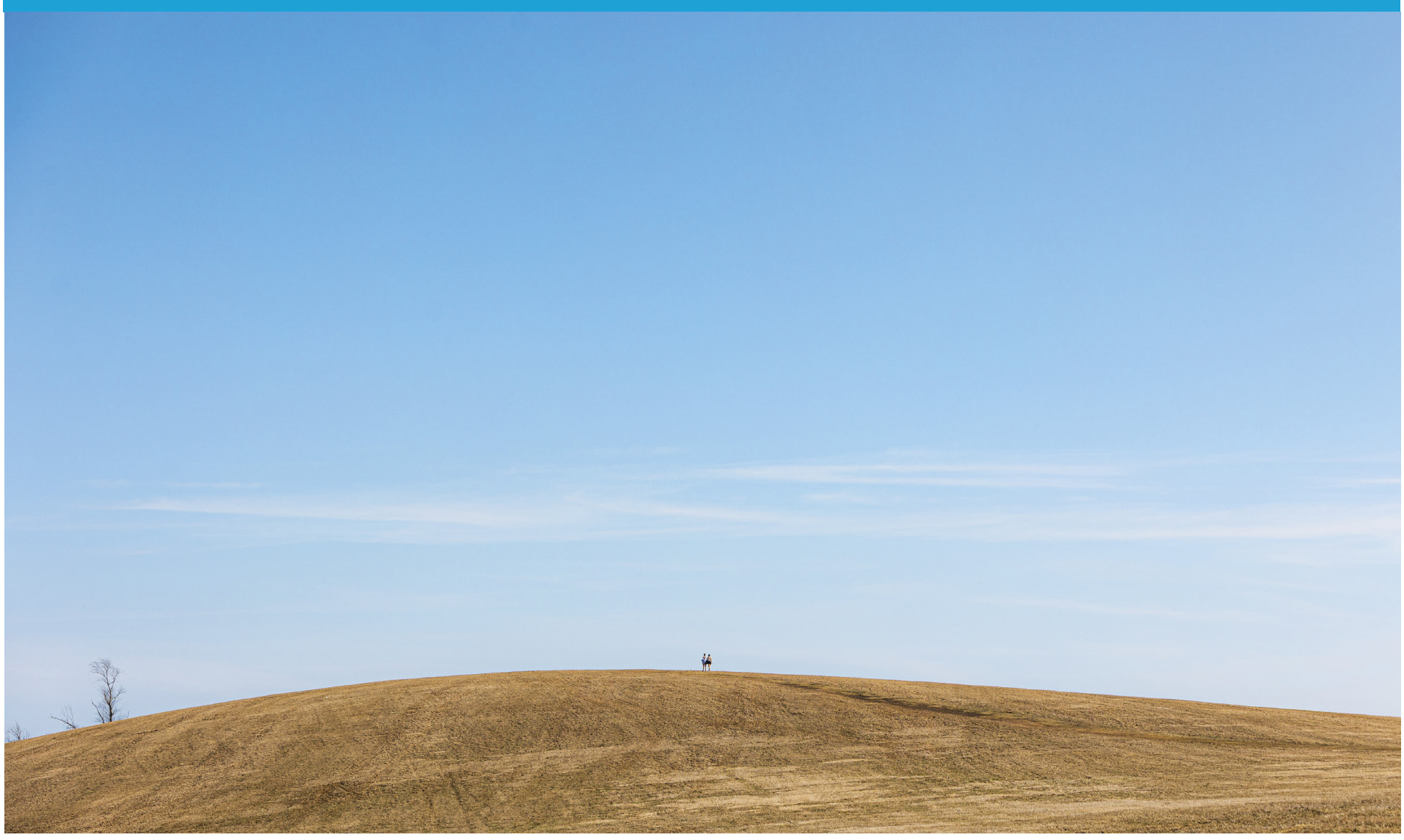
Opinion

Photo of the Day | The sun returns to UConn



Students walk up Horsebarn Hill after 74-degree weather melted the season's remaining snow and ice in Storrs, Conn., on Tuesday, March 10. Warm spring temperatures drew students, locals, and alumni outside to walk, run and enjoy the afternoon. PHOTO BY ZACH MOLLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Have we lost the point of International Women's Day?

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Last Sunday marked the 115th anniversary of International Women's Day. What was once a widespread opportunity to push for progress has dwindled down to a calendar marking acknowledged more in the spoken word than in action. For many, the general sentiment of celebrating International Women's Day seems limited to reposting inspirational Instagram graphics and celebrating the women in our lives. Sure, we say "Happy Women's Day" and maybe buy each other flowers or coffee, but that's hardly enough. In the spirit of its founders, International Women's Day should be honored with an emphasis on action, unity and progress.

International Women's Day was created not merely as a celebration, but a call to action. In 1910, Germany's Clara Zetkin proposed an International Women's Day at Copenhagen's International Conference of Working Women. Working women's protests in New York had inspired America's National Women's Day a year prior, and Zetkin's vision emphasized women around the globe rallying to end discrimination. One hundred women from 17 countries unanimously approved the idea, and International Women's Day was born.

The first International Women's Day was celebrated on March 19th, 1911. Over one million women and men attended IWD rallies campaigning for women's rights to vote, work, hold public office and more. Less than a week later, on March 25, New York City's Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire claimed the lives of over 140 working women. This tragedy, which impacted primarily Jewish and Italian immigrants, sparked a demand for working women's rights. Subsequent International Women's Day celebrations emphasized labor legislation to honor the victims.

Much progress has been made over the last century. Born into their rights to vote, work and hold public office, younger generations of women — especially in America — have begun to feel as though all our battles have been won. However, to merely celebrate how far we've come is to invite complacency. From "pink tax" and wage gaps to horrific incidents of femicide and violence, we are incredibly far from perfect. This isn't to say that we should not celebrate the rights we have and the progress we've made, so long as there's an acknowledgement of the further advancements that can be worked towards.

Aside from calling attention to problems within our country, we must not forget to look beyond our borders. It's crucial to celebrate the women in our lives and those who came before us, but it's just as important to celebrate our sisters across the globe. We gravitate towards honoring those close to us because it's easy, but very rarely does the easy path come without sacrifices. Merely focusing on what's in our line of sight leaves out millions of women. Some live in war zones; some lack the right to education and the workforce. Their struggles may be different from our own or exactly the same. Regardless of the nature of their suffering, distance is no excuse to ignore the hardships of others, especially on a day emphasizing unity across the world. Not a single nation has closed the legal gap between men and women. This movement was born out of solidarity, and it must remain that way.

This Women's History Month, remember the women who sacrificed multitudes to get us where we are now. Remember the invisible sacrifices made by the women close to you, and remember the battles being fought by those far away. Remember these women and fight in their name. Attend a rally, donate to charities, educate yourself on the struggles of others across the world. Complacency is unacceptable until we've achieved gender equality worldwide.



Clara Zetkin, the founder of International Women's Day. Last Sunday marked the 115th anniversary of the day which recognizes women and their contributions to society.

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