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Tie-'Dive' Into The New Semester: STCC's Opening Picnic Fall 2019

by Jesse Mongeon

Everyone loves summer cookouts. On September 11th, STCC hosted their annual Opening Day Picnic, an outdoor cookout event meant to help familiarize new and returning students with services and activities available on campus as well as provide a great social atmosphere for students to interact and meet new people. Each year, the picnic is packed with great food, music, and information tables.

The menu for the event this year was hotdogs and hamburgers, italian pasta salad, a bag of chips, a selection of cookies and brownies, and a soda or water. Each plate of food got 1 of each item and was just \$2.00. The grills were set up nearby, which completed the cookout atmosphere. While most people filled up their plates, some people were disappointed in the lack of vegetarian options. There was only Italian pasta salad, no green garden salad or fruit. That was a strong disappointment to people who are on a meatless diet.



This year, the picnic offered for students to tie-dye a free t-shirt. It was first come first serve, and the line got long very quickly. Many students were very excited about this, and loved the idea of personalizing a shirt for themselves right there on campus. It really enhanced the Opening Day experience for many who participated.

More than 15 tables were set up for students to interact with and get information from. Most of these tables were of STCC student resources or student clubs and activities. This included Student Financial Services, the Honors program, Student Activities, Athletics, the library, the campus

Health and Wellness center, the Dental Hygiene program, Disability Services, the Student Success Center, the Career Development Center, the STCC Foundation Scholarships, the GLBTA Club, and the Armory Square Child Care service, a day care service located on campus. Some of the tables were outside organizations advertising their cause to the students here at STCC, such as Vox Church, Elms College, and the YWCA.

Most of the services at tables had something to get the students more interested in the information, such as an activity or a free item as advertisement.

For example, the YWCA had a banner that read "YWCA is on a mission" and at their table, they asked students to fill out the prompt "#STCCWeCan". Some of the responses were, "#STCCWeCan support each other," and "#STCCWeCan be someone's sunshine." Some of the information tables gave out free items to students as advertisement. The Office of Student Activities gave out student planners, Big E pamphlets, and fanny packs. The library table was giving out information about free ebooks and book themed button pins. Vox Church was giving out water bottles, Red Bulls, candy, pens, and highlighters.

This year's Opening Picnic was very informative, fun, and helpful to many students on campus. Students were able to learn a lot of new information about services and activities around campus, socialize with other students, and enjoy a good meal out in the sunshine. †

New Food On Campus: Nadim's

by Jesse Mongeon

Food options on campus can be a deciding factor on whether a student chooses to apply to a college or not. While the food choices here at STCC have never been extravagant or exotic, there has always been a general variety of breakfast and lunch foods served in the dining hall of Building 2 as well as a slew of random vending machines throughout campus. This fall, STCC drastically changed the quality of food on campus by hiring a new food service company to take over the catering in Building 2. This company, or restaurant, rather, is called Nadim's.

Nadim's is a traditional Mediterranean restaurant and grill with Lebanese flavors and a warm refined atmosphere in their main location in downtown Springfield on Main Street. This location is

referred to as Nadim's Downtown, while the Nadim's in Building 2 is referred to as Nadim's At STCC. Although they don't offer the full Mediterranean menu offered at their downtown location, the overall variety of food options and the quality of the food is just as great. Their menu at STCC is described as, "Standard fare and specialty items, including fattoush salad, chicken kabobs, soups of the day, and homemade hummus," according to STCC's website.

The breakfast menu consists of eggs and hash browns, french toast, breakfast sandwiches on flakey, buttery rolls rather than english muffins or croissants, thick, belgian waffles, and more. They also have a self serve coffee bar you can buy a cup for. Their lunch menu consists of personal sized pizzas, french fries, soups,

salads, chicken kabobs, and more. They also have coolers filled with veggie wraps, sandwich wraps such as tuna, yogurt, and a wide variety of drinks.

As any hungry student on campus, I was obligated to try this new restaurant, especially when some of my classes are in Building 2. From my experience the past two years on campus, though, I initially did not have high hopes for the quality, despite the variety and reputation of the local restaurant. That thought disappeared quite quickly as soon as I got my first taste of Nadim's.

One morning, before my 9:30 class, I stopped into Building 2 to grab a bite to eat at Nadim's. I chose the belgian waffles and a large coffee. Let me tell you, these waffles were the absolute best waffles I have ever had in my life,

without exaggeration. The outside crust of the waffles was deep fried, having the texture of fried dough or fried oreos from a fair. The inside was soft and doughy. It was the perfect combination. There were two waffles and they were quite large and thick, and I could barely finish them. As for the coffee, there were three different coffee flavors to choose from; French Roast, Breakfast Roast, or French Vanilla. The waffles were \$4.00, and the large coffee was \$1.75. Overall, I was quite satisfied and impressed, especially by the waffles.

Nadim's is located on the first floor of Building 2 and is open Monday through Friday 8 AM–2 PM. Breakfast is served from 8–11, and lunch is served 11–2. †

Photo via <https://www.stcc.edu/campus-life/food-services/>



STCC? There's an App for That

by Jesse Mongeon

Yes, really. The new STCC-2GO app is a brand new mobile phone app that was launched at the beginning of this semester. This app is meant to bridge the accessibility gap between WebAdvisor and cell phones. WebAdvisor is the website interface STCC uses to house all student information such as classes, financial aid status, and campus information.

The new app allows you to view much of the important information you would typically access WebAdvisor for, such as your class schedule or the campus map. It also has many useful resources like campus emergency phone numbers or the admissions application. You can also view your current bill balance, if you have one, and the current grades for your classes. There are even quick links to the STCC website and a link that directs you to the phone number for Student Services. The app visually is pretty neat and organized with a red and grey format is very on theme for STCC, and of course features our mascot, Rowdy the Ram.

But unfortunately, since the app is still in the early stages of development, it still has a few bugs that need to get worked out.

For example, in order to access your schedule or grades, you are asked to log in with your WebAdvisor credentials each and every time you would like to view either section of the app. This can be inconvenient when you are running late for a class but forget exactly what room number it is. This also can be tedious to do every time you want to check your grades.

Many other mobile apps we use in our daily lives such as Snapchat, Facebook, or Instagram, keep us logged in no matter how many times we open or close the app, so to be asked to log in each and every time can get annoying pretty quickly.

In addition, some features of the app leave a lot to be desired. The Campus Map Navigator is just a link to Google Maps, where multiple pins have been placed and are named the names of the buildings on campus. That's great, but why did they include all the vacant buildings around campus, and label them simply as "vacant"? It makes the map of pins crowded, hard to click on, and hard to read. The PDF map is much easier to read, and has all the information for each building itemized within the document.

Overall, I am impressed by STCC's endeavor to create a mo-



bile app for the students to use in an attempt to make accessing important information more convenient and quicker. However, there are many small things within the app that could improve functionality and overall performance of the app. Login information should have the option to be saved so that students are able to check their information quickly. In addition, some unnecessary features such as the Campus Map Navigator and the school's social media links, could be moved or removed altogether to better improve the user's experience with the app. ¶

Local Farm Goods at STCC

by Jesse Mongeon

I don't know about you, but for some reason, locally grown produce has always tasted better to me than something bought in a grocery store. So when I learned that STCC had a weekly farmer's market here on campus, I was absolutely thrilled.

Every Wednesday, between Buildings 2 and 13, there are multiple weekly vendors and a wide range of products including locally sourced honey, local produce, locally made sauce, vegan food, and even fudge. You can find anything from tomatoes to corn to pumpkins. Some weeks, you can even find milk and cheese from local farms, or grab a bite to eat from Fatboyz BBQ.

In addition to things you can eat, there are all sorts of other locally made items, like bracelets, necklaces or tote bags made from recycled materials. The roster of vendors changes each week, so you really never know what you might find. With the holidays coming up, many of these locally sourced goods make great, delicious gifts.



Photo via <http://www.facebook.com/STCCFarmersMarket/photos>

Shopping locally sourced goods helps support local farms in the area, an industry that is slowly being phased out and replaced with mass farming. When you shop local, you support real people and not corporations. Students who have received financial aid may be eligible for a waiver to shop at the farmer's market. Check with the financial aid office to see if you're eligible.

The farmer's market is every Wednesday until mid-November from 11:30–2, located outside between Buildings 2 and 13. ¶

Food Is Expensive

by Maria Cruz

How much do you spend on food and how can we fix it? I work at a grocery store and when I was younger food was cheap but now it's getting expensive. When I was younger you could fill a cart all the way to the top and only spend about \$100 but today it's about \$200 to \$300 to fill your cart with food.

In 2008, cereal was \$1.50 and milk was \$2.15, but today cereal is \$4.99 to \$5.99 a box. As for milk it's gone out the roof to about \$4 to \$6 for one gallon. Most of my customers never have enough money to buy their food so they put back items. There was one older lady that I always see, and I feel bad because she never has enough for her food. There are times where I just want to pay for what she didn't have enough for. There are also customers that see others struggle to pay for their food, so they offer to pay the remaining balance. I love to see how some people still care for those who need it the most; I always have a conversation with a few customers who think that to save money is to grow our own veggies and fruits. That doesn't sound like a bad thing to do since it will help to save a little more

money. As a community we should be able to find so many ways to help out, like helping grow our veggies. I feel like one day, food is going to be expensive for everyone, if it's not already.

I feel before you buy food, try to find out how much items cost, and try to look in other stores to see if they are the same price or cheaper. I always try to find where I can find the cheapest items. I usually go to Aldi because sometimes their food is a little bit cheaper than other stores. When I buy milk I go to Chicopee Walmart because it's \$1.25 for a gallon and \$.75 for a half. It's a good deal but some people need a ride to get there. It's always hard to find the best store to buy groceries from.

Online, I found that growing veggies could be expensive but that's if you don't know how to start your garden. Some ways to get your garden started is to get a bucket with worms and all your food scraps. You add food and the worms will start to work to make compost that you can use for your garden. This can save you money on buying soil. The soil they make has more nutrients in it than regular soil at a store.

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Behind the Tech Times

Chief Editor
Jesse Mongeon

General Reporters
Nick Bora
Maria Cruz

General Reporter & Focus on Lifestyle
Tatyana Moriarty

General Reporter & Gaming Specialist
Shawn Ferrari

General Reporter & Sniffer-Out of Bias
Jose Alvarez-Perez

Faculty Advisor
Prof. Davis Johnson
English 110

Faculty Advisor
Prof. Cheryl Lukas
Graphic Communications & Photography

Email us at:
djohnson@stcc.edu
Find us online at:
www.stcc.edu/campus-life/techtimes/

Evil Geniuses Make A Statement

by Shawn Ferrari

Right now is an exciting time for Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, CS:GO, the competitive first-person shooter from the company Valve. Counter-Strike as a series spans back to November 9, 2000, when it was first created, making it one of the oldest esports. The basic setup of CS:GO is 2 teams of five, with the possibility of a coach; one team consists of counter-terrorists and the other terrorists. The main objective is for the counter-terrorists (CTs) to defend bombsites A and B, while the terrorists (Ts) attempt to attack the bombsites. Both sides can win a round by eliminating all enemies, but CTs may win by defusing a planted bomb and Ts on the contrary can win by a planted bomb exploding. Each game has 30 rounds, 15 rounds for each side. The first team to win 16 rounds wins the game. If teams tie 15-15 then it goes into overtime, possibly multiple. There are some similarities to sports, but there are also some key differences.

A major difference is that there are 7 different "fields" that

teams can play on called maps. Teams may play on any of the following maps: Mirage, Cache, Dust2, Train, Overpass, Nuke, and Vertigo. The objectives are the same on every map, but each map is strategically unique in its own ways. Other than maps, factors like decision making, strategies, economy, time, skill, experience, roles, weapons, grenades, etc. can affect the outcome of a match. Sometimes CS:GO is as strategic as chess or football; however, other times a player can single-handedly win a match for their team. On paper, CS:GO can seem convoluted, but it's a great spectator sport and not too hard to follow, especially since casters and analysts do an excellent job of keeping viewers informed.

Recently Evil Geniuses, EG, made an entrance back into Counter-Strike. Evil Geniuses are a staple name from Counter-Strike 1.6 when they had legendary players like Jordan "n0thing" Gilbert, Danny "fRoD" Montaner, and Tomi "lurppis" Kovanen. The organization decided to drop

their 1.6 team in 2012 and since then haven't been a part of the CS scene. They tried entering into CS:GO by picking up ex-iBUY-POWER in 2015, but the deal failed to happen when most of the players got banned from Valve's tournaments. Fast forwarding to September 26, 2019, EG bought NRG's team for a rumored price of \$3 million. Evil Geniuses' CS:GO team consists of Vincent "Brehze" Cayonte, Cvetelin "CeRq" Dimitrov, Ethan "Ethan" Arnold, Tarik "tarik" Celik, Peter "stanislaw" Jarguz, and their coach Chet "ImAPet" Singh.

Previously when the team was under NRG, they won the iBUY-POWER Invitational, IEM XIII - Shanghai, and cs_summit 3 in 2018. Since then, they've struggled to win again, mainly placing 3rd to 4th at most events. Consistently making semifinals isn't a bad feat, but the team needed to make a change in order to move past their hurdle. The most fitting change in the team's eyes was kicking out their previous in-game leader, Damian "daps" Steele.

The roster change was a fair move since daps' micromanaging style hadn't been as successful for some time. So far, bringing stanislaw into the team as the new in-game leader has proven to be the right move. Stanislaw's style is looser and it's had a significant impact on players like tarik and CeRq. The last event they played under NRG was the StarLadder Berlin Major 2019. They once again failed to get past the semifinals, but nonetheless their performance was great. During their brief time between events, they signed to their new organization Evil Geniuses. On the same day, the team was set to play in New York City at ESL One: New York 2019.

The teams' first showing as EG at ESL One: NY 2019 was spectacular. From September 26th to the 29th, there were eight teams in attendance fighting over a prize pool of \$200,000. The format was double-elimination in the group stage, single-elimination in the playoffs. All matches were a best

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A Blind Date with Music

by Shawn Ferrari

Concerts are amazing. You get to see your favorite bands and artists live in the flesh. Plus, you might even get to talk to them, get their autograph, or take a picture with them. It's normal for people to want to go to concerts—especially if more than one of their favorite musicians are playing there—but, what about going to concerts with artists you hardly even know?

Last year, in the summer, my mom won tickets for a Slayer show in Connecticut. As far as I know, my mom doesn't listen to metal and she wasn't planning on getting into metal, so she offered the tickets to my brother and me. We gladly accepted the tickets, even though neither of us had really heard much from Slayer's discography. I'd heard a few of their most popular songs, but that's about it.

We still decided to go because why not? And, to be honest, that Slayer concert was one of the best shows I've ever been to. They had not one, not two, not three, but four opening bands that were all amazing in their own way. Then, after all those bands had played, one after another, finally, Slayer came out, and somehow they one upped all of the other bands that

had played before them. They had stage lights, fire that you could feel was real by just looking. The stage was lit behind them, and of course their loud metal music was bad ass. I only recognized a few songs, but even so, it's a night I won't forget.

Back to the present; recently I went to a concert with friends. We saw Weyes Blood at the Iron Horse Music Hall in Northampton. I'd known about this show for a while and didn't think I was going to be attending, but surprisingly, when I brought it up to two of my friends they said they'd love to go. Neither of them had heard of Weyes Blood, yet they were still down to go to the show. Fast forward to the day of the concert; we got there just on time, bought our tickets at the door, and took seats at a table on the second floor. None of us had prior knowledge of the opening band, Purr, but they were excellent. We couldn't have asked for a better opener. There was a brief intermission afterwards, but then Weyes Blood, dressed in her all white custom suit, and her tour band took the stage.

To set the stage for you, Weyes Blood is an American artist

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Ottawa's Hidden Gem

by Shawn Ferrari

Keith McDonald, hailing from Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, is a fairly unknown artist. He only has about 40 monthly listeners on Spotify, but he's slowly becoming one of my favorite artists. Surely, I'm biased since he's a friend of mine, but truthfully he's a great musician. Depending on who you ask, he might be more well known for being the drummer in the indie pop band Dad Sports, but Keith also has a solo indietronica project that goes by the name Foxhall. On September 8, 2019, Foxhall released his first extended play, EP, titled Shoreside. While his EP has barely seen the light of day, the four tracks on Shoreside are beautiful, powerful, delightful, and such a great experience, that this EP has become one of my favorites from this year.

Shoreside starts with a melodic indie folk pop ballad "Flood". It starts off being nostalgic, reminiscing the past, then becomes more and more depressing, but in a good way. Keith talks about someone who was once there, someone he cared about and trusted dearly, someone he doesn't want to let go of, stating several times "please hold me while I drown". He was blindsided by life and is struggling to move on,

hoping to hold on to what was once there, even if it's just for one last time.

We then move into the second track, "Albatross". Here Keith shows that he's grown and learned from his past. He's letting go of the past, even though he's worried about the future and what it holds for him. Meanwhile, he's also focused on living in the moment, singing, "Oh, I wanna make a mistake tonight" and "we're gonna live like kings tonight". It's a triumphant track, letting out feelings of being young and uncertain, but showing that he's not going to give up.

The transition from "Albatross" into the third track "Ebb" is smooth. On the surface, "Ebb" is just a short instrumental song, the shortest song on the EP, but it's more than just that. It's a soft instrumental song that shows us that the instrumental work on Shoreside is spectacular. It shouldn't take you until this point to realize that the instrumental work is great, but this track gives you downtime to appreciate and reflect on the instrumentation thus far. It's also a nice treat before Foxhall serves the last meal, the final track "Trees".

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IT'S HALLOWEEN

by Nick Bova

Halloween occurs annually every October 31st. Through rain chilling temperatures, and wind we celebrate it. People dress up in costume, and you pretend to be somebody else for the night. Children go out trick or treating for candy door to door. College kids such as myself like to check out the Halloween parties, or go to the bar. Many celebrate Halloween in different ways, but how did this all start?

Halloween's origin came from the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. In this festival people would dress up in costumes and light big bonfires to ward ghosts away. When Halloween finally reached America, the first forms of it celebrated by play parties which were public events held to celebrate the harvest. Neighbors would tell each other stories of the dead. They would also sing and dance.

During the second half of the 19th century, America had a huge influx of immigrants coming from all over the world. After



the great immigration Halloween became way more popular in the United States. That's when Americans started celebrating Halloween annually.

Taking from European traditions, Americans began to dress up in costumes and go house to house asking for food or money, a practice that became today's "trick or treating". We also took on superstitions. Many people avoid black cats because of the belief that witches turned into black cats to avoid being seen, and if you cross a black cat you would have bad luck. We try not to walk under ladders as well. This superstition may have come from the ancient Egyptians, who believed that triangles were sacred (it also may have something to do with the fact that walking under

a leaning ladder tends to be fairly unsafe). And around Halloween, especially, we try to avoid breaking mirrors, stepping on cracks in the road or spilling salt. For it can all lead to back luck.

Now with the 21st century here, we have carried on many of the old styles of Halloween. Children and young adults dress up and go door to door looking for candy. We go out to bars partying drinking, dressing up being whoever we want to be for a night. Only on this night you can dress up to be something so ridiculous nobody will judge you. Happy Halloween everyone! †

Sources: https://www.history.com/topics/halloween/history-of-halloween#section_11; <https://houseandtrip-blog.com/2015/10/28/how-to-celebrate-halloween-in-england/>

Planned Parenthood

by Tatyana Moriarty

Planned Parenthood recently redesigned their website. The website has various information that has to do with sex, having a baby, and any sexuality related issues. When looking through this website you get a lot of information, from abortion to how to safely protect yourself. If you have a question about anything that has to do with sex, this is the website to go on. It also gives some pretty good information on birth control, men's health, STDs and other sexual infections.

Usually, girls go online when they think something is wrong with them, to see if they can match up symptoms, and this is definitely a website that can be very resourceful. The website says that they are providing trust in the community.

This website is pretty interesting because it gives you the opportunity to share a story you might have that is beneficial for the website, based on your experience with Planned Parenthood. I think this is a good thing because it allows other patients to see how well they were treated at this organization. I read about how this young girl was having sex in high school so she turned to Planned Parenthood and they helped her get on birth control. This website is helpful when looking for answers about sex and health education.

Not only is the website very beneficial but there are Planned Parenthood clinics that are located in many states that you can visit to actually get in-person care. This is a place for people to come to feel as comfortable as possible, and see someone for the answers to issues that may concern them.

From my personal experience I feel Planned Parenthood has been great. I go there to fill my birth control, get tested, and to ask any other personal questions that I may have at the time, and I feel so comfortable when I go there. The staff makes sure that you feel safe and that whatever you are there for is confidential which is very important. I recommend this place for everyone.

The local office for Planned Parenthood is in Springfield at 3550 Main Street, Suite 201. †

There are races in life, but life isn't a race. †

Reopening of Building 19

by Maria Cruz

Did you like the reopening of building 19? I did; it was a nice idea for everyone to get to know all the services that STCC has to offer. When walking to the building you could hear the DJ giving information on where to go there and what was happening. He also directed people to get registered for the raffle. When you registered, they handed you a bag and a card that had the names of services. You needed to visit all the places to receive a stamp, and at least 10 stamps to enter the raffle. When you got all your stamps, you then brought them to the library, which was the last stop. They had food like pizza, fruits, veggies and there was also a barbecue across from Building 19. It was easy to walk around, and if you couldn't find an office, they directed you to the right place. They had so many services like Veteran Services, IT Support, Student Activities, Financial Aid, and many more.

Each service table had information about what they do and how it helps the students. One table was for the Campus Police where they had information of how they keep us safe.

There was also information about the STCC app that showed how it keeps us safe just in case. At another table you found Trio which is a service for students who need help with semester organization issues. They offer tutoring and many other things. They also have many workshops that help students with money managing and other things.

IT Support is a good place to go when you can't get into your email or Webadvisor. If your computer acts up, you can ask them for tips on how you can fix your problem. Staff are very nice people and will always be there when we have a technical problem.

Another service is the Student Activity and Development Center. Here they also offer tutoring. They also have information on trips STCC is planning, like the New York shopping trip, and Boston Aquarium tour. You could purchase tickets there and also movie tickets that are \$8, which is a good deal.

They advertised flyers of the trips, as well as other events that will be coming soon. They handed out lanyards and drinks that were served in a STCC cup that changed color,

which was cool. They also have information about the clubs like the Art Club, Anime Club, Criminal Justice Club, and many more. They also advertise student leadership opportunities like Student Trustee, Student Body President or Vice President, and a few other positions. Another thing they offer is the Student Ambassador Program where students help others feel comfortable at STCC.

There was also the Career Center. Here they help you make your resume, and polish interview skills. They also help you look for jobs that fit who you are. If you need help with your resume you can stop by and they will gladly assist.

Financial Aid is where they help students pay their bills. If you don't understand why you are paying so much they can help you understand. They will do their best to help students with financial problems. They will also direct you to the right person or services that can help the student. †



Building 19 Means Convenience!

by Tatyana Moriarty

STCC has made a lot of changes this past year. Have you been to the new Building 19? They have added a lot of different things and made many great adjustments.

As I start this new school, I see a lot of differences between my other school which was a state university. Don't get me wrong, it's a great school; but I see a major issue with the Financial Aid. At STCC the financial aid is very open; you just walk up to the booth and talk to the Financial Aid staff. I think it should be more personal or a little more secluded because no one wants to talk about their financial business out loud. But the school does have a lot of staff that are available to help you which is great.

Although I feel Financial Aid should be able to help you as much as they can, here I felt it was the opposite. They were in a rush because the line was long, which is not fair to me or any other students because who else are we supposed to go to if the staff is not putting any effort in to help us out? When I spoke to my sister she felt the same way about receiving no help. It's hard when Financial Aid can't help you out or give you any simple answers. That can affect whether someone can attend school, so it's a big deal and I feel like they could try a little harder. The staff is here to help us succeed because without their help in the right direction a lot of students will be lost.

Despite the Financial Aid and the errors that they can fix, I feel like the Building 19 adjustments are great. My favorite part of Building 19 is the Advising Office. The school did an amazing job not only with the set up but the choice of staff. This one advisor was so amazing that I try to request her everytime I go. The waiting area is great with plenty of space and comfortable chairs. When I went for advice, I came out with all the answers I needed and the educational information I was looking for.

Building 19 is a great adjustment for the school. All the important stuff is in one building instead of students having to walk all around campus.

Great Decision! †

YOU'VE GOT THIS!

by Shawn Ferrari

It's the first day back to school and I have mixed feelings, I feel anxious and happy. I'm happy to be back, but I'm unsure where I'm going in life. I'm not sure if I should transfer or look for a job once I've gotten my associates. I'm unsure about a lot to be honest. It feels like my life is in shambles, yet I know that it's not. It doesn't help that it seems like I'm behind. Other people who are around my age or even younger seem to be more successful than me and it makes me feel like I've failed and gone about things wrong, like I've wasted my time and energy. Though, that's a skewed perception of life.

How many young people are very successful? To be honest, I don't know the answer to that, but I do have an assumption. I think social media and news make it seem like a lot more young people are very successful than truly are, when really those people make up a small percentage. It's easy to go on to Instagram, Snapchat, or Twitter and see life through other people's lenses and wish you were them, with them, or like them, but truthfully lots of what you see online is skewed. You can easily hide behind a mask or only show

people what you want to show them and keep the rest hidden. Don't get me wrong; there's nothing wrong with different walks of life being shown online, but you shouldn't let an image discourage you when the full picture isn't always shown.

Another rhetorical question is, how many people are successful overnight? Once again, I don't have an exact answer, but I do have another assumption. I believe that almost no one becomes successful overnight, but rather through hard work and dedication. Not everyone will be able to see all of the hard work you've done, but you'll know that you've done it. A good example of a recent star who seems like he's catapulted into the limelight is Lil Nas X. His rise to stardom has seemingly come overnight, but that's far from the truth. He's had an online presence since at least 2015, but has only gained mainstream attention since the release of his song "Old Town Road" at the end of 2018.

One more question, one that might be on your mind is, "What are you getting at?" That I do have an answer for. What I'm getting at is that you shouldn't worry too

much about the past, present, or future. It may seem like you're behind and that you should be as successful as Lil Nas X, Billie Eilish, or any other young celebrity, but there are also plenty of people who've become successful at an older age. A good example is that while the majority of students at STCC are younger, you won't fail to find that there are those who aren't so young, and they're proof that it's never too late to succeed. Lots of us will have at least an Associates before we're 30 years old, but that doesn't mean that anyone older than that isn't succeeding as well.

We're not where we want to be yet, but that's fine. Sometimes life is hard, but you don't need to worry too much because you're going to be fine, you've got this, and you can do it! We should strive to put in the work, take advantage of resources that are available to us, and work towards the goals we want to achieve, but don't be too hard on yourself. Overnight success might be a myth, but eventually you're going to end up where you want to be, so there's no need to race anyone.

There are races in life, but life isn't a race. †

AMEER VANN'S MEDIOCRE RETURN

by Shawn Ferrari

Ameer Vann, an ex-member of the boyband rap collective Brockhampton, has recently come out of the shadows after being quiet for over a year. In May of 2018, many people came forward with allegations about Ameer on Twitter, saying he's a predator, manipulative, and a cheater, just to name a few of the claims.

Ameer defended himself in a post on Twitter, but it wasn't enough for the members of Brockhampton and he was soon kicked from the group. This decision caused many splitting opinions from fans and overall a shock since Brockhampton had recently signed to the RCA record label and announced a release date for their next album. After being kicked, Ameer deactivated all of his social media accounts, until he recently reactivated his Instagram. Then on September 18, 2019, Ameer Vann dropped his new six track EP, *Emmanuel*.

Emmanuel kicks off with a heavy and depressing song, "Emmanuel". Depending on how you look at it, the beat on this track is weak. I don't think the beat is meant to be the focal point of this

track; instead the main attraction is the heavy and personal lyrics. Throughout this song, Ameer talks about his past and current troubles, such as growing up around violence and thinking the world will be better without him, saying, "Make the world a better place, I'll put a bullet in my head". It's an emotional and troubling track because his writing makes it clear that he's not happy with who is and what he's done, but with lines like "I'm a product of my father, I'm a addict like my sister", he makes it seem like he's the victim. He might also be trying to say that what he's grown up around has shaped him into the person he is, which is fair. Though, if Ameer really doesn't like himself, taking actions to become a better person is the answer, not suicide.

In the next track, "Pop Trunk", Ameer talks about Brockhampton. Out of all the lyrics in this track, one line stands out boldly from the rest which is, "I ain't no boy in a band, I am more than a man". It's a clear reference to Brockhampton, stating that he's no longer in the boyband and he's fine with that. Ameer shows

that he'd rather fly solo than try to fix his past relationships. Even though he later on alludes to troubles and possibly going broke, he also says, "I got the world in my palm, sittin' right in my hand," once again making it seem like he's fine. "Pop Trunk" is the catchiest and best song on *Emmanuel*, "Glock 19". In this track, Ameer speaks about his troubles with drugs and the violence around him. The chorus is very catchy, rapping that you don't want to talk shit where he lives or else you might get killed.

Ameer tells us that he's looking for his friends, possibly alluding that he misses his friends, but then saying, "I don't feel alone 'cause the drugs are my friends". It's apparent that Ameer keeps talking about drugs, violence, and depression, which are far from being new subjects in rap, but it's worrying since it's coming from someone who previously tried to become better.

The next two tracks, "Los Angeles" and "Sunday Night" are similar, with Ameer once again talking about Brockhampton and

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My Case Against Online Streaming Services

by Jose Alvarez-Perez

I remember what it was like to wait for HBO to have a movie on the schedule list to watch. I first watched *Alien* on HBO. I waited patiently for it. I simply tuned something else on the cable listing until the movie came on. I used to feel accompanied when I was physically alone, because I knew somebody else would be watching it at the same time. I used to fantasize that my school friends would also be there and watch it with me. I knew deep down that wasn't the case at all, but I felt HBO to be a living room theater.

Watching movies, for me, was an experience. I used to watch movies with my parents and siblings, after the regular programming in Puerto Rican television, unless my parents wanted me to be in bed early. I also loved to visit the movies, grab some popcorn with Peanuts M&M's inside the bag, and to play the arcades. I loved those car games, and to ride that simulation motorcycle, but those days are gone. Now I watch movies in my hand, and it's completely overrated.

Call me ridiculous? You're the boring and grumpy antisocial individual investing your time to personal fun by watching a movie with your subconscious asking yourself, "what's next?" instead of investing \$25 to have fun with your friends at the movies. Call me outdated? You're sentimental and addicted to waiting for your favorite channel to transmit at a convenient hour while getting rid of some accumulated homework. Admit that motion pictures appreciation is dead, and the nostalgia

<<<Food, cont'd from page 2

One of the things that is expensive is meat which is so needed for the body. Meat is in high demand which makes prices go higher. When the grain gets too expensive the owner will make the meat more expensive to make a profit on his cattle. All my customers hand me all the meat first so that they can get that out of the way before getting anything else. They always make sure they get the necessary things first. Some people go to the meat outlet where you can find meat that doesn't cost an arm or a leg. Every time I go there I buy a box of chicken legs and thighs for \$20 that last a month and a half. We should find a way to find a substitutes for meat due to its expense.

is still alive. Older generations may agree that our generation's art is boring as ever. Thanks to streaming services, it's so accessible it feels overrated. Same concepts, unnecessary reboots and the hero almost always wins. Don't you expect it, already? Don't you know they will marry and have kids, as a corny ending always ends?

Don't worry, I have a suggestion to share: TAKE A BREAK. Look at the sky in real life instead of a screen inside your favorite streaming service; live your own motion picture and let these be moments shared with your friends instead of just commented on in Twitter conversations where everybody says spoilers about the movie you're about to watch. Come on, you know I have a big point here. Movies were meant to share time with people, not with your subconscious.

Exclusive content such as Netflix Originals and the new Apple TV+ streaming service are real exceptions, but I bet you can share time watching those classic shows and movies or upcoming blockbusters with family and friends instead of just arguing with them about the reactions they didn't live with you in regular conversations.

Admit it; motion pictures appreciation is dead, and only the nostalgia is still alive. Only you can revive the purpose of motion pictures, and only you can revive those relationships disrupted by your subconscious, having fun with your friends or family watching the same movie and grabbing ice cream cones after. ††

All the stores are not the same. Some such as Big Y or Stop & Shop are expensive for some of us. For example, Big Y has a lot of food but the food is overpriced. When I go in there, the food prices are out of this world, like Friendly's Ice Cream is \$3, while at PriceRite, it's 2 for \$5.

We should have community gardens throughout Springfield so it's easier for people to get cheaper veggies and fruits. No matter what happens, one day we will have enough food to not worry about not feeding our children. But for now we should find ways to get cheaper food for our families. We need to find a way to live and do our best to get the food we need. ††

The Day After the A13, A Third Camera & Tomorrow

by Jose Alvarez-Perez

After an amazing Special Event in the Steve Jobs Theater, I had to visit my nearest Apple Retail Store to see the new store's layout. As a child, I was a huge admirer of the Plaza Las Americas' Apple Retail Store in Puerto Rico and Apple's logo in the front. I never forgot that first impression, which I'm pretty sure every customer felt the very first day visiting their majestic retail store.

As a consumer, I appreciate the company's commitment to safety and security; it is the major reason I switched from long-time Google user to the iCloud platform, although I still need to deal with Google via my student account. It's no secret that Google sells your data for "improved performance and adaptability", but I hate Big Brothers when it comes to opening the browser for being targeted with everything I think of.

Recognizing the fact that Apple is the trustworthy brother that will always bring you the best quality for the fair price, you can be pretty sure the iPhone 11 isn't the exception. The A13 Bionic is a huge update for app developers willing to take advantage from it. The front facing camera jumped to 12 sweet megapixels with the TrueDepth technology, which marks a real difference compared to the iPhone XS' 7 megapixels camera. Screen Touch ID was expected by a lot of people, but I bet Apple trust their FaceID technology.

<<<Ameer Vann, cont'd from page 5

being depressed. On "Los Angeles", he talks about moving to Los Angeles with his friends, but also losing them in Los Angeles since he got kicked from the group. On "Sunday Night", Ameer tries to reason that Brockhampton should have stuck up for him because they're metaphorically a family of brothers. These two tracks showcase one of the biggest flaws on this EP which is Ameer's skewed point of view. For poor reasons, Ameer thinks he's been wronged by his ex-friends, even though he's well aware of his past actions. It's possible that the public has been misinformed and Ameer was backstabbed by Brockhampton, but that sentiment seems unlikely and backwards.

Finally, Emmanuel ends with the track "Plastic". It's the shortest track on the EP, almost 2 minutes long, just one big verse,

On the day after the release, which I call the day after tomorrow for those who dropped the same \$999 in the iPhone XS as the best version of the 10 years anniversary, I visited the Holyoke Mall's Apple Store to see the iPhone 11. Staff members described the major day as "busy", but I didn't receive any sales data after requesting to the mall administration and the retail store. I asked for customer data collection and sales impact around the other stores inside the mall, but permission wasn't granted. The store looks extremely beautiful with the addition of the Watch studio and the iPhone 11.

I heard customers complaining about a problem they identify as "the same phone as last year's (iPhone XS)," and other enthusiastic customers praising the new hardware updates. If you reach me inside the campus to hear my opinion, I will tell you my gear consists of a disconnected 64 GBs iPhone XS with a charging case I use as a PDA. Also, I love my 32GBs iPad 6th with the First-Generation Apple Pencil as my notebook. I have no intention to upgrade this year, but if you're a student, then you should get a disconnected iPhone 11 PRO and the iPad 7th with the respective Apple Pencil to experience the college life as a whole journey.

Don't forget to look at the mighty Watches and some AirPods, by the way! ††

and surprise, it's nothing new from Ameer. There's almost nothing notable to write about for this track, other than the end. Ameer ends this song by saying, "N*ggas want more, but I gotta go", suggesting that we want more music like this from him, which is debatable.

Overall, Emmanuel isn't horrible, but also isn't spectacular. It's filled with Ameer's usual cadence and writing and it's clear that he put his heart and soul into the songs, but it's what he writes that's controversial and problematic. His lyrics show that he's depressed and troubled, but to the public eye, it's questionable whether or not Ameer is taking the right steps towards fixing his life. For some, this will be seen as a great return from Ameer Vann, but for others this isn't going to cut it. ††

THE \$25 PORTFOLIO CHALLENGE

by Jose Alvarez-Perez

People I shared this concept asked me why I suggested them to gamble for increased profits from their income. If you consider buying something that may be increasing or decreasing in value after the purchase to be gambling, then a round of gambling in the casino may not be that bad tasting for you if you're with friends. If you tell me that you will sell me a plastic fork for a dollar, and will buy it from me again in two days for a dollar fifty, I will buy three and wait for you to bring me a dollar fifty more to my weekly budget. About buying stocks, the profits aren't assured but life tomorrow isn't assured either, is it?

Life is a constant gambling journey full of choices but buying stocks shouldn't be confused with gambling. Buying stocks is possessing public shares of companies, something accessible to the general public. As you buy a bottled water of preference instead of drinking water from a drinking fountain or sink, people decide to buy stocks from the company instead of just being a customer. This water is processed through the Wall Street river, and you can drink from it at major scales buying from composite indexes as NYSE and NASDAQ.

Nowadays, counting with a great tool that is part of our hands known as a smartphone, you can improve your trading skills.

How can you trade without risk of losing money? Nothing is for sure, because no one can predict the market's upcoming earnings and declines. The sure thing is, you can make a big profit if you study the market and politics from an unbiased perspective. How can you trade without losing money and without considering risk? The risk is always there, but the word "risk" isn't always in negative tense.

Thanks to mobile applications like Robinhood, the risk is less if you trust the experts and your intuition. Robinhood was launched in 2013, allowing trade and bringing analysts' trading suggestions. I have a \$25 portfolio with a

current 14.25% profit. Honestly, I believe the smartphones bring us equal opportunities around the nation and buying stocks from your hand comfort is one of those equal opportunities you just can't miss.

If you see me around and ask me about my portfolio's stocks, I will suggest you keep PLUG and GLUU in your watchlist. Remember that trading is about aiming for profits if you consider one cent to be a valuable profit for a reliable future. If you ever accept the \$25 portfolio challenge, please use the hashtag #25portfoliochallenge in your favorite social media to catch up with the conversation. ††

Technology: Good or Bad?

by Nick Bova

Technology grows more and more with time; is a good thing? Well, think again, because technology advances have done some very good in the world, as well as brought downfalls. We could never imagine a world without technology. I believe our world will end up in total disaster if that ever happens. However, there are people in third world countries who have very limited technology, and live their daily lives much differently.

Let us take a look at what good technology does for us. We wake up everyday by an alarm clock. We roll over and most of us, the first thing we do is grab our phones with one eye open and one eye closed. We waste time lying there scrolling on our phones. We look at the news, at Facebook or other social media apps, and what that does for us is gives us consistent information.

With the internet we have an unlimited amount of information at our fingertips. We can look up recipes for cooking, message people around the country or even the world in a matter of seconds. We have the capability to 3D print anything we want. Now those are just a couple of the benefits of technology.

Now the bad things that technology houses. For starters, people driving their cars while texting and driving has caused a lot of deaths because people can not disconnect from their phones.



Everywhere you look, people are attached to technology. People stay at home and loaf on the couch eating food, and gaining weight. Weight gain in America has more than doubled in the last few decades thanks to unhealthy foods, and technology. Dating has become lazier, where people make a dating profile online and either swipe right saying "yes" talk to me, or "no" I am not interested. Maybe I'm old fashioned and miss when times were easier to talk to people. It's hard now to talk to people since everyone is glued to their handheld electronic devices.

As you can see there are many different advantages to technology and disadvantages. I see it as we're very dependent on technology so that we can't live without it; I know I can't.

However, remember to take a break from it all, and look around you, look at the nature outside, because that is something that won't hurt your eyes if you stare at it for a long period of time. ††

Source: <https://www.kissclipart.com/information-technology-technology-icon-png-clipart-f3bz5c/download-clipart.html>

<<<Geniuses, cont'd from page 3

of three, except the grand final which was a best of five. In attendance at ESL One: NY 2019 were Astralis, Team Liquid, ENCE, OpTic Gaming, Evil Geniuses, FaZe Clan, G2 Esports, and eUnited. Astralis and Team Liquid were respectively the favorites to win the event since they're the two best teams at the moment.

Astralis and Team Liquid ended up meeting in the semifinals rather than the final, since both teams had their fair share of hiccups in the group stage. Astralis bested Team Liquid, just like they did previously at StarLadder Berlin Major 2019, and claimed their spot in the final. Meanwhile, Evil Geniuses had some troubles, but made it to the semifinals after beating Astralis in the group stage. EG then crushed G2 Esports in the semifinals, securing a rematch with Astralis in the grand final.

The best of five started with Astralis removing Mirage, EG removing Overpass, and then going back and forth picking the order of the remaining five maps. Once the vetoes were over, the chosen maps were Inferno, Dust2, Train, Nuke, and Vertigo. EG stomped Astralis on the first map Inferno, closing out their CT half with a 13-2 lead and then winning it 16-3. The fight on Dust2 was closer, but EG once again came out on top, winning it 16-12. Astralis now had to win the next three maps in order to win the series. The next map, Train, was an outstanding showing from both teams. EG and Astralis fought tooth and nail to win Train, but Astralis finally came out victorious after winning 22-20 in

triple overtime. Astralis pushed themselves and the series into the fourth map, Nuke. The first half was close, with EG barely winning the half on T side 8-7, but they switched into another gear on CT side. Evil Geniuses didn't give Astralis a chance to come back, closing the map out 16-8. With EG winning Nuke, they won the best of five 3-1 and lifted the trophy at ESL One: New York 2019, finally winning an event this year. The most notable players were Brehze and CeRq, who were neck and neck to be the MVP of the tournament. Both performed amazingly, but Brehze with a slightly better performance, was the MVP of ESL One: New York 2019.

With the end of another spectacular event came the beginning of a new chapter for EG. Evil Geniuses' win could have been a fluke, or it could be the start of a new contender at the top. For the past two years, Astralis and Team Liquid have solidified themselves as the best teams, besides some teams briefly challenging them. Now, EG seem to be an outlier compared to the contenders of the past. Usually Astralis shut down other teams' star players, but that hasn't been the case with EG. They've now won 2 out of the past 3 times that they've met Astralis. Evil Geniuses may not even be the only team coming to fruition, but they're certainly a team to keep your eye on. ††

Sources: https://liquipedia.net/counterstrike/Evil_Geniuses; <https://www.hltv.org/news/27970/evil-geniuses-return-to-counterstrike-with-signing-of-nrg-roster>; https://liquipedia.net/counterstrike/ESL/One/2019/New_York

Book Review: *Toxic Inequality*

by Tatyana Moriarty

Tom Shapiro, a professor of law and sociology at Brandeis University, lays out how government policy and systemic racism has created vast gaps in wealth between white and black Americans in the book *Toxic Inequality*. Shapiro and his colleagues followed 187 families from Boston, St. Louis, and Los Angeles. Half of the families were African American and some were Caucasian Americans. They interviewed them in 1998 and then again in 2010, to see what had changed. In the book *Toxic Inequality*, they had a great strength you see in the development of African Americans' middle class. It was a great accomplishment to see the better changes for the families because they are not used to ever being in the same category as white families.

Tom Shapiro has many strengths as he wrote the book *Toxic Inequality*. A strength is that Shapiro's research vividly documents the recession's toll on parents and children, the ways families use assets to manage crises and create opportunities, and the real reasons some families build wealth while others struggle in poverty. The structure of our neighborhoods, workplaces, and tax code much more than individual choices push some forward and hold others back. A lack of assets, far more common in families of color, can often ruin parents' careful plans for themselves and their families.

Another strength he is making the readers understand is wealth and income inequality combined

with racial inequality. He also had a great way of explaining how family stories are one way to shed light on the importance of home. Shapiro explained how families planned for mobility and learned to move up and build wealth through their own ideas. Although Shapiro had many strengths he did have some weaknesses.

"Current policy continues with somewhat of a blind eye to the way implicit racism is operating here. I would point to something like the mortgage-interest deduction, where we invest in the public good of housing approximately \$200 billion a year. If you're a homeowner, whatever your tax bracket is, that percent of your interest payment you can take off your taxes. It's not so difficult of a mechanism, but it operates in a way that privileges those with the highest mortgages. That is, wealthier families. It privileges those that tend to live in suburbs, and sort of actively mitigates against low- and moderate-income homeowners, and homeowners of color whose homes do not increase in value as much. Of that \$200 billion that's invested, the top 10 percent of income earners gather 72 percent of that mortgage-interest deduction.

This just shows that he should explain more in detail. "This is indicative of an underlying assumption that the state is the primary owner of all property and has the right to determine who should get to keep it or not. He also simply assumes that inequality is fundamentally immoral, which he makes no effort to defend. The fundamental problem

is not that rich people have everything, but that the poor are disadvantaged by their poverty. The poor are, in many cases, cut off from living adequate lives; they will never become equal because of historical precedent.

Shapiro suggests that rather than solve the dilemma, we are likely to lead to worse conditions and be financially unstable. For example, Shapiro argues for the creation of make-work jobs by the government designed to inspire full employment. He also argues for increasing the already often unsustainable defined benefit pension plans, like those offered by many municipalities.

Shapiro makes a good point about how families are not poor because they are not responsible or because they are not trying to go to work, but because of the lottery of birth. White families often have inherited wealth. In his plan I feel Shapiro should explain what people can do to make those in the poverty lane be more successful instead of explaining how low in class they are. This was one of his weaknesses when writing this book.

The move is to a better educational system. African Americans in the middle class for the most part are given a great deal of continual residential segregation in the United States. They may live in communities that are adjacent to the black communities they move from but not in the white areas. While dealing with this, Shapiro could have explained how the United States could have been more welcoming as a country than to just push

people from different classes into feeling like they are not a part of society. I really enjoyed reading this book because it shows how we are involuntarily given this world. It's not anyone's fault what race or circumstance they are born into.

Overall, I loved the fact that Shapiro interviewed many different families and you got to see everyone's point of view on how their living situation is. I really enjoyed the stories spread over a period of 10 years so you can see how people have improved, or how they remain stuck in the same struggle because they never learned to do better for themselves.

What I also found compelling about Shapiro was he took time and dedication to back up his evidence by re-interviewing the people he first sat down with because it gives his book more meaning and a more realistic feel because this is what people actually went through and you can't make this up. I do feel as if Shapiro's policy suggestions are well supported by his evidence presented, because he gives great examples based upon a number of families' experiences. This is why his evidence is so great because it's not only evidence from 1993, but also from 2010. Shapiro allows you to see how people have taken what they were given and made it into something great by trying and working as hard as possible. And finally, he also shows how others have failed to escape the system of poverty due to the restraints and challenges of their circumstances. ¶

<<<Blind Date, cont'd from page 3

who uniquely blends art, baroque, progressive, and dream pop into her music; she's phenomenal. My friends were still in awe from how good Purr was and simultaneously wondering what was in store for them. Weyes Blood was breathtaking. It was impressive to hear her beautiful voice and lush instrumentation in person, if I didn't know any better I would've thought I was just listening to her music while at home. I was starstruck. I don't think my friends were starstruck like me, but they definitely enjoyed her performance as well.

I realize that these situations are a bit unusual and that

normally you'd be going to see someone you know, someone whose music you've heard, but I'd highly recommend going to a show for an artist you don't know, if you're ever given the chance. You don't have to go by yourself, I understand the troubles of trying to go somewhere by yourself, but it's honestly a fun experience. It's like you're at home listening to an artist for the first time, except around you are people singing, dancing, or moshing along and then applauding and cheering after each song. It's a one of a kind experience that gets my seal of approval. ¶

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Last, but far from least is "Trees". In "Trees", Keith returns to singing about someone, a possible lover, singing "we're both running away from our hearts today", trying to get over them, not because he wants to, but because he needs to. I asked Foxhall what this track means and he said "Trees is a metaphor for the world going crazy because something very unimportant in the grand scheme of things finally happened, in this case meaning the protagonist finally did something with his life". I was not expecting such an explosive response, but it's one that possibly recontextualizes the EP, with "Trees" being a grandiose way to end it.

Shoreside is only 14 minutes long, but it's so much greater than that. It's a depressing, mature, and moving EP, but one that's more relatable than overbearing. It's easy to just lose yourself to the songs and sing your heart out, though on the other side of the coin, I'd consider it a cathartic experience, one that could put you on the edge of shedding tears. It can be experienced and appreciated in different lights, but altogether Shoreside is a satisfactory EP that has few to no flaws and lots of replayability. ¶