

# The Commonwealth Chronicle

Volume 3 Issue 1

November 16, 2015

## IN THIS ISSUE



(For details of the newspaper mascot and motto, see page 4)

### Learn more about new members of the faculty:

Mr. Weinberg  
(P3)

Ms. Reed  
(P4)

Ms. Burke  
(P4)

Ms. Watson  
(P5)

### Ongoings of the School:

Fall and Winter Plays:  
Romance and Intrigue  
(P3)

Survey: School Opinions on  
Hancock  
(P3)

Community Service: Our  
place--a deeper look  
(P4)

### Politics:

American Prisons: Plea Deals  
and Mandatory Minimums  
(P5)

Evo Morales  
(P6)

Immigrant Crisis in Europe  
(P7)

Uber  
(P8)

Readers are encouraged to  
send 150 word responses!

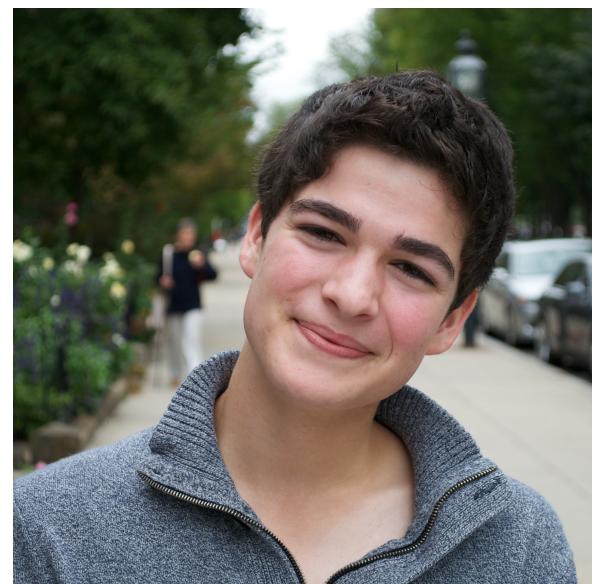
Please email us at:  
[yliu@commschool.org](mailto:yliu@commschool.org)

## Discoveries While Conducting US History Research Paper

By Iman Ali

Last spring, Kevin Ballen '16 conducted his US history research paper on the contentedness of housewives in the 50s and 60s. While looking at a view-changing book about American housewives from that time, he discovered inconsistencies between the basis of the book and reality. *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan, a 20th century American writer, feminist, and activist, was a major spark of Post-War Feminism. According to Friedan, this book had been based on responses from the fifteenth reunion surveys she sent out in 1957 to her Smith College Class of 1942.

Kevin found that the original surveys were available in the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe. After contacting the library and signing many confidentiality and proper handling procedure forms, he was able to access the physical surveys that these Smith graduates had completed. From his perspective, Friedan's leading questions "were trying to elicit a frustrated response from housewives." For example, she asked "Are you happy, submissive, and completely homebound. frustrated?" "Do you feel your weekends are too frantic with social activity?" "How much time do you spend with your own family? Enough?" "How much time do you spend alone? Enough?" and "What difficulties have you found in working out your role as a woman?" While housewifery. For instance, in almost every comparing these surveys to the rest of his research, he began noticing two sets of inconsistencies.



(Picture of Kevin Ballen)

The first was between Friedan's claims about the media and the reality of 50s media. Friedan analyzed the media as portraying housewives as But as Kevin watched episodes of "I Love Lucy," a popular American sitcom from the 1950s, he found that housewife Lucy makes constant efforts to "escape the confines of you found in working out your role as a woman?" While housewifery." For instance, in almost every episode, she dresses up as another person.

(Continued on Page 3)

## When Your Existence is Not an Option: The Need for Gender Inclusive Options on Forms, Surveys and Other Paperwork for Modern Life

By Julia Talbot

Forms are as inevitable a part of student life as all-nighters and extensions. Forms are what stand between you and scholarships, travel grants, extracurricular courses and college applications. Again and again, you will be asked which demographics you belong to such as your age and...gender.

For gender, you will have two boxes to choose from: Male and Female: M and F. These two letters are expected to cover the whole alphabet of gender identity.

This question, while easy for a cis person (someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth), can halt a nonbinary person's application process.

To those who say, well, it's just a checkmark: you're exactly right. How is it difficult on a digital survey to code a few more options? Is it really so difficult to expend a fraction more printer ink to acknowledge the existences of a whole sweep of people? Imagine the last time you filled out your gender on a form. Imagine which box you picked. Now, imagine that box wasn't there. Imagine facing page after page of absent identities. Imagine this over and over and over. Nobody likes paperwork, but to some people, it represents more than a hassle.

How do we fix this?

First, assess how relevant gender is to the application process in question. If it's not, why



(Members of Commonwealth's Gay Straight Alliance)

not leave it out? Many times, these surveyors are only asking because it's something they've always asked. If they're asking you for the practical purpose of finding out what pronouns you go by, why not just ask: what are your preferred gender pronouns?

But in big data surveys, especially college applications, a game changer in a student's life, gender becomes relevant. Colleges still and will continue to ask the gender question; this will not change. Yet there are a few ways of reworking it. For example, since there's always someone outside the checkboxes M or F and because the list of gender identities is ever growing, why not have a fill in the blank option? This wouldn't burden cis applicants but would make all the difference for non-binary ones.

(Continued on page 4)

# WHAT IS THE DIVERSITY COMMITTEE?

By Jazmin de Jesus Lantigua Rosario

The Commonwealth School's Diversity Committee, founded in 2005 by Ariel Hsu-Flanders, aims to be a space where all students and faculty, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, sexuality, socioeconomic class, and ability can come together once a week and discuss diversity-related issues and the impact diversity has on everyone. Unfortunately, the Diversity Committee faces one tragically frequent problem, illustrated by the all-too-common phrase, "I'm not diverse enough to join Diversity." This claim could not be more untrue.

Everyone is diverse—everyone is extremely different. We have lived our entire lives with different people, eating different foods and being shaped and formed by experiences unique to ourselves. We have lived our lives with differences that may appear to us small and of no relevance, but still contribute to the essence of who we are and to how we see ourselves—so much so, in fact, that there can be no denying that they matter—that they deserve to be discussed. Diversity Committee aims to make people aware that no two people are exactly alike and thus, to reiterate, that everyone is "diverse." It hopes to make the diversity within our school something to be proud of, so that people can feel comfortable discussing it. This being the case, it is a discussion group for all students and faculty, not just for the few that feel they are "diverse," a paradox created by misunderstandings of what the Diversity Committee truly is.

In addition to holding Wednesday weekly meetings, the Diversity Committee has tried to more fully incorporate itself into the school. In previous years, the school has hosted "Diversity Day," a day on which members of Diversity lead discussion and activity groups for the entire school on different student-chosen topics. For the 2015 Diversity Day, they also facilitated what is called the "Privilege Walk," an activity in which students move forward and backwards based on advantages—"privileges"—they may or may not have had or known they had. Unfortunately, the small size of Commonwealth's classrooms did not allow for the desired number of students for the walk to really make the impact the Diversity Committee wanted. Displeased, it held another meeting soon after, where it proved itself to be a very active group of people. Using feedback received from the other students and faculty, many new ideas were generated in order to better the activity in the future. On the same Diversity Day, a cultural feast was organized during lunch, encouraging students to bring food



(Members of Commonwealth's Diversity Committee)

say.

Compared to years previous, Diversity plans to be more structured this year. In Google Drive, the Committee is using a shared folder to schedule discussions on different aspects of diversity for the entire year. According to one document posted in the folder, "[They] will organize the calendar to have the time to talk about each topic for at least three consecutive weeks. [Their] goal is to start the discussions from a personal point of view [the first week], then try to think how this aspect of diversity affects the Commonwealth community [the second week], and finally discuss current events around the world that connect to the topic at hand [the third week]." For the month of October, Diversity will be discussing gender. In November, ethnicity, origin, and language. December and January, religion. February, race. March, family structure. April, socioeconomic class. May, sexuality. On June 1st at their final meeting of the year, a small celebration will be held.

The Diversity Committee is constantly coming up with new ideas that expand the reach of Diversity in the school and improve the quality of the club. Even if you may not like it as of this moment, it will only keep improving due to the persistent mindset of its members. Therefore, I, Jazmin de Jesus Lantigua Rosario, encourage everyone in the school to join, including teachers; I promise you will learn and that you will benefit from having the knowledge you picked up while in Diversity.

Editor-in-chief: Nicole Liu

Newspaper Advisor: Melissa Glenn Haber

Editors: Momo Afreen, Iman Ali, Allison Stillerman, Maya Venkatraman

Formatting Team: Momo Afreen, Iman Ali, Henry Bassett, Sue Hong, Molly Jones

Proofreader: Jaquelin Harris

Writers: Iman Ali, Kevin Ballen, Emma Daly, Jordan Dowd, Jazmin Lantigua, Katherine Mateos, Lucius Reibel, Ben Schmandt, Zelda Stewart, Allison Stillerman, Julia Talbot

Photographer: Anna Holderness

Illustrators: Katherine Mateos, Julia Talbot

Leek Editors: Nika Eringros, Randy Zhou

Leek Writers: Halima Blackman, Nika Eringros, Allison Stillerman

commonly eaten in their families or cultures for everyone to sample.

The Committee's influence extends beyond merely Diversity Day, though. It also petitioned for a more diverse selection of summer reading: students may have noticed that there is now a bigger range of books to choose from. In addition to this, there have been other, smaller changes to the school that the Diversity Committee has made, such as the implementation of the microaggressions box. A microaggression is best described as "an instance of unintended discrimination"—little things a person does that he or she may not fully recognize is offensive to another. The Diversity Committee uses the microaggressions box so that students can anonymously submit microaggressions they heard from another person. The Diversity Committee then goes over them and posts them on the "Diversity Wall," the board the Committee uses to post diversity-related materials, hoping to raise awareness of the things students

(Continued from Page 1)

**U.S Research Paper Discovery**

The second inconsistency was between Friedan's claims in her book about the survey responses and the reality of these responses—the basis of Kevin's original research. She wrote that wives were frustrated, suppressed, even "lying awake at night, asking 'Is this all?'" However, Kevin discovered that these surveys revealed that less than half of these women felt their life was fragmented and the other half was totally fulfilled. 80% chose to be housewives and felt now was the best time of their life.

Upon discovering these inconsistencies, Kevin excitedly spoke to US History teacher, Melissa Glenn Haber. Ms. Haber encouraged him to contact professors and scholars to find out if the results of the surveys had been tabulated. If these findings were novel, she told Kevin that he should pursue a complete tabulation over the summer and share it with the scholarly world.

After sending emails to many experts in the field, Kevin received a response from Daniel Horowitz, a Smith College Professor and historian who had written a book about Friedan. Professor Horowitz was excited to hear about Kevin's research and was willing to serve as his mentor. As a result, Kevin spent one day a week this summer analyzing each of the surveys at the Schlesinger Library, collecting quantitative and qualitative data. He finished his tabulation at the end of the summer and is currently in the writing process, aiming to finish a fifteen to twenty page article soon. Kevin is ambitious and has high hopes to get his paper published. Even if he is unable to meet that goal, he would like "to circulate his findings as much as possible to scholars in the field."

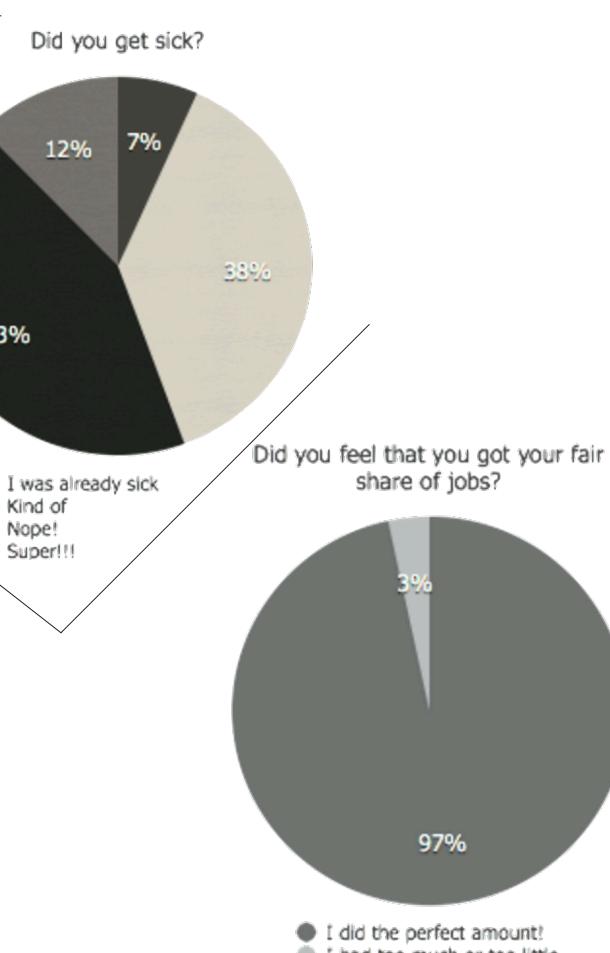
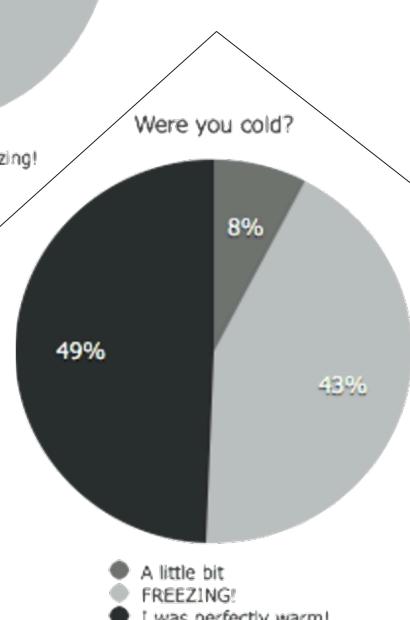
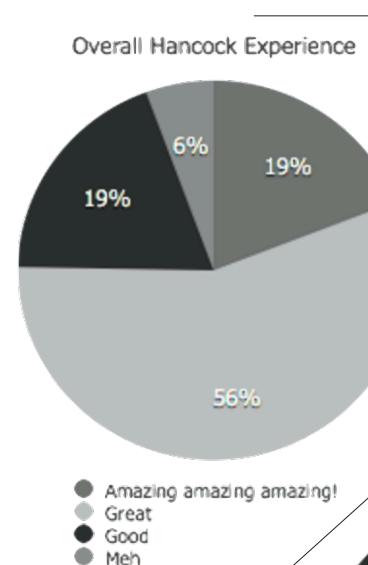
**Survey: School Opinions on Hancock**

By Katherine Mateos

What do Commonwealth students and faculty really think about Hancock? To answer this question, we distributed a survey throughout the school to collect data on general opinions of Hancock jobs, sleeping arrangements, day and evening activities and the overall experience.

The results show that Hancock is an all-around positive experience for the vast majority of the school. Ninety-four percent of respondents described the overall experience as "Amazing, amazing, amazing", "Great", or "Good." Only one respondent felt that she had so many jobs that she was unable to have fun.

Controversy arose over the idea of co-ed housing options on the trip. While some respondents were highly uncomfortable with the idea, others were outraged it was not already offered.

**Interview with Mr. Weinberg**

By Emma Daly



Michael Weinberg comes to us singing with new ideas for our music program as Mr. Hodgkins takes his well-deserved sabbatical! Dr. Weinberg grew up in the Washington D.C. area, and completed a bachelor's degree in vocal performance and more recently a doctorate in choral conducting. Staying on the East Coast, he taught music at a Catholic school in Arlington, Virginia before coming to Commonwealth. It has certainly been an adjustment: Dr. Weinberg is completely new to Boston and its music (and the school renovations surely did not make it any easier) but he looks forward to exploring similarities between other colonial cities he's lived in and getting involved with Boston's early music scene (he is a big fan!).

Music is, naturally, a large part of his life and the baroque era (Bach and Handel, for example) might be his favorite, but he greatly enjoys going to concerts of all sorts. He's also play viola, violin, piano, guitar, and is a professional singer. "Teaching makes me a better musician and it makes me understand music better," he says. He's a big fan of how connected the Commonwealth community feels, regardless of the construction we may face, and we're very happy to have him here!

**THEATER EXPRESS: MYSTERY AND INTRIGUE**

By Zelda Stewart

This fall the Commonwealth Players will perform Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses*, an award-winning anthology of myths based on Ovid's classic poem. The play brings together well-known and much beloved myths, such as King Midas and Orpheus and Eurydice, with lesser-known tales, such as Erysichthon and Baucis and Philemon. The play was first performed in 1996 at Northwestern University, and in 2002 opened on Broadway at the Circle in the Square Theatre, going on to win several Drama Desk and Drama League Awards for Best Play.

When asked about her expectations for the show, Director Susan Thompson remarked, "I think we have a great group of people. They're creative, and each one is going to offer their own ideas... it's a really exciting ensemble." This eagerly anticipated performance will be held at 7:30 PM on November 20 and 21 at the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center.

In March, the Commonwealth Players will bring yet another beloved story to the stage, *Romeo and Juliet*. All students, including freshmen, are invited to participate. Auditions will be held in December and performances will take place March 4 and 5.

# COMMUNITY SERVICE OUR PLACE: A DEEP LOOK

By Kevin Ballen

Over the past few years, Commonwealth has been deeply involved with Our Place, a daycare center for 46 homeless children in Central Square, Cambridge. We've held Supermarket Drives, and students have volunteered throughout the year and over the summers. This summer, I was a Development and Community Outreach Intern at the center. I knew that Our Place was an amazing organization with an important mission, but I never realized how special the day care really is.

As you walk in from the hustle and bustle of Central Square, you immediately enter a loving and warm safe-haven that is Our Place. Sitting in my office each morning, I would always overhear the teachers ecstatically welcoming the children with a "Miiiguelll" and a kiss, while the parents received a hug. For some of these children, Our Place is the only source of stability in their lives.

At the core of the daycare are the teachers and staff. Our Place is not a drop-in center, but rather a nationally accredited daycare. It is an educational beginning for disadvantaged children, giving them the necessary tools to end the cycle of poverty and homelessness. Teachers use extensive curricula, write thorough daily reports for each child, and even during nap time and after school, discuss with the other teachers

how the children are developing and transitioning from classroom to classroom. Even when the kids graduate from the daycare, teachers visit their new schools and meet their new teachers. For many of these children, their teachers have nurtured them since they were born.

The staff certainly do not let the children miss out on classic childhood experiences. For instance, the reality is that homeless families cannot provide their children with special birthday memories. Sometimes parents break into tears when the teachers ask them if they have anything planned. However, at Our Place each child receives a cake, a present, and a celebration with their entire class. Teachers often pay out-of-pocket for special decorations and gifts. Similarly, if a child ever comes to the daycare with ripped or dirty clothes, the Family Advocate will walk over to a store immediately and buy them whatever they need to feel comfortable.

Daycare is exorbitantly expensive, and Our Place estimates that their current cost for infants is \$24,000 a year. That's \$100 a day. This understaffed, underfunded, yet amazingly supportive and loving center is in need of help. Spread the word!

(Continued from page 1)

## The Need for Gender Inclusive Options

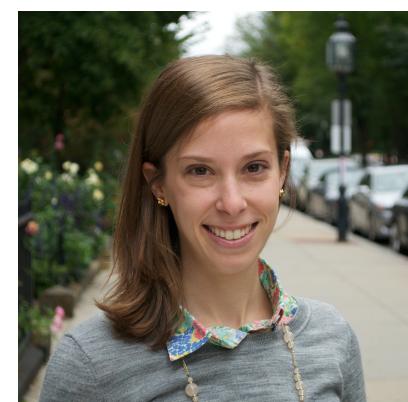
Pretty simple, right? Yes! Yet this solution is not a widespread practice. Our seniors and, in a couple years, our underclassmen will be facing an institutional problem. The Common Application, a one-stop shop of higher education used by over six hundred colleges, asks students to choose between M or F on their forms. There is no way around this that doesn't undermine the validity of your application. In this case, the path of least resistance is to fill out the form with your assigned-at-birth sex and shoot your professors an email after course registration.

Contacting the administration, even over email, can be really scary. The last thing a college applicant wants to do is antagonize their dream school. Few students want to become a nonbinary crusader if it means hurting their chances of being admitted. A student shouldn't have to come out to apply to a school. It would be safer for them if the general public could work together to make change in these institutions, instead of leaving it to the people who the forms disservice.

It is so simple for this change to be made, yet there has been no satisfying conclusion to this issue, which is, to say the least, unsatisfying.

## Interview with Ms. Reed

By Emma Daly



### MASCOT AND MOTTO OR, "A SQUID BY ANY OTHER NAME WOULD TASTE AS GOOD" (WHAT?!)

Many thanks to **Julia Talbot** for the wonderful substantiation of the Kraken as the first Mascot of the *Commonwealth Chronicle*!

The Kraken is selected for its abilities to eat ships for breakfast and squirt ink. The shield in the background is stylized like the Warsaw coat-of-arms, from which the Commonwealth Mermaid hails. The banner in the front contains the current newspaper motto "Communitati", which means "to/for the Community" in Latin.

Though Editor-in-Chief Nicole Liu insistently refers to the Kraken as "Squishie", causing her fellow workers to grimace, the Kraken has yet to find a suitable name. Current suggestions include Colossus (Nika), Inkie (Ms. Tyson), SquidWORD! (Momo), Sid the Squid (Maya V.), and Bob (Jazmin).

We will include a larger picture of the mascot in the next issue. We would also love to receive name suggestions and fanart! Please send your love to [yliu@commschool.org](mailto:yliu@commschool.org)

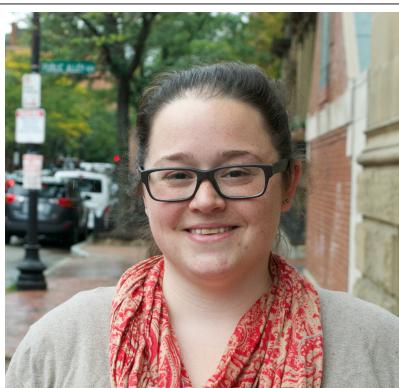
particularly likes how involved and eager the students are to participate in class, as well as the interaction and friendships between students in different grades.

In her free time, Ms. Burke loves reading new books, trying new cooking recipes, and watching hockey. Her favorite hockey teams are the Patriots and BC Hockey.

We're happy to welcome Carly Reed, a new addition to our admissions faculty here and Director of the Annual Fund. She has seen many facets of the administrative world! Ms. Reed went to Muhlenberg College and double-majored in psychology and dance. Moving into administrative work through a dance company, she continued in the world of the arts with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, where she worked on fundraising and volunteer coordination. Ms. Reed's siblings, Katie Reed ('06) and Colin Reed ('04), are both Commonwealth alumni, which helped her find our school for her next admissions position. She has always admired the accepting and inclusive community we create at Commonwealth. "At the BSO we had forty people on admissions, and here there are three," she pointed out, but says she prefers these smaller numbers. "At the BSO I was a small fish in a big pond. Here there's more human interaction." Another aspect she likes about Commonwealth is the maturity level of the students —how it showed itself during the period without a school building and as we continue to adjust to the new circumstances and welcome many new faculty members. Ms. Reed also enjoys staying active, and though she doesn't dance as much as she once did, she enjoys running and yoga. Some of her favorite hobbies are cooking, and a Commonwealth favorite, reading.

## Interview with Ms. Burke

By Ben Schmandt



Ms. Burke went to Austen Prep and then MIT, where she studied biology. She previously held a teaching assistant job as an undergraduate, so this is her first time being a teacher. The subjects she currently teaches are Chemistry 1 Advanced, Algebra, and Biology 1. While discussing the differences between her two jobs, she said that working as a teaching assistant didn't give her the opportunity to design her own course, and that she enjoys "being able to decide the order [she presents] information in and deciding what topics [she wants] to spend more or less time on."

When asked about what she likes about Commonwealth, she said that "everyone here is very welcoming, both faculty and students," and she "really enjoys the community feel of the school." She

## Interview with Ms. Watson

By Zelda Stewart



This year, Commonwealth has welcomed back alumna Sasha Watson to teach English and Fiction Writing. I had the chance to talk with her about her experiences in the world of literature and publishing, as well as how Commonwealth has shaped who she is today.

After graduating from Commonwealth in 1992, she pursued literature and journalism in both English and French at Barnard, and later received her master's in French Literature from NYU. Following college and graduate school, she employed her language skills in a variety of fields. She wrote as a freelance art journalist, reported for the East Hampton Star, and worked for the Oxford University Press. French also remained important to her career, as she used her French skills to translate and direct a play. French language and culture have influenced her own writing, too. In 2008, she published a young adult novel, *Vidalia in Paris*. Following its publication, she began to lead many informal fiction writing workshops. She went on to teach French and English literature at the college level, and most recently English at the Harvard Westlake School in Los Angeles.

This year, she made the move to Commonwealth. When asked why she wanted to come here, she explained, "I wanted to be at a school that really values the intellectual life, and learning and knowledge for its own sake." Although the years have passed, she told me that "it feels like it's the same school, the same spirit. There really persists a spirit here that is the love of learning that I think is great, as a student and as a teacher." One change she remarked upon, however, is that clubs focused on activism, such as Diversity and GSA, have become much more present and involved with the student body. And, of course, there is the age-old question: have we gotten better at sports? She remembers that while sports were not her main focus during high school, she would say that, if anything, we have. She reflected, "I feel like there's only been an addition of some great things, I don't feel like I see anything that has been lost or taken away."

Aside from professional endeavours, she said, "most of my interests are cultural life. I love art and movies, film and film history, so I spend what leisure time I get on doing things like that." And although this isn't on her resume, she has another very important job: raising her one-year-old son, Tobias.

When reflecting upon Commonwealth's influence on her, she said, "I think it set me on the path that I pursued, really [giving me] an interest in cultural life and being a part of the cultural world, and I think Commonwealth really taught me that I was a part of that, you know, that I was a thinking member of the intellectual and cultural world that we live in, and that I was as much of a shaper of it as a consumer of it, and all of that has influenced everything I've ever done: as a writer, as a teacher, and just as a person. I love Commonwealth!" Well, we do too, and we are happy to have her back.

## Politics

### THE CONSTITUTION IS DUMB, BUT AT LEAST PLEA DEALS AND MANDATORY MINIMUMS ARE UNCONSTITUTIONAL

By Allison Stillerman

There is no doubt that America has a prison problem. With the most citizens imprisoned of any country in the world, and with federal prisons operating about 40% over capacity, as well as being chronically understaffed (according to the Government Accountability Office), it seems the United States should not be in a hurry to convict anyone that they do not absolutely have to. However, a series of mandatory minimum policies on both the federal and state level, setting a minimum amount of jail time that a judge can give a defendant who is convicted of a specific crime, are forcing many people into prison for small offenses, mostly nonviolent drug crimes.

The true effect on people going to prison for these relatively minor crimes cannot be understood without looking at their lives once their sentence is complete. First, one must consider recidivism, the relapsing of former convicts into a life of crime. A 2005 study found that about 75% of released prisoners were rearrested within five years and more than half of them were arrested during first year after release. There are several factors that contribute to this. Potential employers can search for an applicant's criminal history as part of the hiring process. Especially in today's competitive job market, it can be difficult for people to get jobs with incarceration on their records. Another contributor to recidivism is the lack of support offered to prisoners upon their release. Often, they are estranged from or lack families after time away from home, and do not have immediate shelter or sources of income. For people who are very suddenly put in this risky position, it may feel as if there is nowhere to turn but back to crime.

Even those who never return to prison after their initial sentence are subject to discrimination in hiring, and as a result, lower income. They also suffer from a loss of their rights. Many states limit the ability of those released from prison to vote and to carry firearms, and some states prohibit them altogether. This creates an entire class of Americans who are unable to exert their rights because they are victims of the court system.

With the true cost of a prison sentence in mind, it seems clear the importance of keeping as many people out of prison as possible. However, due to fear-mongering during the War on Drugs, and fanned by the crack epidemic, mandatory minimum sentencing is extremely common. These sentences make it impossible for judges to consider the circumstances of an individual's arrest, and pre-determine the length of people's sentences. This means that once they return to society, convicts are even more estranged than they would have been under normal sentencing laws. Not only are mandatory minimum sentencing policies dangerous, they are also considered unconstitutional by many.

Though the Supreme Court has ruled three times now on the constitutionality of plea bargaining, it combines with mandatory minimum sentencing to form a deadly, unconstitutional cocktail. The fifth amendment of the Bill of Rights is designed to protect us against coercive trial procedures. However, mandatory minimum sentencing essentially forces defendants, especially those who are not privileged enough to be able to afford private legal counsel, to accept plea deals, regardless of whether or not they are innocent. What is coercion if not being forced to plead guilty to a crime that you did not commit? Say that you are someone who has been falsely arrested on suspicion of a crime for which there is a mandatory minimum sentence, but there is not much evidence to prove your case. At this point, you have

(Continued on Page 6)

# Evo Morales

By Jordan Dowd

## Politics

In September 2015, a former DEA informant leaked multiple documents regarding many years of ongoing investigation, dating to as early as 2008, of Bolivian President Evo Morales by the US federal government, which included detailed plans to prosecute Morales in the United States for alleged connections to international cocaine production. The investigation, titled Operation Naked King, was conducted primarily by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), a US federal agency that was tasked with eliminating the global sale of illicit substances. The incident is only the most recent chapter in the DEA's long history of using the cocaine trade as a pretext to intervene in Latin-American political affairs.

Morales, who served in administrative positions of the Bolivian cocalero (coca grower) union for decades before his election, has long been a target of DEA attention. In 2008, during his first term as President, he ordered the removal of all DEA employees from Bolivia, after years of pressure from the agency to destroy union-owned coca fields or else face withdrawal of up to 85 million dollars of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) annual funding to development projects. This USAID funding was finally cut off in 2013 after Morales expelled the agency's employees, who he accused of supporting opposition parties.

Landlocked Bolivia, with a per-capita GDP of roughly \$3,000 USD, is the poorest country in South America; over two percent of its overall GDP comes from coca sales, which makes up about one-seventh of Bolivia's agricultural output. Although coca can be refined into cocaine, a plurality of production in Bolivia caters to a domestic market for the unprocessed leaves, which are chewed as a mild stimulant. Morales has continued to subsidize coca growers and support the cocalero union since his election in 2005, incurring repeated criticism from the DEA, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and other US enforcement agencies.

While the attempted prosecution of Morales may appear to be a simple case of overzealous coca policing, there is little precedent for this type of legal intervention by the US government. Under the Reagan administration, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) armed and financed anti-communist Nicaraguan Contra (Contra) rebels, a loosely-organized network notorious for its human-rights violations. The Reagan administration provided materiel and extensive protections to the Contras, maximizing their ability to refine and sell cocaine in order to fund operations against the Marxist Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega. The subsequent sharp uptick in Nicaraguan cocaine production corresponded with the beginning of the "crack epidemic" in the United States, as consumption more than quadrupled between 1984 and 1987. Enabling not just cocaine growth, but also cocaine production, was considered justifiable to fund a rebellion against Ortega, who has held the office of President since returning to power in 2006 as the head of a liberalized center-left coalition.

In the early 1990s, Colombian cartels and paramilitary groups became the largest globalexporters of cocaine during the still-ongoing Colombian civil war. In the last two decades, an estimated 40 percent of cocaine exports in Colombia were controlled by the right-wing Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) and its associates, a group responsible for a vast majority of the conflict's 200,000 civilian casualties—including the extrajudicial killing of thousands of union organizers. Meanwhile, the leftist Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, an organization a third the size of the AUC, has produced about 2.5 percent of the cocaine exported from the country. Both FARC and AUC are formally classified as terrorist groups by the US, but nearly all of the military aid sent to Colombia since the civil war began in the 1960s has been allocated specifically for the destruction of FARC—by far the smaller of the two major guerrilla groups. The US has largely avoided operations against the AUC, from which thousands of

soldiers have been contracted as security forces by companies like Chiquita, Drummond Coal, and Coca Cola.

The United States has not always shown such leniency toward heads of state who are known cocaine traffickers. In December 1989, Manuel Noriega, dictator of Panama, was captured by the CIA during the Invasion of Panama, which was authorized for the ostensible purpose of arresting Noriega on well-supported drug charges. Shelling, bombing, and ground invasion of Panama City by US forces killed three thousand civilians. These casualties were repeatedly denied or underestimated by the Bush administration, which viewed the losses as necessary to minimize the risk of Noriega eluding capture. Noriega was eventually convicted of smuggling many tons of cocaine into the United States.

Noriega's centrist coalition of leaders had been protected from DEA investigation for decades—Noriega had been a CIA informant since the 1950s—and President George H.W. Bush, who had learned of Noriega's drug connections while serving as head of the CIA in the 1970s, did not choose to investigate or prosecute Noriega until after the 1989 election was rigged by Noriega's coalition to prevent a victory by a US backed far-right presidential candidate. Around the same time, Noriega cut off military assistance to the Nicaraguan contras. Only when Noriega's coalition began to shift leftwards did the CIA and DEA finally act to depose him, even though Noriega's human rights abuses and connections to cocaine smuggling had been exposed in American newspapers as early as 1984. Both the Reagan and Bush administrations repeatedly chose not to prosecute Noriega until he became an obstacle to their foreign policy in the region.

It is clear, then, that the objective of the attempted prosecution of Evo Morales is not to substantially reduce or disincentivize Bolivian coca production. Morales' removal would most likely not result in any change to Bolivian coca regulation. Historical precedent demonstrates that coca growth is a useful funding stream for conservative political groups, and the US has selectively enforced its drug laws to depose candidates deemed uncooperative. Naked King does not reflect any substantive effort to reduce cocaine production, because the CIA has little interest in actually dismantling US cocaine supply networks. The operation is the most recent of many attempts to remove left-wing politicians from power in Latin America with the false pretext of drug enforcement.

*(Continued from Page 5)*

### Prison: Plea Deals and Mandatory Minimums

two options: go to court and plead innocent, knowing that if (or when) you lose your case due to insufficient evidence, you will be subject to a high mandatory minimum sentence; or, you can accept a plea deal and receive a lighter sentence. Taking a plea deal involves declaring yourself guilty of certain charges in order to receive a lighter sentence. However, this lighter sentence still appears on your record, and, whether you have actually committed a crime or not, you are considered a convict for the rest of your life.

The intersection of plea deals and mandatory minimum sentencing is clearly coercive and clearly unconstitutional, driving innocent people into prison because they feel that they have no other choice. This is dangerous for both these individuals and our prison system, which is flagging under the weight of the influx of prisoners that have flooded the system since these policies came into effect.

## European Attitudes, American Ideals: The Approach to the Immigrant Crisis

In Europe

By Lucius Reibel



In the last two years, Europe has been the focal point of one of the largest population shifts since WW2. As the civil wars in Libya and Syria became more and more vicious, a mass exodus from those countries towards Europe began. Simultaneously, the amount of people travelling to Europe from Sub-Saharan Africa also quickly increased. The EU, and specifically the Schengen Zone, were caught unprepared. The world has been equally captivated and horrified by images of people crossing the mediterranean on rickety boats, cramming into Hungarian trains, and climbing over the fence leading to the U.K. The people of Europe, and indeed the world, are split on how this crisis should be dealt with.

If you watch the BBC or another European news station, you will quickly notice something very odd about how they handle the immigrant crisis as opposed to how it is handled by NBC, an American news conglomerate. The BBC, and other European news organizations, as well as political pundits and shows in Europe, describe the crisis, in literal terms, as a "migrant crisis." However, in the United States, most news programs describe it as a "refugee crisis."

This is an important distinction to make. According to the U.N., a refugee is "a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it." On the other hand, a migrant "should be understood as covering all cases where the decision to migrate is taken freely by the individual concerned, for reasons of 'personal convenience' and without intervention of an external compelling factor." In other words, a migrant chooses to leave their country, and a refugee is forced or coerced to. When applied to the immigration crisis, these terms both cultivate and reveal an underlying understanding of two very different situations.

The question of whether the crisis is a migrant or refugee crisis is hotly contested. On the one hand, in 2014, 55% percent of people illegally entering the E.U. were from Syria, a nation in civil war. Large populations also came from Afghanistan, Somalia, and Eritrea, countries with weak or brutal governments and conditions similar to civil war. On the other hand, the behavior of many of the refugees/migrants from countries not in civil war is that of economic migrants. By E.U. regulation, asylum seekers have to apply for asylum in the country they first arrive in, which in most cases is Italy, Spain, or Greece. However, many refugees/migrants are attempting to get to wealthier European countries before applying for asylum such as Germany, Sweden, or the U.K, places with better economies, and, as many on the right wing of european politics note, "cushier" social safety nets.

For many Europeans, the distinction between migrant and refugee is very important. One's opinion on what crisis is happening strongly determines one's opinion and hospitality towards the people now streaming into Europe. This is not true in the United States. Though it has not been intensively studied, the fact that most people in the U.S.'s ancestors were both refugees and migrants may play a large role in how we see this crisis. For many Europeans in the 19th century, America beckoned as a place of opportunity and wealth. Millions would cross the Atlantic in search of a better life for them and their families. At the time, reception of these migrants was mixed, some Americans seeing them as the future of the nation, and some as hostile to the American way of life.

As we now know, the descendants of those immigrants are now the majority in America. And Americans are keenly aware of their ancestry, and of the fact that their great-great-grandparents were economic migrants. The idea of seeking a better life for oneself and one's family is deeply rooted in American folklore, and continues to be a moderating factor in the debate over illegal immigration from Mexico. This is in stark contrast to Europe, where due to hundreds of years of ethnic and religious conflict, its modern nation-states are almost entirely ethnically homogenous, and much more religiously homogenous than the U.S. The typical ethnic Italian, for example, can most likely say that his ancestors have lived in Italy for hundreds, if not thousands of years. This is unlike the U.S., which has a history of migration, and is comparatively young compared to most European "nations" (While Italy and Germany are newer nation-states, their cultural history is much older).

As a result, the *concept* of economic migration, and of cultural transformation as a whole is much more palpable to Americans. When the fact that Europeans are faced with the reality of this crisis whilst Americans are watching from afar is counted in, it becomes more clear as to why Europeans and Americans as a whole have vastly different attitudes on this migration crisis.

## Is Uber Worse for Cabbies or Their Own Drivers?

By Allison Stillerman

With Consideration by Marc Rios

Uber, and other smartphone-accessed driving services, are taking the streets by storm, with over 8 million customers across the country. At first glance, Uber is an impressive piece of entrepreneurship, a single app growing into a company worth many billions of dollars. However, one does not have to look very hard to see cracks in the sleek, modern facade that Uber tries so hard to create. Between destroying the taxi industry and ruining the livelihoods of cabbies who have invested everything they own in their medallions, and creating a dangerous work environment for their workers with low pay and benefits, it's hard to decide who Uber hurts the most.

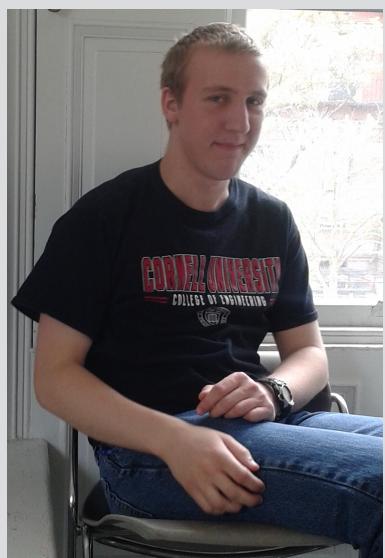
Taxis are highly regulated in cities all across the country to ensure the safety of both drivers and passengers, but these regulations mean that to become a taxi driver is a very expensive endeavor. A business that was once a sound investment for many low-income people and recent immigrants, the industry has taken a great blow with the advent of Uber, losing revenue and causing the medallions that were once so prized to drop in value. Many drivers have homes and savings tied up in their taxi medallions, which are essentially licenses designed to regulate the number of active taxis in a city, and which cost hundreds of thousands of dollars each. As the taxi industry suffers, drivers are finding themselves unable to get a return on this investment, and are losing their money and property. City regulations forbid them from lowering prices, so they are constantly undercut by Uber, which also offers a shorter wait time and a more convenient method of paying. Cabbies are finding themselves trapped by regulation in a dying business. However, the answer is not as simple as deregulation, which would only produce a flood of unsafe taxis that would be further detrimental to the taxi industry.

Although Uber is coming out on top as the market for hired drivers changes, their workers are suffering for it. Uber classifies their workers as contractors, which means that they are not required to pay overtime or insurance benefits, or provide sick leave. While taxi drivers are paid an hourly rate by their company, Uber drivers are only paid for the time that they spend actually driving customers, which means that their income is unreliable and often low. Not only is the pay insecure, but the job itself is: if a driver's rating drops below a certain level, they are terminated (the bottom line can be as high as a 4.6 out of 5 stars). Furthermore, in their role as contractors, Uber drivers are not compensated for gas, or even damages caused to their car while they are working. Uber requires their drivers to provide the car that they drive, which means that these "contractors" are forced to make a significant investment before they even begin the job.

# THE LEEK

## Matt Boudreau Obituary

By Nika Eringros



If our articles don't seem as funny as before, our announcements as curt and unintelligible, or our humor as strange, we at the Leek apologize. We have been mourning the loss of our beloved editor-in-chief, android-Wharton-sympathizer Matthew Boudreau '15. His hard work and contributions made the Leek into what it is today: a half-page at the back of the school newspaper. Matthew was responsible for the infamous Android Wharton article of 2014, and contributed greatly to this piece as well. Some teachers say that he may have even done actual work and gone to classes while at the school. For those of you who may see him around the school or in the halls during Cornell's fall or winter break, make sure to congratulate him on his death. Matthew is survived by his cat Franklin and the two new editors of the Leek, Nika and Randy. He now resides at Cornell where he is definitely not going to be consumed by the Hotel School, never to be seen again.

## WORLD CUP

By Alison Stillerman

As we return to our hallowed abode after a confusing and frustrating start to the year, many Commonwealth students look around at the building that used to be their home, and wonder "what happened to this place?" Indeed, what used to be our school is now in shambles, sucked dry for the sake of the empty shaft that takes up so much of the space that used to be ours. The school has poured money into the new renovations, paid for partially by parent donations and partially with the pain and suffering of students. One cannot help but call to mind one other such situation, when an inconsiderate administration diverted resources away from necessary services in order to fund excess and extravagance. This situation, of course, is the 2014 Brazil World Cup.

Brazil suffers from a famously corrupt government, and, before the World Cup incident, suffered from severely deficient healthcare and education systems. Despite this, the Brazilian government channeled an estimated 3.6 billion US dollars into the construction of stadiums around the country, many of which are not financially viable outside the context of the World Cup. Despite this grotesque expenditure due to an inefficient and fraudulent government, many related infrastructure projects were dropped or delayed. In order to make space for these stadiums, many people were evicted from low-income housing, or forced out of their homes, and provided with little to no replacement housing. Does this sound familiar?

Today at Commonwealth, just as in Brazil, we are still recovering from the fallout of renovation and its costs. Many beloved fixtures of the school have been stripped bare, like the costume closet and the scary tech basement, their contents shipped off to a storage unit in Everett to mildew and languish. The mermaid window that now sits proudly in the Dartmouth lobby represents the school not as it was but as it now is: shiny and new, covering a yawning gap that it has created and can never truly fill.

## LEEK EDITORIAL: KALE JUICE CONSPIRACY

By Halima Blackman

I will never drink a green beverage. They always taste awful. A mixture of various ingredients that did not need help tasting awful on their own, when put together, is enough to make grown men weak in the knees. The addition of sweeteners to cut the unfavorable flavor of the drink only creates a sickening aftertaste, similar to what one gets after one of Trump's campaign speeches. These beverages are unholy concoctions of insidious ingredients created by those bumptious hipsters with their Doc Martins and fashionably unfashionable second hand clothes, meant to destroy the taste buds. Though I can claim no love for vegetables, this does not mean we should maim and pulverize them beyond recognition. The thought of being forced to drink anything green in color deeply unsettles me. Worst of all, these beverages could contain kale. Kale, the weapon of choice of the pretentious modish youths who now populate the streets, is a mere garnish bolstered to fame by false advertisement. It has no place in anyone's drink. It has no true flavor of its own, and has no place dominating my dining experience. Really, green beverages are a part of the hipster conspiracy to make us all alternative, counterculture wannabes.

10/5/15

"I appreciate Hosking as a person. A sex symbol. Potentially a Halloween costume."  
-Noah

10/13/15

"We should call it 'Look What We Did to Native Americans Day.'"  
-Mr. Vollrath on Columbus Day

10/19/15

"I got home and my hands smelled so much like garlic, I just had to go to bed."  
-Tarang

## Winners of Quote of the Week

10/29/15

"Somehow I feel I'm about to be quoted now."  
-Mr. Letarte

11/2/15

"You should go as the Green Line and show up late to all your classes."  
-Ben S. on costume ideas

11/8/15

"As a general rule, stick it in water, then light it on fire and see what happens."  
-Ms Burke, on unknown substances.