

Avelo Airlines stops deportation flights with ICE



by **Pierce Colfer**
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Avelo Airlines, a New Haven-based airline and a marketing partner of the University of Connecticut, has announced that they will stop performing deportation flights for Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) and close the Mesa Gateway Airport in Phoenix, where the airline operated its deportation flights, on Jan. 27.

“Avelo will close the base at AZA on January 27 and will conclude all participation in the [Department of Homeland Security] charter program,” an Avelo statement read.

According to the statement, Avelo is halting their relationship with ICE because the program did not provide “consistent and predictable revenue.”

“The program provided short-term benefits but ultimately did not deliver enough consistent and predictable revenue to overcome its operational complexity and costs,” the statement read.

Avelo announced that they would begin flying deportation flights for ICE in April 2025. The decision faced backlash from New Haven residents, with a change.org petition for Avelo to cancel their contract with ICE receiving over 40,000 supporters.

The decision also faced backlash from Connecticut politi-

cians, including New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker, who was one of the over 40,000 supporters for the change.org petition, and Attorney General William Tong, who condemned Avelo after they refused to answer questions he posed about their relationship with ICE.

“The State of Connecticut has an obligation now to review this business decision and to consider the viability of our choice to support Avelo,” Tong said in an April press release. “I strongly encourage Avelo to reconsider its response and its decision to profit from these atrocities.”

Avelo founder and CEO Andrew Levy previously said that Avelo realizes flying deportation flights is a “sensitive and complicated topic,” but that it would “provide [Avelo] with the stability to continue expanding.”

“The State of Connecticut has an obligation now to review this business decision and to consider the viability of our choice to support Avelo.”

WILLIAM TONG

Two Avelo Airline employees stand in front of an Avelo plane. Avelo will stop performing deportation flights for ICE by Jan. 27. PHOTO COURTESY OF @AVELOAIR ON INSTAGRAM



An Avelo Plane taking off on Sept. 22, 2025. Avelo Airlines started doing deportation flights for ICE in April, 2025.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @AVELOAIR ON INSTAGRAM

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WE ARE NOT THE DAILY DIGEST

News

Metro-North ticketing policies change, MetroCard retiring

by Patrick Boots
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Major changes to the fare and ticketing policies of the Metropolitan Transportation Agency's (MTA) services went into effect on Jan. 4, affecting Metro-North Railroad passengers traveling to and from Connecticut.

"The policy changes...simplify ticketing rules and speed up the fare-collection process," the MTA said in a statement. "They [have been] adopted as a pilot program, subject to ongoing review."

Chief among the changes is the replacement of round-trip tickets with "day passes," which allow for unlimited travel between the fare zones purchased. On weekdays, the day pass will cost 10% less than two one-way peak tickets, and on weekends it will cost the same as two one-way off-peak tickets.

As part of the new rules, all one-way tickets and day passes — both paper and those purchased through the MTA's TrainTime mobile app — will now expire at 4 a.m. the day after purchase. Formerly, they were valid for 60 days; it's a move the MTA hopes will curtail the "re-use" of unpunched

tickets for later trips.

Also gone is the 10-trip ticket. As a consolation, buying 10 trips in a 14-day period will get you an 11th trip free for use within that same period — but only if you purchase them on the app.

The MTA also wants to cut down on passengers purchasing or activating tickets onboard the train. The surcharge is now \$8 whether you're buying from a conductor or the app, which will show "an escalating series of warnings" to offenders, compared and confirmed by digital timestamps when your ticket is scanned.

"There was a lot of unintentional fare evasion, and even some opportunistic fare evasion, and we're adjusting to that," Janno Lieber, CEO of the MTA, said at the agency board's meeting in December. "So, everyone has confidence this is a fair system where everyone's paying their fair share."

Another impact of the changes sees fares on the Long Island Railroad and Metro-North's Harlem and Hudson Lines, as well as to and from New Haven Line stations in Westchester County and the Bronx, increase

by 4.5% for monthly and weekly tickets and by 8% for all other ticket types.

While the price to and from Connecticut will stay the same for now, a 5% increase, the second of two doses, is on its way in July. By then, a one-way ticket from New Haven to Grand Central will cost \$20.25 off-peak and \$27.25 peak, and the fare for U-Pass cardholders will be \$11.55 off-peak and \$15.75 peak.

"Go to a diner of your choice and figure out what else has gone down in price since before [2020]. Not many things. Even where we're doing the 2% annual fare increases, we're staying well below inflation, so the fare model has been great," Lieber also said at the meeting.

The cost of the CityTicket, the MTA's one-price fare option for exclusive rail travel within the city's five boroughs, has likewise gone up: \$5.25 from \$5 for off-peak tickets and \$7.25 from \$7 for peak tickets.

The good news for seniors (and other qualified customers) is that reduced fares will be available "all day, every day" even in the morning peak period. However, there is no dis-

count on the new day passes.

"Because transit fares [are] a fraction of the cost of owning a car, New Yorkers spend less on transportation than people in the rest of the country, and we're determined to keep it that way."

JANNO LIEBER, MTA CEO

Goodbye, MetroCard

It's also the end of an era for the subway's MetroCard, as sales and refills stopped on Jan. 1. Last March, the MTA announced they would "sunset" the beloved fare pass in favor of a contactless payment system as part of their "One Metro New York," or OMNY, initiative.

"After 32 years, it's time to say goodbye to the MetroCard and go 'all in' on the fare payment system of the future,"

Lieber said in the announcement.

Coinciding with the switchover, subway and bus fares have increased to \$3 from \$2.90. Even though many people are dissatisfied with the hike, the first in over two years, Lieber maintains they "prioritize value for frequent riders...while maintaining the MTA's bottom line."

"Because transit fares [are] a fraction of the cost of owning a car, New Yorkers spend less on transportation than people in the rest of the country, and we're determined to keep it that way," Lieber added.

The "tap-and-go" screen at the turnstile now allows riders to pay their fare directly with debit and credit cards as well as smartphone wallets which support contactless payments and new OMNY fare passes.

With the new method, passengers can also pay for 12 rides in a seven-day period and automatically ride free for the rest of the week, a perk that was previously only for pre-paid customers.

"While there's no doubt the MetroCard will remain an iconic New York City symbol, tap-and-go fare payment has been a game changer for everyday riders and visitors," said MTA Chief Customer Officer Shanifah Rieara.

For now, you can still swipe your MetroCard — the official retirement date is yet to be announced — and any remaining value can be transferred to an OMNY pass at one of the MTA's customer service outlets through two years after the MetroCard's printed expiration date.

The MTA also said that the OMNY system "unlocks potential for new promotions, discounts, special deals for tourists and even the possibility of a loyalty program similar to frequent flyer airline programs."

Launched in 1994 as a replacement for subway tokens, the MetroCard was later co-opted for use on the MTA's local and regional bus network, the JFK AirTrain, the Roosevelt Island Tramway and the PATH system — becoming a tri-state icon in its own right.

For more information on MTA service fares, and to calculate specific trips, visit mta.info/fares-tolls.



A train passenger gets their ticket ready for the ticket collector. One of the main changes the MTA implemented is to replace round-trips with "day passes." PHOTO COURTESY OF @MTAMETRONORTH ON INSTAGRAM.

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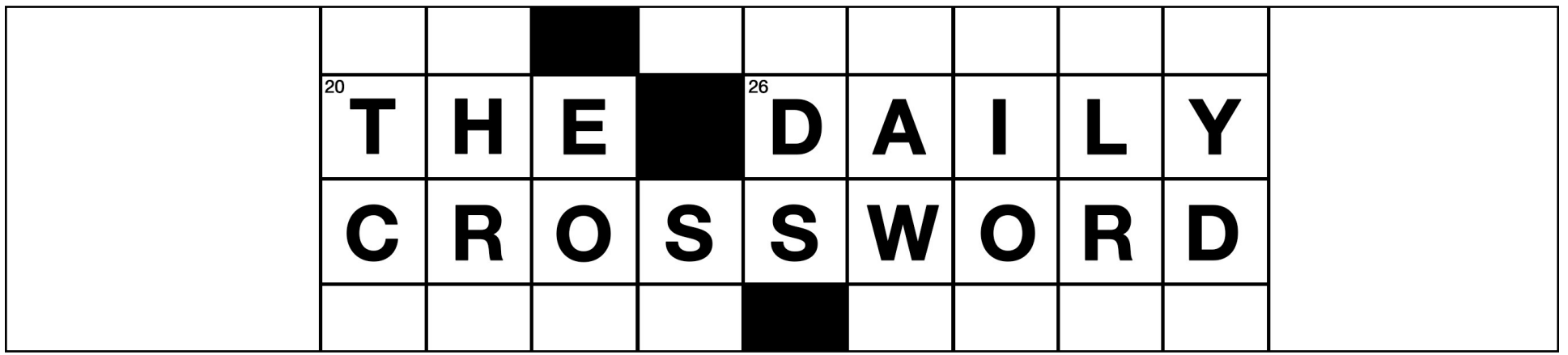
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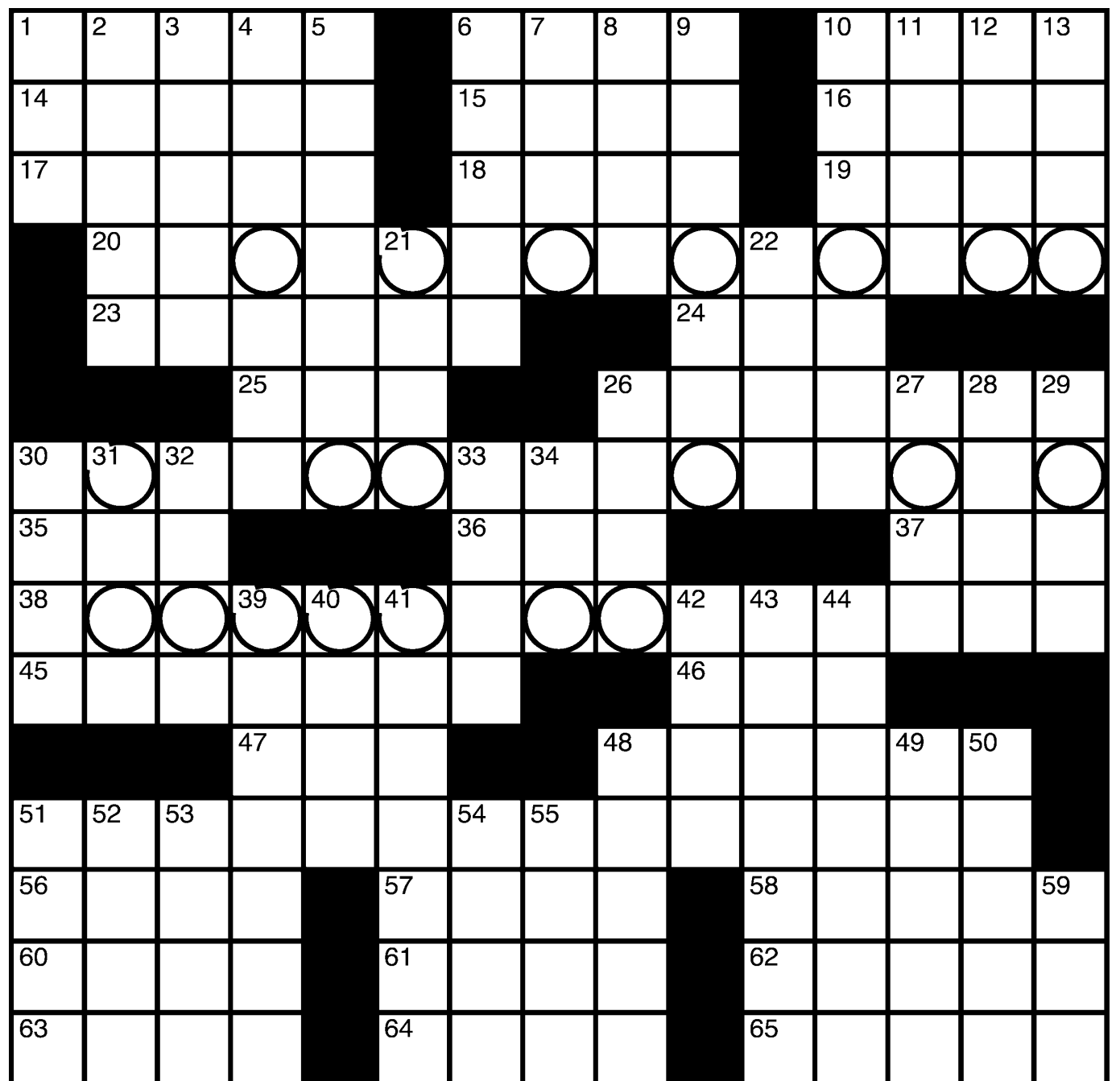


ACROSS

- 1 Facing attack from all sides
- 6 Getup
- 10 Target's target, for one
- 14 "Well done!"
- 15 Double-reed woodwind
- 16 Each, informally
- 17 Uses as evidence in a research paper
- 18 Run a rag over
- 19 Tuckered out
- 20 Trousers with tool-carrying pockets and loops
- 23 Elite squads
- 24 Bubble source, maybe
- 25 ___ Lanka
- 26 Give up, in an idiom
- 30 "So glad I don't have to deal with that"
- 35 Broke bread
- 36 Amazement
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- 45 Lifestyle brand with origins in surf culture
- 46 "Yeah, right!"
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- 48 Fitting measurement
- 51 Backpedaled, or what's found in 20-, 30-, and 38-Across
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By Dylan Schiff

1/20/26

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- 3 Occupied, as a diner booth
- 4 "Into Thin Air" mountain peak
- 5 More than is needed
- 6 Bridal shop selections
- 7 "You haven't changed ___!"
- 8 Tire swing line
- 9 Potbelly
- 10 Ritchie Valens hit
- 11 Doing business
- 12 Farm animal in some yoga classes
- 13 Makes a choice
- 21 Dubai dignitary
- 22 "How Long" singer Charlie
- 26 Prompted on stage
- 27 Against
- 28 "If u ask me ..."
- 29 Many a promgoer
- 30 Big blast
- 31 "At Last" singer James
- 32 Arctic seabird
- 33 Crochet need
- 34 Be behind, in a way

Monday's Puzzle Solved



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1/20/26

- 39 Spurred to action
- 40 Tend to risotto
- 41 Motion detectors for automatic doors
- 42 "Yeah, try again"
- 43 Informal clothing
- 44 Rising current of warm air
- 48 Significant figures
- 49 Yoga pose
- 50 Fixes
- 51 Hard knocks?
- 52 Source of Buffalo's lake-effect snow
- 53 Moral shortcoming
- 54 Cupid's counterpart
- 55 Academic administrator with a list
- 59 Barbecue residue

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Life

Under the Rock:

How to actually keep your New Year's resolutions

by Patrick Boots
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Happy New Year, Huskies! It's a new semester, which means that many students start out with big plans: go to the gym, get better grades, save money or stress less. But just about every February, many of those resolutions quietly disappear between exams, late nights and campus chaos. If this sounds familiar, you're not alone.

The good news? Keeping your New Year's resolutions doesn't require superhuman discipline — just a smarter approach.

Your mileage may vary, but here are a few simple, realistic tips I've used to help turn resolutions into habits that last beyond the first few weeks.

Start Small (Smaller Than You Think)

One of the biggest mistakes students make is setting goals that are too big, too fast. "Do my homework every day" or "never procrastinate again" sounds motivating, but it's hard to sustain.

Instead, aim for something manageable like going to the library twice a week or studying for 30 minutes a day. Small wins build momentum, and momentum builds habits.

Tie Goals to Your Routine

College life is busy, so your resolutions need to fit into what you already do. If your goal is to read more, try reading 10 pages before bed.

If you want to eat better, start by adding one healthy meal per day rather than changing everything at once. If you're eating at the dining halls, integrate more green variety into your plate little by little. You shouldn't go cold turkey, or rather, cold salad (unless recommended by a health professional.)

When a goal is attached to an existing habit, it's easier to remember and follow through.

Write It Down (Yes, It Helps)

Putting your goals in writing makes them feel more real. Whether it's in a planner, notes app or on a sticky note above your desk, writing down your resolution can help keep it top of mind.

I actually use a real piece of paper for this. Indeed, our world — increasingly so here at UConn — is saturated with the "digital way of life," but I find that writing on paper really does "make it stick."

I say you get bonus points if you break writing into weekly or monthly goals — it makes progress easier to track and less overwhelming.

Expect Setbacks But Don't Quit

Missing a workout or not doing so hot on a quiz doesn't mean you've failed your resolution.

College life is unpredictable, and setbacks are normal. What matters is getting back on track instead of giving up entirely. One bad day won't ruin your progress, but quitting will.

Plus, here at UConn, you're rich with resources: When it comes to academics, there's more than one place to turn for help, not to mention the numerous other places to enrich your mind and body in non-academic ways.



Use Accountability to Your Advantage

All signs say you're more likely to stick with a goal if someone else knows about it. Tell a friend about your resolution, find a gym buddy or join a study group. Some students even use habit-track-

ing apps or calendars to stay accountable to themselves.

Remember, you can adjust and adapt your resolutions and goals.

Make It About Progress, Not Perfection

Resolutions aren't about becoming a "new you" overnight, they're

about improving a little at a time. Celebrate progress, even if it's small. Did you cook instead of ordering takeout? Start an assignment early? Those wins count.

My Resolution: A Penny Saved is a Penny Earned

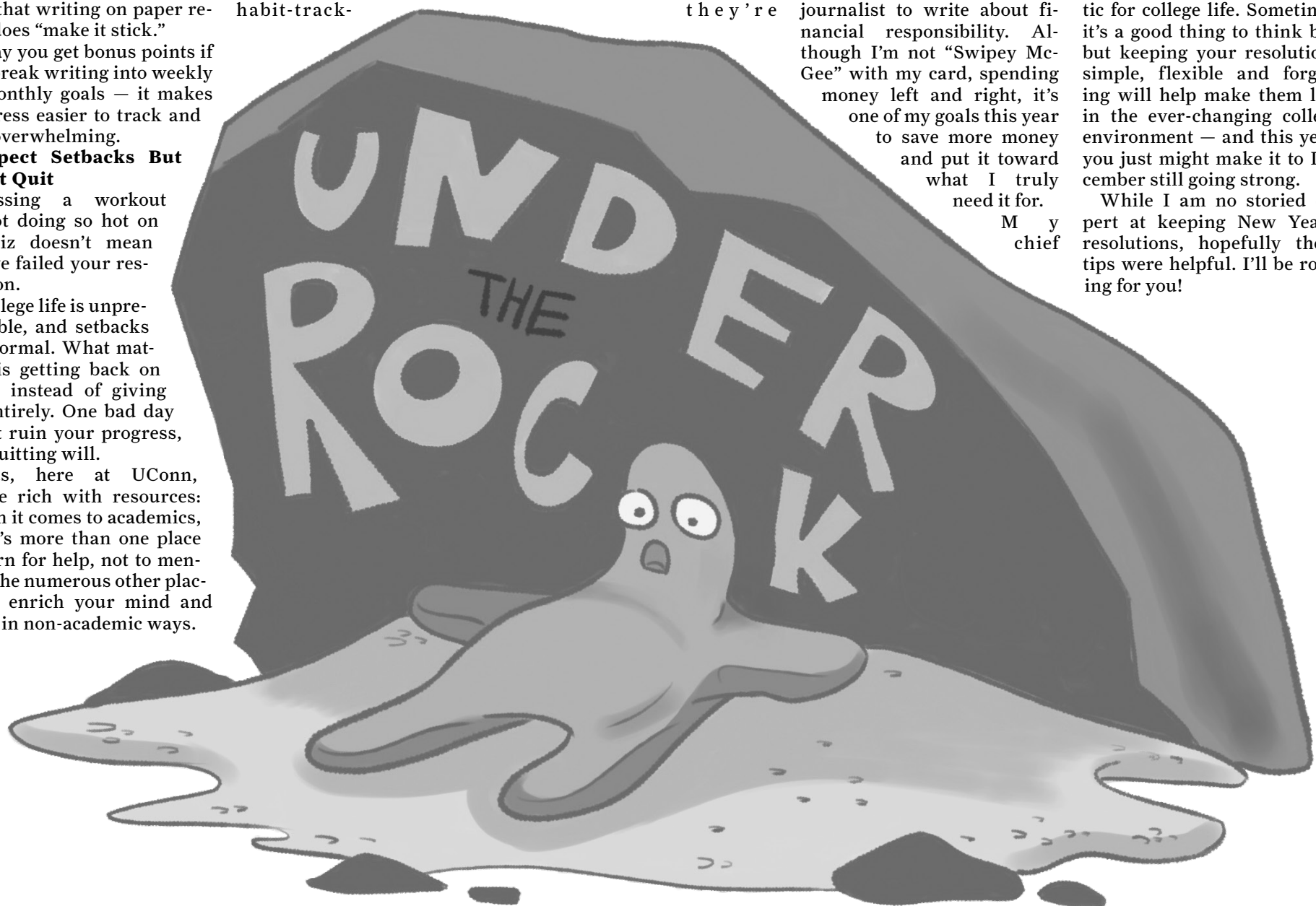
I'm probably not the best journalist to write about financial responsibility. Although I'm not "Swipecy McGee" with my card, spending money left and right, it's one of my goals this year to save more money and put it toward what I truly need it for.

My chief

way of making myself feel better: The old junk I like will still be old junk when I can afford to get it the next time!

At the end of the day, a lot of New Year's resolutions don't fail because folks are lazy or unmotivated. It's just that some goals aren't realistic for college life. Sometimes it's a good thing to think big, but keeping your resolutions simple, flexible and forgiving will help make them last in the ever-changing college environment — and this year, you just might make it to December still going strong.

While I am no storied expert at keeping New Year's resolutions, hopefully these tips were helpful. I'll be rooting for you!



“Hoops, Hopes & Dreams:”

Bringing basketball to the civil rights movement

by **Samantha Brody**
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In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the short documentary “Hoops, Hopes & Dreams” released on Hulu yesterday, detailing the ways King and former president Barack Obama used basketball as a means of bolstering their movements.

“Hoops, Hopes & Dreams” is a short watch at about 20 minutes, but it’s certainly a valuable viewing experience. Directed by artist Glenn Kaino, the documentary tells a moving story of hope, community and of course: basketball.

The documentary opens with a young man walking at night to a basketball court, spliced with images and videos of King’s nonviolent protests and scenes of police brutality. The segment is narrated by activist Andrew Young, who worked closely with King during the civil rights movement.

“I’ve always thought of myself as a point guard,” Young said. “I mean, that my job was to get the ball and get it to the open man to make the shot. And that was true with Martin Luther King.”

Young takes the time to acknowledge the nature of police brutality in the 1960s and earlier. He describes the weapons that police officers used, such as guns, clubs and tear gas, and the violence neighborhoods would see. According to Young, incidents of police brutality could happen multiple times a month in a neighborhood, but without digital records, they were easily swept under the rug.

One of the documentary’s greatest strengths is its determination to remain relevant to today’s political landscape. The 2020 murder of George Floyd and the recent murder of Nicole Renee Good at the hands of an Immigration, Customs and Enforcement officer are both notable modern examples of brutality at the hands of law enforcement officers, and the documentary invites comparison between

the current reality and the world King lived in.

Many documentaries and other retellings of King’s work for the civil rights movement ignore how the problems of the 1960s still exist in the 2020s, almost sixty years after King’s murder. “Hoops, Hopes & Dreams” doesn’t shy away from this truth.

Alongside Young, the documentary collects interviews from journalist Jemele Hill, Michael Strautmanis and former Duke University basketball star Reggie Love — who both worked closely with Obama during his presidential campaigns — and NBA Hall of Famer Jerry West, best known as the inspiration for the NBA logo.

The documentary frames the stories of King and Obama through the usage of basketball as a means of human connection. Young and other members of the movement would play basketball with kids at local courts to earn their respect and find ways to relate to them, before telling them about the civil rights movement.

“Considering what an excellent strategist that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was, of course it makes all the sense in the world that he would use basketball as a way to not just relate, but a way to invite people into a movement that was life-changing,” Hill said.

Basketball is a consistent through line between King’s civil rights movement and Obama’s presidential campaign. Strautmanis even met Obama while playing basketball, having lost multiple games to a clever left-handed player before realizing who he had been losing to: the future U.S. president.

Obama went on to use basketball to earn votes during his campaign. According to Love, Obama started a basketball game during primary day in Iowa and won the state that night. When Obama and his team lost New Hampshire, Obama and his team decided to play basketball during every state’s primary day to try and connect with local voters.

“It gives him sort of a commonality,” Hill said. “Like, a



lot of people in the world love to play basketball and it’s like ‘oh, I have something in common with President Barack Obama.’”

Another major draw of the documentary is Kaino’s incredible choice to animate the basketball games the interviewees describe, instead of using clips of real games. All of the basketball games in the documentary are 3D animated, stylized to look like a hand drawn comic in dark ink. King and Obama

are highlighted in yellow and blue, respectively.

The basketball scenes are soundtracked with hip hop music, which increases energy as the animated figures move dynamically across the screen. Altogether, despite their animated appearance, these sections come across as authentic and lively, painting a picture of King and Obama as real people and not just figureheads of legend.

“Hoops, Hopes & Dreams” has secured a special place

in the world of Martin Luther King Jr. memorials. The unique decision to frame King’s movement around basketball and to compare his tactics with Obama makes the story feel fresh while also bringing some lesser-known details to light. For those interested in learning a bit more about our nation’s history in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, “Hoops, Hopes & Dreams” is a good place to start.

Rating: 5/5



Promotional photos for “Hoops, Hopes & Dreams.” The new Hulu documentary explores how Martin Luther King Jr. and Barack Obama used basketball to connect with people.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF @ALEXYSTHEGREAT ON INSTAGRAM



Life

“Stranger Things”

concludes with long awaited feature-length episode

by **Thaddeus Sawyer**
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This article contains spoilers for “Stranger Things” season five.

After almost 10 years of nostalgic adventures and excessive plot armor, the series finale of “Stranger Things” premiered on Netflix on Dec. 31, 2025.

The feature-length episode of just over two hours brought the story to a semi-ambiguous conclusion, implying that Eleven faked her death inside the Upside Down and was still alive.

The Duffer Brothers, the creators of the series, also hit on many of the major questions left for the final half of season five. We discovered how Vecna or Henry Creel got his powers, and in a full circle moment, we saw Joyce Byers kill him by decapitating him with an axe.

The existence of the Upside Down is also explained as a tunnel of the worm hole located between Earth and the Abyss, which is introduced fully this season.

Will’s connection to the hive mind is further played with, showing him hack into Vecna’s mind and control his actions to save Max (who is also brought

back from her coma).

However, many questions were left unanswered, and further plot holes were created that took away from the viewing experience for many.

Will’s connection to the hive mind not affecting him in the final battle was one of the plot holes, as a major plot point found throughout the second half of season five was completely ignored in that sequence.

After the expansion of the Demogorgon to include dogs in season two and bats in season four, no form of the creature is seen in the final battle as they completely abandon the Mind Flayer and Vecna whom they are controlled by.

The unexplained endings of side characters such as Suzie and Vickie also left some feeling shortchanged by where the show left off for some of their favorite characters. The basic plot and outcomes outside of the glaring plot holes, however, leave the story in a fine place.

Seeing Robin and Vickie break up or continuing a now three-season-old plotline of Dustin having a long-distance relationship (that hasn’t been significant to his individual character development since season three) would have been inconsequential. These

holes were not as important as the scene where Jonathan Byers, Nancy Wheeler, Robin Buckley and Steve Harrington reunite as they return to Hawkins, Ind. after going their separate ways.

There is also an argument to be made that the inclusion of Demogorgons in the final battle would have distracted from the main fight against the Mind Flayer and Eleven against Vecna, even if it comes off as lazy more than as an artistic decision.

The first half of the episode is bare bones, to the point method of wrapping up the Vecna plot, removing the Mind Flayer as a threat and closing the book on the Upside Down.

The episode really thrives in the second act, in which it gives an emotional look at the characters’ lives after chaos and shows the kids graduating from high school to move towards adulthood. Joyce and Jim Hopper get married. Steve Harrington is a baseball coach with Delightful Derek as his backstop.

We get to see the characters who we fell in love with, the reason we cared about the plot, move on to bigger and better things. If you can get past the plot holes, it’s a sentimental and fitting ending that answers enough questions to satisfy.

Rating: 3.1/5



A promotional poster for season five of the popular Netflix show “Stranger Things.” The series finale premiered on Dec. 31, 2025. PHOTO COURTESY OF @STRANGERTHINGSTV ON INSTAGRAM

ASAP Rocky’s “Don’t Be Dumb” review

by **Alex Klancko**
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ASAP Rocky dropped his fourth studio album “Don’t Be Dumb” on Friday, Jan. 16. This is his first album release since “Testing” in 2018, which had countless features like Frank Ocean, Kid Cudi and Kodak Black. “Don’t Be Dumb,” however, is a solo album by ASAP.

ASAP Rocky is one of the most popular rappers today with two number one albums, “Long Live. ASAP” and “At Long Last. ASAP.” His third studio album “Testing” topped at number four on the Billboard 200. The rapper also has many top 100 hits such

as “Wild for the Night,” “LSD” and “Praise the Lord (Da Shine).”

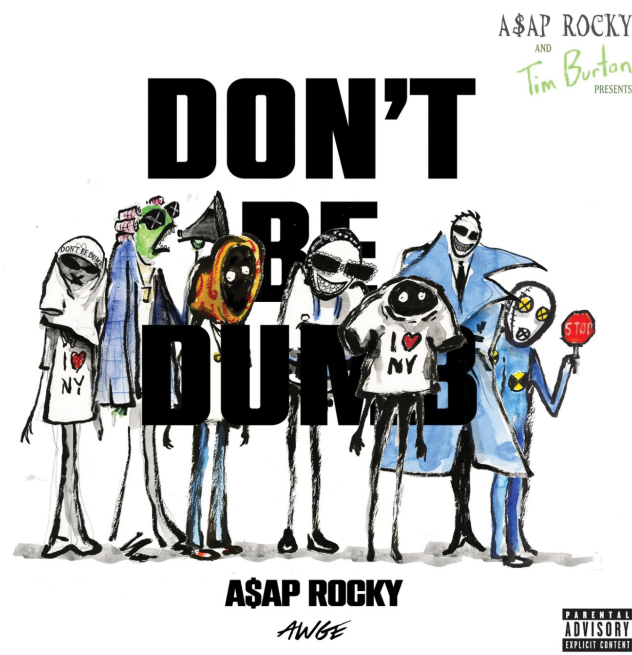
The opening track is “Order of Protection” which opens with the beat before ASAP begins rapping 16 seconds in. The beat is a slow opener but gets louder as the song goes on; it’s a little basic but works with the toned-down vibe. ASAP’s rapping sounds clean; you’re able to understand what he’s saying and it flows well with the beat.

The second track, “Helicopter,” begins totally different. The beat is different from the opener as it starts with a lot of bass. The lyrics flow well with the beat and is very satisfying to listen to. “Helicopter” is also faster paced than “Order of Protection” which makes it easier to focus on.

“Stole Ya Flow” brings similar energy to “Helicopter.” The beat is also fast paced and filled with bass. The lyrics in this one are very catchy — you’ll latch on to them after just a few listens.

“Stay Here 4 Life” has a calmer sound with vocals starting the song. Then, Brent Faiyaz starts to rap repeated lyrics and finally ASAP joins the song. His lyrics flow well with the slower, lighter beat and the song has a more positive vibe to it.

“Playa” continues the calmer, slower beat from the previous song but gets a little faster a couple seconds in. The lyrics itself are alright and Stephen Curry is mentioned in the song with the lyrics “If she curvy, just like Steph Curry, gotta take your



ASAP Rocky promotes his new album “Don’t Be Dumb.” The hip-hop album contains 15 tracks. PHOTOS COURTESY OF @ASAPROCKY ON INSTAGRAM

shot.” “Stop Snitching” has a great beat right off the bat. It starts slow and then gets fast; it’s bass-filled and has some good background tracks. The vocals come in hot, right as the song starts and gives a sort of 2016 vibe as it changes pace.

“Air Force (Black Demarco)” also has a more bassy, heavy, fast-paced sound like the previous songs. The lyrics again come in hot and fast, so if you’re not listening, you’ll miss what’s being said. About a minute in, the song suddenly slows down with the vocals being a lot lower-pitched than before. Then, just like that, 30 seconds later it’s back to fast paced. The combination of slow and fast paced lyrics with the beat makes the song fun to listen to.

The rest of the album is good too, “Robbery” has a fun jazzy sound to it, “Don’t Be Dumb/ Trip Baby” has a slower lo-fi beat to it and “Fish N Steak (What Is It)” has a weird, mesmerizing sound to it that gets faster as the song goes on.

ASAP Rocky’s “Don’t Be Dumb” is a solid album with all sorts of different sounds, beats, lyrics and paces to it. It’s a good mix of ordinary and weird that makes this album a hit.

RATING 4/5



Opinion

The Daily Campus

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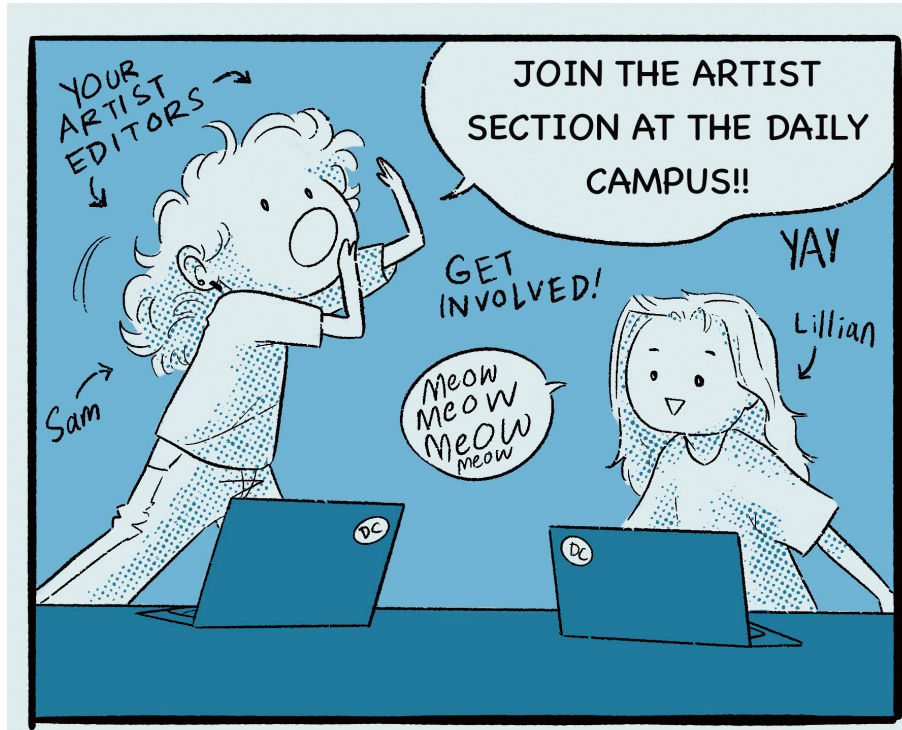
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COMIC BY SAM HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

EPA, Don't Get Bogged Down: Why wetlands deserve federal protection

by **Tamara Segal**
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In 1972, Congress passed the Clean Water Act, which serves as the country's main safeguard against water pollution. It grants the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulatory authority over what it defines as "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS). In many ways, this law has drastically restored our waters from years of pollution and degradation. Yet, throughout its history, one thing has remained unclear: what it means for wetlands.

In general, WOTUS are understood to be navigable waters, like lakes and rivers. The term has historically been interpreted to include some wetlands insofar as they influence those navigable waters, but not in their own right.

In any case, the current standard was set by the Supreme Court in *Sackett v. EPA* in 2023, where an Idaho couple challenged the EPA's authority over the wetlands on their property, which they had recently filled in and were planning to build a home upon. The Court found that the EPA, in fact, did not have jurisdiction because the wetlands lacked a "continuous surface connection" with WOTUS.

Then, in November 2025, the EPA and USACE themselves jointly proposed revisions to the definition of WOTUS that follow the Supreme Court precedent. This new definition could leave 85% of wetlands without any federal protection. And while some states, like Connecticut, have their own formal wetland protections in place, "24 states [rely] entirely on federal protections via the Clean Water Act," according to the Environmental Defense Fund. Thus, these changes will greatly influence the future of the nation's wetlands.

Yet the real problem is that the Court ruling is not unfounded. Despite the past precedent of protecting wetlands, the Clean Water Act itself does not discuss in unambiguous terms the extent to which wetlands qualify as WOTUS, and someone could be forgiven for not inherently considering a marsh or bog as a water body.

The truth remains, however, that wetlands do deserve this federal protection, even though this fact has been eclipsed for so long by a fundamental misunderstanding of wetlands and their value. Far from in-between-lands or disease-ridden wastelands, wetlands are simply ecosystems which hold water intermittently throughout the year – which is exactly where their

importance stems from.

For one thing, they act as sponges, holding excess precipitation in the event of heavy rainfall and prevents storm damage and flooding. The requirement that they have a "continuous surface connection" with another water body ignores the dynamic nature of wetlands that makes them so influential.

Their benefits don't stop there. They also naturally filter out pollutants in runoff before it enters other waterways, including sources of drinking water. Furthermore, their conditions give way to unique soil characteristics that various plants and animals depend upon. Wetlands are among the most biologically productive ecosystems in the world, and they serve as habitats and breeding grounds for myriad wildlife, including one third of all threatened or endangered populations in the country, according to the National Park Service.

In this way, wetlands are not borderline water bodies, but rather a different class of ecosystem that nevertheless provide indispensable environmental services because of their uniquely wet conditions and have a great deal to do with water quality within the United States. By any



Wetlands at Lake Waccamaw State Park located in Columbus County, N.C. Wetlands prevent flooding, filter pollutants and support wildlife. PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

comprehensive definition, they should qualify as "waters of the United States." The obvious and urgent corollary is that, rather than minimizing the definition of WOTUS, the EPA and USACE must expand it to expressly include wetlands – in their own right.

The power of thriving wetlands is great. Take the Rwandan capital Kigali, for example. After losing 50% of their wetlands to pollution and degradation, the city felt the loss of its natural protection against its rainy season

in newfound vulnerability to destructive flooding. But a large and unprecedented project to restore wetlands across the city has seen great improvements in flood management, to many residents' relief. The lesson here is not that wetlands have miraculous restorative powers over nature, but rather that they are especially crucial aspects of nature to begin with, and consequently their degradation results in great disturbance of the natural systems we rely upon daily.

Thus, while it may feel like a tall task to protect wetlands when they seem like enticing places to build, the path forward requires recognizing that the allure of unimpeded construction will come up empty if we fail to respect nature's patterns. Take the Sackett couple, for example. Building their house on a wetland, they have taken the place of a natural holding pool for precipitation, meaning their basement may very well be the new pool the next time it rains. We can't cheat nature, and wetlands are simply the latest test.



Construction of a ditch plug for wetland restoration. The proposed revisions of the term "waters of the United States" could leave 85% of wetlands without any federal protection. PHOTO COURTESY OF FLICKR

Opinion

Photo of the Day | Returning to a snowy Storrs



Snow covers the UConn Storrs campus as students start to move in for the spring semester on Jan. 19, 2026. The sign is prominently displayed to those arriving to campus when driving in. PHOTO BY SYDNEY CHANDLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Umamusume: The amazing franchise that's bringing back horse racing

by Ayden Mirabella
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Getting into gambling has been made easier and easier over time, but the problem is, can an older form of gambling keep up? In the United States, horse racing has been happening since the 1600's, but now with the ability to go online and legally wager on other sports, horse racing has seen a decline. Think about it; the younger audience no longer has interest in Seabiscuit's legacy or whoever is racing at Belmont. The younger generation cares about the parlays of Gianni over under 25.5 points or if Ohtani hit a homerun. That is a major problem for horse racing, but a mobile game and anime have changed that.

The game Umamusume: Pretty Derby has captivated a younger audience. "Uma" is the Japanese word for "horse." "Musume" is the Japanese word for "girl." Thus, "Umamusume" means "horse girl" in English. Umamusume is made of things younger generations have an interest in: anime, video games and anime horse girls. Umamusume also has captivated social media with memes and videos about the characters in the game and anime. The main point of the game is to make a younger audience care about older racehorses. Many of the characters are based on retired horses such as Gold Ship or Haru Urara. By making a younger audience interested in these horses, it draws them to the tracks or at least has them paying more attention to the different races. Watching the anime, you get to see these "Umas" act in amusing ways. It's a running bit that many of the Umas share a close personality with their real-life counterparts, such as Gold Ship having an unpredictable and stubborn personality.

Since the trainers, owners and jockeys of the real life horses have to give permission to Cygames — the developer of Umamusume: Pretty Derby — to use their horses in game, they see the potential of gaining revenue for the sport which, in turn, allows for more horses to be bought and trained. The game itself has the player take on the role of trainer, where you have to train your Uma to compete in races. This is also beneficial to horse racing because many of the races your Uma competes in are inspired by real-life races that are held professionally. Different Umas compete in races allowing the player to see the conditions they are held under, from the Queen Elizabeth II Cup held on turf to the JBC Sprint held on dirt. The game allows the player to begin noticing

the name of the race along with the month it is held, leading to attention being drawn to these events and to more money for organizers and owners.

Umamusume has seen an uptick in popularity on social media platforms from people making jokes about Gold Ship not training to people mourning Grass Wonder and Haru Urara in the early fall of 2025. Fans of the series have also contributed to funding the Japanese farms and ranches the horses are retired at to support them. Umamusume fans have also started to support horse-themed sports teams like the Denver Broncos or SMU. Pictures such as Gold Ship in a Broncos jersey have become a center point under posts about the Broncos. Cosplayers have also been spotted at these events dressed up as the Umas and at the tracks, cheering on the real-life horses. Overall, Umamusume clearly has a presence on social media and that leads to more people downloading and playing the game. As of right now, Umamusume is serving its purpose of getting people back into horse racing by using anime horse girls and video games, leading people back to this older form of gambling, making it more mainstream.

In the words of Gold Ship, it's about presentation. This article was written in memory of the racehorse Haru Urara, known as "The Shining Star of Losers Everywhere". She might have been 0-113, but she will always be number one in our hearts.



Horse racing at Golden Gate Fields in Albany, Calif. on Dec. 26, 2017. The mobile game Umamusume: Pretty Derby features gameplay that resembles real-life horse racing. PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Paper Boy Sam

How snow looks:



How snow feels:



COMIC BY JASON J. SAMPSON, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Geno Auriemma slams CT pizza campaign over lackluster locker-room pie

by Patrick Boots
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The final buzzer sounds and the pressure's lifted: Most coaches would probably be happy that their team won a tough game. As it turns out, other things are on your mind when you're coaching the best women's basketball team in the country on an undefeated streak — at least, they were for Geno Auriemma on Thursday, after crushing the Villanova Wildcats 99-50.

"Pizza capital of the world, my [expletive]," said Auriemma, while sitting down to start the game's press conference.

What is Auriemma referring to?

He's referring to the fact that the State of Connecticut takes pride in our state's pizza. However, the pie the defending national champions were served apparently wasn't up to snuff, according to the coach.

"I think they brought it at our shoot-around this afternoon," he said. "[They] poured some red stuff on the box and called it pizza."

Auriemma, besides being the winningest coach in college basketball history, was born in Italy — Montella, in the southern region of Campania, to be exact — and has been a successful restaurateur for decades, the man has his own tomato sauce, for goodness' sake.

"I would eat it, even cold, but no — being Italian, and being from Philly, just no," the coach said. "Sorry, it doesn't live up to the standards of UConn or the State of Connecticut."

Understandably, he seemed upset because our pizza isn't too shabby: New Haven, on Connecticut's shoreline, played

a crucial role in pizza history, with its distinctive apizza (pronounced "a-beetz") — characterized by a thin, charred crust with a tomato sauce-forward topping. It originated at the turn of the last century from world-famous establishments on Wooster Street like Frank Pepe's and Sally's. Both have franchised locations around the state and nationally.

"We have Pepe's up here, and we can't get it," Auriemma lamented. "We're going to get better pizza, I promise you...the good stuff, not the crap they're passing off as pizza now."

Following the conference, Frank Pepe's responded on social media with a humorous video message saying "Coach, we got you!"

"I'll bring some for you guys [the press] to taste it," Geno added, in the midst of UConn Athletics staff trying to steer the discussion back to the game: a blowout with star performances by Sarah Strong, Azzi Fudd, KK Arnold and Blanca Quiñonez — all with the 2015-16 national championship alumni team in attendance after their induction into the Huskies of Honor before the game.

"Every question you ask, I'm gonna say, 'the pizza sucks,'" he said, later dishing out his official postgame responses.

In 2024, the Connecticut Office of Statewide Marketing and Tourism launched a large campaign focused on the state's pizza prowess, sticking it directly to noted pizza neighbor New York with new "Welcome to Connecticut" highway signs on Interstates 95 and 84 boldly declaring CT the "Pizza Capital of the United States."

"We want everyone entering our state to immediately feel proud of what we do well here, whether it's making the nation's best pizza, national champi-

onships, or the most complex machines in the world," Governor Ned Lamont said when the signs were unveiled — a move that quickly went viral.

"You're not even the pizza capital of the tri-state area," quipped New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy on social media.

"Okay, I see what's happening: nothing means anything anymore," said Stephen Colbert during a segment on his late-night show about the signs. "You can just say whatever you want about your state [now]."

A delegation of state leaders went as far to make it official in Washington, and upped the ante in 2025 by placing billboards targeting pizza hubs like Chicago, Detroit and New Jersey — but especially New York City — with messages like "The Nation's Best Pizza — Not You, New York" among other pizza-focused marketing efforts.

"We know exactly what we're doing," said Anthony Anthony,

the state's chief marketing officer, at the time. "This isn't about being subtle."

But Geno isn't having it.

"Don't believe those signs when you come into Connecticut, saying [the state is] the pizza capital of the world," he said. "It's [bulls--t]."

"To UConn, [Athletic Director David] Benedict, and anyone else in charge of the pizza situation - clean it up," an article by Barstool Sports stated after Auriemma's comments went public.

Some fans used the viral moment to reflect on their own pizza experiences.

"Sgt. Pep's was really good and now it's gone," a comment by Instagram user joshpires said, referring to the longtime UConn campus pizzeria which closed its doors in 2023.

"I'm dying to know what pizza they brought in to set him off like this," added user eastcoast.cook.

Lamont also took to social media after the coach's comments, saying "At least we both agree that Connecticut is the Basketball Capital of the World."

In spite of the controversy — or thanks to, depending on how you look at it — Connecticut's pizza-focused campaign has paid off in its first year, boosting the state's reputation and the largest-yet shift in the state's "brand perception" according to tourism data.

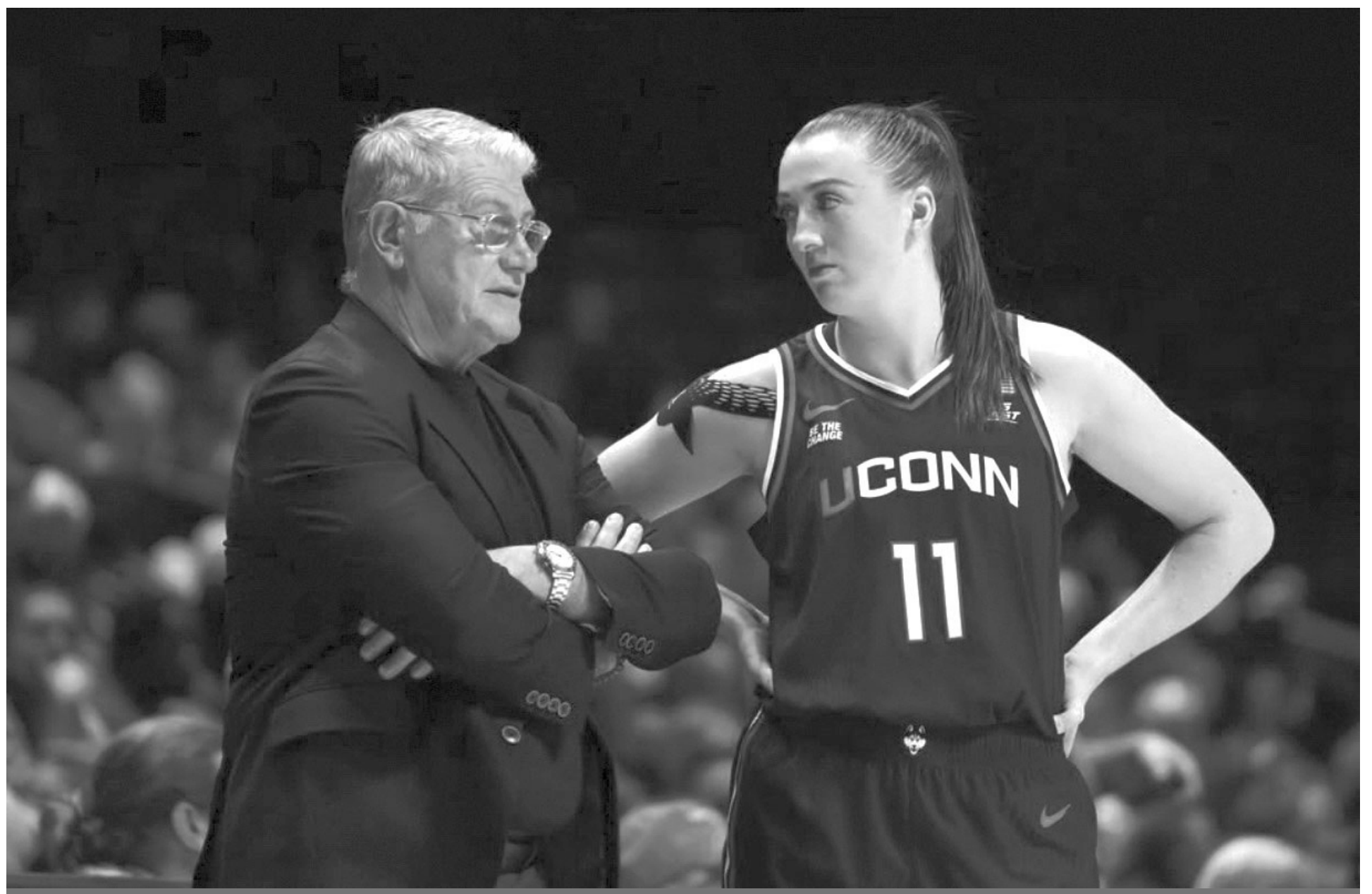
"This wasn't a gimmick," said Anthony when the data was released. "We didn't ask people to think different about Connecticut — we gave them a reason to."

It is unclear who actually cooked the pizza the team had, but it was likely made by UConn Dining Services — albeit earlier that fateful day. All the same, knowing Coach Auriemma's high standard of excellence for his players, no doubt he'll implement an even higher standard for the team's pizza.



IMAGES COURTESY OF @UCONNWBB ON INSTAGRAM AND CREAZILLA

UConn women's head coach Geno Auriemma talking to Allie Ziebell in UConn's 104-39 win against Xavier on Nov. 30. Auriemma criticized some pizza that was delivered to the team's shoot-around before their game against Villanova on Jan. 15, 2026. PHOTO COURTESY OF @UCONNWBB ON INSTAGRAM



Sports

Photo of the Day | Women's basketball



UConn women's basketball plays against Providence on January 19, 2026 in Storrs, Conn. UConn took home the win with a resounding score of 85-47.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Sudoku By The Mephram Group

Level **1** 2 3 4

6				8				7
1	4							
		7	6			4		
				7		2		5
8		6	2		4	3		1
9		5		1				
		8			7	5		
							1	9
3				4				8

Solution to Monday's puzzle

1/20/26

6	1	9	4	5	7	3	2	8
7	3	4	2	8	1	9	5	6
2	8	5	6	9	3	7	4	1
4	5	3	9	1	2	8	6	7
1	2	7	8	3	6	5	9	4
9	6	8	5	7	4	2	1	3
8	9	1	3	4	5	6	7	2
3	4	2	7	6	9	1	8	5
5	7	6	1	2	8	4	3	9

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit sudoku.org.uk.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL HIGHLIGHTS



Photos by Connor Sharp, Photo Editor

Daily Sports

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL: No. 1 UCONN TAKES CARE OF BUSINESS, POLEAXES NOTRE DAME



UConn women's basketball plays against Notre Dame on January 19, 2026 in Storrs, Conn. UConn took home the win with a resounding score of 85-47. PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

by Avery Becker
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When it comes to the storied UConn women's basketball program, rivalries run deep.

Especially when it comes to the Notre Dame Fighting Irish.

After suffering three straight losses against the Irish from 2022-2025, the top-ranked Huskies had some unfinished business.

And, when you have Sarah Strong on your roster, it's certainly easy to take care of that business.

On Monday night, Connecticut and Strong took matters into their own hands.

They defeated the Irish 85-47 in front of a packed crowd in the Basketball Capital of the World. With a 38-point margin, it marks the largest lead the Huskies have won by in the 31-year history between these two teams.

With the win, Strong amassed a double-double with 18 points and 11 rebounds, while notching her 1,000th career point in the second quarter. After accomplishing this feat, Strong becomes the third Husky all-time to attain 1,000 career points the quickest in just 58 straight career games.

The two players before her on that list?

Paige Bueckers and Maya Moore.

As a sophomore, the North Carolina native is in good company, often compared by media and fans alike to Moore.

"I would love to see if anybody has scored 1,000 points by taking less shots than she's taking. She's so efficient." Head coach Geno Auriemma said on the forwards achievement.

To kick things off against the Irish in Storrs, the Huskies came out all guns blazing.

Right off the bat, the Huskies went on an 8-0 run and pushed the Irish to only notch two field goals in the first frame, and guard Hannah Hidalgo, the Irish's points leader, to zero points.

However, the second quarter told a different story than the first.

Hidalgo and the Irish worked to cut their deficit, matching the Huskies 16 points they racked up, Hidalgo scoring 10 of them.

While the Huskies were still maintaining their steady defense and full-court pressure, Auriemma was not entirely satisfied with his roster's offense.

"I thought the first two quarters, we spent too much time, I think, trying to get the perfect shot, trying to get everything exactly right." Auriemma said to the media, "And that's not who we are. I thought we weren't as aggressive as we can be. We weren't in the attacking mode like we have been."

At the end of the first half the score was 32-23, and coming out

of the locker room for intermission, the Huskies looked to extend their lead even further.

The Huskies adjusted their offense and stayed persistent on the defensive end in efforts to put a fork in the game.

The head of the snake of UConn's defensive game?

KK Arnold.

Over the last few games, Auriemma has highlighted the junior's growth as a guard in terms of her leadership and ability to ravage Hidalgo and her teammates' offensive opportunities.

"I thought this is the best game that she's played since she's been at Connecticut." Auriemma said, "Because, you know, it's a mentality to play really well against a really good player."

Auriemma credited Arnold, Azzi Fudd and Ashlynn Shade to flipping the script in the third and fourth quarters to build such a hefty lead as they finished the game with.

"In a nutshell, the third quarter was KK [Arnold], Ash [Shade] and Azzi [Fudd], defensively, just changing the game and getting us into some transition baskets." Auriemma said.

The only achilles heel that came for the Huskies in this bout was their three-point shooting. Out of all four quarters, the Huskies only shot 6-24 from beyond the arc (25%). However, their ability to cash in points made up for it.



PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

"I think that's something that is super unique about our team, is that you really can't take one thing away from us," Fudd said to the media postgame, "If our three-point shot isn't falling we can score at the other two levels. You can take me away; you have the rest of the team that can score. Our team is just so versatile."

With this win, the Huskies extend their undefeated streak to 19 games.

The only other team that's undefeated in women's Division I college basketball?

Auriemma's former player Shea Ralph and her Vanderbilt Commodores.

"To go down there and do what she's done in such a short period of time, I think is really cool." Auriemma said, highlighting how excited he is to see what's next for their schedule.

As for Connecticut, next, they are set to go on the road for a Big East road trip. First, they will travel to the Nation's Capital to take on the Georgetown Hoyas on Thursday evening with a tip-off time of 7:30 p.m. Husky fans can tune in to the game on TNT.