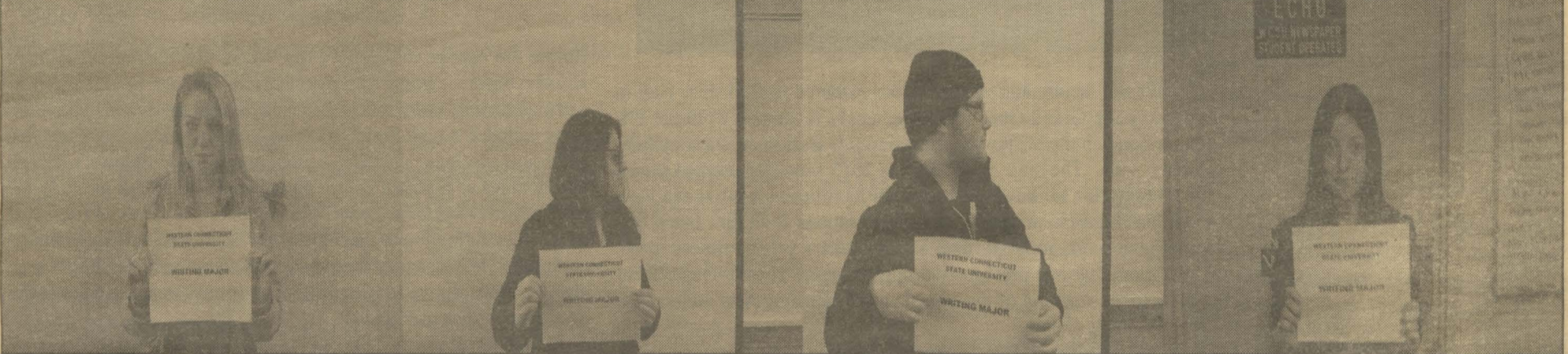
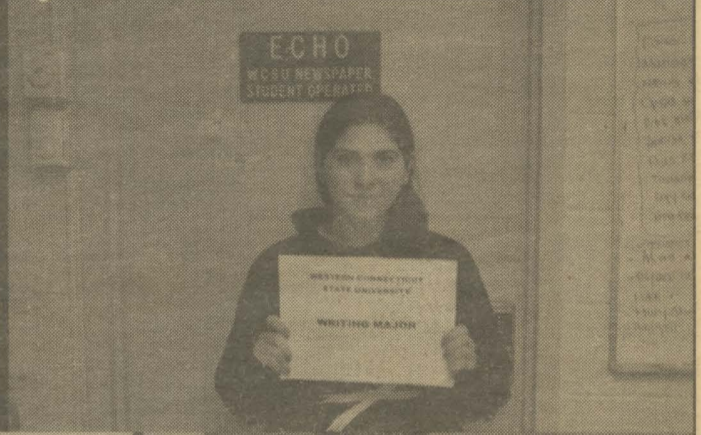
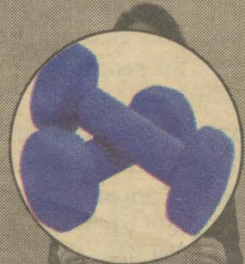
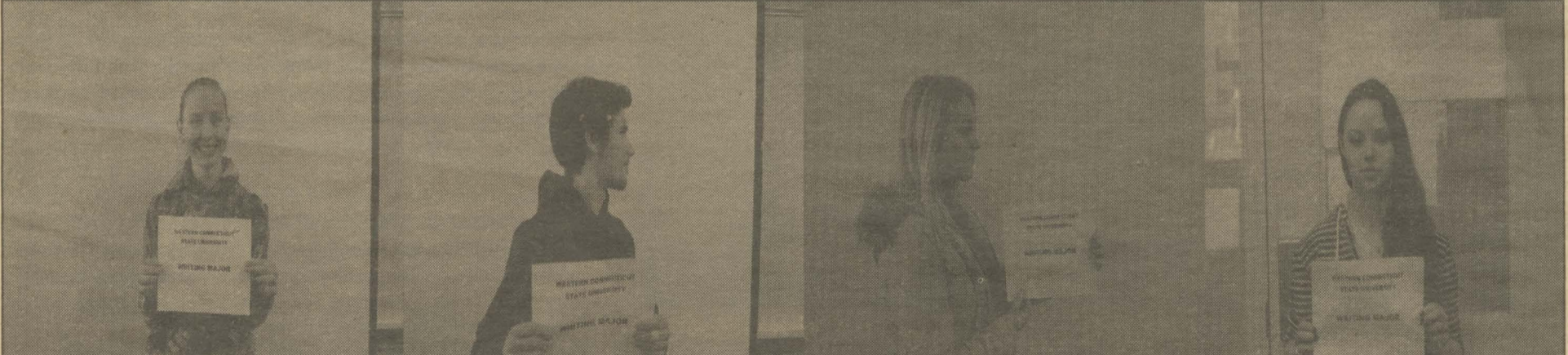


# Time



# ECHO



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The Echo is the student-run newspaper of Western Connecticut State University that aims to inform and enlighten the university community. The Echo's goal is to establish and maintain an atmosphere of free and responsible journalism in an engaging and entertaining format. No censorship from faculty or administration is exerted on any material printed in The Echo. Anything published in The Echo in no way represents the opinion of the university or its faculty and administration.

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# New and Improved Fitness Zone

Leo Budnick  
News Editor

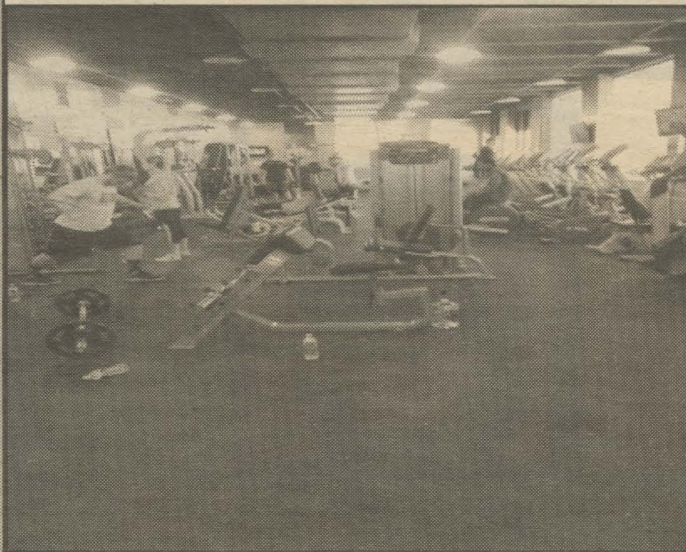


Photo Courtesy of Leo Budnick

WCSU faculty and students alike gathered in Berkshire Hall to observe the Grand Opening of the newly revamped Colonial Fitness Zone on the Midtown Campus in full session on Tuesday February 24th. The start of the Spring 2015 semester marked a new beginning for Midtown Recreational facilities as well as the Recreation Department as they changed locations from the "black box room," a room no larger than a millionaire's private fitness room, to a room that was previously occupied by the Theater Department prior to the opening of the Visual and Performing Arts building on the Westside Campus.

"We've already seen an increase in attendance this week when we checked the card scanners for students to swipe in to use the fitness center," said Amy Shanks, Assistant Director of The Center for Student Involvement. Shanks, along with Doctor Keith Betts (Vice President of Student Affairs), Luigi Marcone (Director, Facilities Operations and EHS Programs) and Peter Visentin (Director of Fa-

ilities, Planning, and Engineering) all had an integral part in overseeing the renovations of the new fitness zone and purchase of new equipment. "Most of the equipment was from the old space. We just had to wait for squat racks and the stair machine to arrive. We had 350 students attending before we switched locations and it's gone up to 500 and more this past week," said Shanks. The Assistant Director also mentioned that her and her colleagues needed to wait for approval from the Connecticut State Legislature in Hartford in order to make renovations to the old theater space.

**"If there's enough demand from students who use the space we'll consider getting more equipment."**

Before the change in location, the WCSU Recreation Department already began making improvements to the old fitness room as early as Spring 2014 when they added new machines. The additions included a new Smith machine, cable machine, leg press, leg extension machine, preacher bench, and a Lat Pulldown machine that doubles as a seated cable row machine. After the move to the old Theater Department space, the fitness center received two squat racks and a stair climber machine as the latest installations of fitness equipment. In addition to new space and equipment, the fitness zone also encompasses other former theater rooms as space to hold fitness classes such as Zumba.

"I love the new space for Zumba. It's perfect for other classes as well," said Rec. Department member and Zumba instructor Ariana Mesaros. "It's a convenient spot next to a fully equipped gym and I think this will help increase participation in fitness classes."

"As increased fitness goes up we will offer more classes," Shanks said. "If there's enough demand from students who use the space we'll consider getting more equipment."

## Albino Abductions in Tanzania

Mary Sheppard  
Contributing Writer



Photo Courtesy of

The brutally mutilated body of one-year-old Yohana Bahati was found on Tuesday, February 17th, a few miles from his homestead in The United Republic of Tanzania in East Africa. His limbs were "hacked off" according to local police Chief Joseph Konyo. Yohana was born with a congenital condition called albinism which causes an absence of pigmentation in an individual's skin, hair, and eyes.

Tanzanian witch-doctors covet the bodies of people born with albinism, superstitiously claiming that they bring "good fortune and wealth", according to The Guardian News. The Red Cross says that an intact set of limbs and other body parts goes for as much as \$75,000 in Tanzania, causing the country's albino population to be vulnerable to kidnappings and murder by armed gangs who seek money in return for the bodies from those practicing the rituals.

The country's UN Chief, Alvaro Rodriguez, claims that since the year 2000, over 74 albino individuals have been murdered in Tanzania. The horrendous abductions and killings started receiving media attention this past December when Pendo Emmanuelle Nundi, a four-year-old Tanzania girl with albinism, was seized from her home by an armed gang. According to The Guardian News, her body has yet to be recovered, but there have been over 15 arrests made in regard to her case. Unfortunately, one of the suspects is her

own father.

Josephat Torner, an albino Tanzanian activist who seeks protection for those in his country with albinism, told VICE News that as the demand for albino body parts grows higher, it is becoming common for parents of albino children to turn against them, selling them to the superstitious. "I have found many parents who have been convicted for this," he said, "They sold their children to the killers."

Although the media attention around the abduction of Nundi resulted in Tanzania outlawing witchcraft this past December, it is still apparent from Bahati's case that the barbaric practices are continuing, and there is fear that they will not come to an end. Rodriguez claimed to Agence France-Presse news agency, (AFP), that

"These attacks are accompanied by a high degree of impunity, and while Tanzania has made efforts to combat the problem, much more must be done to put an end to these heinous crimes and to protect this vulnerable segment of the population."

The year of 2015 brings along political elections in Tanzania, and while one can hope that this will be a step toward new protections and security for the targeted victims of the country, to date it has only led to more violence. The UN told AFP that there are many corrupt politicians who commonly invest their luck in the practices of witch-doctors with the hope of winning the elections. Rodriguez fears that "it could be a dangerous year for people living with albinism."

Still, determined activist Torner has hope for the people of his country who are facing the same condition and threats as he, and seeks justice for victims like Bahati and Nundi. "I am pushing to the Tanzania government to protect us more," he told VICE News. "We are Tanzanian citizens. We need to be protected like other people, the way how they are being protected. I will continue to fight; I will not give up for sure."

**"They sold their children to the killers."**



## Why Girls Are Right On Record

Marc Taricani  
Web Editor

I have frequent talks with the Man Of 1,000 Thoughts, Dakota Sarantos, about being right. When I say being right, I mean it in the broadest sense possible. The wisest person I know is Doug – a man that's a tad older than 50. The most logical person I know is Dakota. In life I find that people are either intellectually incompetent or over-thinkers who ignore the core components in problems. When The Man Of 1,000 Thoughts answers questions, he talks as though the answers were obvious. It's not like he has a condescending attitude, but the answer was actually in front of our faces the whole time; we just didn't think clearly enough.

Our talks often analyze gender differences when being right. And quite often we draw the conclusion that men take accurate measures to be considered right. No, I swear we aren't biased. And yeah, I witness some outliers.

Men have a greater percentage of muscle in their body while women have a greater percentage of fat. Men have a lower life expectancy rate than women. Women use empathy and compassion when critically thinking while men use logic. These are facts that represent the average population. Now let's use facts to draw conclusions.

We've never had a woman president. I find that disappointing. I am extremely curious on how she would manage our country after the wow-factor of being female wore off. I predict that she would do a better job on average than our past presidents (except FDR and JFK; they're anomalies that exemplify immeasurable success). Occupying the Oval Office is not a clear-cut, logical position. Sometimes you need innovation when trying to bring a nation out of debt or improve diplomatic relations. I feel like a woman's brain would excel in these areas and would improve our country.

But what about that classic relationship struggle where both individuals claim they're right? Let me tell you right now, if the man is claiming he is right, then he is dead wrong. When looking to resolve a conflict, a man should know that even if he supplies undisputed proof for his argument, he will never be granted a simple victory. Nor will he be able to end a petty debacle effectively if he continues to portray he's right. For example, the other day my girlfriend and I were making cupcakes. She was doing most of the work, but I was helping where I could. Soon enough they were out of the oven and cooling on a dish. She told my friend who was in the room that the cupcakes could not be eaten until they were frosted. Not hearing this, I picked one up. My friend warned me but I only laughed in their face and tossed them a cupcake. To my surprise, my girlfriend came out of her room furious. I hadn't seen her this furious since one of our first dates. I argued with her that it wasn't a big deal and she should stop overreacting.

Then clarity hit me like a sack of bricks.

The whole I'm right thing never gets solved. These specific problems are normally solved when significant others express their opinions and agree on a common ground (negotiating on a level of thought rather than a plan of action). I use the term negotiating rather than collaborating or accommodating because negotiation involves both parties not being completely satisfied. Accommodation is giving up your wishes to comply with your partner while collaboration is coming up with a perfect solution that fits all wants/needs. So I use negotiation over the latter two terms because they do not apply when you're having the "I'm right" discussion. Both genders are steadfast when it comes to the satisfaction of their point being recognized and accepted.

In my situation, I acknowledge my girlfriend's argument: the cupcakes were not complete therefore they should not have been eaten. I understand she had the right to feel that way because she put effort into them. Feelings do not oblige to logic. I can present a Supreme Court favorable defense but it won't change the way she feels. BUT WHO CARES, THEY'RE FREAKING CUPCAKES. So I gently kissed her and told her she was right. I said this with authenticity and without sarcasm. She accepted this and after a few minutes she was back to normal. I succeeded

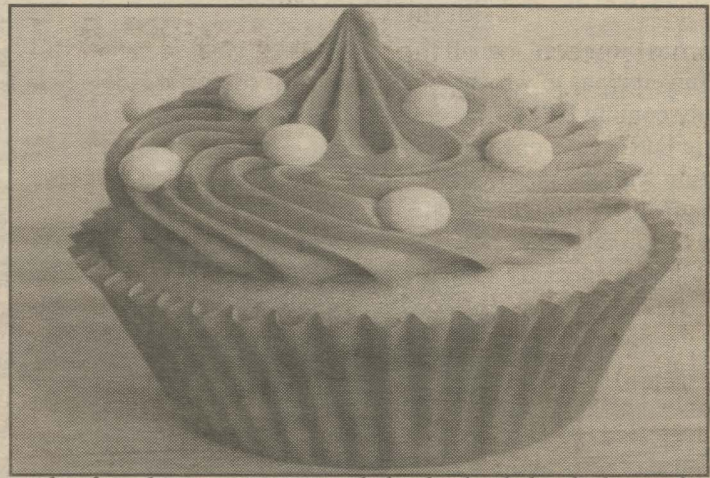


Photo courtesy of Blogspot.com

in ending the frivolous argument while she had the feeling of righteousness. But she was only right on record because I knew that the whole thing was illogical. Remember the key differences as to why this situation is classified as negotiation. She failed to realize the silliness of the argument. Instead of correcting her thought process, I gave up the idea of a perfect solution. But after analyzing all of the aspects, I didn't mind her not realizing I was right. As long as the topic was put to rest, I'm happy.

Using my newly acquired knowledge from my people management class, I was able to diffuse tension within a matter of minutes. However, this situation could have been totally avoided. I'm sure most are thinking, "If you didn't eat the freaking cupcake none of this would have happened." Although that is a generally correct statement, I was unaware that my actions would provoke such a passionate response. This response could have been constructed more appropriately. Had she declared a detailed point of view such as, "You ate the cupcake before it was completed. This makes me upset because I put hard work into making them. I'm also upset because I don't feel the same sense of accomplishment that I would have if the cupcakes were finished. I know nothing is perfect, but that's what I strive to do while baking. I would have to ask that you respect my wishes and not eat my unfinished baked goods next time," there wouldn't be an argument. She would be entitled to her way because she fully expressed her feelings and a plan of action. Feelings are never right or wrong, they're feelings. When you use feelings to argue a point, however, you may find yourself at a loss because you also need fact and logic.

So you may be asking how to avoid a situation like this for yourself in the future. My experience might not speak to your experiences so we'll refer to an additional problem and solution. Ladies, feel free to take this advice as well because we're all people that should continuously seek self-improvement.

A friend recently came up to me with a problem. He said he saw his girlfriend in extremely short-shorts on someone else's Snapchat story [picture-based social media]. Being male, we tend to get angry with this because we know how other males think. Other males will look at these pictures with lust. And like in the cupcake situation, feelings are feelings. It's not right or wrong that we feel this way, we just do and it has to be accepted. This is true whether you're male or female. It's just the way we work.

What's the solution I gave to my friend? Let's first evaluate the alternatives. He can tell his girlfriend not to wear this type of clothing. This solution isn't reasonable because that's stripping her of her freedom, which is controlling. A big no-no. He could ask her to talk to the person who originally posted the photo. This isn't the smartest idea either. Although it may seem like a clean solution, let's remember how our counterparts think. It may not be a problem for my friend, but then his girlfriend and her friend might get into an argument causing drama and possibly stress in my friend's relationship. So the answer I supplied is nothing. Sometimes we just have to accept situations the way they are. And that totally sucks, but remember, someone always has it worse than you. Gain some self-awareness, suck it up, and deal with it. If you truly have a problem with something that shouldn't be bothered with, you can bring it up. Usually this type of situation has a habit of reappearing. The only solution for you might just be to move on with your life to find actual happiness.



# English and Writing Departments to Merge?

**Jordan Sprogis**  
Managing Editor  
**Dakota Sarantos**  
Editor-in-Chief  
**Leo Budnick**  
News Editor

Much talk has circulated among the Professional Writing majors of Western Connecticut State University as to whether the school will still offer a degree in their intended field of study coming Fall 2015.

Junior Eric LaRocca is one such student enrolled in the program who has voiced his dissatisfaction with the possibility of merging the Professional Writing Department with the English Department.

“Whether they realize it or not, the School of Arts and Sciences at Western has an obligation to those currently studying in the Professional Writing department and cannot manipulate the duration and/or requirements for those who have been persistently laboring in the program. This poor decision not only speaks volumes of the culture in which we live where illiteracy has skyrocketed and is commonly applauded, but perpetuates the lopsided notion that the craft of writing is unimportant and, therefore, should be neglected. To disband such a unique and uncommon program that promotes the significance of critical thinking, coherent writing, and other fundamental skills is an absolute disgrace to the integrity of Western Connecticut State University as well as the contemporary professional writing community,” said LaRocca.

Coming this fall, there may be a significant change and new home for those in both the Writing and English departments at Western Connecticut State University.

Jane Gates, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Missy Alexander, Dean of the Department of Arts and Sciences, are currently discussing the potential merging of the Writing Department into the English Department.

Students enrolled in this new department would be able to choose between a Bachelor of Arts in English or a Bachelor of Arts in Writing.

Although she is involved with the discussion on this major decision to merge departments, Gates is currently listed as a finalist to be the next President of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), according to a press release from Jan. 30 on the MCLA website.

In September of last year, Provost Gates and Dr. Alexander proposed the merging of the Writing Department with the English Department.

The proposal addresses budgetary concerns and its goal is to save funds for the school. According to Dr. Patrick Ryan, the current Chair of the Writing Department, the plan includes saving money by eliminating adjunct-taught courses.

However, according to a Feb. 5 article by J. R. Thomas in the CT Mirror,

the budget for the Connecticut state universities (CSU) central office has increased by \$5.5 million as of 2012, while Western and the other state universities have lost a total of 67 faculty members.

The Writing Department has already eliminated 24 adjunct-taught courses.

Members of the Writing Department, including Dr. Ryan, are opposed to the merger and are currently in discussions with Dean Alexander to find other ways to trim the budget.

Several students enrolled in the Writing Department have expressed concerns with the merger. Flyers can be found around the school protesting the merger of the two departments.

Currently, no one knows who put up the flyers.

*The Echo's* inbox was flooded with protests from current Writing Majors.

Even though the merger would still keep the option of both the Writing and English Majors, there is a possibility it would combine parts of the curriculum of both and remove some Writing classes.

Speaking on the merger, Dr. Ryan said, “...the dean’s proposal to merge the department does argue for requiring Writing majors to take three to four courses in English literature, presumably in place of Writing courses.”

At the same time, Dean Alexander’s proposal also suggests eliminating some upper-level special topic courses in English literature, some of which are considerably popular among students.

Dr. Ryan did emphasize that there are currently no definite plans to change the curriculum.

“I have struggled for five years to find my path in college, and I finally found writing. I may not have started going to this school for it, but I sure am now. If the Writing Department merges, I will probably be forced to leave and find another school to go to. I don’t want to have to do that because WestConn is so close to home, it’s affordable, and I finally found the classes I want to be taking,” says Amanda Currier, a fifth-year student who is switching into the Creative Writing focus of the Professional Writing major.

*The Echo* reached out to the secretary of Dean Alexander who set an appointment for an interview about the potential merger.

When the interview was supposed to take place, Dean Alexander declined to comment to *The Echo* until the decision was finalized.

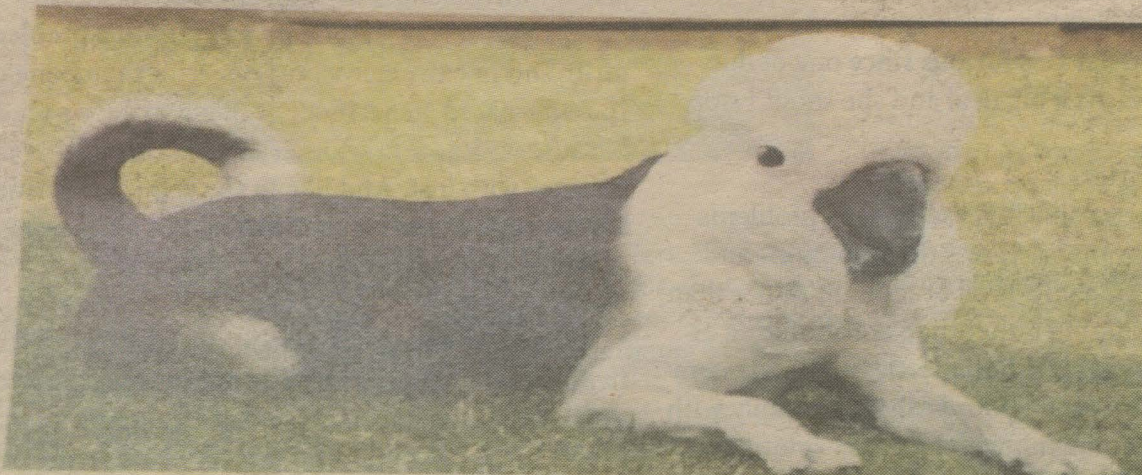


Provost Jane Gates



Dr. Patrick Ryan

Photo credit  
Sarah DeRemer  
sarahderemer.com



Ask about The future of our Departments.

Missy Alexander, Dean  
Western Connecticut School of Arts and Sciences

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This is what happens when the English and Writing majors merge.

The mysterious flyer that has been seen appearing around campus.



# Opinion Editorial

## Fu-sion-Ha!: The Merging of the Writing Department with the English Department

**Kyle Venditti**  
Contributing  
Writer

It has come to my attention that the Administration at Western has proposed a merging of the Professional Writing Department with the English Department. For those who don't know, this has been going on since Fall 2014 with the Writing department continuing to negotiate against the merger, and has just made us aware of it. I believe the merger would be a grave mistake, and one that both departments will regret shortly after the fusion occurs.

Around eight years ago, the Writing Department separated from the English Department at Western with good reason: a conflict in philosophy of studying literature. English focuses on the study and appreciation of literature in an analytical way, understanding the time it was written and learning from it what history books cannot teach: the mindset and social paradigms present in the era through the characters and plot from the book. A Writing major will look at this briefly, but instead study the actual craft of the book: how the plot is structured, what impact the plot has on the psyche and how the author achieved this impact through character, plot, diction and thought. Though we both study literature, we diverge at approach and the product's prospective audiences. English analyzes to understand, Writing dissects to craft new works.

This philosophy of learning is why the two departments separated, and it has been beneficial for both. The Writing department has flourished, despite its small size, but I think if you asked any writing major, they could attest to the quality of the program we have here at Western and how it prepares us for writing in the workforce. Not only are we trained to write fiction or journalism, but we are taught business writing, poetry, advertising and much more. I could continue to praise the Writing Department, but this only stands to prove my point as to how pleased I am with it. I love the Writing Department, I think they're doing a fantastic job and I'm enjoying every class I've taken towards my degree here. I can't think of too many other students who would say the same for their major, and that's special.

Not to mention that the Professional Writing degree here is unique and one of only a few in the country. Most schools are not structured the same way, with the degree being in English with a concentration in journalism or creative writing. That focus on

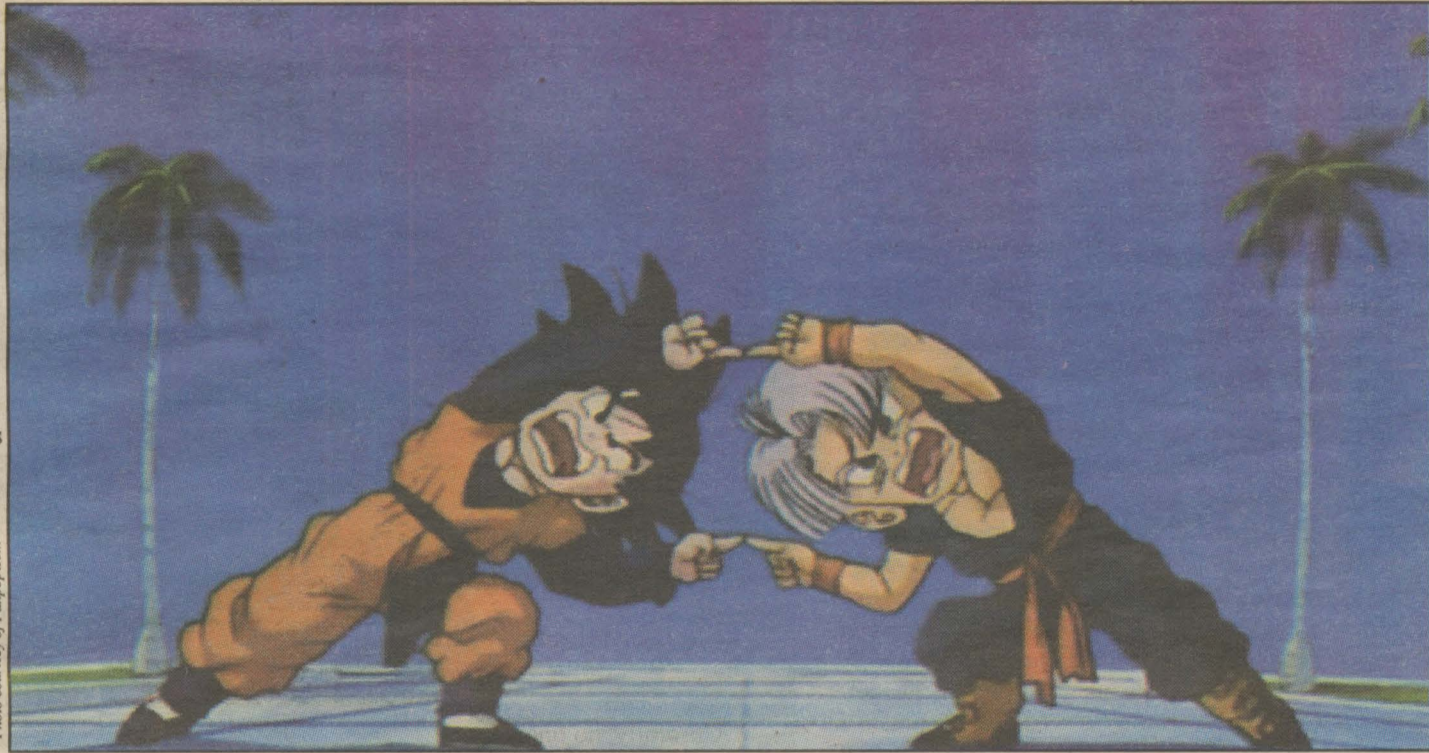


Photo courtesy of Fanpop.com

Writing alone makes us stand out from all other applicants for a job, and makes us and Western unique. For me, and many other writing majors here, it is the reason we chose to attend Western Connecticut State University. Nowhere else will you find a program that is as intensive as the undergraduate Professional Writing program at Western, which prepares you for the profession through years of practice and experimentation with new styles and ideas. We are here for the Writing program, and we learn from faculty of all practices and backgrounds, from journalism to fiction, poetry and academia, all of the faculty here have been published and know how to attack the publishing world and build the skills to become published.

After all, that's what all of us want when we leave here, and I have grown confident in myself through my instructors.

Merging the two departments would cause a conflict of interest; writing majors would no doubt be required to take higher level literature courses, and though I would not mind taking these and I value the skill of analysis, it does not pertain to what I want to do in my career whatsoever. It would give me more knowledge of literature, no doubt, but when I go to write my Science-Fiction novel, I will not focus on Shakespeare's themes and how it relates to 16th century England. It's simply not a good investment of my time for my career path. Not to mention half the class will not want to do the work and hate having discussions

Contributing Writer about such things, thus making the experience for the English majors there who want to study Shakespeare, worse.

Ultimately, writers will find a way to practice their art. If the merge happens, we will have to deal with it and move on. I will still find myself studying journalism, poetry and, my favorite, fiction, but I know that if the merge occurs, we will lose much of the focus we once had being in the Writing Department. Our Department is small, but it helps build our own writing community within Western where most of us know each other, and isn't that the point of a small public University? To have programs and classes that are small and personal? Merging will make one huge department with different goals, larger classes and changes in both departments that will not benefit students at all.

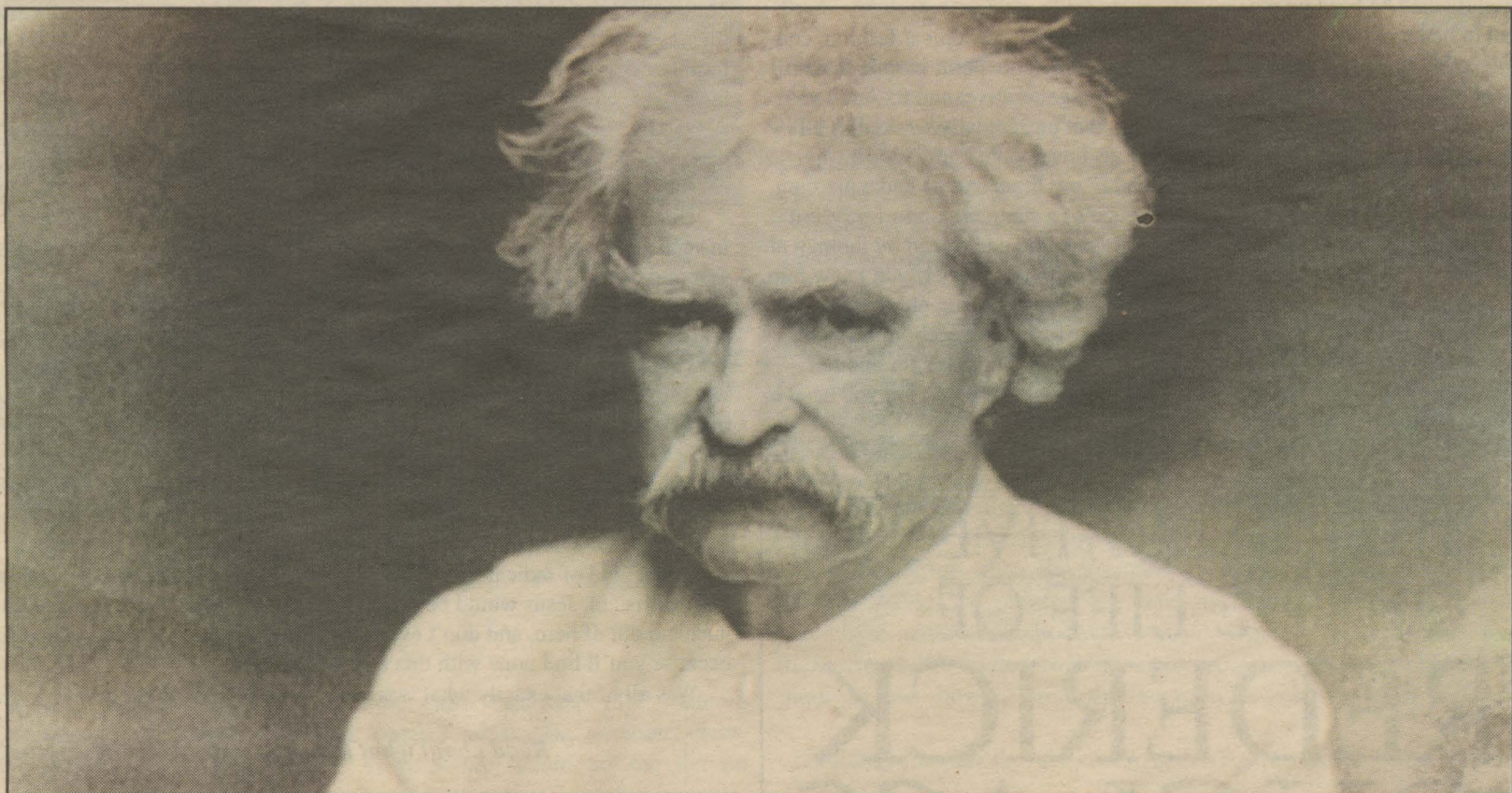


Photo courtesy of theatlantic.com

A concerned Mark Twain.



## “The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass 2”

### Part I

**Dakota Sarantos**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

MY MOTHER NEVER EXPLICITLY TOLD ME I WAS SPECIAL, AND THE TRUTH IS I WAS TOO YOUNG to interpret any implications on the matter. I never wanted to change the world; my only concern was progressing myself. It might have been a selfish stance but how else do children think? The only dreams in my head were those of freedom. I wanted change for myself, I never thought about change for a nation. I grew up watching my mother get abused. She was beaten, raped and treated like a dog. I'm not so fond of that saying, "like a dog." No man treats a dog like that. But that's how slaves were treated. That's how slaves are treated. I was born into slavery after my mother's master, a white man named Captain Anthony, raped her. It wasn't uncommon for the time. There were quite a few slaves coming up who were partly white. White masters loved to dip their fingers in the pie of the dirty black woman. It makes you wonder why, if they're so dirty. Are their proper white wives not giving them the proper satisfaction? Whatever the reason, I was born from a black woman and a white man. If you read my first narrative, then you already know that. It's the real tale of the American Dream. If you're thinking I'm talking about the stale and regurgitated Dusty Rhodes fat plumber white man rising to wealth, think again. I'm talking about a black individual ascending to a level of freedom no one ever expected. Out of my master's plantation and out of slavery. That's the real American Dream. Some people say there is no American Dream, and I suppose that is where the problem persists. My American Dream isn't real. What you've read about me is not the reality. Before you go ahead and get twisted up about it and spit your tobacco all over the floor, let me explain. What you know about me is a story. It's a great tale and although it's true, it's only part of the truth. The first narrative is simply that: the first narrative. For reasons you might understand by the end of this narrative I didn't tell the whole novel of my life. I told what people wanted to hear. More importantly, I told what people needed to hear at the time. You heard a tale, but you were never given the conclusion. The information simply ceased flowing at my death.

There are so many popular idioms and phrases with which I take issue. It's not as though I'm offended that people use them, I genuinely don't understand them. They don't make sense. I get upset about it because they'll come to mind in certain situations, much like this one, and I'll want to use them but they never honestly apply. One is, "rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated," or something of the sort. The phrase pops into your head and you want to roll with it, but it's not accurate. Rumors of my

**“I'M NO DRIVER. I'VE NEVER RODE A HORSE IN MY LIFE. I'M THE MAN WITH WHOM YOUR DAUGHTER LAYS IN THE EVENING. I'M THE HUSBAND. I'M FREDERICK DOUGLASS AND I'M HERE TO EAT THE DINNER YOU PREPARED FOR ME.”**

death were not exaggerated. They were completely authentic. Frederick Douglass died that February night in 1895. Hell, he probably even went to Heaven. But I don't know where I'm going. Before he was Frederick Douglass he was someone else, and when Frederick Douglass died he became me.

I don't mean to be incredibly cryptic but it's hard to explain in a topical fashion, consequently I'll describe it chronologically and start from a suitable point in time that will cover what I feel is required of my objective and revealing narrative, and fix omitted points from my original. Believe it or not, (Well then, that one actually worked) it all starts with Nikola Tesla. A brash young Serbian fellow, few people know we go way back. He was one of the most important friends I had in my time, and he had a piercing intellect. When you looked at him, you didn't see much of a stand up kind-of-guy, but he did give you chills. The trouble was he wasn't someone you could read by looking at. All around, basically explained, you didn't want to fuck with this man. If you knew him, he was scary. In terms of powerful duos, there wasn't a historical team out there that had more dynamism than Frederick Douglass and Nikola Tesla. The accomplishments and adventures we had in our time could fill the history books, but that's for another time. For the purpose of my chosen revelations there's only one undertaking you need to hear about Tesla and myself.

I married a beautiful white feminist named Helen Pitts in 1884. I was living in Washington D.C. at the time. In fact, that's where I met her. But Helen was from New York,

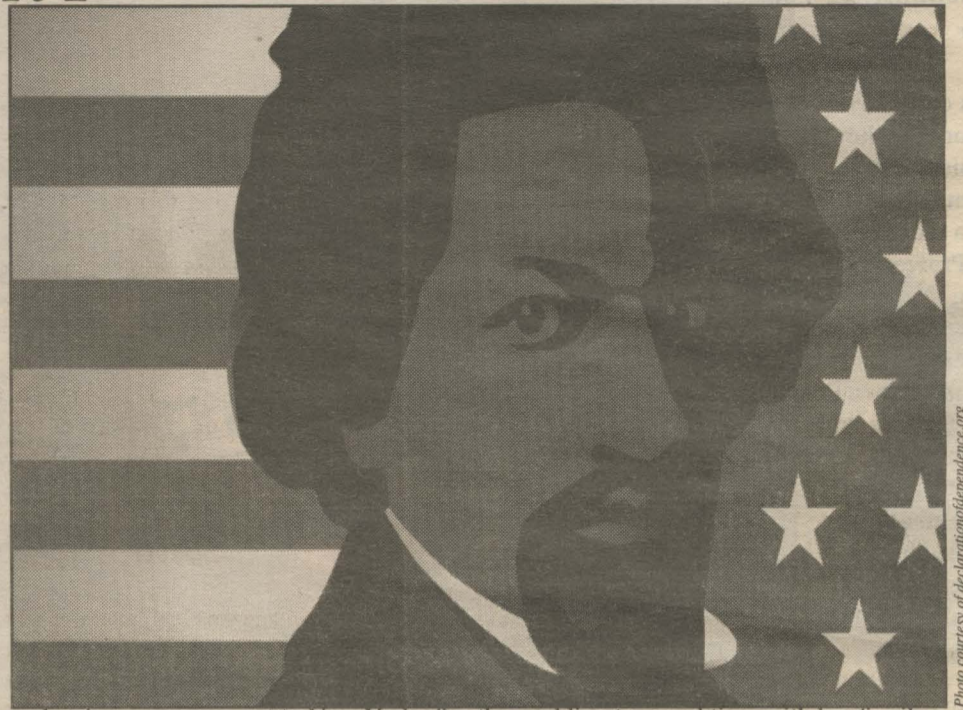


Photo courtesy of declarationofindependence.org

and as is proper we went to New York after the wedding to spend time with her family. We would have gone to see mine as well, but the issue with that was I had no family. This proved to be a bad idea, which we will get to in just a moment. You see, it wasn't proper at the time for a black man to lay with a white woman, let alone marry one. The white man wouldn't stand for it, but I didn't care much for what the white man thought because I was sick of the unfounded oppression, a feeling my wife thoroughly shared. As a feminist, she had a similar distrust and uneasiness toward white men. Women were a suffocated group of the time. Helen was a pioneer for her group, and she took risks that few women in history ever did. Her courage helped the change world and my life. Detractors have said that the only reason we married was to get back at the white man. That it's a form of revenge. It's an extremely narrow view that I don't accept because it's not the truth. As if I set out to marry a white woman to create controversy and draw negative attention to myself. Now, I'm not a robot. I'm a human and humans come with sinful thoughts. Did I get satisfaction out of the fact that I knew my marriage upset the people who enslaved me? Absolutely. Was I little more aggressive in the bedroom because of it? Certainly. There's an element of that. But I didn't marry her for that. I was in love. In all seriousness, is it so hard to believe I simply wanted a fine looking white woman? I'm a man and she had an ass that would make Moses come down from the mountain. That was much more motivating than any petty vengeful racial retaliation. Any man, white or black, would have jumped at the opportunity I had with Helen. But I'm getting ahead of myself (here we go again). I should say, I'm getting behind myself.

We arrived at Helen's parent's apartment at around 8:00pm. Upon entering the home we didn't receive the friendliest greeting. To this day I'm not sure if Helen didn't inform her parents that she had a married a black man or what, but it wouldn't surprise me. That would be in typical feminist fashion. I don't mean to insinuate negatives about feminism, it's a worthwhile cause and all peoples deserve equality. But you know that snarky attitude these types of movements come with; she might have been trying to pull one over on her old disapproving mother. She could have at least informed me. Nonetheless, it was not a welcoming environment. I believe the conversation began with her mother asking, "Darling, why has your driver come in the home with you? Where's your husband Frederick? We're dying to meet him." and of course my pride took over.

"I'm no driver. I've never rode a horse in my life. I'm the man with whom your daughter lays in the evening. I'm the husband. I'm Frederick Douglass and I'm here to eat the dinner you prepared for me."

Her mother, a pampered white woman, never before had a black man to speak to her in such a manner. The feeling of equality seared against her white ego. She screamed in fear and disgust, and Helen's father ripped off his suit jacket.

"How dare you speak to my wife that way, ya dirty nigger! Hyaa!" he said, and pulled a knife out of his pocket and sliced it across the air. Then he lunged at me.

I backed away out of the doorway. I didn't want to escalate the situation, and I didn't want to hurt Helen's father. Had I decided to, I could have put on a hurting on the old man, he didn't know about my two-hour brawl with my old slave master. Helen stepped in between us to defuse the tension.

"Daddy, no! This my husband Frederick and I love him. Can't you see? Get it through your thick male skull. Accept it," she said, "Mother, you too. Stop being a puppet to a man. You're a woman. A strong woman."

"What kind of radical heresy are you speaking, Helen?" Said her father, "This just ain't Christian. Jesus would be sick. Sick I tell you! Now get your one-third of a person husband out of here, and don't ever come back. I hope you pray to God for forgiveness, because you'll find none with this family!"

Was all of that exactly what was said, verbatim? Most likely.

*Read about what happens next in our next issue!*

*Have some creative pieces you would like to share? Email us at [wcsuecho@gmail.com](mailto:wcsuecho@gmail.com)!*

THE NARRATIVE  
 OF THE LIFE OF  
**FREDERICK  
 DOUGLASS**

Photo courtesy of picspark.com



## Pumpnickel

**Alana Branch**  
Staff Writer

Whiteness is everywhere. It is prominent in the worlds of business and entertainment (“white is right!”) and in numerous other aspects of life. Even white people experience whiteness. It is unavoidable. It was the year 2001 and I was eleven when I first came across such a thing, not knowing exactly what to make of it at that time, but my feelings of fear and confusion definitely implied that it was something beyond negative, especially being a black face in the midst of white suburbia.

Being one of three African American students, the other two being my younger sisters, in the Harwinton Consolidated Elementary School was rough enough. Obviously, I looked different from everyone else. I did not have the blonde hair, nor did I have blue or grey eyes, and I was not pale. Therefore, it was hard for me to relate to any of them. I might have had a couple of friends, but it was still awkward on occasion, like when working in groups on a black history month-related assignment. Without asking me, they were telling me that I should know everything there is about all historic black figures because I’m black. I faced whiteness every day.

However, there was one particular moment that will stick with me until the end of my life. I was on the playground, for it was the recess period, the best part of the school day. I could not recall if I were asked today what led to this moment, but his name was Justin Palmer, and in passing me by, he muttered under his breath the word “pumpnickel.” Suddenly, I felt weird. I was no stranger to anxiety—being around a large group of people frightened me—but it must have multiplied by ten at hearing this. I immediately told my teacher, Mrs. Ganetti but I can’t remember whether or not she reprimanded Justin. Parts of that day seem like a blur. What black girl does not want to hear an apology from a white boy for a racial remark?

Moreover, I never told my parents about it. Maybe I did and I just cannot remember. If my father was anything like he is now—blunt, loud, and intimidating—then he might have stormed right onto school grounds and given every white person in there a reason to make my sisters and me feel comfortable from that day forth. I googled “pumpnickel” because I had never heard of the term before. What popped up on the computer screen were images of dark brown bread. Well, that would certainly explain a lot. It was better than being called “nigger,” but being compared to bread could be just as detrimental. I like to think of the comparison now as a positive one because like this type of bread, I am sweet. Just give me time to “rise” in the situation at hand.



Photo courtesy of Alana Branch

Whiteness will never go away. Children, as Justin Palmer and I once were, say the darndest things, but when it comes to racist remarks, one may have to question where it comes from, especially in this case. Children learn from their elders. During a time of heavy protest and senseless actions regarding white brutality, given the past year, the real question ought to be, what could be done to better the situation without putting down any one’s race? After all, ALL lives do matter.

## New York Fashion Week: Fall/Winter 2015



**Jessica Pascale**  
Arts and Entertainment Editor

Ever since its beginning in 1943, New York Fashion Week has been something of a fairytale. For this one week, designers, models, celebrities, and the fashion-obsessed gather in one of America’s most iconic and creative cities for shows where the stars aren’t the men and women on the catwalk, but the garments adorning their bodies. It is the clothes and accessories the audience is drawn to. The crowds sit on the edge of their seats to get a glimpse of what some of the major designers have deemed “in” for the upcoming seasons. And without a prior discussion, there is always at least one universal theme prominent among designers.

Now that has to be the result of magic.

The Fall/Winter 2015 New York shows took place February 11-19 among near-zero temperatures and snow. While it wasn’t ideal, the weather created the perfect atmosphere for the preview of what we would all see out on the streets next fall and winter. It was not too much of a stretch of the imagination to see these garments on the women in their offices, on the women walking around the city with a lover, on the women spending a day out with her friends.

This is what was so groundbreaking about the clothes featured in these shows: they were universal. They were not catered to a specific target audience of rick socialite who would do anything to stand out from a crowd. Instead, the major trends were a little subtler, while still having that “notice me” factor that’s so prevalent in fashion around the world. This season had many designers reaching into the 1970s, bringing back fringe, culottes, and vibrant colors (especially orange) and making it relevant in 2015. Also frequently spotted on the runway this season was fur (perfect for combatting another frigid winter like this one), embellishments (such as sparkles, studs, and sequins), feathers, and asymmetrical hemlines.

The best part of the trends for fall? How universal they are. With any of the trends seen on the runway, they can be incorporated in a number of different ways. Colors can pop up on any piece of clothing or accessory, and other trends—such as feathers and embellishments—can be either subtle or bold, depending on the intensity. Someone can choose to incorporate one of these trends into an outfit in a way that allows them to still blend into a crowd, and someone else can choose to go all out with one of these trends and become the center of attention. It all comes down to personal preference.

This season’s Fashion Week was groundbreaking in other ways as well. The Internet exploded when Jamie Brewer, most well known for her acting on FX’s *American Horror Story*, walked the runway in Carrie Hammer’s show on February 12. Prior to that day, no one with Down syndrome had ever walked in Fashion Week before. In the same show, Dr. Danielle Sheypuk was the first woman to go down the runway in a wheelchair.

This was put together by Carrie Hammer, who recently launched the Role Models Not Runway Models campaign. The campaign had been in the works for over a year, beginning when she was first asked to include her collection in New York Fashion Week. The point of the campaign is to show real women doing incredible things across various fields wearing incredible clothes that are practical for their careers. It’s another way of empowering women by supporting their career aspirations and showing them that anything is possible when you put in the effort.

It’s things like this that are changing the fashion world for the better.



## Hockey in the Deep South: One Woman Finds a Chance to Change a Sport

Al Kessler  
Sports Editor

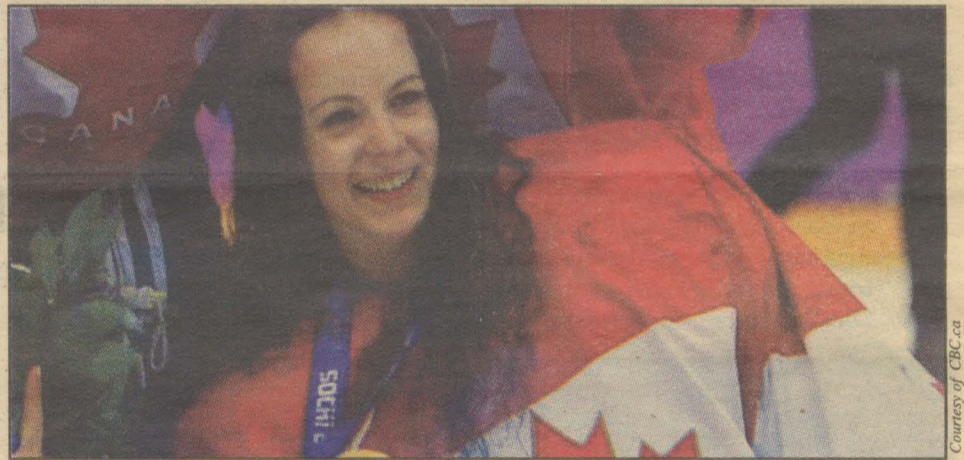
The city of Columbus Georgia is nestled on the border of Alabama and is home to some 200,000 people. This sweltering town is a far cry from the oft-frozen prairies of Edmonton Alberta where a young woman named Shannon Szabados calls home. You may have heard of Shannon, for those who follow the Winter Olympic religiously her name sticks out as the back to back gold medalist for Canada's Women's team. At 5'9" Szabados fits in well among the ranks of the top female hockey stars in the world, but her aspirations are set much higher. Her career has been breaking boundaries before she ever captured gold. In 2002 at the age of 16 Szabados became the first ever woman to play in the Western Hockey League, a junior league for players aged 15-20, when she started for the Tri-City Americans in an exhibition game. Because of this however Szabados was unable to compete in NCAA hockey, so Shannon turned north. She would suit up for the men's team at Grant MacEwan College in Alberta where she played 3 seasons.

Moving on from college Shannon would begin a stellar international career. In her two Winter Olympic appearances she has captured the gold twice, an excellent record by anyone's standards. She has also competed in the International Ice Hockey Federation's World Championships, along with the Air Canada Cup and the 4 Nations Cup (2 long standing Women's tournaments). In 15 tournaments internationally Shannon has won 9 gold medals and 6 silver, and has never placed lower than silver medal.

On March 7th 2014 Shannon would ink a deal with the Columbus Cottonmouths of the Southern Professional Hockey League, a single "A" level minor league which feeds players up the ranks of the minors with the eventual goal of making it to the National Hockey League. She would finish out the season with Columbus and become the first woman to play in the SPHL. She would only play in 2 games during the remainder of the season, losing both contests, but allowing only 7 goals on 59 shots in the 2 games. She would continue the next season as the backup goalie and on November 21st, 2014, Szabados would make 34 saves as her team defeated the Fayetteville Fireantz 5-4 in overtime to make her the first woman to win a game in the league. An interesting note in that game was that two women, Katie Guay and Erin Blair, were referees in the game. This was

not the first time female officials have been used but it is something the league is considering continuing in the future.

For Szabados, Guay, and Blair they are talented, dedicated, and tough athletes and their knowledge and dedication to the sport have earned them a chance to prove themselves in what is traditionally, an exclusively male world. Ice hockey is a sport dominated by tradition and history, and to many purists the simple suggestion of changing the sport is met with hostility. As a professional hockey broadcaster I have experienced live in the minor leagues. 64 hours on a bus with no heat in the dead of January playing 4 games in 5 days in 3 different states. This is just a taste of life as a minor leaguer, not to mention the crude jokes, pranks, hazing, and general shenanigans that go along with a team filled with men in their 20s and 30s playing a game for a living. Putting aside the brash humor one can't leave out the parties which put even the biggest and wildest fraternities to shame, and add in the smell of damp and drying gear which pervades almost every aspect of hockey life, one cannot imagine anyone wanting to live and play in such conditions. It is this which makes Shannon Szabados such a special player. She puts up with the travel and the wild teammates and most importantly she holds her own on the ice. In 19 games this season Shannon has a 10-8-1 record with a 3.16 Goals Against Average and a .906 save percentage. She even has assisted on a goal this season (a rare feat for goalies) and has earned her spot as a solid backup for her team. As the sport continues to grow we may see more like Shannon who throw themselves head first into men's professional sports and come out proving that maybe in the future hockey isn't just about the boys.



Courtesy of CBC.ca

## Snow is For Everyone! Winter Sports in the Frozen North

Ayesha Ali  
Contributing Writer

The crisp, cold air against his face, the solid poles locked in his hands, the exhilarating zoom down the snow-covered hill, and of course the hot chocolate back at the lodge. These are things that John Chafe hasn't been able to fully experience for nearly twenty years. And now he is able to do it again.

John was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in his mid-twenties. From the age of ten, he had been a constant skier, doing both down-hill and cross-country, and participated in many competitions along the way. When he was fifteen, he started volunteering and soon was working as a full-time ski instructor.

"I was diagnosed with MS during my first job out of college," John says. And, for a few years, things went down-hill (pun intended). "I had heard of CADS, the Canadian Association for Disabled Skiing, and joined them five years ago. I was ready to quit after my first try on the baby hill, but they convinced me to try again. Now I tire out my instructors because we never stop."

Winter may be a horror to people living in Connecticut, but Canadians embrace the icy season and enjoy it for all its worth. Most important-

ly, they strive to make sure everyone in their country can enjoy it, too, whether they are disabled or simply can't get the hang of it. It's common knowledge that every child in Canada starts skating from the age of three, and when we say every child, we mean every child. Canadians use winter sports, ice hockey, skiing, figure skating and the rest, to bring people together and promote a sense of solidarity. If anyone, a child or an adult, has a difficult time learning, the instructor willingly works overtime to make them feel included and to help them learn. CADS is just one of many organizations that strives to fulfill this Canadian vision.

Jen, a resident of Ottawa, says that she would have been completely lost if she hadn't been able to play sledge hockey. The 23-year-old college student had been in a wheelchair ever since she had been disabled in a car crash when she was fifteen.

"I thought I was done," she says. "I thought I would be sitting on the sidelines, watching as the rest of my friends and family skated and played hockey without me."

But as soon as she had left the hospital, she was able to enroll in a sledge-hockey group and was back on the ice in no time.

After returning to his favorite sports and years of ground-breaking stem-cell treatment, John's physical condition and confidence has improved greatly. The 46-year-old self-employed marketer has now transitioned from a walking with a walker to just using a cane, and has recently renewed his driver's license. He, his wife



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