UCONN STUDENTS RELAX AND SHOW OFF CREATIVITY AT AUTUMN KICKOFF

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To initiate the new season, Student Activities hosted an event called the Autumn Kickoff on Wednesday, Sept. 23, at the Student Union.

The room was decked out with tables offering apple cider and donuts. While some donuts were glazed, others were fall-themed, with chocolate frosting and yellow, orange and brown sprinkles.

Moeez Khawja, a seventh-semester analytics and information management major who works as a student employee in Student Activities, said the Autumn Kickoff is meant to give students an opportunity to take a break from schoolwork and relax.

"I know exams are coming up for some people, and classes have been going on for a few weeks; so, this event allows them to get together during a time where they can forget about academics for a little bit and do a little bit of self-care, whether that's by painting or by enjoying themselves with a donut or cider," Khawja said.

Besides donuts and apple cider, white 8-by-8-inch tote bags were provided for decorating. The tote bags were designed differently, some with leaves, acorns, pumpkins and sunflowers or a collage of multiple patterns.



Students decorate different autumnal themed tote bags at the Autumn Kickoff on Wed, Sept. 23 in the Student Union. The event was the first fall-themed tote bag even hosted by Student Activities.

PHOTO BY JAYLYN DAVIS, STAFF WRITER/ DAILY CAMPUS.

To decorate the tote bags, students were provided with paint and paintbrushes. Color options for painting included a variety of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink, brown, black, cyan, gray and lavender.

Khawja mentioned that the Autumn Kickoff is one of Student Activities' newer events. He said that Student Activities has held tote bag painting events in the past, but not one specifically tailored to the season.

Vaishakhi Moningi, a ninth-semester physics doctorate student, said the event was great and that it fit her interests.

"I like going to events where it has something creative, so this was perfect for me," Moningi said.

At the beginning of the event, students filled the room. The door was clogged with attendees waiting to grab supplies and a snack. Calming music played while attendees chatted with one another and worked on their bags.

The event was a hit. Tote bags and donuts were gone about 30 minutes after the kickoff began.

Hiral Choksi, a third-semester master's student in computer science and engineering, said the Autumn Kickoff was very chill and serene.

"It was relaxing, especially after work," Choksi said. "I really like painting, and it was soothing with the music and my friend."

Allie Visbee, a first-semester molecular and cell biology student, said the event was enjoyable.

"I had a lot of fun with it," Visbee said. "It was kind of a spontaneous little thing where my friend saw the ad on Instagram, and we were like, 'this would be a fun way to relax after classes and do fun little painting activities.'"

Chill Pill

You're not single, you're just illiterate

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Along with the death of literacy, romance is going with it; this is something I've noticed as a seventh-semester English major in the School of Education.

Something about literacy that most people get confused by is that it doesn't just teach you how to read but rather teaches how to feel in great detail. It helps you understand the difference between wanting someone and needing them, and because people are reading less, emotional fluency disappears.

Romance is confusing and new for everyone, whether you are a senior in high school entering your first long term relationship, or a senior in college re-entering the romance scene after years of being in a committed relationship. Romance is complicated. Romance is complex. But that is where literacy comes into play to help mitigate that complexity.



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Welcome to Chill Pill, a biweekly column featured on Fridays about slowing down in a world that rarely lets us do so as college students. Here, we will talk about balance, burnout and the small things that can make college life feel a little less overwhelming.

Romance requires empathy. Empathy requires imagination. Imagination requires language. Language requires reading.

You can't write your partner a love letter if you've never read one. You can't describe how you feel if you've never seen it described. So, pick up a book. When you don't read books, you start to lose the ability to analyze subtext. You start to miss the plot twist in real conversations. The ability to read the room slowly decreases as you lack the practice of looking at a narrative and figuring out what is happening under the surface. And if you can't parse out the hidden meaning in a stance, how are you going to decipher whether someone is playfully flirting or trying to escape the conversation?

We see evidence of this everywhere; look at dating apps. We went from using pigeons to send love letters to Hinge bios that say, "I'm figuring out my relationship type." That isn't romance or flirting; it's linguistic laziness. If your vocabulary is limited to emojis and internet slang, you are lacking the tools needed to build actual connection.

Now we can take a step back from romance and look at flirting specifically. The best flirts are those that are very witty, fast and understand subtext. They know how to engage in banter, giving replies that move dynamics further. Flirting isn't overly aggressive or sexual either. The best lines make you pause and think. That pause requires nuance, which is lost on the people who need everything spoonfed to them. I blame that on the decline of literacy.

Often, you flirt with someone and they hit you with the "Wait, huh?" You know what, never mind.



A still from the film adaptation of the novel "The Notebook" where the main character, Ally, discovers that her past lover, Noah, wrote her love letters everyday for a year. A literate background is needed in order to understand the art of writing love letter.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BUZZFEED.

The decline in literacy isn't just worsening TV shows and movies, where the plots are predictable, but it is also ruining the art of flirtation. So here is your prescription for this week: put down your phone and read something with actual paragraphs. Read poetry, a bad romance novel; just read something where characters use their words to express their desires.

Expand your vocabulary so you can express your feelings.

Where to buy pumpkins this fall



A variety of pumpkins found at Edmonson's Farm and Nursery in Coventry, Connecticut. Edmondson's also offers pumpkin carving supplies.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EDMONSON'S FARM AND NURSERY

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Fall has finally arrived, and Halloween is just about a month away. The next few weeks will be filled with various seasonal activities including hayrides, scenic hikes and pumpkin carving.

Most people buy their pumpkins from grocery chains like Stop & Shop, Big Y and Price Chopper, but here are some places where you can get the best pumpkins while also supporting local farmers.

Strong Family Farm

In Vernon is Strong Family Farm, which is what it sounds like: a family-owned farm.

This working farm came to light in 1878 and began its journey raising turkeys. Since then, its farmers have grown from raising animals to growing plants, vegetables and flowers on their property.

On Oct. 18, the farm will hold its annual harvest festival filled with one-of-a-kind pumpkins to choose from, friendly animals to pet and memories to make.

Foster Family Farm

Another amazing farm, and a personal favorite of mine, is Foster Family Farm, located in South Windsor.

What started as a small dairy farm in 1790 grew into a lovely place for livestock and people alike. This farm has everything: from a beautiful courtyard to ginormous pumpkins, scenic hayrides, corn mazes and super cute sheep. The farm also hosts field trips for daycares and elementary schools.

On Oct. 2, Foster Family Farm will host a safari night at the corn maze. This event is a wild night with animal-themed trivia and games. Speaking from past experiences, this is definitely a fun night out with friends and family.

Scantic Valley Farm

Scantic Valley Farm, located in Somers, is another gem.

As its website puts it, this farm loves to "harvest happiness" through its various plants and flowers.

Known for its delicious blueberries and strawberries during the summer season, the farm also offers a variety of different kinds of pumpkins in its pick-your-own pumpkin patch, accompanied by its one-of-a-kind twisting, spiral corn maze.

Edmondson's Farm and Nursery

The last farm to mention is Edmondson's Farm Nursery, located in Coventry. This farm is another family-owned farm operating since 1932.

It is open seasonally and offers everything from vegetable plants to large and small pumpkins.

Edmondson's also offers carving supplies to those up for the challenge. Although it's quite simple to buy a cheap, $5 supply carving kit from Price Chopper or Spirit Halloween, the outcome from using better, more stable supplies is worth it.

Cheap carving kit tools break easily and more often than not, end up leaving your pumpkin with a sloppy design. At Edmondson's, buying a carving knife for 10 dollars can make your carving experience transcendental.



An assortment of pumpkins found at Foster Family Farm in South Windsor, Connecticut. Pumpkin picking is a great fall activity.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FOSTER FAMILY FARM