



THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Current

HALLOWEEN ISSUE

**TRICK
OR
TREATING
DURING A
PANDEMIC**

**CONNECTICUT
MELON HEADS**

WITCHCRAFT, FACT OR URBAN
LEGEND?

**EDITORIAL:
DO WE NEED
2 POLITICAL
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**THE GREAT
NEW ENGLAND
VAMPIRE PANIC**

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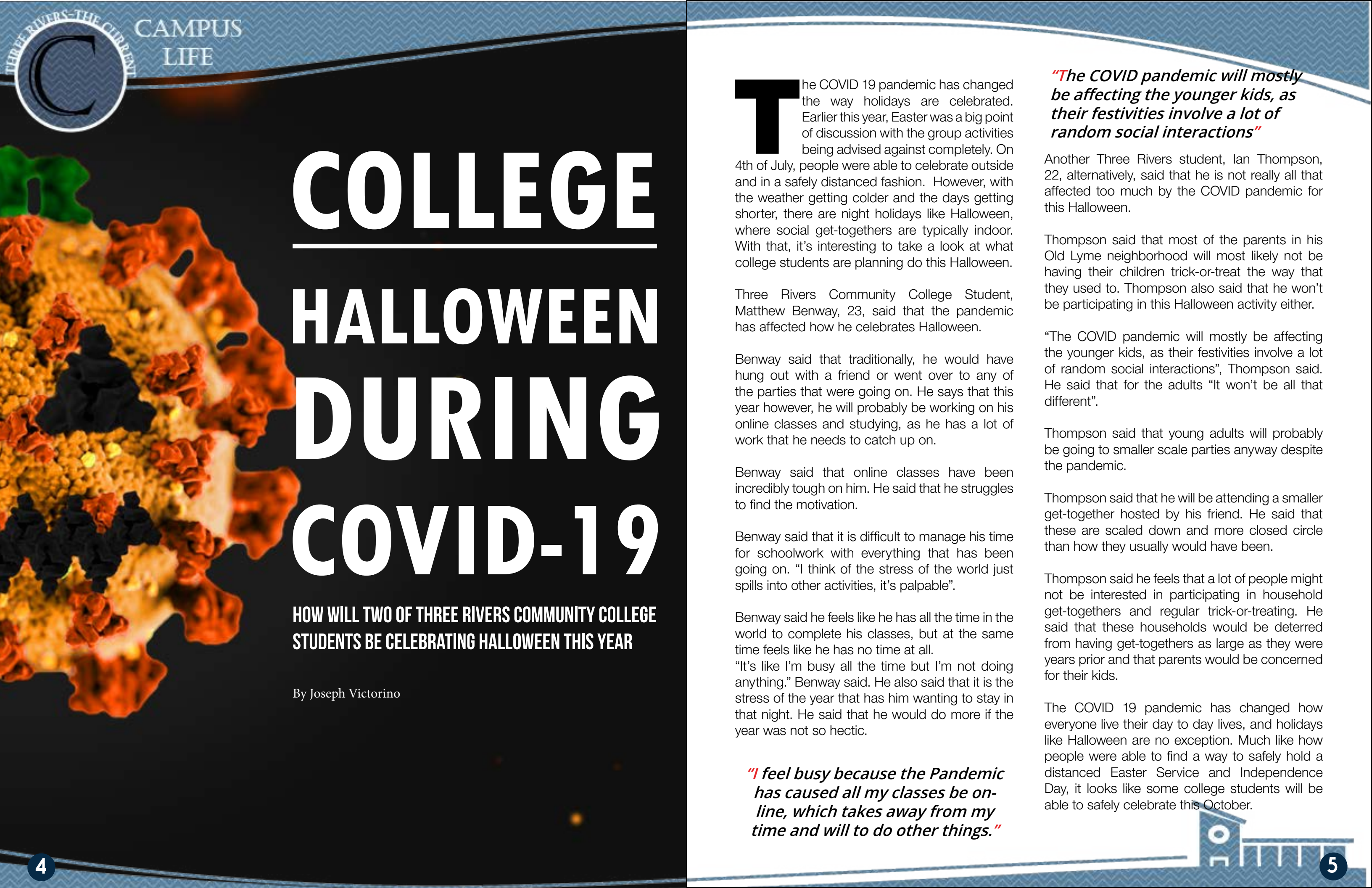
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COLLEGE HALLOWEEN DURING COVID-19

HOW WILL TWO OF THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS BE CELEBRATING HALLOWEEN THIS YEAR

By Joseph Victorino

The COVID 19 pandemic has changed the way holidays are celebrated. Earlier this year, Easter was a big point of discussion with the group activities being advised against completely. On 4th of July, people were able to celebrate outside and in a safely distanced fashion. However, with the weather getting colder and the days getting shorter, there are night holidays like Halloween, where social get-togethers are typically indoor. With that, it's interesting to take a look at what college students are planning do this Halloween.

Three Rivers Community College Student, Matthew Benway, 23, said that the pandemic has affected how he celebrates Halloween.

Benway said that traditionally, he would have hung out with a friend or went over to any of the parties that were going on. He says that this year however, he will probably be working on his online classes and studying, as he has a lot of work that he needs to catch up on.

Benway said that online classes have been incredibly tough on him. He said that he struggles to find the motivation.

Benway said that it is difficult to manage his time for schoolwork with everything that has been going on. "I think of the stress of the world just spills into other activities, it's palpable".

Benway said he feels like he has all the time in the world to complete his classes, but at the same time feels like he has no time at all. "It's like I'm busy all the time but I'm not doing anything." Benway said. He also said that it is the stress of the year that has him wanting to stay in that night. He said that he would do more if the year was not so hectic.

"I feel busy because the Pandemic has caused all my classes be on-line, which takes away from my time and will to do other things."

"The COVID pandemic will mostly be affecting the younger kids, as their festivities involve a lot of random social interactions"

Another Three Rivers student, Ian Thompson, 22, alternatively, said that he is not really all that affected too much by the COVID pandemic for this Halloween.

Thompson said that most of the parents in his Old Lyme neighborhood will most likely not be having their children trick-or-treat the way that they used to. Thompson also said that he won't be participating in this Halloween activity either.

"The COVID pandemic will mostly be affecting the younger kids, as their festivities involve a lot of random social interactions", Thompson said. He said that for the adults "It won't be all that different".

Thompson said that young adults will probably be going to smaller scale parties anyway despite the pandemic.

Thompson said that he will be attending a smaller get-together hosted by his friend. He said that these are scaled down and more closed circle than how they usually would have been.

Thompson said he feels that a lot of people might not be interested in participating in household get-togethers and regular trick-or-treating. He said that these households would be deterred from having get-togethers as large as they were years prior and that parents would be concerned for their kids.

The COVID 19 pandemic has changed how everyone live their day to day lives, and holidays like Halloween are no exception. Much like how people were able to find a way to safely hold a distanced Easter Service and Independence Day, it looks like some college students will be able to safely celebrate this October.



Photo by Francisco Loreda

TRCC GETS CREATIVE WITH FOCUS GROUPS

Staff at Three Rivers Community College continue to ask questions and support students throughout the pandemic

By Danielle Branch

The pandemic seemingly hijacked the typical college experience in the spring of 2020 for both students and higher education professionals. With instruction remaining online for the fall 2020 semester and until further notice, the concerns, needs, and goals of some students are shifting.

The staff at Three Rivers is here to listen. One of the ways they are doing this is by hosting virtual focus groups. In these groups, they are asking specific and situational questions, providing helpful and imperative information, and seeking out ways to better serve the students who attend.

As many students are beginning to turn to their institutions for guidance and rely on them for support, the school continues preparing for the unknown which lies ahead.

TRCC has hosted focus groups in the past but is addressing the gaps in the student support experience. Wether it be exposure to on campus services, financial aid support, tutoring services, or scholarship information, these groups exist to inform students and help the institution see where they may be falling short.

Nontraditional times call for nontraditional measures. Students may receive emails to take a survey, many of which are just a few questions to gauge specific topics. Students may also receive an invitation to attend a virtual meeting with a select group of students, such as adult learners or nontraditional students, to assess how the school can help.

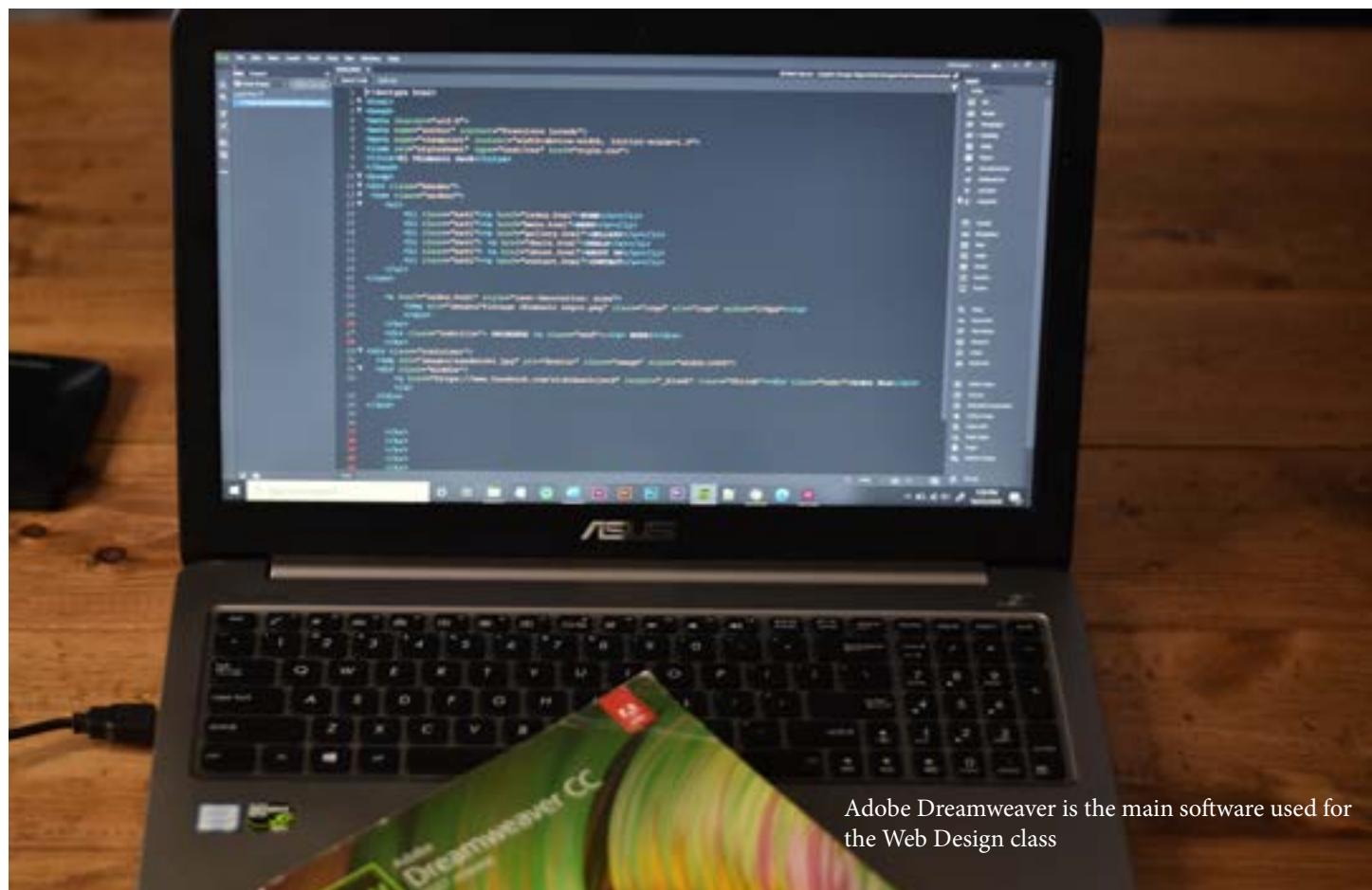
With learning being remote, there are several on campus services that are not as easily accessible as in the past, but they are still there. Some tutoring services have shifted virtually, and the school departments are available via email and many by phone as well.

Now more than ever, it is important for students to voice their concerns to their institutions. This may be done by completing a survey or participating in a focus group, some of which even offer compensation.

The rapid transition of students needs throughout the pandemic requires more comprehensive and holistic support. Existing resources will need to be made more accessible and plentiful.

As students navigate this new(er) way of learning, it is important to take on many typical challenges with a sense of urgency. Let your voice be heard. Help make the coming semesters for future students a seamless experience and aid in the solution to the gaps that currently exist.

“*Tutoring services have shifted virtually and the school departments are available via email and many by phone as well*”



Adobe Dreamweaver is the main software used for the Web Design class

COURSE REVIEW :

WEB
DESIGN

A class that will challenge your design skills and teach you basic elements for coding in HTML5 and CSS

Story and photos Francisco Loredó

Why would I care about Web Design when there are websites like Wix, Squarespace or WordPress? That was a question that I found myself asking when I saw that one of my required classes to obtain my Graphic Design degree was Web Design.

I rapidly understood that Web Design entails much more than just coding. Color schemes, fonts, photography, and image manipulation are part of what you will learn if you decide to take this class, so be ready for a challenge.

I signed up for an online class with Mrs. Leslie Traver back in 2019, I had never used Adobe Dreamweaver before, but I was slightly familiarized with HTML5 and CSS coding, two elements that you will learn a lot about. If you don't know much about it, it's not really a problem. Mrs. Traver's syllabus is very clear, this is an introduction to the basic concepts of professional Web Design.



using Cascading Style Sheets or CSS to give my pages better format. Those two elements would be crucial to learn if I wanted to succeed.

Somehow, by my fourth class I was already building simple websites with very particular design elements. Photography, color combinations and even button effects were used on our first project. Almost half of my grade was based on the weekly assignments, the other half was the final project, and she did give us some quizzes. Mrs. Traver had zero tolerance for late work or make-up work, and she does not give extra credit work, so organization, planning and a sense of urgency were a must.

The final project was challenging, filled with special instructions that Mrs. Traver required in order to get a full grade, it pushed me on my ability to code and my Graphic Design skills to a point where I felt proud of my final result, a full website with a lot of different effects and photography.

The design element is something that I quickly understood was a vital part to succeed in this class. On one of my first assignments I was immediately given feedback regarding the color combinations that I used and how it did not make much sense from a design point of view.

Mrs. Traver required the Adobe Dreamweaver CC 2017 release by Jim Maivald textbook. To be honest, I bought it but barely used it. A combination of YouTube tutorials and her instructions through Blackboard ended up being more useful, however, it was important to have to book to keep up with some of the exercises for the class.

At the end of the semester I realized one thing: There is no bigger satisfaction than seeing the fruits of your hard work. Seeing code turn into beautiful images and forms is an amazing feeling. Using websites like Wix, Squarespace, and WordPress can be easy, but in my opinion, having learned how to build my own website from scratch gave me a bigger sense of accomplishment.

Whether you are a Graphic Design major, a programmer in the making or you simply want to expand your knowledge, I highly recommend this class. You will learn a lot.

The first assignment was simple, it helped me to get familiarized with HTML5. By the third class, I was

CAN I GET A TATTOO DURING THE PANDEMIC?

New COVID-19 procedures and after care tips

Story and photo by Elizabeth Exley

Is it possible to get a tattoo during the pandemic? Yes, in fact, you can get a tattoo or piercing even with the pandemic lasting longer than anticipated. Most shops have opened back up, but a lot of their procedures have changed to make sure everyone stays safe.

Tattoo shops will typically only allow appointments to be made over the phone or through their online website. Once you get to the shop for the date and time that was set up some will have you knock or ring a doorbell before going inside. Due to COVID protocol they will have you sanitize and take down your temperature.

After the few questions they are required to ask you, the person at the front desk will take your ID and have you wait for the artist to be ready like you normally would.

The artist prepares their room or station by wiping everything down and wearing gloves while cleaning off each tool in their equipment.

Unlike before the pandemic, most places will only allow the artist and the client to be in the tattoo or piercing room. Anyone else, like friends and family, have to stay out in the lobby until they are done.

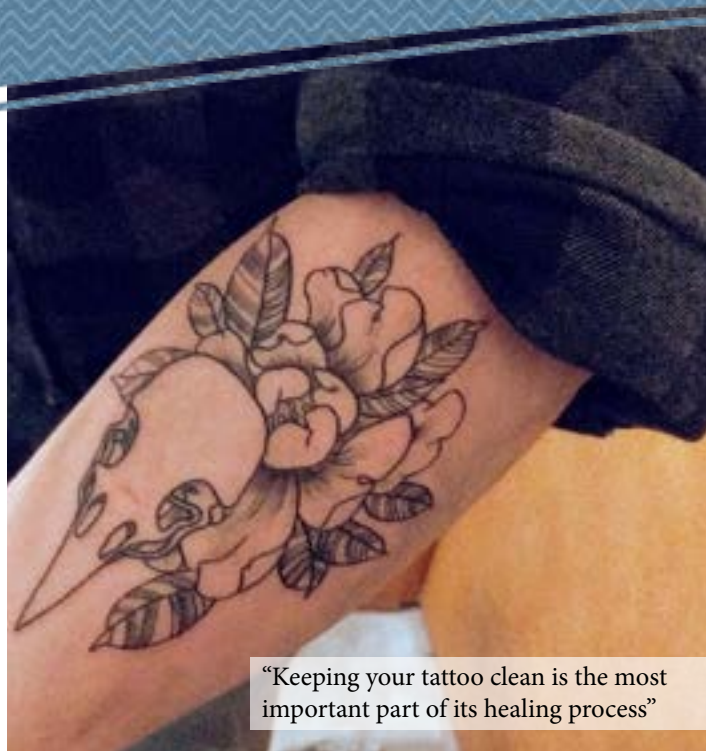
If you are looking at getting a new piercing, those have also opened back up. However, to make sure both the piercer and the client are safe, no piercings under the masks are being done. Once you have your new piercing, it's very important to keep it clean and most shops will sell a cleaner right there or will give you recommendations for ones you can use.

When your tattoo is done, the

artist will clean off any extra ink and wrap you up in either saran wrap and tape or a clear, sticky bandage called Saniderm. Those bandages are recommended to stay on for anywhere from 2 to 4 days.

Keeping your tattoo clean is the most important part of it's healing process to make sure the ink sets right. Once you've taken off your bandages, wash it with a liquid to foam soap like Dial 2 to 3 times a day. After it's cleaned off, make sure to moisturize it with a non-scented lotion like Aveeno to prevent itching off the scabbing.

With the world being a little crazy right now, it can be hard to find something to do that will take your mind off it and have some fun in the meantime. Treating yourself or a friend to a new tattoo or piercing is a great way to get some positivity.



Stock image from depositphotos.com

CONNECTICUT MELON HEADS

From theories of witchcraft to insane asylums. Fact, or urban legend?

By Danielle Branch

Several towns have claims of ghosts and witches in their past, some prompting ghost tours, others just making you shake your head. The melon heads are one of southwestern Connecticut's claim to fame.

The stories of melon heads began at least a century ago in Europe. The group was believed to be a large, inbred family who kept to themselves. Their oversized heads were prevalent in their appearance and, also, contributed to their name.

The term 'melon head' is believed to stem from the word Melungeon and they are sometimes also called the "lost tribe of Appalachia". They are assumed to have ancestry of European outcasts, freed slaves, and Native Americans. They are believed to survive by eating small and/or stray animals and human flesh, which might explain the disappearance of runaways and hikers.

After World War II when people

began moving out of the city and into more rural areas is when the melon heads were believed to begin occupying land in Connecticut.

Situated off the beaten path of heavily wooded roads like Zion Hill Road in Milford and Saw Mill City Road in Shelton are tales of run ins and sightings of the outcasted group. They were also believed to occupy the outskirts of Stratford, Seymour, Weston, Oxford, Southbury, Fairfield, New Haven and Trumbull.

There are several legends of sightings and stories of the melon heads. One legend report that in the 1980's a group of high school girls drove their blue Granada up Velvet Street in Trumbull searching for melon heads. They parked their car, made their way a couple hundred feet into the woods, and then heard the car door slam. Legend has it that the car then began to drive toward them, and the teens could see the silhouette of large heads and smaller bodies occupying the Granada.

Another theory highlights the idea that the melon heads escaped from either Fairfield Hills Hospital which is now an abandoned mental institution, or Garner Correctional Institute, which specialized in inmates with mental health problems. After escaping they returned to burn the buildings down and remained in the woods.

Similar stories surfaced in Ohio and Michigan but involved children from an orphanage.

Halloween is right around the corner, here is a list of roads deemed melon head roads across Connecticut:
Edmonds Rd-Oxford
Velvet St-Trumbull and Monroe Zion Hill Rd-Milford
All roads surrounding Lake Mohegan-Fairfield
Marginal Rd-New Haven
Jeremy Swamp Rd-Southbury
Roads surrounding Roosevelt Forest-Stratford.

THE GREAT NEW ENGLAND VAMPIRE PANIC

Story and photo by Francisco Loredó



Mercy Brown's gravestone is located in Exeter, RI

The notion of vampirism has existed for thousands of years. Tales from cultures such as the Mesopotamian, Hebrew, Ancient Greeks, Manipuri and Romans about demons and spirits are considered the precursors to modern vampires. Vampires as we know them today were mostly originated in Eastern Europe in the late 17th and 18th centuries. In most cases, vampires were considered apparitions of evil beings, suicide victims and even witches, but they could also be created by an evil spirit possessing a corpse or by being bitten by another vampire.

In the late 1800's several rural towns around New England, mainly Rhode Island, Eastern Connecticut and Vermont had a strange reaction to a tuberculosis outbreak. "Consumption" (tuberculosis) was thought to be caused by a deceased that would steal the life force of their surviving relatives.

In 1990, children were playing near a gravel mine in Griswold, Connecticut when they discovered several graves. When one of them was able to find a skull and show it to their mom, things finally got serious.

After analyzing the remains, archeologist Nick Bellantoni determined that they belonged to the colonial era. There were several burials there, most of them were nothing out of the ordinary, simple wood coffins with no jewelry or fancy clothing, until they discovered burial number 4.

Burial number 4, as reported by Abigail Tucker on the Smithsonian Magazine website, had a red coffin that seemed to have been smashed. When opened, the remains inside looked normal until they noticed that the body had been decapitated and the thigh bones had been posthumously re-arranged to cross each other resting on the ribcage with the skull on top, in the fashion of a pirate's flag. Later it was discovered that the beheading and the rearranging of the bones happened five years after death, but why?

The New England Vampire Panic happened around 100 years after the region's chaotic witch trials in the 1790's, while Rhode Island seemingly was the epicenter for this mass hysteria, Connecticut towns close to Rhode Island were also hit by it.

Tuberculosis was spreading throughout the region and by the beginning of the 19th century it was responsible for about one out of every four deaths in the eastern U.S. Based on the symptoms that people witnessed – bloody coughs, weight loss and the general looks of a person being consumed – combined with superstition, many New Englanders believed that it was vampires and not a disease that was taking their relatives from them.

In 1784, a letter to the editor of The Connecticut Courant and Weekly Intelligencer from a Wallingford town councilman cautioned the readers to be wary of a "doctor" who encouraged families to dig up and burn their dead relatives to stop "consumption" from spreading. According to folklore and legend this was the surest way to stop a vampire.

Some of the most notable cases of families that dug up their relatives and burned their remains and even consumed them in the hopes of getting cured were The Ray Family from Jewett City, Connecticut, and Mercy Brown from Exeter, Rhode Island.

The Ray Family, Jewett City

In 1845, Lemuel Ray died of consumption at the age of 24. His death was followed by his father a few years later and then his brother. Three years later, when Lemuel's oldest brother, Henry, fell ill. The family fell to desperation and exhumed and burned Lemuel's remains. Henry died.

Mercy Brown, Exeter

Mercy Brown's is perhaps the best documented and most well-known case of suspected vampirism in New England. In 1883, Mercy's mother died of consumption. Seven months later Mercy's sister died at the age of 20 and a couple of years after that both Mercy and her brother Edwin got ill

Her father, George, who was not a believer of vampires, sent Edwin away in hope that Edwin would recover, Mercy died soon after. Desperate to save his son, George agreed to have his family's remains exhumed.

The Providence Journal reported on March 21, 1892:

"Dr. Harold Metcalf, the medical examiner of the district, who examined the bodies ... is not one to believe in the vampire superstition.... He made his examination ... without exceptional results, according to his own belief, but found in one of the bodies, to the satisfaction of many of the people down there, a sign which they regarded as proof.... When he removed the heart and liver from [Mercy's] body, a quantity of blood dripped therefrom. 'The vampire,' the attendants of the doctor said – and then, conforming to the theory of the necessity of destroying the vampire, burned the heart and liver".

After burning Mercy's heart and liver, they mixed the resulting ashes with water and then gave them to Edwin, who drank it. Edwin died two months later in May 2, 1892.

The New England Vampire Panic started winding down toward the end of the 19th century, coincidentally, Robert Koch discovered Tubercle Bacillus on March 1882, perhaps helping put an end to all this superstition.



YANTIC CEMETERY

Final Resting Place for former Norwich Aristocrats

Story and photos Kimberln Stanford

The Yantic Cemetery, located on Lafayette Road in Norwich CT was established on July 12, 1844. It is the final resting place for many former Norwich aristocrats. This cemetery is filled with elaborate tombstones and monuments as high as twenty feet tall. An estimated 12,000 graves can be found here.

Some Norwich notables buried in this cemetery are:

Daniel Coit Gilman (July 6, 1831 - October 13, 1908)

His occupation was an educator. He was the first President of Johns Hopkins University. He was instrumental in establishing the Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1889. He began the practice still used



Side view of The Blue Lady

today of requiring a college degree as a stipulation for medical college entrance.

William Alfred Buckingham (May 28, 1804 - February 5, 1875)

He was the Civil War Governor of Connecticut from 1858 to 1866. He was also a U.S. senator from 1869 to 1875 and died in office.

Margaret Fuller (January 23, 1872 - February 1, 1954)

She was an author. She penned the books "A New England Childhood", "It Is So Simple", "This Awakening", and "Sonnets and Songs".

Lafayette Sabine Foster (September 22, 1806 - July 19, 1880)

Served as a U.S. senator for Connecticut from 1855 to 1867. He served as a professor of law at Yale College in 1869 and returned to the Connecticut House of Representatives in 1870. He sat on the Connecticut Supreme Court. He had an unsuccessful bid as the Democratic candidate for the United States House of Representatives in 1874. After his defeat, he retired from the court and public life.

Henry Howard Starkweather (April 29, 1826 - January 28, 1876)

He practiced law in Norwich, Connecticut. He was a member of the Connecticut State House of Representative in 1856 and Postmaster of Norwich from 1861 to 1865. In 1867, he was elected as a Republican to the Fortieth Congress and the next four Congresses serving until his death.



View of the Yantic Cemetery

One of the most talked about grave sites at the Yantic Cemetery belongs to a woman named Sarah Larned Osgood. Her husband, Charles Osgood, was the mayor of Norwich during one of its most prosperous times.

Her grave marker is a unique statue. It is a life-size woman crouched over. The statue is made of bronze and weighs approximately 400 pounds and she is adorned in a blue dress. The statue was nicknamed "the Blue Lady."

Her statue sat peacefully for 119 years. But in 2010 it was stolen. It was cut up (for easy transport) and sold for scrap for approximately \$200.00. The perpetrators were caught and arrested. The cut-up pieces were found except for the head. The head was later found on the wall of a vacant lot in Willimantic.

In 2011, the Norwich City Council passed legislation approving the statue's refurbishment which now dons the solder marks.

There are some eerie stories attributed to the Blue Lady. Depending on the day, she could be holding a bible, a rose, or a rosary. Maybe, while walking the approximate 0.7-mile outer loop, a local passing by may tell the tale of how all involved in the statue's theft meet with some sort of demise.

Visit the Yantic cemetery and walk or slowly drive the many winding paths throughout graves. Hours can be spent examining the seemingly endless monoliths and uniquely adorned statues and gravestones. Many other names that are steeped in Norwich's history (for example, Backus, Buckingham, Coit, and Slater) can be found there.

Information about the memorials found at www.findagrave.com.

“There are some eerie stories attributed to the Blue Lady. Depending on the day, she could be holding a bible, a rose, or a rosary”

Story and photos by Kimberlin Stanford

SCARECROW & COCOA FUNDRAISER

A Visit to the Leffingwell House Museum

On October 17, the Leffingwell House Museum (formerly the Leffingwell Inn) hosted a free to the public Scarecrow and Cocoa event. Although free to the public, it was a fundraiser by donation to help collect funds for heating fuel this winter season.

The event featured several activities. There was a scarecrow scavenger hunt where participants matched the donated scarecrows with a list provided when entering the venue. When the list was completed, a prize was given.

There was also a hot cocoa contest which had four entries to choose from. Here, visitors could get a little history on and see how hot cocoa was made in the late 18th century. Robert A Lecce Jr. was preparing an adaptation of a recipe found from 1779. During this time hot cocoa was considered a luxury item. Spices like cinnamon, clove, ginger, nutmeg, and cayenne were used when making hot cocoa.

Christopher Leffingwell, who procured goods for the continental army during the Revolutionary War, had access to many different items, including all the ingredients. During this time, the chocolate was largely coming from South America to avoid the British blockage said Robert A. Lecce Jr, a historical reenactor (soldier, statesman, and scholar) and owner of The Pewter Pot. This drink was expensive.

“Just think about the cost and expense...I went to a

place in Williamsburg where they said a small cup of cocoa would be comparative to the price of a side of beef,” and many steps were involved in acquiring the ingredients Lecce said.

Visitors could also observe how early 18th century redware pottery (redware refers to the color of the clay) was made. “It is the most common kind of pottery that would have been made during the time of the American Revolution,” said Erich Steinhagen of Steinhagen Pottery. His demonstration started with a lump of red clay which he expertly crafted into a small pitcher with an etched design.

Adjacent to the pottery making was wool spinning. The wool would be thinned out between to small-bristle brushes. The fiber was then spun into yarn (it was discovered long ago that spinning the fiber would make it stronger). Here, two ways of wool spinning were shown. First, was hand spinning using a drop spindle and a distaff. This was done primarily by females who were beginners. Second was spinning on a spinning wheel.

This was done by the more experienced. Wool spinning was done by women. More wool spinning was done in the winter months since they were indoors more. This activity could be stopped to tend to other matters and then easily started again.



A blacksmith shaping metal

A blacksmith showed the process of using an iron-based metal and fashioning the metal into the desired shape. This process first starts with smelting the metal (heating and melting). It is then further shaped into the finished product. The blacksmith used antique wrought iron (nearly pure elemental iron with silica impurities); this was the material that would have been used in the colonial period. He points out wrought iron was not fashioned into corners because the corners would be extremely weak.

Other venues included making dolls out of corn husks, an American doll vendor, Leffingwell House Museum gift shop, and a colonial seller who sold colonial goods.

Located at 348 Washington Street in Norwich, the Leffingwell Inn (now as the Leffingwell House Museum) was built in 1675. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1970. It is one of Connecticut's oldest houses. Sometimes it served as an important meeting place during the Revolutionary War. The inn is listed as one of George Washington's headquarters during

the Revolutionary War.

The building was built in stages in the 17th and 18th centuries. The oldest part of it was built by Stephen Backus.

The son of Norwich co-founder Thomas Leffingwell, Thomas Leffingwell 2nd founded the Leffingwell Inn. The building was altered and expanded several times to its present state.

For more information, visit leffingwellhousemuseum.org. Call (860) 889-9440 to prearrange an appointment for a tour.



Shaping the clay into a pitcher

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR PUMPKIN CARVING

Story and photos by Joseph Victorino

Halloween is drawing near, and it's time to get festive. Bring out your inner artist and carve a Jack-O-Lantern. Follow these tips and tricks to get the most out of your pumpkin

Picking a Pumpkin

Choose a Pumpkin with a Stem

Like a watermelon, pumpkins grow on vines, but rest on the ground. Their stem isn't made to bear their weight, so if the pumpkin is missing its stem, assume that it was mishandled beforehand.

Smooth Surface

It might seem enticing to get a pumpkin with a wicked amount of prominent ridges, but in the long run, it will be way easier to carve / shave a smoother and rounder pumpkin.

Which Tools? Although there is nothing wrong with using pumpkin carving kits at the grocery store, the tools you'll need may already be in your home.

Get Creative and Scour Your Home

There are plenty of household objects that can fulfill the job of pumpkin cleaning and carving. Within your kitchen, you may already have serrated & paring knives for carving, large spoons and ice cream scoops for gutting, and so on and so forth. Otherwise, pumpkin carving kit work adequately as well. The included pumpkin scraper works wonders, with its sharp edge and small size.

Preparing Your Pumpkin

Wipe Down Your Pumpkin

Take some time to wash off any dirt or residue off of your pumpkin to minimize the risk of mold growth on your pumpkin later on.



A pumpkin with a stem and a smooth surface is

Save The Seeds

After gutting your pumpkin, don't forget to separate out and save the seeds. Using your desired recipe, you can roast these for a delightful fall snack.

Thin Out the Shell

Figure out what side of the pumpkin you'll be carving. On the interior side, scrape away about a quarter of an inch to an inch. This makes carving much easier, and if you're shaving your pumpkin, it makes the light shine through stronger. However, acknowledge that a thinner wall may cause the pumpkin to decompose faster.

Carving a Pumpkin

Print, Tape, & Poke

Figure out what design you want to carve into your pumpkin and print it out. Alternatively, pumpkin carving kits usually include a catalog of different stencils you can use. Place the printout or premade stencil on the side of the pumpkin you will be carving and tape it on. Use a fork or pencil, or any other fine-pointed object to make a perforated outline of the tape image. This'll guide your carving or shaving. Be careful and make the holes light if you are shaving your pumpkin.

Draw Your Design with a Dry Erase Marker

Whether you're using the stippled stencil method, or just free-handing your pumpkin, using a dry erase marker is an effective way to map out your carving. The beauty of using this as opposed to a sharpie, is that if you mess up or change your mind later, the ink comes off completely with just a damp cloth.

Use your Phone's Flashlight to Check Your Progress

As you get through your carving and / or shaving of your pumpkin, it is important to check on how it is looking. An easy way to see how your pumpkin will look lit up is by placing it on top of your phone flashlight. This lets you know early whether you need to make some grooves deeper or if you need to clean up any cutlines.

Use Electric Light

To avoid the hassle of candles, opt for LEDs, strobe lights, or even Christmas lights. By going electric, you won't have to worry about relighting the candle on a windy day or cleaning up melted wax. Additionally, you open up a new realm of color options. Instead of having the traditional yellow lamp light, you can emit a purple aura, or a raging red. The only downside is that you lose out on the smell of candle-cooked pumpkin. If that is what you like, try using a votive candle, they are typically taller and last longer than tealights. Additionally, if you do decide on candlelight, try sprinkling some cinnamon inside of the pumpkin for a delicious smell.

Coat the Interior and Carved Areas with Vaseline (Petroleum Jelly)

The two main factors for pumpkin rotting is moisture and mold. By coating the interior as well as carved areas of the pumpkin with petroleum jelly, the pumpkin will stay dry out and grow mold at a slower rate. Moreover, you can add Tabasco sauce to the petroleum to deter critters from munching on your art. According to the Vaseline website, their product is not flammable under normal circumstances, therefore, it should be fine to have your petroleum-coated pumpkin in contact with open flames.

Spray the Inside & Cut Edges with Bleach Solution

Spraying your carved pumpkin daily with a diluted bleach spray both fights mold and keeps the pumpkin from drying out. In a spray bottle, add a ratio of about 1 tablespoon bleach to 1 quart of water. Spray the inside and any cut edges. Alternatively, you can also use any bleach-based spray, such as Clorox Cleanup with Bleach. Although, be careful with lighting candles inside these bleach-treated pumpkins. Opt for flameless light alternatives, such as glowsticks and battery-powered light.



TRICK-OR-TREATING DURING THE PANDEMIC

Experts Share Advice, and Parents Make Decisions About the Popular Halloween Activity

Story and photos by Sarah Walsh

A Saturday night and a full moon set Halloween of 2020 to be the ideal night for trick-or-treaters, but the coronavirus means that many parents have made alternative plans for their kids this year. “It’s something we’ve always looked forward to,” said Danielle Branch of Moosup, Connecticut.

“We’ve noticed over the last few years it’s started to fade from traditional trick-or-treating and morphed into trunk or treat and events at the town hall. That combined with COVID brought us to the decision that we wouldn’t be going this year.”

She and her children, Ethan, 16, Gabriella, 8, and Ryan, 6, will be visiting a haunted trail instead and attending a family party.

As of October 8, over 697,000 children in the U.S. have tested positive for COVID-19 since

the pandemic began, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children represented 10.7 percent of all cases in the country.

Although outdoor activities are generally lower risk than those indoors, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention recently released a list regarding holidays and COVID-19 safety which advises against door-to-door trick-or-treating. “Participating in traditional trick-or-treating where treats are handed to children who go door to door,” is the first item on the list of higher risk activities for Halloween.

On the moderate risk list, the CDC mentions participating in a one-way trick-or-treating where families can take individually packaged candy bags or boxes lined up at the end of a driveway or the edge of a yard to help maintain social distancing.



Arianna Criscuolo (center) with her daughter, Julia (left), and her son, Jenson (right)

Mercedes Carnethon, vice chair of preventative medicine at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine also warned of moderate risk because of the probability of children and parents passing each-other and interacting in the streets. Amanda Valyko, director of infection prevention and epidemiology for Michigan Medicine, noted that improper mask wearing is a common issue and could additionally increase risk.

However, the level of risk is partially dependent on the neighborhood. A crowded apartment building, for instance, would be higher risk than a cul-de-sac. “When we get down to the discussion around Halloween, it’s really knowing about your own environment and what’s going on in your neighborhood...to really make decisions whether or not to trick-or-treat,” said Jared Muenzer, pediatric emergency room doctor and physician-in-chief at Phoenix Children’s Hospital, for an interview with The Washington Post.

John McGreevy, section chief of pediatric emergency medicine and assistant director of pediatric emergency department at Phoenix Children’s Hospital said that parents must consider the rate of infection in their community.

“My stance would be that if your community is in the moderate risk for community spread or lower that trick-or-treating would be an acceptable practice with modifications and protection,” he said.

He considers daily positive tests between 5 and 10 percent to be moderate.

“We won’t be participating in traditional trick-or-treating, but a socially distant trunk or treat,” said Arianna Criscuolo of East Haven, Connecticut. She has two children, Julia, 5, and Jenson, 3.

Health officials recommend for those giving out candy to wear face masks, and Muenzer recommended setting up a table and using individual wrapping. “It lessens risk because kids aren’t rooting through a bowl.”

Some people have decided to dispense candy from a six-foot distance by throwing it, sling-shotting it, or using a chute. Experts agree this is low risk but warn people to be careful of injuring someone. Alternatively, scattering candy around the lawn for trick-or-treaters to grab is low risk, according to health experts.

However people choose to celebrate, it is important to keep in mind regular safety precautions, as well as coronavirus guidelines for Oct. 31.



HAUNTED STORIES OF CONNECTICUT

True **GHOST** stories

Story and graphics by Elizabeth Exley

Did you know that Connecticut is just crawling with paranormal stories? These are just a few of the many places in CT that you can go check out for yourselves. Unfortunately, some were torn down, but there are a few that you can follow the story and see where it happens. Paranormal investigators have visited these places to confirm many of the reports given.

Union Cemetery in Easton, CT

If you're ever thinking about taking a walk through this graveyard, be aware of it's famous apparitions known as the White Lady or Red-Eyes. Red-Eyes has been sighted as simply a pair of glowing red eyes in the bushes and some have noted footsteps chasing after them as they turned and ran.

Theories suggest he was a man named Earlie Kellog who was set on fire in the streets in 1935. The White Lady has been spotted walking around in a white nightgown and matching bonnet with long dark hair around Route 59. It is said that the White Lady is the spirit of a woman who was murdered in the late 1940's.

Fairfield Hills State Hospital in Newton, CT

The mental hospital in Fairfield Connecticut treated its patients with some of the most inhumane and barbaric ways you can imagine. It was common for treatments like psychosurgery, hydrotherapy, electric shock therapy, and full-frontal lobotomies.

With multiple suicides and mysterious deaths

in this hospital, it's known to hear disembodied voices and crying throughout the halls. These screams are said to be of the long-dead patients living their agonizing deaths making it the most haunted mental hospitals in the U.S.

The Remington Arms Factory in Bridgeport, CT

Remington bought out Union Metallic Cartridge Company in 1915 and expanded to become a 75-acre plant. The factory suffered from many accidents, including two employee deaths due to falling in molten metal. Another incident was the death of 7 employees and 80 others injured in an explosion in 1942. It's reported that many dark figures haunt the grounds that may be the employees that died in the factory.

The Norwich State Hospital in Preston, CT

This Hospital opened its doors to around 95 patients back in 1905 and right from the beginning, something wasn't right. Within the first year one of their patients hung themselves and then two employees died in a water heater explosion a little later in 1919. Just as you read in the other State Hospital, the patients here were treated inhumanely with treatments such as starvation, physical and sexual abuse, and throwing them into ice. After years of multiple deaths due to the hospital, most by suicide, the doors were closed in 1996. Many would come around to visit one of its 20 different buildings reporting hearing a woman sobbing and clinking tools from the operating rooms. Some say the most haunted of all the buildings is the Salmon Building that held the criminally insane.



NOTABLE WOMEN OF CONNECTICUT: ELSE YOUNG

The first person hanged for Witchcraft in America

By Sarah Walsh

Salem, Massachusetts is infamous for its witch trials, but the first person in America's 13 colonies wasn't executed in Mass.; her name was Else Young, and she was hanged in Hartford, Connecticut.

Connecticut is guilty of a half-century-long witch hunt that resulted in the hanging of 11 people. Two of them were men. The other nine were women. The earliest records of witchcraft in Conn. Date to 1642 when it became a crime punishable by death. In a document called The Capital Laws by the General Court, The First of December, 1642 from the Public Records of the Colony of New Haven, the second law on the list was the first to mention witchcraft.

"If any man or woman be a witch (that is) hath or consulteth with a familiar spirit, they shall be put to death."

New England colonists of the 17th century lived tough, anxious lives battling harsh winters, epidemics, and starvation. Witchcraft accusations arose from feelings of fear and disorder among settlers, but they were also often the consequence of prejudice.

"Patriarchal views of women as second-class citizens sometimes manifested itself in accusations of witchcraft," wrote Andy Piascik for Connecticut History.org.

Poor women, oftentimes single, were most commonly targeted as witches. Only men were allowed to serve roles as legislators or religious figures, and so women were more strictly regulated.

"It was women who bore the brunt of social and religious intolerance," Piascik noted, "...and it was around the expression of any degree of independence and sexual freedom by women that many of the charges of witchcraft arose."

In some cases, women were accused of witchcraft because their deaths meant more wealth for the community. If a woman had no sons, she would inherit her husband's property if she outlived him, but if she died first, the community would inherit his property.

This was the case for Else Young.

Little is known about her or the details of her death. She was born around 1600 in London, England, and arrived in Windsor, Conn. In 1640.

"Her London origin might have made her a pariah in her new town and helped bring about her doom," wrote Norma Buchanan for The Hartford Courant.

Young was married to a man named John Young, a carpenter and landowner. They had a daughter, Alice Beamon, but no sons.

In 1647, Else Young was accused of witchcraft and hanged in Hartford's Meeting House Square. An epidemic of that year, possibly influenza, might have been seen as an act of witchcraft and contributed to Young's demise. But it's unclear.

The journal of Governor John Winthrop of Massachusetts Bay Colony contains his note, "One...of Windsor...executed at Hartford for a witch."

Another diary entry, written May 26, 1647, by Windsor Town Clerk Matthew Grant states simply, "Else Young was hanged."

370 years after her death, in February 2017, Windsor Town Council officially pardoned and cleared Else Young of the charges of witchcraft.

Else Young Illustration



WE THE PEOPLE, NEED MORE

The US democracy needs a multiparty system to survive and succeed.

By Danielle Branch



Photo by pexels.com

When it comes to the presidential election, most people find themselves choosing between red and blue, republican, or democrat. Many have long associated themselves with one party over the other for specific reasons, but the middle ground is becoming nonexistent.

John Adams said, “a division of the republic into two great parties...is to be dreaded as the great political evil.” And that is precisely the position we find ourselves in.

America’s two-party system dates back centuries, but the parties typically contained enough overlapping commonalities within them, that a multiparty democracy could exist and be effective within the two-party system.

But alas, there are other political parties aside from Republican and Democrat. The three largest third parties include the Libertarian Party, Green Party, and the Constitution Party. Let’s break it down.

The Libertarian Party promotes a noninterventionist foreign policy and civil liberties. They also believe in limiting the size and control of government. The Green Party is considered a left-wing party that promotes environmentalism, social democracy, respect for diversity, peace, and nonviolence. The Constitution Party is a party that promotes American Nationalism, Christianity, anti-abortion, and assumes a far-right approach to the United States Constitution.

If you have tuned into the news, scrolled social media, or watched the Presidential and Vice-Presidential debates, many would expect to see only two presidential choices on the ballot, but that is not the case.

Howie Harkins is running for the Green Party, and Jo Jorgensen is representing the Libertarian Party.

If a candidate successfully meets all the ballot access laws, petitions for placement in 50 states and receives sufficient signatures, then their stance and voice should be heard. Otherwise we end up facing a political monopoly of sorts and feel as though our hypothetical backs are pinned against the wall.

In a time where many voters are looking at the two primary candidates wondering if this is the best we can do, it’s important to recognize that there are other options. Options that might better represent your specific beliefs, lifestyle, or vision.

George Washington addressed hyper-partisanship in his farewell address, he said “The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. The disorders and miseries, which result, gradually incline to minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of Public Liberty.”

If you have ever been told or were ever lead to believe that your vote “doesn’t count” if you don’t vote red or blue, please understand that the only votes that don’t count, are the ones that aren’t received. Educate yourself and seek out information about all of the presidential candidates. Vote for the candidate that you believe in, rather than voting against something that seemingly represents the lesser of two evils.



TWO PARTIES ARE ENOUGH

The United States of America does not need more than two parties

By Francisco Loredó

Coming from a different country and trying to understand the political setup for the United States can be confusing, but it is easy to track the two major parties and their development. I am originally from Mexico, where currently, there are 10 registered political parties, and it is political chaos.

Though, it's understandable why people want to have more options to vote for, and basically with a two-party system people feel like they are forced to choose between the "lesser of two evils", I don't think there should be more than two parties. The reason why is simple, when there are more parties involved in an election, there tends to be more division within the voters and even when an idea is good for a country or society, just because the candidate from a different party said it, it suddenly turns into a bad idea. Successful politics requires people to overcome this division and compromise.

It is hard enough getting two parties to overcome the division to compromise, imagine 5 or more parties trying to come up with said commitments.

As it is, currently there is a major feeling of division in the country. It feels like people can't get along, especially when it comes to politics. Imagine how it would be if we had five, six or ten different parties. There are countries that have a multi-party system, where there are generally two or three major parties and there are a lot of smaller parties. These smaller parties tend to be treated as "balance breakers"; when a major party starts getting too much power or prominence, other smaller parties would ally with the main opposition and block them from congress or other elected positions.

In the United States, you could say that even though there are only two parties, those two parties could be seen as a conglomerate of smaller parties or a difference of ideologies. We could see this at the Democratic primary election. Within the same party we witnessed several different ways of thinking.

Even though Democrats are widely referred to as Liberals, there are people within the party that tend to lean more towards one way or the other. We saw Bernie Sanders and his "democratic socialist" views, Pete Buttigieg and his "democratic capitalism", Kamala Harris and how she calls herself a "progressive prosecutor".

With more than two prominent parties, we would see a more diverse political environment maybe, but we would also see the smaller parties trying to feed off the bigger ones. This would probably create a sense of betrayal to the smaller party's followers. I have seen it happen in Mexico.

With a two-party system you will have one ruling party that controls legislation, there is always going to be a sizeable party in the minority that will have the power to win voters and swing the balance. Ideally with two parties the ideas would remain faithful to its original ideologies.

If anything, I believe that one thing that should be legislated and reconsidered is how, how much and why do private benefactors "invest" or donate their money into political campaigns. Politicians, especially the ones running for President, should not ever accept money from big companies or big benefactors. This creates a feeling of being in debt and in my opinion promotes lobbyism.

Joe Biden has an interesting policy that it should be worth to look at, regardless of who wins. This policy is trying to "Introduce a constitutional amendment to entirely eliminate private dollars from our federal elections". If this policy were to eventually be passed by Congress, this would mean that more parties would cost taxpayers more money, this is something that I have never agreed with.

Brandon Lee as the titular in 'The Crow' (1994), imdb.com

CURSED HORROR FILMS TO THINK TWICE ABOUT

Three iconic spooky movies with real-life deaths and unexpected tragedies.

By Maiquynh Truong



Exorcism scene from 'The Exorcist' (1973), imdb.com

The Exorcist (1973)

This classic 1973 haunting flick is highly regarded as the best horror movies of all time. Hail for its disturbing script, graphic contents and controversial depiction of a possessed young girl, *The Exorcist* became known as a real-life cursed production when multiple incidents began to happen on set.

Linda Blair who played the iconic possessed young girl Regan on screen, along with the actress who played Regan's mother sustained a permanent back-injury from the film while several others suffered multiple injuries during the shoot.

There was also a fire that broke out and burned down most of the set. The most bizarre was the fact that Regan's bedroom, the location where the most brutal demonic activities happened in the film was untouched by the fire.

In another incident, one of the film's minor actors was arrested for killing a reporter before the movie was released. When questioned by the police about his motive, the man could not give them an answer.

When it was finally released in theater, *The Exorcist* became the highest grossing movie at the time.

However, audiences who went to see the film reported that they became sick, vomited, and even fainted. Rumors started to circulate about being possessed or touched by the devil if anyone were to see the film. Some cities protested the showing of the movie and it was even banned in some parts of England. However, the detrimental rumors and fervent warnings could not deter curious movie-goers as many flooded to the theaters to witness the film's supernatural effects for themselves.

Till this day, the strange circumstances and happenings surrounding *The Exorcist's* production has yet to be determined, and the film's ability to cause physical harm to those who have watched it remained controversial. One thing that is clear, however, is that viewers will certainly be taken on a wildly spooky ride.



The Omen (1976)

Out of all the entries to the list of the most cursed films of all time, the supernatural horror flick *The Omen* is considered as the most notorious. For a movie about the Antichrist, the film itself is undoubtedly abnormal but the occurrences that were experienced by those involved in the film was even more so.

Writer David Salter along with other filmmakers were warned by Robert Munger, a religious adviser that if they make a movie about the devil, dangerous and terrible things will happen. Coincidentally, while on the flight to the film location, both Salter and actor Gregory Peck's airplane was struck by lightning.

Peck was later involved in an even stranger follow up event when he decided to cancel a previously booked flight for unexplainable reasons. The plane that Peck was supposed to be on crashed that day and no one survived. The most frighteningly bizarre coincidence however was that the crash collided with a nearby vehicle, and inside was the pilot's wife and their two children.

Strange events continued to happen during the filming process, equipment unexplainably went hay-wired, several indirectly related deaths and bombing incidents occurred on the film locations. At the time, many filmmakers, critics, and observers believed that the movie was truly cursed by the devil.

Despite various ominous happenings and calls to end production, director Richard Donner pushed on and the film finally hit theater in 1976. While many condemned *The Omen* for its portrayal of the sinister and unholy subject, others showered the movie in praises.

Theories about the film being blessed by the devil instead of it being cursed started circulating.

Analysts observed that even though terrible things were happening around them, the filmmakers and those directly involved in the production process were unharmed. The film eventually ended up being a box office hit. Be it cursed or blessed, there is no denial that *The Omen* was touched by some unknown supernatural force.

Equipment unexplainably went hay-wired, several indirectly related deaths and bombing incidents occurred on the film locations



Gregory Peck and Harvey Stephens from 'The Omen' (1976), imdb.com



Brandon Lee, photo from medium.com

The Crow (1994)

Based on a comic book written by James O'Barr, *The Crow* is a dark superhero tale about a rock musician, Eric Draven (Brandon Lee) returning from the dead to seek vengeance against the thugs who assaulted and killed his fiancée. One thing no one expected from this cult favorite was how the eerie, thematic sense of mortality and tragedy shown in the film would eventually make its way into the real world.

During the production period, there were multiple reports of unforeseeable accidents. Before *The Crow* even started recording, film makers received an ominous voicemail saying that bad things will happen if they continue the production. On the first day of shooting, an electrician was electrocuted and caught on fire when backing his vehicle into powerlines above him. After this event, a hurricane demolishes parts of the film's backset causing more setbacks during production.

The most sardonic coincidence, however, was the unexpected death of actor Brandon Lee. Lee was the son of the notorious martial artist/movie star Bruce Lee, who finally stepped out from under his father's momentous legacy and became a star in his own right. Regrettably, *The Crow* was Lee's final appearance on the big screen.

With only eight days left on the filming schedule, Lee was killed on-set due to a technical error in the prop gun. He was quickly rushed to the hospital, but it was already too late. After Lee's unfortunate death, the film was forced to undergo script revisions, CGI-additions and reshoots to complete its production.

In the end, no one could have foreseen that the scene which marked the main character, Eric Draven's death in the movie would hauntingly become the actor, Brandon Lee's real-life fatality. Due to this famous lamentable accident, *The Crow* had cemented its place in pop culture as an indubitably cursed film.

With only eight days left on the filming schedule, Lee was killed on-set due to a technical error in the prop gun. He was quickly rushed to the hospital, but it was already too late

IN REVIEW:

US

Jordan Peele's 2019 film explores the horror of buried demons

By: Sarah Walsh

Us is a masterful horror film about **reflection:** reflection of one's self, and reflection of **society.**

Us opens with a slow zoom out of a white rabbit in a cage while blood-red credits roll to a haunting score called 'Anthem' composed by Michael Abels, who also composed the music for Get Out. The song is sung by children and the words are fake. They're not singing in a real language, leaving the song, like the film, open to interpretation.

Both the rabbits and the children's voices are things we would normally take as innocent, but their presentation as something ominous had me immediately challenging my usual perspective, something Peele consistently aims to have his audiences do. As the camera zooms farther and farther out, the screen fills with white rabbits behind bars, suggesting experimentation and mass mistreatment.

The story begins in 1986 in Santa Cruz, where a young girl named Adelaide Thomas is visiting the Beach Boardwalk with her parents. She wanders off into a funhouse with a sign telling visitors 'Find Yourself'. The scene is dark and quiet and the camera pans slowly, building suspense and a looming sense of dread until Adelaide backs into a mirror and turns around to see not her face, but her own back. We don't see what happens next, only Adelaide's look of wide-eyed horror before the scene cuts.

In the present-day, Adelaide (played masterfully by Lupita Nyong'o), now grown, is still traumatized by whatever occurred at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk as her husband, Gabe Wilson (played by Winston Duke) plans to take her and their children, Zora and Jason, there on vacation. Adelaide tries to convince him not to go, but he dismisses her, eager to impress their rich friends, Josh and Kitty Tyler. Gabe's obsession with class and the white-picket American dream is a small-scale reflection of the bigger conflicts to come in the film.

Adelaide becomes panicked at the beach when Jason disappears. Alone, he sees a man with blood dripping from one hand before Adelaide finds him.

That night, four figures appear in the Wilson's driveway in a scene that uses large moments of silence and even a bit of humor when Gabe confronts the shadowy figures to make it feel both tense and real. The invaders reveal themselves to be the family's doppelgangers, dressed in red jumpsuits and wielding large brass scissors.

Red, Adelaide's doppelganger, is the leader. She moves like a machine with broken cogs and speaks with a voice like grinding nails. The others don't talk. Abraham, Gabe's doppelganger, instead groans, while Umbræ, Zora's double, only smirks, and Pluto, Jason's doppelganger, growls like an animal and moves around on all fours.

Red makes Adelaide handcuff herself to a table and tells her the story of a girl who lives a happy life of love and gifts while her "shadow" lives in darkness, receiving only pain and punishment, a powerful metaphor for the haves and have-nots of the world. She explains that she and her family are called the Tethered and they've come to "untether" themselves.

The Wilsons are separated and pursued, each by their own demented double. Meanwhile, it is revealed that the Tylers have doppelgangers too, who show up at their house in a brutal scene of gore that plays out against the song "Good Vibrations" when Josh's double puts on the radio. The upbeat music makes the scene even more disturbing.

The Wilsons reunite after fighting with their "shadows" and turn on the news to see more people in red jumpsuits have emerged to hold hands in a human link. Morning arrives and the Wilsons attempt to flee but they're blocked by their own car in flames on the road. Red steals Jason and Adelaide pursues her back into the traumatic funhouse and deep into a tunnel filled with the white rabbits we saw in the opening.

She confronts Red who tells her everyone's doppelgangers were part of a failed government mind control experiment and have been living underground in suffering and it's their turn to live above. Adelaide defeats her and rescues Jason, but as the family drives away, a flashback reveals a chilling twist, which I won't give away.

The film concludes with a shot of millions of doppelgangers holding hands reminiscent of Hands Across America while helicopters hover above. The comparison highlights the belief the Tethered have in their movement being the right path, and reenforces one of the film's messages about division and each side feeling convinced of their own rightness.

Lupita Nyong'o's performance is spellbinding. Both as Adelaide and Red, the full rawness of the pain and horror and trauma her characters face is elevated by her portrayal. Just the sound of Red's voice carries the weight of the abuse she's suffered. Winston Duke's performance is also noteworthy. He plays the jovial Gabe and the Brute

Abraham both convincingly, characters who appear to be opposites but who are both striving for more than they have. Gabe is fixated on wealth and status, which he has, but he isn't secure in it, while Abraham knows nothing of those things but wants the chance to understand them. There is a brilliant moment where Abraham puts on Gabe's glasses, seeing clearly for the first time and getting a glimpse of all he's missed.

The protagonists are relatable and rounded and the villains are complex as well. In fact, there's not always a clear line between who the heroes are and who the villains are.

The film leaves some plot points vague, like why the government ever started the experiment, why they left it like they did without addressing any fallout, and how the Tethered were even able to survive in such a way. But the film isn't so much about the nuts and bolts as it is the symbolism. When Adelaide asks the doppelgangers who they are, Red replies, "We are... Americans."

The true horror of Us is in its reflection of us. It's a film that sheds a harsh, glaring light on injustice and the truth about one person's privilege being another person's suffering. It compels viewers to examine their own demons as individuals and members of society and it serves as a terrifying reminder of what can emerge when we try to bury our demons beneath us.

IN REVIEW: By: Joseph Victorino

THE BOYS

SEASON 1

The Amazon Original, The Boys, subverts the popular understanding of superheroes. It flips this notion that they always do good and are inherently altruistic, an idea that has been engrained in our minds by franchises like Marvel's The Avengers and DC's Justice League.

Based off the comic book series of the same name, the show's first season was released in 2019. The comics were created in 2006 with the story set between that year and 2008. The television adaptation, however, sees a modernization of the story, and instead, is set in concurrent times.

The Boys was written by Garth Ennis and co-created with Darick Robertson. The story follows quite a few well written characters, each with their own intricate origin and interesting personality.

The show depicts what heroes would really be like in our capitalistic and corporate-ridden landscape. Vile and malicious monsters corrupted and motivated by fear, power, and greed.

The show portrays this best through its antagonists, one of which is The Seven, the series' version of the Justice League. Unlike the heroic group they are based off, however, The Seven's heroic and benevolent reputation was fabricated by their public relations team. Behind closed doors, it is apparent that they are an amoral and self-serving collection of brutes.

In reality, these seven superheroes, or "supes", as the show refers to them, are nothing more than brand figureheads meticulously controlled by their managing megacorporation, Vought. Essentially spoiled celebrities with who happen to have extraordinary abilities.

Vought is yet another villain that brings intrigue and tyranny to the show. As the season progresses, more is revealed about the company's inner workings and malevolent past.

Despite being the big baddies of the show, The Seven's the heinous personalities and atrocious acts aren't too unreasonable. The Boys manages to provide sufficient back story on each of villains to justify their actions and motives.

The show builds these antagonists into three-dimensional characters each with their own past trauma and societal hardships which the audience can understand and sympathize with, regardless of how evil they may be.

In contrast, the show has its fair share protagonists as well. The main one however would be Hughie Campbell, a powerless nobody who after literally having a bad run in with the Seven, sets forth on a journey to take them and their managing company down.

Though he doesn't do it alone. With the guidance of the more experienced superhero killer co-protagonist, Billy Butcher, Hughie is able to make revenge a possibility.

The show itself is visually pleasing and incredibly easy to binge. A critical contributor to this is the cinematography and editing.

Scenes always feel well framed and adequately lit. It could be a scene set indoors in harsh daylight, or a scene set outdoors in the pitch of night, regardless, there was never a moment where I felt like I had to strain my eyes to understand what I was seeing.

The show also features a phenomenal use of film cuts. Whether it's using sound to tie pre-and post-action scenes together, or action cuts to really bring the punch, The Boys utilizes a plethora of editing techniques to maintain the flow of each episode, and in turn keeps the audience hooked.

All in all, in combination with the compelling story, complex characters, and phenomenal cinematography and editing, I give this show a 5 out of 5 and would recommend that anyone with Amazon Prime watch it. Afterwards, I would also insist on watching season 2, which finished releasing episodes on October 9th.

The show depicts what heroes would really be like in our capitalistic and corporate-ridden landscape





KIM'S TOP TEN NETFLIX SCARY MOVIES

This list of scary movies can all be found on Netflix and it skips the classics. Nevertheless, it is a diversified sampling of what Netflix has to offer for scary movies.

Just to be sure; all the suggested movies are rated TV-MA.

By: Kimberlin Stanford

The descriptions of the movies are primarily provided by Netflix, while the ratings and critiques are provided by Rotten Tomatoes.

- 1 Creep 2: (2017, Rotten Tomatoes – 100%):**

A video artist finds the perfect character for a sensational piece, but the subject of her dreams soon reveals his insidious side. Critics Consensus: It has everything that made the original work and more.
- 2 Under the Shadow (2016, Rotten tomatoes – 99%):**

During the Iran-Iraq conflict, a Tehran woman caring for her daughter while her husband is at war is gradually convinced evil spirits are at work. Critics Consensus: Delivers an effective chiller with timely themes and thought-provoking social subtext.
- 3 Sweetheart – (2019, Rotten Tomatoes – 95%):**

A woman shipwrecked on a remote island discovers she is not alone and begins a fight for survival against a deadly presence that emerges each night. Critics Consensus: Balances smart subtext and social commentary against effective genre thrills.
- 4 Hush (2016, Rotten Tomatoes – 93%):**

A deaf writer who retreated in the woods to live a solitary life must fight for her life in silence when a masked killer appears in her window. Critics Consensus: Navigates the bloody waters of home invasion thrillers and insightful slashers for a contemporary horror puree.
- 5 1922 (2017, Rotten Tomatoes – 91%):**

Based on a Stephen King novel. A farmer writes a confession admitting to his wife's murder. Afraid the wife will move to the city taking her share of the money, he manipulates his son to help with her murder. He and the son now try to survive their cursed lives. Critics Consensus: Ranks among the more satisfying Stephen King adaptations.
- 6 Gerald's Game (2017, Rotten Tomatoes – 91%):**

When her husband's sex game goes wrong, Jessie – handcuffed to a bed in a remote lake house – faces warped visions, dark secrets, and a dire choice. Critics Consensus: Small-scale suspense with a career defining performance.
- 7 #Alive (2020, Rotten Tomatoes – 86%):**

As a grisly virus rampages a city, alone, a young man stays locked inside his apartment, digitally cut off from seeking help and desperate to find a way out. Critics Consensus: Proves the crowded zombie genre still has fresh stories to tell.
- 8 1BR (2019, Rotten Tomatoes – 86%):**

Seeking independence, a young woman moves to Los Angeles and settles into a cozy apartment complex with a disturbing sense of community. Critics Consensus: Interesting ideas, and an effective blend of horror and thoughtful drama.
- 9 Girl on the Third Floor (2019, Rotten Tomatoes – 84%):**

A husband with a bad track record tries to start over by renovating a rundown Victorian for his family, only to find he's tackled a house out of hell. Critics Consensus: Proves a good old-fashioned haunted house story can still be entertaining.
- 10 Apostle (2018, Rotten Tomatoes – 78%):**

In 1905, a drifter on a dangerous mission to rescue his kidnapped sister tangles with a sinister religious cult on an isolated island. Critics Consensus: Resists easy scares for a steady, slow-building descent into dread.



SPIRITUAL JOURNEY TURNED INTO CREEPY ENCOUNTERS

Strange and unexpected events witness by people while 'Randonauting'

By: Maiquynh Truong

Over the summer, with a lot of free time and no gathering nor events to go to during quarantine, many teens and young adults found themselves trapped inside. To provide an incentive and a purpose for people to venture into the great outdoors, Randonautica inc. created an app that sends people off on a personal adventure around their local area.

Randonauting is the term used to describe the act of using Randonautica to generate a set of GPS coordinates around the area of where you are. The app said that they can predict anomalies based on the user's intentions/spiritual inclinations and at the coordinate that was provided, app users will find something that will affect their

life.

For example, if a person uses the app with the intention to find something colorful, they will receive a GPS location and upon arrival, perhaps see a wall full of graffiti arts.

Despite the grand premise, the coordinates are purely random, and most users did not encounter anything out of the ordinary and the only things gained from the experience was a few minutes of fresh air and a short exercise.

However, in some instances, people did encounter relatable signs such as seeing a rare animal when their intention is "seeing something unusual" or coincidentally arrived at the entrance of their old school when

thinking about their "childhood."

But not every fruitful experience is positive. Reports and video clips of encountering creepy and unexplainable things eventually went viral on Reddit and TikTok.

In one event, several Seattle teens discovered a black suitcase by a trench of rocks at the coordinate given by Randonautica. Upon poking the bag open, they saw a trash bag that gave off a foul, rotten smell. The group quickly flee from the site and contact local authorities. After investigating, police announce that the content inside the case was a dead body. The video clip that documented their experience was viewed over 4 million times on the teens' TikTok account at @ughhenry and @mykenarae.



Screenshot of Randonautica opening page

Following Mykena's experiences, others quickly went on a journey of their own with the intention of finding something negative. Eventually, users were sent to old, abandoned locations, found strange discarded items along their trek, seeing things in familiar places that they never realized were there before.

The most bizarre occurrences captured on camera was when several TikTok users claimed that they were transported to another dimension or seeing apparitions of ghosts.

@bilbo.gaggins narrates in her TikTok video under the title "Alternate dimension" that she stumbled upon an abandoned house where her car seemingly stopped at. She said that she has lived in the area her whole life and has never once seen this building.

In another TikTok video posted by @raeeleighhhxo, the footage shows a man walking up to the app user's car when the phone camera was pointed to their rear-view mirror. However, when the phone shifted up to the dashboard to show the images captured by the car's rear-view camera, the man seemed to disappear.

Ultimately though, it is unclear whether the "second dimension" or "disappearing person" cases are genuine. These types of footages can easily manipulate, and social media influencers and personnel can fake them for views. However, it is undeniable that mysterious videos like these further fueled the Randonauting phenomenon as it quickly became the most popular activity to do over the summer.

It might not be Randonautica's intention to steer people away from the purpose of exploring positivity in life through their app. But it did accomplish one thing, and that is to get people outdoors for a mental and spiritual change of pace.

With Halloween around the corner, it is likely that Randonautica will see a resurgence in usage as thrill seekers gamble a chance for a good scare. It is important to keep in mind, however, even if cases of strange and creepy encounters are extremely rare; it is best to be safe. Do not embark on explorations alone or enter dangerous areas, there are things in life that are scarier than the supernatural.



@raeeleighhhxo TikTok footage of man walking behind their car but does not show up on rear-camera

CREAMY AU GRATIN POTATOES

An easy comfort dish that will get you through the humdrum days of quarantine

By: Maiquynh Truong



Prep time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

4 russet potatoes, cut into ¼ in slices

1 large onion, sliced into rings

3 Tbsp of butter

3 Tbsp of all-purpose flour

½ tsp of salt

2 cups of milk

1 ½ cups shredded cheddar cheese

½ cup of shredded mozzarella cheese

Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C.) Butter a 1-quart (8x8 in) casserole dish

Layer ½ a portion of the potato slices into the bottom of a buttered casserole dish. Top with onion slices then add the rest of the potatoes. Sprinkle salt and pepper to taste. Set the dish aside.

In a medium-size saucepan, melt the 3 Tbsp of butter over medium heat. Add the flour and stir constantly. Slowly add in milk, a little bit at a time while continuing to stir the mixture until it begins to thicken. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Fold the cheddar cheese into the mixture. Once the cheese melted and the content reached a sauce-like consistency, remove from heat, and pour it over the potatoes.

Cover the dish with aluminum foil and bake in the oven for 1 hr.

Take out the dish, remove foil and sprinkle mozzarella cheese on top and return it to the oven for another ½ hr.

Once the top cheese crust is melted and browned, remove potatoes from the oven, let it cool for ½ hr and enjoy!

Cook time: 1 hour, 30 minutes



Photo by Francisco Loreda

“ There is a child in
everyone of us who is
still a trick-or-treater
looking for a brightly-
lit front porch ”

- Robert Brault

If you would like to contribute to



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