

New educational horizons: Classes move to Nintendo Online

BY THE GHOST OF MARY SPRAGUE

Down-and-out lawn clippings

Unexpected difficulties with online learning platforms have driven Washington College professors to seek out alternative methods of holding class. “Animal Crossing: New Horizons” might be just the place to go.

The video game — the latest installment of the highly popular franchise started in 2001 — is for the Nintendo Switch, and released on March 20 of this year. Already, the game has taken the internet by storm.

Professors, noting its popularity among students and discouraged by frequent technical difficulties of programs like Zoom and Microsoft Teams, have begun hosting classes in-game.

Business-owner, entrepreneur, and raccoon Tom Nook has offered a series of loans for various school buildings, although the prices are steep.

“You only have 1,000 Bells?” Nook said. “You’re joking with me, yes?”

Many educators are opting to set up their classes outdoors in-game, in the lush, fruit-filled forests or on the soft, sandy beaches of their customizable islands.

The influx of visitors, however, has put a strain on local Residential Services staff, Isabelle. The yellow dog is a friend of Nook’s has been with the franchise since 2012.

“Me? Busy?” Isabelle said. “Don’t worry about it! I got a whole hour of sleep last night, so I’m just raring to go!”

To participate in classes, students must first receive their professor’s Switch code, the numerical tag distinguishing one console from the next. The hosting professor will then open their island to visitors, to which the students fly in-game using Dodo Airlines. Since the process is so streamlined, Nook expressed amazement over the awkwardness and difficulties of other programs.

“Have you ever used a smartphone before?” Nook said.

Classes are conducted in small groups of eight, making this platform ideal for break-out sessions and personal professor attention. Lectures are typed, on the Switch console, one sentence at a time. Students are encouraged to use in-game Reactions — animations to display player moods and emotions — to express themselves during class.

“Nothing succeeds like success,” Tommy Nook, Tom Nook’s nephew, island resident, and raccoon, said.

The most difficult aspect of the in-game classroom has, so far, been students’ compulsion to hit each other with butterfly nets. Though non-damaging, the nets — and other hand-held items like slingshots, ocarinas, and party poppers — have proven extremely distracting. Also distracting is the natural wealth of flora and fauna present on the islands, which students enjoy exploring.

In the midst of the virus, however, this kind of tangible learning is beneficial for upkeeping both mind and spirit. Staying connected is at the core of “Animal Crossing.”



Photo by stacknews.com

All work and no play makes Isabelle a sad girl.

“Here’s some personal news,” Isabelle said. “I got to do a video chat with my family back home! Mom and Dad are both great.”

Other comparable institutions have been using “Mario Kart 8” and “Super Smash Bros. Ultimate” to hold classes. WC professors, however, favor heart over competition.

Tom Nook offered some words of advice to the students visiting the island.

“GL-L-LKSK. KEH-KEEH. FST. FST. RrrrrrrrrrrrKLAGH. CH-CH-ch-ch-mmmMMMMmm,” he said. “Oh, well, it is very old and in the language of my ancestors, which happens to be Raccoonish, yes, yes.”

If your class is moving to “Animal Crossing,” make sure to brush up on your Reactions. Any questions or concerns go to Isabelle, in Residential Services.

“Have yourselves a wonderful Thursday...or as I like to call it, Friday Eve,” Isabelle said.

Students urged not to participate in virtual May Day



Photo courtesy of Goodreads



Photo by Vasily Rosca

Students gather to discuss options for continuing hosting May Day on online platform. Senior Tara McClosoff participates in a test-run of virtual May Day.

BY YOUR LEAST FAVORITE ANTIHERO

Yikes-a-million

Many students, and some eager townies, agree that the May Day tradition is one of the best that Washington College has to offer. Alumni, who have their own fond memories, ask if we still do it because once you graduate and you really think about it, it’s a weird thing that we’ve all decided is fun and normal to two days a year.

May Day is celebrated at midnight on May 1 and May 2 every year. When the clock tolls twelve, hordes of students in varying degrees of undress storm down the hill towards the green to run around the flagpole and Toll Science Center. Students not participating often gather around the green or on the back steps of the Hill Dorms to guard their friends’ clothes or just watch the festivities.

Because the semester has moved online due to the Corona Virus pandemic, faculty, staff, and student organizations alike have been scrambling to figure out what to do to about classes, events, and other such student programming.

While many of these events have turned to Zoom, Big Blue Button, and other such teleconferencing platforms, are encouraged to take a gap year on WC’s most revealing tradition after there was speculation that it might move online with students setting up livestreams of themselves running around their houses naked, or something similar.

The concern with May Day moving online is that students wouldn’t be on campus, and therefore are worried about the legality of students posting this content online.

“I’m so mad,” senior Jack Mehoff, a long-time May Day runner, said. “It’s bad enough that we don’t get to see our friends for the rest of the semester — don’t get to graduate in May — but to take this too? It’s just unfair.”

For seniors, having May Day cancelled means they won’t ever get another chance to run around naked in public again without immediately getting arrested.

“It’s more than just running around naked,” Mehoff said. “It’s a bonding opportunity. Like, you get to see sides of your friends you never would have before.”

Seniors are not the only ones upset by the cancellation

of May Day. For many freshmen, it means they won’t get to experience the two-night drunken shenanigans until their second year at WC. Sophomores and juniors are also upset, but who cares what they think.

“I was really nervous to do it, but I hear it’s a lot of fun,” freshman Sharon Head said. “It stinks I won’t get the chance to experience it until next year now.”

“Everybody posts nudes online all the time, who cares?” junior Justin Yermouth said. “I don’t get how virtual May Day would be any different.”

Other students are on board with postponing the event. “The only reason I participate is because I know everyone is too drunk to remember I participated,” senior Tara McClosoff said. “I don’t want it memorialized on the internet. Nor do I want to see other people memorialized on the internet. It’s just, a no from me.”

Ultimately, nobody can stop you from participating in a virtual May Day. But, is it really May Day if you’re not running down to the green, mud and dewy grass between your toes, knowing that it’s okay if you fall because you won’t remember the next day unless you find a big bruise?

Missing WC? Me too. Four ways to feel like you're on campus from anywhere

By MARY SPRAGUE'S EVIL TWIN, WARY
Duck Hater

Since students were fully expecting an entire semester on-campus, the pandemic-forced switch to online learning has been abrupt, distressing, and deeply saddening. If you're missing campus as much as I am, here are some easy at-home strategies to feel closer to the Washington College community and experience.

Trip over a brick. This is easiest done if you've already taken one from campus, but, bricks are also available online (<https://www.homedepot.com/p/7-5-8-in-x-2-1-4-in-x-3-5-8-in-Clay-Brick-20050941/100676108>), in-person at your local hardware store, or sometimes on the ground. Since ground bricks are often difficult to pry up, you may require the help of a crowbar or strong-fingered friend. Once you've got it, though, get to know your brick. You can name it, if you want. Draw on it. Dress it up. Put it somewhere very specific on your floor. Don't trip over it yet. Become comfortable with the brick. Look at it every day. Memorize the cracks, the little ridges on its face. Learn its lighting, its angles — appreciate how its color deepens during golden hour. Love your beautiful brick. Learn its favorite color, its favorite movie. Talk about it to your friends, to your parents. Post pictures of you and your brick on Instagram. Then trip on it, b*tch. Boom. Feel bad. You can never trust a brick.

Listen to emergency sirens. Intrinsic to the sights and sounds of WC is the firetruck and its shrieking. Every. Single. Day. Painfully audible anywhere on campus. During class, during clubs, during the walk to Cromwell. Just when you're falling asleep. Right when you're starting a test. I found the absence of the noise at first a relief, but the quiet of my family home has become somewhat unsettling. Where is the shrieking? The sound of children playing just doesn't cut it. So, for your listening pleasure, here is "Top 25 Fire Truck Responses of 2018 – Best of Sirens": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNksDc50ENM>. Don't hit play, yet — allow me to conduct a visualization exercise. Take a seat, close your eyes. You're at your dorm desk. It's a normal Wednesday night. You're breathing mold. You've just started doing your homework (for real this time) and are concentrated on a particularly difficult question, something you really need your full brainpower for. Hit play. Let it pierce you.

Smell something weird and bad. It's officially spring, which means that all across the Eastern Shore, manure is being spread thick and generous on farms and home gardens alike. Which is great for them, really, but is absolutely devastating for the undergrad with a sense of smell. If you're missing campus specifically in the springtime, I would suggest a ripening manure for your nostril activity. But manure is not the only weird WC smell — no, more pervasive, more permeating, and more damaging to the soul are the Mystery Smells. Why does Goldstein smell like that? And why does Harford Hall? My guesses include, but are not limited to: crabs, mold, moldy crabs, beaver musk, ancient tomb, sweaty socks, rotten coconuts, twenty-year-old footballs, sharp mayonnaise, Époisses de



Those interested can even buy their bricks in designer brands like Supreme.

Bourgogne, mummified shrimp, and month-old DHall leftovers in a reusable To-Go box. So, if you're feeling campus-sick, take a trip to your closest trash can and breathe it in — just enough to make your head hurt.

Provoke a duck. You might not be at the foot of High Street, the bird might not be that mean one that hangs around the dock, but you can still get your kicks upsetting the local fauna with your presence. A duck is a duck. They all smell. They all get punchy if you stand too close. They all will sh*t on you. One of them is bound to throw down — especially those scary looking big ones. Have you seen them? White feathers, with the spikey red faces like they took turns sticking their beaks in a meat grinder? Who let them look that way? They should be censored, for the benefit of small children and avian-adverse adults and because their honking has got to be explicit. In whatever duck-language their spiteful little duck-brains use, we've all been cursed sideways, backwards, and for generations to come. If you don't believe me, here's "10 Hours of Duck Sounds": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-3hyMckeKQ>. For this visualization exercise, please stand. Close your eyes. You're standing in the middle of the concrete circle at the foot of High St. The Chester is in front of you, the Customs House behind. Smell the duck sh*t wafting on that lingering winter breeze. Let the ducks berate you. Bask in their hatred. No one will ever hate you as thoroughly as a duck — take comfort.

Student Spotlight: Gus the Goose



Gus the Goose

By SPOT THE DOG

Not an Accurate Representation of Anything

Hometown: Chestertown, MD

Major(s): Environmental Science

Future Plans: "Ever since I was hatched, I've wanted to help clean wetlands. There is so much junk in them — I mean, just look at me, I'm a 6' purple bird whose feathers look like fur. And I'm not the only one — Testudo, Poe, Swoop, Bruiser, and who knows what went wrong to make the Phillie Phanatic. The point is, the world is a mess and I want to help clean it up." Clubs/Organizations: Pres-ident, Beekeepers of William Smith; Member, Animal Impact; Treasurer, Mold Growers Society; Member, Student Environmental Alliance; Vice President, Fly-ing Club; Member, Future Animal Professionals Club; King, The Hill Dorms

Favorite WC Tradition: "Oh there are so many good ones I don't know which to pick. I guess I'd have to say We Love WAC Day because everyone across cam-pus pretends to love WC as much as I do. It's also a great way to recruit new students — the more we recruit the less likely it is they'll make me sleep under Kibler Field bleachers. It's very cold out there, but sometimes I find food down there, which is fun."

Favorite Spot on Campus: "The basement; nice and dark and cold. Good for mold growth."

Fun Fact: "I taught the Tiger King everything he knows. Even bought him his first tiger."

Most Important Thing Learned at WC: "Don't drink Corona at off-campus parties."

Advice for Future Classes: "Take a bunch of them all at once and then try really hard to do everything at once and then when you think you have everything under control apply for a job or an internship or something so you have even more to do and then you're set!"