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NC STATE STUDENT MEDIA

SPRING 2025



*the* HEART-TO-HEART ISSUE

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

## ABOUT US

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The newest NC State Student Media outlet, Roundabout is a glossy general interest magazine that covers student life, arts and culture.

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## THE COVER

—

Two hands hold a string of paper hearts inside Witherspoon Student Center on Feb. 5. The string of hearts is meant to represent how emotion connects each and every one of us.

Photo Illustration by Emily Peedin

Dear veins, valves and ventricles,

Isn't it crazy? My younger selves are such wildly different people than who I currently am, and yet I still remember things those versions of myself thought, said and did as if they're all still me. One such version, who I will call "Itty Bitty Bran," sincerely believed that heart-to-heart conversations were the solution to all conflict. The real tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, Itty Bitty Bran thought, is that the Montagues and Capulets didn't sit down and have an earnest, sincere chat with one another before any feuding went spicy. Same with Anakin and Obi-Wan, the Hatfields and McCoys, and even North and South Korea. While Itty Bitty Bran was undoubtedly naive, there's something to be said about the power of forthright, honest and empathetic communication. This issue of Roundabout draws on that power with oodles of content devoted to exploring emotions and intimacy. Enjoy!

As is Roundabout custom, I will practice heartfelt communication by extolling the virtues of all the champions who brought this magazine to life. Deplete the world's gem mines to fashion a fittingly large diadem for our preeminent photo editor Emily Peedin, whose queenly work ethic and visual acumen continue to astound. Construct a new wing of the Louvre to house the artistic masterpieces of our dazzling design editor Marlowe Henderson, who doesn't let sleep deprivation deter her from excellence. Rewrite the Magna Carta to enshrine the liberty of our conscientious copy editor Audrey Javan to continue infusing our writing with pristine, unadulterated awesomeness. Toot every trumpet in existence to commemorate our peerless promotion director Layney Keesee's unending crusade to spread awareness of Roundabout from Tuvalu to Timbuktu.

Salute to our adviser Ray, who ensures we're both clocked in and thoroughly advised. Kudos to Abi, Allie and the sales warriors at the business office who're on the front lines of the battle to save print publishing. Thank you to Patrick, our benignant leader. Thank you to our interviewees, who generously shared their insights with us. Thank you to Bart and his staff at Triangle Web Printing, who've never failed to deliver on-time. And most importantly, gigatons of gratitude to all of our staffers for being the literal lifeblood of this magazine. You make Roundabout happen.

To the Wolfpack with love,

*Gerbrand Poster V*

**Gerbrand (Bran) Poster V, Editor-in-Chief**

# MEET THE STAFF



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**Marlowe Henderson**  
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**Layney Keesee**  
PROMOTIONS



Photo by Ray Black III

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**Bran Poster, a fourth-year studying English and the editor-in-chief of Roundabout, cuts a heart out of origami paper inside Witherspoon Student Center on Feb. 2. The paper hearts on this edition of Roundabout, although simple, represent the housing of human emotions in the heart.**

Photo by Emily Peedin

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# Hidden Depths

You know what Walt Whitman says about largeness and multitudes. Truly a visionary.

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Tempests and Turn-Arounds



Emotional Recovery

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# DISCLOSING PIERCINGS

By Grace Warner, Designed by Marlowe Henderson

If you take the time to think about it, piercings are a ridiculous concept. You spend fistfuls of cash to willingly get a hole in your head from an artist likely far removed from any medical license. Said hole is then filled with a piece of titanium, and you're instructed to ritualistically swab the red and swollen site for 40 days and 40 nights, praying it doesn't reject. You'll rejoice in crusty skin forming around the foreign metal, a sign that all your hard work is finally paying off, and can now attempt the first change of jewelry. Don't get ahead of yourself — if you lack even an ounce of patience in this process, you'll be punished with a pain as piercing as the original one. If everything goes smoothly, you can congratulate yourself on taming a festering, volitional wound.

On a lazy afternoon, my best friend took hold of both my wrists and blurted out her desire to get matching holes in our heads. I looked at her sideways, and she explained that what she was suggesting was not as violent as she implied. A week later, I was buckled tight into her car and gripping the top of my ear, thinking about everything that could go wrong. Before I knew it, we were standing outside a darkened brick building with IDs in our hands.

My jaw was getting sore from grinding my teeth, so I went first. I held her hand tightly and she said nothing about how shaky it was. When the needle tore through my cartilage, I unclenched and finally took a breath. The pain was nothing — it was a comfort compared to the anticipation. My piercer hadn't stabbed the wrong part of my ear, thank goodness. Still, I thought to the future: What if the piercing rejected and I was left with a mangled ear? My best friend laid down and tilted her head to the side, holding her face much better than I did. Still, I felt an increase in pressure as her eyes met the needle, making us both victims of catastrophizing.

Little did I know this one measly piercing would unlock a primal urge to fill my head full of holes. As I was settling into my second year of college, I was gushing to my friend about how badly I wanted my septum pierced. After a year, I was finally willing to fork up some spending money, but still too scared to commit. My parents would be disappointed, I said. "So what?" was her answer. "They're not here. They're, what, six hours away?" I couldn't argue with that logic.

I now have a piece of metal in my nose. Fully cosmetic, and honestly a pain in the ass. If you're ever considering it, keep in mind that it's hell when you get a cold and even when worse dealing with a bloody nose. I've never regretted it for an instant, of course. Still, before I made the final commitment, I couldn't stop the familiar rhetoric creeping into my head: "You know people are going to look at you differently. Did you even think this through? Why would you want to make life harder for yourself?"

Luckily, I had an easy answer to all my questions. It was actually the best part of the piercing — I could hide it. Really easily. For a reason I don't fully understand, you can grip the ends of your septum between your fingers, yank down the crest of your lip and shove it inside your nose, a vile, but painless act. Mentally, you'll feel odd for having titanium inside your nose, but physically, you'll feel great. Unless you get whacked in the face.

I had already been in the closet for about four years, so another secret felt like nothing. I didn't want to deal with the questions. It's exhausting trying to navigate through societal implications — I didn't want anyone to see me differently for my piercings or sexuality. I hated being in the dark about what reactions they would elicit. I wanted to navigate my own expectations, even if things turned out badly.

I hid my septum piercing from my parents for about a year until they found out. I told them I was gay about a year and a half before that. My piercing's discovery wasn't planned; I wasn't careful and left it out during a nasty cold, and my dad happened to walk into my room just as I was blowing my nose. He froze for a few seconds in disbelief before he asked — not rhetorically — if I had a nose ring. I begged him not to tell, and he kept it a secret until he accidentally sent a picture of me with it sitting clear as day underneath my nose to our family's group chat.

Luckily, my coming out was more predetermined. Thoughts raced in my head, and I prepared for the worst possible outcome. The words stung my lips on the way out. Somehow, the world didn't stop spinning, and I got a hug from both my parents, gentle teasing from my brother and a laugh from my best friend who'd apparently figured it out a while ago and was just waiting for when I was ready, which I more than appreciated.

My girlfriend now goes with me to get holes in my head. I go through the laborious process of taming my deliberate wounds. I relish the feeling of freely showing them off. I notice myself grabbing the top of my ear — my first piercing. The one that was such a source of anxiety. I trace the outside of the hoop between my thumb and pointer while I sit slouched in my classes, during conversations, when I read, when I write. I think about how much I languished over coming out, how much I writhed hiding parts of myself and how I can finally laugh at the melodrama of it all.

# NOSTALGIOLOGY: THE INS AND OUTS OF ROSY MEMORIES

By Audrey Javan, Photo and Photo Illustration by Emily Peedin



We’re all familiar with fond memories. We tend to look back on our pasts with rose-colored (sepia-toned, rather) glasses, coloring the memories with an idyllic affection. The feeling makes sense until you put a little more thought into, say, your middle school memories and recall just how bad of a time you actually had back then.

Originally coming from the Greek “nostos” for “returning home” and “algos” for “pain,” the historical meaning of nostalgia is “homesickness.” Even though the meaning has changed over the centuries, the bittersweet longing for a place — or a time — you can no longer access is still captured.

Nostalgia is more complex than one might think, and I don’t only mean complexity of feeling. Yes, the feelings it raises within you are rich and tangled, a specific type of knot in your solar plexus that can be difficult to parse out. But more than that, it has dense, far-reaching causes and effects that might not be immediately apparent. Thankfully, NC State has a scholar for that.

Anna Behler — a PhD-holder in experimental psychology, concentrating in social psychology — teaches an array of psychology classes, from foundations like research methods to more unique creations like Psychology and Media. Her 11 academic publications available on ResearchGate have accrued almost 7,000 reads and over 140 citations, a point of envy for anyone who’s published anything online. But I suppose that when you write about something as intriguing and topical as national nostalgia’s impact on in- and outgroup interactions, that’s the kind of attention you rightfully garner.

Nostalgia in the age of social media is something Behler is specifically interested in studying, and something she’s currently working on a manuscript about. Social media provides a memory archive for users that feeds them nostalgia whether or not they actively participate in trends like Throwback Thursday — which is, ironically, considered a throwback itself, nowadays. From this alone, you start seeing the dilemma in a memory backlog. Depending on the person, Behler explained, nostalgic trends can have widely varying effects.

“For some people, it’s really beneficial,” she said, “but there’s certain personality characteristics that play a role.”

Having constant access to photos and videos of yourself dating back decades might seem all well and good for most people, but what if someone has deep negative memories about that time? What if they’ve simply changed so much that they no longer align with the person captured in that Instagram post? What if someone dwells on the peak of their youth so much that their nostalgia becomes a crutch? We all know and dread becoming the peaked-in-highschool archetype.

“But I will say,” Behler assured us, “by and large, nostalgia has lots of benefits and can make you feel more connected to who you were in the past, which can also do things like boost your self-esteem and that feeling of meaning that you have.”

Behler got into studying social media nostalgia through a social psychology rabbit hole. She started by studying self-conscious emotions — a subset of social emotions surrounding personal perception — in graduate school, doing her thesis on how different ways of internalizing envy, whether they see it as a motivator or a green-eyed monster that wishes harm on others, causes people to

forms of media, from fiction to the news to Twitter. From all her research, she simplifies nostalgia down to two main types.

“If it’s your own personal nostalgia, and you’re looking back on memories of you, it’s really positive,” she said. “But if you’re looking at nostalgia at a group level, called collective nostalgia, sometimes national nostalgia, that can get a little dark.”

As reboots, remakes and legacy sequels appear to take over the entertainment industry, often seen as lazy cash-grabs, there’s a worry that this collective tight-fisted clinging to the glory days is hindering our creative progress as people. Is our society too trapped in nostalgia to accept new things? Now, as far as media goes, reworking a familiar IP will always be a winning strategy, and it has both never been uncommon and never been the majority of stories. It’s not always a bad thing, either! There are several legacy sequels and remakes that I genuinely think are great movies. The turnout for a continuation, adaptation or remake of an already-beloved story is staggering, even if it may sometimes be theoretically questionable. But when it comes to the more serious, more pervasive arenas of our quotidienne, the concern is more pronounced.

Politically and culturally, it’s increasingly undeniable that we’re stuck spinning our wheels in the past. On its own, Make America Great Again rhetoric is emblematic of the direction that powerful people plagued by national nostalgia are trying to pull us toward. Are we being held hostage by an over-reaching inability to move forward? Could national nostalgia actually be forcing us to stumble even further, sending us back to levels we thought we’d passed already?

As with most things in the social sciences, there aren’t cut and dry answers to many of these questions. The human condition is a deeper well of inquiry than many appreciate, which is exactly why psychologists like Behler research the hidden corners of the mind every day. Nostalgia is an innate force, intimately connected to your personal idiosyncracies as well as the world around you. So the next time you hear someone talk about the good old days of their community, or you feel yourself somehow getting wistful about seventh grade, you can think about how complex and meaningful of a phenomenon it really is to be living in the world.



**Anna Behler, an associate teaching professor in the Department of Psychology, stands for a portrait inside the building at 111 Lampe Dr. on Feb. 11. Behler has done a copious amount of research on human emotions ranging from envy, grief and anger to nostalgia, empathy and humility.**



# Passion in the Pack: Making Dreams a Reality

By Audrey Hubatka, Photos by Emily Peedin, Designed by Marlowe Henderson

If you spend any time around me, you’ll quickly learn that my favorite movie is “La La Land,” a 2016 movie-musical rom-com about following your dreams. And even after watching the movie countless times, I still bawl when Emma Stone’s eclectic aspiring actor character, Mia, sings the penultimate track “Audition (The Fools Who Dream).” Mia sings about the need for impassioned dreams, because the people behind those dreams change the world. Passion fuels everyone in some capacity, it just hides deeper inside some of us.

The first time I met someone at NC State who wanted to be an aspiring engineer, I was shocked. As I’m sure many people ask, my first question was a puzzled, “What do you actually do, though?” It never occurred to me that at the age of 17 or 18, someone could be so passionate about a field I knew so little about. Although I might not understand what it looks like to be an engineer or a biologist or a graphic designer, I know one thing for certain: there is no shortage of passion here at NC State. With a student body of over 39,000 students and 300 degree programs, the opportunities to handcraft your future are endless.

For some, professional passion was ignited as the years passed.

Hailey Maness, a third-year student studying environmental engineering, explained that their passion for continuing their degree came from being so far into the major and had already “put blood, sweat, and tears into it.” Maness told me that if they weren’t set on being an engineer, they would be studying environmental science or soil science.

“It’s just what I’m interested in,” they said, “and either way, I would be led to the same jobs.”

While applying to colleges, Maness discovered they were motivated to do something about climate change. Developing new technologies to mitigate ecosystem damage was the most attractive part of environmental engineering to them.

But the journey is not without its bumps in the road. Maness often feels like their major is an afterthought here at NC State. They explained that it is often difficult to feel passionate about their desire to become an environmental engineer due to the lack of affirmation from the engineering department.

“My major doesn’t even have its own course code; it’s almost all civil engineering classes,” they said. “[Environmental engineers] take the intro class to civil and chemical engineering before we even take our own intro class.”

While going to a large school provides nearly all opportunities that appear limitless, the competing nature of some programs can lead to more stress than excitement about secondary education. But no one said success would come delivered on a silver platter. Despite the hurdles, Maness finds peace in the progress they’ve made and the skills they’ve gained along the way. Their desire to become an engineer outshines the challenging realities of the major.

For others, the path to the future seems clear and subconsciously draws on lost childhood dreams.



**Hailey Maness, a third-year student studying environmental engineering, laughs outside of Bragaw Hall on Friday, Feb. 7, 2025. Maness was drawn to their course of study through wanting to assist in the fight against climate change.**

Fourth-year student Matt Roepke is studying civil engineering, and he’s known for a long time that he wanted to be an engineer. But in his younger years, Roepke wanted to be an astronaut.

“I thought space was the coolest thing ever,” said Roepke. “I still think it’s the coolest thing ever. I just now realize I can’t be an astronaut. I’m not built like that.”

While Roepke’s interest in becoming a renowned space traveler might have faded, his desire to create change is still very much alive. Roepke takes great pride in being allowed the opportunity to do something for people, whether that’s invoking change on a grand scale by constructing skyscrapers or taking care of his friends and his partner.

“My passion boils down to wanting to help others both overall and in my private life,” he said.



**Matt Roepke, a fourth-year studying civil engineering, lies in the grass outside of Bragaw Hall on Friday, Feb. 7, 2025. Although studying engineering, Roepke actually wanted to be an astronaut in his younger years.**

Second-year student Kayla Gickling finds herself in a similar position. She is majoring in psychology, with a double minor in linguistics and English. Gickling radiates enthusiasm when she talks about her future. For her, dreams and passions are two of the most important qualities of life.

“I’ve always seen myself as a very passionate person,” she said. “I only get one life, and I want to use it to put good into the world and live it to the fullest.”

Though her career aspirations have shifted over time – from dreams of being a famous singer as a child to aspirations of dermatology in middle school – Gickling’s underlying goal has remained the same: helping others. Now, she’s on a path to becoming a speech-language pathologist, a career inspired by personal experiences.

“My brother had a [speech-language pathologist] growing up, and seeing how much she helped him with his language and confidence makes me want to bring that same joy to other kids’ lives,” she said.

Passion and purpose can steer you towards a more enjoyable life, but only if you let them get behind the wheel. Very rarely do dreams unfold exactly as imagined, but that does not mean that they are unobtainable. Instead, they constantly evolve, shaping and reshaping the path of your life every day. It will not be easy, but it will be worth it.

So what’s fueling your life? What wills you to throw off your covers, crawl out of your cozy bed and get dressed every morning? If you pause and let your brain play with the idea, your dreams are probably much closer than you realize. Take it from students like Gickling, who discovered that their spark was glowing with them all along: “My dreams of bringing joy to others haven’t really changed. They have always driven what I want to do with my life.”



**Kayla Gickling, a second-year studying psychology, sits for a portrait outside of Bragaw Hall on Friday, Feb. 7, 2025. After witnessing her own brother’s positive experiences with a speech-language pathologist, Gickling is hoping to pursue the same career.**

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# Tempests and Turn-Arounds

Quit bottling up your feelings before you get hurt! Of course you can trust us; we're a magazine!

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## Three Fantasy Books that Kindled a Burning Fire of Hatred: A Scorching Memoir

By Layney Keesee, Designed by Bridget Bauman

As an English literature major, a burnt-out former gifted kid and a friendless loser in high school, it's safe to say that I've read a lot of books in my extensive nineteen years on this earth. When I was 15 and transferred schools during the pandemic-that-shall-not-be-named, I managed to read 75 books in three months, mostly YA fantasy or science fiction. I've come to terms with the fact that I will never read like that ever again in my life, but it has allowed me to collect quite a list of favorite books, as well as quite a few least favorites. Unfortunately, that does mean that some of the books listed are somewhat outdated — or at least my burning passion for them is — but you'll have to blame my heavy course load for not having more recent picks.

To start, the oldest on the list — not in terms of publication date, but rather how long my hatred for this book has withstood the test of time — is "Matched" by Allie Condie. The first in a trilogy best described as a rip-off of Lois Lowry's "The Giver," this novel follows a young woman who was dealt pretty much as good of a hand as is possible in a dystopian dictatorship, but decides to throw it all away because of a dark-haired emo boy who writes sub-par poetry. This is the first book I remember throwing at a wall in a rage. Not just once, either, but twice. To fully remember why I hated this book so much, I would have to refresh my memory on the plot. However, rereading it would be both a Herculean task and an impossible one, as I had long ago rid myself of this bookshelf scourge by giving it to my mother, a middle-school English teacher, to put in her classroom library. Alas, like the coward I am, I simply passed on my curse instead of destroying it. Thus, I watched a video essay created by someone who hated it just as much as 13-year-old me did. Maybe that's confirmation bias, or maybe Condie's "Matched" is just that poorly-written. That's a question that I fear will haunt us for the ages.

While on the hate train, next is "Red Queen" by Victoria Aveyard. In all fairness, this isn't a poorly written book, and the same author has written plenty of captivating YA fantasy novels, including her most recent series, "Realm Breaker," which I did read and enjoy. My rage for this book is mostly just because I, too, was fooled by the plot twist, and, without spoiling too much, was mad that the guy in the love triangle I was rooting for was not even supposed to be in the love triangle. Low blow, Victoria!

Lastly is a much more recently published book, "Sword Catcher" by Cassandra Clare. I've saved this one for last, as I have a lot to say about it. Quite honestly, its only saving grace is its beautiful cover design. I could write an entire article on this book alone, as well as Cassandra Clare's history of plagiarism accusations, going all the way back to her Harry Potter fanfiction days in the early 2000s. Yes, you read that right. "Sword Catcher," unfortunately, is no exception to this nasty habit of taking what's not hers. Much of the plot and concepts in this novel are too similar to V.E. Schwab's "A Darker Shade of Magic" trilogy to not be suspicious. Additionally, the romance subplots are sloppy and feel tacked on at the final moment. The chemistry between the characters is so nonexistent that, until something explicitly romantic happened, about 400 pages into this 600-page behemoth, I wasn't quite sure who was meant to be with who. Many of these 600 pages aren't even plot, but instead useless worldbuilding that is never mentioned again. Where was her editor during all of this?

Of course, don't let my scathing review discourage you from reading any of these books. The beauty of art, including literature, is personal interpretation! You're welcome to read these and form your opinion. Who knows? They may even become your personal favorites.

# The Death of Preteen Spaces

By Chase Alston, Photo Illustration by Emily Peedin

When I was little, the world seemed tailored just for me. Anywhere I went, there was a designated area for clothes I would like, movies and channels to watch, cute places to shop and simply areas where other kids like me could freely express themselves and just be kids. But now, as we have shifted into a more digital world, the fast-paced agenda to grow up ahead of our time is among us, specifically in the younger generation. With access to unfiltered social media apps and streaming services without limitations, preteens now are not the same as how we were nearly 10 years ago. There is no clear distinction between an 11 year-old and a 17 year-old, as the same accessibility is shared by the two separate groups. The loss of the preteen phase is now upon us.

## Physical Spaces

In my preteen years, I was more excited to receive a Justice gift card over any other item for Christmas or my birthday. Justice was not only a brand, but a common experience many kids shared. Tweens appreciated the Justice store as more than just a clothing store. The inclusivity and excitement sharpened by the environment Justice brought gave tween girls a place to feel confident in clothing that exhibited positive messages. The loss of Justice is just one example of dwindling childhood inclusion – now, kids are looking to fit in at popular stores like Lululemon, which are mostly targeted to an older audience. But does it matter what stores kids are visiting if they can't even get to the mall?

In simpler times, the mall was a space where preteens could hang out with friends while spending a maximum of \$20. Now, the many policies implemented over the past few years have discouraged young teens from exploring

the mall and feeling the same joy many of us remember. In many malls across the country, teens under 18 must be accompanied by a supervising adult 21 or older on Friday and Saturday after 5 p.m. Regardless of the rationale behind it, this swift change in who is allowed to occupy the mall cruelly halves the list of accessible locations for kids to express the freedom they crave. What are kids supposed to do instead? Staying on their computers is the only option, it seems.

## Online Spaces

Until recently, kids were never at a loss for free, fun games online. Sites like PBS Kids and Nickelodeon had dozens of game tie-ins to popular TV shows, many of which hosted educational elements on top of entertainment. Games like Poptropica and Club Penguin fostered puzzle-solving, creative role-playing, home-owning and online social skills for thousands of kids. One by one, we've seen each of these platforms crumble. Many preteen-focused websites, if they still exist, have been gutted of their popular games or hidden behind a hefty paywall – such as when public schools blocked access to most of the content on Cool Math Games.

Tweens of today aren't the first generation to be online since birth, but they have nearly unlimited access to all social media apps to a never-before-seen scale. Mostly, tweens are using this access to explore content targeted toward a larger audience. The Daily Targum analyzed many factors contributing to this loss of the preteen phase and points to many influencers

**An image of an older television is shredded inside Witherspoon Student Center on Feb. 10. With the advent of streaming services, young teens today have the potential to be exposed to a lot more explicit content than they may have previously with regular television stations.**

such as Alabama Barker, who has large following and presents herself in a much more mature fashion for views. The impressionable kid and teen fans of these influencers come to believe that their actions and values must match those expressed on the screen. Nine times out of ten, the goals these influencers represent are unfathomable and should not be the models young childrens follow after, but their fans are often too young to recognize that.

Because of this access to social media content, young girls have begun to flock to Sephora for high quality skin care, dream of premature plastic surgery and vye for exorbitant designer accessories. Kids as young as 10 try to abandon their own age group to make content emulating their favorite influencers, but then find out through harsh responses that they're not welcome among their elders, either. Effectively, they're left floating in limbo, lost in the space between where they should be and where they want to be. Social media has prohibited the graceful transition from child to teen, which is essential to child development.

Growing up, I was strictly on Disney Channel, watching "Hannah Montana," "Girl Meets World" and "Dog with a Blog." Disney Channel was an influential portion of my preteen development as the shows targeted young children in the middle of their adolescence with valuable lessons with maturity at the same level we were at. The removal of designated entertainment vessels for preteens is dwindling as Disney Channel is no longer a station directly advertised. This is due to the increase of streaming services such as Disney+, HBO Max, Netflix, and more. The problem with this increase of streaming services is that accessibility is practically limitless and eliminates specific spaces for preteens. With this increase of availability, preteens begin to wander towards mature titles that are popular online and as preteens crave fitting in, they begin to absorb content not meant for their age group. Now, as streaming services are implemented into virtually every home, preteens have access to other shows and movies that are mature and explicit at a level not meant for them. Shows such as "Euphoria," "One Tree Hill," "Gossip Girl" and "Ginny and Georgia" are intended for young adults, but preteens with the right accounts can watch them easily. Kids want to watch what's cool and popular as those are the shows being represented in the media. As they feed into online peer pressure, they begin to absorb content that doesn't allow them to gracefully transition into the cruel themes of life.

## Final Thoughts

The urge to grow far more quickly than expected has affected all aspects of life as places for tweens are not only few but also not widely accepted. Social media has imposed harmful culture on children, and the loss of spaces has not allowed children to be children for the developmental part of their years. As social media develops, the innocence garnered into spaces and platforms are essentially lost, making the preteen phase a milestone of the past. It is important that as America develops, we take time to allow children to be children as all phases of life are important to a healthy lifestyle and when the tween phase is taken away, that development is essentially disrupted.



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# COLLEGE LIFE: AN INSIGHT INTO STUDENT STRESS

By Sophia Buckner, Designed by Marlowe Henderson



Link to Counseling Center Website

Stress. One of the most common emotions felt by students, especially heightened during one's college years. This feeling could come from anything: a heavy workload, club and extracurricular involvement, jobs and so much more. If you're a student and claim to be completely stress-free, you're lying to yourself. Though college is a perfect time to get out of your comfort zone and challenge yourself through stressful tasks, it's important to manage your time to avoid stress overload. Stress doesn't always have to be a negative thing; it also serves as a way to push yourself to succeed and improve various aspects of your life. At the same time, however, not knowing how to address or lessen your stress properly could lead to other negative emotions like anxiety, frustration, irritability, fatigue or potential mental health risks.

Something that many students don't realize is that apart from mental stress, stress can have a physical impact on you as well. This is especially important to understand while in college because many students are learning how to be independent and care for themselves. Physical impacts of stress could be lack of sleep, not feeling hungry, not eating or feeling low energy, which could also lead to further physical and mental detriments.

not eating or feeling low energy, which could also lead to further physical and mental detriments.

Speaking as a fellow student, it's crucial to find techniques to manage stress that work for you.

One activity could be to practice time management by creating a schedule and having routines that are easy to follow and stick to. Having even a basic plan or format for your week can allow you to be more motivated and productive. A schedule will also get you to feel in control of all your activities, so you can focus more on goals and accomplishments.

Though eating healthy and staying active is easier said than done, it's a scientifically proven way to maintain both good mental and physical health.

And of course, stress is more easily handled with others; in a good circle of friends, everyone has someone to lean on when times get hard. Even something as simple as venting to a buddy can lift a huge weight off your shoulders.

Lastly, know your campus resources and know that it is perfectly okay to utilize these resources. NC State offers so many outstanding resources to help students. Did you know that NC State offers free counseling services for students? Check out NC State's Counseling Services website and you can find a type of service that fits best for you whether this is group counseling, walk-ins, teletherapy and whatever else you need!

STRESS IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT. IF YOU MANAGE TO PUSH THROUGH THE UNCERTAINTY YOU CAN RIDE YOUR STRESS ALL THE WAY TO VICTORY. LEARN TO ENJOY EACH MOMENT OF COLLEGE AND TURN THE NEGATIVE MOMENTS INTO LEARNING EXPERIENCES! DON'T GET LOST IN THE STRESS AND LET'S HAVE ANOTHER GREAT SEMESTER!

# Strange Feelings You’ve Definitely Felt on Campus

By Will LaMarche, Designed by Bridget Bauman

With college comes a wave of new and unfamiliar emotions, a sentiment I’m sure we’ve all heard before. Everyone loves to talk about college as a place where you really discover the things that are important to you, the things that make you tick and the things you never knew could make you happy. But with all that said, it would be a bit easier to vibe with that statement if you had a sense of what they were talking about. So let me guide you through some newly invented emotions!

## Elevation (eleven + alleviation)

The bliss and relief of stress felt when you turn an assignment in seconds before 11:59. Let’s be frank here, we’re all familiar with the near-heavenly sense of relief, with a touch of pride, that runs through you after you submit a paper and see the green Moodle box saying “18 seconds early.” It’s a damn good rush, but chasing it only leads to potential failure after you encounter an 11:55-deadline professor.



## Happeerstance (happenstance + peer)

When you have a class with someone you’ve met before and look forward to becoming better friends with them. Also applies to learning that you have common interests with a professor. It’s easy to dismiss this small joy as something you’re reading too far into, but people rarely refuse the opportunity to make new friends.

## GrubHangry (Grubhub + hangry)

When you place a Grubhub order and the app tells you it will only take a few minutes, but it turns out there’s a hundred people in line. It’s truly an injustice; if you had known there were 50 orders at Tuffy’s, surely you would have just held off and gotten something quicker. But no, now you must face the perils of crankiness while you wait a little longer for a lunch made for you. The world can be so cruel.



## Vacanic (vacate + panic)

The frantic state of moving out of the dorms immediately following or during finals. As if finals and moving out weren’t cruel enough activities on their own. Whose idea was it to place them back-to-back? The stress of cramming coupled with the stress of packing toiletries and beddings ought to be studied.

## Registread (registration + dread)

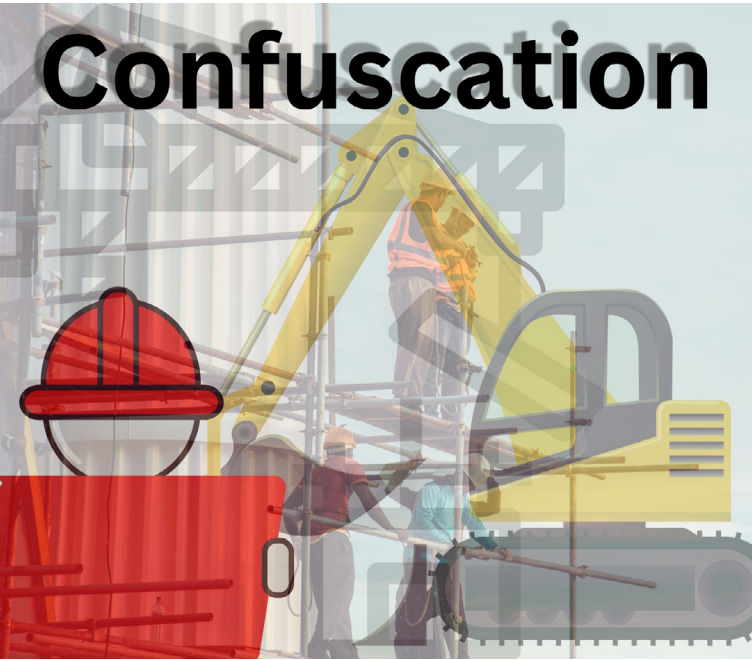
The unique type of anxiety always evoked by registration. . What if all my classes are full? What if I miss my registration time? What if I have to find all new classes? What if those waitlists are full? What if MyPack crashes? What if all the classes I need to take make up new pre-requisites the night before I register? It never matters how straightforward it is or can be, these questions will remain.

## Classimistic (class + pessimistic)

When you are absolutely certain you will fail a class. This sensation is not uncommon to those in foreign language courses, organic chemistry or physics. This feeling is most sharply felt when students start a course thinking they can pass easily – the hope leads to a harder fall.

## Confuscation (construction + obfuscation)

Feeling bewildered at the constant state of construction on campus, particularly when it affects your normal route to class. Right as you’re just about to make it to class, barricades appear and a truck is reversing into a road you didn’t think people could drive on. You know it’s not the fault of the construction workers, and you know it’s just the university organizing projects – but doesn’t it feel so personal?





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Hidden Depths

Tempests and Turn-Arounds

# Emotional Recovery

Pick up the pieces of your heart, stick 'em back together and face the world!

CONTENTS

- 25. For the Love of Crossword Puzzles!
- 26. What's Your Mood Ring?
- 28. "Like a Hug" Cajun Chicken Pasta
- 30. Getting into the Groove: Music that Gets the Good Vibes Going

## For the Love of Crossword Puzzles!

By Katherine Wan

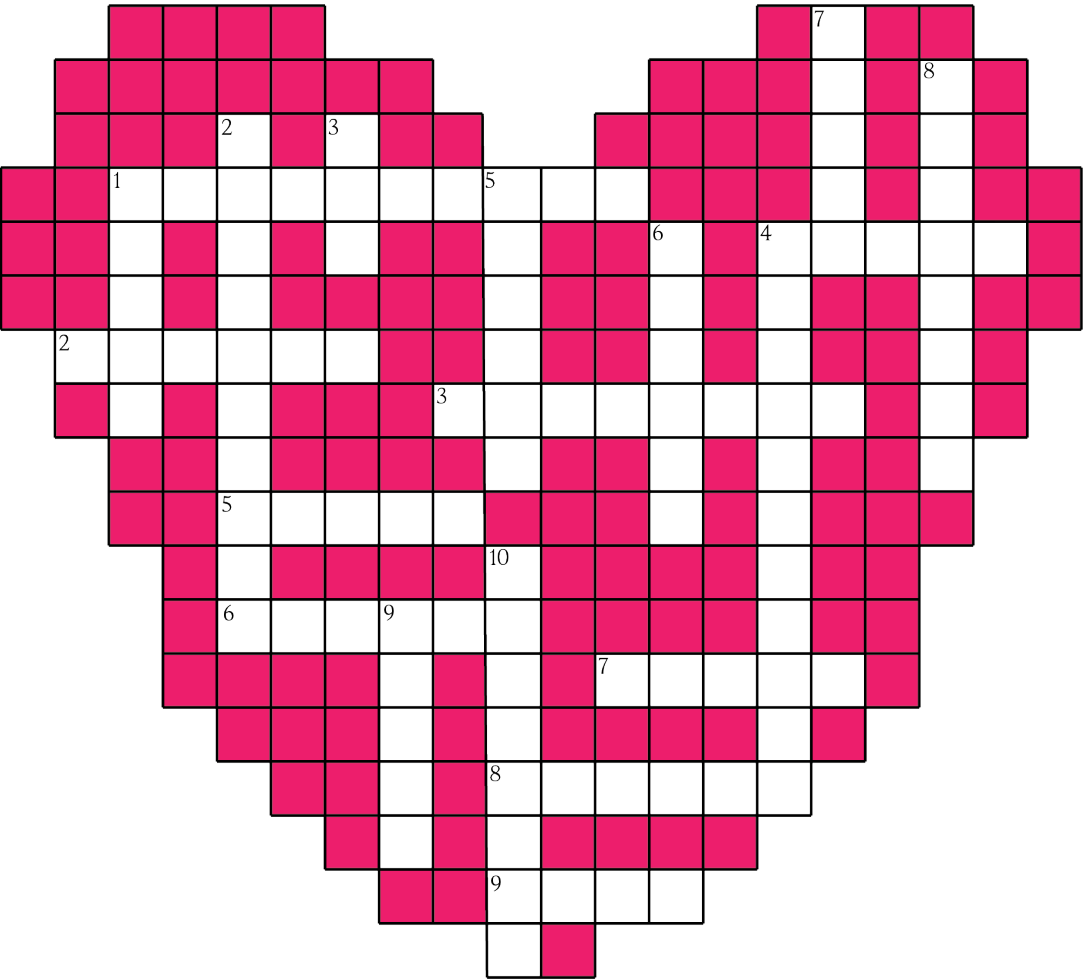
Test your puzzle-solving skills with the loveliest crossword you've ever seen.

Across

- 1. Valentine treats
- 2. Weeping \_\_\_\_
- 3. Green-eyed monster
- 4. "\_\_\_\_ and Prejudice"
- 5. Common in the romance genre
- 6. "When Harry Met Sally," "10 Things I Hate About You," "Notting Hill"
- 7. City of Love
- 8. What pupils do when one sees 9 down
- 9. Flower of sadness

Down

- 1. Roman god of love
- 2. Written note of affection
- 3. Man's best friend
- 4. Put something into \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Popular dating app
- 6. The setting of "Romeo and Juliet"
- 7. What a wedding aisle may lead to
- 8. Color-changing jewelry
- 9. Object of romantic feelings, often one-sided
- 10. Part of brain that processes emotion



Word Bank

ALTAR, AMYGDALA, CHOCOLATES, CRUSH, CUPID, DILATE, DOG, JEALOUSY, LILY, LOVELETTER, MOODRING, PARIS, PERSPECTIVE, PRIDE, ROMCOM, TINDER, TROPE, VERONA, WILLOW

# WHEEL OF MATHS

By Bran Poster and Justin Isaiah Iriarte, Designed by Jup Poster and Marlowe Henderson

## Where is your dream home?

- Valhalla
- Uranus
- The Misty Mountains
- Gwyneth Paltrow's mansion
- Willy Wonka's chocolate factory
- A Phi Beta Kappa house

## What's your fashion of choice?

- Chainmail
- An exosuit
- A loincloth
- Dopamine dressing
- Edible body paint
- Academic honor regalia

## What do you do in an emergency?

- Summon the Valkyries
- Jettison escape pods
- Murder your cousin
- Call your parapsychologist
- Stress eat ice cream
- Calculate the probability of survival

## What's a constant thorn in your side?

- Siege fortifications
- Stellar radiation
- Scheming little hobbitses
- Skeptics
- High blood sugar
- The fear of failure

## What gift would you give to your best friend?

- A runestone
- Thermostabilized food
- A wriggling fish
- Their birth crystal
- Gobstoppers
- A participation award

## What's something you'll never understand?

- Teetotalers
- Multidimensional space
- Potatoes
- Stoicism
- Intermittent fasting
- People who do not care about their GPA

### MOSTLY YELLOW = DRAUPNIR

Hej, halló and hallå to you, Viking champion! You are the lucky bearer of Draupnir, the ring of Odin, a dwarven-forged curio that multiplies into eight new rings every nine days. You have a tendency to swill mead like water, pillage isolated coastal villages and etch occult symbols into large rocks. Your life trajectory begins with conquering and settling foreign lands, but after a few decades, you'll most likely adopt local customs and convert to Christianity.



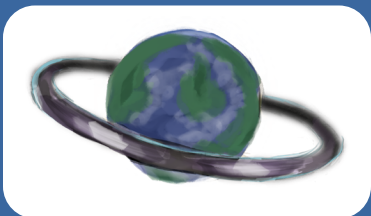
### MOSTLY GREEN = CLASSIC MOOD RING

The classic mood ring. You're timeless, nostalgic and very well-rounded, if not at least a bit turbulent. Your mood changes like the colors of a mood ring and you're able to shift from anger to totally chilled out in less than a minute. But beware: don't always display your emotions for everyone to see. Remember that emotions are so fickle, something like the temperature of your finger could be the difference between elation and distress.



### MOSTLY BLUE = ORBITAL RING

Dang, you've got a big finger! Planet-sized, one might say. Originally proposed by British radio astronomer Paul Birch, an orbital ring is the concept of a massive artificial ring in low Earth orbit that can be used to mount a cable for a space elevator. Clearly, you're not only an astronomically large person, you have an astronomically large desire to experience optic disc edema, bone density loss and all the other perks that come with living amongst the stars!



### MOSTLY PURPLE = RING POP

You're as sweet as candy. At your core, you're a novelty that's meant to be cherished by those around you. You bring joy and childlike wonder to those who have the privilege of sharing a second of your time. Though you're an irresistible treat for others, still take time to recuperate and thrive on your own; the more joy you share, the less you have to give in the future, and, once you run out of that candy sweetness, you'll feel like a hollow core of colored plastic.



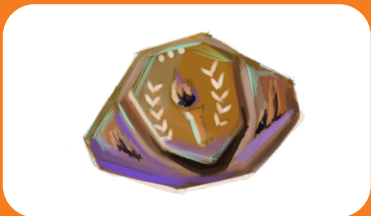
### MOSTLY RED = THE ONE RING

We wants it! We needs it! Oh yes! We must have the precious! It would be ours if not for sneaky, nasty, thieving little hobbitses! If we finds them, we eats them whole! Raw and wriggling! Then we catches sweet, juicy fishes! So nice and tender, so good for munchings! Yes!



### MOSTLY ORANGE = HONOR SOCIETY RING

We have a smart one over here. Deep down, you knew that you'd get an honor society ring. Just like you pay attention intently to your lectures, books, music or movies, you pay close attention to the questions of this quiz to perfectly describe your habits and features. You've earned this ring through a combination of blood, sweat, tears and seemingly effortless determination. So wear it with pride. You go, smartie pants!





# "LIKE A HUG" CAJUN CHICKEN PASTA

By Justin Isaiah Iriarte, Photos by Emily Peedin, Designed by Marlowe Henderson

What is more cozy and warming than a nice big plate of cajun chicken pasta? Probably a lot of other dishes, but this delicious pasta in particular heals our aching student souls. With this issue of Roundabites (trademark pending) being the first to appear in a print edition of our humble yet totally glamorous publication, I wanted to lean into our theme of emotions and cook up a dish that felt like a hug. And if your type of hug feels like the savory goodness of cajun spice, make this recipe and share it with someone who needs it.

A plate of cajun chicken pasta. The dish features well-seasoned chicken, fresh vegetables and creamy sauce.

This recipe was requested by Roundabout promotions director Layney Keesee, a second-year studying English, during our trip to New Orleans for the Collegiate Media Awards. The tastes and smells of the city earned a special place in our hungry hearts that we still reminisce about. I hope that you find this recipe useful and tasty, and that it finds a special place in your kitchen and belly.

## Ingredients

Though there are measurements for specific spices, it's totally okay to increase or decrease certain spices to your liking.

### Cajun Chicken:

- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- 2 tablespoons of butter
- 4 tablespoons of Tony Chachere's Creole seasoning
- 2 tablespoons of chicken bouillon powder
- 2 tablespoons of smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon of dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon of dried thyme

### Pasta Sauce:

- 1 tablespoon of oil from cooked chicken breasts
- 1 diced onion
- ½ cup of diced celery
- 2 julienned bell peppers, red and green
- 2 tablespoons of minced garlic
- ¼ cup of heavy whipping cream
- ½ cup parmesan cheese
- 4 ounces of cream cheese
- 1 tablespoons of Tony Chachere's Creole seasoning
- 1 tablespoons of smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon of dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon of dried thyme
- Salt, to taste
- Black pepper, to taste

### Pasta:

- 1 box (1 pound) of pasta shape of choice
- 4 cups of chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons of butter

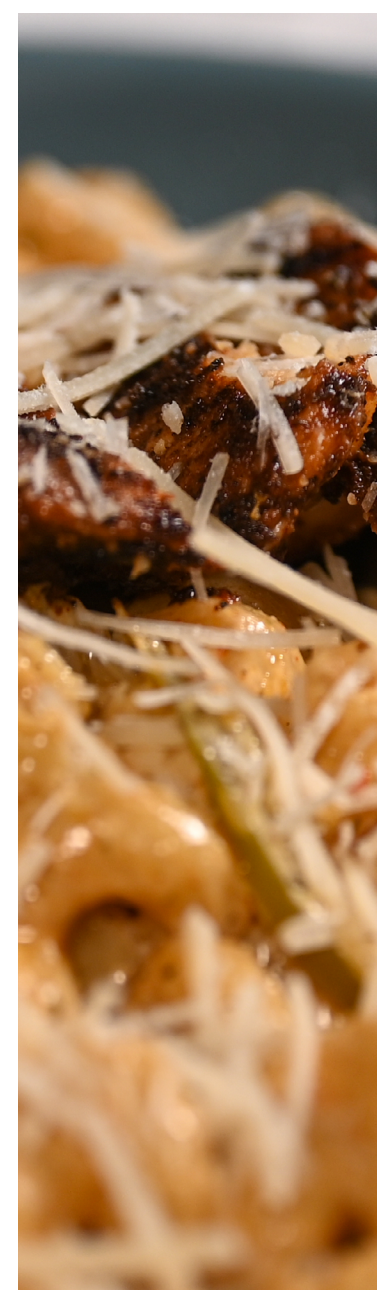
## Instructions

1. **Boil Pasta.** Heat stockpot over medium-high heat and begin to boil chicken broth. Place dried pasta noodles and allow it to cook and soften for around 8-12 minutes. After the pasta is tender, drain any remaining liquid. Then, add in butter, let it melt into the pasta and stir until creamy.
2. **Flatten or Halve the Chicken Breasts.** If your chicken is too thick to cook evenly, either flatten them or halve them. If you opt to flatten them, place the chicken breasts between two sheets of plastic wrap and hit them with a meat mallet or your fists until it's an even thickness. If you decide to halve them, simply cut along the edge into even halves.
3. **Season the Chicken.** Evenly coat the breasts with all of the seasonings. When both sides are coated, rub the surface of each side until none of the chicken's peachy color is left.
4. **Cook the Chicken.** Heat a large skillet over medium heat with a tablespoon of olive oil. Once heated, place chicken and let sear for 3 minutes or until a crust forms. Lower heat to medium-low and continue to cook for 5 minutes or until golden brown on the side that is off the pan. Flip the chicken and sear for 3 minutes, then add the 2 tablespoons of butter and begin to baste. After cooking for around 8 minutes, ensure the internal temperature reaches 165 degrees Fahrenheit or cut into the center and check doneness. Remove breasts from the pan and set aside.
5. **Prepare the Pasta Sauce.** Heat the pan with the drippings from the chicken over medium, add in diced onions, celery and bell peppers and cook until translucent. Next, add in garlic and continue to sauté. Drop heat to medium-low, and add in all seasonings, heavy cream, cream cheese and parmesan. Allow everything to melt and simmer until thick and fragrant.
6. **Prepare pasta.** Add in cooked noodles and stir until the noodles are coated in the sauce. Remove from heat.
7. **Serve.** Plate pasta and top with seared chicken. Garnish with parmesan. Enjoy!

## Final Thoughts

This recipe is so simple and flavorful yet comforting, making you feel like you're wrapped in a blanket fresh out of the dryer on a snowy day. I'm so grateful for the memories and time this recipe has given me with friends old and new. Special thanks to Layney Keesee for requesting it and allowing me to remind her of our days spent in New Orleans.

Take this recipe and use it to make your own memories. After all, the key to the heart is delicious food. And if food is the key, this cajun chicken pasta is basically a battering ram. On that note, I'll leave you with some words of wisdom: keep your friends close and the friends who know how to make a good cajun chicken closer.



Take a look at more of Justin's "Roundabites" on the Roundabout website!

# GETTING IN THE GROOVE:

## Music that Gets the Good Vibes Going

By Justin Isaiah Iriarte and Audrey Hubatka, Designed by Marlowe Henderson

### JUSTIN'S PICKS



#### “LITTLE VOICE”

By Sara Bareilles

Sara Bareilles is truly the unspoken queen of pop. Or at least mine. For a listening experience that feels like a heartfelt hug and a pep talk rolled into one, look no further than Bareilles' "Little Voice." Packed with honest lyrics, charming vocals and a refreshing blend of pop and acoustic piano-driven melodies, it's an album that evokes intense emotion while lifting you up at the same time. Though every song offers a masterclass in pop perfection, tracks like "Love on the Rocks" and "Gravity" truly display the raw emotion and empowerment that this album possesses. Whether you're navigating a tough day or need a dose of inspiration, look no further than "Little Voice" to remind you that strength comes from the heart.

#### “BIRDY'S WORLD”

By Peter Gural

For those moodier days, "Birdy's World" by Peter Gural encapsulates feelings of nostalgia, wonder, heartbreak and love through its enchanting melodies and diaristic lyrics. Each track radiates joy, with intricate guitar riffs and soulful sounds that transport you to a place free of the stress and tribulations of the real world. Gural blends the sounds of folk, indie and jazz with a pop sensibility that feels like a cool breeze and a hot summer day. Standout tracks like "Ollie" and "Around the Bend" capture the album's feelings and themes of freedom and lighthearted exploration. Whether you're winding down from an exhausting day, taking a walk to your next class or simply in need of a pick-me-up, let "Birdy's World" act as the soundtrack to your life and allow it to brighten your mood and keep you grooving.



### AUDREY'S PICKS

#### “THE DEFINITIVE VINCE GUARALDI”

By Vince Guaraldi

There's no doubt that midterms are mentally and physically draining. If you're looking to have a serious academic comeback this semester, try listening to instrumental music while studying! You might know Vince Guaraldi from his long-time collaborations with the Peanuts gang, but he's released over twelve compilations that aren't connected to the iconic Charlie Brown. "The Definitive Vince Guaraldi" treats you to two hours of piano jazz and bossa-nova-inspired sounds that are great for soothing mid-semester anxieties. And just in case you were looking for the nostalgia of watching the Peanuts specials during the holidays, this album has some of Guaraldi's best work — perfect for listening to while the weather is still chilly! I find that the best way to listen is to put the album on loop and let the piano charm you; I get so engrossed in my work that I lose track of time, and suddenly the album has started all over again.



#### “STRANGE DESIRE”

By Bleachers

If you want to feel like the main character in an eccentric romcom while walking around campus, Bleachers' 2014 album "Strange Desire" is the soundtrack for you. An album that explores and celebrates coming-of-age, its songs are as colorful as summer feels. "Strange Desire" is for any indie-pop fans looking for a springtime pick-me-up, so don't expect Bleachers to lull you to sleep. These upbeat tunes are sure to get your blood pumping as you tackle any mid-semester blues. On rough Monday mornings, I lend my ears to electrifying singles like "Rollercoaster" and "Wild Heart" to begin the day with a running start. And did I mention that Bleachers frontman, Jack Antonoff, has won 11 Grammys for his singing, songwriting and production skills? If musical prestige isn't enough to win you over, the album's catchy lyrics and delightfully optimistic nature surely will.



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