A conversation with a university almnus

By Brianna Wallen
Editor-in-Chief

After wondering who was in the portrait on the third floor of the Adanti Student Center, I had the opportunity to meet him last week.

Neil Thomas Proto, a 1967 graduate of the university, met with three members of the Southern News editorial team on Thursday, Oct. 29, to discuss campus life, student concerns and the experiences of young adults navigating campus and the world they will be inheriting.

Proto met with myself, Editor-in-Chief Brianna Wallen, News Editor Valentina Toro and Features Editor Mackenzie Byerlee for a conversation about what is happening on campus, the challenges students face and the issues that matter to the university community.

A first-generation college student, Proto grew up in New Haven's Fair Haven neighborhood.

He has credited the university with providing a foundation for his success while helping strengthen the values he developed growing up.

During his time at the university, Proto studied history and political science and served as Student Government Association president. Proto said he was one of the few college of arts and science students at the time.

Proto recalled how then university President Hilton C. Buley called on him to bring together students from Connecticut's state colleges to advocate for their institutions.

At the time, state colleges were often viewed as inferior to other universities. Buley wanted students to unite and make their voices heard, Proto said.

After graduating from the university, Proto attended George Washington University for graduate school, where he became involved in advocacy. I learned that he was a resident adviser and hall director there as well.

As someone who is an RA, it was cool to hear that we shared similar experiences in our role despite the generational difference.

Proto also shared how he organized students to support John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign.

After learning there was no organized group of young people campaigning for Kennedy, Proto took the initiative to reach out to his peers in Connecticut from Washington, D.C.

He rallied a group of students from the university to campaign for Kennedy, demonstrating his early interest in civic engagement and political involvement.

Throughout his career, Proto has remained connected to the university and the Greater New Haven community.

His support of the university has helped fund initiatives ranging from scholarships for aspiring lawyers to programs encouraging civic engagement and preserving New Haven's political history.

I appreciated the opportunity to sit down with him, hear about his experiences and learn more about the university beyond what I see as a student.

I learned so many things from him, including that the paper used to be called The Soconnion.

For the Southern News editors, the meeting offered an opportunity to share their perspectives as students and discuss the concerns of balancing academics, responsibilities and plans for the future.



PHOTO | MADISON ROMAN

Journalism majors Mackenzie Byerlee, Valentina Toro and Brianna Wallen, seniors, with Neil Proto in the Adanti Student Center on Thursday, Oct. 29.

As student journalists, Toro, Byerlee and I work to cover the issues affecting the university community and provide a platform for student perspectives.

Proto emphasized the importance of students sharing their insights and the need for journalism as a whole.

Using our voices and speaking about topics that we care about is what keeps everyone educated and aware of what is occurring around them. This is especially important when it comes to our local community.

The conversation allowed us to bring those experiences directly to an alumnus whose own time at the university helped shape his career.

The meeting served as a reminder of the connection between past and present students and the importance of continuing conversations about the university's direction and the experiences of the people who make up the campus community.

Features Editor details experience at Buc-ee's

By Mackenzie Byerlee
Features Editor

On Sunday, Nov. 1, I had the pleasure of visiting an American staple for the first time.

Buc-ee's in Rockingham, Virginia was truly an amazing experience. While visiting a friend in a nearby town, I was able to cross this off of my bucket list.

As much as I knew how popular the franchise was, I was not anticipating the amount of signage leading up to our arrival.

There was a sign 100 miles away indicating where the nearest Buc-ees was which was insane to me.

Buc-ees is much more than just a gas station, as this location is 74,000 square feet. They sell such a wide range of items that I had to wander around just to take it all in.

I will say that it was very busy and honestly felt like I was in a crowded grocery store. People had carts full of items and were waiting in line for brisket.

But this did not take away from my experience. It just made me realize how many other people have wanted to visit Buc-ees as badly as I have.

Bucky the Beaver was on just about every item in the store. They had T-shirts, phone holders and even ice cube trays that honored the famous mascot.

As someone who loves a souvenir, this was genuinely my dream.

Naturally, I wanted to purchase almost everything that I saw. But I controlled myself and only bought a T-shirt and some snacks that I obviously needed to try.

As my friends and I were about to embark on an eight hour drive, stopping here to pick up everything we could possibly need was great. It also gave us another activity.

I think the part that surprised me the most was the section of the store that resembled a normal gas station.

After passing through the home and food sections, it really caught me off guard to be reminded where I actually was. I think that the feeling that there is nothing else truly like this was what drew me in the most.

Another section that I was fascinated by was their famous wall of beef jerky, which displayed a plethora of flavors. This was one part of the store that really put into perspective the fact that something like this would never be found outside of the U.S. or honestly even anywhere near Connecticut.

Being able to visit a place that I heard such rave reviews about, both from friends who have been previously as well as from people online, was a really fun way to end my weekend trip to Virginia.

I would certainly recommend taking a trip to Buc-ee's for anyone driving on the highway that sees that they too are in a 100 mile radius of one.



PHOTOS | MACKENZIE BYERLEE

The outside of Buc-ee's in Rockingham, Virginia on Sunday, Nov. 1.



Journalism major Mackenzie Byerlee, a senior, posing with Bucky the Beaver.

Fashion journalism still matters

By Valentina Toro
Managing Editor

Fashion has always been about creativity, individuality and self-expression. However, the way people learn about fashion has changed significantly.

Instead of opening a magazine or reading an article about the latest runway collections, many people now turn to TikTok and Instagram to see what their favorite influencers are wearing.

Fashion influencers have become an important part of the industry, and I do not necessarily see that as a bad thing. They introduce trends to younger audiences, share their personal styles and make fashion feel more accessible.

However, I believe fashion journalism still deserves the same attention and recognition.

During major fashion events such as New York, Paris and Milan fashion weeks, influencers share videos of runway shows, designer collections and behind-the-scenes moments.

Their content allows millions of people to experience events they might never attend in-person.

I enjoy seeing this type of content because it offers a different perspective on fashion. Watching someone react to a collection or explain how they would style a particular outfit can be entertaining and inspiring.

But, there is a difference between showing a collection and reporting on it.

Fashion journalists do more than describe what models wear on the runway. They research designers, interview industry professionals, examine cultural influences and explain the meaning behind collections. Their work helps audiences understand fashion beyond its appearance.

Publications such as Vogue have built their reputations through years of fashion reporting, criticism and storytelling. Although social media has changed how audiences consume information, the importance of credible journalism should not disappear.

I also think it is important to recognize that having thousands or millions of followers does not automatically make someone an expert in fashion. Popularity can create opportunities, but it should not be the only factor determining whose opinions receive attention.

At the same time, I do not believe influencers should be excluded from fashion spaces. Many content creators have developed their own knowledge of the industry and use their platforms to discuss designers, trends and fashion history.

In fact, I think influencers and journalists can learn from each other.

Journalists can explore more creative ways to reach younger audiences, while influencers can recognize the importance of research and accuracy when discussing fashion.

articles that explain the inspiration and creative process behind a collection.

For more on this story visit thesouthernnews.org

SOUTHERN NEWS

Advisers: Cindy Simoneau, Jodie Gil

Contact information:
Email: scsu.southernct.news@gmail.com
Newsroom Phone: 203-392-6928
Fax: 203-392-6927

Mailing Address:
Southern Connecticut State University
Adanti Student Center Room 222
501 Crescent Street
New Haven, CT 06515

Issues printed by: Valley Publishing, Derby, CT
Follow us on Twitter: @Southern_News
Like us on Facebook: facebook.com/thesouthernnews
Visit us online: TheSouthernNews.org
Print edition online: OurSchoolNewspaper.com/Southern

Southern News welcomes any and all comments and suggestions. If we make a mistake, please contact us and we will publish a correction or clarification in the next issue.

We are the student newspaper of Southern Connecticut State University, and we welcome the writing of all Southern students and faculty.

To submit a piece, email it to scsu.southern.news@gmail.com, or stop by the Southern News office on the second floor of the Student Center, Room 225. Electronic submissions are preferred.

Visit www.TheSouthernNews.org for more.

Brianna Wallen	Editor-in-Chief
Valentina Toro	Managing Editor
Section Editors	
Vacancy	News Editor
Mackenzie Byerlee	Features Editor
Vacancy	Sports Editor
Lily Rand	Photo Editor
Mateusz Gazdzicki	Photographer
William Gagne'	Photographer
Staff Reporters	
Noah Nunez	General Reporter
Vacancy	Sports Writer
Vacancy	News Writer
Copy Desk	
Mackenzie Byerlee	Vacancy

WE'RE HIRING!

Become a staff member for student campus media and publications.



SOUTHERN NEWS VACANCIES:
- Sports Editor
- News Writer
- Sports Writer
- Copy Editor

CRESCENT MAGAZINE VACANCIES:
- Copy Editor
- Assistant Layout Editor

Contact simoneauc1@southernct.edu or torov1@southernct.edu to schedule an interview or for more details.