Our Defining Moments

In This Issue:

THE ALUM WHO RUNS A COVID-19 TESTING LAB AT THE CDC
THE STUDENTS WHO WANT US TO SEE BEYOND COLOR
THE EDUCATION PROFESSOR WHO REFUSED TO HOMESCHOOL
Spring sprang on the Storrs campus even though most humans were not there to enjoy it. The University, though, was not closed. Courses moved online on March 23, and on May 9 our alumni ranks grew by 8,912 — congratulations and welcome to each one of you.
Where the Wild Things Are

As in our childhood storybooks (and dreams), animals took over cities, towns, suburbs, and exurbs while people around the globe locked down to slow the spread of Covid-19. Goats crashed through a village in Wales, ducks paraded down boulevards in Turkey, cows sunbathed on beaches in Spain, peacocks window-shopped in Dubai, macaques mobbed streets in Thailand. In Storrs, Jonathan XIV had the shelves of Homer Babbidge Library all to himself — “Balto” or “The Call of the Wild”? Although the physical space was closed, the library provided online support to students, even creating early morning (as in 2 a.m.) Help Desk hours for students on the other side of the globe.
When we started working on this issue, magazine production was business as usual,

**Featuring: Maya A. Moore, '19 (CLAS)**

By Mike Chase '11 JD

Slaves were slaves 24/7. So he did some new math. Reparations in this country simply did not add up.

The author of the wildly popular @CrimeADay Twitter account treats UConn Nation to exclusive diabolical drawings and criminal ruminatings — a healthy dose of humor we can all use right now.

When they can't breathe. When they can't feed their families. When they can't pursue their happiness — work, when they can't stop the anger, rage across the country (an echo of many times, particularly the late '60s — see page 12), and I find myself trying to understand the level of vulnerability black people in this country feel while going about ordinary day-to-day activities. I try to understand the level of helplessness and abject fear a mother of a black child in this country today feels. Of course, I can't know those feelings. All I can do is listen to those who do know and try to understand in an effort to effect change.

The way public policy professor Thomas Craemer listened, growing up in Germany, to the stories of Holocaust survivors. Those stories inspired him to study political science and, recently, to calculate slavery reparations that “help us wrap our minds around the magnitude of the injustice” (page 30).

As Commander Alison (Laufer) Halpin, ’05 (CLAS) at the CDC (page 18) knew all too well, coronavirus was ready to explode across the country, shining a harsh light on the inequities and injustice that make “normal” so different depending on who you are and where you live.

A few short months later, on the day we go to press, Black Lives Matter protests rage across the country (an echo of many times, particularly the late ’60s — see page 12), and I find myself trying to understand the level of vulnerability black people in this country feel while going about ordinary day-to-day activities. I try to understand the level of helplessness and abject fear a mother of a black child in this country today feels. Of course, I can’t know those feelings. All I can do is listen to those who do know and try to understand in an effort to effect change.

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The way Louis Goffinet, ’17 (CLAS) listened to his neighbors when they asked for his help in running errands, but whose stories revealed other needs, too, all of which he found ways to answer — and whose karma must be through the roof (page 53, and pictured above).

The way Kelly Ha, ’19 (BGS) listened to family and friends who won’t go out because they fear they’ll be harmed simply for being Asian, and who helped create a campaign to help the world see beyond color (page 23).

Like they did, we need to listen when our fellow humans tell us when they can’t work, when they can’t feed their families, when they can’t pursue their happiness — when they can’t breathe.

**From the Editor: canoeadey@gmail.com**
Each semester Stephen Stifano assigns his COMM 1000 students “1,000 Words,” asking them to encapsulate their UConn experience in a photo worth, well, you know. He ends each class with a video montage of these photos. This spring, about two weeks after the assignment was due, the entire campus shut down due to Covid-19. He posted the montage saying, “Here is a snapshot of what feels like a simpler time — but the time that you should remember, especially you seniors, as your experience at the University of Connecticut.” Watch the video, set to “Light Years” by The National, at s.uconn.edu/montage.
“It’s beautiful to me,” says plant pathologist Abby Beissinger of specimens that would elicit “Oooh, gross!” sounds from 99% of the population. Commercial growers and home gardeners bring or mail her samples of plants they suspect are sick with pests or disease. She often goes microscopic, drilling down to a cellular level to make a diagnosis.

“Seeing what emerges is super exciting,” she says. “And here’s why. Each pathogen looks so different. With fungal spores, it’s not that one’s a circle and one’s a zigzag; one will look like a tadpole, and one looks like a crystal ball. It’s this whole world we don’t have access to unless we have bionic eyeballs—or a microscope.”

Admittedly “exciting” and “beautiful” are not the first words a farmer receiving a diagnosis might utter. But it’s important to know what is ailing their plants so they can remedy it. Recently, Beissinger, who runs the Plant Diagnostic Lab in the Ratcliffe Hicks building at Storrs, combed through some 500 leek samples looking for pupa she then raised in petri dishes. In so doing, she helped confirm that the commercial farmer who sent the leeks had one of the first known cases of allium leafminer in Connecticut.

“Allium leafminer can completely decimate a leek field,” says Beissinger. So knowing it’s here is critical for controlling it.

 sleuthing 101

Beissinger always felt that connection to some extent—growing up outside Chicago, she planted impatiens with her mom. But it wasn’t until the end of her senior year at University of Wisconsin–Madison that she found her pathological calling. “Allium leafminer can completely decimate a leek field,” says Beissinger. So knowing it’s here is critical for controlling it this season and preparing for next.

The Lab collaborates with UConn’s Home and Garden Education Center (HGEC), both are part of the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources Extension program. You don’t need commercial crops or even live specimens to take advantage of the Lab’s expertise. As with so much else these days, Beissinger’s work is increasingly digital—telemedicine for plants. As of mid-May, she’d received 120 digital samples, nearly double last year’s tally. The shift is not solely a result of coronavirus.

“I’ve been really trying to ramp up my social media content for the Lab. It sparks people’s minds. They’ll think, ‘Oh, I’m seeing something like that in my garden,’ or ‘Oh, I’ve always wondered about this.’ Which plays right into Beissinger’s hand. “One of my main goals is to help people see how really interconnected we are to plants.”

Beissinger has some advice for all the people getting into gardening this summer. The greenhouse and nursery industry in Connecticut had to completely redo business models, going to curbside delivery, at their busiest time of year. She suggests finding garden centers in your area—you’ll help the local economy and find people who really know their plants. —LISA STIEPOCK

Find links to local resources and contact info for labs and centers at s.uconn.edu/beissinger.
SUMMER SMOOTHIES

Like so many local restaurants, UConn Dining Services pivoted to provide takeout meals to the students who had to stay on campus. Looking ahead to summer, the chefs also spent some time devising these whole-food smoothies that will be served at the Student Rec Center.

Strawberry Banana
1 ½ cups milk, almond milk, or coconut milk
1 cup plain Greek yogurt
¼ cup ice
2 cups frozen sliced strawberries
1 banana, sliced

Place all ingredients in a high-powered blender and blend until smooth. Pour into two glasses and enjoy.

Peanut Butter Banana
1 cup milk, almond milk, or coconut milk
½ cup nonfat Greek yogurt
2 frozen sliced bananas
½ cup peanut butter
¼ cup quick or rolled oats

Place all ingredients in a high-powered blender and blend until smooth. Pour into two glasses and enjoy.

The Green Machine
2 cups tightly packed spinach or kale leaves
1 ½ cups fruit juice, milk, almond milk, or coconut milk
1 cup each frozen mango and pineapple chunks
1 banana, sliced
½ cup quick or rolled oats

In a high-powered blender, blend spinach or kale and desired liquid until smooth. Add mango, pineapple, banana, and avocado, and blend until smooth. Pour into two glasses and enjoy.

Very Berry
1 cup milk, almond milk, or coconut milk
½ cup plain Greek yogurt
1 cup each frozen raspberries, strawberries, and blueberries
1 tablespoon chia seeds (optional)

Place all ingredients in a high-powered blender and blend until smooth. Pour into two glasses and enjoy.

TASTE OF STORRS

SUMMER SMOOTHIES

UCONN TALKS

On the end of the modern-day greeting:

“A handshake can transfer 124 million bacteria, twice as many pathogens as a high five.”

Dr. Cato T. Laurencin, University Professor and professor of orthopedic surgery, Science, May 12, 2020

On why “Moby-Dick” may be having a moment:

“He does not care about his boat, his people. He only cares about that ambition. The whole idea of monomania feels relevant right now.”


On the pandemic causing an increase in everyday creativity:

“Perhaps you make your private YouTube channel of punk Sondheim covers public and start getting solid viewer response.”

James C. Kaufman, professor of educational psychology, Psychology Today, April 9, 2020

On discovering a dementia-linked gene:

“It . . . could help us understand why some people stay active to age 100 and beyond, while others become disabled and die in their sixties.”

Dr. Chia-Ling Kuo, assistant professor of public health sciences, Forbes.com, May 26, 2020

On quality issues with big pharma:

“Generic drugs are supposed to be identical, but they may not be as safe as you think.”

C. Michael White, professor of pharmacy practice, Forbes, May 7, 2020

On using his chemistry lab and grad students to make hand sanitizer for senior centers and first responders:

“I thought, how can we possibly help?”

Jeffrey McCutcheon, associate professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, WILI, May 13, 2020

On kids learning, just differently, during school closures:

“We need not siphon public dollars into the hands of testing, tutoring, and textbook industries, but instead find new ways to engage a generation of learners like no other.”


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OCT. 15, 1969, STUDENT PROTEST AGAINST THE VIETNAM WAR

The Connecticut Daily Campus offices were upstairs in the Student Union, so it was a simple matter for me to step outside to take pictures throughout this Vietnam War demonstration that involved hundreds of students. On a personal note, it was my experience that the Black Power protests of the early ’60s and the Vietnam protests of the later ’60s caused a coalition of these two movements that addressed some racial divisions. Obviously, this is still a work in progress. But, as I come from a high school in West Haven where in 1965 I didn’t know a single black person, this “integration by protest” was a revelation for me. —PHOTOGRAPHER HOWARD GOLDBAUM ’70 (CLAS)
Seventy of the nine Puerto Rican students in the class of 2020 gathered for this photo just days before they thought they’d be heading out for spring break. Instead, the campus shut down and most headed back home. From left, back row: Alejandro Rodriguez; Sofia Nieto; Eduardo Abreu; Javier Gomez; front row: Gisellka Cordero, Alexandra Aponte, Francisco Fadhel.

When Alexandra Aponte ’20 (ENG) spoke to her mom on the night of September 17, 2019, she wasn’t too concerned about Puerto Rico.

Talks of yet another hurricane were circulating the news, just two weeks after Hurricane Irma had hit the island, but Aponte knew in her bones that there would be no devastating impact. Circling back and raised on the island, Aponte lived through various storms with the knowledge that for storms that would either slow down drastically by the time they hit the island or miss it altogether. In fact, the running joke she says, was that Puerto Rico had a magic shield that protected it from tropical storms. So when she hung up with her mom, she was convinced she’d hear from her first thing in the morning, and once again the hurricane would have been all talk.

But when she woke up there was no call. Aponte wasn’t alone. Eight other students from Puerto Rico, who started at UConn with her in 2016, were in the same predicament — some unable to reach their families and friends for hours and others for several weeks. Nearly a category 5 hurricane, with winds at 155 mph, Hurricane Maria became the strongest to hit Puerto Rico in 80 years. Causing widespread destruction, Maria left millions without power for months and caused nearly 3,000 fatalities, a number reported much later in an independent study by George Washington University.

When all nine students committed to UConn they did so in hopes of tapping into greater opportunities. And, of course, as they settled in freshman year they were prepared to find their fair share of hurdles, even more than the average student. From speaking English every day to seeing snow for the first time, their experience was similar to that of international students, they say, with the exception of holding a U.S. passport. But Hurricane Maria was one challenge none of them could foresee. Just weeks after starting their sophomore year here, their friends and families were shaken like never before, 1,633 miles away. And all they could do was watch from the sidelines.

“The hardest part for us was not being able to take a boots-on-the-ground approach. All we had were pictures and videos showing us a Puerto Rico that we didn’t recognize,” says Diego Rivera ’21 (ENG).

Classes were missed, exams were failed, and students were stumped in the face of uncertainty. But when they could have given up and returned home, they pushed forward. Inspired by the catastrophe, they were more determined than ever to not be slowed by the storm. They were driven by the same resilience that has come to define Puerto Ricans.

“Being Puerto Rican means staying positive, finding joy in even the simplest of situations, and looking out for one another,” says Javier Gomez ’20 (CLAS).

“That’s exactly how we got through Hurricane Maria. Friends became family and we all helped each other from there on out. We become one in the name of the island.”

Three years after Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico has experienced several other turbulent moments, including a change in government, earthquakes, and more recently, of course, the devastating effects of Covid-19. But with each experience, these students say both they and their island have grown stronger.

Indeed, this is the most decorated senior class of Puerto Rican UConn students has seen. From working as guides at the Visitor’s Center to excelling in the Honors Programs, these Huskies have made their mark across campus. Typically, an average of two to three students directly from Puerto Rico drop out of UConn each year for a variety of reasons, says Aida Silva, Senior Associate Director of Admissions. This is one of the largest groups to graduate in a long time, she says, and one of the most accomplished. She can’t wait to see what they do next.

“We caught up with all nine students just before campus closed and most headed home. With one of the country’s strictest lockdowns in place, the rest of the graduating class of 2020, they were unable to celebrate their accomplishments at Gampel Pavilion. While sad, they agreed it was the best.

“Obviously commencement is important because it’s a celebration of us. But this is a small price to save lives. It’s worth it. We’ve gone through so much that this is nothing to me,” Daniel Cintron ’20 (CLAS) told us.

And virtual graduation allowed them the chance to celebrate with friends and family, who otherwise wouldn’t have been able to come. “While this is not what I expected, I think this is how it had to happen,” said Aponte. “No better place to graduate than the island that shaped me.”

Alexandra Aponte ’20 (ENG)

Since the time she first set foot on campus, she saw the value in student involvement. She has been a key player in the Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center, a STEM Scholar, an event coordinator, and the president of the Puerto Rican Student Association (Photosa). But overall her greatest accomplishment, she says, was as chairperson for the Student Development Committee in the Undergraduate Student Government. There she was influential in starting conversations about culture and identity at UConn through an initiative she helped create, the Cultural Awareness Series.

“Attending and graduating at UConn is the easy part,” Aponte says. “The challenge is occupying spaces you wouldn’t often see minority students in. If you don’t see yourself represented somewhere, you make space for yourself and get things done.”

“She’ll start with a job in Connecticut, joining Pfizer as a manufacturing engineer later this year.

Diego Rivera ’21 (ENG)

Influencing infrastructure policy in Puerto Rico is Diego Rivera’s long-term goal. It would combine his three passions: engineering, politics, and his home.

As an Honors civil engineering student with a minor in political science and mathematics on a pre-law track, Rivera spent the last academic year here, exploring his passion for immigration and civil rights. As a kid, Gomez remembers his grand mother encouraging him to always be a helping hand. At UConn he kept this in mind.

“Whether he was giving rides to classmates in need or translating for full-time dining services kitchen staff, he was known for his reliability. By his senior year he was promoted to student manager at Buckley Dining Hall, while continuing to ace his biology courses.

Post-graduation, he plans to take a gap year to work in a hospital in Puerto Rico and hopes to then embark on his next journey: dental school. He’d like to open his own pediatric practice one day.

Sofía Nieto ’20 (CLAS)

If you had told Nieto during her Husky for a Day experience that, upon graduating from UConn, her list of accomplishments would include being a Special Presidential Envoy to the Caribbean appointed by the first Puerto Rican admitted to a Special Program in Law and founding her own nonprofit in Puerto Rico, she never would have believed it.

But that’s the beauty of college and liberal arts, she says. She started as an Honors chemistry student and found a passion for immigration and civil rights law and the way. Nieto’s nonprofit organization, Mujeres Poder, is the individualized project she did as part of UConn’s first cohort of the BOLD Women’s Leadership Network.

Based in Puerto Rico, Mujeres Poder provides resources to existing women’s nonprofits, making information easily accessible to the public.
“I see these women leading organizations in Puerto Rico as pioneers, and I want to be able to give back any way I can,” says Nieto.

Eduardo Abreu ’20 (CLAS)
Unlike the other students who came directly from Puerto Rico, Abreu and his family moved to New Jersey a week before his freshman year of high school. As a son of Dominican parents raised in Puerto Rico, he was always very proud of his identity. But he admits to losing sight of his roots in high school, as one of only three Latinos amid hundreds of students.

It wasn’t until he started at UConn, he says, that he felt at home again, surrounded by many other students who understood his childhood in Guayana, Puerto Rico. Abreu was a biological science major on a pre-PA track, the social media coordinator for PuRSA, and a UConn tour guide.

As a guide, he says he made it a point to highlight UConn’s six cultural centers and programs and the added support they provide to minority students, such as him.

Daniel Cintron ’20 (CLAS)
Growing up in San Juan, just a three-minute drive from Ocean Park Beach, you could always find Cintron by the shore, he says. But when he returned this past December to the same spot he used to frequent, there was no shore to enjoy. He doesn’t know the exact cause, but he suspects climate change. We’re starting to witness the effects worldwide, especially in small islands like Puerto Rico, he says.

Finding solutions is Cintron’s passion — stemming from his time as a chemistry student. He worked with animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom.

Post-graduation he’ll pursue his master’s and doctoral degrees in chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh.

Greisha Cordero ’20 (CLAS)
Cordero has always wanted to be a doctor, and she’s well on her way. She’ll be attending UConn School of Medicine in the fall, as the first Puerto Rican admitted into the Honors Special Program in Medicine.

She hopes to become an obstetrician-gynecologist in Puerto Rico to advocate for the health and reproductive rights of women, especially women of color. Doctors have left the island in alarming numbers in the last few years, leaving a population of about 3.4 million people with limited access to health care.

“It may be hard for physicians on the island right now, but it will be worth it,” she says. “It’s my duty as a Puerto Rican to give back to my community.”

Francisco Fadhel ’21 (ENG)
Fadhel, a civil engineering major, says he couldn’t have imagined these last four years without his friends from the island. His favorite event at UConn by far was Noche Boricua, which celebrates Puerto Rican culture and shares food and traditions with others at UConn. Like Rivera, Fadhel will be returning to UConn for a fifth year and plans to work in engineering in Florida after graduation, before eventually returning to Puerto Rico.

Alejandro Rodríguez ’20 (CLAS)
Being a student tour guide was much more than just a job for Rodríguez. From the moment he transferred junior year from Fordham University, he saw it as an opportunity to learn about, and advocate for, his newfound passion — UConn. His friends started calling him the “Visitor’s Center King of Facts.”

Rodriguez has advocacy in mind with his history major and double minor in philosophy and Latino and Latin American studies. Though his family now lives in Woodbridge, Connecticut, he plans to get a law degree and then return to Puerto Rico to work in public policy.

During his two years at UConn he was instrumental in a wide range of research and won a SHARE grant for his project “Puerto Rican Heritage Trail,” exploring Puerto Rican migration to Hartford.

Rodriguez says that wherever his career takes him he will always be proud of his time as a tour guide and influencing others to love UConn as much as he does. —CAMILA VALLEJO ’19 (CLAS)

“Obviously commencement is important because it’s a celebration of us. But this small sacrifice to save lives is worth it.” —Daniel Cintron ’20 (CLAS)

The UConn spinoff company working on a retinal implant it hopes will restore sight for millions is taking its science to space.

LambdaVision, founded by chemistry professor emeritus Robert Birge and run by CEO Nicole Wagner ’07 (CLAS), ’13 Ph.D. and CSIO Jordan Greco ’13 Ph.D., has been selected, along with implementation partner Space Tango, to receive a $5 million award from NASA.

The funding will allow the company to use the U.S. National Laboratory in the International Space Station to explore, in a series of flights over three years, the benefits of microgravity for producing the startup’s artificial retina.

Read more at s.uconn.edu/covid.
One of the most frustrating things about a pandemic, says Dr. Alison (Laufer) Halpin ’05 (CLAS), is that “everything comes in waves. Preparing for each wave, I say, is like trying to turn an aircraft carrier when you can see the tsunami on the horizon.” Halpin runs one of the clinical testing laboratories for Covid-19 at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. She was battling the first U.S. waves of the disease in January and February, before most of us knew it was coming.

When we spoke to her in early May, she said, “Covid has been going on for so long it’s hard for me to remember what life was like before.”

During the thickest of the thick of it, Halpin was in charge of 25 CDC staff with whom she worked at the lab 24-7 for eight weeks, doing all the diagnostic testing for Covid — trying to get health organizations their results as quickly as possible. They would see people on the news, like those on massive cruise ships, and know their numbered samples had come from those people.

“It’s incredibly important to remember that these are kids and wives and husbands and grandparents and this can be life threatening for a lot of people and that’s really awful,” says Halpin. “I can say we are always happy when we get a negative test result.”

Halpin is a Commander in the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service, and led the Domestic Infection Control Team at the CDC during the Ebola outbreak in 2014. Ebola was like this too, she says, but to a lesser degree. “Ebola was huge — Covid is gargantuan.”

“I knew I liked science,” she admits, “but I was also considering French. I liked a lot of things. I just kept doing things that I liked. I took Bio 107 with Dr. Tom Terry and it was amazing. So I took microbiology and then I took pathogenic microbe. That last class studied the extraordinary effect the simple act of hand washing had on patient outcomes, which she found fascinating. “It was a huge turning point for me,” she says. Another turning point was the work she did with leeches and gut microbiology in Dr. Joseph Graff’s lab. She’s still passionate about microbiomes and how they affect the gut. And still appreciative of her UConn mentors.

“They really did change the trajectory of my career, and I’m forever grateful for that. Dr. Terry and Dr. Graff were very encouraging of me, and I certainly would not have ended up where I am without them.”

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Our Defining Moments

> UConn Nation Fighting Covid Through Innovation and Creativity

Students, staff, and alumni are battling this novel virus and coming together for their communities in myriad ways. Here are just a few of the Huskies making us proud to bleed blue; find more about them and others at s.uconn.edu/covid.

1. Dr. Chris Wiles wears the mask frame he designed and UConn scientists and engineers produced using 3-D laser cutters and printers. It improved the fit of 40,000 stored masks.

2. From top: Sahil Laul ’19 (CLAS), Sameer Laul ’15 (CLAS), and Aziz Sandhu ’19 (CLAS) collaborated over Zoom with Anupam Laul (not shown) to design and develop an app that could improve communications during future crises.

3. To minimize staff exposure to Covid-19, Emergency Department Chief Dr. Rob Fuller and ED Dr. Paul Kaloudis devised a protective enclosure. Intubation boxes also were manufactured and donated to hospitals by KVC Builders of Waltham, Massachusetts.

4. Joe Luciani and others at the Innovation Partnership Building worked with industry partners and other UConn departments to send hundreds of face shields each week to UConn Health.

5. Yuansun (Sonny) Jiang, who is pursuing a masters in quantitative economics, created the Covid-19 Connecticut Data Visualization website that tracks the spread of coronavirus in the state.

6. From left, Justin Schroeder ’20 (ENG), Noah Pacik-Nelson ’20 (ENG), Matt Grasso ’19 (ENG), and Mark Waldner ’19 (CLAS) worked to design and create an emergency ventilator.

7. Days after campus shut down, physics professor Jason Hancock was working in his kitchen and living room using dummy heads from the medical simulation lab to create better masks.

8. Bill Davenport ’85 (CAHNR), ’86 MS started Operation Community Impact, which reroutes surplus dairy products to more than 100 Connecticut food pantries.

9. Tracey Lafayette ’15 (ED), ’16 MA records herself reading a story every day and shares the link with her third-grade students. “I am trying my best to keep this one thing constant for them,” she says.
he had drawn of coronavirus, complete with labels. It was the type of personal connection MaCulty envisioned when she started the project as a UConn graduate student. “We’ve noticed in the last 10 to 15 years, there’s sort of this growing mistrust of science, right? You’ve got people doing juice cleanses instead of just eating fruits and vegetables,” says MaCulty, now an assistant research professor of molecular and cell biology. “As scientists, we need to build trust up with people.”

And I think a lot of times the first step there is just getting a chance to get face time with scientists and realizing that we’re real people and not how we’re depicted in movies and TV, which is often as socially awkward, sometimes evil, crazy-haired white guys.”

Skype a Scientist, which started with MaCulty reaching out to teachers on Facebook—“Would you like to have your class talk to a scientist?”—snowballed in popularity as word spread at conferences and in national press. Since its founding, nearly 5,000 scientists have held 26,000 sessions, with participants from 70 countries and all 50 states.

The organization’s programming for broad audiences has also been in high demand while the world stays home. “After Hours” adult science trivia nights have moved from local bars to Zoom. “Skype a Scientist Live” streams have ramped up from three sessions a month to four times a week, drawing up to 500 people apiece for such general interest topics as a deep dive into “wind” with London-based environmental scientist Dani Rabuatti, co-author of “Does It Fart? The Definitive Field Guide to Animal Flatulence,” and an examination of “Everything Wrong with [Netflix hit documentary series] ‘Tiger King.’”

More than 30% of Americans have witnessed someone blaming Asian people for the Covid-19 pandemic, according to a recent national survey, and those incidents occur in a number of forms—from a sidewalk glance or a mask pulled tighter to the face to spitting, shouting, and bodily harm. “My family members are constantly afraid to leave the house because they fear they’re going to be attacked,” says Kelly Ha, a Master of Social Work student from West Hartford—above left. “They’re afraid they’re going to be hit or they’re going to be verbally abused. My privilege is that I haven’t felt that yet. But this is happening, and I think it’s really important that we bring awareness to this.”

That’s why Ha decided to get involved in the new campaign I AM NOT A VIRUS. Created in response to growing reports and outright displays of anti-Asian rhetoric and behavior around Covid-19, I AM NOT A VIRUS started as a portrait project—founded by West Hartford photographer Mike Keo—that sought to portray Asian Americans as the neighbors, community members, and business owners that they are. Each portrait is accompanied by a three-item “I Am” statement describing who the person is, in their own view, beyond their race or ethnicity.

“The statements are about who you are as a relatable person in the community, to stop the dehumanization of the Asian community as just being a virus,” Ha says. “So, for me, my three ‘I Am’s are that I am a Master of Social Work student, I am a mental health advocate, and I am a health care worker.”

Ha sat for a portrait early on in the campaign, before social distancing and stay-at-home measures took effect, but she didn’t want to just be an image in the campaign. Part of a long history of political social work organizers, she wanted to do more. She joined the campaign as its outreach coordinator and is now campaign manager. Recently the social work student has been working mental health advocacy and outreach into the campaign’s mission. — JACLYN SEVERANCE
“You are living in uncomfortable times, so in some sense you are living in the greatest time of your life. It’s great to be uncomfortable because that’s when you find out just how great you can really be.” – Geno Auriemma

I knew the Covid-19 situation was bad, but I never would have thought it would take away the last two months of my senior year.

I left for spring break with every intention of returning three weeks later, according to the most recent email at the time from President Katsouleas. I locked the door to my dorm room, hugged my friends goodbye, and said, “Stay safe and I’ll see you soon.” Little did I know that was the last night I would ever spend in my dorm room with friends that I may never see again.

Four days into spring break, I received an email from President Katsouleas that read, “Coursework at UConn will continue to be delivered online for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester, including final exams, and I am sorry to say that there will be no May commencement exercises this year.” My heart sank to the pit of my stomach. I immediately sent a screenshot of the email to my friends. The group chat rang out in crying emojis and statements of complete shock. “What about all of our stuff still in our dorm? They can’t have thousands of students return all at the same time to get our things. Are we going to get refunds for housing and meal plans? What about the international students or students that don’t have homes to return to?”

My professors were frantically sending emails saying they weren’t sure how their classes were going to proceed. A majority of my classes were built around in-class participation and group projects. Many of them said they wouldn’t be holding virtual lectures during normal class hours because they now have to homeschool their young children. They would create PowerPoint slides.

As I click play on lecture after lecture, I’m having trouble focusing. I can only think about how my immediate future has changed so drastically in such a short amount of time, and all of my last moments at UConn that I was looking forward to and will never get to have.

I had been applying for jobs to begin immediately after commencement in May, but now that most people have to work from home and companies are laying off many of their employees, who knows when they’ll be looking to hire new employees again? The economy is going to suffer for a long time due to this pandemic, which means the job hunt for the Class of 2020 will, too.

I wasn’t ready to leave UConn forever. I wanted to cherish the last night in my dorm room, the last time I’d have dinner with my friends in the dining hall, and the last time I’d walk across the stage at commencement. You’ll see your friends again. It’s not the end of the world.

It may not be the end of the world, but it’s the end of my world at UConn. I know I’ll graduate, find a job, and see my friends again, but if I knew that the day I left for spring break was my last as a UConn senior, I would have breathed the air in a little deeper, looked around a little longer, laughed a little harder, and hugged my friends a little tighter.

Sarah Negron worked at UConn Magazine the past two semesters. We were lucky to have her and luckier that she shared these thoughts during the first few days of pandemic reality. In June, Negron started a job as talent assistant at Chloe Productions — it’s WFH for now. She hopes to hug her friends tightly at a non-virtual grad party in August.

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> Mobile Testing of a Different Flavor

Beth Schweitzer ’98 MD takes a sample kit from the UConn Dairy Bar truck, which was pressed into service for walk-up and drive-through Covid-19 testing outside the Hilda May Williams Student Health Services Building on Glenbrook Road on April 14.

Student Health and Wellness (SHAW) wanted a familiar and friendly place for students to be tested on the Storrs campus. And what’s more familiar or friendly to students than the Dairy Bar?

Students started with telehealth appointments and, if tested, received face masks and self-isolation instructions.

“Our SHAW staff, like all health care professionals, have been on the front line of Covid-19 right from the beginning and are performing with great skill and selflessness,” says Eleanor Daugherty, associate vice president for student affairs.

Thanking UConn Dining Services for the use of the Dairy Bar truck, Daugherty said, “I can’t wait until it is back for its intended use!”
government, and most of them strung-ers to each other—banded together to create Project N95, a national medi-cal equipment clearinghouse. The reason Ullman and Project N95's team discovered was that there were tremendous benefits to the health care sector who were using PPE to millions. Their success has multiplied and health care centers source 252 million units of PPE. Their success has resulted in a project that was never needed, as it takes, “Ullman says. “While I wish this service had never been needed, it has been a tremendous benefit to the health care sector.”

“How could this happen? How could this happen? Who is going to do something about it?”

The world will begin hearing more from me, and I hope from you, in the future.

Don't Read the Comments: When I said yes to The New York Times and wrote the op-ed, my husband made me promise I would not read the comments section. It was the best decision he ever made for me. While my inbox was flooded with people writing to me directly—sometimes positively and sometimes less so—it kept me away from the trolls and all those with perhaps more knee-jerk reactions to my piece. Instead, I heard from thoughtful folks who often provided helpful critiques that made me think more deeply about current conversations and the world. I hope by the time you read these words, the world will begin hearing more from me, and I hope from you, in the future.

> Finding a Better Way — and Getting PPE to Millions

When entrepreneur Nadav Ullman ’12 (BUS) heard that schoolchildren had been asked to make cloth medical masks for health care workers treating Covid-19 patients, he knew he had to act. “This seemed like something you’d hear about in a Third World country,” Ullman says. “I initially thought, ‘How could this happen?’ and my next thought was, ‘Who is going to do something about it?’”

In less than a month, Ullman and six other entrepreneurs—experts in everything from tech to health care to

> “This seemed like something you’d hear about in a Third World Country,” says Ullman. “How could this happen? Who is going to do something about it?”

> Going Viral in the Time of Covid-19

On March 9, sitting in my hotel room after a long day observing interviewing teachers, principals, and coaches for a research project on teacher leadership and school improvement out of state, I opened two emails that would change my life for the foreseeable future. The first was from UConn’s provost stating the new travel restrictions due to Covid-19. Faculty were no longer to travel for data collection and the university was moving online. The second, from my children’s school district, indicated that due to a teacher testing positive for Covid, schools would close for two days for a “deep clean.”

By the time I had made it to the airport and paid an exorbitant amount of money to get on the next flight home, those two days had turned into two months—working from home and homeschooling were our new normal.

Yet I was still thinking about the need for PPE, all the other working parents and educators trying to simultaneously be the best teachers, workers, caregivers, therapists, parent wranglers, and providers—I posted the following tweet:

“I’m just going to say this and judge me all you want. We’re not planning anything educational for our kids. Homeschool will not happen. We will survive and watch too much TV. We will eat cookies and carbs and hope for the best. We will love and try not to go insane.”

To my surprise, the tweet went viral. While the risk was more than worth it and maybe (I hope) helping a few people feel less alone along the way. The result was more than worth it and made me bolder and more ready for whatever the future brings.

Tell Your Truth: My research is mostly about focusing on how educators come to understand and experience their roles, including some of the challenges and rewards they incur while doing so. This means a lot of my work is dedicated to interviewing people and hearing their stories. However, even though so much of my work is dedicated to storytelling, I never really thought about telling my own. Moreover, if anyone had said my story would touch a nerve, I would never have believed them. What this experience reinforced for me is that everyone’s story matters—even mine. It matters because in telling our truths we let people know they are not alone, that each of us is part of a “we” and not just a “me.” This sense of connection makes us stronger and more able to persevere when it is most needed (e.g., now).

The best choice he ever made for me. While my inbox was flooded with people writing to me directly—sometimes positively and sometimes less so—it kept me away from the trolls and those with perhaps more knee-jerk reactions to my piece. Instead, I heard from thoughtful folks who often provided helpful critiques that made me think more deeply about current conversations and the world. I hope by the time you read these thoughts, the worst has passed and we are working together to heal, while planning for a “normal” that is better and more just. In the meantime, however, I will end the way I sign my tweets: “ Don’t Read the Comments:”
Historical figures seldom leap off the pages of history books, and we rarely hear their voices outside of those texts. However, professor of public policy Thomas Craemer will tell you that the education he received growing up in postwar Germany prepared him for just such a chance meeting.

Craemer’s parents were children when the war ended. The professor, whose research focuses on race relations and reparations, says that in the immediate postwar era no one wanted to talk about the war or the atrocities that defined the Nazi era. It wasn’t until his parents were adults that the curtains were drawn back, and a new wave of interrogation and accountability began.

“Their generation started asking their parents, ‘Where were you? What did you do? Why did you not act? Did you know anything?’ and so on,” says Craemer.

The results were far-reaching. Craemer says his generation had a public-school curriculum that included a lesson about the Holocaust in every subject.

“Except for physical education, every school subject had the Holocaust front and center,” Craemer says. “That was tough. You know it’s there. You sit in these lectures, you’ve seen the documentary videos, and you can’t help but feel very ashamed. And so I grew up with this desire to be able to express to a Holocaust survivor how I felt about it. But of course, I never thought this would happen.”

It doesn’t add up, thought Thomas Craemer — because slaves didn’t work eight-hour days.
Decades later, Craemer’s interest in his country’s past culminated in the pursuit of a doctorate in political science at the University of Tübingen, Germany. He was there in his hometown at his parents’ apartment that light dinner conversation with friends gave way to a harrowing tale of survival. With it came the long-awaited opportunity for Craemer to contend with the barbarity and complicity of his grandparents’ generation up close. Craemer sat across the table from the Holocaust survivor at the center of that tale, a man named Mieczuł Langer. A year later in 2001, Craemer and his parents embarked on a commemorative trip with Langer and Langer’s wife and grandson. The group — half German, half Jewish — toured the sites of atrocity from Langer’s story. They saw the house in the Krakow ghetto to which Langer and his family were forcibly relocated. Craemer says he took notice of the wall that enclosed the ghetto where the house stood — it looked like gravestones set side by side. Langer led the group to the intersection where the Nazi guards selected him for slave labor — he didn’t know it at the time, but those standing across the road from him were sent to the gas chambers.

“And then he showed us the crematory,” Craemer says, his voice breaking again. “That was the crematory he was destined for, and he escaped. All of it was so deeply moving. It was kind of a way of making history come to life on a very personal level, and to be able to embrace and connect over it was priceless.”

After Langer’s passing in 2015, Craemer found out that his friend had been receiving reparation payments from the West German government since the 1970s.

“I’m sure it signaled to him that Germany was taking its legacy seriously and was making amends,” says Craemer. “And of course, to me, it was also a significant signal that my country was acknowledging our historical injustices.”

Today Craemer resides in the South Bronx with his ball python, Madame Curie, and his African grey parrot Alex. He teaches courses on diversity and inclusion and on race and public policy. Reinvigorated national conversations about reparations have focused new attention on Craemer and his research. We talked in his UConn Hartford office about the case for reparations through the lens of his life experiences.

Japanese Americans who were victims of WWII internment received an apology and $20,000 reparations from then-president Ronald Reagan. Holocaust survivors received reparations from the German government. What can be gleaned from these historical examples when talking about reparations for slavery in the United States? I think one thing is, one lesson is, you can never fully repair. So reparations are, in a way, a misnomer. To me, it’s a symbolic gesture of contrition — you acknowledge the historical injustice, you vow it’ll never happen again, and you give a symbolic token of your sincerity. It’s like when you’ve wronged your neighbor, instead of just saying sorry, you say sorry and bring flowers or a bottle of wine that makes it more meaningful. It’s a symbol.

Your research estimates that reparation payments for American slavery would equal $14 trillion — an incredible number. How did you arrive at that figure? I estimated how many slaves there were in each year that the United States existed, and I excluded colonial slavery. The slave population was counted every 10 years and, for the years in between, I interpolated the population to estimate the enslaved population. Then I multiplied the number of enslaved by 265 days per year times the 24 hours in a day that the slaves did not have control over their lives. And then I just did the calculation: What would a slave owner have had to pay at the time to have a white person or a free laborer? I found historical wage information about unskilled labor, even though many of the enslaved were skilled. This estimate is conservative because unskilled labor wages were minimal — like $1 or $2 an hour. I multiplied the number of hours that the enslaved were available to slave owners times the hourly wage. Then I compounded that with a very conservative interest rate of only 1% — that doesn’t even make up for inflation. That’s how I arrived at the $14 trillion in 2009 dollars.

At the time, it was worth one year of the U.S. GDP. Further compounded to 2018, it’s like $18 or $19 trillion. I haven’t done the calculation for 2020 yet, but it grows. It’s usually roughly one time the U.S. GDP. That’s a super conservative estimate. Much more realistic interest rates at the time were 6%. I did the calculation with 6% and it just explodes. It gets into the quadrillions.

An April 2019 article in CNN Politics said, “Most formulations have produced numbers from as low as $17 billion to as high as almost $5 trillion.” However, the article called your estimate “modest” when compared to others that went as high as $97 trillion. "Would you consider your estimate to be modest? I’m not saying that that should be the amount paid back. For me, the model calculations help us to wrap our minds around the magnitude of the injustice. Capital from American slavery provided the startup loan that the United States then took to have an A-rated economy — and it took that loan by force from African Americans. At some point, there is a need to start paying back the loan.

Reparations have been a big part of the national conversation lately, putting your work in the spotlight. What has that experience been like? It’s a big surprise. I’m glad that it finally has made the mainstream. It’s an important topic. When I started this research and initially did public opinion research on it to see how supportive or opposed people were, they were mostly opposed. To know that it gained that much momentum is gratifying.

What suggestions do you have for looking at reparations through a bipartisan lens? I’m very surprised that it popped up as an issue on the Democratic side because one of the early mainstream proponents of reparations that I can remember is conservative commentator Charles Krauthammer, who was in favor of reparations as a one-time lump sum payment instead of affirmative action. In its structure, reparations are a much more conservative policy because it’s about individual responsibility. You have to be a deserving, eligible recipient.

What question do you get asked the most when it comes to reparations? I get asked about precedents for reparations a lot. Slave owners received reparations for slavery in several instances. One was the Haitian independence debt, where France demanded an indemnity from Haiti for the abolition of slavery so that they could pay off the slave owners that fled from Haiti to France due to the loss of their property. Haiti paid that from 1828, I believe, to...
Reparations and the abolition of American slavery.

It's shocking. Former slave owners received reparations from the American government for the abolition of slavery. So long as the recipients were white, there was never a question about whether it was too long ago, whether it made any sense, or whether it was too complicated to figure out.

When reparations were paid out to survivors of the Holocaust like Langer, many of the perpetrators were still living. What do you say to the argument that the U.S. shouldn't pay reparations because neither the direct perpetrators nor survivors are still alive? The institutions are still alive. The federal government is still alive, and the federal government allowed slavery to exist. It could have quickly abolished it. Many Northern states did. That shows that it was possible at the time. The institutions still exist; companies still exist; the capital of companies still exists.

Slavery provided the startup capital for the U.S. economies. That capital is still alive, and it grows exponentially every year, of course, in more and more diffused hands, and it grows exponentially every year, of the U.S. economies. That capital is still alive, and the federal government allowed slavery to exist. It could have quickly abolished it. Many Northern states did. That shows that it was possible at the time. The institutions still exist; companies still exist; the capital of companies still exists.

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What are you working on now? I feel very honored to be part of the reparations planning committee, led by professor William Darity of Duke University. Darity put together a large group of experts, mostly African Americans, who are researching various aspects of reparations. We are working on a report that should come out this year, talking about how to estimate the harm, the contributing factors to the wealth gap.

There are other aspects of the report as well. What should the design of a reparations policy be? What role does genealogy play? The report looks not only at slavery but also at Jim Crow discrimination, New Deal discrimination, discrimination during World War II, and afterward with the GI Bill. The report also considers post–civil rights discrimination and looks at how each of those affected African Americans living today.

You spoke about growing up in a culture of accountability and contending with your country's past at a young age. Why was that important? It instilled a curiosity about history and about what went on in my generation. That curiosity took on a life of its own, and we started researching our home-town and looking into which stores and establishments had belonged to Jewish families. Now people do the research and put what's called Stolpersteine or “stumbling blocks” into the pavement. These are little bronze cobblestones that have inscriptions on them with the name of the family that owned a given property and a brief story of what happened to them in the Holocaust.

My father's symptoms have finally plateaued along with the gut-wrenching worry my mother's battles via FaceTime. Over a matter of days, the tone of the emails from the corporate heads of my “bread and butter” retail job swung from unrealistic optimism to discrete panic, and I, too, finally plateaued along with the gut-wrenching worry my mother's battles via FaceTime. Over a matter of days, the tone of the emails from the corporate heads of my “bread and butter” retail job swung from unrealistic optimism to discrete panic, and I, too, finally plateaued along with the gut-wrenching worry my mother's battles via FaceTime. Over a matter of days, the tone of the emails from the corporate heads of my “bread and butter” retail job swung from unrealistic optimism to discrete panic, and I, too, finally plateaued.
Look, obviously you should never commit any crimes no matter how silly. So if I haven’t been clear: don’t commit crimes (they’re making me say that). But what’s a bored member of UConn nation to do in these strange times? Let’s start in the kitchen.

During these food-challenged times, we’ve all been eating noodles like we did when we were in college. They’re cheap and delicious and they’re in the pantry. Be careful though. If your noodles don’t meet federal specifications you may have to come up with money for a lawyer like me to defend you. For spaghetti, that means you can’t go around making noodles with a diameter of more than .11 inches. Or say you’re more of a macaroni and cheese kind of person. Well, your noodles had better be under .27 inches to keep the feds away. Naturally, you’re wondering: What about ramen? Well, so far, the government is willing to look the other way on that. Plus, federal noodle crimes are only crimes if you’re selling or distributing illicit noodles. Any good noodle lawyer will tell you that.

Here’s a chart from my book “How to Become a Federal Criminal” to help you comply.

### Fig. 4-36. Federal Noodle Specifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Macaroni</th>
<th>Spaghetti</th>
<th>Vermicelli</th>
<th>Egg Noodles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Must be tube-shaped</td>
<td>Must be tube-shaped or cord-shaped</td>
<td>Must be cord-shaped</td>
<td>Must be ribbon shaped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diameter is between 0.11” and 0.27”</td>
<td>Diameter is between 0.06” and 0.11”</td>
<td>Diameter is under 0.06”</td>
<td>No federal size requirements</td>
</tr>
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For the millions of people now stuck inside their homes, boredom is a reality of daily life. Sure, we’re trying to slow the spread of a deadly virus, but all those hours need to be filled somehow. And eventually the mind runs out of completely legal things to do. That’s where crime comes in. Sweet, sweet crime.

Of course, I’m not talking about the big crimes. Going out and robbing a bank would not be exercising appropriate social distancing. And what’s the point of grand theft auto when there’s no place to go? But take a cruise through the United States Code and the Code of Federal Regulations and you’ll find thousands and thousands of little things that can relieve a bit of boredom and land you in federal prison. If you’re having a hard time finding them, don’t worry – I do it for you daily on my Twitter feed @CrimeADay, where I’ve been counting and posting all the federal crimes on the books every day since 2014. That’s how I know you can’t sell a barrel with an oversized bulge. Shoot a fish from an airplane? Can’t do it. Pretend to be a member of the 4-H club? Off limits. Even mailing a mongoose to someone is a federal crime, no matter how generous your intentions may be.

Other federal crimes you can commit at home might be born out of loneliness. For example, when Skype or Zoom goes down, you might resort to a good old-fashioned CB radio to talk with friends or colleagues. But don’t tell a joke or make a sound effect on that walkie-talkie: both are prohibited by 47 U.S.C. § 501 & 47 CFR § 95.413. Or what about carrying on a conversation with someone you have reason to believe is a pirate (many of my colleagues fall into this category)? Well, that’s prohibited by 18 U.S.C. § 1657 and could get you three years in prison.

Some estimates suggest that there are more than 4,450 federal criminal statutes and more than 100,000 regulations with criminal penalties. That means it’s going to take me until the year 2848 to count them at a rate of one each day. But all Huskies should know that the feds don’t have a monopoly on strange crimes. Connecticut has its own penchant for weird crimes.

Written & Illustrated by Mike Chase ’11 (JD)

Dancing on a Sunday? Don’t Do That!

Who is Mike Chase?

UConn Law alum Mike Chase is a lawyer by day, mad tweeter and author by night. Want more diabolical crime drawings or to know why these laws are still on the books? Go to s.uconn.edu/crime. Want to aid or abet? Join the fun at @CrimeADay.
Heck, even margarine — yes, margarine — has landed Connecticut residents in hot water with the authorities. Both Connecticut and federal law have long made it a crime to give out single servings of unlabeled margarine unless they are triangular in shape. Square margarine, circular margarine, or even rhomboid margarine are illicit in the eyes of the law. Sure enough, in 1952, another Connecticut restaurateur was hauled off by the police when he was busted giving his patrons square pats of margarine.

Now, it might seem like I’m saying that everything is a crime. You might be thinking that it’s impossible to go about your daily life without running afoul of some criminal prohibition among the untold thousands of federal laws on the books. So let me offer a glimmer of hope: I went to the UConn School of Law, and I know a business opportunity when I see it. The more time lawmakers spend pumping out crime after crime, the more job security there will be for the margarine lawyers, the Sunday-dancing lawyers, and the oversized-noodle lawyers among us.

So relax.

Illegal Sunday Dancing

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<th>PICK A SUNDAY</th>
<th>BUST A MOVE</th>
<th>WAIT FOR THE COPS</th>
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Even selling a terrible essay is a crime, though it’s more likely the customer will testify against you if they get an F.

Connecticut has a long history of making it a crime to have fun, even in trying times. Until 1976, Section 53-300 of the Connecticut Statutes made it a crime for any person to be “present at any concert of music, dancing or other public diversion on Sunday or on the evening thereof . . ..” You don’t have to be lawyer to see that dancing on Sunday was a crime — an actual crime — until not that long ago. Naturally, you’re wondering whether any of these silly crimes could possibly result in a person being charged and convicted. Well, in the 1963 case of State v. Abaroa, a restaurant owner was charged under the no-Sunday-dancing law. Police showed up at Anthony Romano’s restaurant one Sunday afternoon and said: “If you have dancing, Mr. Romano, someone is going to get arrested.” In response, Romano said, “Well, we’re going to have dancing,” and then he walked away. Awesome response? Yes. Criminal? Also yes.

For those of us who may have been “enterprising” students during our time at UConn, be advised that Connecticut General Statutes § 53-392b makes it a Class B misdemeanor to write a term paper for someone else. That could mean up to six months in jail if you’re caught writing someone else’s essay. If reading that last part just made you break out in a cold sweat, just act natural and keep reading. And relax, the statute of limitations is just one year.

#CrimeADay

Mike Chase ’11 JD worked on this from his home in Granby, Connecticut, while lawyering, fathering, and tweeting: “I always knew it was probably a bad idea to promise the world (or at least Twitter) a new ridiculous federal crime every day, on top of a busy practice representing clients in and out of court. But when the Covid-19 crisis began, so did a set of totally new obligations: fighting for justice remotely and advising clients in a time when prison became an even more dangerous place to be. Luckily, I have my 4-year-old son and 6-month-old daughter to serve as young non-degreed associates and to remind me there’s more to life than just federal noodle crimes.”
THE ART OF FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

Growing up in Florida and Connecticut, Elizabeth Ellenwood ’20 MFA walked the shoreline picking up trash, following her grandmother’s advice to “leave the beach better than we found it.” Years later she combined her art and beachcombing in “Among the Tides,” in which Ellenwood uses a variety of photo processes to create an artistic visualization of the impact consumerism is having on the world’s oceans. The piece “November 3, 2018 Collection” is an installation of 240 cyanotypes (cyan-blue prints) of beach trash from a walk that day. Since starting “Among the Tides,” she has picked up 3,417 items during 59 beach walks over nearly 36 miles. Ellenwood recently won a Fulbright Scholarship and an American Scandinavian Foundation Grant to Norway for 2020–2021, where she will collaborate with an environmental chemist and a marine biologist to create work based on marine pollution.
SUMMER 2020
And the award goes to... David Fotterman ’76 (CLAS), who received the Presidential Award from the American Anthropological Association in recognition for his contributions to the field of anthropology. In addition, the International Association of Top Professionals named him Top Anthropologist of 2020 at an awards gala in Las Vegas.

Tom Morgan ’71 (CAHNR), a veterinarian, reports that he is living in Avon, Connecticut, “with a bunch of animals and humans” and has published his fifth book, “The Unpronounceable Mammals and Others: Nine Tales of Disquiet and Unease.”

Christopher P. Droney ’79 JD, ’16 H’89

Megrette Fletcher. “I was named senior vice president and chief actuary. When I was named, the number of variable annuities had increased. The number of people using these products has increased as well. It’s a very dynamic field, and I’m excited to be a part of it.”

Jessica Sarin-90s (CLAS)

March now lives by the shoreline, but I was inland until very recently. It’s a different world. “Tech moves very quickly,” she says. “It’s a different world.”

The coronavirus is the storyline that readers are most engaged with, she says. “We’re sort of existing in a chronic breaking news situation that not only can I not prepare for her birth in a pandemic, but it’s also likely that a lot of her life will be beyond my protection. My spreadsheets will be useless. I’m forced to accept that I can plan for everything. I don’t have any choice but to be agile — no one knows what the world will look like in three months.”

March doesn’t usually write for the opinion section, however. “I’ve been doing some writing for the newspaper, and I’ve been writing about the pandemic.”

In addition, she has been working on a book about her experiences as a mother during the pandemic. “I’ve been writing about my experience of being a mother during the pandemic,” she says.

As an editor, March says, “I’ve been trying to figure out how to do the best work I can in these circumstances.”

March’s fascination with the pandemic and its impact on society has led her to explore new ways of working and communicating. “As an editor, I’ve been trying to figure out how to do the best work I can in these circumstances,” she says. 

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“Wellness” may be among the biggest buzzwords of the past decade (not to mention a $4.5 trillion industry), but it was taken on new meaning as people around the world over try to balance widespread uncertainty and stress with a new, socially distant way of life.

“I think of wellness as the ability to move with some sort of intention,” says her “mission as a human is to empower myself, tears streaming down my face,” says Abbate, who graduated from UConn.

“The abundance of digital fitness classes being offered on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram while businesses are shut down means there’s something for everyone, Abbate told listeners on a late-April mini-episode of “Hurdle,” and technology means you can still set a date to work out with friends or family for motivation. And remaining connected point out to achieve fitness excellence. “Little, small habits lead to major change,” says Abbate. “The most important thing is that you started and are dedicated to making it a habit. The best part about ‘Hurdle’ is this constant reinforcement notion that hard stuff happens to all of us, but we are all capable of changing it. We can do it. We don’t matter if you’re the CEO of a publishing house or a world-class athlete, at the end of the day we all face our fair share of adversity.”

Still apprehensive? Remember that Abbate’s fitness life began with a 1-minute run followed by a flop in the grass. And despite all the marathons she’s now run, she says, “that night in the grass was my biggest victory.”
CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO TOM’S TRIVIA!

Go to uconntrivia.s.uconn.edu/trivia or flip to p. 52 to see if you know as much as UConn Trivia King Tom Breen ’00 (CLAS).

1. This year, the Covid-19 pandemic forced UConn to hold a “virtual” commencement for graduates. But this wasn’t the first time a commencement ceremony has been canceled at UConn. What was the most recent previous cancellation?
   A: 1996, when hurricane Donna forced the cancellation of a ceremony that had been rescheduled from May to November.
   B: 1942, when nearly 40% of the University’s graduating class had enlisted in the armed forces after Pearl Harbor.
   C: 1914, when curriculum changes made all the graduating seniors back into juniors.
   D: 1902, when a sudden thunderstorm forced the cancellation of a ceremony that had only 31 graduates.

2. Before it became a central plaza open only to pedestrians, Fairfield Way was a busy, congested road with cars parked along the sidewalks. What was the last year Fairfield Way was known as Fairfield Road?
   A: 1998
   B: 2001
   C: 1995
   D: 2000

3. On Halloween night 1942, UConn students and residents from surrounding towns gathered on Horsebarn Hill for an activity designed to boost wartime morale. What was it?
   A: A visit by Eleanor Roosevelt, who toured the agricultural facilities.
   B: A Halloween-themed war bond carnival, with proceeds going to the war effort.
   C: A demonstration air raid in which several buildings were destroyed.
   D: A cow-milking competition staged by the Women’s Army Corps.

4. Before WHUS, there were several student-run radio stations at UConn, including WABL and WCAC. One of these stations, though, didn’t have call letters and went by a different name. What was it?
   A: Radio Connecticut
   B: The Nutmeg Network
   C: The Husky Network
   D: The College Broadcast Service

TOM’S TRIVIA

Virtual Commencement 2020

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BAPTISM BY FIRE

The nursing class of 2019 has not been eased into the working world. “I just came off orientation in January,” says Mia Hrabcsak ’19 (NUR), “I’m just learning how to be a good nurse, but how to be a good nurse in the middle of a pandemic.” Hrabcsak had just come off a shift on the surgical orthopedic floor at UConn Health Farmington. With elective surgeries on hold, the floor was filled with overflow Covid-19 patients, and things were stressful. “It’s hard to imagine we have 114 bed surge. People are rushing in constantly; how could it get much worse?” The hardest part, she says, is watching people suffer alone, especially when they are put on ventilators.

What gets her through? “I would definitely say it’s my faith. I just want to provide innovative solutions to homelessness. She is chief executive officer of Blissful Haven and the Hartford City Council, an organization for technology and business professionals in the financial industry.

Baptism by Fire

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**Michael Fedele**

**10 MBA** was named to the 40 Under 40 list by Sports Business Journal, which recognizes the best young talent in the sports business.

Laura Mesite

**15 (SFA)**, the town’s outgoing chief financial officer at AmeriFirst Financial Corp., a division of AmeriFirst Financial, Inc., were named among the “Women to Watch” by CTCPA Women, an award program celebrating Connecticut’s exceptional CPAs.

**KUDOS**

**Aimee Loiselle ’19** (CLAS), ’09 (BUS), Katherine A. Donovan ’12 JD and Amanda Slavin ’08 were named to the “Women to Watch” by CTCPA Women, an award program celebrating Connecticut’s exceptional CPAs.

**MORALITY**

**KUDOS**

**Peter Baldwin, “a stunningly original scholar,”** was named vice chancellor of Uganda Christian University. He and some colleagues recently paid a visit to St. Sors to build collaborations with UConn. Previously, he served as dean of the Department of Languages, Literature, and Communication at Makerere University in Uganda.

**Rachel (Goldfarb) Lyke ’07 (CLAS)** earned her doctorate in higher education administration in 2019 from Northeastern University and Gregory S. Bombard ’06 (CLAS), a trial lawyer whose practice focuses on trade secret litigation, business torts, and other complex commercial and intellectual property disputes, was made partner at Duane Morris LLP.

**Also, Erik Kleinbeck ’07 MBA has joined Third Avenue Management LLC, a New York-based registered investment adviser, as head of business development.**

**Also moving onward and upward,** Edwin J. Tucker ’08 MBA was named chief medical officer at Mirum Pharmaceuticals, Inc., a biopharmaceutical company focused on novel therapies for debilitating liver diseases.

**Amanda Slavin ’08 (ED), ’09 MA, founder of brand consulting firm Catalyst/Creative, has published** “The Seventh Level: Transform Your Business Through Meaningful Engagement With Your Customers and Employees.”

**Sue Doernberger & Vita, PC, elevated Bethany L. Barrese ’05 (BUS), ’12 JD to partner.** Her practice focuses on complex insurance policyholder coverage issues, particularly assessing and litigating bad faith and unfair trade practices claims.

Katherine A. Donovan ’09 (BUS), a senior audit partner at Whitley & Hadley, was named one of the “Women to Watch” by CTCPA Women, an award program celebrating Connecticut’s exceptional CPAs.

**Michael Fedele**

**10 MBA** was named to the 40 Under 40 list by Sports Business Journal, which recognizes the best young talent in the sports business.

Laura Mesite

**15 (SFA)**, the town’s outgoing chief financial officer at AmeriFirst Financial Corp., a division of AmeriFirst Financial, Inc., were named among the “Women to Watch” by CTCPA Women, an award program celebrating Connecticut’s exceptional CPAs. **Robert L. Truitt ’11 MBA** was appointed chief financial officer at AmeriFirst Home Mortgage, a division of AmeriFirst Financial Corp., in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Previously, he was CFO at Flagstar Bank’s mortgage division and held senior roles at JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Morgan Stanley.

**Jonathan H. Schafer **

**’11 JD** was promoted to counsel at Robinson+Cole LLP where he works on the firm’s environmental, energy, and telecommunications practice. **Attention marketers:** Melanie Deziel ’12 (CLAS) published her first book for marketers and creators, “The Content Fuel Marketers.”

**Melissa Stern ’11 (CLAS) and Daniel Stewart ’13 (BUS)** married in November at the Waldorf Astoria in Orlando, Florida. The couple first met in 2010 through Greek life (Kappa Kappa Gamma and Sigma Alpha Epsilon) and began dating shortly after graduation when they moved to New York City. Nearly 50 family members attended the wedding.

**KUDOS**

Of the “Women to Watch” by CTCPA Women, an award program celebrating Connecticut’s exceptional CPAs.
“...” says Gordon Markman ‘21, whose individualized bachelor of fine arts concentration in industrial design is pending approval (he’ll graduate before the official major is available). “We didn’t know what would happen until we inflated. There were a host of technical and logistical solutions we had to approach as a team, one being working inside the ball to connect the seams.”

When the time came to test their work, “we rigged our [rainbow] ‘Pride’ ball to the compressor and something truly magical happened — this multicolored 10-foot-tall sphere arose out of the floor. We were all blown away,” Markman says. He is, perhaps, the archetypal Krenicki Institute student. Fascinated by technology and engineering since he was young — “I would take apart everything I owned” — Markman was thrilled to be accepted into engineering, but after a year felt the creative passion that had been inspiring his personal projects was missing. Discovering interdisciplinary design “awoke a huge passion” in Markman, and since he created his own major, “I’ve had the opportunity to work on some really fascinating projects that reside in the broad spectrum between art and engineering and which combine the two,” he says. Similarly, Pnuesha not only creates inflatable art installations but also inflatable event spaces and even inflatable habitats for NASA, showcasing just a fraction of the diverse applications for this niche combination of studies.

The interactions observed during the workshop exemplified the broader lessons students will learn from the interdisciplinary collaborative, says Christopher Sancomb, the assistant professor who is shaping the newly established Industrial Design program. “One of the things that I really want to focus on is drawing together students from different disciplines so those dialogues can happen,” he says. “Students in other disciplines working together, discovering their overlap, discovering and appreciating each other’s areas of specialty so they can really learn to thrive in cross-disciplinary environments. Because frankly that’s where we’re all working, regardless of field.”

Burkey believes the iterative process artists use will be valuable to students with engineering backgrounds. “A lot of engineering students are very high-achieving and very failure-averse,” he says. “Nobody likes to fail, but the thing the design process really insists upon is your first idea is rarely your best idea and rarely your last idea. The design folks really get — let’s be creative and think outside the box: Failure is part of that, and they understand that. Let’s iterate, come around to this idea a couple different times from a couple of different ways,” Burkey says. “I think that’s the biggest thing.”

Opposite Complement

That kind of eye-opening experience is what the Krenickis say they got from UConn and what they hope students get from their namesake program. Although they joke that they need to go through the program themselves to learn from each other’s differing backgrounds, it’s clear that they’ve been doing just that, balancing each other out with seemingly opposing perspectives, since they met in McMahon.

“I hope that the art majors succeed in their careers, that they have a career,” says Donna Krenicki, an artist and a member of the School of Fine Arts Advisory Board, before John interjects, “A financially rewarding career,” says John, a senior operating partner with the private equity investment firm Clayton, Dubilier & Rice, who previously spent 29 years at General Electric Co, where his executive positions included vice chairman and president and CEO of GE Energy.

“Well, emotionally and intellectually rewarding and also creatively rewarding,” Donna finishes. “I hope that they can find a place to put their talents and make some money off of that.”

John Krenicki sums it up — the world isn’t black and white; they hope students who go through the Institute programs learn to adapt, just like they have throughout their lives and careers, moving new places, trying new things.

“Very high-achieving and very failure-averse,” Burkey notes, “Lot of engineering students are very technical and logistical solutions we had to approach as a team, one being working inside the ball to connect the seams.”

As our country faces widespread economic hardship, we know that more future UConn students will require financial aid. Your support for the General Scholarships Fund opens the door to a college education for students in all areas of study. While we don’t know what the future holds, the gift of a UConn education remains one that will change lives for the better.

Donate today at s.uconn.edu/generalscholarships.
**Job Envy**

The job Louis Goffinet ’17 (CLAS) loves having so much right now — not the full-time job teaching science to eighth graders and coaching soccer in Lebanon, Connecticut, or the part-time job as a weekend and evening facilities supervisor at Mansfield Community Center, where he’s worked since high school (he loves these, too) — but the volunteer job. That one wasn’t intentional. “My dad volunteered me,” he says, “which was generous of him.”

Goffinet was happy to do the grocery shopping for their elderly neighbor, who was worried about exposure to Covid-19. After a couple trips, he posted on the Mansfield Connection Facebook page offering to shop for other elderly neighbors. He got dozens of takers, including a mom who said she wasn’t in his intended demographic, but her young family was having a tough time. Both she and her husband had been laid off, and since her husband had medical issues, she didn’t want to risk trips to the store, and the delivery service fees were becoming too much. Could he make a trip for them? Of course, Goffinet shopped for the family, but he also posted on Facebook, asking if anyone wanted to help pay for this particular food run.

In an hour he had the $200, and 7 weeks later his Neighbors Grocery Fund has $30,000 and countless grateful neighbors. Most grateful perhaps? “These twins, 7- or 8-year-olds, they were almost crying, squealing, jumping up and down when they saw the Cheerios in my bags,” says Goffinet, who can relate. “I remember having very specific cereals I liked as a child.” So on the form for the funds, knowing parents will focus on need, he asks what their children’s favorite snack foods and cereals are. “I always get Cheez-its in my bags,” says Goffinet, who can relate. “I remember having very specific cereals I liked as a child.” So on the form for the funds, knowing parents will focus on need, he asks what their children’s favorite snack foods and cereals are. “I always get Cheez-its in my bags,” says Goffinet, who can relate. “I remember having very specific cereals I liked as a child.”

**LOCAL HERO**

For more about Goffinet, go to uconn.edu/goffinet.