Undergraduate Research Forum, which I organized for 20 years.

### How do you hope to see the ENVS and GEOL departments evolve in the near future?

I would like to see the programs at AU evolve into an even more multi-disciplinary program. For a while, there was a core group of faculty in other divisions that contributed to the program. That has waned over time as faculty have left or retired and not been replaced with new faculty

members with those interests. We need to get back to that kind of a program because solving environmental problems requires a multi-disciplinary approach. Look at the problem of climate change - the science is important, of course, to understanding what will happen and where, but it isn't just a scientific issue - it is political, economic, sociological, etc. We need to approach climate change and other environmental issues using all of those disciplines and we need students going out into the workforce or into their communities who can contribute in all of these ways.

### How do you see America rectifying our fight against climate change?

It's tough. Again, education is important. Modifying our behavior and encouraging others to do the same, even taking what may seem like minor actions such as composting or driving vehicles that get more miles to the gallon. Advocating for change wherever we live or work, rebuilding trust in science, [and] learning lessons from disasters such as Hurricane Ian.

### Do you have any advice for ENVS students who are looking for some direction in a post-college world?

My advice to graduating students is to be flexible and keep an open mind about employment opportunities. I



have a database of what our alumni are doing now and the range of places that they work is amazing. Our alumni work for non-profits, municipalities and government agencies, large and small businesses, as teachers, farmers, etc. as well as at the traditional “environmental jobs” such as environmental consulting firms and departments of environmental conservation. I have been inviting alumni to come speak at our weekly seminar series in the fall for the past several years and they have highlighted how students can apply the skills that they learn at AU to a wide variety of jobs and have an impact on the world once they leave Alfred.

### What do you hope to do or see now, post-Alfred?

My husband and I have a cabin in the Adirondacks that we love to spend time at, definitely more cabin time! Also, I hope to get involved with some volunteer groups that monitor lake health in the Adirondacks. Make improvements to my garden. Also, I have been playing the 5-string banjo for many years, but am looking forward to sharpening my banjo-playing skills and learning to play more stringed instruments. I recently purchased an Irish tenor banjo and am looking forward to learning to play it as well.

## Forever Chemicals, the New Normal?

Jo Castine, Copy Editor

First manufactured in the 1930s for military use, Per- and Polyfluorinated Substances, also known as PFAS, are a group of chemicals. They are now commonly used to make a wide range of products with heat, oil, water, and grease resistant properties. There are thousands of different chemicals listed as PFAS, with some of the most well known being Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA), Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS), Perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), and perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA). While PFOA and PFOS have recently been replaced in the United States with other forms of PFAS, a study conducted in 1999 by the CDC found traces of PFOS, PFOA, PFHxS, and PFNA in the blood of nearly every individual they tested.

PFAS exposure is widespread. The chemical class is used in many easily found products. These include food

packaging such as fast food wrappers, popcorn bags, and candy wrappers, personal care products such as shampoo, makeup, and dental floss. They are also found in households with stain and water repellent carpeting, water repellent clothing, nonstick cookware, and electronics, fire extinguisher foam, soil near waste sites such as landfills and hazardous waste sites, and in water used on agricultural lands used to graze livestock we later consume. Due to the nature of the chemical class, some PFAS, such as PFOA and PFOS, do not naturally break down in the environment. PFAS can also bioaccumulate (or build up) in the bodies of fish and other wildlife consumed by humans.

In a study published in August 2022, scientists at Stockholm University made a statement claiming rainwater everywhere on the planet

is now unsafe to drink due to levels of PFAS exceeding the latest EPA guidelines. Some regions in the United States were found to have PFAS levels up to 14 times higher than the US drinking water guidelines.

Knowing the range that these chemicals now cover, should you be worried? What are the potential health effects of PFAS exposure?

While health effects of PFAS can be hard to pinpoint due to the chemicals' abundance and constantly shifting nature, some currently known health effects include hormonal interference, reduced response to vaccines, reduced immune system functions, increase in cholesterol levels and risk of obesity, increased risk of prostate, kidney, and testicular cancers, decreased fertility in women, high blood pressure in pregnant women. In children, they are known to be linked to developmental dis-

abilities, low birth weight, skeletal abnormalities, accelerated puberty, and behavior changes.

Despite the possible risks of PFAS exposure, Ian Cousins, a professor at Stockholm University and lead author of the study published on PFAS in rainwater states, “I’m not super concerned about the everyday exposure in mountain or stream water or in the food. We can’t escape it... we’re just going to have to live with it.”

“But it’s not a great situation to be in, where we’ve contaminated the environment to the point where background exposure is not really safe.”

It seems that while our exposure to PFAS has potentially deadly side effects, it is, in 2022, entirely unavoidable.

# New Club Alert

Alina Zabihailo, Staff Writer

If you are passionate about something, rest assured, it doesn't take a lot to make it real. Just grab your friends and register your student organization on AU Connect. There are more than 80 clubs on campus to fulfill your dreams and wishes. Starting this semester, we have a list of new clubs you may want to join.

## Entrepreneurship Club

Entrepreneurship Club is a place to develop your problem-solving skills and bring your idea to life. This is a student-led organization, where students grow as leaders doing hands-on projects to improve student life on campus. We are preparing for business competitions the next semester, so stay tuned for more on AU Connect for future meetings.

## Alfred University Global Studies Club

The Global Studies Club is focused on analyzing current global issues from multiple perspectives. We discuss global trends in business, media, and politics and learn about the history and how it has affected the world.

Plans for future events include discussions about current affairs, fundraisers, and learning the basics of other languages and cultures. The club can serve as an introduction to global studies courses, so anyone interested in taking them can join the club to start their journey in AU Global Studies.

## Alfred Goes Green

The idea for Alfred Goes Green stemmed from frustration around the lack of action to make sustainable changes on AU's campus. Our purpose is to provide a place to discuss these frustrations and take action to make a difference. Some events in the works are contributing to the compost program ENV5 300 is starting, working on proposals for more sustainable options for dining services, donation drives from the residence halls, specialized recycling collections, and providing an e-newsletter with information about environmental news, policy, and internships. This club is meant for anyone interested in making change and our environment.

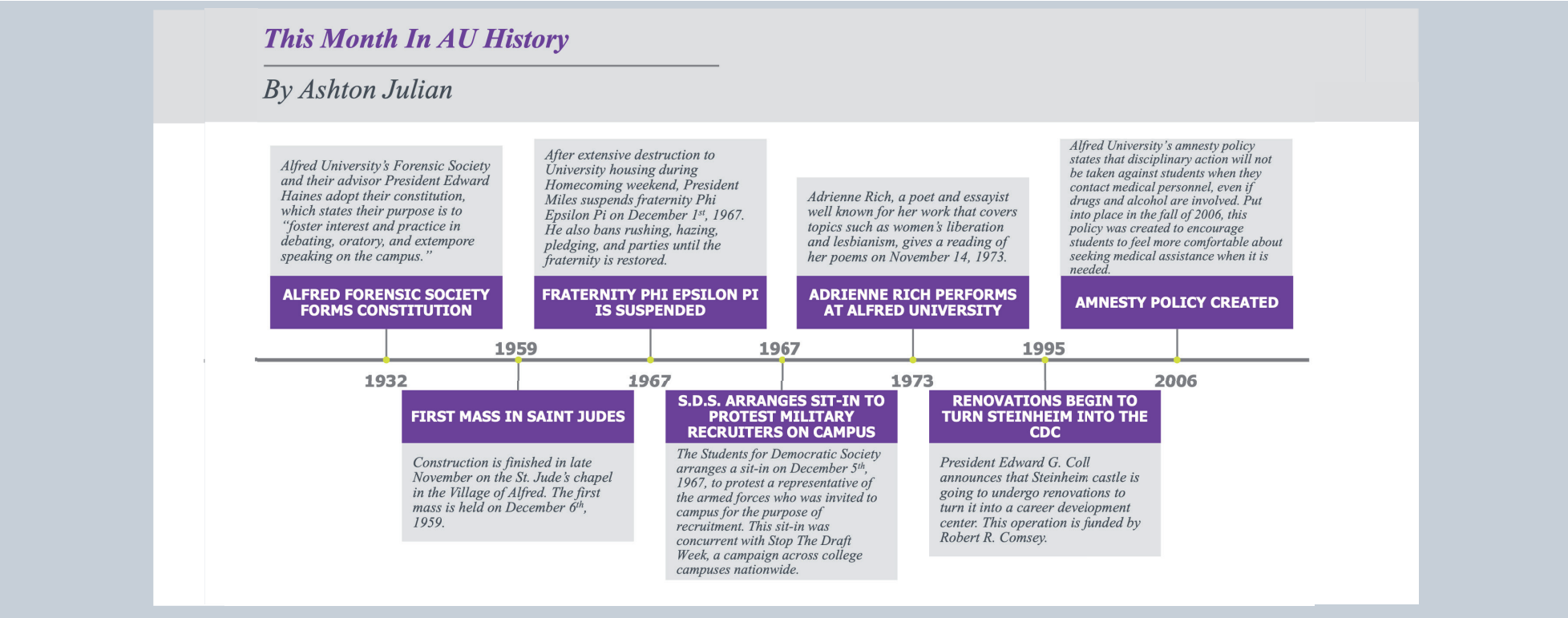
## The Samba360 Club

The Samba360 Club is a partnership with Samba360, a Long Island, NY-based 501c-3 charity that is committed to donating lightly used sporting equipment to children in underserved communities across the US and the world. Although there is no date planned, as of yet, we are working on developing an indoor soccer tournament during the spring semester to allow local club soccer teams to compete as well as fundraise for Samba360!

You may also be interested at:

- Alfred Film Club
- Alfred Karaoke Club
- Qualitative Counting Club
- United Alfred

Check AU Connect for future updates and events from a variety of clubs!



# Modern Slavery in America

Karisma Patrick, Guest Writer

Slavery was on the ballot in this past midterm election.

Voters got to decide whether slavery should be abolished in Alabama, Tennessee, Louisiana, Vermont, and Oregon. The ballot initiative aimed to create criminal justice reform in prison labor, and it was approved by voters in four of the five states.

The ballot initiatives don't enact immediate change in the prison system, but they allow for legal challenges over forcing prisoners to work under threats of losing privileges or sanctions.

Slavery was officially outlawed by the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, but forms of it have survived because

of the exception clause.

"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction," says the Thirteenth Amendment.

Johnny Perez was a victim of this exception clause while he spent 13 years in New York's Prison system.

"Slavery never ended; It evolved," says Perez in an interview with the Abolish Slavery National Network. "Working in prison made me feel very dehumanized... it made me feel worthless," he explains. "You are not allowed any days off; you are not al-

lowed any sick time. If you do not go to work, then you are sent to solitary confinement which is 23 hours a day locked inside a cell the size of your bathroom."

Brenda Lee Marie, a criminal justice major at Alfred University, also sees prison labor as modern-day slavery.

"Many manufacturing companies use prison labor to support their products," says Marie. "The people who make license plates for your car are actually prisoners. They get paid either nothing, or as low as fifteen cents."

"You're not necessarily getting paid good wages, and you work long hours," she says.

This can be compared to the work-

ing conditions of the enslaved people in America. Slaves had to do all of the work and saw no profit on top of being abused all the time. A lot of the prisoners are living under the same circumstances.

Slavery was never fully abolished in the United States. The Thirteenth Amendment left possibilities for it open. States have been using it in their prisons. However, voters in Alabama, Vermont, Tennessee, and Oregon have pushed for a change. Hopefully, this change will also be reflected in the United States Constitution in the future.



# St. Lucia's Day

Monica Nowik, Staff Writer

As we approach the holiday season, it's easy to get bogged down in the commercialism of American Christmas, relatives on Facebook leaving threatening comments on 'Happy Holidays' posts, and other such delightful issues. As Charlie Brown once begged the question: "Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?" Well, any Swede can tell you that Christmas is about eating saffron buns to celebrate a 4th century martyr getting her eyes gouged out; we like our traditions dark and gory, thank you very much!

St. Lucia's Day happens to fall close to Christmas but actually has little to do with a baby being born in a manger. St. Lucia, or Sankta Lucia, was a devout Christian who was

martyred for her faith by the Roman Empire. She is sometimes known to have helped Christians hide from the Roman Empire in a time where Christianity was still illegal, and in order to keep both her hands free while she carried survival necessities, she wore candles on her head to light the way. When she was finally reported for being a Christian, Roman soldiers gouged her eyes out. Legend has it that her eyes miraculously regrew, but they finally executed her. For these reasons, St. Lucia is often depicted holding her own eyeballs in a tray, wearing a red sash around her waist and a wreath of candles on her head. The wreath of candles is also said to symbolize the light of Christ.

In Sweden, Norway, and other

Scandinavian countries, St. Lucia's Day is celebrated on December 13th. It is also celebrated in Italy and other places around the world but with different traditions. Historically, on St. Lucia's Day, the oldest girl in the household gets up before dawn to serve her family saffron buns (lussekatter) and coffee in bed. She wears a wreath with candles around her head and usually sings a hymn. This tradition inside the home carries over especially for Swedish families here in America. In Sweden, the day is also celebrated with public processions; young girls are elected as "Lucies" to go around singing and distributing goods. It's a holiday that celebrates family, community, and culture, and oftentimes need not have anything to do with

religion. Coming from a half Swedish family, this author can highly recommend trying some lussekatter this Christmas season.



# Why It's Important to Practice Gratitude

Jacey Regalado, Staff Writer

As the Thanksgiving season arises it is very common for us as a society to place so much focus on practicing gratitude. More often than not the holiday season can bring sadness and loneliness within the overwhelming pressures of being happy and cheerful. During our day to day lives we carry out our responsibilities becoming enslaved by society. Getting distracted from the true meaning of life—the appreciation to be alive and well. If we carve time out of our busy days to take a moment to practice

gratitude, we can better appreciate the small things in life.

Practicing gratitude is an essential key to unlocking happiness. We can come to a place to ground ourselves, and acknowledge all the wonderful things life can hold. Implementing gratitude can contribute to a positive and sound mind. Here are some helpful ways to implement gratitude into your daily life.

Each and every day think of things you are grateful for and visualize them.

Start writing them down, a gratitude journal can be a great way to express gratitude and be a helpful therapeutic tool in staying more positive!

Meditate— there are many different forms of meditation; classic meditation, guided meditation, nature walks, body scans, etc.

Expressing your gratitude verbally to those in your life! Letting your loved ones know how grateful you are for them is so rewarding.

Lastly, practicing self gratitude. Ap-

preciating where you are today and giving yourself credit for how you got there! It is so important to be thankful to your body for doing so much to keep you alive.

It is so important to practice gratitude, as it contributes to a more positive atmosphere to wake up to everyday!

# Composting For Beginners

Helena Schlueter, Guest Writer

Composting is the process of recycling organic matter into a soil-enriching fertilizer. People have been using compost to increase soil organic matter, improve soil physical properties, and bring essential nutrients within the soil to promote plant growth. It's a great way to recycle scraps from your kitchen while also helping the environment.

One benefit to composting at home is waste reduction. It allows you to recycle pre-consumer kitchen scraps instead of tossing them as trash. The reduced food waste can decrease methane, a greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. So, composting not only reduces food

waste, but helps minimize your environmental impact.

Soil enrichment is another benefit to composting. The organic matter helps soil retain more moisture by increasing the water holding capacity. The natural nutrients from compost also help promote plant growth to produce more enriched foods.

There are two main types of organic material you should compost: Green organic material (fruit and veggie peels/scraps, houseplant trimmings, fresh grass clippings) and brown organic material (wood chips, dead leaves, twigs). You need both of these types to bring all the essential nutrients and properties into compost.

However, there are items that you shouldn't include in your compost. Some items to avoid composting include pet waste, dairy products, bones or meat scraps, baked goods, anything pesticide treated. Although you are able to compost other tree nuts, walnuts can be toxic to some plants.

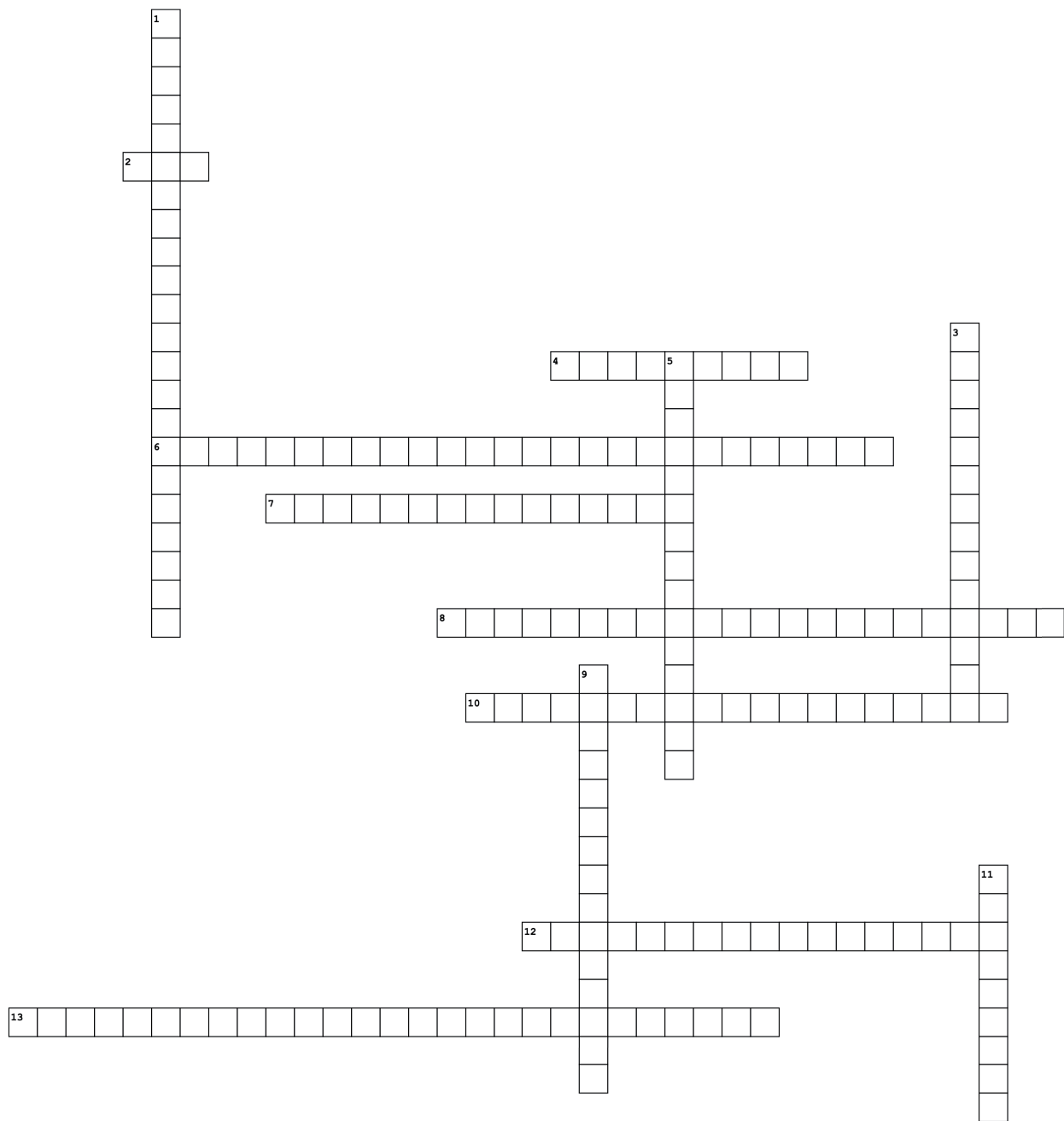
To start composting at home, you will first need to create your own compost pile. To determine where you want your compost bin, you should try to select an outdoor location with shade and drainage. After you pick a location, it's time for you to start adding your materials. Try to rotate brown and green materials in

layers to ensure the right balance of both organic materials as well as to ensure decomposition. Turn your pile of compost regularly, this distribution of air and moisture evenly also ensures efficient composting.

Alternatively, you can use a compost tumbler, which is a container designed to make it easier to rotate and mix your composting materials. It will take your compost anywhere from a few weeks to a year to fully decompose. Once it's ready, your compost should look like soil, dark brown and crumbly. You can use it by mixing it with potting soil or sprinkling it over the surface of your garden.



Christmas Movie Crossword



Across

- 2. "We elves try to stick to the four main food groups: Candy, candy canes, candy corn, and syrup."
- 4. "Merry Christmas, ya filthy animal."
- 6. "Hermey doesn't want to make toys anymore, he wants to be a dentist."
- 7. "The first gift of Christmas!"
- 8. "Skipping Christmas. What a stupid idea."
- 10. "Faith is believing in things when common sense tells you not to"
- 12. "Strange, isn't it? Each man's life touches so many other lives. And when he isn't around he leaves an awful hole, doesn't he?"
- 13. "You know, I think this Christmas thing is not as tricky as it seems! But why should they have all the fun? It should belong to anyone!"

Down

- 1. "Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?"
- 3. "If something should happen to me, put on my suit; the reindeer will know what to do."
- 5. "You'll shoot your eye out!"
- 9. "Marley was dead."
- 11. "Maybe Christmas doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more."



# The Problem with the Constitution

Karisma Patrick, Guest Writer

The Constitution of the United States is failing the nation. It needs to be rewritten. For over 200 years, the Constitution has acted as the foundation of America's government, laws, and citizen's rights. It may have worked for 18th century America, but it does not work for American society in the 21st century. Thomas Jefferson, a founder of America, believed each generation should have the opportunity to update the constitution every nineteen years. It should be "handed on, with periodical repairs, from generation to generation, to the end of time," Jefferson wrote.

The need for a "periodical repair" is clear now more than ever. The controversy surrounding the Second Amendment proves it. "A well-regu-

lated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed upon," the Second amendment says. The weapons we had when the Second Amendment was written in 1791 are different from today's weapons. Technology has changed; now the law must change. Typical firearms of the 1700s were muskets and flintlock pistols. They weren't accurate and were mostly used for hunting. Today's weapons can fire multiple shots in seconds. They are also cheaper, more accessible, and more deadly. This change has led to an increase in the number of deaths caused by gun violence.

America's founders wrote and supported the Declaration of Inde-

pendence which can be considered the foundation of the Constitution. It stresses the idea of the people having unalienable rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." However, those unalienable rights are being violated because people also have the "constitutional right" to guns and use them to hurt others. Solutions are possible. Viewing the Constitution as "sacred" is keeping us from reaching them and dividing the American people. The "originalists" believe the Constitution should be interpreted and applied to issues the founders never predicted. This makes them support the Second Amendment. However, the meaning of the amendment is unclear. The Supreme Court itself has had different interpretations of it throughout

the years.

There have been cases like *United States v. Cruikshank* in 1876 where the Supreme Court ruled against an individual right to bear arms. And in 2008, the Supreme Court officially ruled that the Second Amendment protected an individual's right to bear arms in the *District of Columbia v. Heller* case. We cannot strictly follow a Constitution where the laws can have different meanings for different people and be imposed in such different ways.

America's refusal to change is a problem. We must realize that laws and amendments must change to reflect our current society. The U.S. constitution needs to be rewritten.

## "The Compassion of Community": Meeting Becky Prophet

Sam Sage, Editor-in-Chief

Becky Prophet has always been described as hardworking, playful, and reliable by those who know her. I got the privilege to learn that, at least when it comes to an interview at Terra Cotta Coffee House on a rainy day, Prophet is that and more.

I went into this interview intent on asking her about her political and professorship careers, and came out having learned much about Alfred as a community—still growing, fully intent on evolving into something even better.

Prophet has been mayor of the Village of Alfred for five years, and is preparing to retire from the role soon. Her predecessor, Justin Grigg, is someone she shows respect for: "He was brilliant, he did wonderful things."

Beyond politics, however, there is a deeper connection to this Village. Prophet was born and raised in Alfred, attending school at Alfred-Almond Central School and Alfred University. In her own words, "I went to Alfred University kicking and screaming because my parents were pillars in the community, my older brother was the local cop, and I had two sisters who preceded me at the university, and I babysat for most of the professor's kids."

Despite the initial hesitancy, Prophet speaks about her time at Alfred University fondly. She graduated with a Bachelor's in English, but had developed a tremendous love of

theater—something she continues to indulge in, helping work on plays at AU or walking Miller Theater's stage for another time. Alfred University is also where she met her husband, another person with a mind full of creativity and an eye for art.

Prophet is a woman who understands how to find joy in small moments—laughing over a cup of coffee—and yet is not willing to be put aside. Her husband, she says, tells her that she has a helium hand. She admits that she needs to get better at not becoming burdened by projects she takes on, and yet she wants to be someone quite like her parents. Community is everything to her.

She commits much of her time to politics, community service, and volunteering as an EMT with the Hook & Ladder Fire Company. She can attribute much of this to her experiences as an adolescent. One such story is one that she has shared in classes: how the community came to her family's aid. When her family needed to transfer their hardware store—what Tinkertown had begun as—from a space on Main Street to where Tinkertown currently stands, they asked for assistance without expecting much to come from it. Instead, at least 45 people from the Village helped: sorority sisters, fraternity brothers, and other community members.

"My parents never did anything ex-

pecting any kind of reward, and yet this involvement in the community and the compassion of the community made that move of the store possible," Prophet said.

That was a core memory for her, and she wants to be one of those 45 for whoever needs it. She wants others to understand how important volunteering is, and especially how important it is to a small town like this. Hook & Ladder runs solely on volunteers, and she has seen how their base has fluctuated since her youth.

She has noted that the sense of community has changed, as well. More faculty and students commute to the Village, compared to those who live in the area. It has shifted the dynamic of what activities and events are held on campus at AU,

and she hopes that the Village can make an appealing case for those looking to live somewhere safe and welcoming.

Her daughter has accused her of trying to make Alfred back into what it was in Prophet's childhood, and she admits that it is slightly accurate.

As she has gotten older, though, she has realized that passing the torch is necessary. She hopes to be a mentor, although she would not be as quick to describe herself as a pillar of the community.

With a smile on her face, and an addiction for coffee, Prophet represents what every town (small or big) needs: someone who wants what is best and isn't afraid to go out and make those changes herself.





## Land of the Free...Unless You Read

Rachel Fleischman, Guest Writer

Democracy in America is under threat. The American people must vote to protect democracy. If they do not, the nation is at risk of becoming an authoritarian state.

Authoritarian governments maintain power by limiting people's ability to question authority. Book banning is one of those limits. Banning has been commonly used by authoritarian regimes from different cultures and throughout different time periods. Book banning is not new in American history, but book banning is at an "unprecedented high," with the rate of books challenged spiking from two to three a year to four to six books being challenged a day, according to the American Library Association. PEN America reports that from July 2021 to March 2022, 1,586 books were banned, affecting 1,145 book titles in total. Many of the books being challenged focus on topics like sexual orientation, gender identity, race, and racism. They involve social justice, free-thinking, and free expression. They are banned because they question authority, a concept authoritarian governments target to gain and maintain power.

Throughout history, there are several examples of how book banning has been used by authoritarian governments. From 1920-1940, the Soviet Union purged public libraries of books that did not praise communism or socialism to promote Stalin and his authoritarian regime. In China today, there is a security law that requires all books to be checked by the CPD (Communist Party's Central Publicity Department) before publication to ensure they do not criticize the Chinese Communist

Party. For decades in the Middle East, government-sanctioned book banning has been used to prevent the publication of anything the regime considers politically, morally, or religiously sensitive, or that counters the government's interests. Religious Institutions in the Middle East aid the government by providing recommendations for books to be banned. In 1930s Nazi Germany, students were tasked with finding books that contradicted Nazi ideology. Those books would then be publicly burned in a ritualistic manner because they did not conform to Nazi ideology. Jewish authors, books about race and sexuality, books that mentioned socialism or free thinking or questioned the government were all burned, says Jennifer Wolf, a senior lecturer of education.

Like Nazi efforts, books today that are challenged go against the ideology of those who hold power. In Texas, spreadsheets are compiled containing titles of books that are deemed inappropriate or threaten the upbringing of the nation's youth.

"Protecting the nation's youth" is a common argument for banning books, but by taking away the opportunity for children to learn and ask questions, the MAGA Republicans are priming the next generation for an authoritarian government as democracy slowly erodes away. Like the Nazis, America is targeting books that deal with free thinking and expression and social justice issues like race and sexuality. Democracy's core is having individual freedoms and the ability to question authority. Democracy cannot prevail when we allow this surge in book banning

because it is a direct contradiction to democracy's core.

The surge of book banning as an attempt to undermine democracy is not accidental. Book banning is only the beginning. In America, like in Nazi Germany, democracy will fall if the people stay silent. The Republican Party has taken advantage of the people's silence by strategically placing their people in positions of power at local levels and working their way up the political ladder. They started by winning seats on school boards where they could make decisions that would impact entire communities, where they could require the school library to purge itself of books by claiming they were "protecting the youth." This fear tactic scared parents who then voted for county representatives that campaigned they would "protect the youth." With county control, the Republicans could go after state positions, and eventually, the federal government, and during this pro-

cess, they were slowly taking away the ability to think freely. Abraham Lincoln said America was "a government of the people, by the people, for the people..." so let us make it "by the people" once more.

The simplest proposal? The upcoming midterms. Harry Truman said, "it's not the hand that signs the laws that hold the destiny of America. It's the hand that casts the ballot." The Republicans used voting to strategically win power because the nation continued to remain silent when more positions were taken by MAGA figureheads. To regain positions in government the nation cannot stay silent. To protect democracy, we must vote. Vote to unseat those who wish to control individual freedoms and replace them with those who wish to protect those freedoms. This is how democracy will be saved.

What is the harder proposal? Educating oneself. The late writer Isaac Asimov said, "any book worth banning is a book worth reading."



## A Trustee Dinner Might Be What Alfred University Needed

Monica Nowik, Staff Writer

Last month, Alfred University's Board of Trustees visited campus to talk with students, hold meetings with student leaders, and witness the issues they have been hearing about firsthand. A dinner was held at Ade Dining Hall on October 20th for students and trustees to encourage conversation.

The students who attended the dinner came prepared to answer questions and bring their own concerns forward. One of the major issues spoken about was accessibility on campus, or lack thereof. It's no secret that

navigating the university's campus is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for students with physical disabilities. Connors, formerly Openhym, is the only residence hall with an elevator, and as such is located halfway up the hill. Most of the academic buildings have elevators, Seidlin and Kanakadea being notable outliers, but some, like the Science Center, require a key to access the elevator.

Also brought up were the hypocrisies of promoting inclusion and diversity on a campus where racial and

other forms of discrimination happen on daily, both inside and outside of the classroom. Faculty and staff members have and continue to racially profile, misgender, and sometimes harass certain students, and even in cases where there have been misunderstandings, one could argue that this would not happen if all employees of Alfred University underwent better training to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Other issues discussed included food options (which are bad for the average

diet but zilch for a vegan/vegetarian one), unsatisfactory residence halls, and campus safety, the last being a point of surprise for the trustees, who did not know that until October, AU did not have 24 hour public safety.

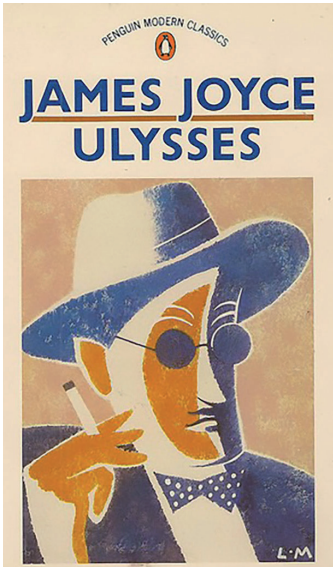
Overall, the trustees appeared to listen to student concerns and promised they would bring them to future meetings. We can only hope that our voices have been heard loud and clear.



# Celebrating Banned Books With Recommendations from People of AU

Sam Sage, Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Rob Reginio,  
English Professor



My favorite banned book is one hundred years old this year. It is James Joyce's *Ulysses* and it was banned due its sexually explicit content.

Closer readers will discover that beyond the explicit representation of sexual desire Joyce questions socially consigned genders roles and, even further, he questions the very concept of solidly fixed gender identities. The book's ability to kick up dust remains and makes it relevant. As I think of America in 2022, I recall one of the novel's protagonists, Leopold Bloom, a Jewish newspaper advertiser and life-long Dubliner. Facing off against a bar full of anti-Semitic Irish nationalists, Bloom's humility and bravery remain admirable to me:

"Bloom was talking and talking with John Wyse and he quite excited with his dunduckety mud coloured mug on him and his old plumeyes rolling about.

—Persecution, says he, all the history of the world is full of it. Perpetuating national hatred among nations.

—But do you know what a nation means? says John Wyse.

—Yes, says Bloom.

—What is it? says John Wyse.

—A nation? says Bloom. A nation is the same people living in the same place.

—By God, then, says Ned, laughing, if that's so I'm a nation for I'm living in the same place for the past five years.

So of course everyone had the laugh at Bloom and says he, trying to muck out of it:

—Or also living in different places.

—That covers my case, says Joe.

—What is your nation if I may ask? says the citizen.

—Ireland, says Bloom. I was born here. Ireland."

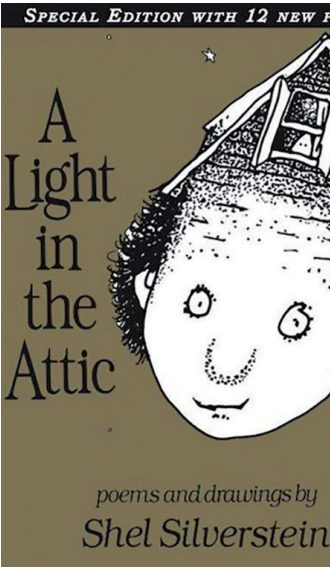
Dr. Melissa Ryan,  
English Professor



*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain as a valuable historical artifact central to American literary history, and more importantly as the center of the kind of interpretive controversy that I think is the lifeblood of liberal education. (Is it a racist book, or a book that seeks to expose the racism that structures American society? That question alone makes it worth teaching.)

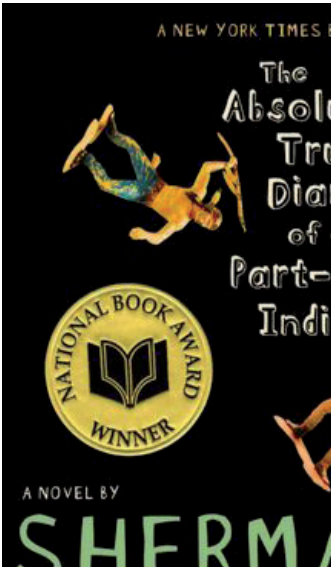
And also *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, for taking a history we may think we know and reminding us that we're never done coming to terms with American slavery and its legacy. (Not to mention the fact that it's just so beautifully written.)

Brian Sullivan,  
Dean of Libraries



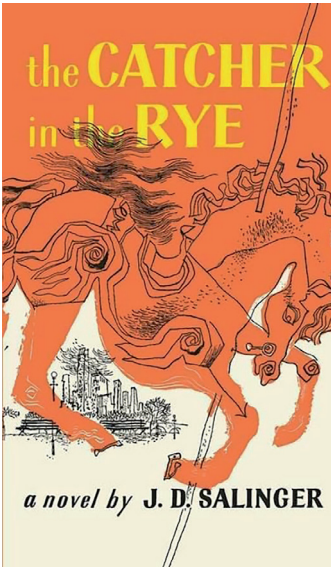
I love so many banned books. I suppose my favorite depends on the season of life I'm in. My favorite banned book as a child was *A Light in the Attic* by Shel Silverstein, which I still cite to this day in library staff meetings! My favorite banned book as a teenager was *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger for its candid portrayal of teen angst. My favorite banned book as a parent is *Go the Fuck to Sleep* by Adam Mansbach for its honest and hilarious take on the sometimes frustrating aspects of having children. My favorite banned book today is *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood for being so terrifyingly prescient.

Mechele Romanchock,  
AU Librarian



I love this book because of Sherman Alexie's beautiful writing style. He manages to be funny and heart-breaking in the same sentence. It's a diary format, which I enjoy reading. The main character, Junior, struggles with identity and acceptance. He is a memorable character with an enduring story who tries to have despite difficult obstacles.

Ashton Julian,  
Staff Writer

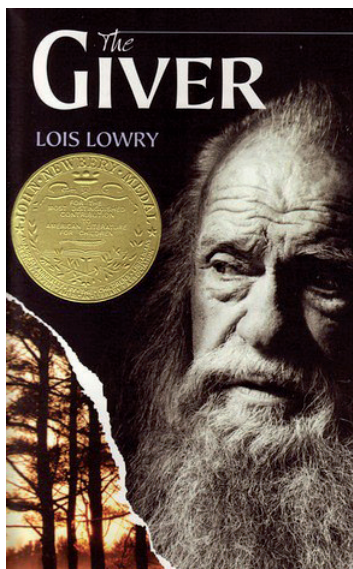


*The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger. I am the first to admit that liking this book is kind of a red flag because Holden is a terrible person and people have used this book as inspiration for some pretty terrible things, however I think that it does give a clarity on mental illness that we don't see much of today.





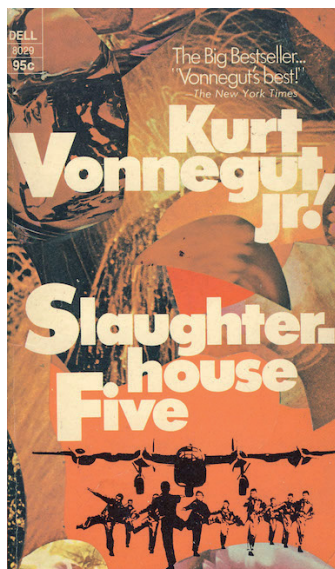
Jordan Castine,  
Copy Editor



So many people are focused on the idea of a utopian society, just the thought of it being "ideal," and they fail to recognize how dangerous it would actually be. This book shows how that can happen, and there are so many important aspects to keep in mind as we move forward as a society of how to keep this utopian ideology from actually happening—but still maintaining a course of successfully growing as a people.

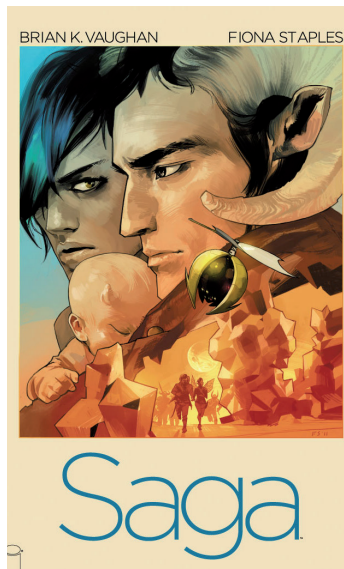
Bonus Favorite: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* by Mark Haddon

Kevin Adams,  
AU Librarian



It is a happy coincidence that one of my favorite books has also been banned from schools. As recently as 2011, this book was banned from a school. When this happened, the Kurt Vonnegut Museum sent a free copy of the book to anyone from the school who requested it! I love all Vonnegut books, but this one was the first one I ever read. It is a curious book that is funny, sad, and beautiful. The book engages the reader in philosophical and metaphysical questions that start to bend reality. This is possibly the only war book that I see myself reading multiple times throughout my life.

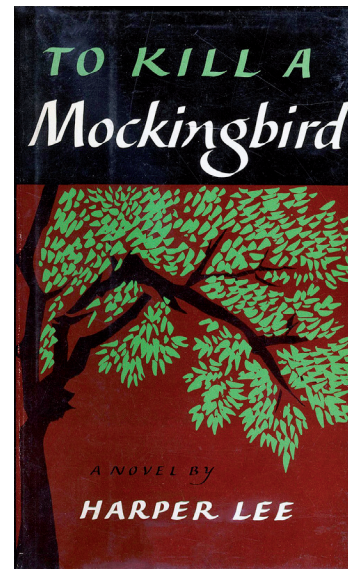
Dr. Juliana Gray,  
English Professor



But as I continued to scroll down American Library Associations lists of most challenged books, I saw *Saga*, a graphic novel series by Brian K. Vaughn and Fiona Staples. One of the reasons provided for the books being challenged is that they're "anti-family," which literally made me snort my drink out of my nose. *Saga* is a beautiful story about two people from opposite sides of an interplanetary war (and different races) who fall in love, have children, flee violence and oppression, and welcome both blood relatives and unrelated friends into their extended family. Sure, there's sex and violence and a prince with a TV for a head, but the story is really all about family and how love overcomes bigotry. That's a story I love, and wish other people would read.

Bonus Favorites: *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood

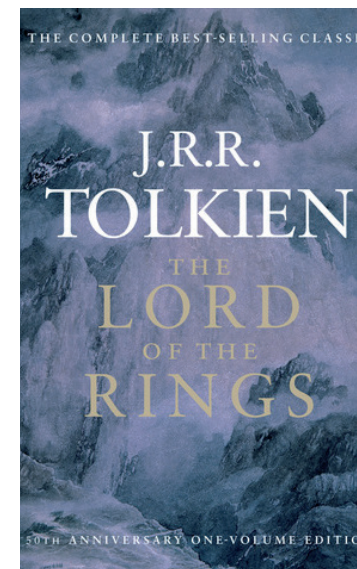
Heather Yanda,  
Senior Lecturer



I poked around on some recent lists of banned books, out of curiosity, and found *To Kill a Mockingbird* listed very consistently. I read it in ninth grade, I think, and I remember conversations about Scout and Jem and Atticus. I can still picture these characters as they existed in my mind back then. Since it is told -- and well -- from a child's point of view, we see an enormous topic shrunken to a child's size, which -- maybe -- made the controversial moments in there feel smaller, but they are so like the moments of today.

As I write this, I realize this is really a book about love, in so many ways: for a girl and her father, her town, and the mysteries that exist around her and the people she may have otherwise judged unfairly.

Sam Sage,  
Editor-in-Chief



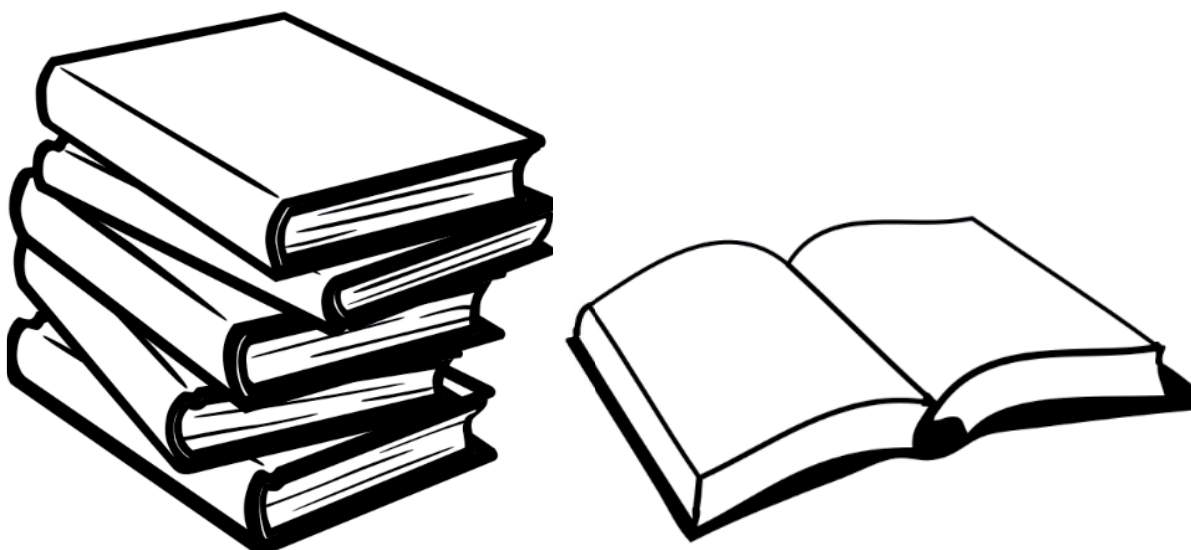
Tolkien's books were a staple of my childhood, as were the movies (both the animated ones from the 1970s and the live-action of the early 2000s.) They have valuable lessons in coexisting with nature, how to be brave (and that it's okay to be scared), and what it means to be a good leader/friend/partner. Each time I read it, as I get older, I learn (and re-learn) lessons that are pertinent to being as good a person as I can be.

Bonus Favorites: *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller, *As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner, *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote



AU Libraries supports the Freedom to Read and we're happy to assist patrons in finding the reading material of their choice. AU Libraries has an Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression commitment which includes action items regarding diversity and representation in library materials which patrons might find useful. You can find that by scanning this code!

You can also find resources on Banned Books at the American Library Association: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks>





## Decoding *Psychodrama*: Act 2 - Relationships

Alpha Bah, Staff Writer

The theme of internal separation runs deep in act one of *Psychodrama*. We see it in track one with manic depressive Dave trying to stop all the pain, in his conflicted feelings towards Streatham in track two, and in his examination of what it means to be a Black Brit of Nigerian descent in track three. In the second act, “Relationships,” Dave begins to open up and celebrate his success in the rap game. Yet, with success comes the problem of negotiating personal growth with his rapper persona. The superficiality of fame and the strain it puts on forming meaningful relationships is the central conflict.

### “Purple Heart”

“Purple Heart” explores romantic relationships, passionate feelings, and the desire for intimacy. Over a soothing sample of “SupaStar” by R&B duo Floetry, Dave expresses his love for a girl. He compares her to the stars, describing his passionate feelings with a series of double entendres and metaphors. “You’re my superstar, you’re my wish into a shooting star.” What brings them together, though, is pain. Both of them have a purple heart and past experiences that have left them battered and bruised. He finally has someone he can share his pain with, someone he can trust with his emotions. To prove he is a good partner, though, Dave defines himself by what he can provide: money and sex. The relationship begins to feel transactional; sex is done to a person rather than something two consenting adults engage in. It’s clear by the therapy session at the end that Dave has made some progress. He is willing to open himself to someone. Yet, the hypermasculine image of the rapper lifestyle clashes with his quest to figure out what kind of man he wants to be.

### “Location”

“Location” featuring Burna Boy is a

break from the moody atmosphere of the opening tracks of the album. Location sounds like summertime at the beach and hanging out with friends. It’s a victory lap with Dave flexing the success he’s attained. His laid-back delivery over a smooth piano instrumental along with Burna Boy’s catchy chorus is infectious.

I felt triumphant when Spring 2020 ended. It was the first time I could relax and bask in the glory of doing what I thought was impossible a few months ago: getting straight A’s. I enjoyed all my classes, and counseling allowed me to talk about all the lingering emotions I had from my first year. Finally, I could talk about whatever was bothering me and not be judged. I was opening up for the first time and making real progress. I couldn’t be happier. Yet, sometimes the happiest moments don’t last as long as the darkest moments. All the struggles that I had gone through, like losing my financial aid, dealing with student loans, and contemplating all the ways my life was ruined, felt like an awfully long nightmare compared to this happy moment. I was seeking some kind of validation that would wash away that anguish. A letter from the Dean and even my parents’ congratulations weren’t enough. There was no relief from the past, no way to completely heal the scars. I was so focused on passing, spending hours studying, and doing every assignment that I realized my good grades did not fix all my problems. I was still struggling with making genuine connections and I was still lonely. If I wanted to feel whole, I had to figure out who I was and what motivated me going forward.

### “Disaster”

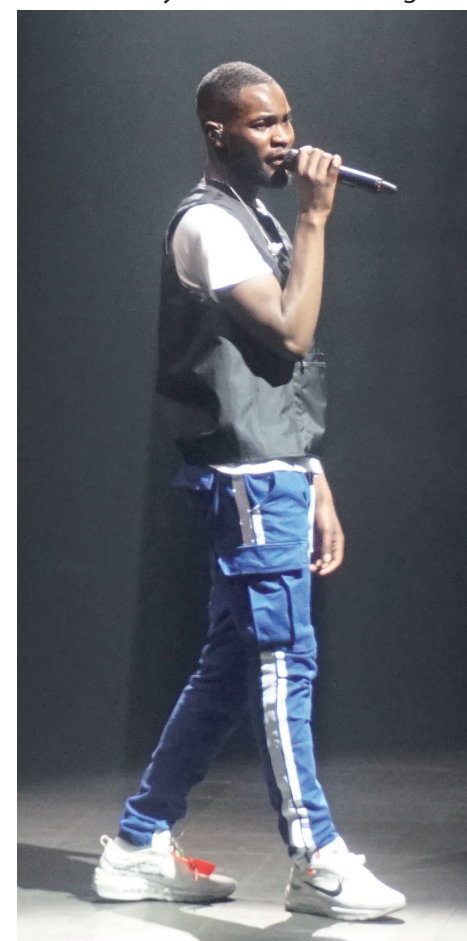
Track six, “Disaster,” plunges us back into the cold dark world of London. The shivery intro played on an analog

synthesizer brings with it a sense of impending violence. Featuring British rapper J Hus, “Disaster” sees the two MCs trading bars, reveling in the violent image of the streets that is common in gangster rap and road rap. The two style themselves as the defenders of the street code, doling out rightful vengeance against bitches, snitches, traitors, babies, and informers. It’s a thrilling track but it also rides a fine line between telling it like it is and exaggerating for story purposes. J Hus was in prison for knife possession when the album was released. When J Hus raps, “came on a Rambo ting,” he’s speaking from personal experience. This does not reflect Dave’s own experience. According to Dave in an *I-D* interview, “I struggled to find freedom so I don’t have a lot of the experiences and memories my friends have cuz I couldn’t come out of my house.” He was protected by his mother from the streets because of how his brothers got caught in the system. It’s a stark reminder that as personal as *Psychodrama* is, it’s a concept album much like Kendrick Lamar’s *Good Kid, M.A.A.D City*. The therapy sessions throughout *Psychodrama* are not real nor is the therapist. But this doesn’t really matter. All that matters is that it feels real. At the end of the day, the album is supposed to give the listener perspective on the real-life trials and tribulations of Dave.

### “Screwface Capital”

“Disaster” is followed by another dark portrait of London, this time characterized as the “Screwface” capital. London is a hard city, where the divide between the rich and poor forces the less fortunate to fend for themselves. Dave is well off now and he boasts about his bespoke outfits, money, and newfound connections. This new financial success comes with the consequence of more attention.

So, Dave threatens violence to prove that he is not an easy target. To feel secure as a rapper, you have to move around with a crew and put fear in people’s hearts. But all this posturing reveals deep seated insecurity and paranoia. “One eye on my opps, two eyes on my friends / ‘Cause at least my opps, man knows their intentions.” Dave has to keep an eye on his enemies but an even closer watch on his friends. Paranoia and the trappings of fame make all Dave’s relationships fraught with danger and mistrust. And if all of that isn’t bad enough, London is a constant reminder of the things that he has lost along the way: his father, his brother, and his childhood. This track sets up the third act, where Dave finally peels back all the layers of artifice to get to the heart of his pain and trauma. He starts by tearing down the grandiose image of the modern-day rapper and the industry that carefully cultivates this image.



Dave (Rapper), Wikimedia Commons

PSYCHODRAMA



## Heartbreak High: A Gen Z Masterpiece

Karisma Patrick, Guest Writer

Talk about *Heartbreak High* has been circulating on social media since Twitter and TikTok users began raving about the show after its release on September 14. The television show ranked number six on Netflix's Top 10 Most Watched List and received 18.25 million hours viewed in its first week.

*Heartbreak High*, the new Netflix original, is a teen drama set in Australia with a fictional story that can be compared to another popular Netflix show, *Sex Education*. However, the show is far from being a copy-cat series.

The show follows the main character, Amerie, as she struggles to understand why her best friend Harper has stopped talking to her. At the same time, the "incest map" she and Harper created, which detailed every hook-up between students at the school, has been discovered. Every student

involved is forced to take part in a new sex-ed class.

It is clear that Gen Z serves as inspiration for the characters and storylines.

The diversity of the cast makes for an authentic feel and gives voices to underrepresented communities and identities, which is something that Gen Z always pushes for. The main characters have many ethnicities, such as Indian-Australian, Anglo-Sri Lankan, Australian Aboriginal, mixed race, and more.

Most of the characters are a part of the LGBTQ+ community. A non-binary character, Darren, is played by non-binary actor, James Majoos. The character's father struggles with accepting his child for who they are. As the season goes on, we watch as they both come to understand each other. Darren's love interest, Cash, is

asexual. The characters Malakai and Dusty are bisexual while Missy, Sasha, and Quinni are lesbians. Quinni, a fan favorite, has been praised on social media for being an accurate representation of autism. The actress who portrays her, Chloe Hayden, is autistic.

Aside from an abundance of representation, *Heartbreak High* perfectly captures Gen Z humor and terminology without being cringey. Characters say lines like, "Is this your 13th reason?" and talk about people being in their "flop era." Despite the show being set in Australia, the dialogue between the characters sounds like a conversation you could hear on a college campus or on Twitter.

This show is very Gen Z. It captures the characteristics of an entire generation in a way that I have never seen on television before. Since the show has been picked up, I am excited to

see what's in store for the second season!

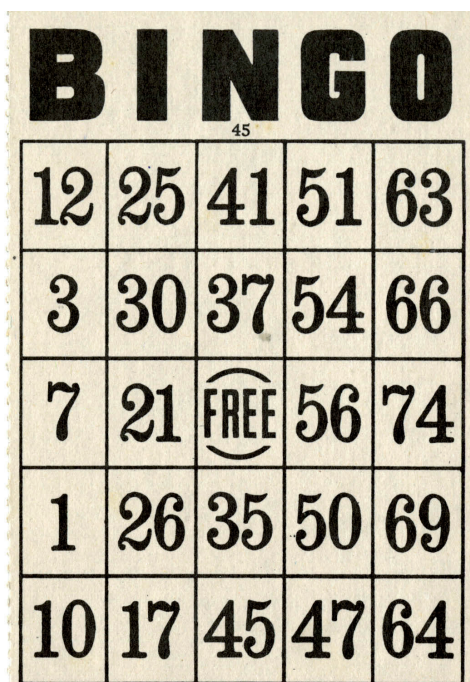


## Howl'een with a Queen: Drag Bingo

Knox VanRenselaar, Guest Writer

Credit: Knox VanRenselaar

On Friday October 28th, The Center for Student Involvement, along with QUAC and United Alfred, hosted a deliciously queer drag bingo night. As Carmen Adore strutted her way to the stage in a high glamor mummy couture, the audience crackled with excitement. The air felt light with queer joy, like a collective shrugging off of the oppressive darkness that seems to linger in the wake of mounting anti-LGBT legislation across the country. Adore's talents sparkled as she called out numbers and made connections with the audience. The highlight of the night was, of course, any time O69 came around eliciting raucous cheering and a collective playful moan. The event was a stunning way to wrap up LGBTQ History Month, and a spooky edition to Hallo-weekend.





## Decoding *Psychodrama*: Act 3 - Social Compass

Alpha Bah, Staff Writer

### "Environment"

"Environment" starts with a repeating piano melody that signals a moment of clarity. The therapist asks, "What do you think people see when they look at you?" This prompts Dave to examine the rap game and his role in it. Per Kayo Chingonyi in the *Decode Podcast*, so far in the album, wealth is a symbol of success and self-worth, an ode to conspicuous consumption. He offers a critique of this for the first time in this album, exposing the wounded egos underneath. "He has to be with twenty man when he wears jewelry / And you see it as gangster, I see it as insecurity." Rappers moving around with a large entourage appear gangster and in control of their situation. Dave deconstructs this image by asking whether the crew is a sign of strength or vulnerability. He suggests it's a sign that rappers are vulnerable and fear for their lives.

Similarly, is having sex with countless women a way of seeking pleasure or just a means of constantly reaffirming your masculinity? The music industry is in the business of selling personalities and unattainable lifestyles. "You see the deals and think all these rappers laughing now / But you don't get that if we weren't already, we're a target now." By interrogating the hollow image of the rap industry, Dave shows the humanity underneath. Rappers aren't invulnerable, they are just as insecure, lonely, and traumatized as everyone else. This section of the album is about Dave finally seeing who he is, what his values are and understanding why he is the way he is.

### "Lesley"

"Lesley" is the most ambitious track on *Psychodrama*. It's an eleven-minute story about a girl suffering from abuse at the hands of her boyfriend, Jason. It's a tragedy, a tale of domestic violence, pregnancy, and betrayal. In the end, while battling for her life in the emergency room, it's revealed that Lesley suffered a miscarriage. Dave then breaks the fourth wall to implore his listeners to get help if they are in an abusive relationship. He also criticizes the way men dismiss stories of abuse to blame women for the terrible situations they end up in. While the story is fictional, it's revealed in the last track "Drama" that it was based on a relative, which adds another layer of tragedy to Lesley.

### "Voices"

"Lesley" is the therapist's last appearance yet there are two more tracks left. Voices brings back the upbeat vibes. Dave describes his new relationship with his emotions and reveals how therapy is an ongoing process. "I know heartbreak well, man, I got her on speed dial / Me and suffering got the same dad / Me and pain go way back." Dave is in touch with his emotions, they are as familiar as longtime friends. He not only shows his resolve but makes a profound statement about self-acceptance. All of the pain and struggle with his emotions did not go away after therapy, they stayed with him. Dave has decided to accept it and have a more positive outlook going forward. In an interview with The Observer, Dave says, "I fell in love with optimism. That whole track is metaphorical, but it's about a constant chase for happiness."

### "Drama"

"Drama," the final record, brings the whole album full circle. The first track "Psycho" and the last track "Drama" come together to form the album title, *Psychodrama*. It is also where we finally meet someone whose understated presence permeates the entire album: Dave's brother Christopher. The psychodrama technique, the central concept of the album, was inspired by the therapy his brother received in prison. Drama is a message to Chris, and a moment for Dave to finally get everything off of his chest. He brings up the past, how Chris' imprisonment left him without a father figure since Dave was only a child when their father was deported. "I remember when you got sentenced and I was throwing up / It's like they took a piece of my freedom when I had opened up / I just lost the only fucking person that I idolised." As a result of this pain, Dave finally understands why he is the way he is. Family separation as a young man led to issues with commitment as an adult. This led to an obsessive desire to make a way for his family and succeed in music.

*But to understand the stairs, you take steps then retrace the shit*

*I tell my circle, the future's ours, we're shaping it*

*The past is just the reason I had came to this*

*I thank God for the pain because it made me this*

To heal and make sense of the journey, Dave has processed his past traumas and feels at peace with what he's experienced. In a strange way, he wouldn't be where he is today without it. It's bittersweet but at least it provides closure. Dave wants to cherish

the present and live a more positive life going forward. "Through the work he's done on the album he knows who Dave really is now, all that he is, all that he was, all that he will be at once." Dave is finally whole. The answer to the question from "Psycho," "How do you stop all the pain," is that you can't, not entirely. But you can learn from past traumas and maybe even move on from them. The album ends with a phone call from Chris, expressing how proud he is of Dave and what he has accomplished.

It has been a long and arduous journey but my time here in college is ending. I remember one particular counseling session where I was trying to make sense of everything I've gone through so far, what it all means. I still don't have a coherent answer. I failed, almost got kicked out of college and managed to make it to graduation in four years. That's the short version of it anyways but it's been four years that have profoundly changed me. I can't forget it, nor can the negative emotions attached to it be entirely disowned. That dark chapter is a part of my story now, but it's led to so much positive growth. All of my current problems pale in comparison to the work I had to put in to improve my grades and my mental health. It made me realize that if I could do this, then what's stopping me from putting myself out there, making new friends, and trying new hobbies. Alfred has had its difficulties but for the most part I enjoyed my time here thanks to Professor Szymanski, Professor Ostrower, Professor Kless, and so many others. I can't say for sure where I'm going from here, but I am optimistic about the future.





## Art Submissions

Credit below



Jo Castine, Copy Editor



Jason Crocker, Staff Photographer



Jason Crocker, Staff Photographer



Amanda Taylor Lipnicki, Professor



Jo Castine, Copy Editor



Jason Crocker, Staff Photographer



# Holly Jolly DALL-E

Jo Castine, Staff Writer

“A bowl of soup that is also a portal to another dimension, digital art”

“A pair of mittens knit with ground beef”

“A photo of Michelangelo’s sculpture of David wearing headphones DJ-ing”

While these prompts may sound like gibberish to some, to the newly released computer program known as DALL-E, they are fuel to form a host of fantastical and often bizarre AI-generated images.

Released in early 2021, OpenAI describes the technology stating, “DALL-E is a new AI system that can create realistic images and art from a description in natural language.” It can create these images and art from text descriptions, combining concepts, attributes, and styles.

In the spirit of Christmas and Thanksgiving, I decided to give the program a shot. Here are some holiday-themed DALL-E creations and the prompts that inspired them. The Ai-generated image that served at this article’s heading photograph on the front cover was inspired by the prompt, “A photograph of a Thanksgiving holiday card that a child handmade.”



“Indigenous American art depicting a harvest festival”



“A Man and His Baby Corn”



“An Aspic Filled Thanksgiving”



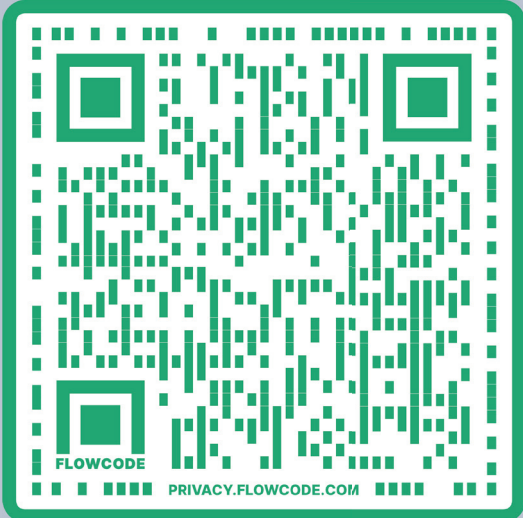
“Overly Festive Christmas Shrimp”



“An Impressionistic painting of Santa’s reindeer in the snow”

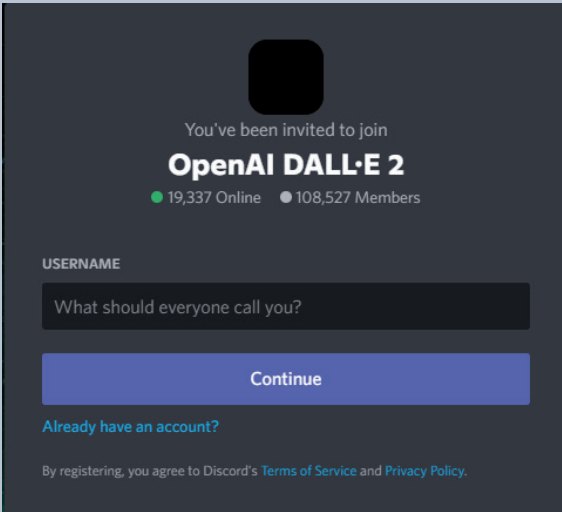


“A Lone Banana Beneath an Artificial Christmas Tree”



Want to learn more about DALL-E, artificial general intelligence, or create your own AI generated art? Sign up to DALL-E now at <https://openai.com> or scan our QR code.

Want to be involved in DALL-E related discourse and browse others creations? Join the DALL-E Discord page at <https://discord.com/invite/openaidalle>





Comic Section

Franmy Mateo Tapia, Staff Comic Artist



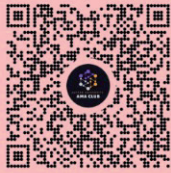
**Fly on the Wall: AMA Remembers Festifall**  
**Credit: Yuliia Koreiba, Copy Editor**

We are a student-led club and are open to new members year-round. So far this year, AMA has hosted a Fall Fundraiser, attended Festifall, organized a Lunch + Learn, and is currently hosting a Holiday Toy Drive and Toy Drive Competition with SAAC sports teams.





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Jennalyn-Conley

## AMA HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE

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POWELL CAMPUS CENTER (2ND FLOOR) AND  
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# FIAT LUX NEWS

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### WANT TO JOIN THE FIAT LUX NEWS TEAM?

Positions for staff writers, photographers, editors, and more are available.

Email us at [aufiatlux@gmail.com](mailto:aufiatlux@gmail.com) with questions or come to our weekly meetings on Fridays at 5pm in the Prunty-Russo Media Lab, Powell Campus Center to get involved.

Submissions to the FLN should be emailed to [aufiatlux@gmail.com](mailto:aufiatlux@gmail.com) as attachments. For articles, attach a word document or use the "insert files from drive" option in your gmail to attach a Google document. Name all files as "Your Name - File Name". Please include your name and submission title in all submitted documents. Photos should be attached to emails and submitted as high resolution JPEGs or PNGs.

Make sure to include who took the photograph or where the photograph came from.

Front Cover Credit: Wendy Marvin

**AS WINTER COMES,  
THOUSANDS OF BIKES ARE LEFT OUTSIDE,  
ABUSED AND FORGOTTEN**



For just \$20 a year,  
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If you're cold, they're cold  
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Located at Bottom Floor of Powell Campus Center,  
across from Mail Room

Monday: 3:00-6:00pm  
Tuesday: 3:00-6:00pm  
Wednesday: 3:00-6:00pm  
Thursday: 3:00-6:00pm  
Friday: 2:00-6:00pm  
Saturday: 12:00-3:00pm



**NEW CLUB ALERT**

# ALFRED GOES GREEN

want to make a positive impact  
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**FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM!**  
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### Student Activities Board Weekly Meeting

Every Friday @ 3pm  
Powell Board Room

All are welcome

## MIDNIGHT BREAKFAST

Sunday, December 11th  
10pm-12am  
Ade Dining Hall

Take a study break and  
unwind before finals  
start on Monday

Want to be served by your  
faculty/staff members?  
Use Board or Powell Swipes

Send recommendations  
to [weissm@alfred.edu](mailto:weissm@alfred.edu)