

# Transitioning to SVCC during a Pandemic



Connor Williams, SVCC's new math professor

By: Ethan Ainley

Sauk Valley Community College is welcoming a new math professor this semester. Connor

Williams is teaching intermediate algebra classes and elementary statistics.

He has been teaching for a total of six years. Professor

Williams first spent five years teaching 8th graders and one-year teaching high school. As well as teaching at other community colleges in the area for the last four years.

I got to talk virtually with Professor Williams and he let us excited to be working at Sauk. "They [SVCC] have a lot of the same values of teaching that I look at. There is a lot of putting the students first," he said. Community college is where he was inspired by his math professor to become a teacher himself.

Professor Williams talked about transitioning to a new job during a pandemic, "The transition has been unlike anything I've ever experienced because I'm not actually in the building." His transition has occurred almost entirely right from home.

The pandemic hasn't stopped him from doing his favorite hobbies like running, reading, playing video games, and watching movies. However, in a normal non-pandemic year he runs about eight 5Ks per year. The COVID Pandemic

has also stopped him from going with his wife to Disney World, as they regularly do in a year. He loves the field of math and his favorite thing about the subject is, "The applications you can put towards almost anything." Professor Williams finds sports statistics to be the most interesting.

He doesn't just love the subject, but he also loves the rewarding feeling of being a teacher that not even a pandemic can stop him from getting. Professor Williams said, "The most rewarding

feeling is seeing a student have that moment of success." Professor Williams is very impressed with Sauk students. They have made transitioning much easier for him. He said, "It really shows in the Sauk students that everyone has the work ethic and want to be successful."

He is aware some students don't like math but his advice is to, "give every class a fair shot." Professor Williams is looking forward to hopefully helping those students gain an appreciation for math just like his professor did for him.

## Phi Theta Kappa Hosts Rock River Cleanup

by: Graycyn Bennett

On September 19th, Phi Theta Kappa is hosting a volunteer opportunity to help clean up the Rock River. The volunteers will pick up in a 1-mile stretch along the river. This event is the first of many in their environmental services project through PTK's Honors in Action program.

The theme for this year's Honors in Action program is Natural and Constructed Environments and they aim to answer the questions "To what extent are natural and constructed environments fluctuating, and how can we intentionally interact with them to affect our legacy?" This theme, along with Covid-19 restrictions, are what lead to the idea for this event.

Audrey Smith, a PTK advisor, along with other PTK advisors, proposed the question "How can we make a difference and

educate people while still being safe?" They decided the river clean-up would be a logical solution.

PTK hopes to have at least 25 students and 10 community members to help out.

Each group will be fewer than 10 people and they will practice safe social distancing.

Each group will be responsible for cleaning up a specific type of waste. Group A, for example, will pick up plastic bottles, while group B will pick up glass. At the end of the event, the Honors in Action students will count how much garbage was picked up from each category and will record this information for a research project.

In the time that PTK has been at Sauk, they have never been able to conduct a research project and Ms. Smith is "really excited" about their mission. PTK hopes to do another river clean-up in April to compare with the September data in order to help educate the com-

munity on the effects of single-use plastic and the importance of recycling.

Ms. Smith said, "our goal is to make people more aware of how much plastic they use and dispose of in their everyday life." She further stated, "It's a global problem but if we can inform others, and each person can make a change in their own lives, and maybe their family's lives, we can slowly make a dent in the single-use plastic."

Those who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact Audrey Smith, at [audrey.e.smith@svcc.edu](mailto:audrey.e.smith@svcc.edu), with their name and phone number.

Volunteers are required to wear masks, preferably reusable ones to reduce waste. Long pants, sturdy shoes, and bug spray are recommended. Gloves, garbage bags, and trash pickers will be provided. Volunteers will meet at Dixon High School's main parking lot at 8 am and will work until 2 pm.



Garbage found in the Rock River, Dixon High School, Dixon, Illinois

## Sterling Races to the Win

by: Jessica Payne

Sterling High school nearly scored a clean sweep against United Township with a close race to first at the cross country meet on September 3rd in Hoover Park located in Sterling.

In the girl's division Sterling Sophomore Kylie Nicklaus Pulled out a win with a time of 19 minutes and 42 seconds. United Township runner Maddie Miller was close

behind.

Sterling took the next 4 places with Lily Peavy in third, Mika Martinez in fourth, Sarah Navarro in fifth, and Rhylee Wade in sixth. United township runner Analya Sedano took seventh place. Sterling claimed the last 3 places with Megan Gingrich in eighth, Laney Block in ninth, and Ellie Mahar in tenth. Sterling claimed 8 of the top ten spots in the girls division.

In the boy's division Sterling Freshman Dale Johnson was first with a time of 16 minutes

and 26 seconds. United township runner Logan Veloz was close behind in second.

Sterling High school took the next five places with Javon Bruce in third, Sam Brown in fourth, Thomas Holcomb in fifth, John Cid in sixth, And Owen Anderson in seventh. United Township runners Kade Rodgers and Josh Allen claimed the eighth and ninth places respectively, and Sterling runner Connor Pham took tenth. Sterling boy's took 7 of the top ten spots.

# Going Green at Sauk

## Cleaning Up The Neighborhood

### Sustainability in a College Setting

by Jessica Payne



A Walmart shopping bag lies on the ground waiting to be picked up.

by Glen Wicks

All around the world, garbage is carelessly thrown about on the ground instead of the trash can where they are supposed to be. That includes the neighborhood just South of the Joseph H. Bitortorf Airport. It is bad enough that we have trash lying around near the highways, but it is genuinely upsetting to have it lying in someone's front yard. That is why I encourage residents of this neighborhood to invest in recycling bins to help reduce the amount of waste there.

Keeping a neighborhood fairly clean is a great way to help out your environment in which you live, and buying a recycling bin for your household is a majorly positive step in that direction.

Jackson Reinhardt, a Sauk student and a resident of this neighborhood, states "I know on my street

that we don't have any recycling bins. If my neighbors got together and found a way to have recycling bins for the neighborhood to use, it would be more convenient for the neighbors so they would be more inclined to do it."

I thoroughly agree with Reinhardt's idea of incorporating recycling bins for every neighbor to use in case they need to pick up the trash they find on his or her property. This way, there will be more Good Samaritans involved with cleaning up other people's messes.



Reusable cups are a great way to reduce waste.

There are ways that you can embrace sustainability in your own life as a college student that not only don't have a large price tag but might actually save you money in the long run.

One way to promote a sustainable lifestyle, especially in the era of online school, is to take notes electronically. If you have access to a computer or tablet using those devices to take notes can save paper. The average American uses 7 trees, about 680 pounds of paper a year.

While going completely paperless is not an easy option you can certainly reduce the amount you use.

If you don't have access to a device to take notes on consider buying a notebook made using recycled materials. They are about the same price as a normal notebook but will reduce your usage all the same.

Another way you can reduce your environmental footprint is by limiting your use of power. Turn off the lights

when you leave a room. Unplug appliances and devices you are not using at the time like a coffee maker or a toaster.

These devices use power when they are sitting on standby that does nothing but run up your electric bill. Making an effort to do the above things can actually significantly reduce your electric bill amount. Saving your wallet and the environment at the same time.

Last but certainly not least, consider reusable products. Coffee cups are the most common single use product in the world! If you normally pick up your morning coffee on your way to school, consider making it at home and bringing a reusable mug with you. You don't have to give up the habit all together. While it may seem like all or nothing, making an effort to reduce the days you get coffee to go to one or two days a week even can make a big difference.

There are also options at certain places like Starbucks where you can buy a reusable cup and they will put your order in the cup for no extra charge. (Some actually give you a discount.)

In the end while living a more sustainable life may seem like a big commitment but it's much easier than you might think. Even making one small change today could make a difference for our world.



# Faculty Feature

## Career Possibilities



Dr. Lori Anton

by Lori Anton

Right out of high school I knew I wanted to be in biology, but it took a while to figure out exactly what kind of job. Such difficult decisions – what to study in college and what to choose as a career for the rest of your life.

I grew up in a college town, so I had many wonderful job possibilities related to biology. Looking for a summer job, I first interviewed with a professor doing research on chocolate. I think I was a little too enthusiastic about the chocolate tree in the greenhouse and didn't get that job. Then I interviewed to take care of chickens for another research project. Yes, "taking care of" meant chopping their heads off and that wasn't for me. Feeding cockroaches used in research would have been fine with me in the next job possibility. I must have recoiled just a little when they opened the barrel of roaches though, so I moved on to washing dishes, proofreading medical transcripts, sugar beet research and then mushrooms.

My first mushroom job was picking mushrooms at the college test facility, which grew different strains of *Agaricus bisporus*, the common white button mushroom. A benefit to this job was bringing

home free mushrooms – sometimes even garbage bags full of them. Then I worked in a lab that kept a collection of a variety of fungi grown regularly on agar filled Petri plates (fungi like potato juice in their agar) and then stored in liquid nitrogen. These contacts lead to my first full-time job after graduation as a lab technician. We studied the proteins fungi use to break down paper in hopes of seeding landfills for faster waste decomposition.

All this time I was enjoying a hobby as a musician. When we moved away from the college town, I turned my hobby into a job. I played trumpet in two local symphonies, a jazz band and best of all a brass quartet with my husband. For almost ten years I taught piano lessons.

I had gone from biology research to teaching music, two very unrelated areas. Never before thinking to put the two together, I applied for a biology instructor position at the nearby community college. This journey of many types of jobs lead to SVCC. Not to sound corny, but teaching at Sauk is the most rewarding of all the jobs I've had.

I really didn't intend for there to be a moral to this story. If you asked me, I would recommend that you consider jobs in many areas and even your hobbies. Be ready for the unexpected to lead to a fulfilling career.

# "It's Alive! It's Alive!": Movie Theaters Re-Open

By: Ethan Ainley

The movie business has been heavily impacted by COVID-19. With movie theaters re-opened, it's time for Sauk students and faculty to safely go back to the multiplex. If you are in the high-risk groups it is best to not risk your life on a leisure activity like movie-going. However, for those not included in that group, you can safely return to the movie theater by following the CDC guidelines of social distancing and wearing a mask.

Throughout the pandemic, movie theaters have been struggling to stay afloat. The movie theater chain, AMC, was at high risk of filing for bankruptcy, and many local non-chain theaters had to close for an extended period. Movie-goers must support the theaters by returning to watch something on the big screen. The safest experience and perhaps one you haven't had before is a theater only three miles from SVCC, the Midway Drive-In.

Watch a movie from the safety of your car, which ensures you won't have to come in contact with others. All patrons are required to bring a face-covering that you are required to wear whenever not inside the



The Princeton Apollo Theater

vehicle or when talking with someone outside the vehicle.

Another choice is the recently re-opened AMC Classic Sauk Valley 8 theater in Sterling, four miles from the school. This theater is following AMC Safe and Clean™ procedures that are outlined on their website.

A local historic theater close to SVCC is the Sterling Theater, which is about seven miles from the school. This theater has been a staple in downtown Sterling since 1944.

Lori VanOosten, Sterling Theater General Manager, detailed their COVID policies, "Masks are required to enter the building and to walk around the building, through

lines, and in bathrooms. Once seated you may remove masks for enjoying your concessions."

VanOosten also talked about implementing an allocated seating system. She described it as, "Assigned seating with every other row not available to purchase." Lori went on to say, "Additionally, after a single or group purchase, the system automatically closes off the next three seats in the row for social distancing." Each theater that normally holds 225 is only allowing 50 customers to allow for distancing. As well as cleaning the theaters between each showing. VanOosten also said, "COVID has deeply

affected our theater. [Sterling Theater] Closed down for 3-1/2 months we managed to sell curbside popcorn to help pay a few bills. Once opening we have had small crowds and limited movie options with studios pushing out releasing new movies or going straight to on-demand."

Lori VanOosten wants to remind everyone that, "Our local historic theater and all local small businesses need customer support whether purchasing gift cards for future use, curbside popcorn, or returning to movies to survive this pandemic."

Whether it is a drive-in or an auditorium, I strongly suggest you visit a movie theater.

# "Tenet" Reivents Time Travel and Spy Thrillers

By: Ethan Ainley

After a few months, we are finally getting some new blockbusters released in theaters. As Christopher Nolan was intending he will be the one that welcomes audiences back to the movie theater. However, is his new film "Tenet" a worthy film to welcome everyone back?

"Tenet" is a palindrome, which means it is a word spelled the same forwards and backwards. The title was chosen for this exact reason to represent the time inversion that Nolan is exploring.

Christopher Nolan is known for his strikingly realistic action and effects. In every

frame of this film, it is impossible to tell where CGI is used and that is because hardly any was used. Nolan's practical effects help make the idea of time travel (or inversion as he calls it) feel possible in our reality.

"Tenet" has a thought-provoking and complex plot that will more than likely take multiple viewings to fully understand. It combines the expensive and dazzling visuals of a true blockbuster with the multi-layered plot of a spy thriller.

Another Nolan trope is on full display in the film's sound design and mixing. Much of the foghorn score is blasted over dialogue, leaving the

viewer missing some important words that could help go towards understanding the plot. This is intended as Nolan loves creating an atmosphere with his sound, but in this case, he might have gone overboard.

Christopher Nolan can write a complex story in his sleep, but his characters here are dull as ever. The only connection to them comes from the actors and their performances.

Nolan doesn't focus on characters but instead puts effort towards fleshing out and developing the plot they inhabit. In "Tenet" he writes a cliched and stereotypical villain, a flat



"Tenet" now showing in theaters

female character, and an under-developed protagonist.

Overall, "Tenet" isn't Nolan's best, but it is not his worst. It was a fun and complex ride that I can't wait to take again later down the line. It is more than worthy of viewing in a theater to fully experience this fascinating and fresh take on time travel.

"Tenet": 8/10

# Funeral for a Firefighter

By Glen Wicks

On September 3rd, many residents of Rock Falls, including first responders and local firefighters, attended the funeral service for fellow firefighter William Milby. His funeral was held at RB & W Park in Rock Falls from 10:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. Tears were shed, prayers were sent from family members and friends, and emergency response vehicles appeared to honor this man's duty to the people as well as his life and legacy. Because of the Coronavirus pandemic, people were forced to wear masks at Milby's service.

There were many people that knew Bill Milby as a friend and as a hero. Melissa Wicks, a former classmate of Bill Milby in high school, explains, "His childhood dream was to become a firefighter which he was



An American flag is shown to honor an American hero.

able to achieve for 33 years. He even made it to the role of the fire chief!" Wicks goes on to explain how Milby married one of his classmates, Kathy Arduini, and had many children combined. "He was a fighter, a leader, a son, a brother, but most importantly, he was a great father. He was definitely a pillar of our

community and a great example of our generation," notes Wicks.

Shortly after retirement in 2018, Milby was diagnosed with renal cancer. He ended up passing away on August 27th from his illness. His death struck everyone he knew such as his fellow firemen, his friends outside the fire department building, and most of all,

# College During Corona

by Kaydence Brauer

With the start of the new school year, teachers and professors around the world have been scrambling to find solutions for teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. With safety on every school's mind, the new way of teaching has students staying at home for learning.

Most students have been focused on how they're going to adjust to their new schedules, but what about the educators?

To get a perspective of how teachers are doing with the new conditions, I interviewed three professors at SVCC about how they're handling the stress of teaching under new circumstances.

Audrey Smith is a psychology professor at Sauk who's been staying hopeful during the global pandemic. When asked if she thought teaching would ever go back to normal, she commented, "I sure hope so!!! There is just something special about being in a classroom, but I am also concerned that virtual learning could become a new normal. Remote learning also may be cheaper and easier for a stu-

dent to enroll".

A question given to Smith asked if she thought learning from a distance would affect the way that students learn the information given to them. She explained how distractions at home and the attempt of multitasking would affect teaching, "We as humans think we can successfully multitask, which is simply not true. There is a sizable amount of research that shows multitasking successfully is an ideal we have, but in reality, we lose focus on one distraction."

Professor Smith is not the only teacher at Sauk who has voiced their concern. Daniel McCollum, a criminal justice professor and Title IX Coordinator for Sauk Valley Community College, has noticed a pattern in his live video classes, "One thing that's becoming apparent is that fewer questions are asked during live classes. Student questions often enhance the overall learning process, so we'll see how that goes."

On a brighter note, Mr. McCollum shared a pleasant result of online learning, "Thus far, I have had perfect attendance in our virtual classes. That's rare in traditionally-delivered classes."

So while students may not be asking as many questions, they are taking initiative and making sure they're still participating in class calls.

McCollum sees this pandemic as an opportunity to push creativity and give new life to his teaching style, to find ways to keep students interested and engaged.

Even if everything was on track with remote learning, it's not without its faults. Connor Williams is a mathematics professor at Sauk who's missing the personal touch of in-class teaching, "I would like to just get to know my students more than I can right now. I'm not really sure what else I can do to have more conversations with them, but I want to get to know them more". And when asked about the most difficult part of remote learning, he answered, "Being online and in a Google Meet session, it's very difficult to have a conversation with students as they come into class and leave class". Being isolated during class doesn't just alter a student's ability to learn; if learning isn't easy to accomplish over a video camera, it isn't any easier to make connections.

# "Take a Break"... and Watch "Hamilton" on Disney+

by: Graycyn Bennett

The hit Broadway musical, "Hamilton", was released exclusively on Disney+ on July 3rd of this year, and although it is not the same as seeing the play in person, it is still a must-watch for theater and music lovers alike. The publication of the musical in this form broadens its audience and opens the stage to those who have never experienced the theatre before. The combination of rap, hip-hop, R&B, and neo-soul provides a wonderful medium to tell the story of one of the founding fathers, Alexander Hamilton. The movie is almost entirely vocals with back to back compositions of memorable lyrics and melodies.

While watching "Hamilton" on your TV, phone, or laptop is a completely different experience than seeing the musical in person, there are still many benefits with bringing Broadway to homes.

Live viewings can cost hundreds of dollars, while a Disney+ membership fee is a little under \$7 per month.

The movie runs for a total of 2 hours and 40 minutes with a brief intermission. Watching from home allows the viewer to pause the movie if needed, and with the press of a button you can watch your favorite moments over and over again.

The film features the original Broadway cast who have been off the live production since 2016.

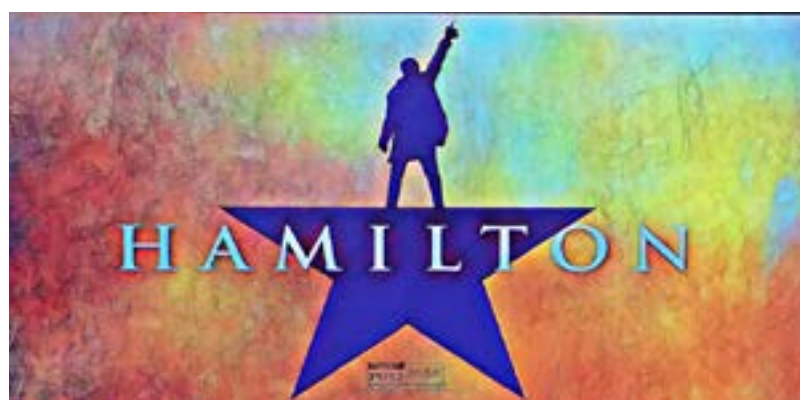
The Disney+ version allows the audience to experience the musical in a way they would never be able to on Broadway.

That being said, there are a few problems with the movie. In order for the film to adhere to Disney+ guidelines, it had to stay within a pg-13 rating. The film had to censor two F-words to appear on Disney+. The F-words do not necessarily add to

the movie and censoring them does not completely take away from the film, but for some, the change is noticeable.

Throughout the film, there are switching angles. There are times when the change in focus centers on a character and takes away from what is occurring on the rest of the stage. Since this is a digital publication, it is to be expected that it will differ from seeing "Hamilton" live on Broadway. However, being able to see a stage in its entirety with multiple routines occurring, is one of the things that makes the theatre special. It would have been nice to feel the same about the Disney+ version.

Overall, "Hamilton" is an amazing composition that takes the viewer on a trip through history from a modern perspective. Do not throw away your "shot" to view this incredible musical.



"Hamilton" at home