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FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

“As I’ve gotten older my view of the world has shifted a little bit. I find my soul beautiful and so hard to pin down, you know, and for me the process of sitting down to write a story is to keep your eyes open all the time, keep yourself mystified and to say, “this thing defies systemization.””

“When you try to leave your ideas about the story at the door; those things you do are so much like what you do with the person in your life that you love. You come back to them again and again and try to intuit their real expansiveness and try to give them the benefit of the doubt, so in that sense, you could see revision as sort of a form of active love; its actually love in progress, I guess.”

George Saunders, George Saunders Explains How to Tell a Good Story

Nothing has changed; I still think these blurbs are weird. What has changed, or grown rather, is my immense respect for editorial positions. They’re tough, but I’ve realized that the outcome is extremely rewarding. Starting with nothing and creating something out of thin air can seem, more often than not, impossible. However, with the help of a wonderful staff and team, we were able to come up with an amazing product; my mic drop if you will, as I pass the torch on and bid adieu to the publication that has made me realize my love for editorial work, (and at times complete disdain for all things in the writing realm), but nonetheless, has filled my days with creativity and laughter while working alongside some of the most talented people here at Coastal.

The quotes from George Saunders summarize the writing and editing processes wonderfully. Having to sit down and create something from nothing is a strange process. You have to dig deep, at times, and pull from past lives to add to the product in front of you. But the editing process is similar in the same regard – it’s active love, an on-going malleable thing. You create a love affair with what you write when you are invested. I created a love affair with this magazine in the short time I was given to love it. I loved it hard and I loved it well, I hope you all will too.

As I graduate and move on, my last parting words are these: I encourage all of you to do something beautiful. Take leaps, take chances, be cliché and just do you. Listen and learn from those around you; there will always be better writers and there will be writers who will learn from you. Sometimes they are one in the same.

Au revoir, aidsos, rock and roll. Listen to The Front Bottoms. They’re a great band.

Eden out.

Eden Halevy

Editor-in-Chief Spring 2016
MEET THE TEAM

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TEMPO
WRITE. DESIGN. SHOOT.

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TEMPO is a student-produced feature magazine, offering publishing experience to some of Coastal Carolina’s most talented writers and designers.

Opinions expressed throughout the magazine do not necessarily reflect those of Tempo staff. That said: we wholeheartedly support individualism, and in that regard, we do not publish a single word we regret.

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HOW TO APPLY FOR
GRADUATE SCHOOL

So you’re graduating pretty soon, and it might feel like you’re about to take a plunge off of a diving board and into the Grand Canyon at night. Everyone about to graduate feels this way—right? You’ve been in the “semi-real world” for quite some time now, and you probably know how to pay taxes, cook a mean lasagna without burning the kitchen down, and hopefully write coherent papers or whatever other form of legitimization your major requires you to do. We’re finally adults…right? We get a paycheck now for graduating, right? Well, yes, you can go straight into the work force, but the Master’s degree is the new Bachelor’s degree (kind of like 40 is the new 30, but with more debt), and how do we “adult” our way into a graduate school? All of these questions can be answered (or assisted) with one simple idea: planning. Here’s a little guideline that has been given by Dr. Triphoi Pillai, a professor in the English Department (but reworded by yours truly).

JANUARY 30TH

By the end of the first month of your final semester, you should pretty much know what you want to do after college. You’ve had at least four years, or maybe less if you’re one of the super nerds—which should have been plenty of time to figure out what you want to do for the rest of your life. Well, if you don’t know your dream job, at least decide what you think you would be happy doing for the first five-ish years of your career. Think about classes you particularly enjoyed—maybe it was that Renaissance History class, La Clase de Español, or maybe it was your Victorian Era Literature class. Pick something that you mildly enjoy, at the very least. Graduate school can be expensive and you don’t want to waste your time or your money.

FEBRUARY 1ST

Alright, so by now, you should know what you want to study, where you want to study, and a rough estimate of how many schools you want to apply to. Now is the time when you should start thinking about who you want to work with and whom you can network through. Look up professors in the field that you’re interested in at graduate schools that you might apply for. Maybe even try contacting people on LinkedIn who have careers doing what you’re considering doing: ask them questions about their typical week on the job. Also, most areas offer GRE testing starting during this month, so you should start preparing for the test earlier rather than later. Some take it once, some take it multiple times. However, you really want to take it as few times as possible because the test will cost you a hefty sum of at least $150. By the end of April you will want to take it, but you are going to want to start preparing by February.

FEBRUARY 15TH

By this point in the year you’ll be in the groove of your classes and things might have calmed down, but don’t get comfortable, there’s more work to be done. By this time, you should have started working on your Statement of Purpose that will be sent out to recruiters at graduate schools. The Statement of Purpose should convey a minimum of four things: what you want to study at the specific school you’re applying to; why you’re interested in studying that; what experience do you have in the field (internship or special courses you excelled in); and what you plan to do with the degree when you finally finish the Master’s program. Like any good résumé, the first edition of it is going to be a draft and you will need a second pair of eyes to help you revise it. However, really try to work and think hard about your SOP before you submit it for review; this is the piece of paper that will set you apart from the other students in the large pile of applicants.

MARCH 1ST

In March you need to start looking at your old pieces of work; essays that you’ve written for classes, past projects that you have completed, and online assignments that went really well. You’re likely going to need a portfolio to present to schools, and you’ll need your best work. You want to sell yourself. If you don’t need a portfolio, make sure you have everything that can be used as an example of who you are in the professional realm for people to look through. Pick an essay that you did for a 300-level course that really sticks out in your mind and save it as “Insert name here draft”. Then, revise the paper to the best of your ability and save it so that you can show your growth as a writer as well as an intellectual thinker. Basically, just show ‘em you learned something and that you’ve improved in both your writing skills and critical thinking abilities.

MARCH 30TH

Around this time in the year, you’ll likely be required to take some kind of “investment test.” However, don’t worry too much about it as it is just going to basically be there to make sure the teachers who have been teaching you for the past four years have been doing an acceptable job of teaching you what they’re required to. Some professors urge students not to study for the test because they want to know how much you actually retained, not how much you can google before the test.
APRIL 5TH
By this point you should be taking the GRE, or whatever graduate exam your course requires of you, and you should have a good idea of how well you scored (it generally takes 10-15 days to receive a score.) You also should know how your grades are looking for your final semester and how that will affect your GPA. If you haven’t failed out of college by this point, then you’re looking good! The grades you have received up until this point will determine what graduate schools you will be eligible to apply to. Be sure to check their websites online for more information.

APRIL 30TH
You should’ve taken the GRE and gotten your scores back by now. You can send these scores to a certain number of schools for free before they charge you for it. Make sure you only send them to the schools you believe you have an actual chance of getting into; this might mean sending them to Coastal’s graduate program before sending them to your Ivy League options. A small, but important, fact about the GRE is that the only score that counts is your most recent score, not your highest score like for the SAT. This means that if you retake the test and get a lower score the second time, it then overrides the previous attempts.

MAY 15TH
By this date you should have your Statement of Purpose revised, your portfolio complete, and your GRE and other tests completed. You should also have your graduate school decisions narrowed down to an affordable number of applications (remember, the applications even cost you money.) Now you need to start working on actually sending out the forms and your portfolios. Make sure every SOP is worded so that it addresses the particular school and department that you are applying for.

MAY 30TH
This is around the time that most graduate programs will want you to have your paperwork submitted. If you can, try to get your information in a little earlier than this because it shows initiative and promptness. Nobody wants to look like a Last-Minute-Larry.

JUNE-AUGUST
This is the period of the waiting game. During this time, you need to be looking for funding for graduate school and applying for loans/scholarships. Also, try to remain calm during this time because it is undoubtedly going to be a very stressful time.

AUGUST
Finally, the month of acceptance and denial letters has arrived! By now, you’ll be told whether or not you’re worthy of acceptance into the multitude of schools that you applied for. But there are still a few things that you need to be considering around this time. When you get accepted into a school, you need to consider where you are going to live, how you are going to pay for your housing and food (by jobs, internships, apprenticeships, etc), and you need to start considering how you will spend your time. The hardest part about getting into graduate school will be over though, so you can finally relax and unwind a bit. However, if you don’t get accepted, then take a step back and breathe. You can always reapply and re-evaluate your options, which are endless. Whatever you do, don’t stress.

- CLAYTON JAMES
WHY THE MOST CAPABLE OF CANDIDATES FALL UNDER THE RADAR

There was a time when American politics consisted of the most prominent and intelligent figures in the country working together to ensure a better future for our nation. While there has been many bumps in the road along the way, it is hard to deny the greatness and importance of people like Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Washington. Nowadays, the situation is a bit different. The debates look more like reality TV specials than they do intellectual and substantive discussions on the future of the United States and that goes for both sides of the political spectrum. As a matter of fact, the frontrunning Republican Donald Trump actually was a reality TV star before he decided that he should run for president. This has shown on his campaign trail, as he is more famous for his ridiculous and offensive blurs then he is for his policies, the most elaborate of which that he has discussed includes building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. On the Democratic side, we have Hillary Clinton as the front-runner. While there is a strong chance that she will be our first female president, which would be a huge step forward, she does carry a lot of baggage with her. First of all, she can’t manage an email account, which is something most people find to be simple. She also has a few other serious scandals following her around, the most talked about among her opponents being Benghazi, when she mishandled a terrorist attack on the U.S. embassy there. While this argument seems to be cliche among anyone who follows politics, all you have to do is read Federalist 10 or 51 and then listen to Donald Trump talk to know that this is the truth. All that said, however, there are some politicians in the field who might actually be worth considering.

Oddly enough, it seems like the candidates with the most detailed plans and willingness to discuss their policies are the ones who struggle most in the polls. Take for example, Rand Paul. Paul is a Senator from Kentucky who represents the Republican party, but most people consider his views to align more closely with the Libertarian platform. While his campaign tactics haven’t exactly been perfect, he has constantly and consistently laid out plans to deal with the national debt, handle foreign policy peacefully, and restore civil liberties to United States citizens. These are all hugely important issues, and he has a clear cut plan to deal with all of them. You can’t say the same for most other Republican contenders, looking at Ben Carson, who has about as much of an understanding of how to handle foreign policy as I do how to perform brain surgery. Another good example of candidates with legitimate policy ideas that get no attention would be Martin O’Malley. The former governor of Maryland is still in the race, although if you watch Democratic debate it would be hard to believe because of the lack of time he is given to speak. O’Malley, however, has laid out a plan that would allow the U.S. to solely rely on renewable energy by the year 2050, which everyone knows would be an enormous victory for America. This plan of his gets little to no attention, usually only when he brings it up himself for the few minutes he gets at the debates. Another left-winger with actual policies would be Bernie Sanders. Although, the self described Democratic Socialist has some views that I don’t agree with and a few more that I don’t see as feasible, he has fought for the same ideals his entire political career. He is a true progressive candidate, and that is respectable. Bernie has discussed plans to redistribute wealth and make things like university education and healthcare free to all Americans. While these views are seen as radical to many across the nation, he is doing phenomenally well among young voters. Another Republican that has steadily gained my respect has been John Kasich. The guy simply has loads of experience. He was a sturdy Governor for Ohio, he worked in the private sector for ten years, and he has experience in the Pentagon. He is one of the few presidential hopeful who seem most willing to work with the other side to get things done, which makes him an attractive candidate. While he has been largely overshadowed on the debate stage by bigger names like Trump, Ted Cruz, and Marco Rubio, he is a candidate that independents and Republicans alike should take a serious look at.

While the election is only just heating up and the primaries are only just kicking off, it is time for us to start taking it seriously. The modern President has never had more executive power than today, and the decision on who we elect to office needs to be an educated one. We have many threats crouching at our doorstep, namely terrorist groups like ISIS and international bullies like Russian President Vladimir Putin. There is also the looming threat of climate change that is becoming more and more blatant everyday. The U.S. economy has almost come to a near halt over the past few months, and civil liberties are being trampled on everyday. These are issues that can all be fixed by a strong leader in the oval office and a legislative branch willing to work across the aisle for the sake of effective collective action. And while getting Washington politicians to work together effectively seems like a serious likelihood, it is only made possible by the voters. As we are all in college now and old enough to vote, this is a right we must not take for granted. We need to educate ourselves on our candidates and what they stand for, and make decisions that we know will benefit our country.

- CLAYTON JAMES
What Do You Want to Do Before You Kick the Bucket?

In my 19 years of living, I’ve noticed that there are multiple types of people who tread this earth. Some who only barely drift through their entire life; these people trudge through life one day at a time. They live their lives so gradually that they are completely unfazed that their lives are so slowly slipping away from them. The other half is full of people who soak up every second, of every minute, of every hour in their day. They choose to not let their lives slip by them, creating adventure everywhere they go. A bucket list is definitely an abundant way for those thrill-seeking individuals to plan for their adventures before it is too late.

- SAMANTHA PROULX

RACHEL FULLERTON, 22 | SOUTH CAROLINA
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Explore different breweries. “I have a huge love for beer so I think that it would be really cool to visit a brewery in every state. Breweries are something that I share with my dad; it is something we bond over so going to different breweries would definitely be sentimental to me.”

Skydive to get over my fear of heights
Be nominated for teacher of the year

BEN BILLAND, 20 | INDIANA
PSYCHOLOGY AND THEATRE

Finish a game of monopoly. “I have tried at least 4 times to play a game of monopoly all the way through but it just never come to fruition. I will never give up on my dream and one day it WILL happen. Mark my words.”

Believe in magic
Open a boutique of cat clothes

BRYAN VARSALONE, 21 | NEW JERSEY
RECREATION AND SPORTS MANAGEMENT

Have a big, happy, healthy family. “As cliché as it sounds, it’s the truth. Most people would choose material items but those things don’t make you as happy as you think. I cannot wait to be a father. I love kids and I’m very excited to have some of my own.”

Learn to surf in Hawaii
Go to a Blink 182 concert

TYLER MARSH, 20 | SOUTH CAROLINA
PSYCHOLOGY

First and foremost: Travel
Raise a family
Find a way to repay my parents. “This is by far the biggest thing on my list. Although I could never fully repay my parents for all the opportunities that I’ve had growing up, I hope to at least find a way to show my appreciation for all the incredibly hard work they’ve done just to support me.”

BRENNA VOGEN, 20 | MARYLAND
ART STUDIO

See the Northern Lights
Close all conflicts I’ve had with people in the past. “Mostly I want to close all conflicts I’ve had because that’s truly the only way I can live peacefully. To quote a song by Johnny Flynn, “you must forget and forgive to be free.”

Meet Dave Matthews

BEN EVA, 22 | AUSTRALIA
SPORTS MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

See all my favourite American sports teams play at their home stadium/arena
Work on a tropical island as a bartender on a beach for a year
Do an African safari, sail the Caribbean and ride a Husky pulled sled in Alaska. “Come on, these things explain themselves.”
A Closer Look at the Rebecca Randall Bryan Art Gallery

Let me frame a proposition in the next page or two; a proposition by way of inquisition. My curious query of classification; an ever so alluring question...What is art?

Turn and speculate… formulate… deliberate. Take a moment to digest the process, and think. Now, when you finally iterate a remark, doubt yourself. This is one of those ever changing definitions. Dynamic and resolutely positioned outside common sense. Teasing focus from the periphery.

As art exists, it eludes the philosopher. Linear extrapolation, logical thought, and deterministic expectation hardly bring insight to the techniques of that inspired expressionistic individual known as the artist. The same can be said of those contemplative onlookers, projecting their repressions and impulses onto the reflective gaze of the canvas; theory, beauty, man, and nature. Art may be the confused hybrid of all these notions, or a visionary lack thereof. Regardless of what you may think: art is done, art is everywhere, and art is expression.

I do believe the best way to figure out more on this baffling concept, known as art, is to go see art. Go do art. Find art where one might not ordinarily see fit.

I took to writing this piece because recently I have been paying more attention to art and what it might mean to the world around me. The world that I live in is full of artistry and chances to extract new and novel perspectives from what is out there. Ingresses into that great unknown ‘Twilight-Zone’ dimension beyond our mind’s eye and imagination, so subtly tamed by the masters’ strokes.

If you don’t know by now, there is an art gallery free to the public in Edward’s Hall of Fine Arts. This lovely place is called the Rebecca Randall Bryan Art Gallery. Located on the back segment of the first floor, the gallery is a perpetual host of professional art exhibits. The gallery hosts a new exhibit every couple of months and they provide a chance to get a good peek at the professional contemporary art world.

Full disclosure: In no way, am I an experienced art critic. In fact, beyond liking a few Tumblr posts of some Basquiat paintings, I have not used my time to really examine pieces of art and find what makes them ipso facto art. Strangely enough, whatever uneasiness I had going into this experience was neutralized by the lofty arrogance that came with the thought of ‘myself’ touring an art gallery with a notepad (I like to feel special sometimes too). Even more strangely, the excitement seemed to come with a bit of shame - shame of the fact that I hadn’t been to this gallery but one other time in my three-year career at CCU. It is because of this, my friends, that I implore you to take advantage of your opportunities to experience art on campus.

The dedication, the raw emancipated spirit of the truly inspired. It’s a damn near sorcery bringing art to life, life that Coastal allows us to see. Casting breath into the uncharted scope of true possibility. Art may be taking that magic air that exists in the realm of the spiritual and strewing it into a blend of culture, perspective, and ingenuity.

This month’s artist exhibition is that of Nick DeFord and his “Old Haunts.” Nick DeFord has taken his art to represent questions that tempt the supernatural. Highlighting mysteries woven into superstition, technology and the American Dream. He conjures faith, fear, and fanaticism into the blissful light of his pieces. I mean it. His work is a circus ground for the eye. Each piece is off putting in one way or another. Some appear as uneven stitches of unmatched materials and subjects; meticulously sewn to mimic sympathy. Others allow sequin streams to dart about a Ouija board to create cultural contrast. Contrasts that command the eye, and made me wonder what the DeFord could be trying to tell me.

He attempts to answer my questions with an enigmatic show of cross-dimensional chaos. But I won’t have you think his art amounts to the formless trifles of a disturbed man. In fact, I was impressed by the care he takes to make his mysteries distinctive and exciting. A lot of what had me so taken back in bewilderment was the dysfunctional symmetries of some of the pieces. Geometry is as much as a tool, as intrigue is a motive for DeFord. Definition by triangulation. Angles tattered and knitted to impress the mind. The inundating and scrupulous formations of his crafts left memorable impressions in me.

When you walk into an exhibit like DeFord’s (let’s assume there are others) you will feel an air of confusion. The more I toured the gallery, the more I wondered if the confusion was mine or his. There was so much information and imagery coming from each piece. Sutured cross-sections of surreal phenomena and domestic paradise. Supernatural space tech meets the American classic with a coke on the side. Conundrum never looked so alluring.
Color: DeFord’s vice; possibly his savior. Each demonic shadow cast onto the canvas is contrasted with a vigorous pop of chromatism. A direct hit to the senses. Like finding Skittles in Hell. Painstaking and vibrant. That bag of candy that spilled onto a deck of tarot cards. I imagined fear and wonder holding hands, bound by sugary eclectivity. However you want to say it, Nick’s splashes of color are what inspired my writing style in this piece. Make sure to take it in slow to avoid getting sick; or worse a cavity.

There seems, at least to me, to be some natural process to creation. For insight into that process I asked some people I knew to give me their perspectives on all this business. When I asked around, I wasn’t surprised to see many people were sympathetic to my bewilderment. Others were more superficial in their concept of art. All responses were telling.

I asked Coastal student Trevon Green to define art. I was met with an anticlimactic “I don’t know.” Which is a completely valid response, considering I didn’t have an answer of my own. After further probing (yeah I said it), Tre told me, “Art is different for everybody, it just depends who you are… It’s all about what you see.” I was impressed because he said in seventeen words what took me a thousand. It’s up to you. Art is yours. How you see it, how you use it, how you perform it. To me, that says art is a form of freedom. Then again, I’ve been known to think too deeply about things.

A local painter I know named Emma Newell described art as “A way to communicate an idea…Something that brings out an emotion or a memory tied to an emotion when someone looks at it.” Poignant and clear. Though, I must admit, I expected an insightful answer from an artist. She went on to tell me how she “…doesn’t really pay attention to art much.” Color me dumbstruck.

Our conversation drifted into whether or not nature can be considered art. Which was important to me, because I think I see art all the time. In the way sunlight bleeds through leaves in the summer, perfectly frozen icicles after a winter storm, and in my dog’s flawless smile. I posed the question: Is God the artist if nature is art? Emma replied, “I think that whether someone created it or not, it is still art, it can still have that strong emotion.” Touché, Emma.

My cryptic disposition was dispelled with her straightforwardness. Her answers were clear, but I couldn’t picture her inspiration. What drove her? Was it to evoke emotion in others? If so, why? I still had to ask, why do you paint? She gave me a few answers, but I think my favorite was this: “It’s an easy gift for people… and it’s fun to be messy with paint.” Because it’s fun. No further questions.

So now, in this last page or so, let me try to sum up everything I learned. My opportunity to take each iota of what art is held to be, what art can be, what art is to me and map its perplexity across these final lines. Etch a puzzle board of intricate emotion and allure (don’t worry I’m almost done)

I believe it is the philosopher’s gambit to ask questions. Ask questions at the risk of never finding an answer. I figure that will at least get us thinking. Our worlds as we see them, have an abundance of space for doubt, speculation, and curiosity. It seems, at least in regards to my life, that the responsibility to admire the world rests on our shoulders. To push our perceptions to new bounds, to confuse ourselves, to bleed our hearts out at times, and at others remain indifferent, to enjoy as much as we can in this life we’re given. And to do all this in light of the realization that we are all part of a community. As much as we’re responsible for ensuring a worthwhile life for ourselves, we’re responsible for each other. So, make something worth sharing with others, no matter how trivial it may seem at that moment. Exercise your skill, aim to inspire, bewilder, clarify, aim to be remembered.

As agents of art, we must perpetuate what impassions. Your mission: seek out new truths in an old world. Keep in mind that we create the truths we see in more ways than one.

As I consider all of this I am almost at a loss for words, yet I feel like I’m understating the significance we have on each other’s lives. Maybe I should stop talking, and start living what I’ve learned. I mean I’ve put copious hours of introspection into this article and I would feel as though it was all for naught, if I didn’t make some changes in my own life. Yeah, that sounds exciting.

This whole time I have been wondering who will even read this long winded piece (follow that with whatever you see fit) I’ve put together. In a fortunate turn of events, it’s you. I’ll be sure to keep my eye out for your contributions.

I’ll sign off with a new favorite quote of mine. Spoken by a great teacher with a lifetime of experiences and stories, and who still finds ways to be amazed each and everyday.

- QUINTEN AMERIS
There are many words that have been over used throughout the years, some lost their meanings, others – lost in translation. However, there is one word that I’ve found hard to run into the ground: family. It’s something we either ran away from to get to the place we are, or the thing that we miss dearest each day. But at Coastal, it’s something that many people begin to acquire. Families are made up of more than just people in our life; they are made with commitments, love, and companionship. They are made with pets. Just as each family can be diverse and unique, so are the pets of Coastal. To show this, we matched the different pets with celebrity personalities and their favorite quotes.
MABEL
“Adopt shelter kitties like me!”
Celebrity Personality: Betty White

ROSIE
“New tennis balls are my favorite!”
Celebrity Personality: Rosie the Riveter

THE CRAB 4
“We are a Beatles tribute band”.
Celebrity Personality: The Beatles

IQQIQ
“Follow my Instagram @iqiqithesky."
Celebrity Personality: Dwayne Johnson

BONNIE
“Oh my god, oh my god. Is that a ball?!”
Celebrity Personality: Seal

GEORGE
“I love to sneak pine cones”
Celebrity Personality: Ryan Reynolds
How To Make Your Relationship Less Boring

EXPLORE NEW TERRITORY

This one requires actually getting out of the house and maybe even getting your hands dirty, and for most modern couples, this is a far cry from the casual weekend loaded with Netflix and naps. Depending on the type of person you are, there are several things that you can do here. I recommend hopping in the car and driving out to somewhere rural; think maybe Aynor or Loris. From here you can either find a patch of woods and hike, or you can find a nice lake and fish or kayak. If you’re looking for something a bit different that still involves nature, you can also just run down to the beach, which is less than 20 minutes away. Surf, paddleboard, kayak, swim, walk just anything to get you doing things you don’t usually do in places you don’t usually go. Charleston and Charlotte are also not too far away for a day trip. It’s always fun to navigate through places you have never been that forces yourself to rely on each other while also providing both of you with meaningful experiences.

CHALLENGE EACH OTHER

It may be and maybe even a bit cliché, but nevertheless it is effective. Sign up for a Crossfit or Martial arts class and push each other to be better. Sign up for a 5k race or triathlon and train together in the mornings before class. Set goal GPAs for each other and work like horses to achieve them. Doing things like this will be difficult and maybe even painful and annoying, but it creates a healthy competition that carries over into other parts of the relationship and make both of you better. It honestly doesn’t even really have to be a super hardcore physical challenge or anything that will create stress like the ones above. As long as it involves the two of you working towards a goal together, there will be benefits.

By Ryan Case
LISTEN TO NICK OFFERMAN

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While significantly better known for playing the character of a wood-working, meat-eating badass that is Ron Swanson, (from the television show It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia), the man is also a brilliant modern day thinker of sorts and in his own words a, “Complete Sap”. Offerman makes a habit of passing on relationship advice whenever he gets the chance. If you want to learn something about successful relationships right now, go on Netflix and watch either American Ham or Parks and Recreation. In all seriousness though, the man knows what he is talking about. He has been married to fellow comedian Megan Mullally for over a decade and to this day never misses an opportunity to publicly barrage her with compliments. Some of his most important bits of advice include things such as hand making gifts for your significant other and to use his words, to “Never half-ass two things, but whole ass one thing.” Putting his advice into play can bring something of an old-school spark into the relationship, which can never hurt.

QUIT TEXTING EACH OTHER

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While this one may seem a bit extreme, texting is the silent ruiner of relationships. Although there is very much to say about effects of constant communication on a relationship, it is the fact that a high percentage of text messages are void of any emotion or purpose, which can lead to petty fights as well as couple simply growing tired of each other. Think about it, if a couple went through an entire day of work or class without sending each other text messages every couple of minutes, wouldn’t they have much more to talk about and be more excited to see each other than if they had given each other a play-play of their entire day already? Conversation between members of a relationship becomes much more substantive if it is done face to face or at least over the phone, so if the majority of the dialogue in relationships moves to those mediums, it is easy to see how the relationship could become more substantive itself.

DO HEARTFELT THINGS

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I know that it can seem embarrassing at times and you might even feel ridiculous while you do it, but there is nothing like a heartfelt romantic gesture to rekindle a lost flame. It doesn’t have to be over the top, just simple. Take your significant other back to the place where you first met, or take them for a walk on the beach at night. If you’re a guy, buy your girlfriend some flowers or pull a Nick Offerman and build her something with your own two hands like your Grandfather would have done. Write her a well thought out letter and cook her favorite meal. Ladies, take him to see his favorite team play or make him something. Most of all, don’t be afraid to say “sappy” things to each other, even in public. You don’t have to put on a massive display of PDA or anything, just be frequent in telling each other how much you care and don’t give a damn about who hears. If you are worried about judgment, you are in the wrong relationship anyways.
It is often reassuring to live in an age where conventional ethics are constantly being questioned and challenged and an unprecedented number of historical wrongs are attempting to be rectified. We see this in the increased inclusion of groups that have long been systematically stepped on in society, and often on a global scale. Ten years ago it may not have been predictable, for example, that transgender rights and Black Lives Matter could have developed (at all, in the latter case) to attain the salience and discussion they now have.

But there remains a group of beings whose right to their own lives seems to be instinctively discarded as laughable or, at worst, outrightly infringed upon and denied: animals.

Knowing vegans, seeing the disturbing undercover slaughterhouse footage that pervades the internet, and reading such books as Eating Animals and Fast Food Nation sowed the seeds for my transition to veganism as a teenager. Now, having been vegan for just over three years (and vegetarian for five before that), I can say it has been one of the easiest and most beneficial things I have ever done. I was surprised at how quickly it became second nature. I felt more alert and found that I had more energy after activities that usually exhausted me. In roughly the first two months I even lost a pleasant ten pounds without increasing physical activity. This is wonderful news for those as averse to it as me.

The brief but growing three years have been pleasant in a number of other ways. I’ve never been at a shortage of good food to eat, even while traveling. In fact, some of the best and cheapest plant food I’ve eaten has been in Latin and South America. Domestic travelers with a preference for convenience can take heart as well. One of the nation’s finest dining experiences, Taco Bell, has numerous dishes which can easily be made vegan. My grandmother has even shown incredible support by making numerous vegan sweets for the holidays. I have thankfully not been told by any physicians that I am suffering from a sudden, inexplicable iron or immune deficiency.

The evolution of the conversation around veganism as well as the resulting increase of vegans are also of interest and encouragement. The feeling of having only a handful of vegan (or even vegetarian) friends in a high school of around a thousand was, at times, that of a social no man’s (or woman’s) land. Now I know more than I ever have. More and more eateries, retailers, and producers are including a growing amount of vegan options for consumers, many of whose wrappings are clearly labeled vegan, thus weeding out the task of reading through ingredient lists. This has of course helped smooth the slow, incremental transition to a friendlier society for animals. Now on to the aforementioned conversation.

Two of the most common reactions that arise at the mention of the topic of animal rights or veganism are the resistance and ridicule that, to be honest, have to be expected. There is of course the starter kit of faux arguments and inquiries you have likely heard if you have been vegan any significant length of time. Perhaps it was the classic “Where do you get your protein?” Maybe it was the aspiringly sharper but equally ill-informed “But chickens lay eggs/ cows produce milk naturally.” Someone has probably told you that God put animals here to be eaten or that their otherwise charming uncle is innocently carrying on the
The nature of man he knew, the insanity that comes of inaction and tradition.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson
When the word “juicing” comes up, most people don’t know what it is besides a form of healthy dieting. Which it is, but in my experience, many people confuse it for smoothies or don’t even know it’s a diet. The art of juicing has been speculated as a fad or as an actual working lifestyle. Googling “juicing” will take you to plenty of websites on what it is, how to do it, and the effects of it. After searching for tips on juicing, I figured it would be something I could handle. I wanted to try it out since I generally have a healthy diet and like trying new things. My expectations for juicing were for me to have a better outlook on the diet, to be able to get a taste for more fruits and vegetables, and to be overall healthier as far as maybe a little weightless and to also feel more energized. I decided to take on the challenge of juicing for a week to see what the pros and cons were and if it’s actually a fad or if it’s the real deal.

The first thing to do for juicing is to research, research, research! I cannot stress how important researching something as juicing is. No matter if it’s a fad or actually works, juicing does effect your body. The first thing I did when it came to juicing was not research, but instead head straight to Pinterest (because where else does one go for DIY stuff?) where me and my roommate, Kaydee hastily searched juicing recipes and went straight to work on choosing what recipes to use and which ones not to. Many of the juices we found have a good mixture of fruits and vegetables. Most recipes involve the same stuff like beets, celery, pears, apples, and bananas. However, I’m a super picky eater and we cut the all the ones out that contained beets and celery which turned out to be majority of the recipes. So being stuck with just enough to give me a weeks amount of juices, I set out to the store with Kaydee in tow to buy the stuff I needed. Fortunately everything I needed was at the store and the bottom of our cart was covered in a plethora of fruits and some vegetables. For one week I had twelve apples, five pears, 4 oranges, eight bananas, three mangoes, and a case of spinach. Although that it was a ton of stuff, surprisingly the trip was very easy on the wallet. My total was just over thirty dollars, which compared to my normal grocery trips, was way cheaper, which is always nice being a college student.

It wasn’t until we got home that I realized in order to juice, you might need a juicer. I only own a blender because I love smoothies and drink them as part of my normal diet. I was yet again on the internet trying to figure out what I could do to still juice without spending a ton of money on a juicer. It turned out, having a juicer isn’t necessary! A blender is perfectly fine for juicing, it just requires a little bit of elbow grease and some cheesecloth. To juice with a blender, chop everything into almost a mince, then place softer ingredients at the bottom of the blender then gradually put ingredients in that are firmer until the most solid fruit is the last item in the blender. This should turn your fruits and vegetables into a kind of puree. After you’ve finished blending, take cheesecloth and place it on the surface of a bowl or cup. Then pour your blend onto the cloth and strain the juice away from the mixture so that the juice drains but the pulp is restrained. If you plan on sticking with juicing though, buying an actual juicer is a preferable choice.

On my first day of juicing, I thought I was prepared. I knew I might get a little hungry and I knew that it would be different than what I’m used to. I figured the smoothie lifestyle was a good gateway into the world of juicing since I was accustomed to not eating a whole ton of solid foods, but I was wrong. My first juice was something called “Sunny Mint” which has one granny smith apple, two oranges, and one handful of mint and it tasted really good. The mint and the orange tastes weren’t too strong
and everything tasted well balanced. The only problem with this particular recipe was that the amount of fruit isn’t much and it doesn’t tell you to double up since the original recipe only makes half a glass. Within the first two hours after drinking, I was hungry. And due to my lack of researching on this topic, I figured that juicing was all that you could do and not eating any solid food was part of the diet. I held out till it was time for my second juice which was called “Morning Joe” which has raspberries, spinach, one mango, four bananas, one pear, and one Granny Smith apple. It tasted amazing and was by far my favorite juice of the week. This particular recipe made enough for two to three glasses of juice. With leftover juices, just refrigerate them until you’re ready to drink! I had to bring Morning Joe to work with me where my coworker asked how my first day of juicing was to which I gave a bland response to. He tried my juice and said that adding soy milk would help it out with taste and texture, which I thought was really weird but took into consideration that he used to juice as part of his work out regime.

Taking into consideration how hungry I was on this first day, I figured it would be a smart decision to actually research how to correctly juice. Turns out, that juices are supposed to be fillers between meals. Healthy meals if you’re dieting. So if you decide to juice, don’t just juice. Remember to eat actual food so you can be fully healthy. Another tip from looking up juicing was that fruits juices were fine, but the vegetable ones were the healthier out of the two since the fruit juices can hold so many sugars and can lead to unhealthy dieting rather the vegetable juices that are better for you.

The next juice I made was called “The Big Bang” which has two pears, one Granny Smith, spinach, a mango, and four bananas. I also took my coworkers advice and poured about half a cup of soy milk in the mix. This juice I prepared for the next day so I put it in the fridge overnight. When it came to taking my juice out the next day, it was practically frozen. My fridge wasn’t on any setting it wasn’t normally on but for some reason, the juice was solid. I blamed the soy milk so my advice to not actually add soy milk unless you plan to drink the juice right after you make it. I even tried thawing the juice for three hours, but nothing worked and missed out on that juice. Throughout the week I continued my journey of juicing, all the recipes I planned out were slowly turning into the same juices and I was really starting to miss my regular diet. Every time someone asked how juicing was going or what juicing was I would always respond with something along the lines of “terrible” or “it’s awful” but that is just me being disappointed with the outcomes. At the end of the week, I was tired, hungry, and didn’t see any results in the changes I thought would happen. There was fatigue, my jeans didn’t fit any looser, and my view on juicing went from possibly positive to really negative.

So yes, my expedition into the world of juicing was not a good one. So here’s the pros and cons of juicing from my week long experiment with it:

Just from my one week of it, I didn’t have a great experience but maybe in the future I’ll try it again and actually give the diet the attention it needs. Juicing isn’t a totally bad idea and if you’re willing to commit and do thorough research, then you should definitely give juicing a try. It’s an experience worth giving a shot and who knows how you’ll like it!
**PROS:**

- Juicing is very financially friendly! For one week of juices, I spent around $32 and got a pretty good amount of fruits and vegetables.
- The appeal of being healthy. Holding a juice and saying you’re “juicing” makes you seem really healthy.
- You for sure get your fill of fruits and vegetables for the day.
- You become educated about important nutrients.

**CONS:**

- Juicing requires a lot of work for the juicer. You have to be confident and ready to commit to the juicing life.
- They freeze super easily in the fridge when trying to store for a later time.
- Most contain the same ingredients so there’s really no new flavors.
- You stay hungry so remember to eat between juices!
- Because there’s a lack of food, there’s really no energy for the body to run off of, making you get very tired.
- There’s no immediate change to your body in a positive light. As in, there’s no slight weight loss and you feel sluggish.

You may have to purchase a juicer or blender and if the latter, you will need to buy cheesecloth.
DEAD PARENTS CLUB

BY EDEN HALEVY
There’s this secret society that some people are apart of but no one wants to join. We don’t recruit and we don’t wait for people to sign up. It’s just something you come into, a club you don’t necessarily want to be apart of until you are. ‘You’re not in it ‘til you’re in it’, my friends and I say, and unfortunately it’s true. No one wants to be apart of the Dead Parents Club; none of us want each other to be in it, but there’s something to be said about empathizing with someone on such a high level that when you make that connection, it’s hard to break.

My best friend Rose and I have a bond that no one else will be able to understand. There’s a reason we call each other soul sisters or kindred spirits, rather, but it’s not only because we share the same aesthetic and taste in music, it’s because we both lost our mothers to sicknesses the same year. Although we didn’t meet until 8 years after our tragic losses, our friendship has manifested itself into a bond we wish we didn’t have to share but are strangely glad to share it. I lost my mother after a ten-month battle to lung cancer on February 17th, 2007. I was 3 days away from turning 13.

We were driving to the hospice center when my father got the phone call. ‘Well,’ he started, ‘she’s not suffering any more.’ His words took their time resonating with me. It wasn’t until a few moments after he spoke that I realized what he had just said. A strange conglomeration of emotions rushed over me; I was both thrilled and deeply saddened that my mother had died. Her pain was over; days of uncomfortable car rides to doctor’s visits and home deliveries of medical supplies (that would cause physical pain more than relief) were through. She had been released from the prison she was living in and was now at peace. I played with that idea for a while – if she was really at peace or not – and finally decided that regardless of what I believe in, despite what I might feel about organized religion, I would choose to be happy and ultimately choose to believe that she was at peace, whatever form that may take.

I made a decision that night that would prove to have a lasting effect on me. My father told me he needed to go take care of some paperwork at the hospice center, and if I wanted to come with him I was more than welcome to. Instead, I chose to preserve the last memory I had of my mother, which wasn’t much, and stay behind to call my friends in search of support. He understood, obliged my request, and left without me. The decision I made to stay behind is something I have gone back and forth regretting for years.

The last standing image I have of my mother is a rather bleak one. I used to go visit her every day after school; my housekeeper or grandmother would drive me, and every day brought something new. New nurses greeted me, various family members would be in from out of town, but all I wanted was that quiet time with her. Friends and family used to say, I would like to think as sort of a safety blanket for me, that my mother would save up all her energy during the day for 3:00 P.M., because she knew I was getting out of school. Due to the various medications and weak stature her body had now sunken into, she couldn’t move much or talk clearly, so I began to associate the body laying in the hospice bed with a newer yet worn out version of the woman who I had once called my mother. This person; this disease that had found comfort in eating away at my mother’s body was now laying before me, but I found solace in her presence. She was my mommy, my superhero, and I wanted to be near her. I was afraid to touch her out of fear of breaking her fragile shell. I did it anyway, even though her skin smelled like a doctor’s office.

There are pieces of this story I have chosen to leave out – years worth of information that could be shared but isn’t necessary; because I have come to deem it utterly irrelevant. There is no need for you, as the reader, to know my mother on a personal level, simply because I am here as the messenger. I’m acting as the speaker of this club, this society that no one wants to belong to, and I am here to tell you that (most of us) rely on people for comfort. We all just want people to listen – it’s human nature to want someone to be a buffer for difficult times. I watched a documentary on HBOgo not too long ago, by way of suggestion from my kindred spirit, called The (Dead Mothers) Club. It’s a documentary film created by Carlye Rubin and Katie Green which show cases the lives of a few women, some famous, some not, and the everlasting effects one can feel when a parent is lost. Their insight was educational and brought new ideas to a world I have known for so long. If you or anyone you know is dealing with the loss of a parent, I strongly suggest directing them to this documentary. It was sentimentally tasteful and very well done.

If I am able to leave one last piece of advice from the trials and tribulations I have faced while dealing with such a difficult curve ball, it’s that time is your friend. Time will heal your wounds, things will get better, and soon enough you will wake up one day and realize that you will be okay. You might be forever changed, I know I was, but you will grow. You will learn, you will be fine, and just remember that flowers can grow from where dirt used to be. You are not alone and you will always have somewhere to turn to. Welcome to the club.

“Everything about my life changed. Everything. It was the defining moment. Everything went from being in color to black and white. Everything went from being possible to impossible. Everything went from hoping for the future to craving the past.”

– Rosie O’Donnell, The (Dead Mothers) Club
Around six in the afternoon on March 31st, 2014, my flight descended to José Martí International Airport just outside Havana, Cuba. The flight attendant’s firm reminder to fasten my seatbelt was the only distraction from gawking through the window at the rusty dirt roads, lush palm trees, and occasional farmer’s hut. I was relieved to be leaving behind the still undecided weather in Myrtle Beach in exchange for the warm, steady breeze in the island’s capital city.

After clearing customs and being questioned briefly by airport security as to my reasons there (a totally random search, I have to assume), I stepped into what travelers have dubbed, fittingly, a time warp. Those unfamiliar with the history of US-Cuba relations need only know that in 1960, the United States ceased trade with the country, successfully keeping much of it in a similar physical state as it was then.

In the hazy yet pink sunset, I rode in a sputtering old van that transported me from the airport. It was uncomfortable, clunky, and still an iconic Chevy sedan – I would encounter these numerous times. I already felt like I was in an antiquated Florida that is if Florida had more character and less retirees.

The first obvious and, perhaps ironically, unassuming difference I noted was the near-total lack of advertisement. The only discernable kinds were the posters for Havana Club rum which were confined to the inside of the airport. Where I could expect to see roadside signs advertising wristwatches, fast food chains, and a limitless number of other goods and services in Myrtle Beach I saw only courageous depictions of Cuban revolutionaries. Decrying capitalism, the embargo, and encouraging the Cuban population to strive for a more socialist society.

It was also impossible to overlook the withered state (no pun intended), many buildings and structures who’s maintenance has simply not been feasible due to economic stagnation as well as lack of tourist money and investment. The majority of houses and apartment complexes I saw were substantially weathered and in serious need of various repairs. My driver told me that building collapses were a very common problem in the city. He quickly cheered up after pointing to a bar and proudly, if questionably, informed me that it was one of Hemingway’s haunts throughout the city as well as the origin of the Sloppy Joe.

A visible political difference was the sprinkling of little offices throughout neighborhoods in Havana. These were, of course, various branches of the CDR or Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. Cubans (or at least the Communist Party) regard the Cuban Revolution as something that did not end with the ousting of Batista and the implementation of a socialist administration, but rather as an ongoing process over fifty years in the making. It is part of the job, at least ostensibly, of the various CDRs to protect the revolution on a local scale and report any counter revolutionary activity. They are also responsible for arranging community activities as well as volunteer work.

My brief, five day spring break trip included the standard sightseeing around Havana. I visited Che’s Mural, adorning the front of the Ministry of the Interior building in Revolution Square. I saw the Cristóbal Colón Cemetery which has around a million interments. I met a few Germans with
which I spent the bulk of my time and we had the unplanned pleasure of stumbling upon the North Korean Embassy. Unsurprisingly, a guard motioned us to leave after taking pictures and laughing at photos of the Kim family.

The most memorable event was finding my way to the five mile highway (known as the Malecón) that winds along Havana’s coast. Facing north to Florida, its boardwalk serves as a popular place for Havanans to unwind and socialize. As I sat dangling my legs over the ledge the surrealism became obvious. I was just ninety miles from Florida, a shorter distance than the drive to my grandparents’ house in North Carolina. I was leisurely strolling around one of the last “communist” countries left after the dissolution of the Soviet Union the same year as my birth. Unknowable to me at the time, I visited just before the quickly-coming normalization of relations with the US.

I am no expert on the country or its diplomatic characteristics. But what I can say is that visiting it for myself was an enlightening experience, especially when both sides of the discussion I have heard my entire life have been so obviously agenda-driven. There were no hammer and sickle-wielding goons lurking for me around the corner. Rather, the strangers I wound up talking to were pleasantly surprised to hear where I was from.

I am also not saying you can’t have a bad time there. What I experienced was simply the opposite of what American myth and media have said for decades. The worst of my experiences were my encounters with often relentless hustlers trying to sell me cheap cigars after uniformly addressing me as “my friend.” But brace yourself. Believe it or not, I mostly saw normal people on the way to work, home, or school who didn’t speak to me of politics and were warm and accommodating in giving me directions or answering general questions. On my first day an old man welcomed me by saying, “Welcome to Havana. There are two million people here. One million of them are cops.”

I would encourage those capable to visit and I’ve been told Americans can fly from Cancún any time. Havana’s unique atmosphere of weakening state socialism and embryonic capitalism will make for a unique glimpse of a one in a kind transitional period, though I imagine the early revolutionaries didn’t have this type in mind. The vibrant combination of Latin American, Caribbean, and indigenous African cultures, on top of political and social differences, highlights the country’s characteristics and peculiarities even further. Non-native Spanish speakers can even amuse and embarrass themselves by straining to understand the incredibly fast, partially pronounced dialect of Spanish found there. Aside from these, it is architecturally and scenically one of the most beautiful places I’ve ever seen.

Should you go, I promise you will not be the only Latin America-obsessed Yank eager to get a glimpse of Cuba before it becomes a satellite of Orlando or an outpost of Disney World.
LOOSENING UP A NOTCH IN THE BIBLE BELT

As a youngin’ in the Bible Belt, you’re accustomed to a routine of going to school, going to practice your sport, and going to church. You’re taught to believe that “Bill Clinton is a no good cheater,” and that no matter what they call you, even if they call you a “Jesus freak,” you should never lose faith. You pray before meals and say your Hail Mary’s before every game. You believe that you are the minority and people on the corner will either try to convert you or sell you drugs; but then you grow up – you realize prayer before Future Farmers of America meetings was normal to you. Wednesdays and Sundays were the days for the Lord, and all your friends would be at church to greet you when you got there. You aren’t the minority. In fact, you realize not being a Christian would make you a bigger “freak” than the actual “Jesus freaks.” Suddenly, one doubt rolls in after another and all of a sudden the script of your life is flipped. You go from a believer to non-believer in what seems like a night, questioning everything you learned growing up, and you realize you have a lot of questions regarding some things you were taught, but no one is around to answer them.

In 1961 geographer Wilbur Zelinsky defined the region of the Bible Belt as one in which Southern Baptists, Methodists, and Evangelical Christians were the predominant religious group. According to a poll recorded in 2010, the rest of America was not too different; 36.8% of Americans identified as Christians and only 3-5% identified as Atheist. Some Atheists would have you believe Atheism is not the disbelief in God but rather the lack of belief in a deity. To me, it really doesn’t matter how you kill the chicken, in the end it’s dead anyways. Atheism, in layman’s terms, is to not believing in a God, higher power, or deity. George Bush touched on the subject of Atheism and said, “No, I don’t know that Atheists should be considered as citizens, nor should they be considered as patriots. This is one nation under God.” Since our country was founded on the beliefs of religious freedom, does that mean that the lack of a belief in God makes you un-American? Garrick Morrison, a freshman from Columbia, South Carolina, grew up in the Bible Belt and was an avid church goer. He says he would go to church between two and four times a week until he was seventeen years old. “I’m nineteen now, and everything’s changed,” he states. “I wouldn’t say I’m an atheist, more agnostic, only because I can’t prove there isn’t a God, but I’d lean towards the fact, that logic and reason and science says that there isn’t.” Coming from spending some time in Ohio, Garrick says he sees obvious differences between religions in the Bible Belt compared to the north. “For sure things are different here, there are church signs every few miles here… but you go up north, you don’t see much of that, people still practice the same thing, but you don’t see it there,” he goes on to say. When asked if he had been discriminated against in the south for his beliefs he ironically responded, “Oh God, yeah.” Although he says most people at Coastal Carolina University are like-minded, he’s definitely had a few people “chew” him out for his views. And for people with bias and different views, he clarifies, “I don’t have a problem at all with what you do, I would recommend opening your mind and exploring other ideas. You know, if you explore them and your faith is true then you won’t feel anything by them, but you will be more knowledgeable and more able to communicate with atheists and if your faith doesn’t hold up then you will feel more free and you’re going to find a new way of thinking and I think that’s really nice. Just explore everything.”

Blaise Pascal was a Christian Philosopher who lived in 17th century France. He had a groundbreaking idea in a time where most civilizations were of theistic rule. He suggested a wager argument. This argument stated that God either is or God is not. He believed that choosing your beliefs systematically was a “gamble”. He knew uncertainty was his fate until death, but he knew the opposite could be true as well. He stated logic and reason could not case his uncertainty, “It is not certain, that everything is uncertain.” He suggested no one 
could ever be completely sure, stating it was pointless to argue about it, you pick your side, (with logic and reason to the best of its ability, I’d hope), and you go on with life.

You see Atheists are not Satanists nor are they devil worshipers. Atheists do not lose total control of their moral compass because they don’t believe in God and they do not feel like life is pointless. They are not in your face with their beliefs either. In fact, they rarely ever discuss their beliefs. Some atheists find peace in the fact that they do not know everything and may never completely dismiss your beliefs, like Garrick. Atheists don’t want to prove you wrong and they don’t think they know more. Like the great philosopher Socrates said, “To know is to know that you know nothing. That is the meaning of true knowledge.”

As a kid, not knowing was a concept I did not like. I wanted to know everything. Why my mom hated spending that one green bill, when she spent two of them for my sister and I to get a drink. I wanted to know how she knew where everything was, no matter what. I wanted to know how she grasped the idea that Steve, from Blue’s Clues, could hop in that damn TV and I wanted to find out why she was so smart. Then I thought, she was the solution, my key to knowledge, my sensi. And as easy as I thought about acquiring her skills, she gave them to me on a silver platter as soon as I asked. She said, “God, God is all and God is good.” So, for seventeen years, I worshiped God. I believed in all my heart that he was the answer to all my questions. But the thing was, I was no longer asking questions. Then, as I stepped back and looked at the whole picture, I made my true decision. All that it ever was, a decision. At first it wasn’t that easy, my whole family was Christian, my whole community was Christian, and there was a church on every corner. I lost friends, the ones I told, and my opinion was the last thing anyone wanted to here. I learned to keep quiet though. For the most part I kept it a secret, like a contagious disease. When I go to my Grandfather’s house, I know not to talk about religion, or the slightest hint of my sin. Because to him, that is what it is. I learned not to talk about it though. But that was fine. I continue to love him and everyone else I always loved, I go on with life, because it’s the decision that they made and that I made. In the end that’s all it is, a decision, nothing more.

No one likes being wrong, it’s science, but you cannot be wrong when the answer cannot be solved. To me, that is a beautiful thing; without the answer – there is an argument, and one less argument is one less wrinkle. Speaking for myself, what I’d like to think of as the atheist community, we do not seek to be right, just understood. We do not want to change you, just like there are people who identify as being religious who I am sure don’t care what I or anyone else believes in, we all just want to be accepted. My one life will not be wasted on mass shootings, prison time, or being an arrogant asshole, I have a moral compass and I do want to be your friend. I do not intend on calling you wrong and I also do not mind agreeing to disagree. Like Ricky Gervais, the comedian said, “Feel free to mock my lack of belief in any Gods. It won’t hurt my feelings. It won’t damage my faith in reason. And I won’t kill you for it.”

- MICHAEL PAGE
LIVING LOCALLY
Huntington Beach State Park is one of South Carolina’s 37 state parks and is located just about 30 minutes away from campus in Murrells Inlet. It’s a quiet coastal preserve featuring hiking trails, kayaking through salt marshes, some of the finest bird-watching on the East Coast, and a wide, sandy beach. There’s a jetty that attracts loons, gannets, and scoters, and a boardwalk that stretches out over a marsh that doubles as an oyster reserve. If you’ve been looking for somewhere local to try your hand at fishing, the park offers that for you too. Surf fishing and fishing from the jetty are allowed, but only with a valid South Carolina fishing license. The park is also a great locale for picnics because of its availability of picnic shelters. And aside from just hiking trails, there are also hiking trails provided for your enjoyment. Another cool thing to do at Huntington is to check out its geocaches. Information on geocaching there can be found on the official geocaching website: https://www.geocaching.com/play. The park’s hours of operation vary during the year, but they are usually open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission to the park is relatively cheap at a small price of $5 per person, and pets are always welcome for no extra charge.

Perhaps one of the most famous features of Huntington is the Moorish-style castle, Atalaya, which was built in the 1930s and is still in pristine condition today. It was originally built to serve as a winter home for industrialist and philanthropist, Archer Huntington, and his wife, Anna Hyatt Huntington, who was a sculptor. The castle was styled based upon Moorish and Mediterranean Revival architecture, which was found in a lot of Spanish Andalusian models on the coastline. Mr. Huntington was the mind behind the house plans because of his interest in Spanish culture and because he had conducted numerous studies on the culture. The residence is consisted of 30 rooms — including an open-air courtyard where Mrs. Huntington would practice her sculpting. Mrs. Huntington was fascinated with animals that often, if not always, inspired her sculptors. She especially enjoyed studying horses, dogs, monkeys, and bears. Because of this, she had her own horse stable, dog pen, monkey pen, and even bear pen built right beside her courtyard so that she could readily access the inspirational animals. From the years 1942-1946 – time during World War II – the Huntingtons allowed the Army Air Corps to stay in Atalaya and in 1947, they returned back. This was the last time they used it as their winter home. The 2,500-acre property was leased to the state in 1960 – five years after Mr. Huntington’s death – for the purpose of being a state park, and is rightfully named after him. Today, the castle can be toured for only $2 per person, individually or as a group-guided.

The park also has a vast area set aside for camping purposes, offering over 140 sites. They have Standard Sites with electricity and water, Full Hookup Sites with electricity, water, and sewer, and Designated Tent Sites that are walk-ins and include tent pads as well as central water. All sites have access to free Wi-Fi and the Standard and Full Hookup Sites are conveniently located to restrooms and hot showers. But before you just up and decide to go camping, it’s required that you make a reservation with the park in advance, and the reservation must be for a minimum of two nights. Reserving a camping site costs money, but not too much. Each night costs roughly $20-60 depending on the season, due to higher or lower demands. Camping reservations can be made online, over the phone, or directly through the park.

Another cool part of Huntington is its Education Center, located at the marsh boardwalk. The center is open throughout the year and provides some indoor activity that also involves learning about the great outdoors. It offers a wide range of information on South Carolina wildlife such as seashells, birds, river levels, and more. Perhaps one of the most exciting things about the Education Center is its live reptile showroom of snakes, turtles, and fish. There is also an interesting collection of skulls in the showroom. In the main showroom of the center, there is a live baby alligator, and a horseshoe crab and stingray that you can pet.
Ashton Stanley has never met a stranger. He is one of the personable, laughable, loveable weirdos I have ever had the utmost pleasure of drinking beer (and on some occasions coffee) with. His spirit is strong, his passion is true, and he is someone who I can proudly consider one of my closest friends. I've known him for what seems like a lifetime, but more so recently, I've gotten to know the other half of him. The side he connects with the most—the person who he would say he is—the musician side.

He starts up his shows the same way every time; opens the guitar case which has “TIPS” hung across the top in tape, he puts the microphone stand together (complete with a drink holder for his Coronas and/or whiskey if his voice is raspy), and lastly tunes his guitar while making small talk—which seems like a personal conversation—with the audience. The first performance I ever saw live was private; it was just him and I, but the next show that I saw had an audience of more than just one. I went to Remedies in Socastee, South Carolina where he was playing an intimate outside show for about 15 people. A little part of me couldn’t help but get flustered when he began playing his originals—I felt as if I was the only one who knew the lyrics.

I remember where I was the first time I ever heard his music. I was sitting in a coffee shop in Davidson, North Carolina. I was home from college for the weekend visiting my family and looking for music to listen to while doing homework. I had known him for a while—the friend of a friend—but hadn’t ever realized he was such a talented musician until I came across his SoundCloud account.

It wouldn’t be until about 6 months after realizing how talented he was that I would see him perform live. It was April of 2015, I was two months into being 21, around the same age the [then] 28-year-old was when he decided to pick up a guitar and learn to play. I decided to meet him at a bar to hear his brother’s band play and we sat in the corner sipping beers and people watching, making small talk between song changes, and he began to let me in on his writing process. “There’s a line that’s stuck with me for ages, now,” he said, “I try really hard to focus on it in everything I do.” The line, writing the unwritten as my story unfolds, has been an important part of his life for sometime now; and has manifested itself into being an important part of mine. I think of him every time I think of it, and, in a lot of ways, it’s helped me stay grounded and focused on the situation at hand.

The first night I ever brought my friends to see him was the night it hit me how powerful his music is. They had been listening to him, too, because of me, and knew his originals and what he was capable of covering. I had a bunch of my sorority sisters meet me at a restaurant by the mall for sushi and live music and not one of them left without falling in love. The car ride home was filled with a chorus of “he’s so good!” and “wow, that was amazing, I want his SoundCloud account.” It was like they had met a celebrity—someone they had known for years through music but had never had the pleasure to meet in person. Again, Ashton has never met a stranger.

ASHTON STANLEY
Facebook.com/ashtonstanleymusic
SoundCloud.com/ashtonstanley27
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It was Friday, January 22nd 2016, a blanket of thick marble covered the mountains of the Northern Carolinas. My friends, Ryan, Omar, and I rented out a log cabin for Omar’s 22nd birthday. As we drove up the powered highways that outlined the rocky terrain, we were caught in Snow Blizzard Jonas’ wrath.

Well, I guess “wrath” is a bit overdramatic. Jonas was more-so teasing us – as opposed to being held hostage. The blizzard hit us before the plow trucks could clear the roads so we (at the pace we were going) practically crawled to our final destination in Omar’s 2015 Ford F-150. We stopped by a gas station to pick up beer and snacks to celebrate as soon we got there. Nothing screams “good times” more than cheap beer and refrigerated bologna sandwiches!

The night we arrived we settled into an abandoned log cabin at the Yonahlossee Resort. There were no other guests, and surprisingly no maintenance workers. Seriously, now that I think about it we could have thrown the craziest rager if one: we weren’t being recorded through surveillance cameras and two: being tourists drastically limits your networking circle. We settled on playing board games in the commons area, where different colored woods clashed together to highlight the eccentricity of an actual cabin. It was beautiful. It was peaceful. Except the constant drunken debating about the board game rules. ‘Sorry’ was never meant to be that complicated.

Boone, NC, home of the Appalachian (Appa-LATCH-in) State Mountaineers, were surprisingly well adjusted to the snow storm. A lot better than we were...Ryan didn’t even bring toothpaste, Jonas didn’t stop the students of ASU from walking to their classes and/or dorms so we obviously had to follow suite. It makes me feel like a little baby whenever I complain about walking around Coastal’s campus during rain showers. These guys have it so much worse. The little flurries of white specks dancing around in the wind, mocking the pedestrians added to the effect of the real struggle.

Mounds of snow accumulated on the corner of streets, supplying entertainment for the kids of Boone. It was quite a sight to see as I stared outside of the window of a corner-booth seat in a convenient Mellow Mushroom, slowly nibbling away at my veggie burger as the nausea from last night’s activities poked at me for attention. Although we didn’t get to see Boone in its most vulnerable state, the town itself had a very close knit, enigmatic feel while driving down King Street. Commerce and local households sat perpendicular to each other, buildings being carved into the mountain added to the aesthetic.

There was a haze in the sky, but the snow on the ground made everything so vibrant and alive. Our main mission was to go snowboarding. None of us had the proper equipment. None of us even knew how to snowboard. All we knew was that our toes were the color of blueberries, and our fingers turned into icicles midway through our trek up this hill where the snowboarding center was. Roughly two-hundred to two-hundred and fifty people gathered on Beech Mountain Resort to shred away in nearly single digit temperature. The best thing about anticipating a mountain side snowboard excursion is when you get hit with a price of over one-hundred dollars, needless to say that we didn’t end up going snowboarding at all. Instead, we ran around the parking lot and threw snowballs at each other, laughing hysterically as security watched us being increasingly obnoxious as the snowball war escalated.
But it doesn’t stop there. Along the way back to the log cabin we picked up plastic snow disc sleds which provided us with most of the entertainment for the day. The paved road leading to our cabin was completely covered in ice, it made for the perfect slope to slide down. No doubt I was going faster than a McDonald’s drive through! I even crashed into a wall of snow, broke my twelve-dollar sled, and limped away in pain. I do have to say, the wind did supply a handy anesthetic.

Here in the heart of the mountains – I was fortunate enough to spend a weekend with my very best friends. Here in the heart of the mountains is where the encumbrance of nature is nonexistent. From the milk-washed forest to the community full of mountaineers who seemed unbothered by the blizzard, as visitors of Boone and the Blowing Rock area, it was nice to see a town full of energy even during the most inconvenient of times.

PS Shout out to the two dudes who helps push Omar’s truck out of the snow when we got stuck. Major props.

YONAHLOSSEE RESORT
BOONE, NC
(828) 963 6400
Watching Jaws before swimming in the ocean will most likely make you change your mind real quick. What a fascinating plot for a movie that focuses on a great white shark attacking just about every human that it comes in contact with. How unlucky for those poor souls that will be digested slowly through a beast of the ocean. However, there is good news. The chances of you coming in contact with a beast like Jaws are slim to none. Surfing has changed my perspective about the ocean over the years and has given me new perspective about what lies beneath the surface. There have been many occurrences where I have seen a fin in the distance, only for it to move closer. Was I terrified? Yes, for sure, but as I have become more knowledgeable about the marine life within the ocean I loosely say that I have agreed with Bruce from Disney Pixar’s Finding Nemo in saying that fish are friends, however, they make for some pretty good food.

As a senior marine science major, I have witnessed firsthand the extraordinary organisms that reside within the marine habitat. From giant squid to common shells along the beach, I have been given a multitude of chances to study the remarkable animals that live within the ocean. Marine mammals and sharks are among the most recognized sea animals which cover just the surface of what really lies within the abyss. The diversity among the sea’s animal life is amazing and the beauty behind it all is how they all interact with each other and their habitat. One begins to understand and respect Mother Nature, especially something like that of the ocean, which is beautiful and majestic, but fierce and destructive at the same time.

The largest animal on the planet can be named by almost anyone you ask; the blue whale. But have you ever asked yourself why whales become so large? Or why do the oceans have waves, currents, and house the most diverse group of life on the planet? There is irony in the fact that we understand so much, but know so little about our own planet’s oceans. To date, less than 5% of the Earth’s oceans have been explored. The common analogy is that we know more about space than we do our own group of oceans, which is true considering that aliens captured the attention of the public in the 1940s with the preceding space age. But the public have become more aware of the beauty and mystery that the oceans possess. Fortunately, the public has also become aware of the problems our oceans face which have been driven by our own selfishness. Now it’s just time to take action.

In the media, we have seen the world’s leading countries discuss global climate change and how far we have let pollution go. Marine scientists have been trying to bring this to attention for decades which, until recently, no one took too seriously until we have begun seeing environmental changes. The world goes through natural processes, which we have all acknowledged, but how much of it is natural versus how much is human driven is up for debate. Only time and experimentation will reinforce one argument or the other. What we do know is that the abundance of garbage and plastic in our ocean isn’t helping fix the issue.

So the question is: why do we care? Besides pollution effecting marine life and destroying habitat, it begins to affect ourselves. Many cultures around the world rely on the ocean as their primary source of food. Fisheries around the world are billion dollar industries, which have helped prompt the need for studies on oceanography. As great as unlimited fish sounds, that is not so much the case which is why cod virtually almost went extinct some years ago.

The most tragic problem with ocean pollution is the loss of animal life. I’m sure everyone has seen pictures of a turtle or bird with a soda plastic ring wrapped around its neck. Plastic is one of the most abundant pollutants within the ocean and is sometimes found in within the remains of marine birds and turtles. According to the New Plastics Economy, the amount of plastic in the Earth’s oceans will soon outweigh all of the fish, pound for pound. This is troubling considering humans are the ones who put it there. We are in a period known as the “plastic age” where pieces of plastic and trash flow freely through our oceans. There is a plastic patch floating in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, which is said to be the size of Texas. As humans continue to dump waste and allow runoff to enter the water we will see increased fish kills and marine life death.

Melting ice caps have also been a main topic in global warming studies. However, due to the rate the ice caps are melting, the land bridge connecting to the North Pole is melting, which will result in a mass habitat loss. This could cause extinctions of species. Once again, it is up for debate whether humans are directly causing the warming, but the loss of ice melting off of Antarctica could potentially raise some sea levels. Say goodbye to Miami.

So now I ask you: what does the ocean mean to you? Here at Coastal Carolina University, which is close to Myrtle Beach, close to every student if asked would say they enjoy going to the beach on warm days. Enjoying the beach is a perfect reason why ocean conservation awareness is so important. Just talking about the problems that the oceans face can be very helpful. Something as simple as picking up pieces of trash from the beach can help. Remember that you can always do your part in protecting our oceans. Just think of saving Nemo, Free Willy, and Squidward. Whatever you take from this, just remember, there is always something you can do to help.

**MYRTLE BEACH**

**SOUTH CAROLINA**
As a college student and avid coffee lover, I make it a point to stay caffeinated. Between Starbucks, Einstein’s, and Dunkin Donuts, there are plenty of spots that I can get my coffee fix. However, accessibility isn’t my deciding factor for me. I love cozy coffee shops where I can relax and do my homework or chat with friends. Corporate coffee places lack a quaintness that can only be found in a intimate and comfortable environment. I’ve tried most of the coffee shops in the area, but when I visited The Local Grind I knew it would soon become my favorite place. The shop is located in one of Murrells Inlet’s original cottages. Before it was a coffee shop, it used to be the home of a florist, which might explain why the building is surrounded by thriving greenery. From the beautiful Black Eyed Susans lining the walkway to the ivy growing on the walls, the building’s inviting exterior is nothing short of breathtaking. The inside of the shop is just as mesmerizing, the same ivy that coats the outside of the building also lines the walls and ceiling indoors. The décor is modern, but still has a charming simplicity of bringing the outdoors inside. The tables are made of tree stumps, which adds to the outdoorsy atmosphere. There’s a certain nostalgia that The Local Grind has, you can’t help but stop to admire the nature that envelops you making you automatically feel at home. The walls are adorned with local artwork that not only adds to the ambiance, but serves as a representation of the community.

The charming appearance of The Local Grind isn’t the only reason that the shop has become Murrells Inlet’s hidden treasure, the coffee and food are exceptional. One of the coolest things about the menu is that it features customer favorites, but if you want to try something new you can just order off of the chalkboard menu that features seasonal drinks and daily specials. One of my favorite seasonal drinks was the banana foster Latte, the banana flavor didn’t overpower the coffee and it was topped with whipped cream, caramel drizzle and crushed walnuts. The presentation of the drinks is excellent, each drink comes in a large colorful mug and the baristas can do coffee art by putting a design on top of your Latte. That kind of attention to detail is sure to make your coffee experience Instagram worthy (come on guys, you know you do it). Seasonal drinks such as the Banana Foster Latte, Salted Caramel Latte, Pumpkin Spice Latte are delicious, but if you’re not into fancy drinks they also have traditional flavors like French Vanilla, Hazelnut, and Caramel. If coffee isn’t your cup of tea, there are a ton of other beverages to choose from. They serve Hot Chocolate, Organic Teas, Chai Lattes, and Bottled Juices.

The drink menu offers a lot of variety, and the drinks are just the beginning. The food menu has the same setup as the drink menu, the specials are written on the chalkboard. The bagels are a popular menu item because you can pair them with their homemade cream cheese. You can choose from original, dill, or roasted red pepper cream cheese. All of the sandwiches and other menu items are made with organic ingredients from local businesses. Some of the menu items include lobster roll, turkey club, roast beef melt, cheesy bit, toasted peanut butter and bacon sandwich, and tuna melt. One of my favorite menu items is the homemade shrimp tacos. The fresh ingredients include local shrimp, pico de gallo, Mexican cheese, shredded purple cabbage, and spicy sriracha sauce. Shrimp tacos might not be something you typically get when you go to a coffee shop, but if you step out of your comfort zone you’ll be doing your taste buds a solid. If you’re more of a breakfast sandwich person I would recommend the sunrise special which is fried egg, smoked bacon, Vermont cheddar, baby spinach, and homemade tomato jam. The food menu is eclectic and offers a large variety of options. You definitely won’t be disappointed in terms of flavor and portion, you definitely get what you pay for.

The food and scenery definitely make The Local Grind an unforgettable coffee house. However, the fact that The Local Grind places a lot of emphasis on supporting local businesses and local art work shows that they are invested in the community. You can appreciate talented art by people from the area and occasionally hear performances from local music artists. There’s a sense of comradery among the customers because they can gather for fun events. Some cool events that they host are coffee tastings and art shows. The friendly customer service contributes to the local atmosphere. The baristas and owner always make you feel at home and are very helpful if you can’t decide on what to order.
The atmosphere of The Local Grind is inviting and relaxing. It’s the type of environment that you could hang out in for hours and not feel weird about it. It’s cozy enough that you can get lost in a good book and enjoy without being disturbed. If you want to be social and hang out with your friends – you can get comfortable on one of the large couches and enjoy good music, good people, and good vibes. I can’t speak highly enough about what a great edition this coffee shop is to Murrells Inlet. I honestly have no complaints, I’ve been multiple times and the service, food, and drinks have always been phenomenal. The only bummer is that Murrells Inlet is kind of a drive for Coastal students, but I think you should do yourself a favor and invest the gas money because places like this are priceless. So if you need to study and you’re not about fighting off the crowd in the library during finals week, The Local Grind is a great place to study or procrastinate, either way you’ll be glad you checked it out.

THE LOCAL GRIND
800 INLET SQUARE DR
MURRELLS INLET, SC 29576
(843) 299 0547
When you think about Buddhism, what immediately comes to mind? Bald heads glistening in the sun, traditional orange monk robes, or maybe just Asia in general? You might not immediately think, “Myrtle Beach, South Carolina!” However, there is actually a Buddhist community operating out of the Grand Strand that’s been around for over fifty years.

When I initially met David LaCombe, I expected something different than what I saw—given that I was meeting with him to talk about his traditionally Eastern religion. He’s a normal looking, nine-to-five working, white man who originally met with me dressed in Coastal Carolina Faculty garb rather than an orange robe. His official title at Coastal Carolina is an Audio/Visual Specialist, but when I met him he described himself as a, “Damn Yankee.” When I asked what the difference between a Yankee and a Damn Yankee was, LaCombe replied, “Yankees come down here to visit, but Damn Yankees are the ones who stay.”

LaCombe has been practicing Buddhism for twenty one years, shortly after he met his partner Marlene Krauthamer, who has been practicing for thirty five years. LaCombe was working for a newspaper at the time and was assigned to write a piece on Eastern Philosophy. He ended up interviewing Krauthamer, befriending her, and ultimately going with her to the meetings and practicing Buddhism as well. He said that Buddhism was appealing to him because there are no commandments or sins; the Myrtle Beach Buddhist chapter has a wonderful community of individuals, and it has helped him become more goal-oriented.

LaCombe practices Nichiren Buddhism; a Japanese sect of the religion that was founded by Nishiren Daishonin. This sect focuses primarily on the belief that every person has an innate Buddha nature within themselves that they should strive to embrace. They believe that through the practice of chanting, and by living their lives according to the ideals of the Lotus Sutra, one can reach their inner Buddha nature. In one of their publications, The Age of Worlwide Kosen-Rufu: Living Buddhism, they describe Buddha nature as, “a name for the unsurpassed state of wisdom, courage, compassion and happiness that all people can achieve and the supreme potential with which they are originally endowed.”

This inner Buddha nature is a peaceful connection with others and a content-ness with the suffering that we all have to face in life. They say that one can never truly escape life’s suffering, but through certain rituals and practices, they can learn to achieve happiness in lieu of that suffering. Buddhists believe that there are four essential sufferings that are unavoidable in life: birth, old age, sickness, and death. At their weekly meeting, one member described Buddha nature as being like the axle of a car, and our life as the wheels. The wheel of the car represents the suffering that we all inevitably have to encounter in life as we move forward, but the axle represents the peaceful Buddha nature that connects us to other’s lives. Through the practice of chanting and thoughtful studying, one can transcend beyond the constant turning of the wheel and live in the peaceful Buddha nature that connects us all.

Josef Toda, Co-Founder of the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai Buddhist chapter, said that the true benefit of the Nichiren practices is the capacity to embrace life with joy no matter what happens. Out of all the important things that were stressed in my encounters with the Myrtle Beach Soka Gakkai chapter, inner peace and happiness were said to be the most important goals. They believe that through the attainment of these two things, and the spread of Buddhism, World Peace can be achieved. Buddhism is a non-theistic religion, meaning they don’t worship any gods, but they have certain beliefs and practices that empower them in their daily lives. The main practice of Nichiren Buddhism is daily chanting of a specific phrase, Nam Myoho Renge Kyo, along with the first part of the “Expedient Means” chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

Nam is a Sanskrit word that essentially means, “to devote oneself to something”. Myo can be translated to “mystic” or “wonderful” and ho means “law”. The combination of the two, Myoho, refers to the mystic law of life and the innate Buddha nature that resides in all of life (not just human life but plant, animal, etc). Renge translates to, “lotus blossom” which is a flower that remains pure and beautiful amidst the muddy water that it grows in. Much like the lotus flower, the Buddhist strives to achieve their most peaceful inner selves in the midst of life’s adversity. Finally, Kyo is translated to the same meaning as Sutra, or text of religious doctrines. The daily recitation of these four words is the fundamental practice of all sections of Nichiren Buddhism.

This chant is supposed to represent the worshipper’s devotion to the ultimate laws of life that Shakyamuni Buddha taught. The object of devotion for the Nichiren Buddhists is the Gohonzon, which has the Japanese symbols for “Nam Myoho Renge Kyo” written down the center, and the symbols representing The Ten Worlds surrounding it. The Ten Worlds are Hell, Hunger, Animality, Anger, Humanity, Rapture, Learning, Realization, Bodhisattva, and Buddha nature. What makes the Gohonzon important to their lives is not specifically the meaning of the words, but rather the representation of the main pillar as representing your life itself in the midst of the Ten Worlds. The Gohonzon is a mirror that, “perfectly reflects the state of Buddha nature inherent in life, and which could thus enable all people, regardless of their circumstances or ability, to draw out and manifest this Buddha nature.”

Like any religion it takes practice, devotion, and time in order to reap the benefits of Buddhism. Krauthamer said that the kind of faith it takes, “is faith like flowing water, as opposed to faith like a fire that will burn strong and then die out.” There are two practices that they believe one must attend to. The first is the daily practice of chanting and the reading of Buddhist texts to get a better understanding of Shakyamuni Buddha’s teachings. The second is evangelism and fellowship, which is the main purpose of the weekly meetings that they hold. A shorter, old black man with a shaved head and a calm demeanor told me at the meeting that they believe the Buddha’s life is inseparable from other’s lives. Genuine happiness is not possible for man without helping and sharing of these Nichiren principles and practices with others.
At their weekly meetings, LaCombe and the other Myrtle Beach members all gather in one of the member’s homes and sit in front of the Gohonzon scroll for chanting. They chant for five to twenty minutes per meeting, depending on what they have planned to study or discuss that evening. Upon arriving at LaCombe’s house for my first chanting and discussion, I was greeted at the door by a little friendly Chihuahua that mounted the top of the couch so he could be high enough to get the attention of the people in the room. There were around 13 people standing around who showed up to the meeting, including myself, and the crowd was incredibly diverse. There was one man with the thick accent of a New York cabbie, a shorter Japanese man with thin-framed glasses and a notebook clenched in hand, and a young man who came to the meeting to get the Nichiren experience that he has seen his childhood friend practicing.

When I initially met with LaCombe, he told me that Buddhism, “sounds so foreign, but it is not that way.” For me, my idea of Buddhism was fabricated heavily by popular culture: movies showing Buddhists living in their monasteries and chanting continually, only stopping to practice their martial arts kicks. That might be the way that some Buddhists are, but that doesn’t even scratch the surface of what a Buddhist can be. Going to the Myrtle Beach Buddhist chapter meeting really changed my idea of the religion and normalized it in a way that you don’t get from just reading about it. We had about a fifteen-minute chanting session that was followed by individual introductions; it was an extremely friendly and conversational atmosphere.

We met in LaCombe’s living room and grabbed some chairs facing the Gohonzon that was displayed ornately in a wooden chest. The room was filled with the fragrance of incense and decorated with oriental banners and some plants, but the people were distinctly American. The chanting was soothing once you got into the groove of the saying and really tried to relax. When I asked the group what they think about when they chant, some people said that they just tried to clear their minds and many said they thought about loved ones. One man said that when he starts his day he has so many things that are worrying him and concerning him, but once he does his chanting all of those worries fade to the back of his mind. Another man who had a thick southern accent said that he prefers to just meditate when he’s on his own, as opposed to repeating the chant.

The young man, who’s childhood friend was a Nichiren Buddhist, asked an interesting question at the meeting I attended. He asked, “Why should you care to spread these teachings to people who are worse off, when karma has put them into that situation?” The Japanese man simply replied that when you practice the chanting and start to become happier you will want to help other people as well. I think that compassion is what really sets these people apart; they’re just a wonderful community, and they’re right here in Myrtle Beach. If you want to learn more about Buddhism, or even attend a meeting to see what it’s really about, you can contact David LaCombe. This can be a real eye-opening and unique experience, and I for one definitely recommend looking further into it.

112 Santee River Road
Myrtle Beach, 29588
THIS MARKS OUR FIFTH CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST. THE COMPETITION AROSE FROM NECESSITY, AS IT QUICKLY BECAME IMPOSSIBLE FOR US NOT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE VAST BODY OF CREATIVITY AROUND CAMPUS. WE ASKED FOR SHORT STORY AND POETRY SUBMISSIONS AND WERE ANSWERED WITH FULL INBOXES, BRIMMING WITH TALENT. THIS IS A COLLECTIVE THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO SUBMITTED WORK. YOUR STORIES WERE DEFAMILIARIZING, FULL OF UNHARNESSED POTENTIAL AND TALENT.

Eden Haley
V. Cultural Cataclysm

BY MICHAEL KANE

In the age of Ptolemy, the flourished world
Of the great library's contents that were stored
In a seat of knowledge and boon.
    And the loss
That came with the flames and attacks of those who
Relented the scrolls and texts, subjected to
A most heinous transgression.
    What works might have
Graced our society? What other Hamlet,
Odyssey, Canterbury, or Beowulf
Was lost to the inferno?
    In the presence
Of the fires that raged, I would not flee from
The marble steps of Alexandria. I
Would face the blaze and not yield,
    I would return.

Ode To My Mother

BY TOREY GREEN

In the bare bones of South Carolina, my mother
washes her dark Cherokee hair in tub made
of cracked fiberglass. She keeps her hair
long and straight and dyed brown to match her eyes,
and though my eyes are green, she says I look
like her, somehow, through my father's blood.

My mother reads Stephen King, smokes cheap
cigarettes, and eats rarely. She dates men with names
like Leroy or Randy, tells them she loves them first,
and lets them kiss her in public. She calls me from
borrowed phones and tells me she'll write me letters,
but never gets around to it. She was born in 1976

in Pickens, South Carolina, where her own mother
would live and die, where there was nothing but mountains,
gravity, and churches, where I'd be born seventeen years later,
screaming hallelujahs in the sterile hospital air.
Six

BY VICTORIA GOOD

I met Carol in support group. I had just gone over the edge and broken my brother’s nose. He was looking at my movie collection when he put Die Hard after Ghostbusters, and I lost it. I had just put those movies on the shelf, perfectly alphabetized. He ended up with two perfect, although asymmetrical, black eyes and looked like a raccoon for a couple weeks, but he told my mother about the whole episode and she decided that I need help for my “little issue.” Mom doesn’t want to believe that I have a mental disorder.

Group was more stereotypical than I could have anticipated. We sat in a circle saying our names explaining how our disorders had gotten bad enough to land us in a small conference room in the Clearview Rehabilitation and Counseling Center. When I joined the group, Carol had already been there for a year, but she was twenty then. Everything was even. Her number was ten. Rather than try to overcome her obsession, Carol did her best to separate herself from anything that did not work with the number ten. Unfortunately for me, I was twenty-four, so she steered clear of me for the most part, instead chattering with Kyle, thirty, and Nora, a wise fifty, and tolerating our group leader Sarah who had to be at least thirty-six, but she swore she was a solid thirty and would be for a long time.

I won her over four months later on her twenty-first birthday. She was deep in an anxious state about the upcoming year that was divisible by ten exactly two and one-tenths times rather than an even two. I came to group high on the smell of ten perfect red roses each cut to have ten inch stems. I’d like to say that she accepted them with surprise and grace, but she snatched them, crying over the number and running around looking for something to measure the stems with. It wasn’t until she had assured herself and the entire group ten times that the roses were all tens. They were perfect. I made sure of that. Carol decided that the roses were enough to overlook my age flaw but only after also examining my driver’s license where she found that my birthday was October 20, 1990. “How lovely,” she had whispered.

It may sound strange, but dating someone as obsessive compulsive as Carol was difficult. I had the same disorder, yet hers was so much more specific than mine. Disorder was my trigger. A crinkled bed sheet, a smudge on the window, a disorganized collection of anything was absolute torture for me and had to be fixed immediately. Everything just needed to be perfect. Carol though, everything had to be ten. Lock the door ten times before we go to bed. Shower for ten minutes. Take ten sleepy steps to the toilet in the middle of the night. We couldn’t go swimming in a pool that wasn’t ten feet at the deep end. On my twenty-fifth birthday, she made me a cake, vanilla round decorated with perfect symmetry, but the candles. There were twenty candles and ten half candles. “Do the math, and it’s twenty-five,” she said, but I knew to her there were thirty.

But I endured. Carol was beautiful, all wavy blonde hair and pretty blue eyes. She was smart, quick and witty. I sincerely did believe she was my perfect match. Otherwise I would not have been able to stay with her. It was Carol that couldn’t stay with me in the end though. I wasn’t perfect enough to fit within her world of tens. One night, six and a half months into our relationship, we were on the couch watching the tenth season of Bones. I wanted to watch reruns of How I Met Your Mother, but it only had nine seasons. Out of nowhere, Carol turned to me. “What’s your favorite number?”


Her expression fell into something dark then. I expected an episode, screaming, fighting, the end of us maybe. She got up off the couch, practically jettisoned herself away from me. Escaping my embrace with an “excuse me.” When she disappeared into the kitchen, I was at a loss. There was little to no chance that a mistake like this could be made up for. I sat, head down, one fist pressed desperately against my grim mouth, waiting for either a goodbye or just the soft click of the door shutting behind her. I was not waiting for a gun.

Carol emerged from the kitchen with a horrible violence about her face. Her right arm was raised straight in front of her, the small revolver she had gotten for herself on her twenty first birthday clenched in her shaking fist. I remembered when she bought the gun, saying that twenty-one would be a bad year. I told her I didn’t think it would be that bad. The worst thing was that she didn’t say a word. She just pulled the trigger. She shot me, planted a bullet deep in my thigh.
I screamed something incoherent somewhere between “ow” and “God” and took off toward the bedroom to grab my cellphone. The plan was to call for help. I wasn’t mad, but when an episode gets this bad, it has be dealt with. I needed back up of some sort, mostly for my safety, but for hers too. Halfway through the living room bullet number two bit me in the same thigh, from behind this time. It was then that Carol finally spoke, or screamed rather, “TEN!” Falling into what I assumed was shock, I was forced to crawl backwards into the bedroom as she put four more shots into my stomach and chest. Backed up against the nightstand, I watch her stomp forward the gun still aimed at me.

There was a squelch as she stepped in the trail of blood I had left behind. I closed my eyes waiting for some big finale, one more shot to put me out of my misery. Carol’s hair hung limp around her face as she pulled up her shaking arm and set her gaze directly between my eyes. I looked away and waited. Everything was already starting to get a little dark, breathing was a chore. “Ten,” she whispered.

Click.

Carol’s gasp burned my ears. “TEN! TEN! TEN!” Three more clicks. Looking up through the dark haze, I watched Carol sling the gun to the floor. She looked at me like an abandoned puppy. This was the same way she had looked at me on our first real date when we had planned to stroll through a large historical garden, but opted for a movie when she found out that their oak alley had two perfect rows of twelve of the grand trees. Unable to talk, I saw her crumple to the floor before me, pulling at her hair and sobbing “six” and “oh no.”

As the last tendrils of consciousness began to escape me, I couldn’t help but notice how oddly circular and perfect my wounds were. Maybe I was hallucinating, but they were just gorgeous. Carol was crying and I was bleeding out. I never had made it to my phone, and she was in hysterics, so there was no chance of calling 911. She wouldn’t have been able to dial the number anyhow. 9 + 1 + 1 is eleven. I wish Carol would have noticed how perfect they were though, if only there hadn’t been six of them.
Transition

BY QUINTEN R. AMERIS

That faded pink, radiant and fleeting from peripheral as we tended to our dying.
The lapse into those corners of life where we push our last breaths and twitches.
I can’t imagine my aunt will be here for another month.
Living is hard and dying is necessary.
The transitioning resting in wait, for what I imagine is a sigh of fading
Just not enough strength to hold on any longer; while the living are here to get a grip.
Resolve. Abiding.
Our imaginations stomach the fragility that beguiles us, and we discover what mortality really means.
I imagined my older sister dying unmarried, and contentedly accomplished.
Her blood slowing to a pool under thin and weathered sheet of skin.
It was hard to imagine some in this condition getting healthier.
Any medical generation prior would’ve already announced the death.
But here we are, awaiting the next flitter of eye lids and wince of mechanical breath.
Each spreading like a gasp.
The Plastic Comb

BY HALLIE BONDS

Sitting in between my Mom’s white legs, green varicose veins stain them. I twirl my tan thumbs in a large circle. My legs are crisscross applesauce and I am in a ring of hair supplies. Five different types of hair lotions, three different types of hair gels, six or seven brushes, a blow-dryer and rainbow colored hair bows.

“How do you want your hair for school today?” my Mom said.

“I don’t know Mommy, I just don’t want it sticking up.” I said.

The children at my school were constantly picking on me about my hair. Asking me why I don’t know how to brush it and why it is always so frizzy. I was seven years old. I did not know how to fully do my hair by myself yet. I could brush it here and there, but that is about it.

“I was talking to my friend Miranda at work today. She recommended we get this gel called “Jamz” it comes in a black container,” my mother said, as she reaches for a black comb.

My Mom was always telling me about all these new hair products we should try. The bathroom cabinets were full of unused products. Half-empty bottles of Pantene shampoo and Garnier Fructis conditioner. Little did we know at the time, is that those were nowhere near what we should have been using for my hair texture.

It was a curly and tangly jungle that multiple Bobby pins would get lost in. Yet, at the same time it had the softness and flowyness of my mother’s hair. My hair was just confused about what it wanted to be. Kind of like a child who changes what they want to be when they grow up 15 times before college. I always find myself getting jealous of the other black girls at my school. How they have perfect zig-zag parts in their hair, tied off with multi-colored plastic barrettes. Sometimes I didn’t even care about how extravagant the hairstyles were, I just wanted my hair so lay down. For my hair to not stick up like blades of grass. I am sure the teachers at my school were thinking, I was just rolling out of my twin-sized bed every day. Throwing my shirt over my head, slipping my pants on and neglecting my hair.

She grabs another type of hair tool to try on my hair, since the black comb kept getting stuck. It made me feel like my hair was made out of mud or something. Why couldn’t the comb just go through effortlessly? Why did the white women on the hair commercials make it look so easy? Her next choice was a round-red brush with coarse bristles. The bristles on it were already suffocating with previous hair attempts. My Mom takes her hand and cleans the hair out of it, pulling it from the bristles slowly. Her white fingers contrasting my soft black hair. They are now greasy, as she finds a towel to whip them on. I suddenly feel a jolt as my mother nearly whiplashes my hair back. I look in the oval white mirror and notice she is settling for a ponytail. This is taking a really long time. The bristles press up against my scalp and it feels kind of good. I was in no way what black people call “tender headed.” I feel her loop a black hair bow around my hair. I tell her that the hair bow is not tight enough and to please do it again. Reluctantly she takes it out and reties it to my liking. I look back up in the mirror again and my hair is still sticking up. Even though I knew that the children were going to laugh at me at school. I gave my mother a kiss on the cheek and started walking over to my closet. Picking out my black chuck tailors, accented with white laces to wear to school today. There was never any trouble with my laces laying down.
Window Pane
BY HALLIE BONDS

I. Abandonment:
First, you will not understand why someone who made you would do this to you. Yes, the person whose sperm helped create you. Every little follicle of your curly black hair, the pigments of your chestnut skin. You have inherited the shape of his black round nose. The way he smiles that precious smile. You used to think that smile was the brightest in the world. Kin of the sun. What about all those times his deep robust voice said, “I love you munchkin.” How did each of those words now mean absolutely nothing? The “o” in love and you were now full of forget. All these thoughts that you are having are not enough. His tall dark frame still walks out the door. He grabs the gold shiny doorknob and twists it. Your hearts twists at the time. The sound of his grey Sudan starts up. Down it rolls against the grey pavement, smoke from the exhaust pipes leave you in the dust.

II. Denial:
You continue to tell yourself that it was just a mistake, only to realize that these mistakes are never-ending. The tears that you thought would go away have not. Pouring out of your eyes like an endless waterfall. However, you continue to sit at the window and cry your eyes out, your tears matching the clear raindrops hitting the windowpane. A storm is brewing in your heart. The dark grey clouds in your head shoot out bolts of lightning. You look back out the window and his beat up grey-Sudan has still not pulled up in the driveway. It is almost past your bedtime, so you respect your mother’s wishes and go up the stairs. Every step you take up the stairs, your heart is tugging you to go back down them. If you just looked out the window one more time his car would be there. He was just a little late, was taking a nap all day and overslept. His phone died, so that was why he did not hear you call him 15 times.

III. Forgiveness:
Your heart is tired and your adolescent eyes are weary. So you make an agreement with your heart to keep a distance. He finally shows up to take you on an ice cream date. The tension of hurt in the air is thick. You guys enjoy the sundaes you have made. He went for the fresh flavor of mint chocolate chip. While you settle for the classic vanilla flavor and pile on walnuts, multi-colored gummy worms, and Oreo cookie crumbs. You understand that he is a human being and will never be perfect. The way that he makes you laugh, makes it all worth it. Now when he does not answer the phone you will expect it. When he says that he will be there in 15 minutes, your mind will automatically mark that as a lie. Red lights will flash brightly. LIAR. LIAR. Sirens will go off in your heart, as a form of protection. You are now protected. Protected from the hurt. You have decided that you still will want him to see your receive your bachelor’s degree. There is nobody else in the world, which you would want to walk you down the aisle. He just comes with little bumps in the road. So the forgiveness you have now given him. Is worth it.
City Of Fallen Angels: Blackout

BY AUTUMN GANIS

A picture had begun to emerge slowly, of a young man... his disenchantment... and sickness... It made sense... What kind of person did that make him?...
THE COASTAL WAY OF LIFE
Myrtle Beach is home to some of the coolest and most serene surf spots in the area. As Coastal Carolina students, we have the luxury of the beach being in our own backyard; at our disposal for a multitude of outdoor activities. The surf scene attracts tourists of all kinds during the warm seasons and allows those who enjoy the sport to get out there and do their thing. Coastal even offers a PALS surfing class!
Billy Currington said it best, “A bad day of fishin’ beats a good day of anything else.” With Myrtle Beach right by campus, it’s no shocker to find students partaking in the sport of fishing. Clubs like CCU Salt Water Anglers have created an undeniable alliance with students and the ocean. There’s nothing better than getting knee to waist deep in the ocean and casting your line out at Murrells Inlet with your friends.
“The only way to make a real difference is to take a heartfelt interest in the health of our ecosystems and realize that we’re a part of them, not just an observer.”

– JAKE SPRAUGE
SKATING

When the waves are bad and you can’t surf what is the next best thing? Surfing on land! The skate scene around Myrtle Beach is just as good as the surf scene. Located off of 29th Avenue near Broadway at the Beach sits Matt Hughes skate park – open to locals during the light hours (it closes at dusk) it’s the spot in the area to go and push around and try out some new tricks you want to do.
Ever thought about trying to surf but being too scared of the adrenaline rush? Then paddleboarding might be for you! This calm sport is the perfect mixture of a muscle workout and meditative activity that will keep your body in great shape. You can rent gear from the HTC Center and go out exploring for the day in one of the many locations across the area.
ELEANOR & PARK
by Rainbow Rowell

The Notebook meets The Fault in Our Stars. As cliche and over written “coming of age” love stories are, Eleanor & Park by Rainbow Rowell is among one of the most eloquently written love tales.

Set in the mid-1980s, the tale of Eleanor & Park follows two very uniquely different high school kids as they develop a peculiar friendship which subsequently turns into adoration for each other.

The story starts off by saying that our narrator, Park, has lost somebody he truly loved and has finally stopped trying to imagine that she is still alive. He has officially given up trying to bring her back. As you might imagine, hearing the spoiler at the beginning of the book kind of ruins the whole story, however, that was not the case for this book. It adds a mysterious aspect to the story which makes you want to keep reading in order to find out what brought Eleanor’s life to this horrendous end.

Rewind the story a bit and we find out that Park Sheridan is a half-Korean teenage boy with a little bit of a geeky side to him, which is why he does not have very many friends. He is obsessed with music and comic books. At the beginning of the school year, Park is sitting alone on the school bus and suddenly, this chubby yet masculine teenage girl with wavy, curly red hair steps on the bus. And yes, that girl is Eleanor. To save her from embarrassment and humiliate from the popular kids on the school bus, Park offers her a seat next to him. As Park is reading a comic on the bus, Eleanor cannot help but read over his shoulder. From this moment on, they become inseparable. Who would have thought two opposites could attract?

As the story progresses, you get an inside look at what life is really like for Eleanor. I will not give too much detail about her home life, however, I will say that it is heart wrenching. Her story, as well as Park’s really allows the reader to gain a personal connection with both of them. This allows the reader to fall in love with both Eleanor and Park a duel, as well as them individually. The whole time, you will be rooting for their relationship to last forever. Which is something I personally loved about the story.

Rowell has the power to make a common story of love and tragedy into one of the most charmingly relatable “coming of age” stories. Her words will have you hooked until the very last page.

- SAMANTHA PROULX

UNFORGIVEN
by Lauren Kate

Unforgiven is the sixth book in the Fallen series by Lauren Kate. The first five books focus on the main characters, Daniel and Lucinda. Throughout the entire series, Cam is a significant secondary character. Many in the fan base complained to the author and requested that she write a book centered around Cam. Finally, after years of anticipation and sleepless nights wondering about Cam, we got the book that would change our lives forever. The book like the others in the Fallen series is a page turner that is hard to resist and will keep the reader up at night trying to decide how they want it to end. The book begins when Cam discovered that the love of his was not dead, in fact she was very much alive. Lilith made a deal with Lucifer and sentenced herself to eternal hells, each one worse than the one before it.

In the spur of the moment Cam makes a bet with Lucifer that he can win Lilith’s love again. Throughout the whole story Cam tries everything within his power to win Lilith’s love. All the while, Lucifer is presenting a series of challenges in effort to defeat Cam. Lauren Kate has a beautiful way of writing. It is hard to read her books and not relate to the characters as if they have been your best friend for years. Each time I finish one of her books I am sad that it is over and wonder what to do with the rest of my life.

I can not reveal the ending, however I will say it was one of the most satisfying endings I have ever come across. The suspense of the story ending the way the reader wants it to stays until the last sentence. As you read the last page you will surely hold your breath until you have finished and then you will hold the book to your chest and ponder for a while. Then you will realize that your life will never be the same and you will be just fine with it. If the world ends tomorrow, I will be content because I know what happened with Cam.

- SAVANNAH LACKEY
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

The movie event that most of our generation has been waiting for these past ten years has finally arrived! The Force Awakens is now the third-highest grossing film, just behind Titanic. Now owned by Disney, the seventh installment of the most popular movie saga of all time returns, and it’s arguably the most beautifully made one of the entire series. First of all, let’s talk about the cast. Of course, there are many original returning characters such as the smuggler Han Solo, Princess Leia Organa, and the furry beast himself, Chewbacca. To see the original characters return to their role in the new film is like lying down on your bed after being away on vacation for a very long time.

Not only does it feel like a triumphant return to experience these old, familiar faces, but the original ‘Stars’ really help introduce the new characters into the Star Wars universe. The three new main characters are Poe Dameron, Rey, and FN-2187 (or Finn as Poe nicknames him). Finn is an amazing character for numerous reasons. For one, Finn is the first black main character in Star Wars, and he’s also the first Stormtrooper we get to see that has decided to join the Rebel Alliance. One great Easter egg in the film is Finn’s name, FN-2187, which references the number of Leia’s holding cell on the original Death Star.

You don’t need to be a die-hard Star Wars fan to enjoy this film. Of course the plot still relies heavily on lineage of the previous galactic wars, and the innate gift of the Force. However, the producer, J.J. Abrams, does an amazing job of filling in all of the gaps for people who aren’t in-the-know about the previous films. He subtly lets the characters show their intentions through their actions, and uses an acceptable amount of humor and stunning action scenes to move the plot along. The main villain of the film, Kylo Ren, is a new character who is the leader of the new empire that emerged after the fall of the Galactic Empire; they’re called ‘The First Order.’ Unlike when we were originally introduced to Darth Vader, Abrams introduces and develops Kylo Ren’s character immediately. Hopefully you won’t be on Kylo’s side, but you will completely understand who he is and why he is shown worshiping Vader’s helmet in the original advertisement for the movie.

The special effects are stunning in this new film. You can really tell that Disney has spent a small fortune putting it together. In one scene, Kylo Ren stops a blaster shot in mid-air and suspends it for a long time before releasing it to strike against a wall. The energy shot being suspended in mid-air and the visible force that he is using to stop the blast, are polished unlike any special effects that I have seen in a film to date. Abrams used as many practical effects that he could in the film, and the minimization of computer generated imagery makes the film that much more believable and immersive. He even used real sparks when filming the lightsaber fight-scenes, which are the most visually-pleasing in any of the saga films to date. The light-sabers crackle, and spit flames and sparks everywhere when they clash together. This isn’t just a new installment on the original space-opera saga, but rather a stunning visual creation and a thrilling, action-packed film as a whole.

- CLAYTON JAMES

HOW TO BE SINGLE

From the desk of the screenwriter, Abby Kohn, who was responsible for He’s Just Not That Into You, Valentine’s Day, and The Vow – came the comedic product of How To Be Single. Released just 2 days before Valentine’s Day, I, along with a group of my single friends went to see the movie that on a day of pronouncements of love and passion for a significant other celebrated the unseen opposite side – being single. With the help of the leading cast: Dakota Johnson (Alice), Rebel Wilson (Robin), Leslie Mann (Meg), Damon Wayans Jr. (David), Anders Holm (Tom), and Nicolas Braun (Josh), a story unfolded of what the single life is like in New York City.

Whether it was a college couple taking a break, such as Alice and Josh, those strictly forbidding themselves from falling subject to commitment, Tom, or twenty-something year old paralegal with a perfected hangover recipe and a nightly one night stand record, Robin; came the perfect over lap of characters in the big city, falling subject to a small world. How To Be Single found a way to combine copious amounts of humor with the most specific relationship problems all back to one central message. Shockingly so, it wasn’t a standpoint on whether one should remain single, dating, or married, which is exactly what I intended it to be. Rather, finding and then loving yourself enough to share it with others. How To Be Single not only is hands down a top 5 of the most crudely inappropriate yet funniest movies I’ve seen to date, but one of the most relatable themes as a college student.

- CAIT PRZETAK

STAFF FAVORITES

Zootopia
MUSIC.

COLDPLAY | Head Full Of Dreams
Coldplay’s song “Don’t Panic” had a line saying, “We live in a beautiful world”, and the band’s music is definitely a lens through which we can see that beauty. A Head Full of Dreams by Coldplay is essentially the sequel album to Mylo Xyloto; in that it is a return to their fun-loving, upbeat sound that is essential to the band. Their previous album, Ghost Stories, took a turn towards a more melodramatic tone, and consisted of what were essentially break-up tunes. The first lines of Ghost Stories, “I think of you, I haven’t slept”, showed us that Martin was going through some pretty rough times. A Head Full of Dreams, on the other hand, begins with a fun and catchy beat that builds to an optimistic climax with one of Martin’s signature oooh’s.

The album begins with its namesake song, “A Head Full of Dreams”, and Martin sings to us that he thinks he just landed into a world where there are miracles at work! They then transition into “Birds”, a slower beat with another feel good vibe that can be totally defined by the term ‘hippie rock’. The album progresses into “Hymn For The Weekend”, a song that is destined for the dancefloors of clubs and parties everywhere.

The variety in the album is beautiful, and it’s something that not many of their albums have had in the past. There are quite a few other singers on the album such as Beyoncé on “Hymn For The Weekend”, Tove Lo on “Funk”, and even a feature by Gwendeth Paltrow on the track “Everglow”. This last song with Martin’s ex-wife is a particularly heartfelt, melodious track; “Everglow” begins with a pleasant piano ballad that is carried through with strong vocals, which are backed by the even stronger lyrics. The song’s about this positive feeling that emerges after a falling out of love, the passing of someone close to you, or any other extremely sad and emotional time. “You’re with me wherever I go, and you give me this feeling, this Everglow.”

The melodies of their music evokes emotion with every beat of the drum and strum of the guitar string. The last few tracks on the album sound are reminiscent of the whole mood of the album, “lying in the gutter, aiming for the moon”. No matter what situation you’re in you can look up and find beauty in the world. On making this album Chris Martin said, “It’s about love and acceptance and embracing what happens to you. It’s quite a hippie album. All of our records were a journey to get to this one.” The journey and the wait paid off.

- CLAYTON JAMES

ALABAMA SHAKES | Sound & Color
I know bad music; I dated a guy in a screamo band once. Sound & Color is not bad music. When I first heard the opening notes of the song “Sound & Color” – I stopped what I was doing. I was alone, trying to clean up the perpetual mess of my room, listening to Pandora radio when one song faded out, leaving me with a few moments of silence. I could only hear the shuffling of my bare feet across my carpet and the white noise of static streaming from the stereo. Then, there was the whisper-talk of a vibraphone, followed by a slow but captivating beat. I was hooked on the sound of a voice that seemed to be coming at me from all angles. The same voice that crooned to me in lilting falsettos would soon belt out soul and blood from the speakers. It was Led Zeppelin. It was Etta James. It was Brittany Howard. Sound & Color is the sophomore release of Alabama Shakes, a four-piece rock band from Athens, Alabama, lead vocalist and guitarist, Brittany Howard, brings a unique blend of soul and rock from the very first track. Sound & Color is one of the very few albums that is gold from beginning to end. The album is a kaleidoscope of sound, from the sultry “Gimme All Your Love” – a song that seems to shatter the air around it – to “Guess Who” – a song that floats on Howard’s falsetto. Each song brings a new feeling and a new memory to link it to. It’s the new-vintage, the kind of album that any record-collecting millennial would be drawn to. This album covers a lot of ground and can please most any kind of musical palette. The growth in Alabama Shakes is very apparent when looking at their first release Boys & Girls to Sound & Color. From the down-home, feels-like-summer sound of “Hold On” on Boys & Girls to the psychedelic fuzz-rock feel of “Gemini” on Sound & Color, it can be said that Howard and the band are trying their hand at making music that bridges genres.

The future for the native southern band certainly seems bright. Will the group continue to blur the borders of genre? My guess is yes, Howard and the band will continue to define versatility and combine new school vibes with old school soul. Alabama Shakes is a band with small-town charm and a big city appeal, Brittany Howard’s voice is bigger than her roots. Her voice bigger than the smoky Saturday nights it sound like. If you haven’t given Sound & Color a listen, do it. Dump your screaming band boyfriend and listen to some good music.

- TOREY GREEN
DAN + SHAY
HOUSE OF BLUES, MYRTLE BEACH. MARCH 2, 2016

Blue lights line the ceiling and escape from the projector onto the back wall of the stage. In large letters, the main act’s name is illuminated and daunting. There is not one doubt in anyone’s mind who was performing at the House of Blues tonight: Dan + Shay.

The crowd was compiled of couples – old and young, pretzels, hicks, and millennials were the majority. Regardless of age, decent, and color, you could tell once the opening act, Steve Moakler, took center stage that all of us had come together for one soul reason: Country Music. Steve Moakler’s career began fairly recently in the limelight with his song Suitcase hit country highway on Sirius radio a month or so back. He is the epitome of a songwriter turned singer, more known for writing Dierk’s Bentley’s song Riser, which he also performed flawlessly. He especially connected with the crowd when he said he was just a norther city boy who followed a love for twang – which is most of our community here in Horry County.

Suffice to say, the opening act, was the right step in the door to begin the night. But the anticipation for Dan + Shay to surface was growing fast. After five minutes of the crowd’s chants for the main act, the lights re-dimmed and the announcer came on the PA and introduced the men that increased our love for the southern sound we craved so dearly. Dan + Shay came out running from off stage to their first song of the night, Nothing Like You, and with Dan’s eye contact floating from girl to girl, it made the entire room feel special and entranced right away. That feeling lingered the entire night. Shay’s riffs were so clean and passionate; it was better than their recordings in my opinion. Their set list consisted of not only song from their album, but covers of Pour Some Sugar On Me, Thinking Out Loud, Any Way You Want It, and a more than steamy I’ll Make Love To You. They took turns stopping after each and every song to thank us for coming out and listening to country music, it was humbling and made you fall even more in love with the duo. Before the last song that we had all awaited to hear was played, our direction was turned to a fan with a sign reading, “Damn Daniel” and on the count of 3 we chanted “Damn Daniel” and it was recorded for the artists’ Snapchat account and a group selfie was taken as well for Instagram. And finally, the song that Myrtle Beach attendees had waited for, 19 You + Me, was performed. Written about Dan’s trips to our very own Myrtle Beach, growing up with his family, it more than resonated with all of us. It was a spectacular when the first line was sung, “Myrtle Beach, you and me, where it all began” the room shook with pride and happiness. To say they finished the night with leaving the best for last would still be an injustice.

- CAIT PRZETAK

STAFF FAVORITES

THE FRONT BOTTOMS
Back On Top
EDEN HALEVY

MAT Kearney
Just Kids
EMILY ENGLEHART

CARRIE UNDERWOOD
Storyteller
CAIT PRZETAK
What is your name?
PARAG DESAI: Shelley, right?
SHELLEY HERNANDEZ: Shelley, that’s right.
PD: Okay Shelley, what’s your last name?
SH: Hernandez.
I looked down at the screen where it shows the next question, and I hesitated for a moment

How old are you?
PD: How—okay, actually that’s—I was actually expecting a male Uber driver so—
SH: Right?
Shelley immediately bursts into laughter.
PD: I was going to ask how old “he” was but I won’t ask you how old you are.
I began to nervously chuckle a bit.
SH: You can ask me how old I am, that doesn’t bother me.
I looked over at her as she presented me with a wide grin on her face. She was a kind woman.
SH: I’m fifty-four.
PD: Fifty-four, okay! Next question!

Where are you from originally?
SH: I’m originally from Cleveland Ohio.
PD: Cleveland! Sweet.

How was life there?
SH: It was cold.
She chuckles a bit more, this time with a hint of sarcasm.
PD: Really? Yeah, I can imagine so.

What brings you to Myrtle Beach?
SH: Actually we vacationed here and like a lot of people and I ended up just staying.
PD: Yeah, yeah that’s how it usually is.
Look at me acting like I have some knowledge!!
SH: Back in ’84.

What did you eat for breakfast today?
SH: Oh! I had eggs, bacon—
PD: Naturally—
PD: That’s a pretty hearty breakfast.
SH: And some coffee.
PD: Oh, yeah! I can’t live without coffee.
For some reason I end up telling everyone, even complete strangers, of my bad coffee habits.

Is Uber a good gig?
SH: So far I’m really enjoying it. The first time I drove was during New Year’s Eve.
PD: Oh wow, that must have been interesting.
SH: It was fun! That’s what kind of kept me continuing to drive. Everyone is nice, friendly.

You must drive around a lot throughout the day, tell me your most interesting experience as an Uber driver?

SH: Actually, I’d have to say my second pick-up, was a lady who was Canadian and she and her husband were visiting the area for the first time, she said she—it was her student who was the one who founded Uber
PD: Really?
SH: Yes. She knew quite a bit about it and—

PD: Here in Myrtle Beach?
SH: No, no. It started in California, maybe San Francisco? I thought I should look into this for sure but I never did, so I wondered if it was true and um—I mean she looked like the college professor type so…

What is your favorite color? Explain.
SH: Oh wow, my favorite color is purple, and I think it’s because when I was younger I had a really nice outfit that was purple and it stuck with me ever since
PD: Yeah, that’s how it usually is. Most of my clothes are really neutral like browns, blacks, greys…sometimes I mix it up and throw on reds or blues.
SH: Yeah, I like red too.

If you had to choose one specific place to live for the rest of your life, without worrying about finances, where would it be?
SH: British Virgin Islands!
She eyes started to glow as she thought of an answer.
PD: Great answer! Great answer!
Then we shared a laugh, this lady was pretty cool.

How important is education?
SH: It’s very important.
PD: Yeah?
SH: Oh, yeah.
PD: Why’s that?
SH: Well, I mean first of all you have to understand how things work, how we got to where we are, and two: to be able to... live day to day in society—have meaningful conversations with people. You have to be educated. Of course, I guess it can help somewhat uh—your career choices but, sometimes your path takes you different places than you expect.

Her voices started to crack, looking at her I can sense that she was deep in thought; a twinkle in her eyes. This complete stranger, this Uber driver, had a story, like we all do.

PD: Yeah definitely, definitely. I can tell you from my personal experience that I started off as a Psychology major—

SH: Oh wow!

PD: Yeah, but then I made this whole switch to an English major because it... it just felt right. You know?

SH: Sudden!

Donald Trump or Hilary Clinton?

SH: Nope!

We both laughed in unison.

What is one pet peeve/activity that you’ve grown accustomed to as an Uber driver?

SH: As an Uber driver? Hmm... I don’t really have any pet peeves yet, but I do actively try to look into local events that are going into the area. Instead of just trying to find places that interested me, but now I go to places that would bring people to the area.

Donald Trump or Hilary Clinton?

SH: Nope!

We both laughed in unison.

PD: No?

SH: Nope, no. No comment!

PD: Okay—

SH: Donald Trump makes me laugh though!

In three words, how would you describe your mother?

SH: Loving, diligent...

A short paused between the second and last adjective left some room for some interpretation.

SH: Kind.

In three words, how would you describe your father?

SH: Smart, stubborn, and tough.

What is the best piece of advice your parents gave you?

SH: If you ever leave home make sure you take a dime.

We shared a laugh, this time more sentimental.

SH: You’re not quite as ready as you think you are.

Favorite sport/sports team?

SH: I guess I would have to say—well I do like the NFL so, I’ll go ahead and say it! I’m from Cleveland so it has to be the Browns.

PD: Oh, that’s not bad! You know, Johnny Manziel isn’t doing that bad.

Do you find it easy to talk to complete strangers when giving them a ride?

SH: I do find it easy. I did, when I was researching about Uber one of the things they tell you is not to engage in conversation—that most likely they don’t want to be engaged in conversation, but I’ve found that not to be true especially here in Myrtle Beach. So, I guess it happens in the big metropolitan areas.

PD: Makes sense. Where people are usually on the go or ready to go—

SH: Right so, most people have wanted to talk to me and most people talk to me about Uber! Almost all of my pick-ups, if not all of them, whoever called for the pick-up was pretty knowledgeable, it was evident that they used Uber a lot and they would actually engage in conversation with the rest of the riders because they would have questions about Uber too.

What’s your rating on the Uber app?

SH: My rating is a 4.5.

Would it be cool if I gave you a 5-star rating?

SH: It would cool! It would be cool! Thank you!

I got dropped off at the Overflow parking lot on campus, and waved goodbye as I watched her head towards the highway. It was definitely a great experience interviewing Shelley, the Uber driver—no excuse me. Not just the Uber driver, but Shelley the loving woman from Cleveland who, from my perspective, wears her heart on her sleeve and is a joy to be around. I totally gained a new appreciation for the company and its employees, and I suggest everyone to hit up Uber for a ride, even if you just want someone to talk to. You might run into a friend of mine.
An Open Letter to the One I Love

You pick me up when I’m down. You give me the strength to keep going – when all I want to do is sleep the work and stress away. You help me through all nighters, early work shifts, and even during the dreaded hangovers. You give me that warm and fuzzy feeling inside. You’re the one that makes me know that we are going to be in one another’s life for a long time.

I know what people say, and I know you may not be the healthiest choice I make, but everyday you’re still here. You’ve been categorized as a drug. My drug. To be completely honest, I don’t think that I can relinquish your hold on my life and me. You’re my daily fix, and you have been since I was young. Through the bright blue butterfly shaped barrettes, the clunky costume jewelry, and the various cowboy boots that I’ve worn in public, you didn’t shy away. You were there: bold, sweet, and warm. More than anyone I’ve ever known.

You are one of my most important relationships in my life. I know we’ve always been a little distanced as I grew up, but we’ve matured. I’ve switched states and you came right along. I took the next step in my young adult life and went onto college. I’ve learned so much. I’ve learned about the struggle of scheduling on WebAdvisor, the career path I wish to take, independence from my parents, but most importantly... I’ve learned about us. You showed me to let you become a routine, and not a chore. You’ve allowed me the chance to wake up grumpy and soon be fully conscious with a smile on my face.

To put it simply, we make sense. I’m your damsel in distress and you’re my knight in shining armor. It’s scary to think how much that I need you, even more so to say it out loud. But if you’re not with me each morning – I feel lost, empty, and pained. The worst part is – those feelings don’t go away until you’re around me. Until I indulge in your presence, I am not myself. I know I shouldn’t let one thing take over my life and that I should never categorize myself as something that’s not in my control, but I do. You are a part of me, and no amount of time will ever change that.

You make me want the future to be today. I see us, ten years from now, we are both on the wrap around porch, sitting in our wicker and cushioned chairs. We switch our gaze from one another to looking out at the kids running and squealing with joy as they jump through the sprinklers. I see myself being the main flow of our income, and while I’m supporting the house and keeping food on the table for the family, you’re in the background supporting me. And that is all I could ever ask of you to do, both now and in future, just as you always have. I don’t know how else to say this, but I love you, Coffee.

XO-

Your Favorite College Student
A SPECIAL THANK YOU

“The essence of all beautiful art, all great art, is gratitude.” - Friedrich Nietzsche

On behalf of the TEMPO publication team, we would like to take a moment to thank those that contributed their time, their energy, and their passion to create the photographs embedded in this Spring 2016 Issue. You each have allowed us the honor to the work alongside you and watch as you constructed each frame and shot. Through every photograph, a story is told, and that’s more than we could have ever intended. So, thank you, for allowing this magazine to flourish with countless words and stories, both in the articles and in your individual the images. You’ve created beautiful art.

Eden Halevy, Cait Przetak, Emily Englehart
Editor-in-Chief, Assistant Editor, Art Director Spring 2016
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