



## VINYL CHLORIDE SPILL CAUSED BY TRAIN DERAILMENT IN OHIO SPARKS SOCIETAL FEARS

UCONN PROFESSORS TALK ABOUT ITS IMPACTS ON HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

by Delan Li

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On Feb. 3, a Norfolk Southern train derailed in East Palestine, Ohio, with 11 tank cars carrying hazardous materials and five tank cars carrying 115,580 gallons of vinyl chloride, according to CNN. A response team then ignited the hazardous materials to control the spill.

Vinyl chloride is often used to make PVC. Its combustion products are phosgene and dioxin, of which phosgene was used as a chemical weapon in World War I, and dioxin is a persistent environmental pollutant that can remain in the ground and body for years. They are all carcinogens.

People in East Palestine and throughout other outlying states, including Connecticut, have closely watched the incident. Officials are concerned that these toxic substances are entering the water cycle, the atmosphere and the soil, thus affecting health.

Animal studies done by the Department of Health and Human Services have shown that exposure to 50 ppm of vinyl chloride in the air increases the risk of liver cancer.

Cody Smith is an assistant professor of pharmacology and toxicology at UConn. He explained he does not expect people to be exposed long enough to the chemicals to bear the worst side-effects.

"I don't think anyone's going to be exposed long enough or at high enough levels to actually be concerned with liver cancer," Smith said.

David Grant is also a professor of pharmacology and toxicology at UConn. He concurred with Professor Smith's assessment.

"Most of the chemicals in the train cars were

relatively volatile, unstable compounds. Their biological and environmental half-life is relatively short. So they're not going to stay around too long," Grant said.

Another, riskier practice, Grant noted, would be to bury these hazards in the ground.

"That's one reason why the remediation team didn't do that. It's better to burn these types of chemicals and get rid of them than to bury them in the ground and have them potentially leach into the groundwater or someone's basement," Grant said.

Kristina Wagstrom is an associate professor of environmental engineering at UConn. She explained how complex the situation is in terms of cleanup and the options available to agencies on how to do so.

"They were trying to come up with the best solution to a bad problem. And none of the solutions were perfect," commented Wagstrom. "If vinyl chloride got into the soil and the groundwater, it was going to be a very big problem that would take a very long time to clean up. By combusting it, they made things that were slightly less toxic than releasing the original compounds into the air. I think that was the logic."

Wagstrom also pointed out that if the vinyl chloride was not burned, there would be a risk of explosion which would have a greater impact.

"That's why they did a controlled combustion, it was partially to keep from having that happen. This probably resulted in less vinyl chloride being released directly because, with the controlled burn, they can make sure that everything's combusting as it's released," Wagstrom said.

At present, the concentration of vinyl chloride

will become lower and lower with atmospheric volatilization and will not pose a threat to residents of Connecticut.

"You could calculate how much vinyl chloride and how much of all of those chemicals were there, and then if you dilute that amount in that space of air, you could calculate the approximate concentration, and you could come up with how significant that concentration might be," Grant said. And I would bet you would find that the concentration would be so low that it's probably a very, very, very low risk to anyone here in Eastern Connecticut".

Another concern for environmentalists is that it may take a very long time for nature to degrade these toxic chemicals fully. According to estimates from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, more than 43,000 animals have died in and around East Palestine in the three weeks directly following the train derailment. Dark clouds and acid rain have also been reported in Ohio and surrounding areas after the VCM burn. However, Grant had a more optimistic view of the environmental situation.

"If the environment is healthy, if it's diverse, typically the environmental problem will eventually go away," Grant explained. There's so much redundancy in our environment, many species that can recover very quickly. Some species are very sensitive. So they might be initially eliminated, but gradually, they will likely come back, especially in a stream or an aquatic ecosystem like this, where there's fresh water coming in all the time and new species drifting in the water. So it'll take a while, but if the environment is healthy, it will probably recover," Grant said.



Students talk with Professor Grant and Wagstrom about recent chloride incidents in Palestine, Ohio, which will have lasting effects on the environment. (Cody Smith, left; David Grant, right)

PHOTOGRAPH BY DELAN LI, CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT/THE DAILY CAMPUS

The method of transporting hazardous materials has always been a highly controversial issue. According to the CT Mirror, there are over 1,700 derailments in the U.S. each year. In Connecticut, those chemicals are traveling on our highways, albeit in smaller truck-sized loads, but they are no less likely to cause explosions or damage if they're involved in an accident.

For Grant, it is a risk vs. cost problem with no single optimal solution.

"Companies that use these chemicals could potentially make them on-site. And then there would be less transportation, but that would be very costly for someone who needs vinyl chloride to make it themselves, and it might even make the potential risk worse because now you've got vinyl chloride all over the country being made in a factory somewhere and people don't even know it," Grant said.

The professors also expressed their opinions

in response to the social impact of this incident.

"There are still some questions on the overall impact, and this is going to be something that gets looked at for years to come," Wagstrom said. "As far as transport within the environmental matrix, the dioxins that might have formed from the combustion and how they may have deposited, that still needs to be looked at," said Wagstrom.

"I think for Connecticut, the biggest thing that will come out of this is that the railroad industry will need to be more diligent in monitoring the safety of their transportation system. They will likely have to make sure those trucks and wheels under the train cars are inspected more frequently. And hopefully, stricter oversight of hazardous chemical transportation will be enacted from this, so that the railroad industry is more responsible and do a better job in preventing this in the future," Grant said.

## Indiana bill for switch to partisan school boards stalls



Indiana Republican House Speaker Todd Huston speaks to reporters at the state Capitol in Indianapolis, Monday, Feb. 27, 2023.

(AP PHOTO/ARLEIGH RODGERS)

(AP) — A new push by Republican Indiana lawmakers to have local school board candidates run with political party affiliations has stalled for this year's legislative session, as they did not advance the proposal before a Monday deadline.

A legislative committee had endorsed a bill establishing a system for voter referendums in the state's nearly 300 school districts on whether to change from the current nonpartisan school board elections in favor of requiring candidates to declare a political party or independent status.

That bill, however, was not called for a vote in the full House before the deadline for it to win approval and advance to the Senate.

The proposal didn't gain enough support among GOP House members, as it faced ques-

tions over whether to have school board candidates go through party primaries or only be listed by political party on the November general election ballot, said Republican House Speaker Todd Huston.

"It's hard to find that sweet spot," Huston said. "We didn't quite get it this year."

Democrats and several education groups opposed the proposed change, arguing it would further inject politics into local schools and that allowing a district-by-district decision would lead to a messy patchwork across the state and confuse voters.

Supporters, meanwhile, maintained that having candidates identified by political party would give voters more information to consider and increase transparency in what are already often politicized election races.

Other bills in recent years calling for partisan school board elections in Indiana haven't advanced in the Republican-dominated Legislature. Those elections, however, have gained more attention across the country and in several Indiana districts as parents raised complaints over issues such as COVID-19 policies, classroom dis-

cussions of race and sexuality and the removal of offending books.

At least nine states now have some form of partisan local school board elections, advocates said.

House Democratic Leader Phil GiaQuinta, of Fort Wayne, said he worried that partisan school board elections could lead to political affiliations playing a role in the hiring of teachers and principals.

"I do think people finally realize that maybe after these tough school board debates and meetings that we've seen there's enough politics in there already," GiaQuinta said. "We don't need folks putting a 'D' or 'R' or whatever behind their name."

The Indiana Senate's elections committee heard testimony on a similar bill in January but did not vote on it ahead of a deadline last week for that proposal to advance.

While it is possible for lawmakers to insert school board election changes into another bill before this year's legislative session ends in late April, Huston said "that's pretty unlikely."

The bill's sponsor, Republican Rep. J.D. Prescott, of Union City, said he would work to build more future support for the change.

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## News

## SEATTLE OPERA PUTS STORY OF AFGHAN WOMEN CENTER STAGE

(AP)— As the Taliban once again assert control of Afghanistan and push women further out of public view, a female Afghan filmmaker is working thousands of miles away to help bring to life a wildly popular tale of two heroines living in her homeland, including under the group's first reign.

The world premiere of Seattle Opera's "A Thousand Splendid Suns" opens Saturday evening. It is based on a novel by Kabul-born author Khaled Hosseini that explores the inner worlds of Mariam and Laila over decades of Afghan history, some with stark parallels to the present.

The women, born nearly two decades apart, forge an unlikely bond as they share an abusive husband and navigate struggles facing them and their country. It's a story of hardships, injustices and loss, but also of deep love, endurance and one big decision that, ultimately, alters both their lives and leads to the survival of only one.

It was supposed to be a story of a bygone era -- until the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in 2021 dramatically changed that.

For the opera's stage director, Roya Sadat, who lived under Taliban's first rule and made a professional name for herself after the group's 2001 ouster, that reversal is deeply personal.

Born in the city of Herat, she happened to be in America when she learned that her birthplace had fallen to the Taliban in 2021. Just like other historic events in Afghanistan colored Mariam's and Laila's lives, that takeover has once again reshaped Sadat's country and, this time, turned her into an asylee in the United States.

"I was actually never thinking that one day I will leave Afghanistan," the 39-year-old said. "When I heard this news, I was in shock. And I just said: 'no, no, no, it's not possible.'... It was like watching a terrible movie."

In that moment, Sadat added, directing "A Thousand Splendid Suns" took on a new meaning.

"Suddenly, the topic changed in my mind, that 'Oh my God, now this story is going to repeat again. Now, maybe, a thousand Laila and Mariam are going to be in the same situation,'" she said.

In her director's statement, Sadat writes about becoming "homeless" in the blink of an eye and describes how the goal of her work has evolved.

"My task was no longer to simply portray the universal pain, struggle, and persever-

ance of women through the story of two Afghan women," she said. "It became a duty to convey an unparalleled injustice to which my countrywomen are condemned."

Mariam and Laila have captured the imagination of composer Sheila Silver for a long time. She felt like she knew them and wanted to tell their story. She listened to the book in 2009 and recalled tears streaming down her face as one of the women faced her death.

"This is what heroes are made of, people who make sacrifices for others that they love and so that was what drew me in," Silver said. "It was about the love and bonding and resilience and strength of these two women."

And in that sense, she found their tales universal. "It's their humanity that we're celebrating," she said. "It's a story of that time with incredible parallels to this time today."

Hosseini, the book's author who lives in California, wishes that wasn't the case.

He had hoped the story of "A Thousand Splendid Suns" would become a relic of the past, maybe a "cautionary tale." But instead, he said, "what's going on with women today is a cruel *deja vu*."

He lamented that the international spotlight on Afghanistan seemed to have faded. He hopes the opera's audience will be moved by

the music, but also that the production, even if in limited ways, can spark conversations about the situation there.

"I've always thought of the arts as our most powerful ... teachers of empathy," he said. "I hope that this opera is an expression of the collective struggles and sacrifices of Afghans over the last four decades, particularly Afghan women."

Despite initial promises, the Taliban have increasingly imposed restrictions on women and girls with an expanding list of bans that included barring them from universities and schools beyond the sixth grade. That has sparked an international uproar, deepening Afghanistan's isolation at a time of severe economic turmoil.

The crackdown on women's freedoms harkens back to when the Taliban ran Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 -- and to a somber part of Sadat's own life under the group.

She no longer could attend school. She turned to books, sometimes borrowed from relatives or friends, to expand her world. Home doubled as a school of sorts, where her mother and an aunt would teach her different subjects.

Through it all, she clung to hope.

It was under the Taliban, that, sitting on her family's kitchen floor, Sadat started writing a script that later turned into her first movie. At the time, she said, she didn't have electricity; the kitchen fire provided the light she needed to write.

Toward the end of the Taliban's reign, a relative helped her get a spot in a class that trained women in nursing. There, Sadat said she helped organize small cultural groups that produced theater critical of the Taliban's treatment of women; to avoid getting caught, classmates would be on the lookout inside a stairwell to alert others if Taliban members approached.

After the Taliban's fall, Sadat and her sister co-founded Roya Film House, a company that has produced films and TV dramas.

Working on the Seattle opera, she said, has been of special significance.

"In creating the atmosphere of this work, I have tried to show the people the beauty of Afghan women's lives -- the parts of that world they do not know and the people they have not seen," she said. "I want to evoke Kabul in the old years, full of songs, poetry, music, color, and joy. Throughout Afghanistan's history, even on the path of pain and suffering, is the radiant face of a woman who shines."



Karin Mushegain, in purple, who portrays Mariam, performs in a dress rehearsal for the opera "A Thousand Splendid Suns," in Seattle, on Wednesday, Feb. 22, 2023.

(AP PHOTO/STEPHEN BRASHEAR)



Director Roya Sadat, left, confers with associate stage director Anderson Nunnelley before a dress rehearsal for the opera "A Thousand Splendid Suns," in Seattle, on Wednesday, Feb. 22, 2023.

(AP PHOTO/STEPHEN BRASHEAR)

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# CASINOS AND CONSULTING?

## PANDEMIC SPURS TRIBES TO DIVERSIFY

(AP) — When the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered Foxwoods Resort Casino in Connecticut for three months in 2020, its owners, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, had to reckon with decades of relying heavily on gambling as the tribe's main source of revenue.

"The fact that the casino revenues went from millions to zero overnight just fully reiterated the need for diverse revenue streams," said Tribal Chairman Rodney Butler.

The 1,000-member tribe has since expanded its efforts to get into the federal government contracting business, making it one of several tribal nations to look beyond the casino business more seriously after the coronavirus crisis. Tribal leaders and tribal business experts say the global pandemic has been the latest and clearest sign that tribal governments with casinos can't depend solely on slot machines and poker rooms to support future generations.

In Michigan, the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians, or Gun Lake Tribe, recently announced a 25-year plan to develop hundreds of acres near its casino into a corridor with housing, retail, manufacturing and a new 15-story hotel. A non-gambling entity owned by the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, also in Michigan,

is now selling "NativeWahl" burger franchises to other tribes after forming a 2021 partnership with Wahlburgers, the national burger chain created by the celebrity brothers Paul, Mark and Donnie Wahlberg.

Some tribes, with and without casinos, have gotten involved in a wide range

of non-gambling businesses, such as trucking, construction, consulting, health care, real estate, cannabis and marketing over the past decade or longer while others have been branching out more recently. "While enterprise diversifi-

cation can come with costs, its necessity became clear during the early phases of the pandemic, when tribally owned casinos were shut down to mitigate COVID-19 transmission and gaming-dependent tribes were left with little incoming revenue," according to a new report from the Center for Indian Country

Development at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. The report found that many tribes are increasingly doing business with the federal government, especially the U.S. Department of Defense. The Mashantucket Pequots' non-gambling entity, Command Holdings, last year made its largest acquisition to date: WWC Global, a Florida-based management consulting firm that predominantly works with federal agencies, including the defense and state departments. WWC announced in December that it had been awarded a \$37.5 million contract supporting the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

WWC Global CEO Jon Panamaroff applauded the Mashantucket Pequots' casino and hospitality business but noted that it can be subject to the "ups and downs of the market," making it important to branch out economically. A member of the Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak,

ing from a planned family resort with a 91,000-square-foot (8,450-square-meter) water park that's expected to open in 2025, will eventually comprise 50% to 80% of the Mashantucket Pequots' portfolio, providing "stability and certainty" when another challenging event undoubtedly will happen.

"You think about the financial crisis in '08 and now COVID. And so, something's going to happen again," Butler said. "We've learned from past mistakes, and we want to be ready for it in the future." Even before the pandemic hit, some tribal casinos were already facing competitive pressures from the advent of other gambling options, including legalized online wagering on sports and casino games in some states. At the same time, traditional patrons of brick-and-mortar casinos are getting older.

"Tribal economies are at an inflection point because gaming markets are maturing across the U.S.," said Dawson Her Many Horses, head of Native American banking for Wells Fargo and an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe of South Dakota. "As casino revenues flatten, tribes will be looking for new business opportunities in other industries."

Terri Fitzpatrick, a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians in Michigan and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's chief real estate and global attraction officer, has noted "tremendous growth" in non-gambling-related tribal businesses over the last decade in Michigan. Most tribes within the state now engage in some form of economic development other than casinos.



Slot machines at the FireKeepers Casino Hotel, owned and operated by the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, are seen in Battle Creek, Mich., Aug. 5, 2019. (NICK BUCKLEY/BATTLE CREEK ENQUIRER VIA AP, FILE)

of non-gambling businesses, such as trucking, construction, consulting, health care, real estate, cannabis and marketing over the past decade or longer while others have been branching out more recently. "While enterprise diversifi-

Development at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. The report found that many tribes are increasingly doing business with the federal government, especially the U.S. Department of Defense. The Mashantucket Pequots'

Alaska, he credited the Mashantucket Pequots' tribal leaders with doubling down on diversification efforts during the pandemic instead of "shying away and trying to hunker down." Butler said the tribe hopes non-gambling revenues, includ-

# Supreme Court student loan case: The arguments explained.

(AP) — The Supreme Court is about to hear arguments over President Joe Biden's student debt relief plan, which impacts millions of borrowers who could see their loans wiped away or reduced.

So far, Republican-appointed judges have kept the Democratic president's plan from going into effect, and it remains to be seen how the court, dominated 6-3 by conservatives, will respond. The justices have scheduled two hours of arguments in the case Tuesday, though it will probably go longer. The public can listen in on the court's website beginning at 10 a.m. EST. Where things stand ahead of the hearing as well as what to expect:

### HOW DOES THE FORGIVENESS PLAN WORK?

The debt forgiveness plan announced in August would cancel \$10,000 in federal student loan debt for those making less than \$125,000 or households with less than \$250,000 in income per year. Pell Grant recipients, who typically demonstrate more financial need, would get an additional \$10,000 in debt forgiven.

College students qualify if their loans were disbursed before July 1. The plan makes 43 million borrowers eligible for some debt forgiveness, with 20 million who could have their debt erased entirely, according to the Biden administration.

The White House says 26 million people have applied for debt relief, and 16 million people had already had their relief

approved. The Congressional Budget Office has said the program will cost about \$400 billion over the next three decades.

### HOW DID THE ISSUE WIND UP AT THE SUPREME COURT?

The Supreme Court is hearing two challenges to the plan. One involves six Republican-led states that sued. The other involves a lawsuit filed by two students.

A lower court dismissed the lawsuit involving the following states: Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and South Carolina. The court said the states could not challenge the program because they weren't harmed by it. But a panel of three federal appeals court judges on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit — all of them appointed by Republican presidents — put the program on hold during an appeal. The Supreme Court then agreed to weigh in.

The students' case involves Myra Brown, who is ineligible for debt relief because her loans are commercially held, and Alexander Taylor, who is eligible for just \$10,000 and not the full \$20,000 because he didn't receive a Pell grant. They say that the Biden administration didn't go through the proper process in enacting the plan, among other things.

Texas-based U.S. District Judge Mark Pittman, an appointee of President Donald Trump, sided with the students and ruled to block the program. Pittman ruled that the Biden ad-

ministration did not have clear authorization from Congress to implement the program. A federal appeals court left Pittman's ruling in place, and the Supreme Court agreed to take up the case along with the states' challenge.

### HOW DID BIDEN GET TO CANCEL THE DEBT?

To cancel student loan debt, the Biden administration relied on the Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act, commonly known as the HEROES Act. Originally enacted after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attack, the law was initially intended to keep service members from being worse off financially while they fought in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Now extended, it allows the secretary of education to waive or modify the terms of federal student loans as necessary in connection with a national emergency. Trump, a Republican, declared

the COVID-19 pandemic a national emergency in March 2020, but Biden recently announced that designation will end May 11. The Biden administration has said that the end to the national emergency doesn't change the legal argument for student loan debt cancellation because the pandemic affected millions of student borrowers who might have fallen behind on their loans during the emergency.

### WHAT ARE THE JUSTICES LIKELY TO ASK ABOUT?

Expect the justices to be focused on several big issues. The first one is whether the states and the two borrowers have the right to sue over the plan in the first place, a legal concept called "standing." If they don't, that clears the way for the Biden administration to go ahead with it. To prove they have standing, the states and borrowers will

have to show in part that they're financially harmed by the plan.

Beyond standing, the justices will also be asking whether the HEROES Act gives the Biden administration the power to enact the plan and how it went about doing so.

### WHEN WILL BORROWERS KNOW THE OUTCOME?

It will likely be months before borrowers learn the outcome of the case, but there's a deadline of sorts. The court generally issues all of its decisions by the end of June before going on a summer break.

Whether or not the debt gets cancelled, the case's resolution will bring changes. While federal student loan payments are currently paused, that will end 60 days after the case is resolved. And if the case hasn't been resolved by June 30, payments will start 60 days after that.



New graduates walk into the High Point Solutions Stadium before the start of the Rutgers University graduation ceremony in Piscataway Township, N.J., on May 13, 2018.

(AP PHOTO/SETH WENIG)

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## 'COCAINE BEAR' REACHES GREAT HIGH WITH A SLIGHTLY ROUGH COMEDOWN

by **Taevis Kolz**  
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Legendary actor Ray Liotta had a career unmatched by many. Starring in iconic films such as "Goodfellas" (1990), "Marriage Story" (2019) and "Bee Movie" (2007), it simply feels right that his last role before he sadly passed away is Syd White, a drug kingpin in the movie "Cocaine Bear."

"Cocaine Bear" is a film inspired by the real-life story of a black bear who ingested a duffel bag full of cocaine after it was dropped out of a plane carrying too heavy of a load by drug smuggler Andrew C. Thornton II. Thornton then-

that is unexpectedly difficult to pull off well. It's a challenge to maintain a proper balance of shock and comedy without boring the audience by failing to deliver on laughs or losing tension.

Thankfully, "Cocaine Bear" knows its place. It never takes itself too seriously. There's a scene where the bear snorts a line of cocaine off a guy's dismembered leg. Each character (and there's a lot of them) has enough impact to affect the story in some way, but not enough to make you too sad when they inevitably succumb to the wrath of the cocaine bear.

For the most part, the cast plays off each other very

tones. Despite the bear being the main antagonist, the film makes it clear that if it wasn't for humans dumping cocaine into the woods, none of the events would have happened and no one would have died.

Unfortunately, "Cocaine Bear" loses its high in the last third. The slight tonal shift doesn't quite match up with the rest of the film. It also fails to reach the levels of hilarity it was able to pull off to great effect previously. In addition, some of the character's decisions felt very annoying, far past the point of being funny.

For as gruesome as some of the deaths were (there's a scene where the bear's cubs eat a character's small intestine while said character is

jumped out of the plane and died due to his parachute failing to open.

This is where the film's similarities to actual events end. In the real world, the bear simply died. That wouldn't make a very interesting movie, so director Elizabeth Banks decided to take a few creative liberties. "Cocaine Bear," in short, is about a bear that becomes addicted to cocaine from the dropped duffel bag and goes on a murderous rampage, killing multiple people in various grisly ways.

"Cocaine Bear" falls under the horror comedy genre, one

well. An especially hilarious scene that comes to mind is when a group of teenagers and a park ranger complain to each other after sustaining injuries. However, while the park ranger was attacked by the bear, the teens got theirs from a scrap with Daveed, Syd White's fixer, after they tried to rob him. Both groups think the other endured a run-in with the same person/bear, creating one of the funniest scenes in the film.

"Cocaine Bear" might be more than meets the eye. It has a surprising amount of subtle environmental under-

tone while said character is still alive), I wish the film took it further. With a title such as "Cocaine Bear," one would expect the film to reach ridiculous levels of mayhem, but it never quite gets there.

Even still, "Cocaine Bear" is undoubtedly worth a watch. If you hunger for mindless thrills, hilarious dialogue and gruesome deaths, look no further than this film.

**Rating: 3.5/5**

**COCAINE  
BEAR**

PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDB



ILLUSTRATION BY STEVEN COLEMAN, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS



## Box Office Breakdown: 'Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania' shrinks as 'Cocaine Bear' claws to \$23 million

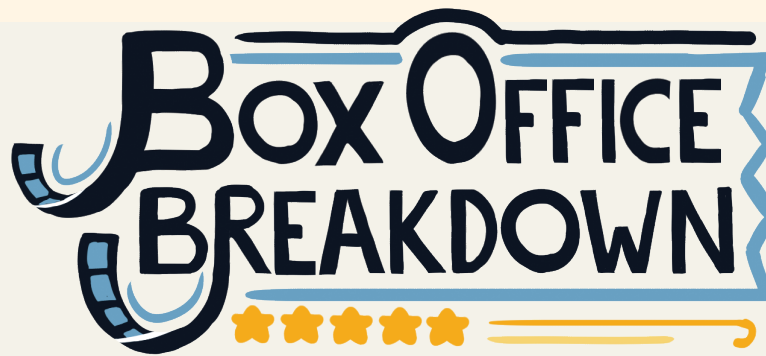
by **Zachary Wisniefsky**  
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While "Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania" won the box office again this past weekend, the superhero film still lost big. With a 69.7% drop, "Quantumania" fell significantly in its second weekend. The film grossed \$32 million, pushing its domestic sum to \$167 million. As we said last week, it will take a 3.15x multiplier (total gross/opening weekend) for the third "Ant-Man" film to break even. With a near 70% second weekend drop, the film has only attained around a 1.57x multiplier thus far. Unless it has some surprise late legs, the film is not likely to profit. We shall see if "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3" will bring Marvel Studios a needed win in May.

Second place is the film that has lit social media ablaze - "Cocaine Bear." The film rose high above expectations, earning \$23.3 million in its opening weekend. With a budget reportedly near \$35 million, the film needs to gross around \$128 million worldwide to profit, with likely \$85 million of that coming domestically. The second value depends on the gross in some international markets where it hasn't been released, but the total still remains. The good news for "Cocaine Bear" - the film currently sits at 70% on Rotten Tomatoes, which bodes well for its legs. However, it only earned a "B-" CinemaScore, meaning audiences may not be loving it as much as expected. With a \$23.3 million opening, it will need around a 3.6x multiple to profit. Much of that will be reliant on these next two weekends, so we will keep a careful eye on "Cocaine Bear."



BOX OFFICE BREAKDOWN ILLUSTRATION AND LOGO BY KAITLYN TRAN, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS



Third this weekend is an entrant we were not expecting - "Jesus Revolution." The faith-based drama earned \$15.8 million in its opening weekend, well above most expectations. While the film has earned tepid critical reception, "Jesus Revolution" has garnered acclaim from general audiences, earning a rare "A+" CinemaScore. That will most certainly boost word-of-mouth marketing, posing well for future weekends. However,

"Jesus Revolution" will need it. Priced fairly high near \$15 million, it will need to gross around \$44 million to profit. Needing a multiplier just south of 3x, "Jesus Revolution" needs crowds to continue to show up in future weekends to break even.

In fourth and fifth place are the iron men of the 2023 box office charts - "Avatar: The Way of Water" and "Puss in Boots: The Last Wish," which grossed \$4.9 million and \$4.1 million respectively. Eleven weekends in and "Avatar" is still in the top five, falling only 25.8%. It officially passed "Jurassic World" to become the ninth highest grossing film domestically all time, with \$655 million earned thus far. Up next on the domestic charts - "Titanic." "Puss in Boots" fell 22.8% to push its domestic total to \$173 million. This also moved the film into 17th place on the all-time domestic charts for films that have never had a weekend at No. 1.

Next week brings the release of two new films - "Creed III" and "Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre."

"Creed III" is the third film in the "Rocky" spin-off franchise starring Michael B. Jordan, who also directs. With strong critical reception thus far, I expect the film to open to \$35 million. "Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre" is an action comedy from Guy Ritchie starring Jason Statham and Aubrey Plaza. Earning decent reviews from critics abroad, I expect it to earn \$14 million next weekend.

Will "Creed III" knockout "Ant-Man" or will "Operation Fortune" plan its way into first place?

As always, we shall see.

## INVISIBLE ASIANS: DMD event addresses underrepresentation and hate

by **Alicia Gomez**  
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The rise of anti-Asian sentiments since 2020 has led to increasing advocacy to address and combat racial discrimination against the Asian American Pacific Islander community, according to Aalok Kanani, the digital director of the Asia Society. On Feb. 27, Kanani spoke at a Digital Media and Design event titled "Invisible Asians: How Underrepresentation Creates Otherization and Fuels Hate."

During this talk, he discussed his role at Asia Society, where he works to amplify the voices of Asian communities, challenge stereotypes and drive positive change through social media.

Kanani first noticed increased violence and hate against Asian Americans in 2020 while working for the Biden campaign.

"At the time we knew it was largely due to the pandemic and xenophobia around attributing it to Asian Americans - Chinese Americans - but also it was, in my opinion at least, driven by the other side," Kanani said. "And so it became part of our job on the Biden campaign to try and counter it."

However, Kanani saw how little people cared about Asian American issues, said he.

"I also quickly realized there isn't a ton of political value to speaking out for Asian Americans," Kanani said. "That really stuck with me after the campaign ended."

About a year later, Kanani got involved in the Asia Society, a non-profit organization looking to "pivot to digital" and change its audience. While it was originally founded to inform White

people about Asia and Asians, the organization wanted to create more content celebrating Asians, Kanani explained.

"Specifically, we've made it a core pillar of ours to do more to stand up against Asian hate and platform Asians," Kanani said.

Despite the decrease in the pandemic, political polarization and a lack of downturn in the economy, hate and discrimination against Asians have increased between 2020-2022, Kanani said, citing the 2022 STAATUS report from The Asian American Foundation.

One of the reasons for this increase is the attribution of COVID-19 to Asians. According to the report, Americans increasingly consider anti-Chinese names for COVID-19, like "Wuhan virus," to be appropriate.

The percentage of Americans who believe that Asian Americans are more loyal to their country of origin also increased sharply from 20% in 2021 to 33% in 2022, according to the report.

"It's that trend of increasing otherization of Asians coupled with the fact that Asians continue not to be represented in media," Kanani said.

Even when Asians are portrayed in media, they are shown in harmful ways, Kanani said. For example, according to the report, Asian American women are often seen in "less desirable roles," like sex workers, martial artists and maids.

"There's a high degree of sexualization, of violent portrayals, of otherization," Kanani said. "That was a really worrisome trend."

Stereotypical and harmful portrayals in the media are especially problematic with a new trend of Americans increasingly getting information about

ethnic and racial groups from social media, Kanani said.

"This area where Asians are totally unrepresented or badly represented is shaping how we see Asians, Kanani explained. "The problem becomes clear of why otherization is being caused."

According to Kanani, digital media students can work to combat anti-Asian hate in their content by using their voice and skills to "give lens" to Asian American issues and being thoughtful about content creation.

"Content can have a huge impact on shaping hearts and minds of every generation," Kanani said.

Combatting these problems is essential, with Asians being the fastest-growing racial group in the United States today, with nearly 25 million Asian Americans, according to Asia Society.

That is why the Asia Society has made it their mission to combat these issues, Kanani said.

Mari Sachs, an eighth-semester DMD student who interviewed Kanani during the event, asked Kanani what campaigns the Asia Society was involved in that Kanani is proud of.

"We were able to raise several thousand dollars for the Monterey Park shooting victims fund and, more recently, the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey," Kanani responded.

Kanani has also worked for the Obama administration at the United Nations and the private sector at Lyft.

The event was hosted online via UConn DMD's YouTube channel as part of their "Diverse Perspectives in Digital Media & Design Speaker Series."





# Life

@dailycampuslife

## The 'Shrinking' fan base has the potential for great growth



PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDb

by Maxim Soroka  
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One of the streaming release-highlights this season has been Apple TV+'s "Shrinking" starring Jason Segel and Harrison Ford. The show follows Jimmy, a grieving therapist played by Jason Segel, who decides to incorporate a more personal and hands-on approach with his patients in hopes to yield more successful results. It's a healthy mix of comedy and drama with a bit more of a concentration on the latter. With the first season just over halfway done, many fans are holding their breath for a second season to be approved after its conclusion.

Segel, along with veteran screenwriters Brett Goldstein and Bill Lawrence, act as the collaborative force that created and wrote this unconventional dramedy. Segel is no stranger to the pen, having written successful comedies such as "Forgetting Sarah Marshall" and "The Five-Year Engagement," both of which he starred in. Goldstein is one of Apple TV+'s rising stars; he is the executive story editor on the service's most popular show "Ted Lasso" and portrays the beloved Roy Kent. Lawrence is the most experienced of the trio as the writer and creator of iconic television series like "Ted Lasso" and "Scrubs."

Some newer faces include the talented Jessica Williams as a Jimmy's coworker and Lukita Maxwell, who plays Jimmy's

daughter. Luke Tennie also stands out as a likable veteran and patient of Jimmy's. Harrison Ford's performance as the head therapist of the practice is what stands out the most, though. The role seems to break type-casting for the experienced actor and it is engaging to see him excel in a character you wouldn't expect him to play; it really flaunts his range.

The first episode of the series is by far its best, as it eloquently wraps an entire narrative into its 37-minute runtime, causing the audience to feel a broad array of emotions. Any psychology or behavioral medicine student would be deeply enthralled, as Jimmy breaks all sorts of commonly-taught ethical codes. Even though it's a fictitious show it's engaging to see how patients would theoretically respond to more authoritative guidance in a therapeutic setting, for better or worse.

Thought-provoking programs and series such as this one may be Apple's saving grace for their streaming platform. Recent consumer surveys and financial analytics reveal that Apple TV is struggling with flatlining subscriptions. The platform seems to be suffering more than other services such as Netflix and Hulu. All are being left in the dust by HBOMax, which is one of the only streaming services that has seen a recent increase in subscribers. This is credited to the platform's current influx of original content with titles like "The Last of Us," "House of the Dragon" and "The White Lotus."

Apple had a strong start with this tactic with the wildly successful "Ted Lasso," but has yet to create another original series with a comparable viewership. "Shrinking" is not on that caliber yet, but has the potential to get there. Much of the "Ted Lasso" fan base grew over the pandemic, when many spent time at home binge-watching television; at that point, the entire first season was already released. I could see "Shrinking" yielding similar results after the completion of its first season. It has the kind of pacing that makes you want to sit down and bang out four or five episodes at a time, which doesn't always work well with weekly episode releases.

Even though the series is rated as TV-MA, I find it could be enjoyed by a great number of families. The show was originally recommended to me by my parents, so there is nothing overly inappropriate about the content that could make a family-viewing uncomfortable. This could be a smart move on Apple's part, because it opens the audience range to anyone in their mid-teenage years and up.

If you are an avid fan of Apple TV's other original series you'll have no problem adding this one to the rotation. It's a unique and heart-warming series that you can't really define until you see it.

Rating: 4/5



ILLUSTRATION BY ZAIRE DIAZ, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS





# Opinion

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COMIC BY VAN NGUYEN, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

### ► Editorial

## Vote YES for The Daily Campus fee increase!

Undergraduate and graduate student elections open at 12:00pm today at the University of Connecticut. Through the Undergraduate Student Government-run elections, you'll have the opportunity to vote for USG representatives, student representatives on the board of trustees and the student fee allocated to each Tier-III student organization including The Daily Campus. Students can either vote by clicking on the red button at <https://vote.uconn.edu/> or logging in directly to UConn and clicking on the homepage election banner.

This year, The Daily Campus is asking for more money. Inflation has impacted all student organizations and newspapers are no exception. Printing a paper, especially a daily paper, is more expensive than ever before. Without a fee increase, we're faced with printing less papers, which we've already substantially decreased this year, hiring less staff, paying staff less or ending live coverage of various events throughout the paper. Please help us avoid all of these by voting YES on The Daily Campus fee increase referendum today!

The Daily Campus is asking you to vote YES for increasing our semesterly fee from \$10 to \$16. This increase, worth approximately one dozen eggs in today's prices, is enough to make The Daily Campus financially stable for years to come. If you've read an article you enjoyed or have a friend that works here — please support the journalism we do by allowing us to sustain our basic operations.

We are the only independent daily student news outlet on campus — the Daily Digest and UConn Today produce public relations for the university's administration. At our best, we produce independent student critiques, investigative reporting and honest coverage of campus life. While the editorial board believes the funding process for Tier-III organizations should be democratized and made less dependent on student fees, they are the current method for funding our work and we depend upon and appreciate the community's support.

Once you have voted YES for our fee increase petition, take advantage of your fee! There are paid roles throughout our newspaper in Opinion, Sports, Life, News, Digital, production, photography, illustration and even delivering our papers around the Storrs campus. Our writers have gone on to become professional journalists and enjoy some of the most fun jobs on campus while improving their community.

If you don't want to work here, contribute anyways! Submit an Op-Ed about another student organization or initiative you're a part of, or pitch an opinion piece on what you think about rising tuition. Write a food review in Life or cover a game in Sports. Submit a comic or photo, or even try writing a news piece. You may be surprised by the feedback you receive and the fun you have making your voice heard.

Whatever you do, if you support independent student journalism or if The Daily Campus has impacted your life positively throughout your time as a student here, please support our work by voting YES on the Daily Campus fee increase referendum this year. Thank you!

## East Palestine, Ohio: Race and class in conflict

by Nell Srinath  
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On Feb. 3, many of us encountered the horrific image of a train derailment that occurred in East Palestine, Ohio the same day. The train, owned and operated by Norfolk Southern Corporation, one of the largest transportation companies in the United States, weighed 18,000 tons and was 9,300 feet long. From what Norfolk Southern rank-and-file believe was the train's excessive size and weight, the fated Train 32N was stopped by technical failures just days earlier. Matters worsened when a defect detector measured that an axle on the train was 53 to 83 degrees Fahrenheit over the "critical" temperature required to stop the train. Stopping the vehicle didn't prevent the situation from unraveling into a calamity.

Aerial photos of the disaster — and it is, by all means, a disaster — capture 38 derailed train cars scattered among ash and hazardous waste like a fallen tower of Jenga blocks. A thick, black plume of smoke engulfed the small Ohio town like scenes from an apocalypse thriller. The towering pillar of chemicals was the result of a "controlled explosion" conducted on Monday, Feb. 6 by Norfolk Southern to manage the over 100,000 gallons of vinyl chloride and butyl acrylate, both toxic and flammable compounds, contained in the train's cars.

As one might imagine, the impacts of the derailment and subsequent controlled release are still developing. When Ohio Governor Mike DeWine addressed the state at the beginning of the controlled release — a term which feels slightly oxymoronic in nature — he noted that the dangers of vinyl chloride inhalation include lung damage and death, not to mention the potential of violent skin burns. Only two days after the release of hazardous chemicals from the train began, however, the evacuation order around East Palestine was lifted, and air and water quality within the one-mile evacuation radius were deemed safe. In spite of the go-ahead from municipal authorities, the number of dead aquatic animals attributed to chemicals in the environment has increased to 43,000, local residents are receiving increasing diagnoses of "chemical bronchitis" and, at a hearing hosted by Senator Doug Mastriano (R-Ohio), frustrated constituents testified to experiencing "burning lips, itchy eyes, rashes, diarrhea and other symptoms" associated with chemical exposure.

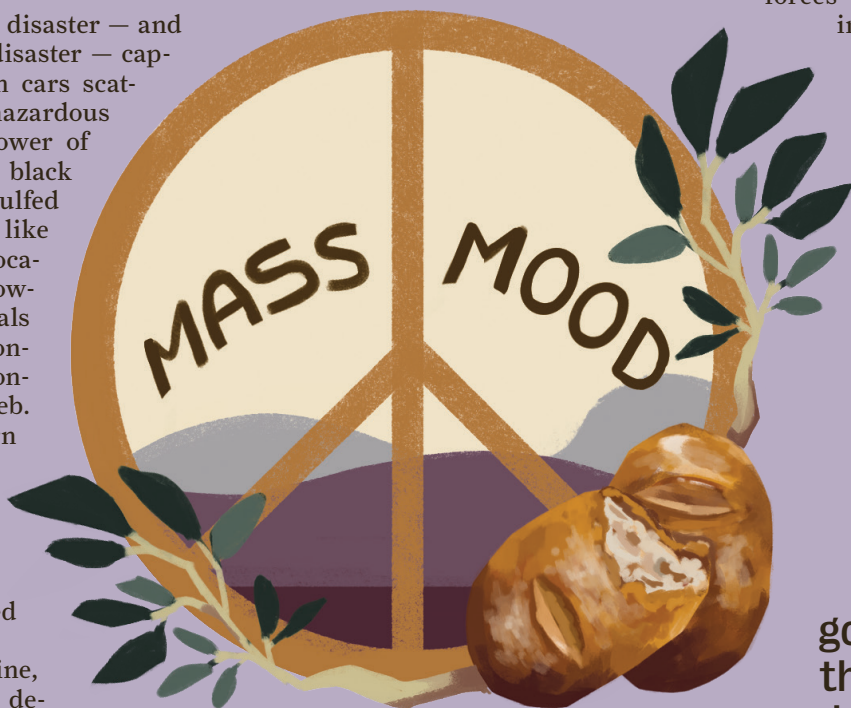
The anger of Ohioans is justified further by the fact that safety regulators and state officials alike consider the derailment to have been "100% preventable" in the first place, being on the heels of extensive lobbying efforts by the rail industry across the

country and in Ohio to skirt by profit-lagging regulations imposing speed and weight limits. Thus, a forceful and sympathetic political response in the immediate days following the disaster would have been critical.

Why, then, did former President Donald Trump and his hand-picked Senator, white nationalist talking head and "Hillbilly Elegy" author J.D. Vance (R-Ohio), get the jump on visiting East Palestine before any national Democratic figure? Trump and Vance managed to visit the town one day prior to Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg to placate a vocally enthusiastic audience and accuse the Biden administration of "indifference and betrayal," having "forgotten" the people of the small, 95% white Ohio county. Buttigieg, on the other hand, offered a polite and decidedly less energizing appeal to the rail industry to "stop fighting" the Biden administration on regulations.

margin. Paired with majority-white racial demographics, Columbiana County has long been a prime environment for Republicans to galvanize the mythic "working class white" population who, having been caught in the crossfire of automation, globalization and American economic imperialism, feel left behind by the political establishment. Cynically, Democrats can afford to leave this month's events to the annals of history, where the political memory of the majority of the country goes to die before the next eventual crisis of racial capitalism can be exploited for one party's political clout. Ohioans, though, will not forget. The tragedy of East Palestine presages a bitter 2024 presidential election, with the manufactured and weaponized identity of the "white working class" once again taking the reins and obscuring the commitments of both political parties to the forces that produce poverty, inequality and crisis in the first place.

**Buttigieg's dissatisfying response at best implies an equal partnership between the federal government and the rail industry whose negligence caused this environmental crisis. Moreover, Biden's expressed lack of intentions to visit East Palestine suggests his administration desires business as usual between the timid regulatory state and powerful, ferociously anti-regulation corporations. Still, one might ask why and how high-level Democrats could have fumbled such an opportunity to provide respite to the beleaguered town, therefore "handing" the good optics to Republicans?**



President Biden himself, in the aftermath of the disaster, made the decision to travel to Kyiv and announce an additional \$500 million in military aid to Ukraine, a move which drew intense ire from East Palestine Mayor Trent Conaway, as well as a host of Republicans.

Buttigieg's dissatisfying response at best implies an equal partnership between the federal government and the rail industry whose negligence caused this environmental crisis. Moreover, Biden's expressed lack of intentions to visit East Palestine suggests his administration desires business as usual between the timid regulatory state and powerful, ferociously anti-regulation corporations. Still, one might ask why and how high-level Democrats could have fumbled such an opportunity to provide respite to the beleaguered town, therefore "handing" the good optics to Republicans?

Democrats likely seem all too willing to allow this latest crisis to fall victim to America's short political memory because they know they wouldn't have benefited as a party machine in the first place. In every national election since 2000, Columbiana County has voted for Republicans by a dramatically-increasing

LOGO BY KAITLYN TRAN, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



## Opinion

## Photo of the Day | Smiles on line



Two students smile and pose among many others that lined up outside Gampel Pavilion before the start of the UConn women's basketball team's last home game of the 2022-2023 basketball regular season on Monday, Feb. 27, 2023. This game is also the Huskies' senior night as they face off against Xavier University.

PHOTO BY IZZI BARTON, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

## Letter to the Editor

# Response to 2/9/23 Daily Campus article

by Eversource Energy Center | [eversourceenergycenter@uconn.edu](mailto:eversourceenergycenter@uconn.edu)

In 2015, the Eversource Energy Center was founded at UConn with the mission of ensuring reliable power during extreme weather and security events. Since then, the Center has pursued this mission through leading-edge research, both to predict and reduce power outages caused by the increasingly frequent extreme weather events resulting from climate change and to address and mitigate the causes of climate change itself.

This context is important to consider in light of misunderstandings perpetuated in the Feb. 9 editorial in The Daily Campus ("It's Time to Ditch Eversource"), which incorrectly stated that "hefty investments" by Eversource in the on-campus research center would "lock UConn into a dangerous position, whereby it is wholly dependent on one private firm to connect it to the state's energy grid."

The editorial assumes a nonexistent link and reflects a lack of the understanding of how partnerships between universities and industry work. It also disregards the center's academic and research contributions to the state, UConn, its students and wider society beyond our state borders.

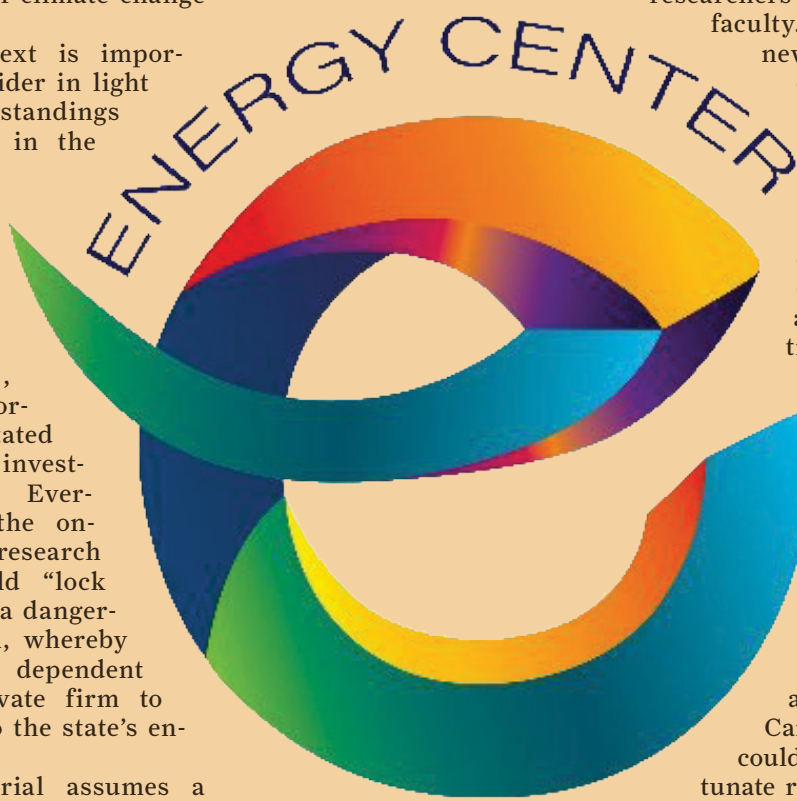
Simply put, the Eversource Energy Center at UConn is a

research entity; Eversource Energy is a utilities company with which UConn has a separate business relationship as a backup and supplement to the on-campus Cogeneration Plant. Neither influences nor controls the other, nor can one control or impede the activities of the other, as the editorial suggests.

In its eight years of operation, the Eversource Energy Center at

in years to come. These include advancing wind power and water conservation, conducting research toward the integration of sustainable energy sources into the power grid, and fostering student research to design renewable-energy microgrids for rural Ethiopia, among many others. To date, the center has funded 145 students at the graduate and undergraduate levels, 10 postdoctoral researchers and 49 UConn faculty. Through its new Grid Modernization Certificate Program, it is also preparing early-career engineers for careers in managing an electric grid made ever more complex by the transition away from fossil fuels to clean energy.

The misunderstandings perpetuated in the Daily Campus editorial could have the unfortunate result of causing UConn students and others to miss out on learning what the Eversource Energy Center is really about and of taking advantage of opportunities to contribute to its work. With that work, the center not only advances major research in science and engineering; it addresses the very fiscal and environmental challenges that were the focus of the editorial.



UConn has established itself as a valuable resource to help predict outages before storms, facilitating and accelerating recovery for businesses and homeowners across the state.

That service, while among its most visible, is only one of many the center has provided and will continue to provide

The logo for the the Eversource Energy Center at UConn, located at 159 Discovery Drive in Storrs. The center was established in 2015.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @UCONNEC ON TWITTER







## Sports

## Photo of the Day | Within the huddle



UConn men's basketball coach Dan Hurley talks to his players during timeout. The Huskies went on to defeat St. Johns 95-86 at Madison Square Garden in New York City on Saturday, Feb. 25, 2023. PHOTO BY SOFIA SAWCHUK, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

## Women's Lacrosse: Huskies defeat UNH in dominating fashion

by Jonathan Synott  
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The UConn women's lacrosse team had no issues taking on the New Hampshire Wildcats on Monday, dominating their way to a 17-6 victory at Joseph J. Morrone Stadium in Storrs, CT.

The contest, initially scheduled for Tuesday, was pushed up to Monday to accommodate the incoming snowstorm. Even with the last-minute change, the Huskies had no problem securing their third win of the year.

Connecticut set the tone of the matchup early thanks to a quick goal from Preseason All-Big East Teamer Lia Laprise. The Husky pressure didn't stop there, with goals from Sophie Sorenson and Susan Lafountain coming within 30 seconds of each other to extend the lead to three.

After the third goal, UNH finally responded, making their way down field a few times before the ball skated past UConn

goalie Landyn White. The Huskies had a quick counter, adding two more scores before the Wildcats added one at the end of the quarter.

In the second period, the Huskies added another three unanswered goals to kick things off, including a swift free position strike from Rayea Davis. UNH was able to snag one more goal in retaliation, but Connecticut continued to extend their lead throughout the rest of the half. Kyra Place added back-to-back goals to make it a 10-3 contest.

It wasn't until less than five minutes in the first half that second-leading scorer Grace Coon added her first goal for the Huskies, the team's 11th on the day. White, the reigning Big East Goalkeeper of the Year, kept up her commanding streak in net, making some crucial saves late in the quarter. With a Lauren Barry goal late in the half, UConn would go into the big break with a 12-3 lead.

The third quarter was nothing short of pure domination from the Huskies. Ready to put this one away, the trio of Kate

Shaffer, Coon and Place combined for four goals. UConn had 15 shots to UNH's three, and White made one save en route to a clean quarter.

By the time the fourth rolled around, Connecticut head coach Katie Woods had put Georgia Hoey in net and more of her subs into a game that was all but over. The Huskies would be outscored in the last period 3-1, but the Wildcats were far from coming back in what was a 17-6 decision.

Leading UConn in scoring was Shaffer, who totaled four goals and an assist. Place and Lafountain weren't far behind on the leaderboard, each earning a hat trick on the afternoon. Coon was ultra-efficient, netting two scores in as many shot attempts. Giving a helping hand, Davis dished out two assists alongside her one goal.

The win was a complete one for the Huskies, who improved to 3-1 on the early season. Connecticut gets a well-deserved rest, taking on UMass this Saturday at home. Game time is set for 1 p.m. with stats provided by StatBroadcast.



The UConn women's lacrosse team demonstrated dominance over the visiting University of New Hampshire Wildcats, winning the match 17-6 at Morrone Stadium in Storrs, Connecticut on Feb. 27, 2023. The Huskies improved their record to 3-1. PHOTO BY SKYLER KIM, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

## WBB March Madness Cinderella candidates

by Stratton Stave  
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Every year in women's college basketball at least one team ranked in the lower half of the bracket stands out and has a magical unexpected run. The fun part about looking at Cinderella teams is that there are a number of candidates that are qualified to make it past the first weekend, but an unfortunate bounce of the ball can make all the difference. Last year it was No. 10 seed Creighton, who made it all the way to the Elite Eight before falling to eventual champions, South Carolina. Who will rise above this year and surprise everyone en route to surprise success? Let's take a look using metrics and Charlie Creme's Bracketology projections.

### Columbia, projected 11 seed

Now in their sixth season of the

a monstrous 16 game win streak that saw them slowly climb the bubble. Savannah Wheeler has been fantastic for MTSU, leading them with 16 points and three assists a contest, really serving as a difference maker. She's also demonstrated an ability to take over games, pouring in 37 against Western Kentucky on just four attempts from deep and 16 from the field. Her ability to turn it on and get upsets will be massive and the key for their success.

### UMass, projected 13 seed

The Minutemen have made mincemeat of the majority of the Atlantic 10, winning 12 straight games before their recent loss against Saint Louis. They've played just well enough to be on the bubble if they don't come out of the A-10 tournament as champions, but nothing's certain. UMass has an impressive, single-digit loss at projected No. 5 seed Tennessee, but they're lacking in great wins.



LOGO BY KAITLYN TRAN, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Meg Griffith era, the Lions are armed and ready to make their NCAA tournament debut. They had a strong season last year, falling in the WNIT final four and are returning all of their key pieces. Abbey Hsu has been a top-10 mid-major player, averaging 18 points while shooting better than 40% from deep. Kaitlyn Davis and Duke transfer Jaida Patrick both add a lot on the defensive end and can help the scoring. The glue of the team and real difference maker has been Kitty Henderson, the sophomore who has jumped up to four assists per game and nine points. They're a well-structured team that knows how to win big games. They also have favorable metrics with a KPI ranking at No. 32. They're not a team any six or seven seed wants to see come tournament time.

### Middle Tennessee State, projected 11 seed

The Lady Raiders are another metrics darling, sitting at No. 33 in KPI. They don't have the strongest set of wins, with their best coming at Memphis and adding a home victory against then ranked Louisville. Both of those were part of

They haven't beaten a team projected to be in the field, but they have what it takes to steal a few games. That effort is going to start with Sam Breen, who is averaging an 18 point double-double. The Minutemen go as she does and their ability to get big wins starts with the forward from Pennsylvania.

### Marquette, projected 11 seed

The Golden Eagles have played roughly as expected this year, with Jordan King as the dominant guard in the effort. They're notably one of five teams to beat No. 6 UConn and they held the Huskies to a mere 52 points. Marquette has now won eight of their past 10 games and are showing no signs of slowing down. Their defense has been strong even in games they don't win, a critical piece of their success. In March, defense travels even when the offense isn't clicking as it usually does. The Golden Eagles have also been tried and tested in a rough Big East that's as strong as it's been in decades. If they can continue to keep their pieces together, there's no reason they can't make a bid for a second weekend spot.



# Big East Baller update No. 13

## Backboard Vegetables: A Fives Out production

by Cole Stefan  
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LOGO BY STEVEN COLEMAN,  
ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

I bet you did not expect this plot twist coming from the Big East Conference. What initially started as a six-day investigation turned into three weeks as sleuths investigated some wizardry at Hinkle Fieldhouse before grappling with a flurry of double overtime battles. Having overcome both of those, these detectives are starting to move one step closer to solving the cases that lie at their feet.

The Big East remains a mystery as several seeds in the conference tournament have yet to be finalized and there still is no clear frontrunner for conference Player of the Year. Although the biggest mystery revolves around who wins the automatic bid for March Madness, this week's slate of games helped crack some of the cases that these detectives have been focused on.

Writer's Note: Two ranked teams lost at home to conference foes on the same day. This year's tournament will be fun.

**Player of the Week:**

Tyler Kolek - Marquette

**Freshman of the Week:**

Cam Whitmore - Villanova

**Villanova vs. No. 16 Xavier (Feb. 21): Wild, Wild East**

Had these two teams met at the end of January, the Xavier Musketeers would have handedly defeated the Villanova Wildcats in front of a packed Cintas Center by double digits. But with Zach Freemantle still injured and

the Wildcats catching major momentum late in the season, a Musketeer home win was not a guarantee.

Xavier had a double-digit lead within the first two minutes of the second half as Jerome Hunter scored four straight points, but that is when Villanova began their rally. Sparked by a subsequent 9-2 run, the Wildcats went back and forth with the Musketeers for the lead before Eric Dixon's go-ahead layup in response to Hunter's floater nearly put the game away. Adam Kunkel made it a one-possession contest with less than two minutes left to play,

12 and 10 rebounds. Xavier bounced back three days later with a 22-point win against the Seton Hall Pirates, but both teams are trending in opposite directions as the calendar flips to March.

**No. 10 Marquette vs. No. 19 Creighton (Feb. 21): Hey look, a birdie**

Neither the Marquette

The Blue Jays responded with a 9-2 run that made it a one-possession game before a Baylor Scheierman layup tied things up. When Ryan Nembhard answered his first layup at the line, Tyler Kolek responded with what ultimately became the game-winning layup. Creighton attempted to steal the inbound pass following a Ryan Kalkbrenner bucket, but even with Nembhard's foul and Kam Jones missing two free throws, desperation heave fell short as Marquette escaped Omaha 73-71.

While Kolek and Oso Ig-hodaro each scored 18 points for the

**quette (Feb. 25): Going for Gold**

Coming off a home loss to the Butler Bulldogs, the DePaul Blue Demons had a chance to play spoiler against a Golden Eagles team hoping to claim at least a share of their first regular-season conference championship since 2013. Marquette nearly wrapped the game up in the first half with a 21-point half-time advantage, but DePaul had other plans.

The pace of the game slowed down as the Golden Eagles struggled to make shots early in the second half. For every step Marquette took following the first media timeout, the Blue Demons took two, which cut into their deficit. Within minutes, the Golden Eagles' double-digit lead had shrunk to eight as Javan Johnson and Nick Ongenda made multiple shots. DePaul got within four in the final seconds, but never got closer as Kolek iced the game at the line. As his final shots went in, Marquette celebrated a 90-84 victory and at least a share of the regular-season title.

Both Kolek and Jones scored 22 points in different fashion as two other Golden Eagle starters reached double digits. While Umoja Gibson picked up 20 on 6-12 shooting, Zion Cruz and Caleb Murphy reached double digits in a combined 30 minutes off the bench. Shaka Smart took a Marquette team without Justin Lewis and Darryl Morsell to their highest AP ranking since 1978 within one season. That is worthy of giving the conference their second straight National Coach of the Year.

Several mysteries were solved through this past week's slate, but there are still some that need to be completed in this final week of round robin action. Connect the dots together from what evidence remains, and these pieces of evidence lead to Madison Square Garden and the Big East Tournament.



but Souley Boum missed the potential game-winning layup in the expiring seconds as Villanova stunned Xavier in their own house 64-63.

Justin Moore had his best game this season with 25 points and four three-pointers while Cam Whitmore was the only other Wildcat in double digits with 11 and four rebounds. Four Musketeer starters scored in double figures as Boum outdueled defensive zones for 17 points and four threes, while Jack Nunge grabbed a double-double of

Golden Eagles nor the Creighton Blue Jays were ranked when they met at the Fiserv Forum in December. Entering as two of the nation's hottest teams while dominating conference play, these programs let the feathers fly in a pivotal battle for Big East supremacy.

The Golden Eagles soared out of the gates following halftime, snatching the lead after being down eight and going on a 13-2 run to nearly put the contest out of reach.

Golden Eagles, Jones led the flock with 19 and three triples. Scheierman secured a double-double with 18 points and 13 boards while Nembhard had 16 and five assists for the Blue Jays. With the critical sweep of Creighton and a two-game conference lead, Marquette had a chance to do something they had not done in 10 years in front of their home crowd. Only Tony Stubblefield's squad stood in the way of that becoming a reality.

**DePaul vs. No. 10 Mar-**

# Modern problems require modern solutions

by Noah Reed  
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I don't follow the NBA as much as I used to, but I caught myself watching just a couple of weeks ago. It was a contest between the Boston Celtics and Philadelphia 76ers and, early in the first quarter, I saw one of the strangest things ever. 76ers Center Joel Embiid had the ball at the top of the key, getting ready to shoot when a Celtics player about 10 feet away from him jumped. Embiid held onto the ball, so the Celtics player jumped once again, now only about eight feet away from him. The 76ers star drained the shot and celebrated in front of the smiling Celtics player's face. For someone who hasn't watched the NBA all season, this was a great moment to remind me how fun the game can be.

As the game continued, I couldn't stop laughing about the player who just kept jumping in the paint anytime someone shot a three. It got me thinking—there has to be evidence that what he just did worked or else he'd be out of the league, right?

The "Kornet Kontest" is the name of the move I apparently witnessed. This player had been doing it beforehand, but I just had no knowledge of what it was, and it caught me off guard. It originated with Celtics bench player Luke Kornet, whom the maneuver is named after. In theory, the move blocks the shooter's vision of the basketball rim in hopes that it messes up their shot enough for them to miss. The move was tested out in the

opponents shoot worse than league average — of course, on a very small sample size. This is about the extent of data that is available for the move so far, but Kornet isn't the only one doing it. Washington Wizards center and former all-star Kristaps Porzingis employed this move in the paint recently. Porzingis and his analytics coach both agree that despite the move's statistically unproven status, it remains effective.

If you look up the most three-pointers attempted in a game by a single team, the numbers increase every decade. When you look up the most three-pointers made in a game by a single team, the top 30 examples and beyond are from 2018 to this season. Defending three-pointers continues to get harder, with players gaining larger ranges along with wide rule changes, so an effective way to stop them is needed. One argument against the

rnet also has the luxury of teammates who are pretty good at grabbing defensive rebounds and make up for his loss in positioning. If a player pump-fakes Kornet, he can get down and land in a defensive position. When players took advantage of an air-born Kornet earlier this season, he adapted and started perfecting the move.

The Celtics themselves don't seem too worried about the move; Kornet continues to do it and the team has kept winning. Boston is first in the Eastern Conference and holds the best record in the NBA at the time I'm writing this. They are fourth in the league in defensive rating (111.0) and still lead in defensive rebound percentage (75.2%). Kornet lost playing time this season with the return of Rob Williams III, but his move has the potential to make a significant change to the league.

Everyone on the court now can essentially shoot from anywhere. Finding new ways to defend has been a topic of interest for many NBA scouts and front offices, with Kornet offering a possible solution. We must wait until the end of the season to really dive into the statistics, but it wouldn't be surprising to find more players doing this within the next few seasons.

G-League and practices, but this season was the first time Kornet attempted it for real.

In the first 16 recorded uses of the "Kornet Kontest" this season, only four of those shots were made. That means players shot around 25% from three whenever Luke Kornet jumped to block the rim from their vision. League averages for three-point percentage is about 36%, meaning that Kornet's strategy made his

Recently, the three-point shot took over the game of basketball. Teams take roughly as many three-pointers as they do two-pointers, and they continue to get better at making them each year. Just this past week, the Los Angeles Clippers and Sacramento Kings played a double overtime game that became the second-highest scoring game in NBA history while also tying the NBA record with 44 combined three-pointers.

move is that players lose the ability to rebound the ball. That has been a definitive issue that is seen in Kornet's game due to the maneuver. In a few instances, Kornet has given up an easy rebound and put-back to opponents, but the benefits of the move might be worth it. Kornet stays away from the landing area of the shooter, which prevents giving up free throw opportunities and fouls. Ko-

# THE WEEKLY REED





# Sports

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL: NO. 9 HUSKIES BEAT XAVIER IN SCRAPPY SENIOR NIGHT CONTEST

by Cole Stefan  
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From the senior night festivities recognizing Lou Lopez Senechal and Dorka Juhasz to a sold-out Gampel Pavilion, the No. 9 UConn women's basketball team had the perfect atmosphere to end their regular season with a blowout win against the Xavier Musketeers. However, the Huskies were far from perfect as they beat the Musketeers 60-51, trailing for parts of the first half against a team that had not won a game in conference play.

On a night where Connecticut committed 17 turnovers and surrendered 12 points, they still found ways to put points on the board and do just enough on both ends of the floor to grab the win. With Juhasz out of action due to a sprained ankle, Aaliyah Edwards dominated on the glass with 19 points, eight rebounds and three blocks. Even though she had six turnovers, this marks the sixth straight game in which Edwards has scored in double figures.

Two days removed from scoring five points against the DePaul Blue Demons, Lopez Senechal had another bounce back performance as she buried two 3-pointers, finished with 12 points and grabbed six rebounds. The graduate transfer from Fairfield University, who scored 10 of her points in the first half, finished with 28 double-digit performances throughout the regular season.

UConn started the game with a hot hand as a free throw and two layups gave them a 5-0 advantage over three minutes into the contest. Even with Xavier ending their scoring drought, it initially appeared that the Huskies were on their way to a signature blowout win. But as the opening frame came to a close, the Musketeers cut into the deficit with each shot they made, whether it was a layup from Courtney Prenger or a 3-pointer from Fernanda Ovalle. This put Xavier down two to begin the second quarter, which subsequently turned into a two-point advantage as Ovalle and Prenger each made layups.

After head coach Geno Auriemma called his first timeout of the game, however, a switch seemed to flip on the court as UConn dominated throughout the rest of the second quarter. Over the final eight minutes of the first half, the Huskies outscored the Musketeers 16-2, limiting them to a driving layup from Shelby Calhoun after she grabbed the rebound on the defensive end. UConn made two out of their five 3-pointers during that stretch, but the best moment in a strong second quarter got saved for last.

As time expired in the first half, Ayanna Patterson grabbed a rebound on the defensive end to start the Huskies' final possession for her best offensive play of the season. Caroline Ducharme threw the ball over to Patterson, who tossed a heave to the basket that went in as the buzzer sounded. Similar to the start of the second quarter, the Huskies had all of



The UConn women's basketball team plays their senior game against Xavier University, winning 60-51 on Monday, Feb. 27, 2023 in Gampel Pavilion. The Huskies will play their first game of the Big East Women's Basketball Tournament on Saturday, March 4 at the Mohegan Sun Arena.

PHOTOGRAPH BY IZZI BARTON, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

the momentum to begin the third as Edwards scored in the paint within 15 seconds. Up 16 and making shot after shot, UConn seemed to be in the driver's seat for the rest of the game, but then a nasty and heated collision occurred that seemed to change momentum.

After weeks of taking hit after hit on both ends of the floor, something snapped in Lopez Senechal after Taylor Smith got charged with an offensive foul near midcourt. In what appeared to be a physical collision, Lopez Senechal looked like she had something to say to Smith following the contact before both teams got sent to their benches. Lopez Senechal got assessed a technical foul, and it provided the spark Xavier needed to avoid getting blown out as they held the Huskies to four points in the final five

minutes of the frame. UConn's offensive struggles continued to begin the fourth as they missed four out of their first six shot attempts, which included two wide-open opportunities and three on the first possession of the frame. Even with the game out of reach after Edwards made two buckets and Aubrey Griffin drove for a layup, the Musketeers played as though they had nothing to lose in their regular-season finale.

With two layups from Prenger in the final two minutes, the Huskies finished their 10th consecutive game with the final result decided by a single-digit margin—a sign of the struggles the team has endured throughout the month of February. Despite claiming the regular season title and everything that they have been through this

year, Auriemma knows that the mentality has got to change heading into postseason play.

"It's time we stop blaming the injuries, stop blaming the fatigue," Auriemma commented. "We are who we are."

Ducharme finished with 14 points in her first start since December 31, which included three 3-pointers, three rebounds and two assists. On a night where she broke the single-season assists record set by Sue Bird in 2002, Nika Muhl finished with five points, all at the free throw line, and seven dimes. UConn shot 40.4% from the field and outrebounded Xavier 37-30, despite getting only two points from their three-person bench.

No Musketeer scored in double figures, but Ovalle finished close to that mark with nine points while Scarlett and Prenger each

had eight as the former made two of the team's three shots from downtown. Despite shooting 39.3% from the field and scoring 19 bench points, the Musketeers finished with an 0-20 record in conference play.

The regular season has concluded for the Huskies, who finish 18-2 in Big East play and with outright possession of their 29th regular season conference championship. Connecticut now has their longest break since Christmas before traveling to Mohegan Sun Arena to compete in the Big East Tournament. As the No. 1 seed, their first game is on Saturday, March 4, at 12 p.m. against the winner of Friday's contest between the eighth-seeded Butler Bulldogs and the ninth-seeded Georgetown Hoyas, and it will air on FS1.

**WHAT TO KEEP AN EYE ON THIS WEEK**

**UConn SCOREBOARD**

vs.

17
vs.
6

**Women's Lacrosse  
Monday**

**Upcoming Games**

vs.

MBB, 7 p.m. Wednesday  
Hartford, Conn.

vs.

Softball, 1 p.m. Friday  
Lynchburg, VA

**INSTAGRAM OF THE DAY**

@miltonlevin  
Another morning snow tease @uconn  
(Feb 21, 2023).

**TWEETS OF THE DAY**

aaliyah edwards for npoy  
@mariey325

uconn did beat iowa folks,  
and without dorka

TabSoda  
@TabSoda\_SSB

Professors stop putting  
Midterms on the day before  
Spring Break challenge

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