

Lennon Wall

Spring 2018 | Green





Green Issue Spring 2018

From The Editor

The days are longer, the nights are sweeter, the colors are brighter. Green, the color of life and calmness, is gaining ground again and we cannot be happier. “Spring is here”, you whisper to yourself.

This spring, travel with us. Join Lennon Wall on a trip to the Prague Zoo, to the streets of York, to the gym where the female bodybuilder Vladislava trains every day, because green means ADVENTURE. The color is also a symbol of HOPE - hope for better gun control in the States, for female abortion rights in Ireland and more. Green symbolizes PROGRESS, such made by Denisa as she helps young Roma in the Czech Republic overcome the discrimination, and by the Czechs as they protest to protect their democracy. That's what we call spring vibes.

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U.S.A. Military Brat: AAU Law Student Hanna Ripper



There is no place like home

By Nel Tomczyk

The majority of AAU students know how challenging starting your life over in a foreign country is. Hanna Ripper, who is now a 2nd year Law Student at AAU, is familiar with ups and downs of moving to a new country and adjusting to the different culture. Czech Republic is the 6th country she has lived in.

According to the U.S Department of Defense, Ripper is one of the 15 million “military brats”: children of full-time U.S Armed Forces’ service members. Growing up with one or both parents in the army results in a significantly different lifestyle. During their upbringing, military brats frequently move and one may

describe it as an opportunity to become a world citizen and experience adventurous and exciting childhood civilians don’t get to experience. On the other hand, in addition to have to adjust to a different country every couple of years they need to get accustomed to their parent’s well-being being put at risk every day

Mary Wertsch, an American journalist specializing in military brats points out that although they possess a great deal of multicultural awareness, military kids are also likely to face attachment issues and develop various mental disorders. Ripper admits that challenges connected to moving and switching schools on regular basis made her an introverted person. After starting at AAU, Ripper realized she sees no benefit in actively participating in the school’s community. “It is hard for me to go out and interact with new people, there are all these events, barbecues, different parties, and I don’t want to go to any of this. I just grew into this introverted lifestyle,” she says. When asked if growing up as a military brat can be a factor in developing mental disorders, she does not hesitate: ‘Absolutely!’”

Due to her father being responsible for running all the operation systems for US Forces in Europe, Ripper was constantly moving back

and forth between US, Asia, and Europe. She admits that while as a small child, adapting to a new environment was not as hard for her, going into her teenage years made her realize that fitting in was no longer as easy of a process.

“When you are a kid, nobody cares and there is no formation of groups yet, but once I got into high school, it started to get trickier. I moved my senior year of high school from Virginia to Germany and there people were like ‘We don’t want to talk to you because we already have our groups situated so go be by yourself,’” she says.

Despite her unconventional childhood, Ripper does not fully consider herself a military brat because her father never served on active duty and thus, she did not have to live in constant fear for his life, like many of her friends did.

Another AAU student, Caroline Christopher Beach knows this anxious feeling quite well. Her father, Robert Beach, Retired Major in U.S Army Corps of Engineers was on active duty for 24 years. Beach never had to face permanent change of station (PCS) orders that are a big part of most of the army brats’ lifestyle. Her father managed to find a loophole that allowed her and her brother to grow up in Savannah, GA, together with their mother. Therefore, her upbringing differed from the one Ripper and many other military brats have. However, when other fathers would come to their children’s weekly volleyball games and drive them to the cinema, Beach’s father was risking his life in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“During Leave, Dad came home exhausted from overseas travel and constantly being on high-alert. Instead of using his leave time on much needed relaxation from his high demand job, he had an obligation to entertain his children and fit a year’s worth of time into the minuscule span of two weeks,” she says.

Being the only military brat at school did not make things easier as she could not count on support from children in the same situation and it was hard for the other students to relate to her life and problems she struggles with. Beach says: “Children with a deployed parent face the stress of knowing their parent is in a highly publicized warzone. In the 2000s, in the United States, every magazine cover or news story displayed gruesome pictures, videos, and sound bites of the War on Terror, a daily reminder of the constant threat of danger faced by the deployed. Every evening came new stories of car bombings with titles such as ‘15 wounded and 6 dead’. Children are sponges and the constant exposure to violence gave me nightmares and great anxiety regarding my family’s safety.”

Both Ripper and Beach admit that growing up as a military brat may likely lead to other problems: social anxiety, turbulent relationship with their parents, and attachment issues. Beach admits that her lifestyle was far from perfect. However, she is proud of her father and his service to their country.

“Although we faced unique hardships, many military children join the military and follow in their parents’ footsteps,” she points out.

Ripper says that although she is jealous of people that have one place they call “home”, one country they can relate to, she would not change her life if she could. Although challenging, growing up as a military brat allows children to become open-minded citizens of the world. When asked if she would choose the same life for her children, Ripper smiles and says:

“I think I would, just because of the mindset and how quickly you mature. The world now is multicultural anyway, you can’t just stay in your own little bubble for eternity.”



The Best and Cheapest Places to Live in Prague

By Irina Nikolaeva

Masarykova Dormitory

Photo courtesy of Czech technical university in Prague

University dormitories open their doors for international students.

Anastasia Alieva is a university student, and she faced the same problem as everybody in our Anglo-American University: finding a good and cheap place to live. She thought about renting a flat, but it was too expensive. She then discovered an attractive and affordable alternative: university dormitories run by different Czech universities.

“There are such things as good quality and small price,” says Alieva, “I decided to stay in Masarykova dormitory because it is very cheap. I made a lot of friends there; this is a nice place for active people.”

Czech Technical University in Prague, or ČVUT as it’s more commonly known, has 8 different dormitories in different parts of the city. The dormitories are available to all students but don’t forget to bring a confirmation that you

are studying in a different university. In most of the dormitories there are housing units, where 2 or 3 rooms are situated. There are 2 students in every room. Some dormitories have a shower and a kitchen in a housing unit, and it is like you are renting a flat with 3 other people. Others have only one shower and a kitchen in a housing unit, and it is like you are renting a flat with 3 other people. Others have only one shower and kitchen on the floor, but the price will be very low. The furniture is in a Soviet style, but it feels cozy at the same time.

The dormitories closest to AAU are Masarykova, Dejvická, Sinkuleho, and Orlík dormitories, all of which are only two metro stations away. It will take you only 1-2 minutes to get to the NTK library, which is free for every student and even open at night time. Here is a brief overview of the best options for AAU students, and what facilities they can offer.

Masarykova Dormitory. The big advantage of this dormitory is an active student life with parties in a dormitory nightclub, bar, bowling club and there are free language courses. The

highest rent per month is 3900-4000 CZK which is inclusive of electricity and hot water. However, you also need to pay for the Masařka Student Club which costs 800 CZK per semester. This student club will provide a good internet connection by cable and Wi-fi, along with the access to the gym, a music room with a piano and a big screen for watching movies and a bigger kitchen with an oven.

If you want to invite your parents or friends to Prague, the dormitory has rooms available for visitors and tourists. Dejvická station is not far from the city center and not far from the airport (two stations to Nádraží Veleslavín, where you can take a 10 minute bus to the airport).

One of the most uncomfortable disadvantages is the laundry room. The price is cheap: 30 CZK for one hour. But it can be crowded, which

means you will have to wait in the queue. And sometimes the washing machines break because they are rather old.

Dejvická dormitory is also situated at the Dejvická metro station. This dormitory is much smaller than Masarykova Dormitory, though the furniture is more modern. The conditions are the same: you can use the Masařka club gym and other facilities for 800 CZK per semester. The price for the month is lower: 3500-3700 CZK. The laundry room is better because the dormitory is small, so there are no big queues. This dormitory usually has 3 rooms in each housing unit.

"I didn't have complaints about the cleanliness, everything was very clean," says AAU student Elina Gabdrakhmanova. "But the kitchen was not enough for 6 girls, it was very small".



Masarykova Dormitory



Dejvická Dormitory

Sinkuleho Dormitory is bigger than Dejvická, but the conditions are not that good. There is only one kitchen and one shower (separate for girls and boys) on each floor. But there is also the possibility to live alone in a room. The price is lower than in other dormitories: 2500 - 3000 CZK per month. The situation with the internet and facilities is the same: you need to pay 800. Like the Dejvická and Masarykova dormitories, Sinkuleho it is not far from the Dejvická metro station and many trams. Billa, KFC, Starbucks, Bageterie Boulevard, and Albert are close to the dormitory.

Orlík Dormitory is an alternative to a small flat, but the price is a little bit higher than in the other dormitories. The rent is about 5000 CZK per month., It is situated in the Bubeneč district which is not far from Dejvická.

Most of the students say that this is the best cheap dormitory and the cleanest one. The furniture is not Soviet-like and the walls are very clean and fresh. You will also need to pay for the internet per semester, and as in Masarykova dormitory, the fee will allow you to use the gym in Orlík Dormitory.

To get a room in one of these dormitories, you do have to fill out a detailed registration application form. You can find it in the special system for reservations ISKAM: <https://web.suz.cvut.cz/>. After the form is filled out and submitted, usually you get a response within one or two days. Good luck!

For photos of the room, instructions, reservations, and contacts, see:

<https://www.suz.cvut.cz/en/dormitories>



Sinkuleho Dormitory



Orlik Dormitory

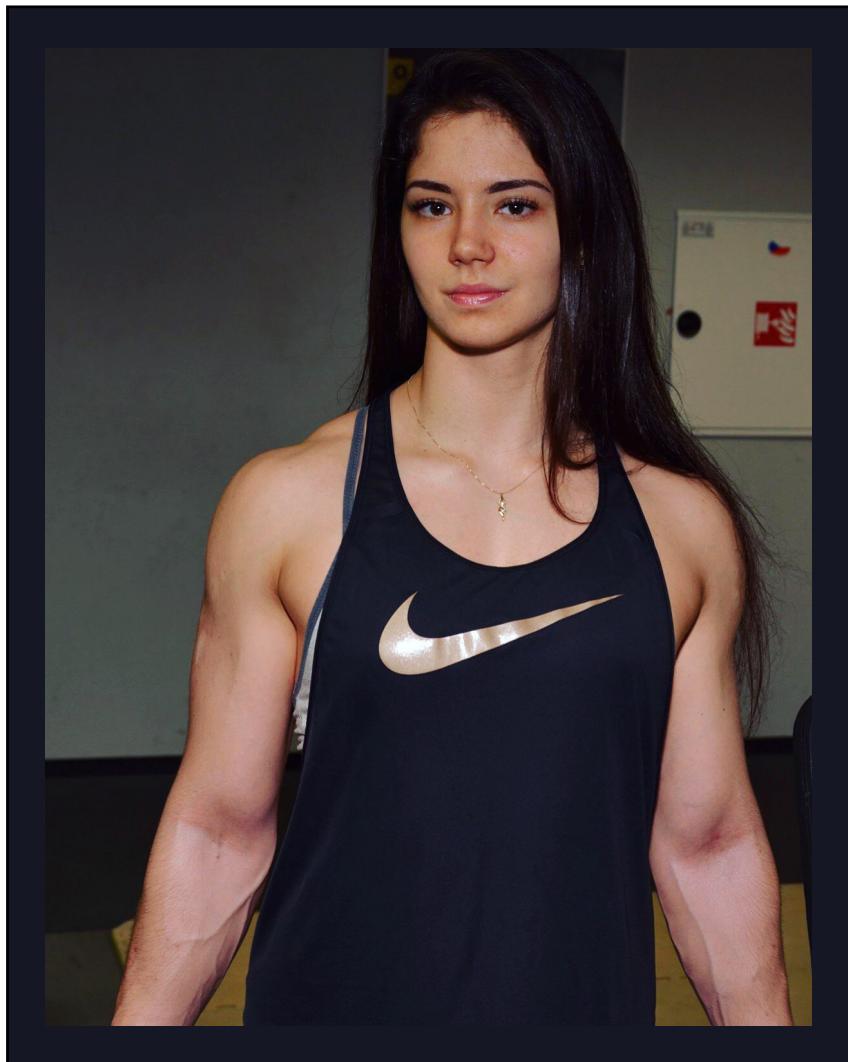
Vladislava Galagan, a Female Bodybuilder

By Vasilina Pazdnikova

Photo courtesy of
Vladislava Galagan

Vladislava Galagan is 21 years old, 175 cm tall and weights 80 kg. Her chest is 107 cm, haunch 64 cm, biceps 38 cm in circumference. Vladislava is a bodybuilder. Originally from Temryuk - a small town in Russia - Vladislava lives in Prague now and is getting ready for her first competition in the category "physique" - the category where women are judged by symmetry, shape, proportion, muscle tone, poise and beauty flow.

Vladislava juxtaposes the seemingly incompatible: she has the shape of a seriously built amazon and the face of the prettiest, most innocent girl. Long shiny dark hair, big eyes with curly lashes and a charming smile somehow go along with the widest female shoulders. When selecting her outfits, Vladislava emphasizes biceps and well-built legs so that her achievements don't go unnoticed.



Since early childhood, Vladislava has been an athlete. "I always liked physical activity," Vladislava smiles. She started with gymnastics, then moved to athletics and sprinting, and then gradually developed her passion for bodybuilding. Her very first impression of beauty found in a muscled human body was when

she attended the local competitions in the town neighboring hers.

“For the first time, I saw advanced athletes, the relief muscles on their calves. Also, there were girls who were in good shape with beautiful legs muscles. It amazed me. If I saw them now I would be like “pfff, please” but at that time, when I was 16, it caused major changes in my mind.”

Vladislava remembers her first competition experience, which is also a story about her first negative motivation. At the age of 15 her coach enrolled her in the sprint contest, though she was barely ready for it. “Now I am very grateful to her because she taught me that it is better to compete with those who are stronger than me. I think she intentionally put me with the stronger competitors in my first attempt. As I said, if you don’t really compete you don’t grow”. Stepping up to the starting line of the running track, she could hear the guy in the grandstand “I am sure this girl is not gonna win, the other one will.” And Vladislava didn’t win. But the worst was the mocking from the coach of the other, winning girl, “How does it feel to lose to somebody of a lower age?” Despite the obvious devastation, she channeled that rage into training. Harder and harder, she trained at the old Soviet stadium, running there every day. Along with that, she started to go to the gym and stick to a healthy diet.

“I wasn’t thinking about bodybuilding at that time, I just worked out for



Vladislava at age 16



myself. But I liked to notice how my legs were slowly becoming toned, my shoulders and back stronger. I was slowly developing and I enjoyed building my body.”

She eventually took revenge a year later in the same competition with the same girl. Standing on the same starting line, she was more confident and 100% ready. “I heard the shot and I started running and I notice that my competitor was not within eye shot. For a second I wondered where she was; then I realized she was way behind my back,” Vladislava smiles again, “This mocking trainer didn’t say a word as though he had swallowed his tongue.” That was the first time she realized that her hard work paid off, and she liked how it felt.

Later on, when athletics slowly moved on a second tier role, her obsession with bodybuilding grew. She distinctly remembers

the moment she realized that she was going for it. “I was on the phone with my ex-boyfriend while scrolling the body-fitness models on the Internet. In one second it felt like somebody from inside put those words into my mouth: ‘I know what I want to do with my life.’” Since then she started to build not only her body but her dream of becoming a professional bodybuilder and to start, she needed to escape her hometown.

Interrupting the interview for one of her five daily scheduled meals, she puts a pre-prepared box in the microwave and explains how crucial her special nutritious diet is. “I stand for healthy eating, no gluten or palm oil, minimum additives and colors. I always try to choose bio-products.” The microwave bell rings and she takes her unsalted rice and braised chicken breast.

“Of course, I spoil myself with chocolate or chips sometimes, but only during the off-season, and I always have to compensate for it with extra work at the gym”.

Europe opened new horizons for Vladislava. She applied to AAU but unfortunately had to quit after the first semester. “Bodybuilding requires a lot of investment, so I had to work and train. Studying was just too much for me. I loved it, but it stood in the way of my dream”. The university was not the only obstacle to the freedom of doing what she is passionate about. Vladislava’s family did not support her in her activities. For now, she only keeps in touch with her father. She explains it by the conservativeness of her parents, “bodybuilding is a whole different world for them. They are just unable to understand it”.

Luckily for her, when she started to live on her own she became completely independent, both financially and spiritually. “Now I am the one who makes the decisions. Poor support from my family was only an extra motivation for leaving the country and working harder.”

Motivation is a key concept for Vladislava, as she has the special talent of turning all her faults into motivation for new gains. She

admits that positive motivation is still the main moving factor for her.

“Success motivates me towards even greater success. I have a dream and I work for it as hard as I can. Achieving my goal is my main motivation,” she says with all seriousness.

Vladislava stands for the right of women to be equal to men. She explains that building and demonstrating the body in female bodybuilding is only the tip of an iceberg which, in fact, consists of constant hard work and dedicated self-development. Despite the appearance of this sport being all about the body, it is also about the spirit and the efforts athletes put in on the long road toward success.

Female bodybuilding is a sensitive topic; some criticize it for its lack of femininity, but Vladislava has her own point of view. “For me, a woman is not just a piece of a beautiful meat. I believe that a woman can be self-sufficient, strong, single-minded. She can have opinions and goals and has the right to pursue them. I like when a woman can defend herself when she is able to take a punch. I feel myself equal to men, and every woman should do the same. It is only up to us how we look and what we do”.



Denisa Makova: A Roma Who Defies The Stereotypes

Makova is helping young Roma overcome the discrimination she is all too familiar with.

By Mariam Bakhturidze

“How is it possible that you are a gypsy and have better grades than the rest of us? It’s not fair!”

Denisa Makova recalled this kind of constant discrimination she and her friends faced as the only Romas at her high school. “It was very surprising for me,” Makova said, “because I think that they should’ve been happy to see that there are Roma people who are trying to be different and get an education. But no, they weren’t.”

Now, Makova is an employee at Romeo, a non-profit organization founded in 2002 dedicated to helping young Roma facing the same discrimination. The organization aims to present a positive side of the community to the public of the Czech Republic. This is achieved through the organization’s own media outlets that attract between 3,000 and 20,000 daily readers, such as Romeo.cz, Roma.tv and Romano Vodi.

The poor living and financial conditions in many Roma communities cause Roma students to lack the motivation and confidence to pursue their education. The organization provides educational support and scholarships to high school and university degree-seeking Roma students. “So, in the beginning of their studies, we want to support them,” said Makova. “It’s not just about the financial support but also about moral support to motivate them to go and study,” she added. Romeo additionally provides career counseling and finances special courses that help Roma pass high school and university entrance exams.



At meetings with Roma students that her organization hosts three times a year, Makova hears stories and experiences that closely resemble her own. Students reveal to her that so long as they physically do not appear Roma, they conceal their true identities from other students in fear of becoming targets of bullying and abuse. “The view of the Roma people is somebody who steals and who lives on social benefits,” said Makova, “so it is common that people call them gypsies and regularly offend Roma students because of those stereotypes,” she explained.

Born and raised in Karvina, Czech Republic, a town highly concentrated with Romas, Makova was luckier than most of her peers at dodging institutional discrimination. “The main reason behind this is the fact that I’m not so dark and I don’t look like a typical Roma. And they also see that I dress well in contrast to the stereotype that Roma people are always dirty and dress shabbily,” Makova said. “But if I was darker, it would definitely be different,” she added.

Her light skin and today's fashionable clothing, a grey cardigan and jeans, do not in anyway suggest an impoverished minority. In fact, these elements are what win over the respect and non-discriminatory attitudes of the people she encounters. This is in addition to her calm, confident and goal-oriented behaviour and speech.

However, for most Roma the discrimination extends into their adulthood and from institutions like real estate agencies. Imitating the typical discriminatory response of real estate agencies to Roma customers after carrying out and recording experiments, Makova says, "Oh no, this flat is not for you. I will not rent it to you. We don't want Roma people to live in this house." You even get couples where the girl is Roma and then her boyfriend will be Czech. In fact, two of my colleagues here have Czech boyfriends and they are Roma themselves. So even then, they are refused service by such institutions because they see that the girl is darker and looks Roma," said Makova.

Makova knows firsthand the bitterness and pain that emotionally and psychologically taints victims of social discrimination. She still scowls in anger as she recalls her bus trip to Ostrava to sit a university entrance exam. "I went to the bus station and there were a lot of people, mainly young students and there was some boy with a girl and she was standing in front of the bus in the same line as the rest of the students but I wasn't in that line. I remember that they were standing but I wasn't sure if they were getting on the bus or not. So, I kind of went ahead them to get on the bus and they saw it as me trying to cut in the line. So then, on the bus, the boy came to me and began insulting me, using vulgar words, and degrading me in front of all those people by calling me a gypsy." Still shocked and in disbelief, wide-eyed, she continued, "And I remember how there were many people and nobody said anything."

"Then when I finally got to my class to do the entrance exam, I saw that same guy at the front of the class watching me. I realized it was because his girlfriend was sitting next to me taking the same exam," she added. "It was a really terrible experience for me because I didn't know why. Why? I don't think it was my fault."

The prejudice towards the Roma community is the result of history. Known as the nomads of Europe, the Roma have developed a reputation for 'living in the now' and never staying in one place too long. "From my experience, Roma people are noisy and have big temper. That's why they have problems with jobs. Employers don't get their mentality," said Lenka Mala, a 21-year-old student from Slovakia, a nation with a large Roma community. "They don't know us very well," Makova said. "They don't know the reasons behind why the Roma people live the way that they do. So, I want to show the public good examples," she added.

Makova offers some qualities of the Roma community she wishes people knew and the media reported. "One of our biggest values is family. Maybe that's why we have so many children. We love people. We are also very spontaneous. And it's not just that we are good in music and dancing, we're good in many other things as well, like being teachers and doctors. In the European Parliament there are like 5 Roma members."

Growing up, Makova saw the stereotypes firsthand. Her own family in Slovakia is trapped by a lack of employment and education, lacking direction and living in poverty, although they do wish for stable jobs and an education. "I would say they just live in 4 walls and don't see any possibilities because when they go into society people say 'Oh you gypsy, go home' and things like that," Makova explained. "So, they get discouraged and, at the same time, they lose confidence," she said.

Fortunately, Makova's father's success in getting a job resulted in her being the first to receive a high school and a university degree in her family. Makova was able to escape the vicious cycle that these circumstances inevitably create for the Roma community and become a walking example of what she preaches: Despite the additional struggles you face as a Roma, you can rise above the discrimination and prejudice to establish yourself in society.

But how? "The first thing you have to tell yourself, is that 'I'm okay with myself' and if someone else isn't, that's their problem," Makova highlights. "God created me like this and I cannot go to some store and buy a new identity like you can buy a new bag. This is me," she said.



The Stigmatized Never-ending Party: Students Working in the Sex Industry

By Vasilina Pazdnikova



Photo: Black Bunny

“When the porn appeared in my life – I found the harmony” - says Black Bunny, a 21-year-old porn actress, living and studying in Prague.

Bunny openly speaks about her occupation, “Everybody watches porn, your relatives, your friends, your parents. I imagined the moment when everybody knows [about my job], including my mother, my grandmothers, cousins, classmates, everybody. I imagined them calling me, asking the questions, insulting me, rejecting me. I imagined the worst and decided that I would live with that. I decided that if my job seems unacceptable for someone then this person is unacceptable for me. It is a natural selection, if you want. In my opinion, if people accept me, they accept my job.”

Bunny is not the exception, she is only one of the numerous students working in this infamous sphere. Her colleague, Marylin, who manages to combine studying at the University of finance and administration with dancing in a striptease bar, explains that the total opennesses about this kind of job is rare: “My friends know; my parents don’t. I think the less you know, the better you sleep. That’s why my parents have colorful dreams.”

Prague is famous for its loyalty towards the sex industry. Prostitution rooted here before the middle ages; pornography studios productively work and put the Czech Republic at the top list of porn-producing countries. Numerous striptease bars and erotic massage salons open their doors to the tourists who come to Prague, second only to Amsterdam. All these kinds of business are well developed and – more importantly – legal. Seeking money and adventures, students accept the jobs generously offered by the sex industry.

"I can hardly imagine myself in another kind of job because it is just boring. Here I meet new people every day. Every day I get a new experience, people's energy," - says Yuliana, a 23 year old student from Charles University who works as a masseuse in the salon of erotic massage. She emphasizes its difference from prostitution, "sex is restricted in the salon – oral, anal, classic – all kinds. Orgasm at the end of massage is reached either with the help of the masseuse's hands, or while she slides on the client and stimulates him with the breasts or the stomach". She explains that sex workers are unfairly stigmatized. She stands for calling it a normal job and explains that there are people who like it.

"I like to give pleasure to people. I like to see how they come here tired and stressed and how I help them release it."

Bunny and Marylin support that view; they both claim that the stereotype of drug addicted desperate girls involved in this industry against their will or under pressure of circumstance is no longer relevant.

"I would have the same attitude towards a waitress or a president. It is just an occupation," notes Bunny.

Along with the risk of being stigmatized because of sex related jobs, the girls describe the disadvantages. Health risks vary in extent: falling off the pylon wearing high heels, the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, and unpleasant clients top this list. The girls confess that misinterpretation of their profession is very annoying. The clients and the customers often do not see the difference between the strippers, the erotic masseuses and the prostitutes



and often ask for more than the offered service. “Men have no logic. At all.” – Yuliana laconically comments this problem. This negative side, however, is surpassed by the positives. Good money for less time and effort alongside the curiosity and will to explore the sexuality of oneself and others play key role in the decision for some students.

“[Doing porn] changed my mind. I started to look at things differently, accepting them.” – explains Bunny. Undoubtedly, the decision to enter the sex industry is a life-changing one. It affects everyday life and the how we view it. “I feel more free, open minded, independent. More precious. I like what I am doing for now. It’s like a big party which never ends.” – confesses Marylin.





7,000 people brought the center of Prague to a standstill.

Photo Essay: Protest against Ex-communist police in Prague

By Chau Nguyen

On March 5, approximately 7,000 Czechs flooded Wenceslas Square to protest against the ex-communist police Zdeněk Ondráček after he was appointed head of police watchdog.

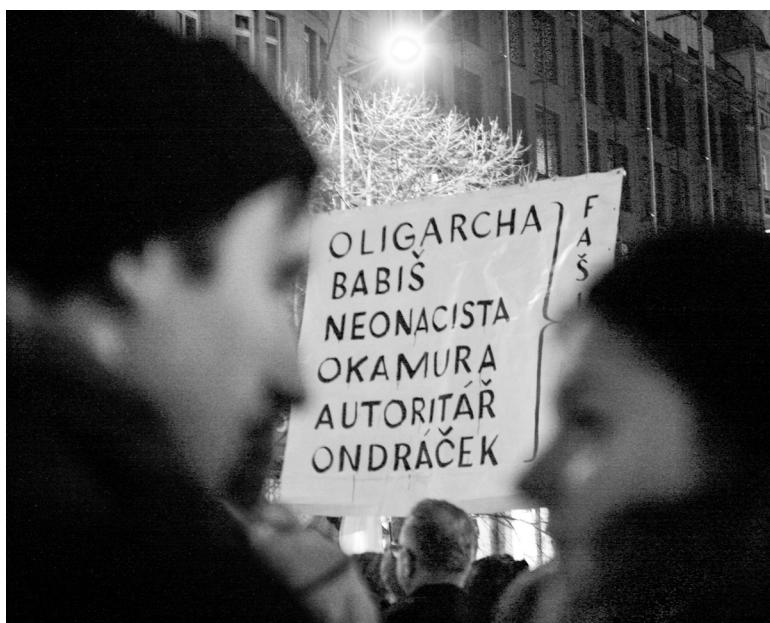
According to the Guardian, Ondráček had served in a unit that beat up pro-democracy demonstrators in the 1989 Velvet Revolution before the fall of communism in what was then Czechoslovakia.

Needless to say, the appointment of him as head of parliament's police oversight committee caused an uproar across the country. After the protest on Monday evening, Ondráček resigned on Tuesday afternoon.



ABOVE: Petition were signed to call on Parliament to have a new vote on another person to head of the security commissions.

BELOW: People were also protesting against Babis, the Czech Prime Minister, and his party ANO that supported the appointment of Ondracek.





ABOVE: Protesters held sheets of paper rolled up to resemble police batons.

BELOW: People rattled their key chains in the air in an echo of the Velvet Revolution in 1989 that took down the Communist party.





Prominent
chants were
“communists
are murderers”
and “we have
had enough”.





Alexey Navalny's Secret Side Is Irrelevant

Article and illustration by Stanislav Press

Why it is time to finish the debate on one of the most controversial figures in Russian politics.

Alexey Navalny started his political career as an anti-corruption activist in 2004 with his Protection of Muscovites Comity and since then became one of the most notorious figures on the political landscape of Russian Federation. Corruption is highly relevant to

all spheres of life in Russia with well-known Russian intellectual Alexander Gordon even claiming that it should be viewed as an essential part of Russian mentality. Fighting this essential war, Navalny has achieved a recognition level that can be compared only with the one of Vladimir Putin or prime-minister and ex-president Dmitry Medvedev.

In 2017, Navalny released a well-received documentary “Don’t call him ‘Dimon’” (Dimon being a diminutive for Dmitry) in which he exposed Dmitry Medvedev for being involved in numerous corrupt schemes over the years,

exposing his overpriced private property, and claiming that he is not the only Russian politician to be involved in this shady circle of corruption.

Being the most recognizable figure in the Russian opposition, Navalny is often demonized on Russian television and other news outlets. As was said during the Russia 24 report, “He is speculating on the important topic, pushing people to unlawful actions with intent. For him this is just a business.” When actor Daniel Radcliffe was a guest on the NTV midnight show, one of the hosts said “Navalny is like Voldemort, we cannot say his name,” which is only partially a joke, since many opinion-forming show hosts, including Vladimir Pozner, claim that it is forbidden for them to invite Navalny on their programs. He is viewed by the Russian conformists among ordinary citizens to be an agent of the US and NATO and his demonstrations are facing violent suppression from Russian law enforcers.

That being the case, it is ironic that among the opposition crowd, it has become fashionable to view Navalny as an agent of Kremlin. The reason for this is simple: he is not yet dead or in prison.

Russia has a bad reputation for the freedom of the press. It is currently scored by the Journalist without Borders website as 148th on a global ranking of countries for the freedom of press with already one journalist killed in 2017. The most notable example of this is the case of politician Boris Nemtsov, who was killed on the Big Moscow Bridge in 2015. Russian opposition in large thinks that this tragedy was organized by Kremlin.

In this environment, it is not hard to see why the opposition is slowly losing trust for Navalny, since, despite him being a much bigger face in Russian opposition than Nemtsov, he is still

continuing his political career. What is also important to mention is that Russian government is known to use controversial topics and people for its own advantage, making masses clash on any given topic instead of working together to sustain democracy, as was reported by The Guardian.

The idea for Navalny’s supposed role in Kremlin’s game is this: acting as a fake leader for the other side, he is encouraging people to argue, thereby adding to the division of the Russian public.

The problem with this thinking is that it is impossible to prove either opinion. Unfortunately, we cannot know what is happening behind the closed doors. That being said, Navalny is by far the only Russian politician, who is supporting liberal ideals, at least with his words. In a climate where even the Liberal Democratic Party is advocating for monarchy and adding to the harsh narrative of the Russian establishment towards sexual minorities, it is clear that there is no strong ideological opposition to Putin other than Navalny.

Consider the possibility of Navalny working for the Kremlin. In that case nothing would change during his presidency. The establishment would continue its line and everything will stay the way it was. On the other hand, on the 50% chance that he does believe in his ideals, his presidency will bring everything that the liberal-minded portion of the Russian federation is rooting for. Voting for Navalny also means a symbolic vote. With only 36% of Russians participating in elections, it is extremely important to bring a symbol of change.

Navalny might forever stay the unsolved mystery, but on the outside he is, unfortunately, the only visible alternative to the current Russian reality.

Ireland: Abortion is A Crime

By Mariam Bakhturidze

As Europe encourages human rights, Ireland restricts and violates women's rights.

Ireland has one of the most restrictive abortion laws in Europe. Abortion is illegal under any circumstances with the exception of the pregnancy endangering the mother's life. The penalty for performing an illegal abortion is a life in prison, while receiving an illegal

abortion can result in the woman facing 14 years imprisonment and a fine of €4,000. Irish women are forced to travel abroad to England in order to have an abortion.

In contrast, under the Abortion Act of 1967, doctors in England can perform an abortion after receiving an approval from two other doctors who base their decisions on medical grounds. In practice however, doctors in England are also permitted to carry out abortions without medical grounds by the



In 2012, a large number of protesters took to the streets of Dublin in response to the unfortunate death of an Indian woman who was refused an abortion.

Department of Health. According to the article UK Abortion Law (n.d) published by Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, the Abortion Act has led to a total of 8.3 million abortions since its introduction. In Finland, for example, an abortion is legally permitted under a multitude of cases, such as: if the delivery or raising of the child would be a burden to the woman, if the pregnancy was the result of a sex crime such as rape, if the pregnancy poses a threat to the woman's mental health, etc. Abortion in Finland was made legal in 1950 and had become even less restrictive as time progressed.

According to an article published in 2016 by the BBC News, the likely reasoning behind Ireland's restrictive abortion laws lies deeply

within the nation's Christian belief that even the fetus has the human right to life. Ireland's anti-abortion law is stated in the Eighth Amendment of its constitution. Passed in 1983, the amendment is greatly outdated. It was created for a different time period and one which was deeply rooted in the religious Catholic beliefs. While violating human rights laws, the amendment unfairly forces Christian beliefs onto women and strips them of their rights to healthcare, privacy and freedom.

Abortion should be made readily available to mothers in their first 2 or 3 weeks of pregnancy. During this time, the growing fetus in a woman's womb has not yet developed a heartbeat. One of the most basic



Photo by William Murphy

features of nearly all living organisms is a heartbeat and, therefore, the fetus is only a collection of cells that should not be given the privilege of the arguments used by pro-life advocates. However, because the fetus has the potential of developing into a living human organism, the concerns of pro-life advocates are understandable but they inaccurately impose the belief that “every human has the right to life” in this early period of pregnancy.

Pro-life supporters argue that the fetus can feel pain upon abortion. As reported in an article by The Guardian in 2015, according to the clinical review Fetal Pain - a Systematic Multidisciplinary Review of the Evidence, a fetus in the early stages has yet to develop a nervous system and a brain in order to feel pain. This development is incomplete until the 26th week of pregnancy. In the same article, there are references to reports by the Royal



College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists stating that, "...existing data suggests that cortical processing and therefore fetal perception of pain cannot occur before 24 weeks of gestation."

A woman has the right to her own body. Putting science and data aside, so long as the unborn child lives in a woman's body, she must have the undeniable right to choose the most

beneficial course of action. Women are rightly outraged by the epidemic of people's sense of entitlement to women's bodies but they must also recognize that the enforcement of their pro-life beliefs on other women is a mimicry of that epidemic. If women so feverishly support the criminalization of abortions, they must be just as willing to provide whatever financial and emotional support required for other women to continue with their pregnancies and participate in forcing governments to provide more sophisticated aid programs.

In particular, rape victims should not have to bear the responsibility of their unwanted pregnancies. According to The Dublin Rape Crisis Center (DRCC), of the 495 clients who had visited therapists at DRCC, 38.22% of adults and 45.72% of children reported rape in 2016. Female clients disclosed only 11 pregnancies to the center in 2016 but DRCC notes that more of such convictions may have been reported in previous years to the center. Women are primary targets for sexual predators and are left to deal with the consequences of unwanted pregnancies that follow their unfortunate circumstances.

Pro-life advocates and legislators cannot identify with the emotional turmoil that rape and unwanted pregnancies entail. For rape especially, it is unfair and inappropriate for them to dictate what action the victim is to proceed with. Instead, rape victims should be provided with the possibility to proceed with any option they deem most suitable for themselves- be it an abortion or continuing with the pregnancy.



Pride Parade 2016, Dublin, Ireland

Photo by Giuseppe Milo



Minneapolis, Minnesota February 21, 2018 Around 200 students from South High School went to Minneapolis City Hall to protest recent gun violence and call for gun law reform such as restricting the sale of assault rifles.

Dear Congress, I am Frustrated

By Olivia Traversi

We as a nation have taken bold steps against bullying in schools. Don't hit other kids, don't verbally abuse them, don't purposefully exclude them. We don't want children to get hurt at school; that's the whole goal. There are 'zero tolerance' policies that work exceptionally well. Why is it then that when kids are murdered in school, we are slower to take action? The stakes are infinitely higher, and yet our gun laws are not being justly modified. The ideas of our current administration do not count as just to me; they are backwards and nonsensical. I mean, what if we decided that any teacher who stood witness to a bully in action could just throw an uppercut at the meanie and call it a day? That's preposterous. Why would we perpetuate the problem, rather than enact that 'zero

Photo courtesy of Fibonacci Blue

tolerance' idea that seems to work super duper well? I'm not saying we need to ban guns all together (although personally, I wouldn't mind it at all), but let's tighten the regulations on them rather than distribute them. That's what a progressive nation is supposed to do. Act on problems that arise and actively try to fix them, rather than shrug and say, "At least I'm safe. And so is my gun."

Why is our government impotent when classrooms of children are being taken out by a gun? Bullying used to be the biggest worry for kids in school, and action was taken against it. But those who are targeted by shooters are not going home with a scraped knee or a bruised ego; they are not going home at all. Why are we having to beg



Common chants included “Enough is enough” and “Gun reform now.”

Congress to stop allowing the next leading generation from getting slaughtered? Why is it taking so long, and so many lives away from us, before our gun laws are amended?

The foundation of United States law was established not even 250 years ago. Let's get acquainted with those times. When our founding fathers were writing up the Constitution and Bill of Rights, they owned slaves. It took the better part of a century for slavery to be abolished, because racist individuals and groups were hung up on what they still thought to be their “rights.” We didn't let women vote for another 50 years or so after that, because the Constitution didn't guarantee it. We are currently only on the cusp of equality for the LGBTQ community, but we still have a long way to go. We have no agenda for treating mental illnesses, even though they have been the cause of mass shootings time and time again. Why does it take forever for the laws to catch up with the intended progress of this country?

The most ignorant members of our government stomp and yell about our “sacred” Constitution, which was written by men who didn't even make it three years before realizing that it wasn't really working for them, and that it actually necessitated a whole new bill full of amendments to go with it. Let me reiterate; these same men decided that their code of law needed some progress after such a short time. So how come when 250 years go by, our Congress still clutches to a document that wasn't even good enough at the time without re-writes and additions? In fact, the drafters realized that the will of society would fluctuate over time, and purposefully gave it elasticity so that Congress would have the power to do whatever is “necessary and proper” to do its job. I'd say saving lives is the proper thing to do. It's been necessary for a while now. So, you know the end of the sentence, Congress: Do your jobs. You are called law makers, not law reminders. The right to bear arms doesn't work for us anymore, clearly. So let's save innocent lives and fix it again.

**Government
Silence +
= VIOLENCE**

NRA JUST TOUR

LAS VEGAS 58 DEAD OCT. 1 2017 • ORLANDO 49 DEAD JUN 12 2016 • VIRGINIA TECH 32 DEAD APR 16 2007 • SANDY HOOK 27 DEAD DEC 14 2012 • SUTHERLAND SPRINGS 25 DEAD NOV 5 2017 • KILLEEN 23 DEAD OCT 16 1991 • SAN YSIDRO 21 DEAD JUL 18 1984 • AUSTIN 18 DEAD AUG 1 1966 • DOUGLAS HIGH 17 DEAD FEB 14 2018 • SAN BERNARDINO 14 DEAD DEC 2 2015 • EDMOND 14 DEAD AUG 20 1986 • FORT HOOD 13 DEAD NOV 5 2009 • BINGHAMPTON 13 DEAD APR 3 2009 • COLUMBINE 15 DEAD APR 20 1999 • SEATTLE 13 DEAD FEB 18 1983 • WILKES-BARRE 13 DEAD SEP 25 1982 • AURORA 12 DEAD JUL 20 2012 • ATLANTA 12 DEAD JUL 29 1999 • ALABAMA 10 DEAD OCT 1 2015



They were joined there by students from other local high schools. They went into the streets and marched around city hall, then they marched into and out of city hall and then they marched around city hall again.



Enchanting Streets of York

Article and photos by Natalie Kejhova



Stonegate, the antique center York

The street names of York reveal secrets behind this beautiful historical city.

York, England is where medieval architecture meets a modern city where pubs, restaurants, cafés and high-end stores are now located today. As a new visitor walking through the streets of York, I feel as time has frozen.

The historical city center is very well preserved and visitors can have a more enjoyable and in-depth experience when they are informed about the origin of the street names there.

Stonegate

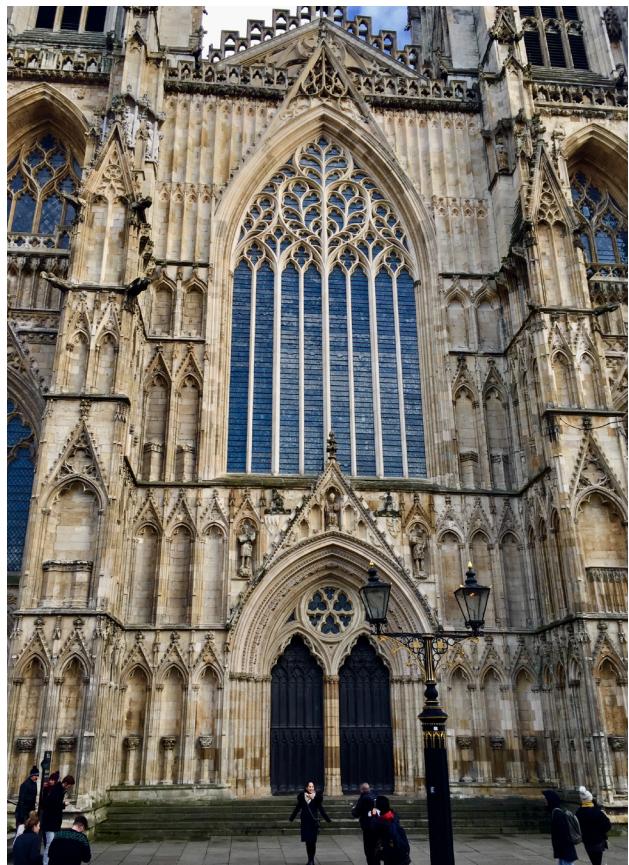
York's street names will have "Gate" in them, which doesn't mean what the word initially

implies since it's not referring to any gates. In the language of the Vikings, Old Norse gater simply means street.

On this cobblestone street today one can find pubs, souvenir shops and cafés. This street is particularly popular with tourists since it leads to the icon of the city, the York Minster. Francis Drake records from 1736 state that the street earned its name during the building of the York Minster, since leftover stone was used to create pavement for this street.

As said on the official 'History of York' website, the York Minster was designed to be one of the greatest gothic style cathedrals in England.

The Antiques Center York which is located on Stonegate is a locally-owned business. It not only sells antiques that are native to the city,



York Minster (LEFT and RIGHT)

it's also a café. It offers British classics such as oven packed jacket potatoes for £5.95.

Shambles

York's famous historically preserved street "Shambles" has medieval buildings which appear to be leaning into each other. In the past this street was known to be full of butcher shops and the Old Norse word shambles, meaning shelves.

The town is ranked as the most haunted in England by The Guardian. Legend tells that in Shambles each former butcher shop has its own ghost. This spooky atmosphere can be sensed when one explores this street by visualizing its history of blood-shedding butcher shops.

Coney Street

Despite the city centre being very historical, York certainly isn't lacking in modern stores and restaurants. For instance, the 'Lush' cosmetics store located in a medieval-style building situated on Coney street.

According to York County Archives the street was originally called Cuningstreta which in Viking language meant King's street.

Today, as being part of the city center, the street is one of York's most popular streets for shopping and dining.

It's interesting to point out how York's street names have slowly evolved overtime to suit the English language better, but yet linguistically still maintain the root of the Old Norse word.



TOP LEFT: Shambles

BOTTOM LEFT: Coney Street

TOP RIGHT: Coffee Yard

BOTTOM RIGHT: Grape Lane



Coffee Yard

According to publicly available York archives, The street was formerly known as Langton lane. Since the old name for this street didn't hold any significant meaning, today the street holds a more relevant name.

"Coffee" in the new name suits what it represents today, a cozy wide street offering a large range of small cafés.

However the second part "Yard" is a traditional suffix for Viking-inspired street names in this city. This is used across York referring to wider alleyways and squares such as Minster Yard.

Grape Lane

Right in the heart of the historical city center, high-end boutiques for passionate shoppers such as 'Moda in Pelle' are located on Grape lane. However this street wasn't always glamorous in the past.

Paul Furnes, an advocate of York's alternative history points out that, this street used to be called Grope Lane. The literal meaning of the name stems from the street being famous for brothels in the medieval times.

It isn't quite sure when the street's name change took place, but it is sure that Grape Lane is a much more appropriate name for the high-end street today.

Nevertheless it's safe to say that York is a beautiful and enchanting city. It will surely be more fun to explore it with a little more background knowledge on the origin of street names. This will offer visitors an insight into how this city has evolved throughout its rich history.





Paws, Claws, and Praha

I consider myself a cat person, but I never thought one day I'd be writing an essay while next to a sleeping tiger's head. But that's what happens when you're at the Prague Zoo, a sanctuary and hidden gem in the Prague countryside.

It's overwhelming living in a new city, and important to find a "sanctuary" where you can go and know it will be a calm experience. When I lived in Central California, it was my goat pen. When I moved to University, it

was Disneyland (a unique example, but I am very fortunate.) When I moved to Prague, I had no idea what could be "mine." Some people found parks or cafes, and I enjoy a good cappuccino as much as the next student, but I needed something a little different.

When I first looked up Prague in researching for studying abroad, the zoo was one of Google's first "recommendations." But naturally, the internet never really does anything

justice when they describe it analytically. So I packed up my camera, my lens to the world, saved my traveling directions and set off confidently. What I found was a sanctuary not just for myself, but for over 4200 animals.

Located in the Troja district in Northern Prague, the Prague Zoological Garden was opened in 1931 with the mission to "advance the study of zoology, protect wildlife, and educate the public." It is just a metro ride

on the C line and then a quick direct bus trip (112 route) away. One of my favorite drivers puts animal “stuffies” by the windshield, and I always love the drive there. Upon arrival, the ticket sellers are helpful to get you the best price. **For students, an annual pass is 450CZK. For just a one time ticket, 150CZK.** There are discounts for seniors and children as well, and on their “Happy Mondays”.

When first walking into the zoo, it is easy to see how much space is dedicated to

these animals. Unlike many zoos, each animal is clearly cared for and protected. From the largest elephant to the tiniest monkey, every animal looks healthy and happy. There are constant renovations to exhibitions, and even on days where exhibits are being cleaned, it is wonderful to see the teamwork the Zoo employees show to prepare each environment the best it can be. On one particular instance, we were able to watch a caregiver hide treats all over the elephant’s

expansive enclosure, then watch said elephants quickly find the tasty snacks.

The Zoo is not one to be strolled through, it takes advantage of the hills and valleys naturally found in Prague. My boots are always on my feet as I trek up the hill to see the (previously extinct) Przewalski’s horse, as Prague Zoo was vital to the reintroduction of the species back to the wild.

Pronounced “shuh-VAL-skee’s” horse (and also known by P-Horse), the species is

Article and photos by Olivia Dom



native to Central Asia and was almost driven into complete wild extinction by humans by the end of the 1960s. But thanks to care of zoological institutes, breeding programs were created to reintroduce the P-Horse back into the wild. The Prague Zoo was on the forefront of this effort, and has the most exhaustive records of the breeding and offspring of the P-Horse.

Every time I go I see something new, whether it is the bird sanctuary or the

“Twilight Zone” of free-flying fruit bats (The Twilight Zone experience cannot be missed.) Whether you’re there in the heat of August or the chill of December, there are little moments that could only be seen when you’re in the Prague Zoo. In the middle of the zoo, there is an open air “Lemur Island” where you can sit while Lemurs leap and bound all around you-- careful not to have your lunch stolen!

All over the hills, there are little cafes and themed

restaurants, with language translated menus and helpful staff. I highly recommend the cafe, Černohouska, by the Parrot’s Trail, for chocolate cake and a stunning million-dollar view of Prague.

In the warmer months there is a chairlift, but it isn’t too hard to make the whole journey by foot. The Zoo has many “Wifi Spots” to share the incredible photos you will take. I can sit for hours in the (heated) Feline Pavilion, watching the tigers nap while I do homework.





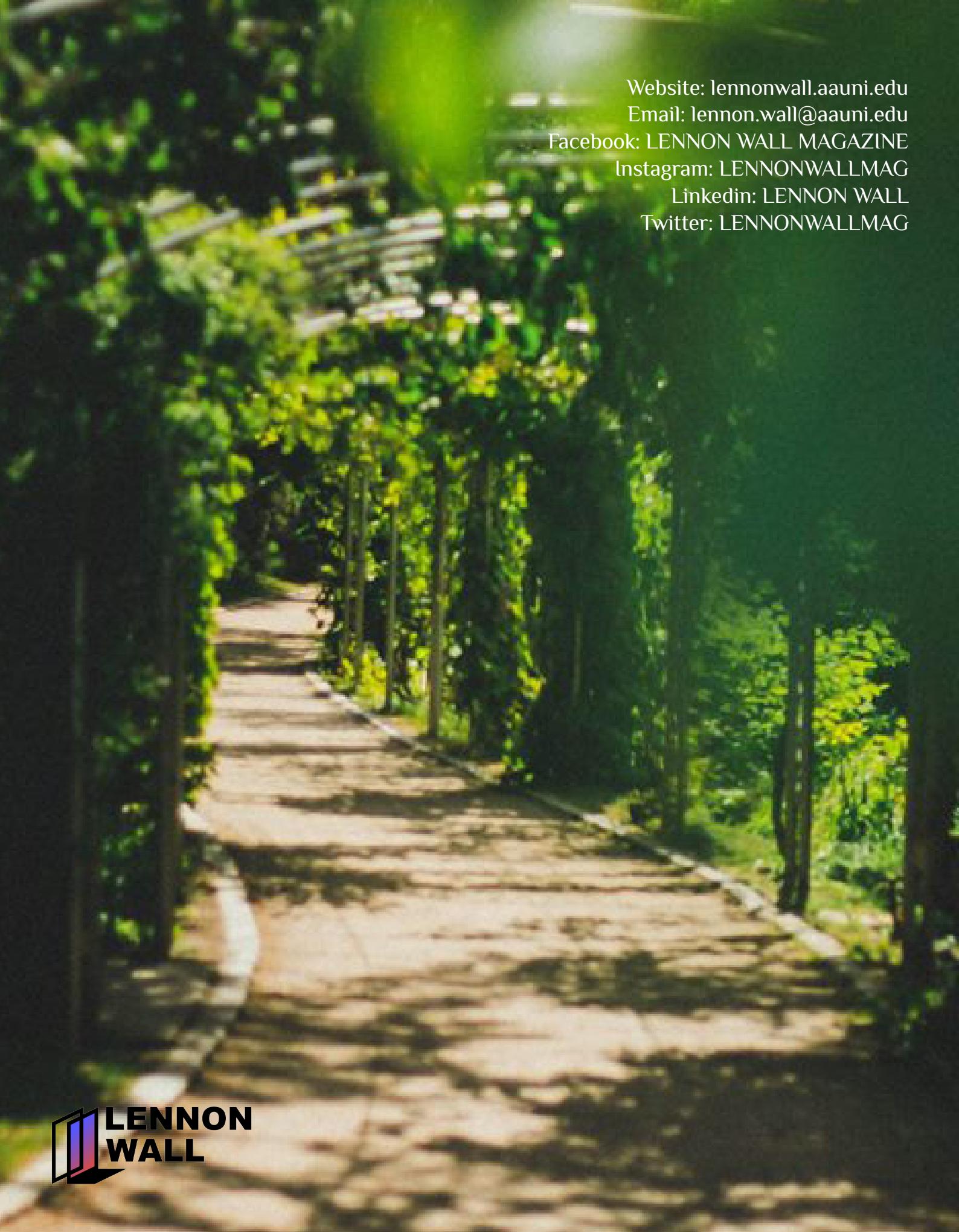
The Zoo is notable for being one of the best breeders of rare species: recently the zoo has introduced two baby tigers to the public eye, and I was there on the first day the public could see them. It's an incredible thing, to be a witness to the young mother tiger as she cares for her

young. Currently, there are also two baby elephants, five young cheetahs (with their gorgeous mother, Savannah), and baby gorillas.

The Zoo is a calm, quiet place just radiating with life. There, baby elephants throw leaves over their heads. Polar Bears do the backstroke.

Orangutans steal each other's blankets and species can come back from the dead. Prague Zoo is rated 5th best in the entire world by TripAdvisor, but is ranked #1 in my heart. Thanks for the sanctuary, thanks for protecting me too.





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