

Annual Maker Fair shows off student skills



UConn Innovation Zone hosted the UConn Annual Maker Fair on April 24, 2025, on Fairfield Way. Makers from across the university came together to showcase their creativity and some to also compete in the seventh Annual Modified Pinewood Derby. PHOTOS BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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The end of the spring semester at the University of Connecticut always brings with it Spring Weekend: a three-day event encompassing a variety of activities and events for UConn students to offer. One prominent mainstay of Spring Weekend is the annual Maker Fair, now in its sixth year.

This year, the Maker Fair took place from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Fairfield Way and featured work from student innovators. Sponsored by the Innovation Zone located in Werth Tower, the event is open to clubs, vendors and more.

Situated at the corner of the Maker Fair was the UConn Woodworking Club, run by second-semester student and molecular and cell biology major Aleck McNeil. Club members had set up a ramp and wooden cars, with a trigger system capable of releasing the cars to race against one another.

“We started this up this semester,” McNeil said. “So, our second semester here, we were like, you know what? There’s no woodworking club here so, need filled, we made one.”

As president and founder of the club, McNeil acts a primary introduction for students interested in woodworking. During meetings, he typically spends his time helping club-goers understand how to complete their projects and show them the tools required to do so.

“It’s a passion of mine,” McNeil said. “And I went to the Werth iZone, I saw they had a ton of free resources, ton of tools, and I was like, no one’s using them. I might as well use them. And then I used them a lot and got good at them, and I was like, maybe I should make a club out of this.”

Currently, McNeil and the rest of the club have been focusing on smaller projects, such as making birdhouses for conservation groups. Club members can also make pinewood cars, which can be used in competitions. In the future, McNeil hopes to focus on more philanthropic ventures, such as making toys for children in hospitals and other environmentally focused efforts.

“For now, we’re just starting as small as we can while we’re still getting our resources and our footing at UConn,” McNeil said.

Those interested in UConn Woodworking can find them on UConn contact or by visiting their Instagram page, @uconnwoodworking.

While student clubs and organizations are an essential part of the Maker Fair, they aren’t the only people manning tables. The annual event also provides the opportunity for vendors to throw their hat in the ring and sell handmade wares, with one such vendor being second-semester, English education hopeful Madison Angelillo.

“I do not care about making money, I just want people to

see my work,” Angelillo said about vending for the fair.

Along with a purple, velvety table cover, Angelillo brought plenty of samples of her work as a jewelry-maker. Stainless steel necklaces and bracelets, along with customized lighters, were on full display.

“For the past six years, I have been making jewelry, and I haven’t been able to get it out there,” Angelillo said. “And now that I’m growing an Instagram following surrounding it, I get to be in the Maker Fair and have other people see it.”

Angelillo first became involved in making jewelry by visiting conventions, where other creatives were able to show off their work. She soon made the decision to begin her own adventure into jewelry in what she described as “a shot in the dark.” Now that she’s established herself, Angelillo said she’s enjoyed meeting other vendors at the fair.

“I love creating art; painting, jewelry, whatever,” Angelillo said. “It’s really just a great method of stress release. I struggle with mental health, so it’s great to just sit down and focus on making that I love and hopefully other people would love. Sometimes I feel like my purpose is to make and share why I make what I do.”

Those interested in learning more about Angelillo and her work can find her on her TikTok, @n3cromancy, or her Instagram, @necromanticfate.



‘STRANGER THINGS’ returns with new animated series

CLIPART COURTESY OF CREATIVE COMMONS



“Stranger Things: Tales from ‘85” characters Mike and Eleven pose together in a portrait. The Netflix animated series is a spinoff of the original hit show “Stranger Things.” PHOTO COURTESY OF @STRANGERTHINGSTV ON INSTAGRAM

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For the first time since the controversial series finale early this year, “Stranger Things” is officially back.

“Stranger Things: Tales from ‘85” was released on Netflix Wednesday. Based on the original live action series and fitting into the timeline of the show between seasons two and three, the animated series isn’t canon but does stay true to the characters through writing.

The first episode of the show focuses on the six main kids, with cameos from Jim Hopper and Mr. Clarke. The original actors didn’t reprise their characters for this semi-spinoff, meaning that soundalikes had to be found.

The performances range from great impressions, such as Braxton Quinney as Dustin Henderson (Gaten Matarazzo) to iffy at best. Still, none truly take you out of the show, making them all effective at a minimum.

The writing of the reimagined characters also feels close enough to the original show that the re-castings feel more natural. Lucas Sinclair and Max Mayfield are back to their pre-Vecna banter,

while Dustin is just as much of a smart aleck as ever and Mike Wheeler is still his panicked self. Benjamin Plessala doesn’t get much to do as Will Byers, but neither did Noah Schnapp for most of the series.

A few points of question for me arose in listening to Eleven’s dialogue. Some of the conversations don’t feel natural to the character, but there was also a big jump in dialogue from season two to season three in the original show as Eleven began to learn more of the common vernacular. Thus, it’s an understandably difficult period to write about.

There are also a few peculiar half-second pauses after certain bits of Dustin’s dialogue, but that has more to do with editing than the actual makeup of the show.

The animation is wonderful. It is bright and colorful, bringing the world of the 80s back to life and using every shade of neon in doing so. The music is also back from the live action series, with the opening credit music getting a refresh and 80s classics like “We Got the Beat” by the Go-Go’s spliced throughout.

Outside of the similarities to the original show, it does feel like a less-interesting re-

hash of the original. It follows the same storyline of a big-bad appearing from the Upside Down and Eleven needing to stop it. The most interesting parts come in the dialogue, which isn’t bad but can be underwhelming at times.

Because the show doesn’t do anything new, a more cynical person may see the series as an unneeded milking of an already drawn-out IP.

Instead, I see it as more of children’s alternative to the real thing. It’ll be a great stepping-stone for anyone not ready for the gore of the original series but wants to be introduced to one of the best TV series of the past 10 years.

For those who loved the original series, they’ll get a kick out of some of the dialogue that is reminiscent of the early seasons. If for no other reason, give it a chance just because of the awesome visuals.

There are enough reasons to watch a few episodes of the series that it lands a positive review.

Rating:
3.6/5

