

Spring is in the Air! (Finally!)



Handout:

The ARM Newsletter

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ACADEMIC PEER MENTORS— YOUR ARM HAS A *HANDOUT* FOR YOU!

IN THIS ISSUE

Going Somewhere?

by **Jeff Field**, Centennial ARM

As the semester begins to come to a close, some of you may be planning for your summer vacation. Don't forget that the summer is your chance to explore, and experience different things that you wouldn't normally have time for. With that, here are my top Connecticut sites to explore for the summer. Keep in mind that the descriptions are taken from their individual websites. Enjoy!

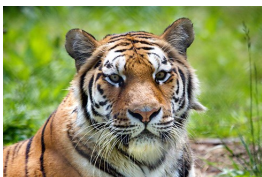
7) The Railway Museum in Danbury

The Danbury Railway Museum is located in the historic station and rail yard in downtown Danbury, Connecticut. It offers railroad history, tours, train rides, a collection of original and restored rolling stock, and opportunities for hands-on railroad work at "12 inches to the foot" scale.



6) Beardsley Zoo

Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo is a wonderful place to visit, either alone or with your



friends/family. Spend an hour, or the entire day, to see more than 300 animals representing North and South American species. Learn about our many endangered and threatened species, which include the Amur (Siberian) tiger, Andean condor, Ocelot, Red wolf, Maned wolf, and Golden Lion tamarin.

5) Yale Art Gallery

The Gallery offers a wide variety of programs and teaching resources designed to help Yale and community audiences engage with the museum's diverse collection and special exhibitions. Visitors of all ages will find opportunities to learn about, enjoy, and be inspired by art and artists of the past and present.



4) Wadsworth Atheneum



The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is the oldest continually-operating public art museum in the United States, founded in 1842 by arts patron Daniel Wadsworth. High-

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Reflections

Reflections

My mother's garden, the once barren tundra of four months of cold darkness outlasting day, was blooming. Grass flanked the red mulched earth and tall green stalks reached for the sun, precious food and energy after sleeping a whole year. The pink peonies, dressed in dew that

glinted like diamonds in the horizon, opened with pride to display their yellow cores. For two semesters I attended college, churning paper after paper, project after project and reading books by the double digits. Finally, I was home, the last week of May, breathing softly without the threat of professors dropping grades like atom bombs each week. But one grade remained, the one that counted the most and showed on the one piece of proof I'd survived another hard year.

The final grade.

Booting up my Sony Vaio, I clicked through Western's home page, scrolling past each identification window and giving my credentials to each prompt. The pages moved, windows shifted, slower than molasses slithering over frozen black top, slower than the tick of my black watch and slower than the blood pumping through my hands. The arrow spun in the tab, the icon of my poor connection to the web, dancing like a halo, hovering indefinitely over the head of faceless Gabriel: permanent, pure and precise.

My name appears, and my grades. I sigh out of relief; the work had paid off with the breaking of the finish line's ribbon and my transcript as trophy. And then an echo... a small voice, shrill and sharp, like a key struck out of tune on an archaic piano, pierced the coolness of my satisfaction. What else did you do? How do you know you did well? Bet Amber did more than you, helped more people. What makes you think you did your best?

I remembered holding the door one March afternoon for a girl whose hands carried boxes rising over her head, and the thank you she gave me, a feeling that few sensations could compare to, the true gift of assistance being a simple exchange of words for a simple action.

The first meeting for a new club I joined was a brief memory, but there it was, shallow as a tide pool. Only attending one or two meetings doesn't help much for its growth, and I can't help but feel as though some potential, an opportunity to grow and expand, was wasted there, not by the club itself, but by my choice to ignore them, to focus solely on my studies and my job. There's only so much time in one day, one week, one month, one semester...

I attended my first event on campus, a movie night held by PAC. I sat there, hunched over in my chair and flipping through apps on my iPhone, desperately trying to find someone, anyone, to see the movie

by Kyle Venditti, Grasso ARM

* This submission is a work of fiction that asks what happens if you take time to reflect on the year you just had when you go home for the summer.

with, just so I wouldn't be alone. After all, what self-respecting guy would want to get caught seeing *The Fault in Our Stars* alone, especially at college? I looked at the blank screen and tried to picture the lights dimming and the projector lighting up the dark room. It would be over soon enough, soon enough. Secretly, I enjoyed these kinds of movies. It wasn't because of the love story per se, or the emotions I knew it would draw from me. It was the story of the human complex, how against all odds, people stand up to what the world gives them—a curse, some deformity that marks them as “different” and permanently bans them from experiencing what the rest of society seems to enjoy, something most people take for granted as simple as love. In that sense, I was here for the love story. Someone broke my despondent stare-down with the wall to ask if she could sit next to me. I blinked a few times, still dazed, a tad confused why she chose to sit next to me when there was a whole row of empty seats around us, but nodded. When the film ended, she left with a wave and an ever-so-slight grin, her red glistening lips wrinkling, perhaps a friendly gesture or, as my stomach indicated after turning a few times, something more, and was gone. All that was left was the taste of strawberries in the air: her savory perfume.

And at my job I worked at as diligently as my schoolwork. It was work, plain and often boring, but the reward of helping direct people to proper departments or buildings from the Student Center Info Desk made the long hours of staring at Snickers bars worth every second. Except for the day this one old woman came in. She was ancient, in her nineties most likely, perhaps even pushing triple digits, and with this obnoxious yellow purse we all knew held wintergreen lifesavers to last a troop of six year olds months. She came to me with a scowl and yelled at me for not making the campus navigable for elderly people, cussed me out in Albanian and walked out the door, leaving her tube of Chapstick® on our counter. It's still next to our phone, a token of her frustration.

The voice grew silent as I reflected on all my works, my accomplishments, my failures, my seized opportunities and bullets dodged, and all the little choices I made. Not all worked out, but next semester would bring more chances to explore, to learn, and to grow. I closed my laptop and sat back in my chair, proud of what I'd done and where I could go next. My mother called for me from the kitchen, asking for help with cutting the garlic for our pan seared chicken tonight. Now that was a skill I had mastered.

“Without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences, and failing to achieve anything useful.”

- Margaret J. Wheatley

lights include the Morgan collection of Greek and Roman antiquities and European decorative arts; world-renowned Baroque and Surrealist paintings; an unsurpassed collection of Hudson River School landscapes; European and American Impressionist paintings; Modernist masterpieces; the Serge Lifar collection of Ballets Russes drawings and costumes; the George A. Gay collection of prints; the Wallace Nutting collection of American colonial furniture and decorative arts; the Samuel Colt firearms collection; costumes and textiles; African American art and artifacts; and contemporary art.



3) Mystic Seaport

The 19th century has never felt more alive than in the formal exhibitions and maritime galleries at Mystic Seaport. The Museum's exhibition halls are brimming with permanent and changing exhibits that offer rare glimpses into other eras and cultures, including restored vessels, figureheads, ship carvings, and vintage photography. Each exhibit and art gallery at Mystic Seaport offers a unique perspective of our nation's history with the sea and voyages on the water.

2) The Harriet Beecher Stowe House



The Harriet Beecher Stowe Center preserves and interprets Stowe's Hartford home and the Center's historic collections, promotes vibrant discussion of her life and work, and inspires commitment to social justice and positive change.



1) Mystic Aquarium

The mission of Mystic Aquarium is to inspire people to care for and protect our ocean environment through conservation, education, and research.

We do this by creating thought-provoking encounters with marine life, conducting research that advances aquatic animal husbandry and health, and by serving as an interpreter of marine science discoveries and conservation issues.

I hope you are able to check out as many of these places as possible, and that you have a great vacation.



Here are a few hints to make summer at home go much better for you:

1. **Don't forget to call.** You're used to going out and staying out all night, and when your parents aren't there, they don't worry. But when you're back at home, give them a heads up when to expect you back, and call them if it changes. It's different when they don't hear you return—they worry!
2. **Help out.** You're in a family. Be a part of it and clear the table or clean a toilet once or twice while you're home. Your mother will be amazed, and your siblings will be happy to have the help!
3. **Remember what you've been missing.** You know how you were homesick when you first got to school? Appreciate home now that you're back.
4. **Be respectful.** I know your roommate didn't seem to care if you came in and turned your music and lights on at 4 am, but your parents, who have to get up for work in two hours, may. Keep it quiet!
5. **Blend in.** Reestablish your connection to your siblings and be a part of things.
6. **Curfew?** Are they kidding? Have a discussion about it, and remind your parents that you've been on your own for a while now. Ask them to give it a try with you being responsible and coming and going at your own schedule, as long as you remember #1 and check in from time to time. It usually works!
7. **Get a job.** As great as it sounds to lounge all day near the pool, you'll be bored in a few days, and you'll run out of money. Keep yourself occupied and stash some cash while you can.
8. **Introduce your boy/girlfriend** to your parents, but take advantage of places in town to get away to.

Enjoy your time at home. Your family really does miss you when you're gone, and you know you miss them while you're away!

Adapted from "Home (Bitter) Sweet Home: A College Student Perspective" by Caroline Finnegan for www.growandflow.com

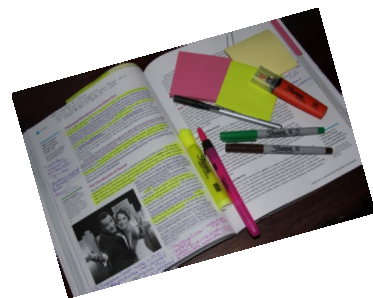
Preparing for Finals

by **Jamie Maitland**, Newbury ARM

- **Plan appropriately:** Finals week can feel like an overwhelming time. You may not know what class to focus on first, or how to even start preparing for it. Therefore, there are a lot of things that you need to take into consideration, like the level of difficulty the class is for you, your finals schedule, and your personal schedule. If you have a final on Monday, May 4, and your next final is not until Thursday, May 7, make sure that you focus on the final that is

first (which is the final on Monday), and then start preparing for your final on Thursday.

- **Remember to eat:** While in the midst of studying, you may not realize that you have been at your desk for hours. All you may be focused on is receiving a passing grade on your final. However, not eating can harmfully affect you in more ways than one. Making sure to have a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and dinner throughout the day



will benefit you physically and mentally.

- **Set time aside for you:**

Those of you who are new to college and are new to the idea of finals week may think that it is this dreadful week that you do nothing but study. However, that is not true. During finals week you need to study but you also need to make sure that you relax. Overloading

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In Summer: Melting Away Bad Fitness Habits

by Kenny Ward,
Centennial ARM

With summer fast approaching, a lot of students are going to end up with a lot more free time than they have right now. This excess time can easily be lost to endless hours binging *Ghost Whisperer* reruns on Netflix, creating and subsequently murdering your Sims on loop, or even just blankly staring at a wall for an unknown amount time. (I may or may not be speaking from personal experience here). The point is that all of this free time and doing nothing can quickly lead to falling out of shape. This can be easily avoided, though. Rather than letting all of this new free time go to waste, you can get down to business and start a new workout schedule to help yourself treat your body properly!

While at school, a lot of people are given the leisure of heading to the many gyms around campus for a quick workout, but once home, it isn't quite as easy if you don't have or can't afford a gym membership. There are still plenty of options though. For one, you can do something as easy as putting on some sneakers and going for a jog. Starting a regular jogging routine can help you stay focused and give you something definite in your schedule every day. If jogging is a little too high-octane for you, you could try a hike or even just a nice stroll around the neighborhood. There are so many great parks around Connecticut that often go unused, so try a nice hike or walk through one of them. And if you have a pooch, make sure to bring them along! Dogs need exercise, too—possibly even more than humans. Try using your pup's well being as a motivator to get you both out on the trails.

Swimming can also be a fun and affordable option, as well as a great way to cool down during the heat of the summer. Come summer, you can join your local town

pool, or swim in your own pool if you have one. If neither of these options is appealing, don't forget about natural bodies of water! Lakes, rivers, and the ocean all serve as nature's swimming pools. Swimming laps is amazing cardio, works wonderfully to tone nearly all of your muscles, and is also a generally relaxing way to pass some time and clear your mind.

Yet another option to get the blood flowing is yoga. This is something that you're able to do easily on your own and in pretty much any location, although I can't necessarily recommend doing this in the middle of the mall or at a funeral or something like that. Maybe just stick to your living room or backyard. There are a lot of varieties of yoga, such as the slower, traditionally regarded yoga, power yoga, Bikram, and some fusion yoga practices as well. Although the optimal experience is in a studio, there are plenty of free video sessions accessible on YouTube. Check these out and find some inner peace in your down time!

Overall, summer should be a time for relaxing, rejuvenating, and simply enjoying a little bit of fun in the sun. Whether you're working or are lucky enough to be spending the summer with ample free time, relaxing and feeling good are two things that simply should not be neglected. However, with this being said, it is innumerable important to remember that if you want to be fit and healthy, it takes dedication. Remember that being healthy doesn't mean depriving yourself of things you love, working out for five hours a day, or dieting until you're super skinny. It means taking the time to exercise your body, eradicate stress, and make informed diet choices. Make sure your summer is relaxing, restful, and more than anything, good to your body.



Preparing for Finals (cont.)



your brain with a lot of information all of the time is not going to benefit you in any way. Go out for a walk, exercise, and even nap— just make sure that you partake in other things besides studying.

- **Utilize your resources:** WCSU has a plethora of people that you can go to for help in your academics. If there is a certain topic in math that you do not understand and you know that you will see the material again on the final you can visit the math lab. If you need help in writing, the writing lab is also available to you. All you have to do is go in and make an appointment.
- **Get enough sleep:** A lot of students think that they are going to pass their finals if they stay up all night and cram. Getting at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep will allow you to remember more information, feel awake, and keep focused on your final.
- **Keep calm:** If you look at your exam, do not immediately think that it is too hard and become discouraged. Go through each question one by one and answer it to the best of your knowledge. If there is something that you do not know, skip it and go back to it. Once you pick an answer, make sure that you stick with it! Remember not to change an answer unless you are **sure** that it is wrong.
- **Study in a quiet place:** While studying for finals, you need to concentrate on the material. You may think that you are fully concentrating on work while you are around a group of friends or in a distracting place but you are not. Grab some snacks, a water bottle, and find somewhere quiet to study.

The Power of Indoor Plants



by Alex Saraceno, Pinney ARM

Indoor plants not only purify the air within the space, but they enrich the overall aesthetic too. Consider livening up your own room in the residence hall and beyond with indoor plants. There are actually many types of indoor plants that thrive well in residence halls. All of the following plants can be found at grocery or hardware stores.

Succulents fit perfectly on windowsills and only need water once to a couple times a month. Aloe vera plants are also low-maintenance and have nourishing properties. They don't require much sunlight or water. The liquid within the leaves can relieve simple skin irritations. Like aloe, mint also has healing properties. These plants need plenty of sunlight and moist soil in a pot that can drain well. Combat stress by chewing a sprig of mint; it can calm nerves, soothe sore throats, and refresh breath. Cacti are also very simple to maintain, considering they can survive the conditions of a desert. One must be careful not to overwater the plant though. Bamboo does best in indirect sunlight and requires weekly waterings. Although some bamboo is quite large, you can find the perfect size for your desk or windowsill.

With little maintenance these plants can improve air quality and provide a calming environment. You also don't have to worry about them growing too large. Although it may seem daunting, consider tending to a plant. Succulents, aloe, mint, cacti, and bamboo are all great plants to start with and will certainly brighten up your room. Get some this summer and start them out at home, then bring them back in the fall. You and your lungs won't regret it!



Before You Know It...

by Saraphina Mwangi, Pinney ARM

Summer is around the corner! Can you feel it in the air? Maybe it's just allergies, but nonetheless, the semester is soon to end and summer activities will commence! I don't know about you, but I cannot wait to wear shorts and feel the sunshine on my back—to finally have a break from a full course load and to be able to breathe a little.

Summer break is a time when we are able to relax a bit and decompress from the previous semester. Although most of us look forward to the break, it can be challenging to adjust to moving off campus. Many of us move back in



with our families, and have to get used to their schedule, having rules, and not having as much freedom as you may have on campus. One thing I would suggest is having a conversation with the people you live with, whether it be parents, grandparents, or friends, and have a discussion on expectations, what they may expect from you, and what you expect from them. If you are used to getting back to your residence hall at 1:00am and not having to let anyone know, that may not be acceptable when you are living

with your parents. It is important to have these conversations with the people you live with.

During the break many of us may work full or part time to save up for the coming semester. If you have not already applied for a job and are looking for work, try to apply for positions at summer camps; many day and overnight



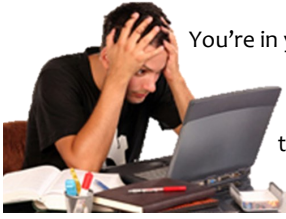
Work at Summer Camp

campers love to hire college students. Another option is applying for jobs at retail stores. Many can hire you as a full time employee for the summer, and during the semester you can have the option of working on weekends.

Summer goes by so quickly, in May it seems like you have forever to enjoy the break, but before you know it August is already here. To enjoy the break it is not necessary to take long vacations in Hawaii, or backpack through Europe. Try taking day trips to drivable destinations. There are many beautiful beaches in New England that we can take advantage of, and historical sights that you can visit. Try to enjoy the break, because before you know it you'll be preparing for another year of school!



PLAN OF ATTACK—PREPARING FOR THE END OF THE YEAR



You're in your room. The desk light is on. Your notebooks and papers and texts are spread all around you, and your computer is blinking out hints from SparkNotes. You've had 3 cups of coffee from The Daily Grind, and you're about out of your mind from the caffeine. Your foot is tapping uncontrollably (probably due to the caffeine overload), and you just can't focus on anything. You're **never** going to finish this paper, and you haven't even **started** studying for the exam you have tomorrow afternoon. How did you get in this mess?

Frankly, at this point in time, it doesn't matter at all how you got to this point. The weeks leading up to spring finals are full. There's WestFest, for example, or the Leadership Banquet or Honors and Awards ceremonies. There's getting those last few nights out with your friends, and—yes—there are still classes even though the weather has FINALLY started to feel warm again. So many things compete for your attention, including your mom who's nagging you to figure out where you're going to work this summer to earn money for next year.

Where do you start? How about organizing yourself and cleaning up your space. It may sound like it's just another way to waste time, but clearing up your space gives you the chance to clear the clutter both physically and mentally.



Make a plan. Write down all the things you need to accomplish between now and the end of the semester. Make sure to include everything—the papers, the tests, classes, outings with friends, arranging with your family when they'll be able to help you move out, end-of-semester events you want to attend. The list will get big fast! Then, make a schedule. Decide what has to be done, and put that in a color that catches your eye. Then put down things you really want to do, and fit that in around the things you have to do, using a different color. Finally, put in the things you'd like to do if you have time, and put those in another color. The visual reminders of what you **have to**

do versus what you **want** to do will help you keep your priorities straight, and if you keep to your schedule, you should be able to fit it all in.



Remember to go to class. In your last few classes, your professor will often go over the course content that will be on the test. Don't miss this valuable time. And, if you still have questions about course materials, take advantage of the prof's office hours to go and ask some questions so that you're clear on the materials. It will show the professor that you're anxious to really understand that material, which could give you a leg up when the prof is grading your exam and s/he remembers you asking for clarification on a topic. Remember, too, that you can get help from your ARMs and your building's PASS members, as well as the labs on campus (Math, Study Skills, Writing, etc.).

Take care of yourself. Don't forget to eat (really—people do this!) And when you do eat, make sure it's not all pizza and chocolate. You need some fruits and veggies and real food to keep you healthy and keep your brain working well. Get out and take a walk. If you've been in the library studying for a few hours, gather up your belongings and take a 10 minute walk around the quad. Stretch. Go to the bathroom. Your brain needs the rest, and your body needs the stimulation of movement.



Finally— if you're actually following this plan, you won't need to be cramming the night before the test. Cramming feels like it works because you're usually excited by caffeine and lack of sleep, but it really doesn't work. Take these last few weeks to methodically review your course notes and readings. If you do, you can almost guarantee that you will be prepared for your tests when you get to them, and ready to face the dreaded blue book with confidence!



So: organize your stuff, plan your attack, get to class, keep yourself fit, and review, review, review! You'll have a great finals week, and you'll be ready to relax and enjoy a beautiful summer!

IMPORTANT HOUSING REMINDERS



It's nearly the end of the year, so it's time to talk about **checking out**. Every resident student is **REQUIRED** to officially check out of the building when leaving, which means that you and a staff member will tour your room, you'll sign out on the inventory form you completed when you checked in, and turn in any keys or other res life equipment you may have. Once you've followed your building's check out procedures (look for emails from your RDs and signs in your buildings for **YOUR** procedures), you're all set to leave for the summer. The final determination of whether you are billed for any damages will be determined by your RIF and a final inspection of your room after everyone has left.

Please make sure to make check out arrangements with your families now. Remember—you are required to move out once your last final is complete. The buildings close on Friday, May 8th for anyone who is not graduating or participating in graduation ceremonies. With this first year of holding graduation in Bridgeport, it might make sense for you to move most of your things home before graduation weekend so that you don't have to return to campus after graduation. Give some thought to what works best for you!

Good luck on exams, and best wishes for a relaxing, fun summer!

**** Don't forget to look for campus events in the WOW email each Thursday! ****

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



What do you think? Have something you'd like to share about this newsletter or other housing issues? Want to give a suggestion for a topic you're interested in knowing more about? Let us know. Drop us a line at housing@wcsu.edu