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NECC Observer

The award-winning student newspaper of Northern Essex Community College • Haverhill and Lawrence, Mass.

Fall 2025 • Volume 90 • Issue Number 3 • Nov. 20, 2025

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Season starts with wins

BY JOHN MULCAHY
Sports Editor

The NECC basketball teams played their hearts out in the home opener.

NECC fans were left smiling Nov. 6, as their teams showed up and showed off, both winning in convincing fashion.

NECC sports fans were packing the stands at the Haverhill Campus Sport and Fitness Center Nov. 6 for the home opener of both the men's and women's seasons facing off against Bristol Community College. The event was completely free, with food and merchandise available at no extra cost. With the women set to go at 5:30 and the men at 7:30 attendees were prepared for a full night of fun.



Photo by Talan Stratton

NECC Knight Christian Sanders making the shot

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What's Happening?

Last day to withdraw with
a "W" for Full Semester
classes
All day event
Nov. 26

3rd Annual Stuff a Cruiser
Nov. 24, 25, 26; Dec. 1, 2
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.,
3 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Lawrence Campus
414 Common St, El Helfni
building, public safety
desk
7 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Haverhill Campus, Spurrk
building C110
Check out flier on page 13

Check calendar events:
nec.mass.edu/event

How to find security around each campus:

Haverhill Campus
100 Elliott St., Spurrk Building,
Room 110C

Lawrence Campus
45 Franklin St. main lobby
Call 978.556.3333 from a cell
phone. Extension 3333 from
any campus phone on either
campus.

Editorial

Food ideas for all students at NECC

By **LIDIA RAMIREZ**
Editor-in-Chief

In these days that are difficult to deal with, there remains the concerns of food

insecurity as the recent government shutdown threatened from the troubles within the federal system in the U.S. and the potential future impacts it may have on federal funded programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance

Program, that helps low-income families by providing monthly benefits to buy food.

Yet there are other things that can be considered a useful idea that contribute to the need for food for students, accommodation or accessibility within the college.

As you know, it is important for students to have enough food and receive the necessary amount of nutrients both at home and in campus to perform well in schoolwork and all other curricular activities.

Some community colleges offer free meals to their students.

While ideas are being sought at Northern Essex Community College for a back-up plan for food emergencies, we could consider more broad ideas like free meals for students at the

campus. Some community colleges like The White Mountains Community College offer programs like Meals Included, that provides free daily meals for breakfast and lunch to their students and The Cabinet program is a pantry that offers students, staff and faculty free snacks, pre-packaged meals, and other grab-and-go items, according to the website for the college, www.wmcc.edu.

Already on the Northern Essex Lawrence Campus, we have a food pantry for students located in the Dimity building. Recently, ideas for a second food pantry or food closet for the Haverhill Campus have pretty much become the most common idea communicated by students and staff.

I personally would propose the idea of another program that may or may not involve a free cafeteria but does provides free fresh cooked or cold meals.

It is understandable that financially we may not be able to make a cafeteria happen, but my idea is to introduce more ways that we can bring fresh meals to students on at least one of the campuses.

Maybe volunteers can cook, or students can run the program and the cooking with at least one staff or adviser just as students run The Observer Newspaper.

At first, I began to think about small ideas to make free ready hot meals possible. One idea would require a good cook volunteer, a room dedicated to the program with all the appliances, food items, dining dishes, etc.

Another small idea for free ready hot meals is a rice pot, where students can take as much rice as they want straight from a rice cooker, and another idea is toast in the morning that simply are available with a toaster ready for all to use with different varieties of bread.

The food can be sourced from donations or from the college food pantry.

Usually, the campuses have available snacks for students to grab and go through the different centers throughout the buildings and the food pantry that is accessible by appointment.

The kind of snacks and amount students can take are yet limited and the accessibility to the food pantry resource is more for at home food needs and is also limited on how many times a student can visit during a monthly period.

Meanwhile the student food vouchers are also limited and are currently only available to use at the UTEC food truck or the Perfect Blend Cafe in the Spurr building.

The food truck is only at Haverhill campus twice a month and at Lawrence campus twice a month or two Tuesdays a month for each campus. With the new NECC bookstore, students can also buy snacks meanwhile the selling of hot food is currently under negotiation, it will still cost students and or be available to buy just with the student food vouchers, which usually are never enough.

The important point is that not all students have the money or funds to pay for everyday breakfast and lunch. Even students that do have some money end up running out of it and are not able to pay for food during however many remaining days of the week or month. Our community is not meant to leave anyone in the struggle. We are a community that has the potential to come together and work out beneficial ways to succeed together.

Money could be used towards more convenient methods that save money and takes care of all students so that they do not have the financial burden on their stomachs which can impact their academic success.

NECC Observer

The award-winning student newspaper of Northern Essex Community College

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The NECC Observer reserves the right to edit, condense and refuse all submissions.

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Publication Schedule

Issue #	Publication Date	Ad/Copy Deadline
1	Oct. 9	Oct. 2
2	Oct. 30	Oct. 23
3	Nov. 20	Nov. 13
4	Dec. 4	Nov. 28

We welcome letters and articles from our readers. You can submit via email, and must include your name and phone number for verification. Write "Letter" or "Article to Editor" in the subject line so we notice it right away.

Send your letters to observer@necc.mass.edu

We try to publish all letters we receive, but we reserve the right to edit or reject those we receive.

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Opinion

Uncertainty remains as Supreme Court rejects appeal on marriage equality

By BAILEY ORIO
Opinion Editor

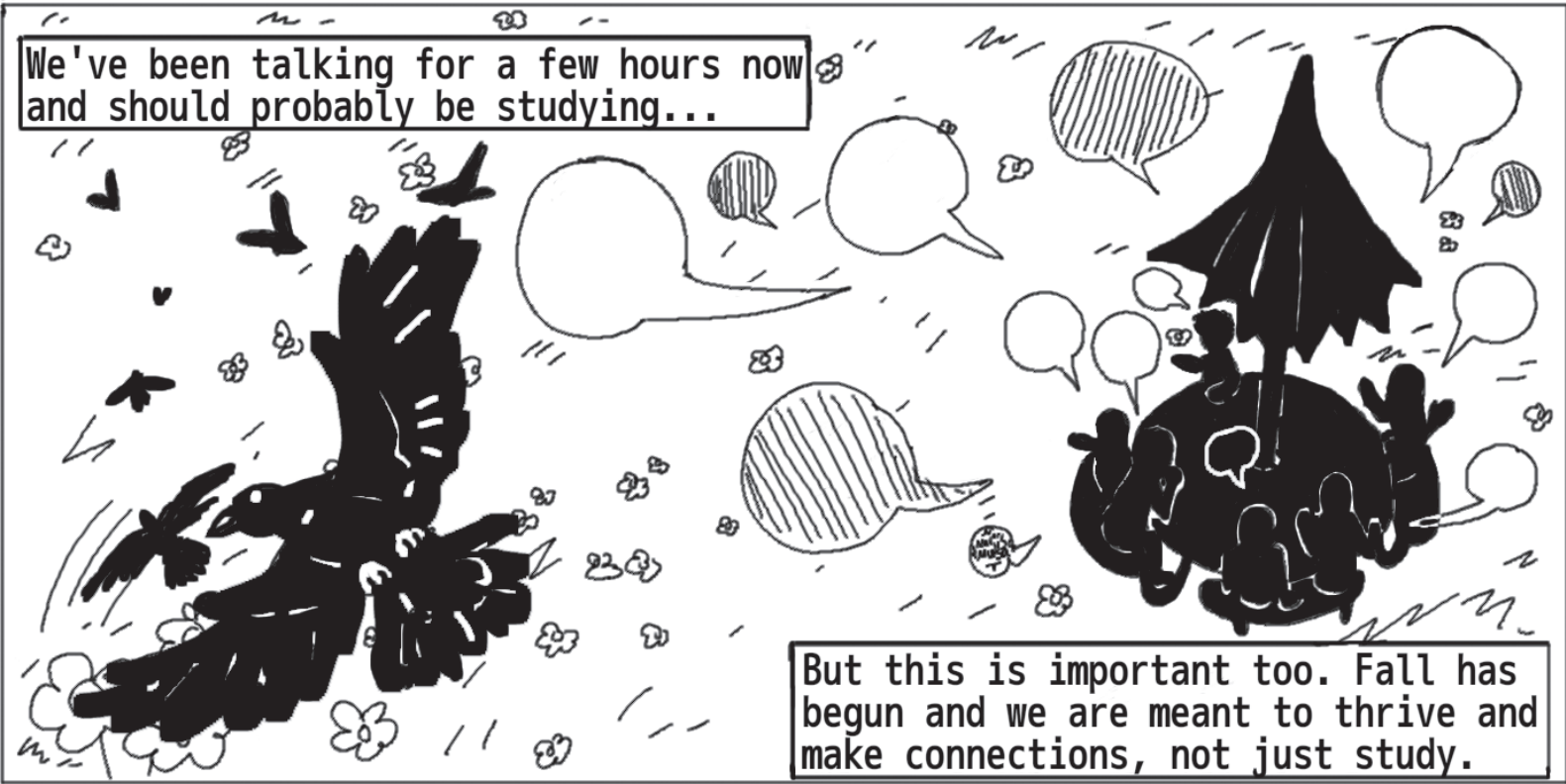
On Monday Nov. 10, 2025, the Supreme court declined a petition brought forward by Kim Davis, a former Kentucky County Clerk who gained national attention after failing to sign marriage licenses for same-sex couples. The petition was to revisit the deci-

sion made on Obergefell v. Hodges, the landmark decision that legalized same-sex marriage nationwide a decade ago. Davis faced legal and financial consequences including a court order to pay over \$300,000 to a couple she denied a marriage license to. Davis argued that giving a same-sex couple a marriage license was against her religious beliefs.

The possible overturn of the ruling that legalized same-sex marriage worried members of the LGBTQIA community. As the Trump administration has been against the community in the past such as removing protections for those in the community and removing health care protections this raised a lot of uncertainty about the future of marriage

equality. The uncertainty of marriage equality protections prove that it's important to keep informed and allow people to marry who they want. While the Supreme Court's decision preserves the status quo for now, many argue that the debate highlights the fragility of rights the LGBTQIA+ community has fought for over decades.

Comic by Narjis Musa



Opinion

Start searching for an internship

By **KATIE YEATON-HROMADA**
Coordinator for Career Services

Internships are a great way to start exploring your career while you're still in college. You don't need tons of experience — just your coursework, curiosity, and willingness to learn. Whether you apply online or reach out to a company on your own, internships give you a chance to gain entry-level experience, meet professionals in your field, and figure out what kind of work actually interests you.

You can start as early as your first year — it's never too soon! Some majors might have a class that requires working experience. They might call it an internship, practicum, externship, or clinical, but they all mean the same thing: hands-on learning that helps you grow.

Internships vs. Jobs

Internships are all about learning and usually are a semester or year long. You're there to build skills and share your work with the company. A job, on the other hand, usually means you're hired to do specific tasks for a long period of time.

Before you start your internship, make sure you talk with your supervisor about what you'll be doing and what you hope to learn. That way, you're both on the same page.

Are Internships Paid?

Some internships pay, some don't. It's important to ask about pay before you accept an offer or start creating your own internship opportunity.

If it's paid, you might earn an hourly wage or get a set amount (called a stipend) for the whole experience. Since internships are temporary, they usually don't come with benefits like health insurance.



If it's unpaid, you're volunteering your time, so be clear about how many hours you're willing to commit. Unpaid internships are more common in fields like politics, education, healthcare, and nonprofits. Paid internships tend to show up more in tech, finance, and larger companies.

When Should You Start Looking for Internships?

Finding an internship takes time, so it's smart to start early. Some companies—especially the competitive ones—open applications 4 to 8 months before the internship begins. That means if you're thinking about summer 2026, applications might already be live!

Most internships start accepting applications about 3 to 4 months ahead of time. If you're looking locally or planning to create your own internship, the timeline can be shorter—1 to 2 months is usually enough.

Bottom line: give yourself time to search, apply, and hear back. If you're aiming for something next semester, start looking 2 to 3 months in advance

so you're not scrambling at the last minute.

There are two main ways to find an internship: (1) Apply online or (2) Create your own by reaching out to a company directly.

Option 1: Search & Apply Online

Start with Handshake — NECC's job and internship board. You already have an account! Log in using your MyNECC info: necc.joinhandshake.com/edu.

Once you find an internship that interests you, read the description carefully. Check for any required coursework or qualifications. Then take a look at the company's website to learn about its mission and values.

If it feels like a good fit, go ahead and apply! Most internships ask for a resume and cover letter, just like a regular job.

After exploring Handshake, you can also check out other sites like LinkedIn, Indeed, or individual company websites.

Option 2: Create Your Own Internship

Can't find the perfect internship? Make one!

Start by thinking about your goals—do you want to explore a certain industry or work on a specific type of project? Then look for companies doing similar work.

Use Handshake or your local Chamber of Commerce website to find contact info for businesses that match your interests.

Once you've got a few in mind, send a professional email explaining who you are, what you're looking for, and why you're interested in working with them. It might take a little more effort, but creating your own internship can lead to amazing opportunities.

We're here to support you — whether it's resume guidance, interview prep, or career planning. If you would like to talk more about this process and have a cheerleader in your search, contact NECC's Career Services through Navigate or email (careerservices@necc.mass.edu).

News

Honoring veterans at NECC

By LINDA GOSS
Correspondent

On Nov. 6, a special event took place on the Haverhill campus at NECC to honor those who have served in the military ahead of Veterans Day.

Commencement started at eight-thirty with Dean of Students Jason Arey, who made a speech about our soldiers and veterans who are active and non-active in the military.

There was a very special moment of silence after Arey made his speech. Taps was played as the American flag and the P.O.W. flag waved half-mast on the flagpole.

Master Sgt. Alfred Denesowicz was the M.C. who led the formal event.

Denesowicz joined the military in 1996 and served until 2022. He was a member of the Army Reserve Careers Group in Fort Devens in Massachusetts. He stated, "I am proud to stand with our veterans and military students and to ensure they have the resources and support".

This reporter, Sgt. Linda Taylor-Goss also attended the event and is a student at NECC. She is also a veteran and was a proud member of the Army National Guard. She served from 1980 to 2006. She is currently retired and is attending NECC as well. She stated, "If I were young, I would do it all over again."

Private First Class Hailey Denesowicz has been in the military for a year, and she is also a student at NECC in an EMT program. She stated, "I recommend anyone to join the military."

In addition, NECC police Lt. Keith Walker and Winnie were present for the special event.



Photos by Linda Goss

Scenes from a special event to honor veterans at NECC on Nov. 6.

Transfer Fair helps students think about next step

By ETHAN LOWELL
Correspondent

With the fall semester moving along, students at Northern Essex Community College had a chance to think about their next step at the annual College Transfer Fair on Nov. 4. The event took place in the El-Hefni Building on the Lawrence campus and brought many students into the lobby throughout the afternoon.

More than 30 four year colleges and universities sent representatives to meet with

students. Admissions officers answered questions about programs, transfer requirements, scholarships, and financial aid. The goal of the fair was to help students understand what they need to do if they want to continue their education after they finish at NECC.

Ana Tomkiewicz, a second year student, said she attended because she has been looking into radiology programs. "Yeah, I am thinking about radiology school," Tomkiewicz said. "It was good to walk around

and talk to a few colleges."

Ava Maurer, who now studies at Salem State University, said she first heard about her school at a past NECC fair. "I met someone from Salem State here when I was a student," Maurer said. "It helped me figure out where I wanted to go."

Freshman Christopher Hernandez said he was not sure what to expect but wanted to check it out. "I talked to a couple schools," Hernandez said. "I am still figuring things out, but it was helpful."

The fair gave students a chance to compare schools without having to travel. Colleges in attendance included UMAss Lowell, Framingham State University, Fitchburg State University, Merrimack College, Salem State University, and several others from around the region.

Events like this help students plan ahead and understand their transfer options. Many left the fair with new ideas and a clearer picture of the steps they may take after completing their time at NECC.

News

Global Politics Club revisited

By SARAH MIKLINEVICH
Correspondent

NECC students dig deep into how politics touches their lives. The topic for debate this week at NECC's Global Politics Club was kept simple: current events.

In 2025, nothing is ever simple.

The topics up for discussion range from extraterrestrials to immigration, from the New York City Mamdani-win to good ole-fashioned, home-grown misogyny.

Keelin Russell, a student at NECC, speaks about the stark difference seen at home across lines of gender.

Russell leads the group on the topic of misogyny, while group president Melissa Ferris raises interesting questions of why these social issues are so important to newer generations. The students mull this question over for a while, as the conversation leads back to accessibility to higher education, unavailable to generations of women before them.

"A lot of women now, especially

coming out of that generation, they want to do better," says Russell.

Russell's mother is a nurse at the hospital where Russell also works. She says the difference in behavior comes down to a role model issue.

"You raise your women to be more well mannered," she said.

The discussion touches on the effect of radicalizing the next generation of misogynists.

Social media influencers online, for example, have the potential to reach billions of screens, regardless of how politically correct what they have to say is. Sometimes, women — a vulnerable minority making up approximately one half of the world's population — become an easy target.

"It's very easy to put the blame on someone else, and women are very easy to blame," Russell said.

Of course, misogyny is not the only dish on the menu. The topic of immigration also touches close to home for many of the students at NECC.

One source, who requested to re-

main anonymous, fleshed out in detail the semantics revolving around the now-rescinded three-year extension by the Biden administration for expiring green cards.

A green card is an official document issued to immigrants by the United States to signify their official permanent residence in the country.

A green card makes an immigrant a lawful, permanent resident.

The Biden administration previously issued a three-year-extension for green card renewals, which has now been rescinded by the Trump administration. The current waiting period for a renewed permanent residency card is approximately 26 months, the anonymous source said.

The anonymous source explained how this muddies the water for international travel. Permanent residents everywhere face the same problem: leave the United States with no valid visa to permit reentry. This creates a problem for those interested in visiting family for the holiday season.

Not only could a permanent resident lose their job, their home, their education opportunities, but their family as well. For families with different passports

from different countries, parents face another risk of separation from their spouse and children.

"It's hard to see how that effects people in your own personal communities," the anonymous source said.

They also explained how they feel disenfranchised from their constitutional right to free speech.

"If I were to engage in any kind of activism, that could spiral into an investigation in my family," they said.

For group goers, the discussion was sobering.

"Hearing about this from a person [of color], it's very real," Dez Kelly, Liberal Arts major said.

NECC's Global Politics Club meets at the Haverhill Commons, room 201 in the Spurk building on the Haverhill campus, at 1:45 p.m. every Wednesday.



Northern Essex
Community College

NECC Music

JURIES

MUSIC PERFORMANCE FINAL EXAM

Thursday
DEC 11, 2025
9:00AM - 2:00PM

Haverhill Campus TC-103

Juries are end-of-semester performance exams that occur at important junctures in a student's degree program. Music major students are periodically required to participate in Juries, in order to assess progress in the Applied Music portion of their core music training.

#NECCMusicThrives

We welcome requests for ASL sign language interpreting & other ADA access requests. Please contact the host of this event: Prof. Alisa Buchiere phone: (978) 556-3779 email: abuchiere@necc.mass.edu for requests, questions for event information.

FALL
2025



NECC Music Presents

FALL
2025

JAZZ ROCK CONCERT

MUSIC DIRECTOR:
PROF. JAKE SMITH

Dec. 11th at 6:00 PM

NECC Haverhill Campus, TC - 103
100 Elliott St. Haverhill, MA

#NECCMusicThrives

Northern Essex
Community College

We welcome requests for ASL sign language interpreting & other ADA access requests. Please contact the host of this event: Prof. Alisa Buchiere phone: (978) 556-3779 email: abuchiere@necc.mass.edu for requests, questions or event information.



FREE ADMISSION

Arts & Entertainment

NECC vs. the world of object shows

BY MICAELA PENA
Correspondent

Most students and other people at Northern Essex Community College have likely never heard of a phenomenal YouTube sensation known as object shows. These types of shows, which include the series Battle for Dream Island and Inanimate Insanity, are based on anthropomorphic object characters going through Survivor-like challenges in a competition, building friendships and having silly moments along the way. They are meant to be enjoyed by anyone stalking on YouTube who has a particular interest in animation vids, so why don't typical college students give much thought into these shows?

A few people at NECC have at least been exposed to these shows at least once, but there are several factors as to why it might not be their biggest passion. "I think I've heard of [object shows], but not very much," Emma McDonough, an early college student, said.

"I saw BFDI on TikTok," Bianca DaSilva, another early college student, said. "But I've only heard of Inanimate Insanity once."

Ricky DaSilva, an early college student, came up with some ideas as to why object shows are not very popular among teenagers in high school and

“Everybody’s algorithm tells them what to watch, but no two people share the same algorithm interests.

- Mary Clark, NECC learning coach

college. "People's attention span is being killed by TikTok and Instagram," DaSilva said.

Bianca DaSilva seconds his opinion. "They are more convenient and easier for us to use rather than YouTube," Bianca DaSilva said. Additionally, "not a lot of students go on YouTube," McDonough said.

Mary Clark, learning coach at NECC, knows some greater detail behind the students at this college not being fully passionate about object shows. "Everybody's algorithm tells them what to watch, but no two people share the same algorithm interests," Clark said.

There is another major reason as to why most college students at NECC don't fully connect with object shows on YouTube. On which platforms everyone used most often to view video content on television, Netflix came on top with 39% of viewership while

YouTube trailed behind at 17%, Yahoo News said. This means Netflix is a streaming service which occupies college-age students' minds more frequently than YouTube.

Madison O'Brien, an early childhood education major student, usually prefers Netflix over YouTube most of the time and has not heard of object shows completely. "Netflix is just more popular and has a greater attention span for viewers," O'Brien said.

There is an even bigger factor contributing to object shows not appealing to college age students. Due to their friendly approach in terms of character design and visuals, object shows are primarily targeted towards Gen Alpha and younger audiences as they are a digital native group that spends a significant amount of time on YouTube, Google said.

In other words, the object shows

have not yet reached mainstream awareness for those who are older than Gen Alpha audiences, as those in Gen Z and older are more attached with other social media platforms relevant to their age level, whereas the younger Gen Alpha generation is more attached with YouTube as it's easier for them to use, making it more likely for younger audiences to know about object shows rather than the rest of the human population.

Both BFDI and Inanimate Insanity have been increasing in viewership in recent years, yet still not well-known enough to capture the attention of all age groups, but they are still trying. Battle for Dream Island originally released to YouTube on January 1, 2010, while Inanimate Insanity was introduced a year later on April 1, 2011.

This paper is your voice, too!
We want to see what you have to say.

You can reach us at:

observer@necc.mass.edu

Arts & Entertainment

NECC's comedy connection

By JACK LOMBARDO
Correspondent

Like most colleges, NECC has solid ties to the creative arts. A simple look through the school's course catalog shows that classes are offered in drama, music, graphic design and more.

What may not be as well known is that NECC has solid ties to the world of stand up comedy. At the present time, there are students, faculty and alumni involved in this area of performing.

In fact, NECC once even offered a class on this topic. From 2003-2010, Professor David Rattigan periodically taught a course titled, Introduction To Stand Up Comedy. Rattigan, while still teaching at NECC, is a performer himself. In 2005, he formed Scamps Comedy Productions, which focuses on fundraisers by presenting comedy shows. Among others, Rattigan has worked with well known comedians, such as Steven Wright and Jeff Dunham.

But Rattigan is far from NECC's only connection to the world of stand up. A current, quick rising comedy star is Amy Tee. Tee first got into performing by taking the very class that NECC offered in 2003. She has gone on to have a successful career in the field and on Sept. 13, Tee recorded her first one hour comedy special, titled Spilling The Tee.

In addition to Tee, another NECC alumni, Maxwell Schultz has released three one hour specials of his own. They are titled, Safe Room (2020), Just Another Beautiful Day (2022) and Ol' Peg A Leg (2025).

In addition to staff and alumni, there are also students actively involved in performing stand up comedy. Ricardo Ramirez (who performs as Star Sapphire) is a current second year NECC

student, majoring in Health Specializations. When asked how this field of study ties to comedy, Ramirez responded, "I get to bring a smile to each person that I take care of."

It also may come as a surprise to some that NECC's own town of Haverhill has a bustling comedy scene. Schultz, who runs Malice Comedy, hosts shows every Friday at 7 p.m. at Crusttown Pizza (150 Washington St). In addition, a professional standup comedy club, Funny Vibes, has also opened inside of the Oriental Gardens restaurant (400 Lowell St.), Funny Vibes also produces shows on a regular basis.

Opportunities are even available if you would like to get onstage and try telling some jokes yourself. Crusttown offers an open mic every Wednesday at 9 p.m. Oriental Garden also hosts one every Thursday at 7 p.m. Haverhill's Amvets Post 147 even offers an additional opportunity every Thursday at 7:30p.m.

With all stated, it becomes easy to see that NECC does in fact have solid ties to the world of stand up comedy.

Jennifer Fitzgerald is a professor in the NECC math department. She has been performing comedy under the name Jenni Fitz since 2023. Fitzgerald stated, "I haven't worked with any 'famous' comics yet, but the local comics I've worked with are so impressive, I'm sure some of them will make it big someday."

Maxwell Schultz goes on to give a similar statement, saying, "There are so many talented local comedians. Though you may not be seeing household names, local comedy is worth going to see."

This reporter would encourage you to do just that.



David Rattigan



Amy Tee



Posters for local comedy shows. On left a poster features NECC student Star Sapphire. One right, a posted for Malice Comedy shows in Haverhill, hosted by alumni Maxwell Schultz

Arts & Entertainment

Tarot Talk Part 3: Getting over the hump and preparing for the wind down of the semester

By J.T. MELANSON

Arts & Entertainment Editor

As the semester transitions from the midterms into its final third, the tone on the Northern Essex Community College (NECC) campuses shifts. The chaos of the midterms has passed, but the initial burst of energy is long gone. Students are now battling fatigue, staring down finals, and wrestling with the temptation to simply coast along.

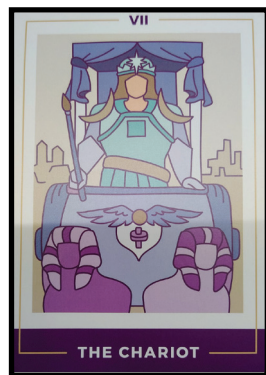
This critical period is not just about survival; it's about strategic action.

The tarot deck, far from being just a tool for prophecy, is best used as a road map for energy management and willpower. The following three cards offer some symbolic advice on how to switch from simply enduring the semester to driving toward a successful completion.

A Note on Methodology

The modern relevancy of tarot lies in the symbolism of each card, which together represents a framework for navigating life's challenges. As a seasoned tarot reader, I selected these cards for their direct relevance to the common struggles faced by students at NECC during the final third of the semester: harnessing willpower, managing energy sustainably, and courageously defending personal boundaries.

Tarot breakdown: The final strategic push



Photos by J.T. Melanson

1. The Chariot (VII) — The Card of Victory, Willpower, and Focused Drive

The Lesson for NECC: This Major Arcana card is the ultimate call to action. After dealing with obstacles, The Chariot provides the surge of energy needed for the final sprint. It is a symbol of victory through relentless, disciplined effort. The Chariot tells the NECC student to stop allowing distractions and harness their focus—like a driver gripping the reins—to propel themselves toward the finish line.

The NECC Academic Coaching program is designed to deliver this very focus. Coaching will help students “become a more effective learner, not simply to survive the crisis of the day”. The program explicitly provides support focused on “goal setting” and “motivation and encouragement” to ensure students have the disciplined direction The Chariot symbolizes. The card reminds you that you must actively steer your course past procrastination and fatigue. Victory isn't about luck; it's about determined, focused will.

2. Temperance (XIV) — The Card of Balance, Moderation, and Sustainable Flow

The Lesson for NECC: The Temperance card, often showing an angel carefully mixing two liquids, is a powerful reminder that the goal is not to burn out, but to finish strong. While The Chariot



demands action, Temperance demands moderation. For the exhausted student, this is a lesson in sustainable flow: you must find a healthy mix of intense work and crucial rest. Pushing too hard now will lead to burnout just before any final exams.

To help students achieve this flow, the SOAR Program regularly plans workshops on “personal health and wellness activities” and “self-care”. This proactive, moderated approach reflects Temperance's lesson that sustainable success requires strategically mixing hard work with rest, thereby managing energy all the way to the end.

3. Seven of Wands — The Card of Courage, Defiance, and Defending Your Position

The Lesson for NECC: The Seven of Wands often depicts a figure fighting off multiple attackers from high ground. For the NECC student, this represents the pressure of the final weeks: friends asking for help, family demands, and the sheer volume of deadlines closing in. This card encourages you to stand your ground.

Academic support services are critical in establishing this boundary. NECC's Academic Advising and Coaching teams help students work closely with an advisor on essential skills like “time management,” “organizational skills,” and “setting priorities”. This directly aligns with the Seven of Wands' message: courageously

establishing and defending your priorities is necessary to protect your final academic position and secure your success.

Conclusion: Time to Drive

These cards all point to the same truth: the end of the semester is not a gentle wind-down, but a period requiring intense, focused willpower and strategic energy management.

The cards provide the strategy, but all the NECC resources give you the tools and resources available to finish your journey. Whether you need help harnessing The Chariot's energy, learning moderation with Temperance or establishing The Seven of Wands' boundaries, remember that help are available to anyone willing to take the steps necessary to obtain it.

- **Counseling and Psychological Services:** Available to all students, these services offer confidential, short-term counseling for stress management, anxiety, and personal issues. To make an appointment, call 978-556-3730 or email counseling@necc.mass.edu.

- **Academic Advising/SOAR Program:**

This program provides personalized coaching to manage academic load, major exploration, goal setting, and plans for transferring or career entry. Contact them at academiccoaching@necc.mass.edu to schedule a meeting.

- **Success Workshops:** Regular workshops and coaching sessions dedicated to time management, overcoming procrastination, and building crucial life skills. Check the NECC Student Success Center homepage for the latest schedule



Arts & Entertainment

Students say modern music has become cliché

By **BRIANNA BURGOS**

Features Editor

As modern hits dominate streaming platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube and TikTok, many college students say today's popular songs have lost their resonance and lyricism compared to the past.

The algorithms on social media and streaming platforms have transformed music consumption into short, catchy clips. Several students at Northern Essex Community College have expressed their opinions on the decline in lyrical depth in artists creating viral hits that are known today.

"I think modern music is less meaningful because most of the artists creating it are making songs they think will be top hits instead of writing something unique to them," said Allora Ramos, a

chemistry major. "Crystal by Fleetwood Mac is a good example of a meaningful song. It's a song about finding clarity and love in a relationship and having a deep understanding of one another, using metaphors like the ocean to represent how natural the connection is," Ramos said. "Die with a Smile by Lady Gaga and Bruno Mars was a song that got popular right away, but I feel like although it's a good song, it doesn't really have a deep meaning to it."

Eva Carias, a medical assisting major, said, "the majority of the time a lot of music is just random words put together." "Nokia by Drake is a good song because it's catchy and it has a good beat, but it's not really meaningful when it's just talking about girls hitting up his phone."

"An old song that everyone loves is

Stand By Me by Ben E. King, and it has to do with love, but also talks about loyalty and companionship for others you leave when they are going through difficult times."

"Songs were more meaningful back then with the lyrics, but now songs just don't have that same vibe to them, especially with the lyrics," said Observer Campus Life Editor Pheonix German, a business transfer major. "24k Magic by Bruno Mars is a song that doesn't make sense, and the lyrics just don't make sense." "Heroes by Alesso and Tove Lo has been a meaningful song to me throughout my childhood, and the lyrics are significant to me."

"Nowadays people only talk about crimes, intimacy and substance use when before there was more variety in the music industry," said Dariellys Me-

dina Duran, an education major.

Medina Duran said music can be meaningful if artists use their platform to spread a positive message: "It can be used to express kind and honest feelings or even as a form of protest for what you believe is right instead of using it to demonstrate an idea that is harmful."

"Michael Jackson used to make meaningful songs to show how Black people were treated and still are being treated. None of Ice Spice's songs are that meaningful because most of her songs are just her saying random things and talking about very provocative themes. I think the songs that have more meaning are the ones you have to really look at the lyrics for," Ramos said. "That's what makes music meaningful."

Parnassus wins back-to-back national awards

By **MELISSA BOUSE**

NECC News

For the second year in a row, The Associated Collegiate Press (ACP) is recognizing Northern Essex Community College's student literary magazine, Parnassus, with a national Pacemaker Award. This makes Parnassus one of the top student collegiate magazines in the country, as this marks the sixth time overall the ACP has recognized the magazine with the distinction. cover image of Parnassus magazine features rainbow-like swirl with the magazine title written sideways in green

"Parnassus is a truly amazing opportunity for students and other members of the NECC community to showcase their artistic works, both at the college and in these national competitions, and

winning the Pacemaker two years in a row (and our sixth time overall) is a strong testament to how fantastic our college's creativity is and continues to be alongside the amazing work of the Parnassus staff in their selection and design of the magazine as well," said NECC Writing Program Coordinator/Faculty Advisor for Parnassus Patrick Lochelt. "We will continue to build on the great foundation we've established, and we look forward to receiving more amazing submissions from our NECC artists and writers for the 2026 issue!"

The prestigious Pacemaker recognizes overall excellence and distinguishes the top student media produced during a particular school year. The award started shortly after the association was founded in 1921 and is often regarded

as the most competitive, most honored award in collegiate journalism.

Other winners of the Pacemaker Award this year include Auburn University, Southwestern College, University of New Mexico, Valencia College, University of Oregon, Western Kentucky University, and Black Hills State University.

Gary Lundgren, ACP associate director and coordinator of the Pacemaker competition, noted the quality of the winning student magazines rivals those produced by professionals.

"The verbal and visual storytelling in the winning magazines is incredible and robust long-form stories combined with shorter quick-reads to pace the reader through the pages of the feature magazines," Lundgren said.

Other national associations, including the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, the Community College Humanities Association, have also recognized past issues of Parnassus. It was first produced at Northern Essex in 1965, making it one of the oldest institutions at the college. The Parnassus staff creates new and fresh looks to present each year, with submissions from the NECC community in the areas of fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, art, and photography.

To learn more about Parnassus, click here or contact Patrick Lochelt at plochelt@necc.mass.edu.

The NECC Observer is also a multi-time Columbia Scholastic Press gold medal winner and Pacemaker Award winner.

Campus Life

Introducing the new student editor

BY PHEONIX GERMAN
Campus Life Editor

Hello, my name is Lirianni, but my preferred name is Pheonix German. I am the new campus life editor in the NECC Observer. I am also visually impaired and use a white cane when I am not in the Haverhill campus.

As a visually impaired person, I was told to use my technology all the time, but I really like writing with pen and paper rather than typing. But now that I have the app Goodnotes on my iPad, I can do traditional handwriting with the technology that I have. But I also really like typing a little bit more now.

I am nonbinary and my pronouns are he/they. I am gender fluid specifically.

For the people who are unaware of these words, nonbinary means that my gender is not in the binary, there are many different types of nonbinary genders such as gender fluid, agender, and lots more. Gender fluid is when someone experiences two genders that can fluctuate over time.

For me, being gender fluid is feel-



Photo courtesy Pheonix German

Pheonix German

ing more masculine some days and sometimes being more feminine. I feel more masculine most days, but I rarely feel feminine. What I feel is out of my control when it comes to my gender expression. Like on days when I am at school or just going somewhere, I present more masculine, but on days when I am going out to a professional place or a fancy place, I tend to feel more feminine. There are other times where I feel more feminine, it's just hard to catch sometimes and sometimes it's hard to explain.

I prefer the pronouns he/they be-

cause I don't really care which one you use but I just prefer he/he's/his and they/them/theirs. I also prefer he/they pronouns because, like what I said in the last passage, I present more masculine and rarely present feminine. So I feel like it is more fitting for me to use those pronouns.

If you are interested, you can search up the meanings of these things in more detail. It's just hard to explain because everyone experiences it differently.

I am a business major, but I wanted to be a part of the Observer because I love writing and always have loved it since I was little. I also love being a part of the campus life here at Northern Essex and thought it would be a good thing to do what I love to do the most, while keeping people informed on the different events that happen here in the Haverhill campus.

I have always loved writing. When I was little, I had a notebook where I would write anything I thought of. Even though I had really long paragraphs and would run out of sentenc-

es, I still loved writing anything I could. In middle school, I would go in the library and just write in my notebook and some of the books that I'd check out as well. The library was my favorite place to go to when it came to recess. That was until the library was closed for that time.

I also like reading, studying, and solving math problems and solving educational puzzles and reading textbooks and educational books.

I wanted to make this my third story because although I might only have one semester left in this college, I wanted to experience writing in journalism and how it works. I am currently taking journalism 1 this semester as it is a required course to be apart of The Observer.

I am very excited to write about the different events here at Northern Essex.

I am very excited to get more involved in some of the events and get to let people who weren't able to go to the events know what went on and how other people thought about it.

Student Affairs Committee to seek student rep

BY SIERRA HERNANDEZ
Correspondent

The Student Affairs Committee is planning to announce the opening of the student representative seat on the committee. The current representative is getting ready to move on from Northern Essex Community College and has been helping to draft the job that will be presented to the student population. Nominations need to be submitted by the end of November.

Lisa Fabbri, a current member of the student affairs committee and an associate professor at NECC highlighted that the student representative was a "necessary piece of the student affairs committee. This is why we are here, for the students. Making sure we are hearing the student's voices and addressing them to the best of our ability."

Sara Codair who is also a student affairs committee member said that

"everything we do as a college affects students."

The student representative would bring student issues to the Student Affairs Committee's attention. Mary Hooper the current student representative explained that the committee was "looking for a really dedicated student," one that could be actively involved on campus with student life.

The Student Affairs Committee

hadn't had a student representative for quite some time until Hooper and is hoping to avoid the seat sitting empty.

The Student Affairs Committee, which is part of the College Advisory Group, helps to advise college leaders.

Anyone joining the committee will have a rare chance to help influence policy on high level.

Helping to bring attention to issues that the student body might have.

Features

Store closures leave shoppers with fewer options

BY BRIANNA BURGOS
Correspondent

If it feels like more stores are closing lately and malls are looking half-empty, it's not your imagination. Across the country, thousands of stores from major retail chains like Macy's, Party City, and Carter's to supermarkets and pharmacies such as Walgreens and CVS have closed their doors.

Bankruptcy, rising tariffs, inflation and the rise of online shopping have driven these closures, leaving communities across the U.S. facing higher costs and difficulty accessing many everyday goods.

For shoppers and NECC students alike, this has become a familiar sight.

Dariellys Medina Duran said she found it shocking to see one of her favorite retail stores closing. "I have noticed various stores closing lately and one of my favorites was

Forever 21," she said. "To my

knowledge, the company was doing very good and making sales. So, the closing felt unreal to me."

Medina Duran said shoppers, including herself, will have to turn to the closest nearby alternative.

For many NECC students, the closures have meant relying more on online shopping.

Allora Ramos said the shutdowns in retail stores have made it harder to find affordable clothing.

"I think all the stores being shut down has made it very difficult for people to easily shop for affordable clothing," she said. "A lot of brands advertise online shopping now, but I feel like this is more difficult and it makes you spend more money than you would inside a store."

Ramos said stores like Forever 21 offered cheaper options that were easy to find and closures like these will change the type of stores students will have to rely on.

For other students, the closures have affected not just availability, but accessibility as well.

Observer Campus Life Editor Pheonix German said their family relied on Walgreens for essentials and they were disappointed when they found out a Walgreens near their home had closed.

"That store wasn't only for other items but also a pharmacy too, so it would affect a lot of people if it's no longer accessible," German said.

The concern about accessibility is one many students share.

Ramos said online shopping may seem convenient, but it can be less accessible for some communities. "People who rely on physical stores will definitely be affected by store closures and accessibility is more difficult online," she said. "It's harder for some communities to see sizing or accessibility online."

The high prices across stores have shoppers holding on to every dollar.

Medina Duran said inflation and tariffs are making even basic purchases harder for families.

"Tariffs and inflation are making shopping very difficult for low-income families who like to treat themselves once in a while," she said. "Prices are going very high, which gives people no choice but to stick to the necessities."

Other students have noticed the same trend.

"Everything is more expensive and less accessible," Ramos said. "These prices make it hard to even find basic things like a T-shirt or jeans for cheap."

As prices continue to rise, German said they expect the shift toward online shopping to continue.

"Most stores would end up moving online, especially because the pandemic changed people's shopping habits," German said.

"Some people might find benefits in that rather than going to a store."

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Sports

NECC reacts to Dodgers World Series win

BY TRISTAN TAYLOR

Features Editor

The 2025 Major League Baseball season wrapped up on Nov. 1 when the Los Angeles Dodgers defeated the Toronto Blue Jays in the seventh and final game of the World Series. The Dodgers, managed by former player Dave Roberts, were able to end the series in extra innings when, with a runner on base, Blue Jays catcher Alejandro Kirk grounded into a double play by Dodgers infielders Mookie Betts and Freddie Freeman.

Students at Northern Essex Community College, as well as alumni, have made their opinions clear. One student, Jake Axford, stated that “I rooted for the Toronto Blue Jays, who were the underdogs, only because I didn’t want the Dodgers to repeat”. Axford further went on to state “I wasn’t sure if the Toronto Blue Jays were going to win, but the Los Angeles Dodgers won. It’s also a rarity to see a team like the Dodgers repeat as World Series champions.”

As Axford stated, the Dodgers became the first team to achieve back to back championships since the New York Yankees won in 1999 and 2000. While this was more common decades ago, league expansions and changes to the playoff format have made this feat increasingly rare.

Others expressed disappointment with the outcome, with one student, Aidan Lohan, saying “I think the Blue Jays should’ve won. They beat a strong Yankees team in the Wild Card.” However, Lohan did give Dodgers pitcher Yoshinobu Yamamoto credit for his remarkable pitching, stating “It was great for the most part.”

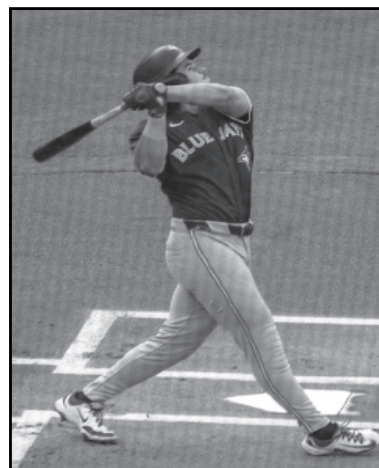
Yamamoto’s extraordinary pitching became a hot topic during the series, re-



All Photos courtesy of Wikipedia
Yoshinobu Yamamoto with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2024.

cording a 1.02 ERA with 15 strikeouts in 17.2 innings. His 3-0 win record is also groundbreaking, as it was the first time a pitcher recorded three road wins in a single World Series, with one of these wins coming in the form of a complete Game 2. Yamamoto, a native of Bizen, Japan, won the World Series MVP award and was listed as a member of the All-MLB First Team this year, some noteworthy accomplishments to add to his already historic career that began in 2017 with the Orix Buffaloes in Japan’s professional baseball league, Nippon Professional Baseball.

Yamamoto was one of three Japanese players on the Dodgers’ World Series roster, joined by superstar Shohei Ohtani and rookie Roki Sasaki. Ohtani’s lackluster World Series performance was a stark difference from his regular season statistics that earned him numerous awards this season, including his fourth Silver Slugger Award. Meanwhile, Sasaki, who struggled in the beginning of the regular season, had a breakout performance in the World Series, showing more of the promise he had coming into the sea-



Addison Barger with the Toronto Blue Jays in 2024.

son after a stellar start to his career in NPB.

This was also the final World Series appearance for pitcher Clayton Kershaw, who called it a career after 18 seasons in the majors, all of which came with the Dodgers. Widely regarded as one of the greatest pitchers in history, Kershaw ended his historic career with a record of 223 wins and 96 losses, and a career 2.53 ERA. The Dodgers legend, who is just one of 20 pitchers to strike out over 3,000 batters, will first be eligible to be inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2031, and is considered by many to be a future first-ballot inductee.

While the Dodgers had great defense in the World Series, the Blue Jays had an offense that attempted to bring the championship back to Toronto for the first time since 1993. Addison Barger, in particular, became a clutch bat, slashing 12 hits in the series, including a home run and two doubles. The home run, in particular, was historic, as it was the first time a pinch hitter hit a grand slam in World Series history. Barger’s .480 batting average in the series got him recognized on a national level.



Clayton Kershaw with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2015.

The Blue Jays, despite losing, carried an incredible roster, including pitcher Trey Yesavage. The Blue Jays’ 2024 first round draft pick made his professional debut this year with the team’s Low Single-A affiliate, the Dunedin Blue Jays, and quickly worked his way up to the majors. Yesavage’s climb is noteworthy, as he reached the major leagues a little over a year, whereas most drafted pitchers take four to six years to reach the majors if they do at all.

NECC alum and diehard baseball fan Cheryl Cantara called Yesavage’s journey “inspiring”, going on to state “He is a phenomenal player and someone we (baseball fans) will be watching a lot going forward.”

The 2025 World Series was one for the history books, with quite a few historic firsts, numerous player breakouts, and incredible plays that will live on in the memories of those who witnessed it either in person or through a screen.

While sports, like anything else, can be a dividing topic, baseball fans at NECC can agree that this was a World Series for the history books.

Sports

The basketball season home opener in photos



The Knight mascot.



Knight Alex Johnson attempts a basket.



Photos by Talan Stratton

A crowd turned out to “pack the stands” for the women’s and men’s basketball team home openers on Nov. 6. For more, see Page 1 and Page 15. Above, NECC Knight Cristian Moscat focused on the drive.



Northern Essex
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FALL
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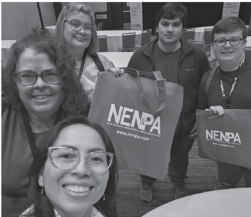
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field

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Sports

Season home opener continued from Page 1

Women's Game:

Tipping off at 5:30 the NECC Women's team sports white jerseys and a full lineup with 4 substitutions. They're facing off against Bristol Community College wearing dark green and featuring a small lineup of only 5 with no room for substitution.

The game gets underway and both teams play a solid first few minutes. Despite the early even play NECC goes on to dominate the first quarter controlling the game by a score of 22-12. Things really start to get going in the second quarter, both teams played well but NECC would end up increasing their lead to 13 with the score at the end of the second being 40-27.

The food arrived at halftime and the fans were getting into it. Bradford Farris, the son of NECC student Melissa Farris, is a big college basketball fan "I came for the free shirt." Bradford said "I'm a big college basketball fan. It's very fun and stimulating." The NECC mascot was perusing the crowd during half-time hyping up fans and making sure everyone had a good time.

In the third quarter Bristol started to make a comeback, and cut their deficit down to 5 points with the game now being at 49-44 in favor of the knights. Bristol controlled the game for most of this quarter despite missing some key passes and taking untimely fouls in the later stages.

As the 4th and final quarter gets underway the game starts to become out of reach for Bristol. It becomes a 4 on 5 matchup in NECC's favor as 1 of Bristol's players goes out. Even-

tually going down to just 3 on 5 for the later half of the 4th and the game would end with the matchup being 2 on 5. Bristol's lack of team power led to a crushing victory for NECC with the final score being a decisive 71-52. NECC's road to victory was spearheaded by Kelsie Martinez who recorded 17 points to lead the team, as well as 16 rebounds, and 3 assists in the game, according to stats from the NECC Knights website.

Men's game:

With the women wrapping up at 7:19 the men started their warmup with the game now set to start at about 7:45. The NECC men's team was suited in blue and yellow school colors facing off against Bristol again in dark green.

Both teams played the first part of the half well and things started of on an even playing field. As play continued NECC would start to take the game away from Bristol. eventually leading to a score of 43-22 in favor of the Knights.

Despite NECC not making a huge impact on the college sports scene they still have many dedicated fans who love to cheer on the team. Shannon Vaughan is a mom of 2 NECC grads and former student athletes. She's a regular attendee at NECC's games and she's here to support their home opener tonight. "I've adopted this team to fill the empty space in my heart with my kids no longer playing." Shannon said "It makes them better men. Especially in today's world with a lot of distractions."

In the second half the men contin-



Photo by John Mulcahy

NECC women's basketball team vs. Bristol Community College

ued to play a hard fought game trading baskets early, but as play continues so do the offensive struggles for Bristol. At the 14:48 mark the score is far into NECC's favor being at 51-28. The Knights dominate the game going into the later minutes. They're safely in the lead at 69-48 by the 5:30 time mark. It was time for fans to stop worrying and start celebrating a victory as the Knights were destined to take this one barring a miracle. The game wrapped up in a devastating victory for NECC taking the contest with a final score of 80-55. The NECC Knights website shows that Alejandro Delgado lead the team in the campaign. He put together an impressive performance including 20 points, 11 rebounds, and 2 assists.

NECC hopes this is a sign of things to come. With the rest of the season looming the teams will look to build off these wins and stay in good shape for the year.



Photo by Lidia Ramirez

NECC head basketball coach Darren Stratton talking to player Cristian Moscat.

Editors note:

According to Sporting News men's college basketball is played in 2 halves, while women's college basketball is played in 4 quarters. The switch for the women was made during the 2015-16 season in hopes of a better flowing game.

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