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THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER, SINCE 1977

Am I Being Unpatriotic?

LUCIE ENGLEHART
OPINIONS EDITOR

Social media has become a trademark platform for social justice, activism resources, and general political engagement, most of which is fruitful, some of which is perhaps more performative. Not to be confused with constructive information on voter education, for instance, or resources under the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, but rather a certain type of fetishization of political figures that makes them more of a trend for their charisma rather than the face of their platforms. Their media-presented personalities cast a shadow on some of their more contentious policies, where chaos lurks within what isn't romanticized on social media. Amid the 2020 election cycle, the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and county elections, I have found one common thread that seems to be ubiquitous in social media politics: blind loyalty to a politician is dangerous, and I am no exception.

To acknowledge that a politician is a pioneer for social change can be acknowledged in tangent to some of their less-progressive policies; the two aren't mutually exclusive. It is possible to acknowledge that, for instance, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a trailblazer as a powerful female figure in the American judicial system while also acknowledging that she has cited the anti-indigenous Doctrine of Discovery in landmark court cases. But to blindly follow a politician desensitizes the plight of the communities that said politician has wronged. I personally have glorified the Obama presidency, bowed down to RBG, romanticized Hillary Clinton, and even fawned over young Ronald Reagan at one point next to my classmates in what seemed like a lighthearted flattery of an attractive politician.

It is not only that there are a select few politicians who have pushed morally questionable legislation in the name of protecting the common good; rather it is the very philosophical nature of government that rejects most moral virtue. Something is addictive, however, about parasocial relationships particularly with the rise of social media. It seems that these one-sided relationships Americans—particularly the younger generation—have with politicians grow more and more distant from political ideology and more towards emotions and mass-fetishization.

I recently cast my ballot for Joe Biden in hopes of turning Texas blue, but I did so while trying to be cognizant of the pain he has inflicted on certain communities with his political agenda, while also voting in support of other Biden policies in the realm of healthcare and education. In the 2016 Texas midterm election, I praised Beto O'Rourke for his fervent perseverance in nearly turning over a historically red state, but I wish I had been more educated and found more of my own sense of personal agency before fetishizing a politician—even if that politician trademarked an exciting turn

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New London Votes

OWEN TACY
CONTRIBUTOR

On November 3, 2020, the New London community came together under a looming financial recession and pandemic in record numbers to decide the next president of the United States of America. I took a Camel Van down to the polls on Election Day and played my part in our democracy alongside many other camels. On the way to and at the polls, I got the chance to speak to students and New Londoners alike, and gathered a more regional sense of how New London feels going into this election.

On the way down to the polls, there was an uneasy silence in the van. I was seated with two other students, both of whom were prior voters either in the 2019 Democratic primary or 2018 Congressional election. They both had similar feelings going into the election: that a lot was on the line, and that the nation was in a crisis moment. They felt that President Trump did not represent their view for the future of the United States, and that their vote was a step towards that ideal.

As the van rounded onto Jefferson Ave, the first visible sign of New London High School's polling location was a red-and-blue MAGA flag. Flanked by two American flags, it towered over the dozens of state and Congressional pickets dotting the streetside—flush against Biden-Harris signs. The polling place was evidently busy. Cars streamed in and out of the



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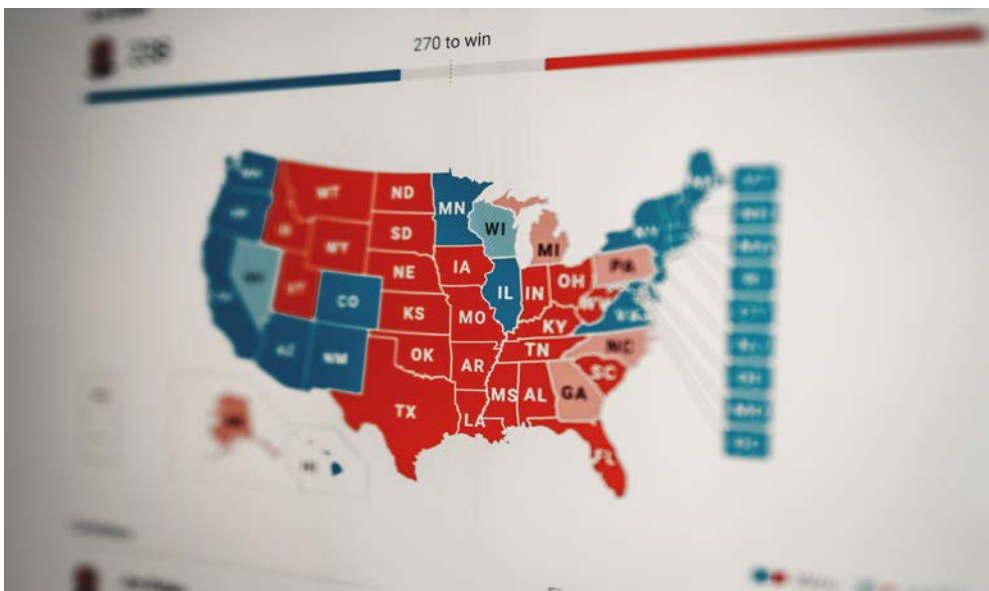
AMANDA SANDERS
MANAGING EDITOR

On Saturday morning, while drinking my first cup of coffee I got a text from my grandma back in New York. "Good-bye, DT," it read, "Hello, President Joe Biden." I ignored it. Sorry, Grandma. After days and days of counting votes, there was no way that the election was finally over and a winner had

been declared. I turned on the news. Like many others this past week, I had been glued to my laptop while I watched MSNBC's khaki king Steve Kornacki and CNN's John King gesture wildly at their magic boards displaying maps of the United States and listened to their breakdowns of election data hour by hour. Between classes I Googled election results in Pennsylvania and Georgia, watching those percentages of votes inch closer and closer to one another. But on Saturday morning there was no Steve Kornacki. Instead, there was Joe Biden, our new President-Elect.

This has been a presidential election like no other. But, then again, 2020 has been no ordinary year. It has been a year of challenges like no other. In the midst of a pandemic, a recession, and a civil rights movement, people across the country turned out to vote for their future, either through absentee ballots or in person. In 2016, few, if any of the students currently enrolled at Connecticut College were eligible to vote, and yet according to The All In Campus Democracy Challenge, this year Conn students had the highest percentage of students who had pledged to vote out of over 800 institutions. This is an incredible feat. Thank you Camels for taking the time to play your part in our democracy. But this is no time to get complacent. Yes, the election is over. We have elected a president who preaches love and unity, instead of hate and a vice president who will be the first woman of color in the White House. These are exciting times. But we still must hold our elected officials accountable for their actions in order to build ourselves a better future.

Connecticut College hasn't been able to stop talking about the election all week, and we can't either. I've shared conversations with strangers in line at Coffee Grounds, and with classmates at Harris and J.A. This issue of The College Voice certainly reflects that sentiment. Articles to look out for include Owen Tacy's '24 visit to the New London polls, a critique of President Trump and President-Elect Joe Biden's environmental plans, and our fetishization of politicians. I, along with the rest of the Voice's staff am excited to continue reporting on what this new chapter will bring for us during the rest of this year. So while you celebrate with your coffee and take a break from CNN and MSNBC, remember to stay vigilant and to keep fighting for what is right. We have a complicated few months ahead of us, if not years. Now is not the time to be complacent, but to continue taking action. •



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New London Votes

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in turn by a cramped yet intimate interior, with New Londoners of all sorts conversing and worrying in equal measure.

In line, I spoke with the New Londoners surrounding me. I spoke with a 78 year old African-American man named James and his wife, both born and raised in New London, about a few topics on every voter's mind that day. I asked them how they felt about the election, and James immediately took a step back. He spoke about how much he has thought about the 60's lately, of course evoking images of Martin Luther King's civil rights movement and its fierce opposition, and how things seem just as bad as back then, if not worse. His wife agreed, but stressed how things are different for her vote now than in the civil rights era, because she is voting more for "Us" than herself. This sentiment echoed around us, as other voters nodded their heads in agreement.

I asked the voters around us how they felt about the New London community, if they felt it had changed as a result of the tumult and polarization surrounding the current administration. The answer was unanimous: New London has always been New London. Everyone there felt that no outside influence would ever change the city, that it had always been diverse and

adjacent parking lot with voters having done their civic duty. The crowded outside was reflected

peaceful.

New London has historically aligned itself with James' sentiment, voting majority blue and in support of progressive measures since 1984. This election was far from an exception to this rule, with voters in New London county showing up to vote in record numbers. New London county achieved its new record high voter count over the course of this election, reaching, as of Nov 6, 136,466 votes-- a full 20,000 votes more than the previous election. The wait-- though crowded-- was short overall, and I quickly advanced to the voting booths. The ballot was short and sweet, much different than I had expected coming from California where ballots are filled with propositions and measures. I filled out my choices, turned in my ballot, and was out of the polling place in less than half an hour.

In the months leading up to this election, I followed politics religiously. I glued my eyes to Twitter, watched media outlets with abandon, and read more of the New York Times than the other 18 years of my life combined. That was all unsubstantial, though. It was metaphysical, like faerie dust. On election day, that waxing tension reached a physical crescendo-- in the form of a few short marks on a piece of paper. It felt anti-climactic, that something so severe and important could be so seemingly puny. Yet, as I sat watching the election until 5:00 am the next morning, I saw just how important that puny piece of paper really was. •

7 Year Climate Countdown

KERI KRASNOFF
STAFF WRITER

If there is anything you can say about the 2020 Election, it definitely is not straightforward. For the past few months, presidential candidates President Donald J. Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden have endlessly debated topics that, although particularly important at the moment, are likely to continue to have significance for the foreseeable future: the COVID pandemic, institutionalized racism, and massive unemployment. However, one topic in particular that is important and needs more emphasis is climate change. According to a report recently published by Pew Research Center, only 42% of registered voters see climate change as "very important" for their vote. When breaking down that 42% into Trump supporters and Biden supporters, 68% of Biden supporters deemed climate change to be "very important," while only 11% of Trump supporters thought the same. In September, a group of artists, activists, and scientists unveiled climate clocks around the world, with one in New York City, in order to show that there is only a little over seven years left until climate change is irreversible. With these clocks appearing just before the election, it is imperative that voters understand the candidates' stances on climate change and what to expect in regards to how prepared the nation will be once the countdown hits zero.

To understand Biden's plan for combating climate change, we first need to understand the Green New Deal. In February of 2019, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Ed Markey introduced the Green New Deal to Congress. The main goal of the deal was to "bring U.S. greenhouse gas emissions down to net-zero and meet 100% of power demand in the country through clean, renewable, and zero-emission energy sources by 2030." The deal prompted strong reactions from both Democrats and Republicans. While the majority of Democrats were all for the plan, many Republicans denounced the idea altogether, calling it radical and socialist. The Green New Deal has left such an impact that a year later it was featured prominently in questions directed at candidates throughout the Democratic primary. Most notably, Biden initially implied he was on board for the Green New Deal. On his website, it described the deal as "a crucial framework for meeting the climate challenges we face." However, during the first presidential debate on Sept. 29th, Biden changed his tune and stated that "The Green New Deal is not my [Biden's] plan" and that

"I don't support the Green New Deal." While this was a great disappointment for environmental activists, this may have been a debate tactic right before the election to distance himself from the stigma that surrounds socialist politics in the United States, an agenda that Trump and the Republican party have pushed for the past four years.

But, Biden's rhetorical choice, of explicitly distancing himself from the Green New Deal, could cause confusion for undecided voters since Biden is seemingly changing his stance. But in retrospect, Biden does have a plan. Back in July, Biden created his own plan titled, Build Back Better. Although the plan is not as ambitious as the Green New Deal, it is still a strong and aggressive course of action. The plan says its objective is "creating the jobs we need to build a modern, sustainable infrastructure now and deliver an equitable clean energy future." The plan proposes a \$2 trillion investment in order to provide resources in all aspects of society: infrastructure, transit, housing, innovation, agriculture and conservation, and more.

For Trump, his unyielding fight against climate science and environmental policies for the past four years makes it clear that for him climate change is not a concern. Just two months after his inauguration, Trump signed an order to reverse environmental policies that were issued during the Obama-era. According to The New York Times, Trump has attempted to roll back a total of 99 policies. As of Oct. 29th, 72 policies have successfully been rolled back while 27 are in-progress. This decision puts a dark cloud over the hope of taking climate change seriously. As if it couldn't get any worse, in June of 2017, Trump took the United States out of the Paris Climate Agreement. This agreement (signed by 197 countries) was a global pledge to delay the effects of global warming by keeping the temperature increase well below 2 degree Celsius. One of the reasons that Trump outlined in his speech for leaving was because he believed that the agreement "would only produce two-tenths of one degree," calling it a "tiny amount." Trump's choice of words downplays the danger of climate change, a running theme of his administration the past four years. Another example of Trump's dismissal of climate change is his response to the heartbreaking wildfires in California that erupted back in September

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Camel Companions Connect

ERIN SHEVLIN
CONTRIBUTOR

The transition to college is often difficult for students, and the pandemic has made it even harder. Seeing first-year students struggling to form friendships while living complying with Covid-19 restrictions is what inspired Emily Suher '21 and Lydia Chase '21 to form a new group, Camel Companions. When I asked about the driving force behind its creation, Lydia explained: "We were thinking of the types of connections that were fostered during our first year, and a lot of those came from quick, casual interactions with people—such as in a class, in a club, or having someone on your floor—things that COVID makes really difficult. So, our thought process was, how can we create these interactions, and create a space on campus where people feel that level of comfort in speaking and meeting new people?" Their solution was Camel Companions, a new initiative in which one or two upperclassmen meet with four first-year/transfer students for lunch. Participants can get lunch with their group as frequently as they would like. Emily and Lydia hope this group will create a space that, besides giving people a fun lunch plan, will create an environment where students meet other students in different class years, dorms, or majors. The goal is that students will leave lunch having met a friend, or even just a new friendly face to greet around campus—both of these relationships are important, and part of making connections on campus.

I also had the chance to speak with Owen Tacy '24, a first-year who is participating in Camel Companions. He learned about the program from a "This Weekend At Conn" email. Like many first-years, he had been having some trouble meeting people due to COVID restrictions and online classes. The opportunity to meet more people immediately caught his attention, and he signed up right away. He has had lunch with a Camel Companions group twice so far, and is planning on continuing to do so. He was enthusiastic about his experience, saying: "It was really fun! Both times [the upperclassmen] facilitated conversation really well, they were outgoing. Even when some of them were clearly more introverted, they still made a visible effort to try to connect with us... It was just great to be able to have that kind of social interaction that I personally was sorely missing." Owen hopes that more first-year students will join Camel Companions, and that groups will start meeting more frequently. He recommended that the group consider more outreach initiatives, in order to engage with introverted students or those nervous about signing up.

To any first years who are thinking about signing up but feeling hesitant, Emily said, "We really feel for you, because we understand that this is kind of a vulnerable position to be in, and certainly you wouldn't normally be in this position," but "you can only get good things out of [joining Camel Companions]." Lydia added, "It's a lot less commitment or pressure than it may seem like—I know it's a lot to sign up for something new with people that you don't know in it... you might think 'Oh I'm not the right type of person for this, I don't know what type of person is signing up', but Camel Companions doesn't have one type of person." This program is for everyone, and signups are open. The easiest way for first-years and transfer students to sign up for Camel Companions is to go to their Instagram page, @camelcompanions, and click the link in their bio. This opens a Google Form that serves as both a signup sheet and a way to determine student availability. Lunches last from 12 to 1 PM, and the upperclassman participants will reach out to first-years in order to determine when and where to meet.

The organizers had just experienced their first lunch meeting with their Camel Companions before the interview, and were excited about meeting new people, even as seniors. They hope that more people will continue to sign up, and that the program can continue even after COVID restrictions are lifted. They really emphasize the importance of forming good relationships, and are hopeful that such connections will be made through this program. "To have one person make a friend," Lydia said, "that would make the whole thing worth it." •

7 Year Climate Countdown

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2020. Trump repeatedly blamed California officials for their lack of forest management. Even though forest management is a portion of the problem, climate change is a huge factor that Trump fails to admit. When meeting with Governor Newsom of California on Sept. 14th, Trump once again downplayed science, and when Wade Crowfoot (head of California's Natural Resources Agency) responded to Trump's belief, that California will get cooler in the future, with "I don't think science agrees with you," Trump responded with "I don't think science knows, actually."

When looking at a possible four more years of Trump, it seems that there will be no improvements in regards to combating climate change. Throughout the debates, Trump has consistently denied the science behind climate change, and instead brought up his One Trillion Trees Initiative. This executive order aims to "promote healthy and resilient forests and rangelands." However, not once does this executive order mention climate change or climate science. Besides the fact that this executive order was passed less than a month before election day, the idea as a whole may suggest Trump intended to use this initiative as a diversion in the debates when asked about climate change.

Although both candidates are not doing enough when it comes to creating a promising foundation for a sustainable future, it is abundantly clear that Biden would be the lesser of two evils. Therefore, in order to use the next four years to create environmental justice, it is important for people to keep being politically-active even after the results of the election. No matter who the next president is, the fight for environmental justice is not going to go away any time soon. There are many opportunities for people (especially young people) to take action for the health of the climate. For one, doing your own research about climate change and environmental policy is a perfect way to get started. To take it even further, you could push yourself to educate other people on the importance of environmental justice, especially people with political views different from your own. Another option that is often overlooked is getting involved in your local government. By becoming involved in your community, you can push for environmental change on a local level. Overall, if we don't want the next seven years to be wasted on inaction, now is the time to be the change we want to see. •



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Am I Being Unpatriotic?

Article continued from front page.

a holistic approach on O'Rourke's platform.

This logic extends to party ideology as well; just as Biden is not exempt from scrutiny, neither is the Democratic party. It ultimately underscores the importance of being an engaged citizen, recognizing goals but also acknowledging shortfalls. When visually-pleasing infographics are ubiquitous in today's social media activism culture, scrutinizing, fact-checking, and taking information with a grain of salt is more important than ever. I am an adamant supporter of engaging future and newer voters, but democracy is only as good as those who participate. When I vote—or have the privilege to, since the American voting system is far from equitable—I want to do so with a critical eye. Without taking a critical eye on politics, I would be in the same political bandwagon as Texas that raised me. I argue this with privilege, however, understanding that my rights as a cis het white individual in this country are often not up for debate, which grants me the freedom to write this. I don't need to idolize some politicians

in Texas politics. I was swept up in the mere enthusiasm of booting Ted Cruz that I failed to take

because I don't need their policy stances to advocate for many of my basic human rights.

It is perhaps more patriotic to instill a desire in ourselves to improve the state of our country than it is to blindly wave the American flag. To approach supporting politicians holistically—with a keen eye for not only their successes but their faults—is to consider not only ourselves when deciding where our loyalties lie, but also the common good. It may be inevitable to detach ourselves from the charisma of highly-publicized political figures—or any celebrity—but politicians are worth the public scrutiny. The nature of their position—one that serves to subjugate as part of an innately subjugated system—overpowers their moral convictions. •

Students Speak Out Against the Module System

KELLY WALLACE
OPINIONS EDITOR

When students came back to college this fall, whether in-person or remotely, everyone knew that classes were going to look different this academic year. The administration at Connecticut College decided that it would be best if the semester was broken up into two halves. When we heard this proposal, many of us were fine with it, thinking we would only be taking two classes each quarter. I know that at least some of us (including me) did not realize how intense module classes would be. Hear from me and other students about how module classes are worsening student mental health and wellbeing with no end in sight.

Let's look at the reasoning for having a module system. In theory, taking only two classes at a time seems less stressful but I think most students agree that the main issue with the module system is how it has been implemented, not the original idea. In theory, the module system is supposed to make students' course load easier and less stressful during a pandemic. But is making classes much more intense the way to do it?

I spoke with some fellow students at Conn and here's what they have said. All students wished to be anonymous in order for them to speak honestly about the module system.

A '21 student believes that the module system's failure lies in its misapplication: "the classes four days a week schedule would be fine if the college decided to commit to a full module format or a full semester format. It's the half-and-half that's really causing problems for students. To be in four classes and have some of those classes contain double the work just isn't it. Professors are forgetting that this is a global pandemic and an election year—students are stressed enough. They can't be expected to deal with such a demanding workload and keep their own mental health afloat, because don't even get me started on the college's abysmal excuse for a counseling center."

Another '21 student finds that the pacing of the system is to blame: "The module system felt extremely rushed. I had no time to digest what I was learning. Since I had classes every day, I was just caught up in the cycle of completing the coursework. This is because I had to take 2 mod and 2 semester courses at the same time. There were way too many schedule conflicts. However, if I was only taking 2 mod classes, my experience would have differed. I would have enjoyed the system more."

A '22 student finds it difficult balancing their work with the module

system: "As a neuroscience major, three of my courses this semester are full-semester. I decided to take one Module 2 course and while I love the subject, I'm finding it hard to balance work from that class with my other three. Having class four days a week has also left me with less time to study for my other classes overall."

A '21 student struggles with feeling rushed in their classes: "I'll start with Saturday classes. I don't have any and I'm glad I don't because that sounds awful. Four day a week classes sound fine to me. I know some language courses are four days a week. It'll just feel like high school again. And lastly I'm not the biggest fan of the module system. Everything is rushed and condensed. Plus, since everything is rushed we can't get everything we need to learn."

Another '21 student finds that they cannot learn well in module classes: "I hate them. It feels like trying to run a marathon. Even though it's not as much work in an absolute sense it feels like so much more work because you don't get the chance to absorb anything. For this reason, I also feel like I'm retaining a lot less."

From the statements I have gathered about the module system in addition to my own input, it appears that the biggest issues students have with the module system are: the intensity of the classwork, Saturday classes, rushed classes, not learning enough, and increased class meeting frequencies or number of hours spent in class. Beyond those, the main issue with the module system is having both module classes and semester classes offered at the same time. How can students be expected to take two classes in which the intensity and coursework is doubled and then also take two normal classes at the same time? This is a common outcome. Very few of the friends and classmates I have spoken with are only taking module classes or only taking semester classes. Almost all are taking both which makes our course load much harder to handle.

Like many new ideas, the module system has been implemented and the results have been obvious. It appears that we have been guinea pigs for Conn this year and this project is failing. Hopefully we, the guinea pigs, will not be blamed for its failure in addition to having been negatively affected by the module system. Look out for an upcoming article on the module system from faculty members' points of view where we'll see if the students and faculty both agree on the module system's failure. No matter how you feel towards the module system, take care of yourself, stay safe, and know that you're not alone in adapting to a new academic life. •

War: Who is it Good For? Certainly Not Armenia or Azerbaijan

LUCAS SIEGEL
STAFF WRITER

A thirty-year dormant frozen conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan reignited late last month. The fighting began on Sept. 27 and quickly developed into the worst violence between the two countries since the end of the brutal war that broke

out in the early nineties during the Soviet Union's collapse. Both former Soviet republics blame the other for the outbreak of the current war, which shows no signs of stopping.

Meanwhile, a battle of propaganda is being tirelessly waged by digital soldiers of both countries. The Armenian and Azerbaijani narratives of the conflict are black-and-white stories which categorically reject the idea that their side could have some responsibility for the conflict or that the other side might have legitimate grievances. Since there are many more US-Armenians than US-Azerbaijanis, the former narrative is the one which has become dominant on US social media. The narratives that many US-Americans are spreading about the current war are dangerous, untrue, and unhelpful. To demonstrate the falsity of these narratives, this article will examine a popular infographic which is characteristic of this trend.

The infographic in question was posted on Oct. 12 via Instagram by @asa.united, a US-Armenian student organization. It states that "this [conflict] is not about territory, but about Azerbaijan's attempt to ethnically cleanse Armenians from their homeland... Armenians are fighting to survive... for self-determination... [and] for the right to exist."

This infographic distorts a complex conflict into a simple story of good versus evil, with Armenia defending its land from invasion and Azerbaijan intent only on the murder of Armenians for its own sake. It omits or outright lies about facts which do not conform to this easily-digestible narrative. Despite claiming to cut through Azerbaijani propaganda and provide the truth, this infographic is a mirror image of the very hate narratives it purports to dispel.

The infographic suggests that the current violence is an attempt to destroy the Armenian nation and repeat the horrific events of 1915 when over a million Armenians were murdered by the genocidal Ottoman state. But Azerbaijan was never a part of the Ottoman Empire, and the current conflict has little to do with the Armenian Genocide. The dispute between the two countries is over the status of the Republic of Artsakh, an unrecognized breakaway state which has occupied the Nagorny-Karabakh region of southwestern Azerbaijan since 1994.

Azerbaijan claims Nagorny-Karabakh, despite its being populated almost entirely by ethnic Armenians, because the area is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan. Armenia, conversely, maintains a contradictory stance towards the area. Despite Armenia not officially claiming Nagorny-Karabakh, Azerbaijan maintains that the territory is under de facto occupation by Armenia, a view which is given credence by Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan's controversial 2019 statement that "Artsakh is Armenia. Period."

The current upsurge of violence was indeed likely initiated by Azerbaijan. But this conflict did not begin in 2020. It began in 1987 with antecedents stretching back to the early-20th century. In 1922, following the collapse of the Russian Empire, the newly-formed Soviet Union assigned the territory of Nagorny-Karabakh to Azerbaijan, despite its Armenian majority. Whatever the reasoning behind this decision, the status of Nagorny-Karabakh as an autonomous region within Azerbaijan did not cause substantial problems for 65 years of Soviet rule. The two communities lived side-by-side in relative peace until the closing years of the USSR.

In 1987, ethnic violence broke out in Nagorny-Karabakh's countryside, causing many Azerbaijani villagers to flee to Azerbaijan's capital, Baku. Meanwhile, protests broke out in Karabakh's capital of Stepanakert demanding the transfer of the autonomous region to Armenia. The resurgence of ethnic violence on the Armenian side was matched on the Azerbaijani, with vicious anti-Armenian pogroms in several large cities killing dozens.

The ailing Soviet government's clumsy attempts to resolve the situation were of no help; by the time the USSR began to split apart in mid-1991, the vast majority of Armenians in Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis in Armenia had been forced out. With the two republics declaring independence in late-1991, the conflict became a full-fledged war.

Political chaos in Azerbaijan allowed the Armenian forces a massive initial advantage. Poorly defended Azerbaijani towns were captured and systematically cleansed of their non-Armenian inhabitants. A brutal example is the capture of Kho-

jali, a large Azerbaijani town northeast of Stepanakert. On Feb. 25, 1992, Armenian fighters attacked the lightly-defended town, indiscriminately slaughtering over 500 people. This gruesome story is incongruous with the narrative that Armenia is the sole victim and Azerbaijan the sole aggressor in the conflict, and so the purveyors of that narrative tend simply to ignore it altogether.

By the time Azerbaijan was politically stable enough to mount a genuine offensive, Armenian forces were in control of Nagorny-Karabakh, alongside another 9% of Azerbaijan's internationally-recognized territory, most of which was demographically Azerbaijani. The Azerbaijanis of Nagorny-Karabakh and its surrounding regions were systematically ethnically cleansed.

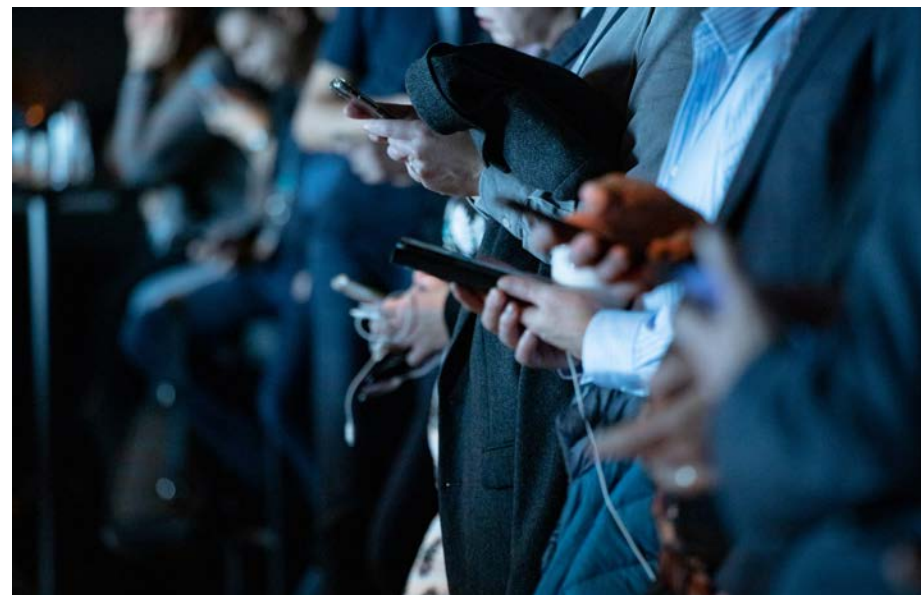
This is the context left out by the @asa.united infographic. The fearmongering about a 'second Armenian Genocide' is a smokescreen for the actual genocides which have occurred throughout the conflict, and which are likely to occur in the future if it is not resolved. According to human rights activist Arif Yunusov, Azerbaijan housed 843,000 refugees in 1997, almost all Azerbaijanis displaced due to the conflict from 1987 to 1994. Yunusov estimates that an additional 323,000 Armenians were displaced from Azerbaijan during the same period.

These refugees are the forgotten victims whose rights are ignored by the warmongers on both sides. The @asa.united infographic doesn't bother to mention the Armenian victims of displacement from Azerbaijan, much less the even greater numbers of refugees from the other side.

None of this means that Azerbaijan's current assault on the Armenians living in the Republic of Artsakh represents 'justice,' as Azerbaijan claims. It is merely a cyclical continuation of indiscriminate violence against civilians. If Azerbaijan manages to recapture its lost territory militarily, there will likely be untold humanitarian consequences for the Armenians living there.

What are the prospects for peace? Outside mediation has thus far failed, partially because foreign interference was a major factor in the reignition of the conflict. Turkey, Azerbaijan's closest ally, has supplied drones, planes, and Syrian mercenaries to the Azerbaijani war effort. While many Armenians are understandably terrified at the prospect of further Turkish involvement in the conflict, this is unlikely because Armenia's security is guaranteed by another major regional power, Russia.

Ultimately, an end to the Nagorny-Karabakh conflict can come only from Armenians and Azerbaijanis themselves, in defiance of the belligerence of their governments and the machinations of outside powers. Outsiders who wish to advocate for peace and justice must be careful not to promote the narratives of violence, fear, and hate which are ubiquitous in this conflict. Instead, we must promote an accurate narrative which acknowledges that both governments have committed injustices and atrocities for which both peoples have suffered. Otherwise, we risk becoming propagandists for a brutal, senseless war. •



The Unfairness of the "Pink Tax"

GRACE ROBINSON
STAFF WRITER

Many Americans—mostly women—are aware of what is known as the “Pink Tax.” The pink tax is a system that has industries pricing products for women higher than products for men, even when the products are the same. For example, “a five-pack of Schick Hydro cartridges in purple packaging cost \$18.49, while the same count of Schick Hydro refills in blue packaging cost \$14.99.” This system is apparent in so many of the goods that we buy, most notably tampons.

In the United States, people are exempt from paying taxes on items that are deemed essential or “non-luxury items.” So when most women go to the store and are taxed for menstrual products, they wonder: why are tampons non-essential?

Luxury taxes are placed on items that are only considered available for the wealthiest individuals because they can afford the higher prices. This tax is imposed with the intention of targeting wealthy consumers, so why is it that poor and working class people are suffering? Currently in America, 31 states have deemed tampons and pads luxury items.

“At any given moment, 800 million people around the world are on their periods, and many of them cannot afford period products. In the United States, 1 in 5 teenagers have struggled to afford period products, and 1 in 4 have missed class because they did not have access to period products.” When the absence of an item causes 1 in 4 teenagers to miss class, can we truly call it non-essential?

Compared to other “non-luxury items,” tampons quickly lose their “luxury” value. The main comparison to tampons is Viagra. With the exception of Illinois, all U.S. States don’t tax Viagra as it is a prescription drug and therefore is exempt from taxation. Some argue that the law cannot discriminate based on gender because other female-specific products—birth control for example—are not taxed. Though the act to repeal the tampon tax has had great support, there has been some opposition. Most people and government officials that are hesitant to repeal the tampon tax aren’t wary about the necessity of tampons, but the revenue that it brings in. “I never heard anybody say it was a bad idea to get rid of the tax,” Ms. Ajello said. “I just heard some people wonder whether we could afford it.” Many states boast their effort to repeal the tampon tax, but haven’t made it official. States such as California



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have made “tax breaks” that remove taxes on menstrual products and diapers for the next two years. “We hope to extend it, but we hope to be in a fiscal position to do so and we want to maintain our prudence” California was reported to have to spend \$76 million a year for removing the tax on menstrual products and diapers. Most Americans believe that the government should be leading and protecting them. If the government doesn’t think it can afford to spend money on menstrual products, how can it expect its citizens to?

Another opposition is how this “exemption” of a particular product is going to affect others. If tampons are absolved from a tax, what other items might people try to push through too? There has always been a rightful worry about precedent when dealing with laws in this country. Nevertheless, a tax incorrectly marking necessary items as “luxury” is unfair to those who need it and gives society an incorrect notion of equality in the country. •

5 Things You Did Before COVID-19

NEFERTARI PIERRE-LOUIS
CONTRIBUTOR

1. Cough

By now we've all been that guy, you know the one. The guy clenching his fist, stiff-necked and shaking, looking clinically insane because he'd rather choke in silence than cough in public. The pandemic has canceled coughing indefinitely—I haven't coughed in nine months. The manner in which people clear the room as if you said "I didn't vote" is simply unbearable. When was the last time you coughed and didn't get the "I will literally end you" stare from everyone in your proximity? Have you or a loved one been cough-shamed within the past month? Do your spring allergies result in the police being called? Did that mother tell her son "Let's go Jason, he's sick" after you coughed in the HomeGoods candle aisle? If you've answered yes to any of these questions, you're officially living in the age of Covid-19. As far as coughing goes, just don't do it, or whatever Nike said.

2. Hug

Remember that comforting act of love and appreciation we used to engage in? I believe it's called a hug. It's been absent from our daily lives for quite some time and it's having a negative effect on my social skills. If you're abiding by Covid-19 distancing laws, which you should be, seeing your friends has never been weirder. I'm sure we've all been that girl, you know the one. The girl walking up to her pal, getting close enough to hug but awkwardly dangling her arms to her sides instead. "How the hell do I greet this human?" she thinks. The "almost hug" is the strangest interaction you'll ever have because neither you nor your friend knows what's appropriate. Just last week I foolishly attempted to hug an old classmate only to receive a "Woah, that's not allowed" and a "do I know you?" As far as hugging goes, 15 minutes of contactless conversations can save you 15% on getting Covid...or whatever the lizard said.

3. Examine Faces

The new age "mask reveal" has caused many of us a great deal of anxiety. Remember when we used to see faces? It was nothing out of the ordinary to know exactly how a person looked when they walked past you. In a world of masks and shields, we suddenly have no clue what facial features lie behind Covid protection. Taking off your mask becomes an epiphany for new people in your life. There's no doubt we've all been that person (they/ them), you know the one. The they who hasn't been maskless around their new friends, but will soon reveal themselves over lunch. The nerves that come with not knowing how they friends will react to they face are overwhelming. As the mask is removed everyone looks up and says "what the f*uck?" Just kidding, the friends act normal, because there's nothing weird about your face, you look great! Don't fear the mask reveal, own it. Never Eat Self Consciously Around Classmates, or whatever NESAC stands for.

4. Run To Class

I know the majority of us miss the in-class, hands-on, maskless setting. But do any of us actually long for the days of running to class when late? For the past

several months, we've all been doing the roll-hop out of bed to scoot into a chair two feet away and launch Zoom. Rumor has it some people don't even get out of bed, they log on, turn off their camera, and continue sleeping. To be clear, this isn't true of Conn students. To any administrators who may be reading this, if a Zoom camera is off there is definitely NOT a sleeping student behind it. That's Middlebury activity. Who knows, perhaps some of you actually liked the high-adrenaline rush of getting up late, throwing on clothes, banging your toe on your bed stand, shoving food down your throat, slapping your face with water, forgetting 99% of your class materials (including that homework assignment), and running to your 9 am at 9:06. Personally, I could go without that form of exercise for a couple more years. To quote that plant-based influencer who posted a black screen and never talked about social justice again, "running is not it."

5. Party

Zero partying is a result of Covid-19 we must respect as college students, and more imperatively, as considerate human beings. Of course, we all miss the glorious nights of abandoning our worries and drinking ungodly amounts of...water. A party here and there is simply the college experience, but we have to acknowledge the reality of these times. The coronavirus is not strep throat, it won't go away with ginger tea. The virus is taking lives, disproportionately the lives of marginalized people, and I can't find a way to joke around it. Parties equate to Covid cases and every individual does not survive Covid. When you host a function, you're facilitating an environment in which someone can lose their life or suffer various complications for the rest of their life. Please listen to Dean Arcelus, our very own Dr. Fauci. You don't look cool partying, you look shameful and privileged risking your life and the lives of others. "The party don't start till Covid ends" - Ke\$ha. •



Nefertari Pierre-Louis

A Discussion on the Southern Strategy

The CC Republicans and Conservatives engaged in a conversation on the Southern Strategy. The concept claims that in order to appeal to white Southern voters, political leaders utilize racist language and promote discriminatory policies. Here are their submitted discussions on the topic.

How the South Was Won by Nixon

PETER GATTUSO
STAFF WRITER

Currently, the South represents a strong base of the Republican Party. However, for much of American history the South represented a strong political base for the Democratic Party. The first two Republican presidential candidates, John Fremont and Abraham Lincoln, were not even on the ballot in most southern states. The Democratic South spawned Woodrow Wilson, perhaps the most progressive president in American history, and the south was a major stronghold of FDR's four-term coalition. One theory, known as the "Southern Strategy", is that in the 1960s, Republican Presidential candidate Richard Nixon used a political strategy of appealing to racist policies and rhetoric in order to win the support of white voters in the South. The theory continues that this strategy was continued by succeeding Republican nominees of Goldwater and Reagan, which led to a party realignment that explains the South's current support for the GOP. However, the "Southern Strategy" theory is historically inaccurate and doesn't factually explain how the South became predominantly Republican.

Now before I go on, let me first explain (reword) the duality of Richard Nixon's private and public selves. From the Nixon White House Tapes we know that Nixon was privately a vehement racist. However, this was very much hidden from Nixon's public persona. Nixon built a public image that was supportive of the civil rights movement in his time as a legislator and executive. Nixon served as Vice President of the Eisenhower administration, which oversaw the integration of U.S. armed forces, and sent the U.S. National Guard to Little Rock, Arkansas to uphold the decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*. In 1957, Nixon urged President Eisenhower to sign the Civil Rights Act of 1957, which was recognized and thanked by the great Martin Luther King in a letter, "Let me say before closing how deeply grateful all people of goodwill are to you for your assiduous labor and dauntless courage in seeking to take the Civil Rights Bill a reality." King goes on to state "I am convinced that we shall continue to make real progress toward our goal of guaranteeing rights to every American."

From the popularity and success of the Eisenhower administration, Richard Nixon was nominated for President by the Republican Party in 1960, which he ended up narrowly losing to Sen. John F. Kennedy. The Nixon campaign strategy focused not on the South, but rather on swing states such as California, Texas, Pennsylvania, and Illinois, among others. Nixon ended up losing eleven of the fourteen southern states not only to Kennedy but to the third-party segregationist candidate, Democratic Sen. Harry Byrd, who launched an Independent bid as a result of Nixon and Kennedy's support of the Civil Rights Movement.

In 1968, the GOP once again nominated Nixon for president, hoping a moderate candidate could defeat the fractured Democratic party caused by the LBJ presidency. The strategy of the '68 Nixon campaign again focused on the crucial swing states of California, Texas, Illinois, Missouri, and Wisconsin, among a few others. George Wallace, the Democratic Governor of Alabama, launched a third-party bid under the American Independent party in response to Nixon and Humphrey's support for the civil rights movement. Wallace, similarly to Byrd, focused on the South, but was much more popular and was backed by a strong southern coalition, that Byrd did not have in 1960. Thus, Nixon had no political incentive to appeal to racist, white voters in the South, as they were safe Wallace voters. However, Nixon had much to lose had he chosen to appeal to racism in the swing states he ultimately won; Nixon's success in the swing states resulted in his victory in 1968. However, this victory for Nixon was given little contribution from the South, which gave Wallace a total of 46 electoral votes. Nix-

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A History on Southern Politics

ISAAC MOSKOWITZ
CONTRIBUTOR

In the 1950s and 1960s, the South experienced unprecedented social upheaval as the civil rights movement surged forward. There was extreme backlash from white Southerners who felt that their supremacy was being threatened. It was also at this time that the Democratic South collapsed, and the Republican party gained traction. Republican leaders used anti-civil rights messaging to attract these white Southerners whose racial resentment towards African Americans had been brought to a boiling point by the ensuing civil rights movement. After a certain point, Republicans began using coded language to relay to their Southern constituents their hesitation to push for social change. However, there are those who refute this claim and say that racial incitement had nothing to do with the growth of a Republican South. In this article I will explain the Southern Strategy: how Republicans transformed the Southern political landscape mainly by appealing to racially motivated white voters.

To best understand the Southern Strategy, a general understanding of the two major political parties of the United States is needed. In his book *The Two-Party South*, Alexander P. Lamis explains that from Reconstruction up until the early 1960s, the South was dominated by the Democratic party (3). The Republican party, on the other hand, was the party of the North—the socially liberal party of Lincoln. Although breaks in the "Solid South" did occur a few times before the '50s and '60s, Republicans enjoyed few electoral victories until this time. This alignment of the collapse of the Democratic South alongside the civil rights movement demonstrates the role that racial upheaval played in the political realignment of Southerners.

An understanding of the national climate during the civil rights movement is also key in understanding the Southern Strategy. This national struggle to end discrimination against African Americans was a source of incredible social and political turbulence—especially for the South. Key Supreme Court decisions like *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* (1954) and *Baker v. Carr* (1962) upended years of white supremacy. Governors and Congressmen fervently passed legislation to protect all-white institutions, and racist Southerners put their visceral hatred towards the federal government and African Americans on public display. At this point, the South was still dominated by Democrats and consequently this racially fueled hatred was aimed at the Republican party of the North. As Joseph Aistrup points out in his book *The Southern Strategy Revisited: Republican Top-Down Advancement in the South*, it was a Republican court that ruled in favor of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* and a Republican President who sent the troops to Little Rock Arkansas to forcibly integrate the Central High School (7). Southern Republicans needed a plan to transform themselves from the Party of Lincoln to one that supported the needs of the white southerner.

As early as 1956, Republican Congressmen and Senators from Southern states picked up on growing racial tensions and transitioned from a gradualist to a more segregationist perspective on the issue of social change. This would allow them to separate themselves from the civil rights movement and garner support from Southerners for whom race was their primary issue. One after another, Senators and House representatives from states like Texas, Florida, and North Carolina won races using race-baiting rhetoric. In 1960, the Republican National Convention launched "Operation Dixie"; a national plan to recruit members who ran on "states rights" platforms that pushed against the civil rights effort. However, cam-

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How the South Was Won by Nixon

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on came in third place in Deep South states of Alabama and Mississippi, trailing Wallace by 52% and 50%, respectively. As simply as a campaign strategy, the “Southern Strategy” would not have made any strategic sense for the Nixon campaign, as it would not have influenced enough voters to win the South from Wallace and would have cost votes from the West, Midwest, and Rustbelt, which provided Nixon his victory.

The Nixon Administration continued to push progressive reform civil rights action. One of Nixon’s first actions was creating a special committee in his cabinet to better enforce the desegregation of schools in the South. Nixon also implemented the first act of federal affirmative action in the “Philadelphia Plan.” Nixon confronted unions in Philadelphia, which discriminated against African-Americans and other marginalized groups, and threatened to cut their federal contracts unless they met a specified quota. Additionally, Nixon signed the Voting Rights Act of 1970, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 which expanded their funding and power to enforce against workplace discrimination. As stated earlier, there is little doubt that Nixon was a racist individual, but to increase his electoral chances and to keep a good public opinion, he shielded his racism from the public.

The South’s transformation from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party was not a sudden occurrence caused by a single election or strategy, but occurred as a result of a generational shift between the 1960’s and the 1990’s. Of the twenty Southern Democrats who voted against the Civil Rights Act of 1964, only one of them eventually switched to the Republican Party. It wouldn’t be until 1996 when the Republicans were voted in all those twenty senate seats. Furthermore, the Republican Party didn’t hold a majority of southern congressional seats until 1994. National Review’s Kevin Williamson said that “If southern rednecks ditched the democrats because of a civil rights law passed in 1964, it is strange that they waited until the late 1980’s and early 1990’s to do so.” The southern switch to Republican occurred between generations, as more industry moved to the South, younger generations aligned with policies that better benefited them such as tax cuts, business deregulation, pro-guns, and tariff cuts. •



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A History on Southern Politics

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paings could no longer openly run against the civil rights issue for fear of appearing racist to the broader American electorate. Republican politicians consequently would veil their desire to push back against the civil rights Movement in coded words like “the fight for states rights.” Barry Goldwater showed how using these political dog-whistles to appeal to racists could be advantageous when he swept the deep South in the presidential election of 1964. The use of code language continued in the campaigns of Nixon and Reagan, becoming increasingly abstract in order to not appear explicitly racist. Nixon’s very own chief political strategist, Lee Atwater, described this strategy aptly in a damning 1981 interview. “By 1968 you can’t say ‘[n-word]’ — that hurts you, backfires. So you say stuff like, uh, forced busing, states’ rights, and all that stuff, and you’re getting so abstract...” (Atwater, 1981). Since that election of 1964, the South has voted overwhelmingly Republican in Presidential elections with few exceptions.

There are some who would argue that the realignment of white, Southern voters from the Democratic party to the Republican party is not due to the incitement of racial tensions. This perspective (which even one of its central supporters, history professor Matthew Lassiter, admits is going against academic consensus) claims that Southerners mainly swapped party affiliation because of an appeal to “traditional conservative values” used in the ‘70s and ‘80s by Republican politicians like Reagan and Bush. However, this claim underscores the vast importance of race in American politics and is historically inaccurate. In his book *Nut Country: rights-Wing Dallas and the Birth of the Southern Strategy*, Edward Miller explains that Southern districts and states began flipping red far earlier than the 70s; as early as 1954 Republican politicians employed race-baiting rhetoric to win over voters.

Interestingly, in my research for this article I have found that the majority of opposition to the Southern Strategy theory does not come from academics. It is rather conservative media pundits and members of heavily partisan think tanks like the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation that are trying to push this narrative. Yet, historical evidence, including confessions from those who actually participated in the strategy, shows that racial polarization did indeed play a major role in the realignment of Southern voters in this country. To deny this fact is to deny a well documented piece of our country’s history. •



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Crochet Creations at the Crochet Cottage

ELIZABETH BERRY
ARTS EDITOR

My introduction to crocheting was a crochet kit made just for kids that was far too advanced for my nine-year-old self, leading to a bout of frustrated tantrums. Needless to say, crocheting was not the hobby I dabbled with during quarantine. But Connecticut College alumna Maddie Megargee '20 has been crocheting various clothing items since March, posting her wholesome creations on her Instagram account @the.crochetcottage—a pun on the ‘cottage core’ fashion trend.

Megargee, who studied Sociology and French at Conn, ordered her first crochet kit in March as a potential quarantine activity. She began to post images of her pieces on her personal Instagram accounts but eventually decided to make a crochet-focused account where she could share her work, as well as sell items to interested parties. So, she made a little black-and-white doodle that is now her bio photo and worked with her friend Hannah @ladyandthecam to design a logo.

While crocheting is fun, Megargee explains it was frustrating in the beginning. She taught herself the basics and became more familiar with certain crochet patterns that use specific terminology in the instructions. Even now, having more background in these patterns, Megargee enjoys free-handing and often does not have to follow pre-established patterns. “I will free-hand [the piece] and block it out using shapes, [with] lots of trial and error,” she says over a phone interview. She goes on to say that “most projects have a moment where I have to un-do something,” regardless of following a pattern or not. Her hardest pieces are always new styles, while patterns she has more familiarity with are a lot easier to make. I have personally asked for a striped halter top with a tie-neck and teardrop cutout, a design that Megargee has previously made for her sister. Regardless of how many times she has made a pattern before, Megargee says a little frustration is always present in the process.

Despite these hurdles, crocheting is a very portable hobby because all you need is a crochet hook, some yarn, and access to Youtube tutorials. When it comes to pricing, Megargee will plan out how much yarn she needs to make a specific item and base the price on the cost of the yarn and how much time it will take her to make—plus shipping. There is definitely more expensive yarn out there, but Megargee says you can easily find a roll of yarn for just a couple of dollars.

You can see Megargee’s breadth in the craft; her Instagram highlights



items ranging from leg warmers, purses, and earrings to bralettes, crop tops, and sweaters. Customers can order a customized piece, like the matching colorful crop top and shorts pictured above, or purchase items that Megargee has already made such as the hats pictured below. Her favorite piece so far is a large blanket of 100-little granny squares. This is the largest crochet project Megargee has undertaken; she worked on crocheting the individual squares for almost two months. •



Maggie Megargee