

THE **C**urrent

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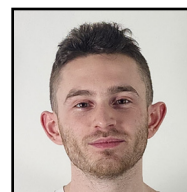
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New Era of CT State Entering Its 2nd Semester

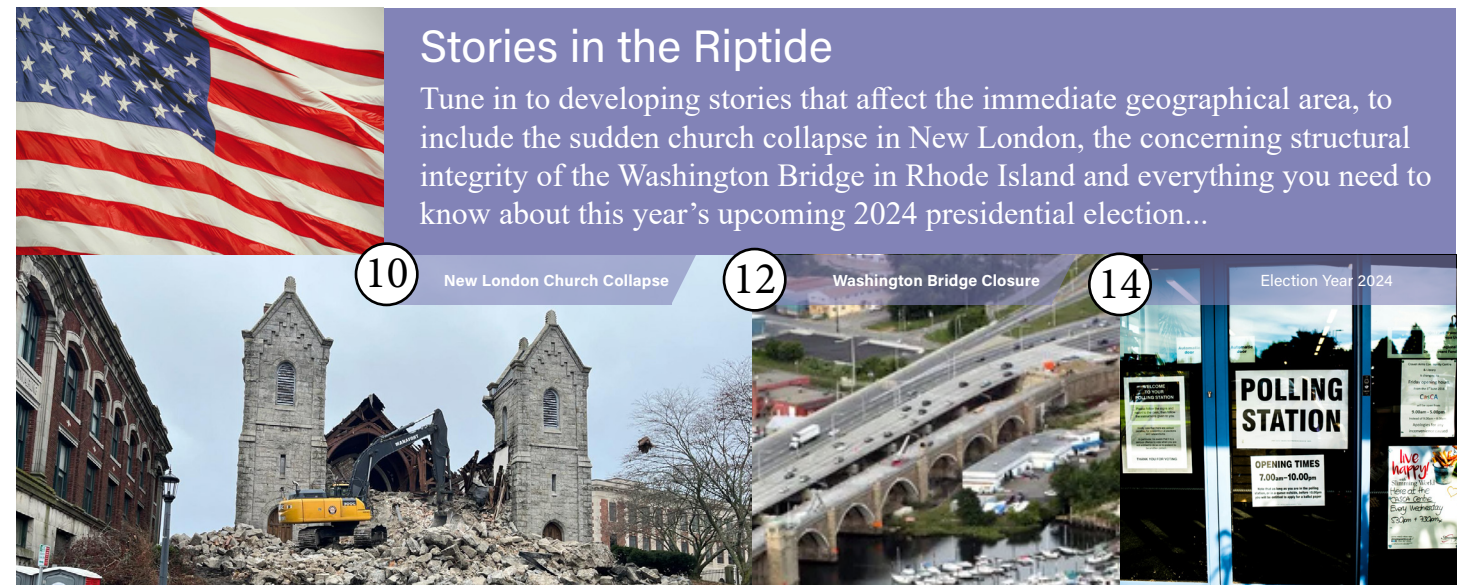
As we are gradually finishing the first full academic year of the newly appointed Connecticut community college jurisdiction, find out how life at Three Rivers Community College has adapted to the newly carried out transition publicly known as the CT State Merger...

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Stories in the Riptide

Tune in to developing stories that affect the immediate geographical area, to include the sudden church collapse in New London, the concerning structural integrity of the Washington Bridge in Rhode Island and everything you need to know about this year's upcoming 2024 presidential election...



Stories of Interest



THE CT STATE COLLEGE MERGER, ONE SEMESTER LATER

How TRCC's students, faculty and staff are responding to the numerous budget cuts and changes affecting everyone.

Article by: Johnathon Santangelo

Last semester, Three Rivers had to swiftly adjust their tight-knit community college into a statewide institution of all of Connecticut's current community college locations. The merger has posed both positives and negatives as the semester has rolled out. The students and faculty at Three Rivers have felt the ripple effects hitting the college since the giant move to become one giant stream of colleges. In a search for more answers, the team at The Current reached out to multiple personnel at Three Rivers for interviews and discussions about the subject matter.

Tom Bayley is the Associate Dean of Campus Operations here at Three Rivers. Bayley largely works behind the scenes at the college and oversees "just about everything." It was fitting to garner his thoughts and experience since the merger occurred. First,



Tom Bayley, Associate Dean of Campus Operations.

Bayley wanted to set the record straight and say the merger isn't the sole reason for the sudden budget cuts that Three Rivers has seen recently. External reasons such as federal economic pressure and lower student enrollment all contribute to the college's budget.

As much as that rings true, it's still such a surprise to many students and faculty to see the ramifications this soon. Bayley was asked how else the consolidation affected Three Rivers directly. He replied that the whole system was implemented swiftly and that "it should've been a phased approach." At the start of July, the systems didn't work out for Three Rivers, and the merger forced Three Rivers to adjust their schedules, workforce, and operations.

But that begs the question: why wasn't Three Rivers affected by the previous fall 2023 semester? Bayley shed some light and stated, "We burned through our budget last semester." While Three Rivers converted to CT State Community College last semester, the campus was trying to keep operations as normal as possible. However, that only dominoed into the huge mountain of changes seen right now. "Right now, we're trying to maintain the budget," Bayley said. Bayley further explained the budget cut's specifics and described how it all forms into this downward spiral. According to Bayley, "the budget goes towards 86% payroll and 14% operating costs. But now, we are at 80% labor because of the increased deficit." It's apparent that this is the core reason why the physical ramifications on campus are on display right now, such as student workers, cafeteria hours, and library hours being completely disjointed. Bayley said in order to stay afloat, the campus has to cut 5–6% of Three Rivers' total budget. "It's either take away from the

already low 14% operating costs or take [away] 86% from payroll." Now that payroll has been drastically cut, we see a reduction in part-time workers and clashes with campus hours overall. This has been especially felt in the Mac lab in the E wing. For years now, the Mac lab has been outdated, and little to no changes have been made to remedy their issues. There has been looming news that the Mac lab would be replaced with Windows desktops, which leaves a lot to be desired for graphic design students and classes. Bayley was asked to elaborate on this change because it's an unpopular switch of resources. "We definitely want to keep the Macs," Bayley assured.

The main issue Bayley described was the lack of personnel that used to monitor the Mac OS. Due to the machines being expired, they can pose a network and security risk. Bayley explains the story of the staff cuts specifically relating to this topic, where two network managers left the IT team to explore better job opportunities or offered higher-paying wages that Three Rivers can't compete with anymore. When asked if there's an idea of when Three Rivers would address these issues, Bayley stated there's no timeline. "We had the authority," Bayley said while explaining the push for these budget cuts. However, the decisions are now made by the higher management directing the CT State Community College system.

Students and faculty are now wondering: What's next for Three Rivers? What's the future for the school with these drastic changes arising now? Bayley offered some numbers on the current deficit for CT State Community College, which is currently \$33.6 million. That's a staggering number for not just Three Rivers specifically, but for the entire community college



TRCC student studying in the cafeteria.

system in Connecticut. Bayley confirmed that next year the deficit will only grow higher, going up to a \$146 million deficit. "If you think this year is bad, we don't know how we're going to do next year." Bayley kept it straight: "Things look dark."

While the numbers are grim and Three Rivers is scrambling to adjust to these abrupt changes, Bayley assures that "Three Rivers is trying their best." When asked about the attractive factors of the campus being slowly chipped away at, such as the library, financial aid, cafeteria, and student worker opportunities, Bayley states, "We know the value of those things, and Three Rivers has a great appreciation for what we do." With that said, however, Bayley admits, "Three Rivers hasn't done a good job explaining this to the students and faculty."

Bayley was more than open and transparent in answering these questions that describe the situation Three Rivers finds itself in.

Dr. Kem Barfield is the Campus Dean of Students and Faculty for Three Rivers and has some valuable information that students might want to know. As some students and professors may notice, there were some classes that weren't offered at Three Rivers this semester, and Barfield had some insight on this concern. Barfield explained, "In general, what we're looking at is enrollments, and we're looking at enrollments that are about 14 students to make a class viable. There are some reasons why we run them a little bit less. It may be that it's the spring semester and we have some people that need this class to graduate, and the next time won't be until next spring. We don't want to delay it if possible. We don't want to delay a student until the whole year to graduate, and so we might run that class a little bit low."

It's apparent that more classes last semester and this semester are no longer being offered here at Three Rivers. As Barfield said, "In order for the class to be viable, we're looking at about 14 students, and so we are canceling many things that are below that." With that said, however, Barfield does state that most classes run through a cycle for the most convenient means of graduation. Despite the allocation of students attending classes here at Three Rivers, Barfield states that students now possess many other classes because of the merger. "I think it's really a really good thing because the students do have the advantage of having so many more choices without having to go sign up at another college somewhere. I tell students at orientations to leverage that power to their advantage. You know, if there's something that doesn't fit in your schedule here, then certainly look around CT State and see if there are other classes." Barfield proceeds to give an interesting statistic in regards to enrollment: "We look at not just enrollment, but what's called FTE." As Barfield describes it, FTE stands for full-time equivalent, and it essentially means that Three Rivers calculates all the students that are taking full-time classes and looks at the part-time students. With those numbers, they add up all the credits and divide that by 15 to get the full-time equivalent. "So our full-time equivalent has actually been up a little bit



TRCC art student enjoying a drawing session in the art studio.

for this spring." In the realm of academics and enrollment, it seems that while the home campus does shift classes around temporarily, the students are ultimately benefiting from the merger. With that said, Barfield agrees with the majority that the merger was done very hastily. "We're doing something that's unprecedented. All of these independent community colleges and making them one and creating a very large community college that's stretched across the whole state is really something that very few others have even attempted." He continues to discuss the future of the merger, where there's undoubtedly a long process ahead. Barfield agrees that there are things that Three Rivers planned as well as they could, but "there we're running into things that we didn't encounter or didn't think we would encounter." Alongside the merger logistics, there's always new change coming from the federal government and the creditors, which directly affects Three Rivers as well. Rallying off the fact that Three Rivers is no longer in charge, Barfield gave his perspective on how the college functions after the merger. He gave valuable insight, as he was once the dean of both academics and student services. Barfield would rent everything at Three Rivers as an independent college.

"Now what we have is academics, [which] is run by school deans in New Britain," he stated. "Their faculty still works for the campus, and they work for me, but they also work for their curriculum. They are very qualified people. But it's just [that] you don't have that presence on campus." During the interview, some people might have discussed the number of professors and staff retiring recently. Curious to see if this is because of the merger, Barfield said, "It's just that type of era [when] people retire." Barfield noted that retirements have increased in the last five or six years. With that said, Three Rivers doesn't have a lot of turnover of people coming and going to other opportunities. Rather, Barfield said it has to do with other factors, such as the stress of COVID, which impacts colleges to this day. However, the merger still put some apparent stress on those employees who were on the fence about retirement. Barfield expressed

that "the merger certainly put pressure on a lot of people... You know, if you see your program changing and you've been here a long time, you can either start to learn all those things and then go in another two years or you can go now... It's a mountain of challenges, and all we do at each campus is just keep working through them."

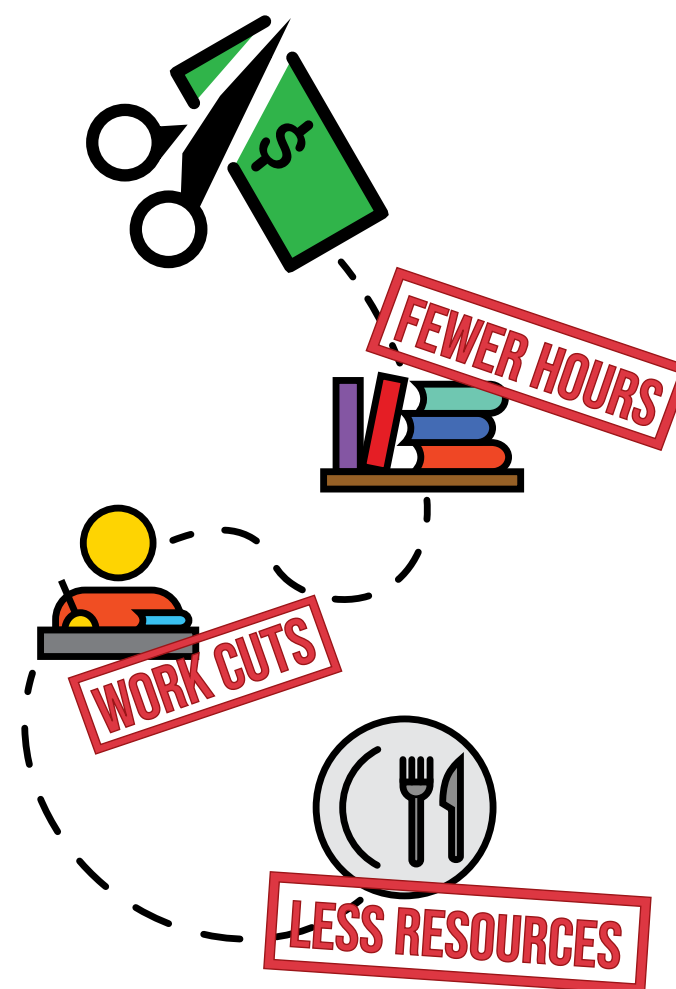
Kumar Appadwedula, the Serials & Interlibrary Loan Librarian here at Three Rivers, has been a part of Three Rivers for over thirty years and has worked in nearly every office during that time. With the incredible amount of backstory Kumar possesses, he is the best fit to answer the concerns and questions a lot of students are having.

Kumar said, "Since you've been here for so long, what's the impact that you've seen with the mergers since it's been about a full semester now? What has changed?" Kumar responds by saying there's been "good and bad things" and elaborates to say that the library has gotten access to a little bit more resources than before. "That's the good part," Kumar said.

"But the bad part is, like now, because of the financial aid and all that? Our student workers took a very big hit. Both student labor and the work study took a big hit. We lost, I think, like one or two staff members."

Kumar adds that even before the merger and budget cuts, the library was running with a skeleton crew. "So now it's even gotten to the point of bare bones."

With the library now even more starved of personnel and student workers, the scenario of someone calling out sick leaves a giant detriment to the library. Usually Kumar and the library staff would rely on student workers to fill that gap, but now that the budget cuts have happened, student workers are unable to obtain those hours to work at the library. These budget cuts are outside of Three Rivers control because they're largely being dictated by the state and federal governments. "It happened suddenly," he said.



In the fall semester of 2023, the library was running smoothly, but once this spring semester began, numerous changes hit the department all at once. “It sent us into a mini scramble.” Kumar continues to talk about the most obvious change for students: the library hours being cut. “We were open only until 5 o’clock the first week of school. Now, we’re able to do it at least until 7:00 o’clock.” This is a massive shift from how the library used to operate traditionally at Three Rivers. As many students remember, the library would close at 8:00 p.m. throughout the weekday as well as stay open on Saturdays. Now, due to these budget cuts, the Three Rivers library is starting to feel the ripple effect and cause collateral damage to the students who would frequently use the library. Not only are the student workers and faculty affected, but now students lose an entire hour each day to access the library.

The hour cuts aren’t just a convenience and money issue either, as Kumar begins to explain how they affect the other avenues of the TRCC library. “We have to do a lot of clerical work, and that keeps us from improving the library guides, or the guides that we do on the web. It prevents us from doing proper updates, so it’s like a domino effect.” Since the hours are tighter and there’s less staff, the library struggles to keep up-to-date with the library catalog and databases. Kumar disclosed his opinion on how CT State could help the library and mitigate these issues. “I don’t know; it’s hard to tell from me.”

“But my only thing I would think is probably that if they came and saw how it was affecting people, that would be big. We don’t think the upper management people really understand this domino effect that’s happening right now.” Kumar said that he agrees they do understand it on a logistical level but doesn’t think they understand the ‘down to earth’ impact fully. The higher-ups understand the issues on a surface level because they’re trying to fight them, but Kumar said it would be beneficial if they could physically see these changes for themselves. “I know it’s not going to be doable, but if they spent a day in the college, they would see it.”



Students hanging out and studying in the cafeteria at TRCC.

Kathy Shea is the head of the cafeteria at Three Rivers. When asked about the current state of the cafeteria on campus, she explained the difficulties they’ve had maintaining their business in light of the budget cuts. The cafeteria staff consists of only 3 workers, with two of them being part-time.

“[There is] between 200 and 300 people per day in and out, so there’s a lot of prep work that goes into making the servery frontline work.” Despite their difficulties, the cafeteria staff does their best to both serve their students at a reasonable price and keep their budget as low as possible. “[...] We’re always trying to stay under budget. I think we were the only department last semester to come in under budget at the college. [...] I know people will probably say it’s the prices. It’s not. [...] When I go up on a price, I go up 1/4.”

Kathy Shea empathizes with the students on campus and does everything she can to keep her prices down. When asked about the effects of the budget cuts on campus, she emphasizes that they affect the students the most. “All I ever hear is how everybody talks about how tough it is, but it’s probably more tough for all the students than anybody else, because your prices go up, the food goes up, [and] the tuition goes up. I understand that. That’s why we try to keep [it] as low as we can.” Although the school cafeteria has been struggling, Shea has a few ideas that could help the cafeteria this semester. Shea also noted that opening the cafeteria to the public would help their business. This would not only attract new customers, but potentially even new students. Even in hardship, the cafeteria staff looks out for students in the community. Shea continues to dedicate herself to Three Rivers and keeps her focus on helping the students.

“ I ALWAYS PUSH FOR STUDENT VOUCHERS. [...] GIVE THE KIDS A VOUCHER BECAUSE NOBODY NEEDS FOOD MORE THAN THE KIDS. ”

-Kathy Shea, head of the cafeteria

A Historic Building Left In Ruins

Article by: Benjamin Garay



Front view of the Engaging Heaven Church

On Thursday, January 25, citizens in downtown New London witnessed the tragic collapse of the Engaging Heaven Church, a historic structure at 66 Union St. This church, with a history spanning over 200 years, met its end as the central tower crumbled unexpectedly during working hours. The incident was captured by surrounding security cameras, leaving the community in shock.

Fortunately, the collapse occurred when the streets were devoid of pedestrians, and prompt 911 calls were made by witnesses fearing potential injuries. Police and firefighters swiftly responded, evacuating

the vicinity to prevent the potential collapse of the remaining two towers. As a precautionary measure, the streets were temporarily closed for public safety. Thankfully, no injuries were reported, and the sole occupant, Teresa Tymes, the church administrator, emerged unharmed from her office at the back of the church, which miraculously remained intact. Teresa shared her resilience, attributing her well-being to faith, stating, “I’m good because of the Lord.”

City workers promptly arrived to clear debris, working tirelessly throughout the day. The subsequent demolition of the remaining towers was deemed necessary for safety. The Engaging Heaven community, facing this unfortunate incident, aims to rebuild on the same site. Meanwhile, their religious activities continue at a temporary location in the Salvation Army, ensuring an uninterrupted sense of community. The collapse marks a somber moment for those who frequented the Engaging Heaven Church for religious services. The incident necessitated the evacuation of the active community, impacting its vibrant outreach. Although the church’s history—the first congregation in New London—was reduced to dust, efforts are underway to construct a new place of worship. This unfortunate event also raises concerns about the preservation of ancient buildings throughout the city. The collapse prompts reflection on the need to maintain and protect these structures to prevent potential hazards. The city, recognizing the risks, is taking steps to enforce the maintenance of old buildings, ensuring the safety of its citizens.

As New London grapples with the aftermath, the incident serves as a wake-up call for vigilance around older buildings. The city plans to announce changes and updates aimed at preventing further collapses, prioritizing safety, and preserving the historical charm of this beautiful city.

Frame-by-frame images of the church collapse



A side view of the church.



The complete demolition of the entire church.



The church, hours after the collapse.

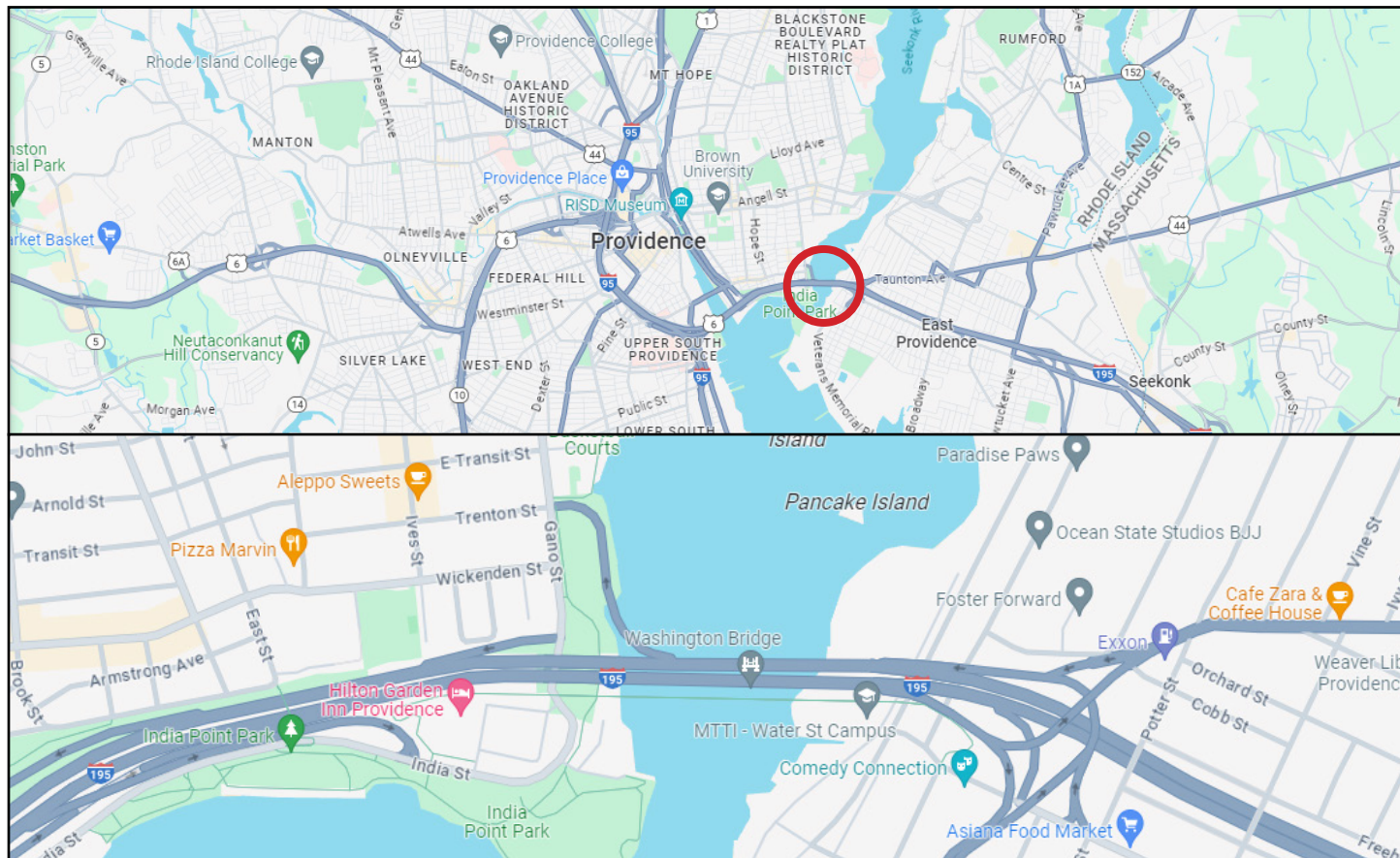
Worry At The Washington!

Article by: Lee Metzger

Washington Bridge in Rhode Island is set for a change, and it won't be pretty. Rhode Island's Washington Bridge carries more than 96,000 vehicles a day and remains one of the state's busiest sections of Interstate Highway, spanning the Seekonk River between East Providence and Providence. Its importance to the area cannot be overstated. Originally built in 1930, the new proposed Washington Bridge began its initial facelift in 2003, situating itself within the 13.7-meter (45-foot) gap between the former Washington Bridge 700 and Washington Bridge 200. It was seen as a fabulous alternative to the other concrete-heavy constructions of the time, instead focusing on local resources and labor as well as maintaining the 70-year-old look

and feel of the original bridge. The stage was set to complete this wonderful new bridge that would fit hand-in-glove with the surrounding neighborhoods without usurping any easements or right-of-ways. And it went off without a hitch. However, after a recent realization by local experts, this initial facelift may not have been carried out or maintained as well as some people may have realized.

On December 8th, 2023, structural engineer Andrew Prezioso emailed the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) about anchor rod failures on the bridge. In response to this, RIDOT Managing Engineer Keith Gaulin returns this message: "Based on our phone conversation, it seems there are no



Map of the Washington Bridge and its connecting roadways / Google Maps

immediate actions to be taken right at this moment as we try to determine other short- and long-term solutions." Nothing happens until three days later, when on December 11th, this information made it to RIDOT director Peter Alviti Jr.'s desk, and he realized the catastrophic effect an engineering failure could have not only on the structure of the bridge itself but also on the hundreds of thousands of people who use the bridge weekly. After immediately briefing Rhode Island Governor Dan McKee, the two men shut down the westbound side of the bridge. This shutdown devastated commute times for the entire community. Although this shutdown may have prevented or delayed a tragedy, the impact on local businesses and communities cannot be overstated. The evening commute is the most affected. Local side streets in East Providence have become gridlocked. People become nearly stranded in their vehicles as traffic is at a standstill city-wide. Then, from December 13th through 21st, McKee announces emergency

measures allowing two lanes of westbound traffic on the eastbound span of the bridge. This eases the amount of traffic slightly, but the bandage is not nearly large enough. The RIDOT even goes so far as to tell pregnant women to avoid the bridge altogether. The ferry is also mobilized, creating another right-of-way from Bristol to Providence for commuters to get around the traffic. Meanwhile, a forensic investigation is underway underneath the bridge. RIDOT's Alviti considers many options, from repairing important load-bearing beams and arches to tearing the whole thing down and starting from scratch. Concurrently, the U.S. Attorney for the District of Rhode Island

opens an investigation into RIDOT and allegations of false claims for payment on maintenance of the Washington bridge going back to 2015, resulting in Gov. McKee's office dispatching top aide Joseph Almond to monitor RIDOT's response to the bridge's closure while Alviti notifies Providence-bound lawmakers that there may be no clear path forward until February or even into March.

The situation is an absolute mire. Commuters are furious that things have gotten this bad. But good news



Aerial view of the Washington Bridge.

The Providence Journal

may be on the horizon. With expedited inspections and analysis of the bridge, the RIDOT has the opportunity to come up with some innovative and lasting solutions for this most load-bearing stretch of highway. The importance of this thoroughfare is such that it almost guarantees that no matter the scope of the repairs or new construction needed, the work will be swiftly enacted, or else the RIDOT and Governor McKee will face even more criticism and scrutiny than they already are facing. No matter what happens, the Washington Bridge remains an important part of the face of Providence and will either remain a blemish or perhaps blossom into the beauty mark that it could be.

The 2024 Election Season Officially Begins

Local elections & Republican Presidential primaries heat up as Super Tuesday voting get closer.

Article by: Johnathon Santangelo

As election year rolls out, the Republican presidential primaries and caucuses continue onward between former U.S. President Donald Trump and former governor Nikki Haley.

Throughout the rest of this year, voters will also take the booth and decide on the Democratic presidential election. However, U.S. President Joe Biden, who took office in early 2021, faces little opposition in his bid for the Democratic Party nomination and appears to win as the presidential incumbent.

At the time of writing, Donald Trump is leading with 32 delegates, while Nikki Haley trails behind with 17 delegates. Nevada and the Virgin Islands will be holding their Republican presidential caucus early in February, opening up another 26 and 4 delegates, respectively.

States continue to vote for the Republican nominee, including South Carolina, Michigan, Idaho, Missouri, the District of Columbia, and North Dakota. These states are important to follow as they signal the big event ahead: Super Tuesday.

Super Tuesday will occur on March 5th, where more than a third of all delegates will be up for grabs and drastically shape the direction of the Republican presidential race. Super Tuesday has long determined the frontrunner for the party's general election.

These state delegates are crucial, as many Republican presidential hopefuls take an early stand before March 5th. For example, former President Donald Trump stopped in Alabama last August to speak at a Republican dinner, and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis campaigned early in the state of Tennessee to address over 1,500 GOP voters last July.

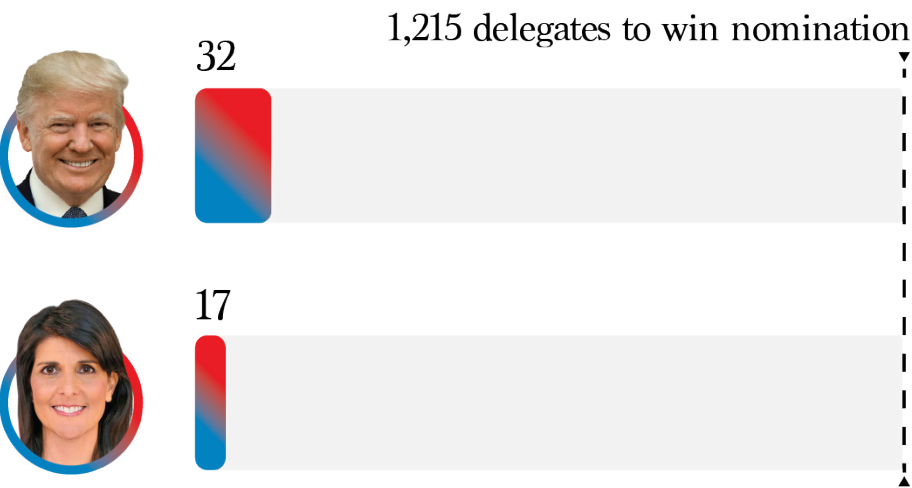


Super Tuesday also contains other important statewide races, such as North Carolina’s governor and Texas’ Senate and House seats.

Connecticut will have its presidential primaries in a couple months on April 2nd, so there’s plenty of time to register to vote if you haven’t already! The deadline to register online is March 15, and to register in person, it ends on April 1. To learn more about Connecticut’s elections and voting information, be sure to visit portal.ct.gov.

As November’s presidential election approaches closer and closer, expect a competitive battle between Donald Trump and Nikki Haley to become the Republican nominee. In the meantime, keep an eye on which states might see a new governor or flip a couple state seats.

Republican delegates



Drown In Sound takes Montville by storm!

Article by: Jesse Bisunia

The talk of the town for the last three to four months was the highly anticipated and sought-after musical event at the VFW in Montville, hosted and performed by Three Rivers' very own Derek Denis, Max Hillyer, and Jack Hillyer. Alongside their bandmates John Henderson, Adam Radley, Alec Bergeron, and fellow musicians ProbDead and Silly Notion, the group raised the roof on January 27th.

The four-hour event was a collaboration of several artists and bands that have written, recorded, and published their own music on several music platforms. The performers included GASH and ProbDead, which specialized in hip-hop and trap; Done Right and Silly Notion, who were fueled by punk rock; and a surprise appearance by the newly formed band Marked Up, which absolutely nailed the art form of rap rock. The event had accumulated over a hundred spectators from all corners of New London County and became so lively to the point that large mosh pits were formed during the venue by hardcore punk rock and hip-hop fans. Attendees of all ages were spotted at Drown in Sound, as the venue had no limitations for anyone who wanted to stop by and be a part of the rockin' night. Several eventgoers were asked to elaborate on their experience attending the event, and most answers were geared towards excitement. Many were already wondering when the next event would take place and which bands would be participating.

The night began with Probdead setting the tone with his best hits and getting the crowd in the musical mood. His style of music was very therapeutically relaxing, and he began turning heads towards the stage. Following his performance, Silly Notion took to the stage and started revealing the moshers in the crowd; one by one, they would rapidly gather on the floor as the pit was heating up.



Moshpit at Drown in Sound

“ SAYING IT LIVED UP TO THE HYPE IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT. ”

-Eventgoer

tracks were being revealed for the first time in a live setting. This paved the way for the night's final performance, led by Done Right. The mosh pit was raging by this point, and fuel was only getting added to the fire. Done Right entertained a few of their own originals, including “Armchair Hero,” “Regrets,” and “New Understanding,” and thrilled the audience with two surprise cover tracks, “Blitzkrieg Bop” by Ramones and “1945” by Social Distortion. This event was a huge stepping stone for the new-aged bands as they strive to take on what their journey entails and make their mark in the music industry.

BAND LOGOS



As the night was rolling, the event was turning up. Soon after Silly Notion finished their performance, GASH wasted no time grabbing the mic and taking to the stage. He performed various tracks, including “bLuHd STANE,” “Entitled,” and “All I See,” and surprised the crowd with his brand new hit single “MISBEHAVIN’.” He got the crowd hyped up, and as he was slowly wrapping up his part of the night, the gig rolled right into the new band collaboration, Marked Up, where brand new, never-before-heard



NATIONAL PIE DAY

Article by: Maximilian Hillyer

Pie Day was here at TRCC! This was an event that took place on campus in the main lobby from 11:00 a.m. through 1:00 p.m. and again around 5:00 p.m. through 7:00 p.m. This event was a fun and exciting way to introduce students to this school semester's events. Students were able to take a small bag that was full of informational brochures about the school and CT State. Some of the events listed are Empty Bowls (March 6th), Dodgeball Tournament (March 20th), and Wellness Symposium (April 19). A tasty single-serve pie treat with the choice of apple, pecan, blueberry, and cherry was available in the bags with the informational news.

By the end of the first half of the two-part event, all the bags were taken. This was a fun event that helped spread awareness and information and updates about the school. Make sure to stay in the loop about school events and plans, and show off that school spirit.



Goodie bags being handed out in the main entrance lobby on Pie Day.

Smartphone AI Is The Future!

Article by: Jesse Bisunia

The latest and arguably greatest leap ever taken from one smartphone to the next has just hit the market and has the tech community talking. Some reviewers and critics have questioned, Why buy anything else? Popular YouTube tech reviewer Marques Brownlee called the S24 Ultra the tonesetter for 2024. There are several specifications about the new S24 Ultra that top the charts among all competing smartphones to date, including a new class-leading quad HD AMOLED display with a screen brightness specification of up to 2,600 nits. For reference, it's about 100 nites brighter than the iPhone 15 Pro and Pro Max. But all these new hardware specs aren't what the tech experts are talking about. It's a highly anticipated software specification formally announced by Samsung as Galaxy AI.

Three exclusive AI features to point out include photo editing, which includes being able to move an object around in a photograph as the AI software fills the gaps left behind with realistic content. Real-time translations are also a big hit with this new software. You are able to call someone who speaks another language and have the AI translate the language for you in real time with unnoticeable delays. The third feature is website summaries, which give you a detailed rundown of the contents of whatever website you're visiting. All that and more, as the S24 series sets the next stepping stone for smartphones in 2024.



The Galaxy S24 series on display at the Best Buy in Waterford.

Samsung S24 Series Spec Comparisons

	S24	S24+	S24 Ultra
Size	6.2"	6.7"	6.8"
Resolution	2340 x 1080 pixels 19.5:9 ratio 416 PPI	3088 x 1440 pixels 19.5:9 ratio 509 PPI	3088 x 1440 pixels 19.5:9 ratio 501 PPI
Features	HDR support, Scratch-resistant glass (Corning Gorilla Glass Victus 2), Ambient light sensor, Proximity sensor		+ Stylus Pen
Refresh Rate	120Hz		
System Chip	Qualcomm Snapdragon 8 Gen 3		
GPU	Adreno 750		
RAM	8GB	12GB	
Storage	128GB / 256GB		256GB / 512GB / 1TB
Battery	4000 mAh	4900 mAh	5000 mAh
Price	\$800	\$1000	\$1300



Lee’s 2024 Oscar Prediction Locks

Article by: Lee Metzger

LOCK THEM UP - Movies! What can be said about movies that hasn’t already been said? How about “No one has ever liked a movie?” That’s pretty easily been disproven, so even if someone has said that, they probably shouldn’t have. What about “Film is a dying art form?” This is equally ridiculous a premise and proposition, and it begs the question: to whom are you prompting these almost arbitrarily made statements? To that question, I answer, “Wait, what are we talking about?”

Film is alive and well, and there is no better place to look than the thriving organization of the Academy Awards. Once a year, every year, the stars (and their less important friends and family) gather to stare in one direction for 3 hours while others get told that they are the best at acting, directing, and screenwriting. However, in recent years, it has been discovered that there are actually people in the film industry worthy of attention and accolades who normally do not get that type of attention. Many people have balked, leading to tension in Hollywood and an unexpected pushback from the idea that all people should be represented at these awards. Although there are clear snubs this year (how were Greta Gerwig and Cord Jefferson not included in Best Director categories??), the net was cast wide, and I’d love to tell you who I think will bring home the hardware in this year’s OSCARS.

In the following sections, I will lay out who I think should win and who will actually win. Sometimes those distinctions will result in the same person. Other times, it won’t. Allow me now to lay it all out for you!

ACTOR IN A LEADING ROLE

- Nominees:
- BRADLEY COOPER
Maestro
 - COLMAN DOMINGO
Rustin
 - PAUL GIAMATTI
The Holdovers
 - CILLIAN MURPHY
Oppenheimer
 - JEFFREY WRIGHT
American Fiction

There is a game being played in all of these categories. A bit of a game within a game, if you will. There is always the easy one—the nomination that stands out. As an American who benefits from living in the same country that the most popular movies come from, I believe that my experience is the “normal” or “expected” experience for everyone. So when I see this list, I think, “Who is America’s choice?” Then, the second question arises: “Who is the Academy’s choice?” My gut reaction is to go with Cillian Murphy. It’s Nolan, it’s big bombs, it’s practical effects, Cillian Murphy is so hot right now, etc. However, these Academy types see the ghost in the machine; they can read the code like Neo at the end of the Matrix. It is within this code that the Academy knows who win.

The award should go to: Bradley Cooper.

Maestro was such bait, you guys. The movie ends with a 7-minute shot of an incredible Mahler piece that, if seen in a theater or at your weird-friend-who-is-obsessed-with-cinematic-audio’s basement, will blow you out of your damn seat. All that after 2 hours of a gripping tale of a tortured genius who was sexually manipulative to his wife and lovers? It’s a guarantee.



Oscar trophy, the most prestigious award in the film industry.

Lee’s pick on who will win: Jeffrey Wright.

This is going to be the beginning of a trend, folks. First of all, Jeffrey Wright should win all the awards. Cinematography, costuming, best behavior at crafty, whatever, I don’t care. Give it all to him. The man is a national treasure!

ACTRESS IN A LEADING ROLE

- Nominees:
- ANNETTE BENING
Nyad
 - LILY GLADSTONE
Killers of the Flower Moon
 - SANDRA HÜLLER
Anatomy of a Fall
 - CAREY MULLIGAN
Maestro
 - EMMA STONE
Poor Things

This one is easy (but not really). It’s Lily Gladstone, right? Gotta be. She already took home the Golden Globe for Best Actress in a Motion Picture. This category is stacked, however. Annette Bening in her best role since the Supreme Intelligence in Captain Marvel (joke) and the Sopranos (not a joke). Carey Mulligan’s role in Maestro grounded Bradley Cooper’s (almost cartoonish at times) depiction of Leonard Bernstein. Emma Stone devouring the scenery in Poor Things. The category. Is. Stacked. That being said...

The award should go to: Lily Gladstone.

This one is easy (it’s really not). Lily Gladstone deserves her flowers with this difficult portrayal of a Native American woman struggling in the American West during a tumultuous time (understatement of the century). Not to mention the public support she’s received from her director, Martin Scorsese, and her co-star, Leonardo DiCaprio, which should go a long way in solidifying her securing the award.

Lee’s pick on who will win: For all the same reasons, it’s got to be Lily Gladstone. Not only is she hot right now, but she’s also earned every accolade she receives for this role.

DIRECTOR

Nominees:
ANATOMY OF A FALL
Justine Triet
KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON
Martin Scorsese
OPPENHEIMER
Christopher Nolan
POOR THINGS
Yorgos Lanthimos
THE ZONE OF INTEREST
Jonathan Glazer

Well, I definitely know who I want to win, but this one seems a bit canned. With both Scorsese and Nolan up for this award, it seems guaranteed to be one of them. I personally push back on the notion that when Scorsese puts up a film that lasts over 3 hours, he must be given a nomination for best director. Buddy, that should’ve been a mini-series, let’s be honest. And as great as Christopher Nolan is, I think I’m good with skipping this nod. However...

The award should go to: Nolan or Scorsese.

You know it’s going to be one of them, y’all. Sorry.

Lee’s pick on who will win:

If it’s not Yorgos Lanthimos, we will riot. We take it to the streets and burn it all down. Flip cars, tear down lamp posts—the whole thing. Poor Things is one of the most beautiful, weird, and jarring cinematic experiences, not to mention a [gasp] original story! And to all those out there who say this isn’t an original story: To that, I say: Shut up. And that’s that, folks! You only get three, so go on DraftKings or whatever and lock in your parlay. We’re making some money off of this, right?

The Oscars will be on ABC on March 10 at 8:00 p.m. EST.



Dolby Theatre, venue for the 2024 Academy Awards Ceremony.

Historic Theatre Photos

2024 Grammy Awards Recapitulation

Article by: Jesse Bisunia

Winners are in **bold**.

1. Record of the Year

Worshop - Jon Batiste
Not Strong Enough - boygenius
Flowers - Miley Cyrus
What Was I Made For? - Billie Eilish
On My Mama - Victoria Monét
Vampire - Olivia Rodrigo
Anti-Hero - Taylor Swift
Kill Bill - SZA
2. Album of the Year

World Music Radio - Jon Basiste
the record - boygenius
Endless Summer Vacation - Miley Cryus
D.Y.K.T.T.A.T.U.O.B - Lana Del Rey
The Age Of Pleasure - Janelle Monáe
GUTS - Olivia Rodrigo
Midnights - Taylor Swift
SOS - SZA
3. Song Of The Year

A&W - Lana Del Rey
Anti-Hero - Taylor Swift
Butterfly - Jon Batiste
Dance The Night - Dua Lipa
Flowers - Miley Cyrus
Kill Bill - SZA
Vampire - Olivia Rodrigo
What Was I Made For? - Billie Eilish
4. Best New Artist

Gracie Abrams
Fred again..
Ice Spice
Jelly Roll
Coco Jones
Noah Kahan
Victoria Monét
The War And Treaty
5. Producer Of The Year, Non-Classical

Jack Antonoff
Dernst "D'Mile" Emile II
Hit-Boy
Metro Boomin
Daniel Nigro
6. Songwriter of the Year, Non-Classical

Edgar Barrera
Jessie Jo Dillon
Shane McAnally
Theron Thomas
Justin Tranter
7. Best Pop Solo Performance

Flowers - Miley Cyrus
Paint The Town Red - Doja Cat
What Was I Made For? - Billie Eilish
Vampire - Olivia Rodrigo
Anti-Hero - Taylor Swift
8. Best Pop Duo/Group Performance

Thousand Miles - Miley Cyrus Ft Brandi Carlile
Candy Necklace -Lana Del Rey Ft Jon Batiste
Never Felt So Alone - Labrinth Ft Billie Eilish
Karma - Taylor Swift Featuring Ice Spice
Ghost In The Machine - SZA Ft Phoebe Bridgers
9. Best Pop Vocal Album

Chemistry - Kelly Clarkson
Endless Summer Vacation - Miley Cyrus
GUTS - Olivia Rodrigo
- (Subtract) - Ed Sheeran
Midnights - Taylor Swift
10. Best Dance/Electronic Recording

Blackbox Life Recorder 21F - Aphex Twin
Loading - James Blake
Higher Than Ever Before - Disclosure
Strong - Romy & Fred again..
Rumble - Skrillex, Fred again.. & Flowdan
11. Best Pop Dance Recording

Baby Don't Hurt Me - David Guetta, Anne-Marie & Coi Leray
Miracle - Calvin Harris, Ellie Goulding
Padam Padam - Kylie Minogue
One In A Million - Bebe Rexha & David Guetta
Rush - Troye Sivan
12. Best Dance/Electronic Music Album

Playing Robots Into Heaven - James Blake
For That Beautiful Feeling - The Chemical Brothers
Actual Life 3 (Jan 1 - Sept 9 2022) - Fred again..
Kx5 - Kx5
Quest For Fire - Skrillex
13. Best Rock Performance

Sculptures Of Anything Goes - Arctic Monkey
More Than A Love Song - Black Pumas
Not Strong Enough - Boygenius
Rescued - Foo Fighters
Lux Aeterna - Metallica
14. Best Metal Performance

Bad Man - Disturbed
Phantom Of The Opera - Ghost
72 Seasons - Metallica
Hive Mind - Slipknot
Jaded - Spiritbox
15. Best R&B Performance

Summer Too Hot - Chris Brown
Back To Love - Robert Glasper Ft SiR & Alex Isle4
ICU - Coco Jones
How Does It Make You Feel - Victoria Monét
Kill Bill - SZA
16. Best Traditional R&B Performance

Simple - Babyface Featuring Coco Jones
Lucky - Kenyon Dixon
Hollywood - Victoria Monét Ft Earth, Wind & Fire & Hazel Monét
Good Morning - PJ Morton Ft Susan Carol
Love Language - SZA
17. Best Rap Performance

The Hillbillies - Baby Keem Ft Kendrick Lamar
Love Letter - Black Thought
Rich Flex - Drake & 21 Savage
SCIENTISTS & ENGINEERS - Killer Mike Ft André 3000, Future And Eryn Allen Kane
Players - Coi Leray
18. Best Melodic Rap Performance

Sittin' On Top Of The World - Burna Boy Ft 21 Savage
Attention - Doja Cat
Spin Bout U - Drake & 21 Savage
All My Life - Lil Durk Ft J. Cole
Low - SZA
19. Best Jazz Performance

Movement 18' (Heroes) - Jon Batiste
Basquiat - Lakecia Benjamin
Vulnerable - Adam Blackstone Ft The Baylor Project & Russell Ferranté
But Not For Me - Fred Hersch & Esperanza Spalding
Tight - Samara Joy
20. Best Country Solo Performance

In Your Love - Tyler Childers
Buried - Brandy Clark
Fast Car - Luke Combs
The Last Thing On My Mind - Dolly Parton
White Horse - Chris Stapleton



Miley Cyrus wins her first Grammy.

ABC News



What February Has Brewing For Us

Article by: Benjamin Garay

To chocolate lovers: A sweet and tasty event will be held at the Bill Memorial Library in Groton, where you can try chocolates from different parts of the world and vote on your favorite one. On February 14, a committee will crown their favorite chocolate as the best in the world. It can be tasted from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. You can't miss it.

The annual sweet potato festival will take place on February 24 from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. There is a very popular festival in Norwich where you can delight in various sweet potato dishes. This year, various tickets will receive a discount. Tickets for adults cost \$25, and tickets for children under 12 years old only cost \$15. This is an interesting event for those who want to taste some delicious sweet potatoes. To purchase tickets, contact the following email: norwich.NAACP.2012@gmail.com.

Located within the Norwich Free Academy, you have the Slater Memorial Museum. It is a gallery full of art from various parts of the world, both regional and global. The place is very large and full of sculptures from many eras in history—Greek, Roman, Renaissance, etc. The museum also presents the local history of the city of Norwich. Without a doubt, this is a favorable point of interest for history enthusiasts and

those interested in learning more about the beautiful city of Norwich.

Gillette's mansion is one of the most popular places to spend a good day indoors. You can tour the medieval mansion and the wooded grounds surrounding the building. You will discover new and beautiful views, and if you dare, you can camp at this location and spend a day there full of crazy adventures. Inside the mansion, you can learn a little more about the life of playwright William Hooker Gillette, the actor famous for his stage portrayal of Sherlock Holmes and the owner of the Gillette mansion. That being said, free up your calendar and plan for a weekend visit to this historic castle. It's open all day and closes at sunset.

If you want to have a fun time with all your friends and family, we highly recommend you visit Supercharged. Located in Oakdale, CT, it is a place full of attractions, including go-karting, trampolines, arcades, food, and so much more. The venue is available for organized parties and events; just put your name down to make a reservation, and it will be yours for that date. Fridays are the perfect days to visit because there are offers and discounts for all customers. The schedule varies depending on the day, so check the website for more details.



O = Event X = Point of Interest

- O **World Chocolate Extravaganza @ Bill Memorial Library, Groton / February 14 / 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM**
Explore chocolates from around the world, vote for your favorite, and witness the crowning of the best chocolate. Don't miss this unique event for chocolate enthusiasts.
- O **Annual Sweet Potato Festival @ Rose City Senior Center, Norwich / February 24 / 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM**
Indulge in various sweet potato dishes at the popular annual Sweet Potato Festival. Discounted tickets available: \$25 for adults, \$15 for children under 12. Contact norwich.NAACP.2012@gmail.com for tickets.
- X **Slater Memorial Museum @ Norwich Free Academy, Norwich**
A large gallery featuring art from around the world, including sculptures from various historical eras. Explore both regional and global art, along with the local history of Norwich.
- X **Gillette Castle in Lyme**
Tour the medieval mansion, explore wooded grounds, and learn about the life of playwright William Hooker Gillette. Open all day until sunset, offering a historic and adventurous experience.
- X **Supercharged in Oakdale**
A fun-filled destination with karting, trampolines, arcades, food, and more. Perfect for family and friends, with party and event hosting available. Check the website for varying schedules and Friday offers.



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The History of the Greatest Stage in American Sports

Article by: Jesse Bisunia

As we gear up for the big event on the national stage between the Kansas City Chiefs and the San Francisco 49ers, let's take a stroll down history lane about how this great sport came to be. The NFL began as the APFA, which stood for the American Professional Football Association, which consisted of ten teams from four states. The league rapidly gained publicity and quickly expanded to more states across the nation from its formation in 1920 until 1960. Upon the creation of the American Football League in 1960, this stimulated a newborn rivalry between the two



Pro football player in the mid 20th century. Library of Congress

professional gridiron football leagues and eventually propelled the sport ahead of baseball as the most popular spectator sport in the country by the end of the decade. In 1966, commissioner Pete Rozelle (whom the NFL MVP trophy is named after) and owner of the AFL's Kansas City Chiefs Lamar Hunt (whom the AFC Championship Trophy is named after)

negotiated a merger agreement where both the NFL and AFL would formally merge together into one unified league that would retain the name of National Football League. As a result, an additional game would be added at the end of the season where the champion of both former leagues would square off to attain the title of the ultimate champion of gridiron football. Rozelle

suggested the name of the game be called the "Super Bowl." While this name was only a mere brainstorm, the media began using this iconic phrase in journalistic references ahead of the inaugural game in January 1967 between the Green Bay Packers and Kansas City Chiefs. The Packers won the game by a score of 35-10 and the NFL championship trophy was named "The Vince Lombardi Trophy" after the head coach for the Green Bay Packers at the time. He ended up winning the first two Super Bowls and is widely regarded as one of the greatest head coaches of all time.



Left: Tex Schramm, former President of the Dallas Cowboys
Middle: Pete Rozelle, former commissioner of the NFL
Right: Lamar Hunt, former President of the Kansas City Chiefs
Associated Press Photo



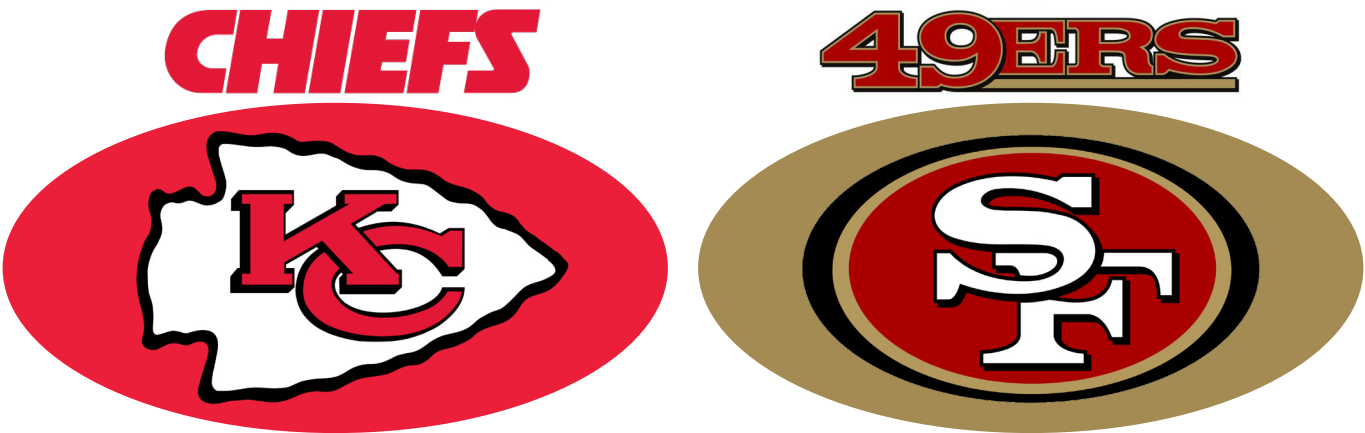
Vince Lombardi, head coach of the Green Bay Packers Associated Press Photo

Most Super Bowl / NFL Championship Titles in NFL History

As of 02/12/2024

GREEN BAY PACKERS	4 SUPER BOWLS	9 NFL TITLES	SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS	5 SUPER BOWLS	
CHICAGO BEARS	1 SUPER BOWL	8 NFL TITLES	INDIANAPOLIS COLTS	2 SUPER BOWLS	3 NFL TITLES
NEW YORK GIANTS	4 SUPER BOWLS	4 NFL TITLES	DETROIT LIONS		4 NFL TITLES
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS	6 SUPER BOWLS		LAS VEGAS RAIDERS	3 SUPER BOWLS	1 NFL TITLE
PITTSBURGH STEELERS	6 SUPER BOWLS		CLEVELAND BROWNS		4 NFL TITLES
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS	4 SUPER BOWLS	2 NFL TITLES	LOS ANGELES RAMS	2 SUPER BOWLS	2 NFL TITLES
DALLAS COWBOYS	5 SUPER BOWLS		PHILADELPHIA EAGLES	1 SUPER BOWL	3 NFL TITLES
WASHINGTON COMMANDERS	3 SUPER BOWLS	2 NFL TITLES	DENVER BRONCOS	3 SUPER BOWLS	

This year's  matchup



A survey was conducted of 100 NFL fans in New London County...

WHO ARE YOU ROOTING FOR TO WIN SUPERBOWL LVIII?



WHO DO YOU THINK WILL WIN SUPERBOWL LVIII?



Mini Guitar Lesson *by Max*

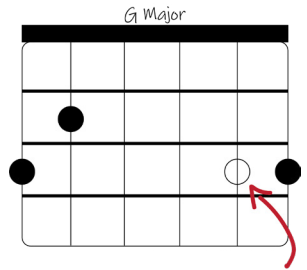
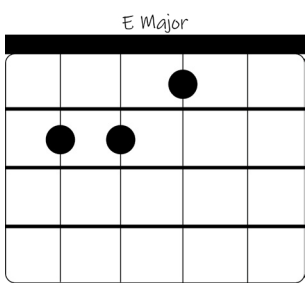
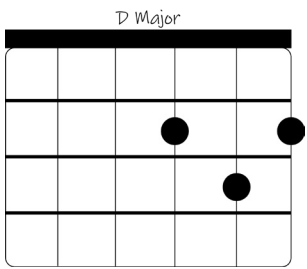
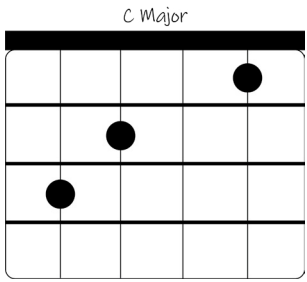
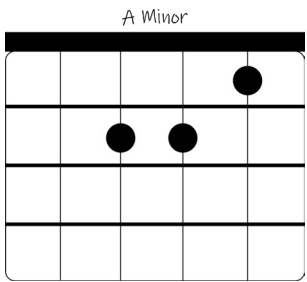
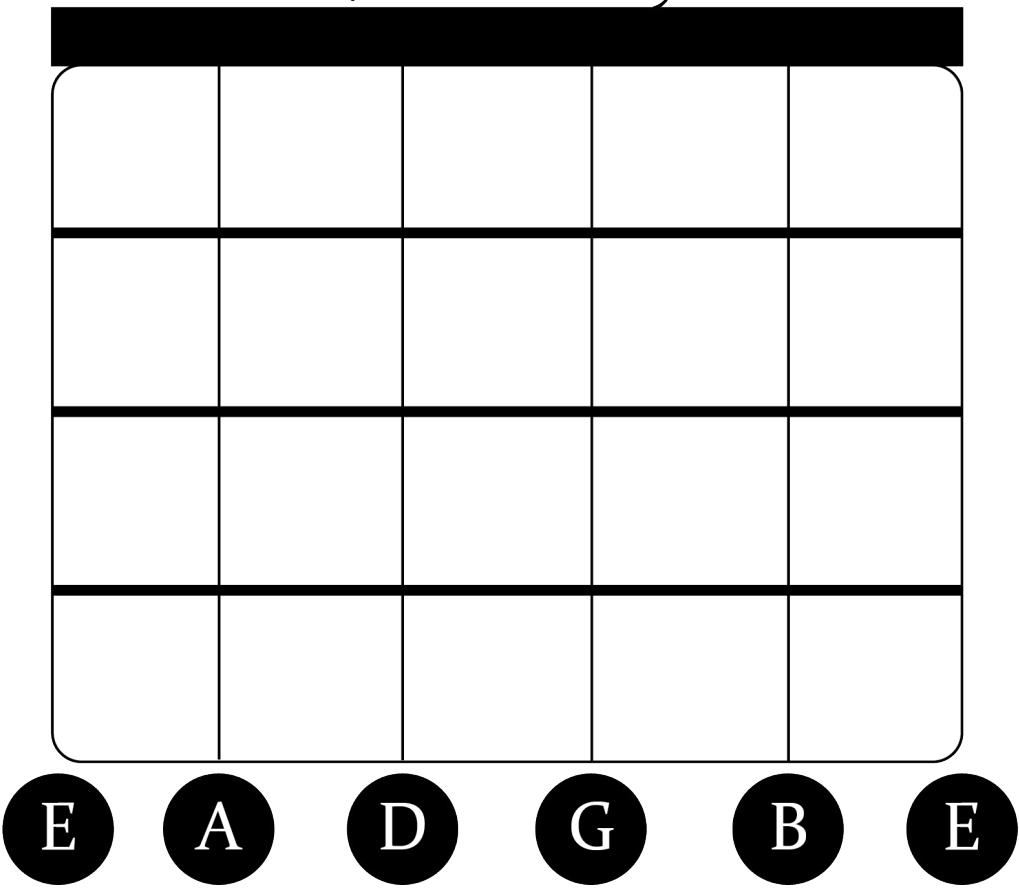
Article by: Maximilian Hillyer



Have you ever thought of the idea of learning, practicing, and even mastering an instrument? A lot of people like the thought of being a musician and being able to play music, but many don't go forward with this. This is probably because of the reality of playing: endless hours of practicing and learning just to understand how to play or even know what to do. The best thing to do if you want to learn any instrument is to find something you are eager to learn. Don't pick up an instrument to impress people or at others' expense, but for yourself. This will make you more motivated to play, as it is you who started and only you who will keep going. Find songs and genres you personally like to listen to, and go from there. Starting off small and learning small parts of

songs, or easy-going songs, will help tremendously when going through your journey as a musician. Don't try to learn the fastest or hardest thing first, as you will find yourself more aggravated and annoyed than satisfied and happy. The guitar is an instrument that is very fun and rewarding to play. There are many benefits to playing this instrument, as it is very versatile in what you can do with it. Even during busy times, like the school semester and work, it can be a relaxing output to go to. Learning an instrument like the guitar can relieve stress, enhance creativity, boost self-esteem, and even improve memory. What about this? Is it not appealing? In this article, there are tabs and graphics of chords and chord shapes to help you pursue and start your rockstar journey.

Guitar Strings



This note could be added to fill up the sound of the chord. It is a "D" note, which is part of the G Major scale.

Balancing a Healthy Lifestyle with School

Article by: Derek Denis

Staying physically active can be extremely challenging for students during the school semester. Between attending classes, working a job, and finishing assignments, setting aside time to go to the gym becomes increasingly difficult. Here are a few exercises to help you stay active:

Push-ups (10-20 repetitions)

Push-ups are a great way to build upper-body strength. They work your chest, biceps, triceps, shoulders, and abdominal muscles. Remember to keep your back straight, your feet together, and position your hands directly underneath your shoulders. Inhale on your way down, and keep your biceps close to the body. Lower your body until your chest is close to the floor. Exhale and keep your core tightened as you push back up.



Bodyweight Squats (20-30 repetitions)

This exercise is perfect for building leg muscle and burning calories. Bodyweight squats work the glutes, hip flexors, and quadriceps, as well as the core, calves, and hamstrings. To start off, stand with your feet hip-width apart and point your toes slightly outward. Bend your knees as you lower your hips toward the ground. Continue until you feel a stretch in your quads, and slowly push down through your heels to return to the starting position. Remember to always keep your back straight.



Crunches (20-30 repetitions)

Crunches are a simple, beginner-friendly exercise to work the abs. It is important that this exercise be done in a slow, controlled manner to engage the right muscles. Start in a lying position and plant your feet on the floor, hip-width apart. As you lift your upper body, exhale and keep your neck relaxed. Inhale and slowly return to the starting position.



Planks (30 seconds)

This exercise builds your core muscles and becomes increasingly difficult the longer you do it. Start in a push-up position, but with your forearms touching the ground, shoulder-width apart. Keep your back straight and your core tightened. Avoid sagging your hips and raising your shoulders. Repeat these exercises for 3 sets. Modify the number of reps to your personal preference.



Word Search / Issue #3

Word search grid containing letters for the word search puzzle.

Word Bank

- 1. BACKPACK
- 2. CLASSROOM
- 3. LIBRARY
- 4. GRADUATION
- 5. BOOKSTORE
- 6. CAFETERIA
- 7. SEMINAR
- 8. LECTURE
- 9. SYLLABUS
- 10. REGISTRATION

Scavenger Hunt / Issue #3

Find the hidden CAN in this issue of The Current and e-mail the answer to thecurrentspring2024@gmail.com. Find the hidden items in all 6 issues of the 2024 Spring Semester for a chance to win a \$25 Amazon giftcard!



Crossword Puzzle / Issue #3

Crossword puzzle grid with numbered squares for the crossword puzzle.

Across

- 3. A teacher of the highest academic rank in a college or university
- 4. The milieu or interests of a university, college, or academy
- 6. The grounds, often including the buildings, of a college
- 7. An academic title conferred by universities and colleges as an indication of the completion of a course of study
- 9. The charge or fee for instruction, as at a private school or a college

Down

- 1. A learned or erudite person
- 2. A member of the same class at a school or college
- 4. The plural of alumnus
- 5. A person who works as an apprentice or trainee in an occupation or profession to gain practical experience
- 8. An official at a school or college who maintains students' personal and academic records

Crossword Puzzle Answer Key
Across: 3. professor, 4. academia, 6. campus, 7. degree, 9. tuition
Down: 1. scholar, 2. classroom, 4. alumnus, 5. intern, 8. registrar

Wyoming. February, 1876.



Annie Crowe - Part 1: The Deal.

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Designed by

Jesse Bisunia