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THE KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE CANCELATION

What Does This Mean For
Americans?

LOCAL FOOD BANKS

Where and How to get the
food you need

MOVIE REVIEW

Soul

INSTRUMENT BUYING GUIDE

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THE KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE CANCELATION

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR AMERICANS?

By: Brent Meraviglia

WASHINGTON D.C - President Joe Biden moved quickly into office, canceling the Keystone XL pipeline on his first day. 830,000 barrels of oil a day were expected to be transported from Alberta, Canada to Illinois and Texas where it would be refined. The project has been in process for over a decade now leading to a multibillion-dollar roadblock. Recently in March, Alberta invested 1.5 billion into the pipeline and construction began on April 7th, 2020. Along with the project cancellation also comes 48,000 tons of steel.

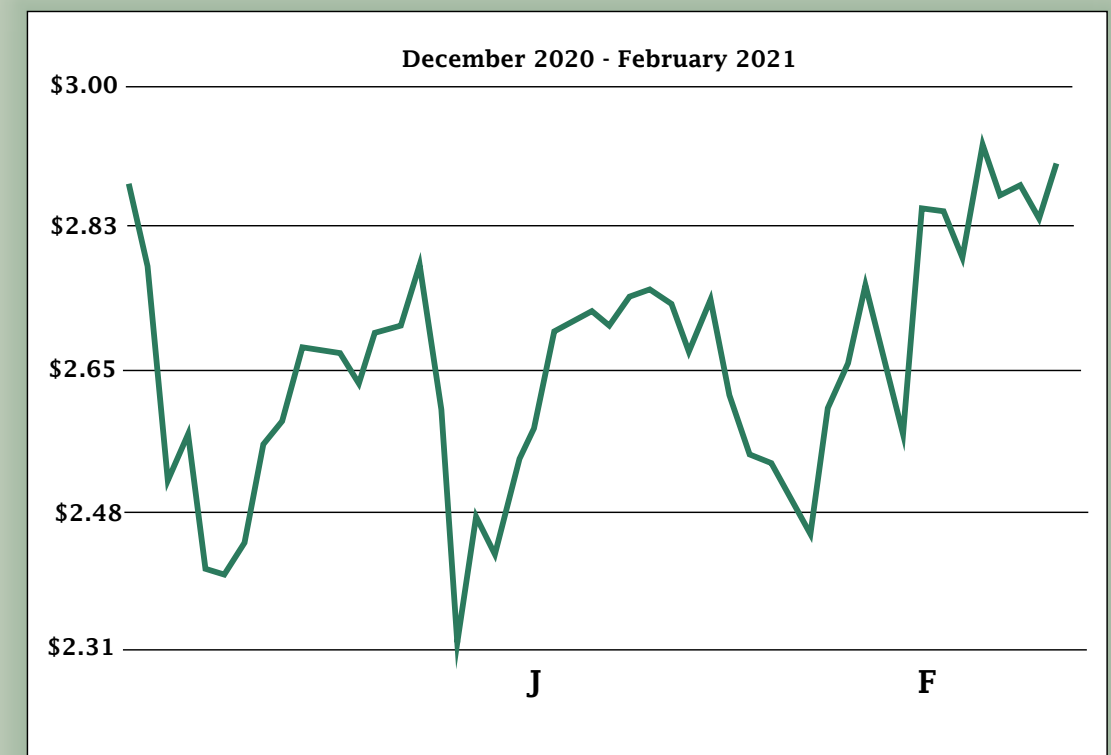
The Keystone XL project offered many pros. The pipeline helps create thousands of jobs although most are temporary. The pipeline itself would have helped reduce emissions and transportation dangers with other methods. Economically, the pipeline

could have offered an estimated \$3 billion dollar addition to the American economy and would support production from Canada. While the pipeline would have guaranteed a more productive economy for both Canada and the US, it also came with many cons. Something to consider is that sustainable and renewable energy could create up to four times more jobs than the pipeline. Not only would this option create more jobs, but it would also be better for the environment. The pipeline would be transporting a corrosive product, leading to a risk of a potential leak. While unlikely, leaks from the pipeline could create damaging effects for the environment. The size of the pipeline is also a risk. 1200 miles is a lot to cover in terms of safety. The pipeline also does not sit well with Native Americans. The project would go through traditional lands, where they argue many of their dead are buried.

Gas prices are on the rise again leading some Americans to link it with the pipeline cancelation.

Nationwide, gas prices went up 5 cents from February 1st to the 8th. However, gas prices are dependent on multiple factors. This includes crude oil prices, production, location and a recent factor, the Covid-19 pandemic. Covid-19 has put many Americans in a situation far from normal. The same can be said about gas. According to CNN, drivers spent 100 billion dollars less on gasoline in 2020 than they did in 2019. While the pipeline closing may be a factor, it is not the sole reason.

While many Americans go back and forth on the shortcomings and benefits of the pipeline, the decision made by



Gas prices between Dec 2020 to Feb 2021



A Gas pump at Shell Gas Station in Lisbon CT. Taken by Gillian Taylor

C COMMUNITY

President Joe Biden will not have a massive effect on gas prices. It will, however, affect the thousands of workers now without a job and the local businesses benefiting around the construction. Geri Risley, a local resident from Lebanon said “It’s upsetting. I think we need the jobs. It would have been a great benefit to the economy.”

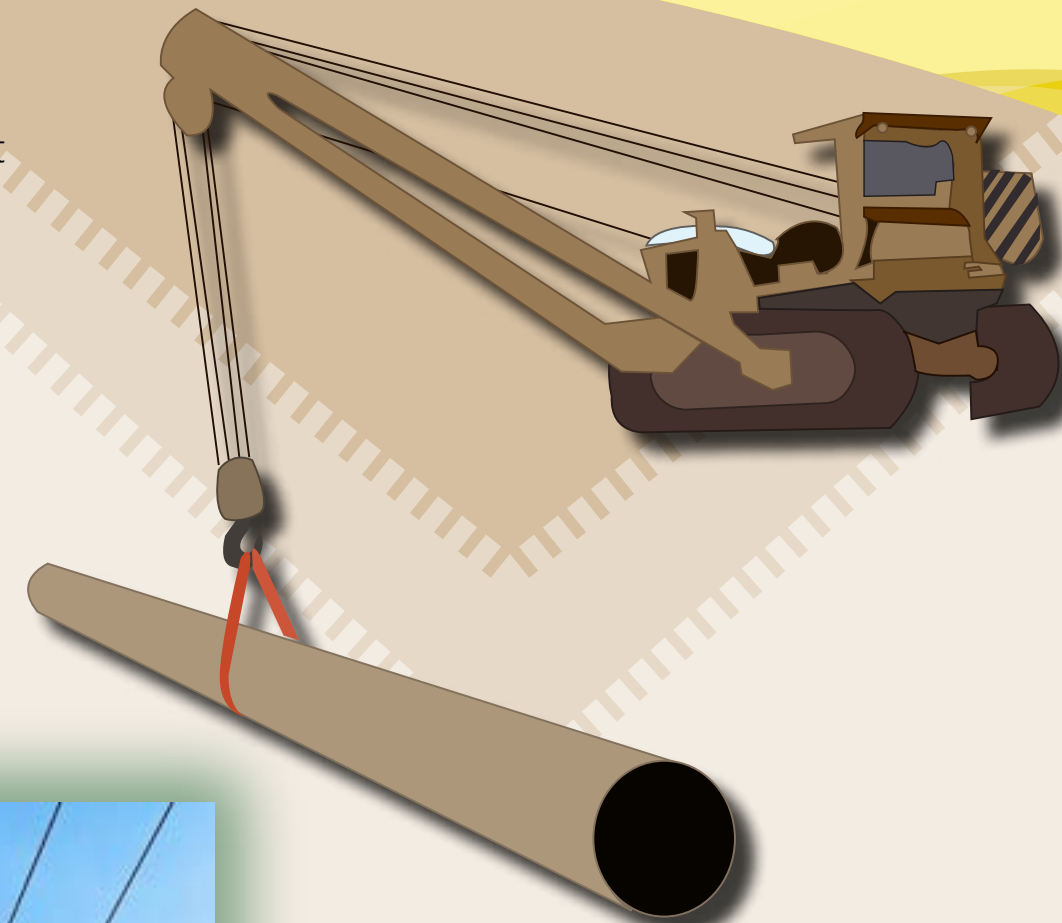
It has created a situation where pipe liners and environmentalists are against each other. Despite many arguing these are temporary jobs, they are also jobs that families rely on. The current situation of the pandemic and lack of stimulus money makes this decision even harder for the workers. The president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Global Energy



A close up of someone pumping gas. Taken by: Brent Meraviglia

Institute, Marty Durbin said in a statement “It will harm consumers and put thousands of Americans in the building trades out of work. Halting construction will also impede the safe and efficient transport of oil, and unfairly single out production from one of our closest and most important allies.”

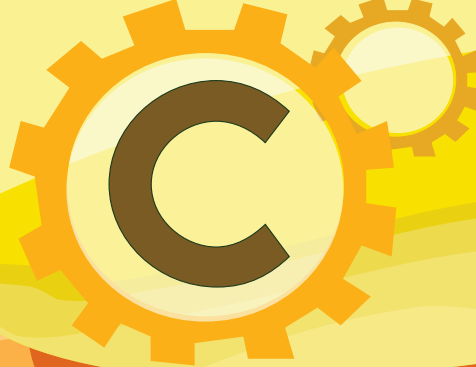
Alternatively, the decision has given a lot of attention towards



environmentally friendly solutions and has pushed America in that direction. Dale Marshall, the national climate program manager for Canada’s Environmental Defence stated “Killing the Keystone XL pipeline once and for all is a clear indication that climate action is a priority for the White House.”



Shell Gas Station Sign with prices.
Taken by: Gillian Taylor
Graphic of a crane carrying a pipe.
Created by: Gillian Taylor



Local Food Banks

Where and how to get the food, you need in South Eastern CT

By: Gillian Taylor



1 St. Vincent De Paul Place

120 CLIFF ST, NORWICH CT

Hours: Mon & Wed 9:30 am till 3:00 pm,
Saturday 8:00 am till 12:00 pm

Phone Number: 860-889-7374

Email: info@svdpp.org

Web site: <https://www.svdpp.org/>

St. Vincent De Paul Place was founded in 1979 to help the communities who are struggling. From their webpage it states that their mission is “to provide food and service to those who are physically, mentally, or spiritually impoverished. We welcome anyone in need. Our goal is to motivate our patrons towards self-sufficient and a better life”.

2 First Haitian Baptist Church Food Pantry

365 CENTRAL AVE, NORWICH CT

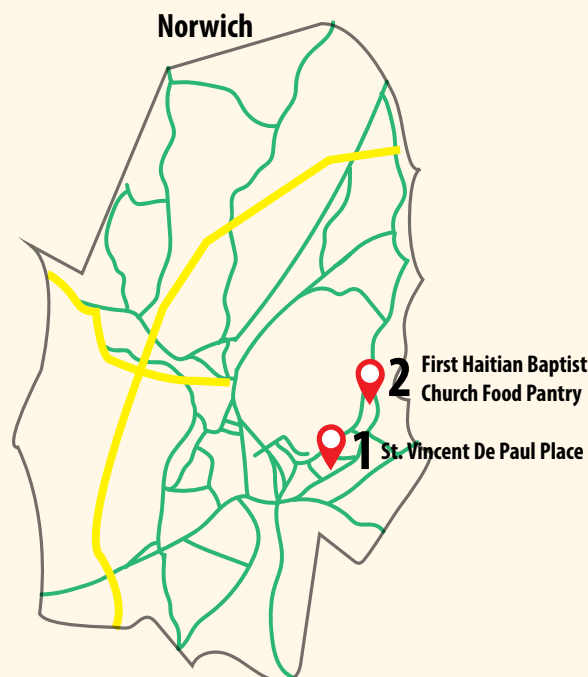
Hours: Friday 12pm

Phone Number: 860.367.7413

Web site: <https://fhbcnorwich.org/>

The First Haitian Baptist Church of Norwich was first established in 1996.

From their webpage it states that “Rev. George Sterne Lys, pastor of Hartford Missionary Baptist Church in Hartford CT, a few members of that church, and a few residents in Norwich; in March 1996 started a movement of evangelization every Saturday, by going from house to house”.



3 Thames Valley Council for Community Action

83 HUNTINGTON ST, NEW LONDON CT

Hours: Mon - Fri 8:00am till 4:00pm

Phone Number: 860.889.1365

Web site: <https://www.tvcca.org/>

TVCCA is a large program that helps family across Eastern CT. This program strives to help those in need of housing, food, employment and education. From the TVCCA

webpage it says that they have a “focus on building the community’s self-sufficiency and resiliency”.

Not only do they provide help with food, but they also want to help families who need housing or many who need jobs.

4 New London Area Food Pantry

106 TRUMAN ST, NEW LONDON CT

Hours: Mon 2pm to 4pm, Tues 10am to 12pm, and
Thurs 10am to 12pm

Web site: <https://newlondonareafoodpantry.weebly.com/>

The New London Area Food Pantry has been in operation since 1988 as a nonprofit organization. Their mission statement is “we provide emergency food to those in need in the New London area with a choice of foods to provide a balanced diet of fresh, frozen and canned foods. This includes vegetables, bread, fruit, peanut butter, dairy products, meats and various other products that become available to us”.

New London



COVID VACCINATION UPDATE

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE BRAND-NEW VACCINE

By: Emme Romanelli

CCOVID-19 is nothing new to anyone, but there is something new in terms of ending the pandemic. As we come up on one year since the pandemic began in the U.S. Pfizer and Moderna have begun distributing vaccines to senior citizens and healthcare workers.

The scope of who gets the vaccine first is a bit further than people may think. The vaccine is being given to those working inside hospitals, as well as first responders

and assisted living facility staff. ER nurse Riley Tompkins who currently works at Providence Medical Center in Anchorage, Alaska received the vaccine less than three weeks after battling COVID-19. His experience with the vaccine differs from those receiving it without having had the virus.

“Most people are getting a little more than a sore arm from the first dose, but then an immune response from the second dose, including fever chills and aches.” For those who haven’t had the virus he says “it’s miserable, but it’s your body doing its job.”

In terms of if someone receiving the vaccine has had it, he states “My body was still chock full of antibodies, which meant I had the immune response

both times... speaking firsthand it was nothing compared to the virus, and absolutely worth it.” It is predicted that the vaccine will be available to the public by mid-2021, so it is important for those unfamiliar with how vaccines work to understand why this one is so important.

“[The vaccine] instructs your body to create the proteins that mimic those found in the virus. These proteins are what your body recognizes as bad news and creates antibodies to fight against it. At no point is there a live or dead version of the virus introduced, so it’s impossible to contract the virus from the shot.” In terms of a local perspective, first

responders are continually getting vaccinated to protect those they care for as well as themselves. Outside of a hospital there is more organization necessary to make sure all firefighters and police personnel receive the vaccine. Nate Romanelli, Old Mystic Fire Department EMT completed the process to receive his vaccine in the coming weeks. As he is only 17 years old, most doctors’ offices cannot provide the vaccine as they are reserved for citizens 75 and older. “The station I volunteer with has a program through our department which provides us the vaccine if we choose to receive

it.” He clarifies “We are assigned to get it at Hartford hospital as they are focusing on healthcare workers rather than enior citizens.” Most people getting the vaccine do not have a full scope of what to really expect as it varies Nate plans on, “taking a couple days at least to recover from any effect it may have. I’m in online school anyway so there’s no better time than now to get it and make sure I’m safe.” The vaccine is obviously not a walk in the park, but this is



Old Mystic EMT Nate Romanelli Photographed by Emme Romanelli

nothing to be worried about. Though it may have more of an effect that a regular flu shot, this is the first vaccine available to tackle this pandemic. As of now, it is all we have to get back to regular day to day life.



Graphics made by Emme Romanelli

Vocatura's Bakery Reopens!

Iconic sandwich shop recovers after a tragic accident back in October 2020

By: Gillian Taylor

VOCATURAS BAKERY in Greenville CT has been standing for over 50 years. In October 2020, a Jeep rammed into the front of the old building destroying the store front and all the cases inside. Workers were quickly rushed from the building so that the area could be secured. David Vocatura, the owner of the bakery was in shambles and believed that his business was done for. Not only were the employee's devastated from this accident but so were the people of the community.

The damage done to the building was extensive and needed a lot of time to repair. David Vocatura was the most eager to get

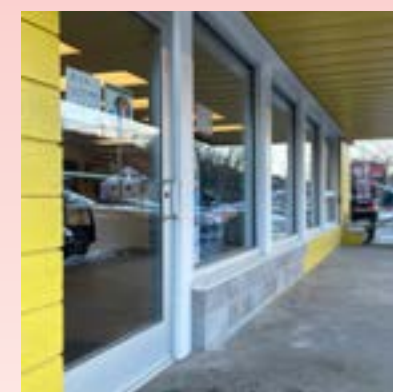
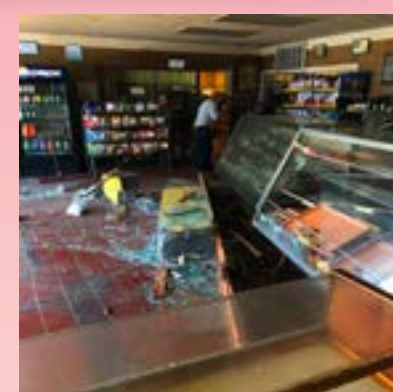
his beloved business back and booming again. After 3 months of hard work and labor, they finally picked an opening day. As of Thursday, February 4, 2021 Vocaturas Bakery is officially reopened and ready for business.

Walking into the Bakery today, customers would never know that a jeep drove straight into the building just 3 months earlier. The construction company called Mattern Construction worked day and night to secure the structure of the building. The shiny new fridges, meat slicers and counter tops are an upgrade from the previous wood counters, old fridges, and dinky slicers they had before. The whole inside is a lot brighter and more welcoming compared to what it looked like before.

Being an eyewitness to the accident, standing in the building now it never even looked like a vehicle smashed into the glass store front. Jordan Lombardi, who has been working at the bakery for 5 years, made it clear how different everything is now at the bakery. She talked about how it is going to take a while to get used to the newer cash registers. Previously, the cash registers were so outdated, employees had to do all the math in their head to give back change. With the new registers the employee's job is more efficient.

When asked what the biggest difference is, Lombardi stated that "the biggest difference is really the upgraded appliances,

having the refrigerated grinder and pizza counters. The new slicers, and the new cases. The old cases were about 40 years old. Maybe even older. These new changes are for the better". She mentioned how happy she is with the change and that the bakery really needed an upgrade, a new start she even goes to say. Lombardi was present during the accident and said "I do get scared" when reminiscing about the event. However, she mentioned feeling safer now that she better knows how to handle such a situation.



Pictures of the accident and after repairs. Taken by: Gillian Taylor

Although this close knit family at the bakery have been through a lot, they're working to come back stronger than before. The new appliances secured structural supports and love from the community, Vocaturas Bakery is back up and booming. Parking lot is

full as usual, and bellies filled with the pizza, grinders and pastries sold at Vocaturas.

Before

After

Principles of Advertsing

A class more than just advertisers could benefit from

By: Emme Romanelli

Pinciples of Advertising is a Marketing Course which is typically a requirement for Graphic Design students. My course was taught by Professor James O'Shea, a Professor within the Business and Technologies Department here at Three Rivers.

My experience with the class was positive, the class is helpful to anyone who wants to improve on appealing to an audience. For my case, it was looking at how designs will be interpreted to anyone looking for a split second. The first several weeks are devoted to learning the basics of marketing and advertising. This includes focusing on concepts such

as Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), which is utilizing various marketing channels to convey one message. While we learned concepts to sell to specific audiences, we also viewed real world examples, such as Super Bowl commercials and recognizable ad campaigns. This class took our learning one step further, while a regular class may require just learning the material, we applied these concepts to our own advertising campaigns. The bulk of the class was spent within breakout rooms on the online format with our designated groups, ranging from four to six people per group. The goal was to create a product which did not exist and would appeal to a specific audience.

We were required to create a full visual advertising campaign. This included magazine advertisements and social media posts alongside a mock website and concepts for a commercial and radio advertisement. Overall, the campaign was created for a mock product which were sneakers that converted into roller-skates.



The final for the class was presenting our ad campaign as well as listen to what other came up with. All around there were so many different ideas that only show up when collaborating with other people. The class was one of my most helpful as a Graphic Design major. Most of my career work will involve collaboration and this class provided one of the most real-world situations I could be part of as a student. Although it is an advertising class, I highly recommend taking this as a way of problem solving and creating something

with more people than just yourself. Alongside the group work, the concepts learned in this class are felt by everyone. Advertising is everywhere and it is a cool thing to understand how your brain perceives these concepts every day.

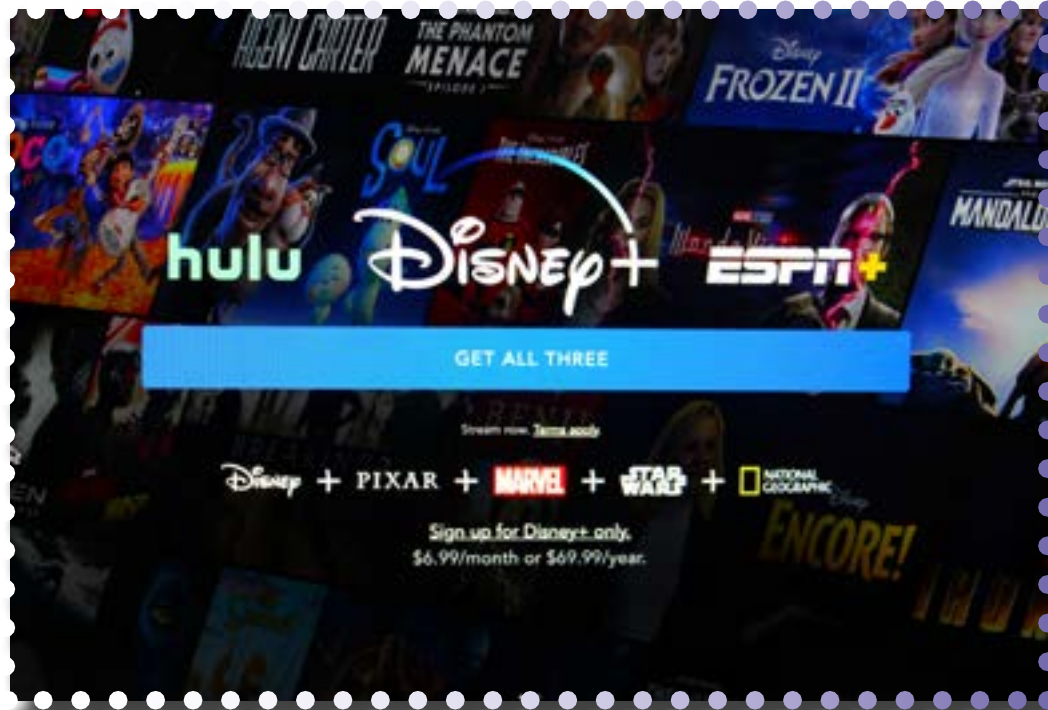
Streaming Services in a Pandemic

How media consumption has changed for at-home use

By: Emme Romanelli

Streaming services have become a media giant in recent years. The classics such as Netflix and Hulu have been around for years, but 2020 saw a whole different need for at home streaming, stay-at-home orders.

2020 opened with some of the now biggest shows and movies



Disney Plus

the beginning of the pandemic, to more recently Bridgerton.

Disney was one of the biggest contenders for a quarantine takeover. Their service came out at the perfect time in November of 2019. By the time COVID-19 hit, people had already bought the subscription and were taking it all in.

Disney also took a business venture and bundled Hulu and ESPN+ with their plan to give more incentive to choose their service

over others.

Before long, movie releases were being delayed and eventually just moved to streaming platforms. But that can come with some trouble as at home movie releases were rare before now.

While streaming giants are getting their day in the sun, the fate of movie theaters is up in the air. As of October 2020, Regal Cinemas closed all 536 of their theaters indefinitely. While 2020 provided us with dozens of paid streaming services there are a few that come free. Tubi TV is one of them which features smaller movies such as My Friend Dahmer and shows like The Masked Singer.

If there is anything 2020 brought along, it was change and adjustment. The movie industry was hit, but in comes adjustment and alas we have a streaming service takeover.



Tubi. Taken by Emme Romanelli

Vegan Cheese Pizza and Vegetarian Bacon Pizza

By: Alex Slane



Vegan Cheese and Vegetarian Bacon Pizza. taken by Alex Slane



Veganism and the various forms of vegetarianism have become much more popular over the past few years. There is a whole new generation who are trying to do their part in saving the planet and reducing their carbon footprint. A good way to help towards ending animalcruelty as well as helping the environment is cutting meat, or even all animal products out of your diet. Many people think this means having to eat extra healthy and frankly, not the most delicious meals. However, this is not the case. Today we are going to be making plan- based pizza! The total time for this recipe is 20-25 mins.

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup of Daiya Mozzarella Style Shreds

4 strips of Morning Star Veggie Bacon Strips

½ Cup of your choice of Pizza Sauce

Your choice of pizza dough

INSTRUCTIONS:

To start, preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Now, we are going to get our bacon started. The amount of bacon is up to your preferences. We are making one pizza today, ½ cheese and ½ bacon, so I used 4 slices of bacon to cover ½ of the pizza. Place your bacon strips on a greased pan on medium heat. They are going to take around 3 minutes on each side or cook to your preferred crispness.

After starting your bacon, we can begin on rolling the dough. You may need to add a little flour to your dough so you can roll it into the shape for your pizza. You can make dough

from scratch if desired, but we used pre-made dough for this recipe. Just make sure the pre-made dough does not contain any animal products such as milk or eggs. By this point you might want to check and see if your bacon needs to flip.

After preparing your dough, you can pour your sauce out. We used just about half a cup of pizza sauce. Make sure to spread it evenly on your dough.

Once the sauce is on, you can spread your cheese out on top of your pizza. The amount of cheese is really a preference, we used an estimated amount of 1 cup of shredded cheese. Spread your cheese out evenly as well.

Finally, your bacon is likely done at this point, so it's time to prepare it for your pizza. Cut your bacon strips into small slices and sprinkle it onto your pizza. The bacon required for this recipe does contain egg and milk products, so it is not vegan, it is vegetarian. We are going to do half bacon and half cheese, this way, we have half a vegan cheese pizza and half a vegetarian bacon pizza.

Put the pizza onto a greased tray and cook in the oven for 15 Minutes. Depending on the dough you used, it may take a few minutes longer than that.

When it is done, cut it and enjoy!

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Bernie Sanders Next Big Meme

The mittens seen around the nation

By: Brent Meraviglia

Washington D.C - Former Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders was a primary topic of discussion during the Presidential Inauguration that took place on Wednesday, January 20th. While many were on edge after the recent capitol raid, Sanders unintentionally took the internet by storm. Alleviating some of the tension. Hundreds of thousands of memes are available, many showing up just hours after the inauguration.

What sparked the meme was a now famous picture of Sanders wearing hand-knit mittens from a supporter in Vermont along with a casual coat. In an interview with Late Night hosted by Seth Meyers, Sanders said "I was just

sitting there, trying to keep warm. Trying to pay attention to what was going on". Sanders isn't into memes himself but appreciated the moment, nonetheless. Brendan Smialowski, a man from Newtown Connecticut was responsible for the viral photo. He is a photographer with the Agence France-Presse and has been taking pictures of political key moments for almost two decades. In an interview from his home in Washington D.C, he said "It's okay for people to take a break from the heavy journalism and find light hearted moments". While he is serious about his work, he is still grateful for the attention.

Not only has the photographer himself been getting some recent attention, but the woman that made the famous mittens has been getting some interest as well. In reply to Seth Meyers, Sanders said "What was really nice is the woman who made the mittens lives in Essex Junction, Vermont. She is a schoolteacher; a very very nice person and she has been somewhat overwhelmed by the kind of attention shown to her mittens." Her name is Jen Ellis and now has over 22,000 followers on twitter. It has gone as far now that people are bidding on the mittens she is making.

While both Biden and Trump supporters were on edge, Sanders gave the nation something to come together and laugh about. Between the pandemic, political differences, and other concerning conflicts, it was something that brought American's together during a time of division. This event shows the power of people coming together.

Sanders has since announced that the meme has raised 1.8 million dollars from his online store. The meme was put to good use and Sanders included merchandise for it. He plans on giving the money to organizations working in his home state, Vermont. Andrew Zemantic, a local resident from Lebanon said "I'm not huge on politics but it was nice seeing something so positive for once. Both political sides seemed to be together and it's funny considering how unexpected and unrelated it was."

Graphic made by Gillian Taylor



MOVIE REVIEW: SOUL

By: William Silva

This Disney movie takes you on a magical journey through life, death, and the unknown. It takes place in the busy streets of New York City. The main character is named Joe Gardner, and he is voiced by Jamie Foxx. Joe is a school music teacher who has always had dreams of being something more. Music is his passion and even though his job involves music it is not what he is meant to do for the rest of his life. Ever since he was a boy he wanted to be in the spotlight. He knows deep down that he is meant to be on stage speaking jazz through the keys of his piano.

The movie starts to pick up when his boss offers him a raise. He acts excited about getting the full-time position, but he is far from it. To him taking this position is essentially the same as closing the door on his dreams to be a famous jazz musician. His mother pushes him to take the position because she does not believe he will ever be capable of accomplishing his dream. From her perspective he is chasing a fantasy. On the same day that Joe receives a raise he also receives a life changing voicemail. A past student left him a message with an offer of a lifetime. This student informed Joe that he was going to be performing with a famous jazz musician and asked Joe to join them playing the piano. Joe is ecstatic to hear this voicemail and immediately starts celebrating as he runs through the streets of New York. Distracted by his excitement he falls into an open manhole.



A movie poster for "Soul" showing the main character.

From this fall Joe's soul is sent to the great beyond. He lands on this conveyor belt that is slowly bringing him up to a white light. There are other souls on it and Joe realizes he is not in his body anymore. He is not ready to die right after waiting his whole life for an opportunity to perform. From here Joe runs through this cosmic dimension and breaks a lot of rules along the way to get back to the life he knew. While escaping the fate in front of him he gets lost in a place where new souls are created before going to Earth. Joe breaks the rules to get back to Earth and he finally is reunited with his body that has been in a coma. After jumping over all the obstacles to get into his body he frantically runs around the city getting ready for his big night.

Joe arrives late to perform, and the famous jazz musician tells him he is too late. Joe does not take no for an answer and he tells the woman he is meant to perform. Inspired by his dedication she lets him perform alongside her. Joe gives it his all and wows the audience with the biggest performance of his lifetime. At this moment he is truly content. However, after the performance he feels this emptiness inside of him. He asks the famous musician what happens after the show. She tells him that they will come back tomorrow night and do it all again.



A photo comparing (Joe Gardner) the main character to (Jamie Foxx) the actor who voiced him.

as you stand and look at the sunset. He realizes life is not about the destination, rather it is about the journey and appreciating every little moment.



A scene of Joe as a child. In this memory he is listening to music with his father.

In this moment Joe realizes that he has been chasing this dream his whole life and by doing so he has missed out on all the little things that he thought of as a waste of time. He realizes that living is not just playing piano and being famous. Living is sitting in the park as the breeze hits your face. Living is letting the cold ocean water hit your toes as you stand and look at the sunset. He realizes life is not about the destination, rather it is about the journey and appreciating every little moment. This is a beautiful life lesson, and it was necessary. Especially for people who have dreams of being famous this movie has a crucial lesson. You must chase your dreams and never give up on them, but do not let them take your attention away from the beautiful moments that life has to offer.

Places to go When Everything is Closed

By: Alex Slane

For over a year now, Coronavirus has had a hold on us and kept us from being able to do things like we used to. To keep ourselves and everyone else safe, we have had to sacrifice many of the things we liked to do. Having to stay indoors for over a year can have some negative side effects. Therefore, it is important to get outside and explore the local beauty you may not have seen before. Visiting local parks and other outdoor locations is a good way to remain safe and still have that feeling of being out in public like everything is normal.

Devils Hopyard

If you are feeling a little down and need a good mood booster, you should consider hiking! Exercise releases endorphins which make your brain happy. Devils Hopyard located in East Haddam, CT, has several paths to follow so you can enjoy a nice walk in the woods. Surrounded by waterfalls and rivers, you can enjoy your surroundings and have a nice time. There are even seating areas if you wanted to pack a lunch.



Fort Shantok

Located in Uncasville, CT, Fort Shantok offers easy trails with pretty views and wildlife. There are many ponds, some even with bridges to cross. If you are lucky, you might even stumble across some sleeping turtles. There are geese everywhere, but do not get too close as they do not take kindly to strangers. Once in the woods, you can even break away from the trail and explore on your own. There are cliffs and waterfalls here as well to add to the amazing surroundings.



Esker Point

Esker Point is a small beach and picnic area with many glowing features. Located in Groton, CT, you are right on the coast and have access to a nice little beach. The beach allows for swimming and they even offer volleyball courts! The picnic area is very nice, and you will find that many people enjoy bringing their dog. This park is also right next to a nice residential area if you are in the mood for a walk to look at the unique architecture.



Harkness Park

Harkness Memorial State Park is in Waterford, CT, and offers a beach as well as a massive field and picnic area. Harkness is much larger than the other parks mentioned, meaning it can feel less crowded even with a lot of people visiting. It has a beach like Esker Point, but it is much larger. However, there is no swimming at this beach. The picnic area has tables and even some charcoal grills. There is also a mansion that houses 42 rooms.

Remember to make time for yourself to go outside and experience what the local parks have to offer and stay safe while doing so.

*Pictures of Fort Shantok and Esker Point Taken by Alex Slane
Devils Hopyard Taken By: Gillian Taylor.*

Things to do During a Snow Storm

Whether you are cozied up inside or eager to get out, here are some fun things to keep yourself entertained when snowed in

By: Gillian Taylor

Outside:

Snowboarding

Although many people think you need large slopes to go snowboarding, you are wrong. The Norwich Golf Course has large hills and when there is tons of snow it makes plenty of chances to build jumps, rails and different obstacles. Even if you live on a large plot of land with a hill you can go out and build yourself a mini snowboard slope!

Sledding

Sledding is one of the oldest ways to have fun in the snow! Sledding is fun for all ages and gives everyone that sense of being a little kid again. The little bit of adrenaline that rushes through you when going down a huge hill is like nothing else. Even if you do hit a bump and tumble you are wearing so many layers you can barely feel it! Fun for all ages and can be done even in your own backyard or at a public park that has some huge hills.

Building snowman

Building your own frosty the snowman is one of the easiest things you could do in the snow. Gathering all your supplies, the sticks and pebbles or even a carrot. Coming together as a family outside assembling your own snowman is an easy way to spend time together outside the house. You can even make it a little competition to see who has the best snowman out of the bunch! Using old gloves and scarves can bring a bit of pizzazz to your snowman ensemble!

Snowball fights

Do you need to let out a little anger after being pent up in the house with your family for 9 months? Outside is an endless supply of snowballs! The easiest way to let off some steam and have fun. Going outside and forming these tiny soft snowballs is simple and doesn't take a lot of time and it's not as painful as some other options!

Inside:

Baking

When it's too cold to get outside and you are looking for something fun, look in your cabinets and bake something yummy! Or if you or your family is going outside, having a warm piece of cake just hits the spot! Also, this will give you and your family something to do together, baking cookies and decorating them can make for some great memories.

Netflix

There is nothing better than cuddling up on the couch and watching your favorite TV show or Movie. Not just on Netflix but also, Hulu, Disney Plus and others. Plus, if you bake some cookies it will give you something to snack on while watching your binge worthy TV series.

Card Games

Sometimes there is nothing better than playing a good old fashion card game. Whether you want to play alone or with family, there are plenty of options. If you are alone you can play solitaire, there are 4 different types to choose from. And if you are in a family setting you can play, Go Fish, Rummy, Blackjack or Poker!

Plan a camp out in living room/ bedroom

This one is great whether you have kids or not! Building a fort on the living room brings you right back to your childhood. It is not only easy but it is fun to build. If you have kids, it will give them a sense of doing something new! The kids will enjoy being able to sleep outside of their rooms and spend time with their parents!

Picture of snowman and
apple pie. Taken by Gillian Taylor

Find your sound!

An instrument guide to help you chose the right one

By: Alex Slane

The summer of 2020 was a time of mixed feelings for many. The COVID-19 outbreak had started becoming a real threat in the United States and Connecticut had begun

their major quarantine in late spring. Having to stay at home and quarantine resulted in a very odd summer compared to past years. For some, this meant

having to adjust their work life to being at home, and for others it meant having a lot of free time on their hands. If you had an eye of social media over the summer, you would have seen lots of people getting into art such

as painting and crafts, and many decided to get into

learning music.

After speaking to an employee of the Music & Arts location found in Waterford, CT, it is clear that music was on the mind. "Oh yeah, definitely! It was crazy" says employee Margo Cadorette. Based on the large increase of sales and several conversations with customers, they have determined that there was indeed a spike in popularity.

Now jump ahead to the current times. Many people are still working from home or may not even be back to work yet at all. The free time may be a little less abundant than when the quarantine began, but it's certainly still there.

Music is a very satisfying hobby, and the best part is, anybody can learn! This is going to be a comprehensive guide on

the best buy for you!

When beginning to learn music, there are a few things to consider. You are going to want to think about what style of music you are going to want to play, your budget, and your goals with learning music.

Let's start with piano. Piano is a great starter instrument for any beginner musician. It allows for an easy experience for learning about music theory, which is a knowledge of why music is the way it is. The keys are laid out in a consistent manner, making learning where the notes are, and building chords easier than some other instruments. You can play many genres of music on piano, so it is quite the versatile instrument.

As for obtaining a piano yourself, there are a few options. There are pianos, digital pianos, and keyboards. Pianos are the traditional piano with real

strings inside. They can be very large, and you need to get them tuned several times a year. Digital Pianos are essentially as close to a real piano as you can get, but the sound is all digital. Digital Pianos have weighted keys to emulate the feeling of a real piano, and they are most commonly 88 keys long, which is essentially a full-size upright piano. Finally, there's keyboards. Keyboards are the

lightweight and portable. They are like digital pianos; however, they do not have weighted keys, and are usually either 61 keys long or 76 keys long. They do not feel exactly like a real piano and do sound a bit cheaper than the other options. However, keyboards are a great option for people who are not sure if they



Electric Guitars hanging on wall



Margo Cadorette working on an Electric Guitar

cheapest of the three options and are also the most

will stick with learning piano. The price range for keyboards is around \$100-\$300. The price range for digital pianos is around 300-\$2,000+ The price for Pianos is around \$2,000+. Moving on to our next category which is going to be Guitars and Ukuleles. Guitar is not necessarily any more or less difficult than piano, it simply has very different techniques. The theory is the same between all instruments, it is just a matter of how you play them. If you are wanting to learn and be able to play full songs in a short

amount of time, guitar and ukulele are for you. Songs on guitar are mostly played with chords. Chords are a group of notes played at the same time. The most common chords on ukulele are very easy to learn and only require one or two fingers to play. Guitar chords are slightly more robust, but overall, not too difficult with some practice. Ukuleles are divided into sizes, and guitar is divided into acoustic and electric.

Acoustic and electric guitar are fundamentally the same, they simply sound and feel

slightly different. They both have six strings and are tuned to EADGBE. Let's start with acoustic guitar. Acoustic

guitars are larger than electric guitars because they need to be hollow to allow sound to project without plugging into anything. They are used to play many genres of music, including blues, country, indie, pop, and more. There is also a type of acoustic guitars called "Classical" guitars, these use nylon strings as opposed to traditional steel strings and are from Spanish origin.

Moving on to electric guitar, they are much lighter and need to be plugged into an amplifier. They use a lighter string, so some recommend learning on an electric guitar as it is easier on your fingers. Alongside amplifiers, they also can be used with an assortment of foot pedals. These pedals are modification accessories that allow you to add effects to your guitar. Some

amplifiers, called mod amps, take the place of foot pedals, and have effects built in. Electric guitar is commonly used for genres such as rock, punk, metal, jazz, indie, pop, and more. Finally let's move on to ukuleles.

Ukuleles are four-stringed instruments that tune to GCEA and make use of nylon strings, similarly to classical guitars. They come in various sizes, which from smallest to largest are soprano, concert, tenor, and baritone. The only difference between these instruments is size, excluding baritone, which uses a different tuning. The nylon strings are very easy on the fingers and allow for an easy learning experience. Ukuleles use a chord system just like guitar. The chords on ukulele are generally easy to learn because they only have four strings. If you think six strings is too much to learn on, then

ukulele maybe for you. The pricing for acoustic and



Ukuleles being displayed on wall

electric guitars ranges from \$100-\$2000+. A decent beginner guitar is usually around the \$200-\$300 range. It is important to remember that electric guitars will need an amp and a cable, which can range from \$60-\$400+. Ukuleles can be found from \$30-\$400+. There are hundreds of other instruments to choose from, these are just the common instruments that people choose to learn on.

Hopefully, this helps you choose what will be best

for you to begin your musical journey. If you still are not positive, head to your local music stores and try out some instruments!

Learning an instrument is a great way to spend free time right now and is a very satisfying hobby. There are many resources to teach yourself these instruments as well as local places you can take lessons. Many stores offer online lessons as well so you can stay safe while learning. Rock on!

All images taken by: Alex Slane



Close up of an Electric Guitar

The Pros and Cons of a Social Media Giant

A REVIEW - IS TIKTOK SOMETHING TO WORRY ABOUT?

By: Brent Meraviglia

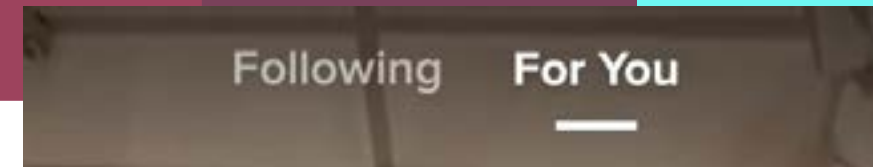
Since its creation in August 2018, TikTok has been downloaded over 2 billion times globally. Chances are it's hard for cell phone users to have never heard of the app. It offers a broad range of content involving anything lighthearted, serious, controversial, funny, and more.

The app features a section to discover, to create and a "For you" and "Following" section where users can find personalized content fit for them. While the app was developed with fun in mind, mental health is a big issue revolving around it. Followers, screen time, likes, notifications and trends can quickly overwhelm if not cripple an individual's mental fortitude. While TikTok isn't the first of its kind to have this problem, it is arguably a game changer. A constant flow of 15 second videos is available at the user's fingertips. It provides a wide variety of fast video-only entertainment generated based off the user's likes and view time. It becomes easy to lose track of time. Users need to remember that TikTok is a business running a free app. Users are the product. It is TikTok's job to keep their users there for longer as it generates more ad revenue.

With that in mind, TikTok and its community are proactive about mental health. They have featured hashtags listed as "mentalhealthawareness" and "mentalhealthmatters". A video will automatically play saying remember to take a break once a user has been scrolling for too long. There are certified doctors and therapists on the app as users offering healthy life tips. There is also a wide variety of wholesome content that can inspire or uplift a user's mood. There are options to report a video or mark it as "not interested" so that the algorithm

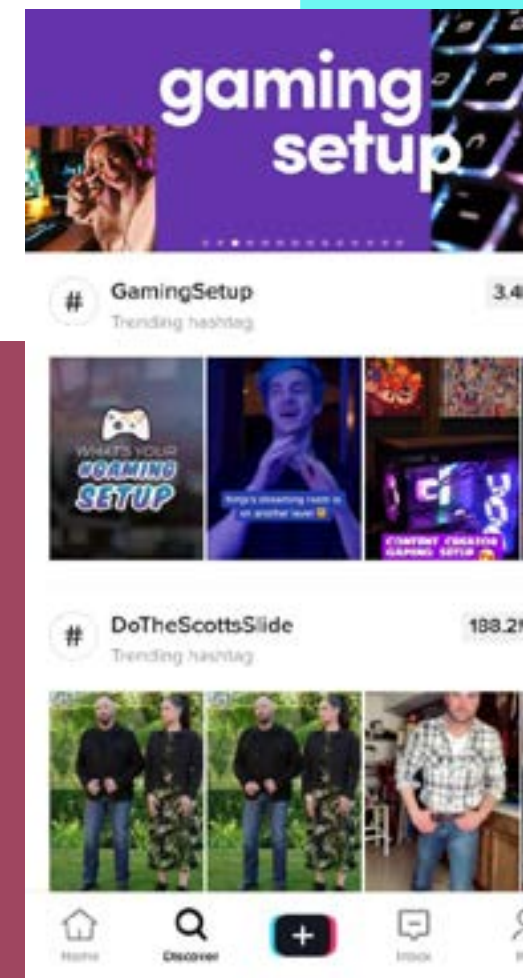


learns what to show and not show that specific user. If used correctly, TikTok can be a great source of entertainment filled with similar content a specific user may want to see. Alternatively, it can be just as negative and inappropriate as the latter option.



While TikTok does have strict guidelines with eleven different sections, certain unnecessary content can get through due to the high population of users. According to their guidelines, TikTok states "TikTok's mission is to inspire creativity and bring joy. We are building a global community where people can create and share, discover the world around them, and connect with others across the globe". However, this is easier said than done. TikTok does a great job achieving this mission, but it cannot be foolproof. They also stated "We will remove any content - including video, audio, livestream, images, comments, and text - that violates our Community Guidelines. Individuals are notified of our

decisions and can appeal if they believe no violation has occurred".



So is TikTok something to worry about? I would say for children under the age of 16, yes. TikTok can quickly lead to a battle for followers, create self-esteem issues, create a lack of sleep, and may leave some feeling disconnected from their peers. Charlie D'Amelio, TikTok's most subscribed user is 16 with over 100 million followers. She's reported having panic attacks, not feeling normal and feeling discontent with herself. While most users won't feel the pressure she does, it's a great example how even some of the most popular people on the app struggle with mental health. In an interview with Avani Gregg, D'Amelio mentioned her therapist, stating "Even if you think, 'Hey, I'm doing great,' it doesn't hurt to get help. It doesn't hurt to talk to someone. It's genuinely really awesome because even though sometimes you feel genuinely alone, you have someone to talk to."



**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO
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