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Storrs music venue 'The Dog Pound' finding new location post-closure

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After receiving complaints from the Town of Mansfield and months of closure at their official location, indie DIY music venue The Dog Pound has begun transitioning to a new location.

The Storrs-based collective first began operation in August of 2024, hosting their first show for move-in day of that semester. Beginning in October of 2025, however, the organization began to see pressure from the Town of Mansfield calling for the venue's closure. The Dog Pound's primary location has been inactive since the end of the fall semester.

The Dog Pound had begun receiving communication from the University of Connecticut, the Town of Mansfield and the venue's landlord in request that the organization stop hosting events at their current location, according to founding member Alexa Udell. While the organization had received noise complaints in the past, October was when the group started to see this specific request, Udell said.

"For me, saying that really can't be separated from the context that our previous spot was on, like, Frat Row," Udell said, referring to a neighborhood known for including fraternity houses. "So, it was next to a ton of houses that were all doing the same thing, and we were the only house that faced that."

Udell is a second-year master's of public policy student at UConn. Udell is also a primary organizer for The Dog Pound and does most of the group's booking, along with making flyers, operating the social media, working sound equipment and making many of The Dog Pound's "big picture" decisions.

The Town of Mansfield was first to receive noise complaints about The Dog Pound, and later contacted UConn, according to Udell. The Dean of Students office notified The Dog Pound to expect a visit from the office to ask that the venue discontinue hosting music events.

Since the venue's closure, The Dog Pound and its members have been looking for a new way for the organization to thrive. For Udell, the official location could never have been permanent.

"It's inherently tenuous to be hosting music events at places like that, and even hosting DIY venues in general is very tenuous," Udell said. "Even established locations, places that were intended to be a venue, sometimes go under. So, taking that into account, I knew that we would have to eventually be adapting."

Without the ability to host events at their official location, Udell and the rest of the team at The Dog Pound needed to evolve. Current events hosted by The Dog Pound are now held at a separate location, while the organization itself now operates primarily as a booking agency.

"We're really thankful for people for opening their home to us to allow us to host and do things there," Udell said.

Udell and the rest of the team at The Dog Pound have found a venue in Vernon where they plan to begin hosting events again. To begin, Udell hopes to host smaller artists as opposed to the ones The Dog Pound hosted in Storrs, to try and keep the location to smaller crowds.

"It's a lot of work to go and scout out venues and find people who are willing to let you host at their place," Udell said. "But it's really exciting when we're able to get those things going through. I'm always looking for new places to host at, especially in Storrs just because that's where we've been super strongly rooted."

While The Dog Pound has begun expanding its operations, Udell hopes to remain connected to the UConn scene.

"It's really important to us to emphasize the community building aspect of it, I feel like specifically in the queer community at UConn," Udell said. "At UConn, The Dog Pound is very well-known, and it's a very important space for people to be able to go out and have a nice night out without necessarily worrying about a lot of the considerations that you need to have when you're going out as an openly queer person."

For some in the Storrs music scene, The Dog Pound's closure is more than just a venue shutting down. Eddie Dahill, the drummer for Connecticut-based band Ruby Leftstep, saw the organization as an important way of connecting with fans.

"The Dog Pound was a very important presence to us musically and then also socially, because our, I would say 60, 70% of our loyalist fans are all at UConn," Dahill said.

Dahill noted that he had a personal connection to The Dog Pound. When the organization first moved locations at the start of the 2025 fall semester, Dahill helped set up the venue's sound system and even secured discounts from his job at a music store. Additionally, Ruby Leftstep recorded their live album "TED" at this new location in October of this past year.

"It doesn't need to be like this," Dahill said. "You're infinitely safer at The Dog Pound in a mosh pit than you are at a frat, you know, covering your drink the entire night."

"Music will always go on," Dahill said. "They hosted a show where they had shuttle services — like, music will find a way. They'll find a way around the assholes that try and put it down. That's the beauty of it, is that everybody wants it so bad that they'll do anything to get it back."



Photos from a show at Storrs-based DIY live music venue, The Dog P0und. The venue has had to switch locations following complaints from the Town of Mansfield and the University of Connecticut. PHOTO COURTESY OF @THEDOGP0UND ON INSTAGRAM

FIRES AT HORSEBARN HILL, DADDY'S NOODLE BAR

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A fire broke out at Horsebarn Hill on Feb. 14 around 8 p.m., killing four sheep.

University of Connecticut spokesperson Stephanie Reitz said in an email that UConn firefighters put the fire out before major damage occurred. Reitz also confirmed that there were no reported injuries to the emergency response crews.

The UConn Fire Marshal's Unit is investigating the origin of the fire. Mutual aid crews from Coventry's and Manfield's fire departments also responded to assist, according to Reitz. Representatives from UConn Facilities Operations, Farm Services and the Building Inspector's Office came to the scene as well.

"UConn's sheep herds are used in the UConn Department of Animal Science's teaching, research, and community extension programs," Reitz said in the email. "There typically are about 90 ewes in the livestock barns along with about 45 beef cows."

Fire crews came to Daddy's Noodle Bar in Downtown Storrs late in the morning on Feb. 15. The restaurant was closed for at least the rest of the day.

Jordan Narotsky, an eighth-semester allied health major, worked at Dog Lane Café, the neighboring restaurant, that day. She said that because of the connected vents between the two buildings, Dog Lane Café was filled with smoke for a while. The restaurant never closed, but it mainly focused on takeout orders for a while, according to Narotsky.

The Daily Campus will continue to report on the fires as more information becomes available.



Fire crews responding to a smoking building. Mutual aid crews from Coventry and Mansfield fire departments responded to a fire on Horsebarn Hill this past Saturday, with additional crews responding in Downtown Storrs on Sunday, Feb. 15.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @WTNH8 VIA INSTAGRAM.

BLUMENTHAL HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE TO STAND AGAINST STUDENT LOAN RESTRUCTURING

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Sen. Richard Blumenthal held a press conference in Hartford, Conn. on Feb. 9 to address federal student loan limits imposed on teaching and social work degrees by the One Big Beautiful Bill.

Blumenthal called the bill "one big betrayal" and said he wondered whether Secretary of Education Linda McMahon was "more the secretary of miseducation."

"If you could imagine a measure that is stupid and cruel, it would be capping the loans that are available to teachers and social workers as they pursue their studies," Blumenthal said.

The One Big Beautiful Bill changed the system for federal student loans based on whether the borrower was pursuing a professional or graduate degree. Blumenthal said these changes could worsen the shortages of educators and social workers, both in the nation and in Connecticut.

"Public service is a calling for teachers and social workers, and the least we can do is enable them to afford financially and have access to the studies they are engaged in doing to acquire the skills that make them productive public servants," he said. "We need more of them, not fewer. We need to aid them more, not less."



Sen. Richard Blumenthal speaking at the Munich Security Conference. Blumenthal has stated that recent student loan restructuring outlined in the One Big Beautiful Bill could worsen the shortages of educators and social workers.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @SENBLUMENTHAL ON INSTAGRAM

Blumenthal said he has written to McMahon and reached out to colleagues on both sides of the political aisle to address the potential fallout from these changes, as supporting teachers and social workers should not be a political issue.

Education and social worker advocates also spoke at the press conference. Kate Dias, the president of the Connecticut Education Association and a University of Connecticut graduate, said continued education was important so

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