

THE VERMILLION

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette Student Newspaper February 1, 2024

Cajun Field begins renovations, to be renamed Our Lady of Lourdes Stadium

Adhamm Safford
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette has commenced renovations on Cajun Field, which will be renamed Our Lady of Lourdes Stadium.

The project will cost \$65 million and is slated to be complete in Fall 2025. The university has called it “the most significant improvement made to the facility since its inception in 1971.”

The project began on Dec. 11, 2023, and will see the west side seating of the stadium (which will be closed during the 2024 season) undergoing changes. The total capacity of the stadium will be decreased, going down from 41,126 to

“just over 30,000 seats,” according to the Advocate.

However, renovations will bring “34 suites, 40 loge boxes, 524 club seats, an indoor club, five new chairback sections in the lower west bowl and enhanced amenities,” according to the university.

The most prominent additions coming to Our Lady of Lourdes Stadium is the remodeling of the west tower, which will house new premium seating spaces, including club seats, loge boxes and three tiers of luxury suites, the highest of which will have “bar service, private restrooms, and individual conditioned spaces,” according to the university’s website.

The concession stands on the west side

will also see improvements, with better layouts for both permanent concessions and visiting outside vendors.

Commuter students who park at Cajun Field will only be able to enter through Gates 4 and 5, as the entire west side is closed off to be used by construction vehicles.

The renovation comes as a result of a \$15 million donation from Our Lady of Lourdes Health for naming rights, as well as the donations of other investors. Currently, over 20 other donation opportunities for naming rights in the stadium are open, such as \$3 million to name the stadium scoreboard, \$1.5 million for the concession/food court and so on.

The project comes despite UL Lafayette’s athletics department seeing an \$8.16 million deficit in the 2023 fiscal year, in large part due to an increase in expenses according to documents received by the Daily Advertiser. Team travel expenses increased, costing UL Lafayette \$3.865 million. The dip in ticket sales didn’t help either, which dropped by over \$500,000.

Despite that, Bryan Maggard, vice president for intercollegiate athletics, believes the renovations to the stadium will serve as a “catalyst for Louisiana football,” according to reporting by The Daily Advertiser.

“If you’re not growing, you’re dying in this business. It’s not a matter of not keeping up with the Joneses, but doing what works for you in the manner you can do it in. This is going to be a catalyst for Louisiana football, no doubt in my mind,” Maggard said.

UL Lafayette students were mixed on the renovation project, some seeing it as a waste of money, while others were hesitant or curious to see what the completed project will look like.

Treasure Gotch, a freshman majoring

in biology, expressed her wish that money would’ve been put towards other parts of the university.

“Honestly, I think \$65 million is a bit too much for a stadium. I understand sports are important, you know, and that’s part of college life. But I do feel like a portion of that could go to other things, like maybe updating things with the school like the library and things like that,” Gotch said.

Kayla Dorsey, a freshman majoring in dance, expressed a similar sentiment, though noted that she didn’t mind the change of name to Our Lady of Lourdes Stadium.

“Them renaming it I don’t mind, just because they’re a sponsor. But I don’t like how they’re spending that much money just to have a VIP section. I mean, sure, do what they want. But they’re wasting all their money on that when there could be a lot more done around the school,” Dorsey said.

Jordan Williams, a freshman majoring in nursing, shared that she’s gone to football games at Cajun Field in the past and is curious to see what the new stadium will look like.

Jarvis Warner, a freshman majoring in marketing, was intrigued by the renovations and name change, but was hesitant about the premium suites being added.

“I think that it’s kinda cool. Like to renovate it and all that, and the name change’ll be cool too. Honestly I don’t know how I feel about the VIP seats, but I guess we’re becoming bigger and everything, they’re gonna have to have VIP seats so I guess it’s cool,” Warner said.

Further updates and information, such as on ticketing, parking and reseating, can be found on the UL Lafayette’s website for the project: www.buildtheculture.com.



Photo by Alyus Dick

Heavy machinery at work to bring a new life to Cajun Field.

SGA's Big Three share goals for this semester, and their future plans following graduation

Ellie Moore
NEWS WRITER

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette’s Student Government Association (SGA) plans to continue the efforts they made in 2023 and bring new efforts to campus during the Spring 2024 semester.

The members of the executive branch, commonly known as the Big Three, are President Colby Hebert, Vice President Karessa De La Paz and Treasurer Gabe Cupstid. In addition, Chief of Staff Kate Hughes has tremendously helped with new plans and has been an integral part of their team as well.

This semester, the Big Three are confident they will continue to provide for students and continue working on new and current projects that will improve UL Lafayette.

“Students can expect our continued efforts in being fierce advocates for their voice. We are excited to continue this work,” Hebert said.

De La Paz added, “We are not losing any momentum. We achieved a lot of goals last semester and we plan to continue.”

Hebert explains that SGA will continue their recent transparency efforts from last semester.

“This semester we are looking forward to continuing our audit we began last year on self assessed student fees, ensuring students’ money is spent responsibly,” Hebert said.

In addition to their continued work on transparency, SGA has new efforts underway for this semester.

“We also will be undergoing new

initiatives regarding sustainability, safety, and wellness,” Hebert said.

Apart from these external efforts, these executive members of SGA are also preparing to leave office at the end of the semester. This semester is the Big Three’s last semester before graduating from UL Lafayette.

“Internally, we are preparing our organization for smooth transitions between leadership,” Hughes said.

Applications for the Big Three closed Jan. 19, 2024. Election results will be announced April 4, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. The Big Three candidates that are running will be posted online to sga.louisiana.edu and the @ulsga Instagram in March. On the morning of the elections, links for voting will be posted.

After graduating from UL Lafayette, the senior members will move on to the next steps in their work and school careers. The senior members of SGA share their big plans for their future.

Hebert, a political science major, shared what is next for him after UL Lafayette.

“After graduating, I will be getting married and moving to Washington D.C. to work at the U.S. Capitol.”

De La Paz, a major in environmental science, shared she will be pursuing a master’s degree.

“I will be attending graduate school to continue my work in coastal restoration and pursue a Master’s of Science in Coastal Sciences,” De La Paz said.

Cupstid, an accounting major, said that he has accepted an accounting position to prepare for CPA exams.

“I have accepted a full-time accountant position at Thibodaux Hebert Deshotels

LeBlanc CPAs and will begin studying for the CPA exams after graduation,” Cupstid said.

Hughes, a journalism major, shared she has accepted a new job and will continue her education to obtain a law degree.

“I will be working full-time at Broussard, David & Moroux as their Communications and Marketing Coordinator. This year, I plan to take the LSAT and apply to law school,” Hughes said.



Photo provided by SGA

SGA’s Big Three and Chief of Staff, from left to right: Gabriel Cupstid, Karessa De La Paz, Colby Hebert, Kate Hughes.

News

PEEKING INTO THE BALLOT BOX

Discussing the future presidential candidates for the 2024 presidential election and where they stand amongst different issues.

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GOING ON A TEAR

Looking at the men’s basketball game against the Arkansas State Red Wolves as the Cajuns win their fourth straight game.

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A look into how celebrity fans and many have begun to become overly obsessed and critical of the celebrities they love.

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SWITCHING UP THE FORECAST

Vermillion Staff write about what their ideal weather conditions to live in would be.

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Early look at candidates, issues of the 2024 presidential election

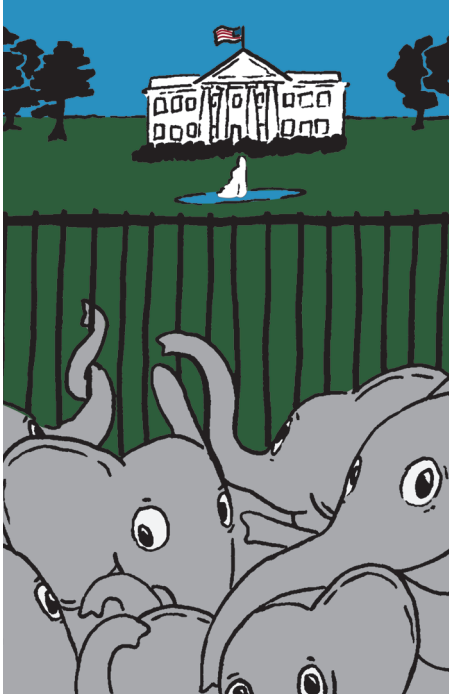
Gabriella Enamorado
NEWS WRITER

The 2024 presidential election is on Nov. 5, so here's an early look at the candidates and where they stand amongst different issues.

There are a total of nine candidates in the running for president in the 2024 presidential election. Running as democrats are Joe Biden, Marianne Williamson and Dean Philips.

On the republican side are Donald Trump, Nikki Haley and Ryan Binkley. As independent or third-party there are Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Cornel West and Jill Stein.

There are key issues that each candidate has been asked about that allows people to see how they view important issues that are ongoing in the United States right now. These issues are on abortion, climate, crime and guns, the economy,



Graphic by Caitlyn Chase

education, elections, foreign policy and immigration.

Joe Biden was elected in 2020 and is the current President of the United States. Biden as well as many other candidates have stated that they want to protect social security, as well as canceling some student debt that people may have.

Social Security is an important benefit that the federal government has put in place to help retirees and people that have lost a spouse. Biden spoke about the importance of it and how when losing a spouse that made about the same income as you, it can be hard, which is where social security benefits come into play.

Along with issues with social security, immigration plays another major role in the U.S. Many immigrants that come to live in America, with some crossing the border illegally. Illegal immigrants seek refuge in America hoping for better lives, especially if they are mothers that cross the border are pregnant and hoping better for their baby.

When mothers come into America illegally and have their baby on American soil, their baby automatically becomes a United States citizen. This is called birthright citizenship.

Six out of nine of the candidates support that immigrants seeking refuge have the right to gain citizenship. Many of them also support that families should not be separated during the process and that many of them would make departments that aid in immigrants seeking refuge in the United States.

Gwynneth Casto, a sophomore majoring in visual arts said that people are people and that it is unfair to deny human rights to others when their parents are from another country.

"People are people. The fact that we might deny another human's right to live equally because they were born and their parents are from another country is crap," says Casto.

Former US President Donald Trump had 40 charges against him and faced four indictments based on unlawful retention of national defense information and falsifying business records. Even though Trump has faced all of these allegations and gone through many trials, he is running for president again in the 2024 presidential election.

Some states, such as Maine and Colorado, have taken Trump off the ballot due to the fact that the 14th amendment in the U.S. Constitution bans insurrectionists from holding office and citing the attack on the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. As of writing, Trump is appealing the decision to remove him from the ballot.

Though many of the candidates running for president mention that they want to help immigrants become U.S. citizens, Trump says that he wants to end birthright citizenship and conduct mass deportations of undocumented immigrants.

According to factcheck.org, Trump has promised to make an executive order on day one of him being president if he is re-elected to end birthright citizenship even though it has been part of the 14th amendment for over 100 years.

Many candidates and people in the United States feel different about this topic and hope to help the situation for immigrants that seek refuge on American soil.

Kyle Primeaux, a freshman majoring in environmental science said that he thinks that we should open our borders to others that seek refuge and have departments for immigration.

"As a humanitarian person, I believe come war, risk of human endangerment from governments or environments, we should open our borders and have a department for emigration and immigration," said Primeaux. "We are built off of immigration, so why should

we turn around and boot others when we are built on it?"

Another issue is climate change. Climate change has been attributed increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide that is produced by the use of fossil fuels.

Presidential candidates such as Marianne Williamson, believe that humans are the sole cause of climate change and that government action is the solution.

While many candidates believe that humans are the main cause of climate change, Trump believes that humans aren't the only cause and that climate change is not making the weather changes worse.

Even though there are many candidates with views and plans to do better for the country, some people don't think so. Some people think that what some of the candidates are doing and saying is just a show and nothing will come from this presidential campaign.

"There's nobody I would for because when have we ever been made to feel like our vote mattered? As far as I'm concerned, it's all a show anyway," says Casto.

While others may feel that voting doesn't matter, some think otherwise.

"Honestly, please go vote. It's your birthright in America. Also, it is important to get educated on candidates," says Primeaux.

There are nine candidates in the 2024 presidential campaign so far, each with many views on serious topics that should be talked about. Each topic is important to cover and many of them have solutions or ideas as to how they will tackle these issues.

These topics being discussed early on make it easier for the people wanting to vote in 2024 so that they can clearly look at the candidates and how they think they can change America for the better.

Police Reports

Compiled by Kay Padilla

Jan. 24

- At 7:18 p.m., officers responded to a Flock Alert. A white Toyota Avalon was stopped and found to have marijuana, a container labeled "OG Kush" containing green leaf, one gray grinder, one orange grinder and a brown zipper bag with a silver tray. An arrest was made.
- At 2:50 p.m., officers were dispatched to the UL Police Department in reference to a student who wished to discuss an incident that occurred off campus.
- At 7:56 a.m., officers were dispatched to Legacy Park in reference to a stolen black 2020 Chevrolet Camaro.
- At 5:57 a.m., officers responded to a vehicle theft at The Heritage Apartments.

Jan. 23

- At 5:50 p.m., an officer was dispatched to Legacy Park Apartments in reference to a vehicle crash involving a 2017 black Hyundai Accent.

Jan. 22

- At 2:26 p.m., officers responded to a Flock Alert of a stolen license plate. The stolen plate was recovered.
- At 1:40 p.m., officers responded to a single vehicle crash that occurred on the 100 block of Hebrard Blvd.
- At 1:10 p.m., officers were dispatched to a crash that occurred in the 100 block of E. St. Mary Street, between a silver 2014 Nissan Altima and a blue 2013 Honda Civic. No injuries were reported.
- At 7:54 a.m., officers were dispatched to a theft of a motor vehicle in Legacy Park Apartments involving a silver 2019 Chevrolet Camaro.

Jan. 21

- At 11:27 p.m., officers were dispatched to Café Fleur De Lis in reference to a medical emergency.











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Student Publications

THE VERMILION

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EDITORIAL STAFF

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Adhamm Safford
MANAGING EDITOR Sarah Guidry
NEWS EDITOR Adhamm Safford
LAYOUT EDITOR Sarah Guidry
SPORTS EDITOR Charles Martin

EMAIL thevermilion@louisiana.edu **BUSINESS** 482-6110 **MAIL** P.O. Box 43721 Lafayette, LA 70504-4813 **LOCATION** 101 BOUCHER DRIVE LAFAYETTE, LA

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All letters to the editor and guest editorials must include the author's full name and phone number and be no longer than 400 words in length. Submissions are edited for libel and vulgarity only. Editorial and columns reflect the author's opinion and not those of The Vermilion staff. All advertisements must be submitted by the Friday before publication at thevermilion@louisiana.edu. © 2024 Communications Committee of UL Lafayette. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Sports

Good Hunting: Ragin' Cajuns vs. the Arkansas State Red Wolves

Charles Martin
SPORTS EDITOR

Despite the recent weather that Lafayette has found itself facing, many fans made their way to the Cajundome to watch the Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns take on the Arkansas State Red Wolves, but the game ended up being postponed.

Minutes before the game was set to tip off, the Cajundome began experiencing electrical issues, forcing officials to call the game off for the day and delay it till the next day. The game that was originally scheduled to take place on Jan. 25 instead took place on Jan. 26. This also caused the men's game against the Texas State Bobcats to be moved back a day till Jan. 28.

The game would start off with a foul

committed by junior forward Hosana Kitenge, though Arkansas State would miss both free throws to keep the game tied at nothing. It would then be the Cajuns that scored first thanks to a layup from Kitenge.

The following ten minutes would be far more defensive than offensive as both teams played a very solid defense, a Cajun defense helped by junior forward Joe Charles who led the game with 10 rebounds, seven of those being defensive rebounds.

The rest of the team was equally good on defense, with six of the eight players that saw the court grabbing at least two defensive rebounds.

The Cajuns also led the game with five blocked shots, with junior forward Kobe Julien and Kitenge each recording two a piece.

11 minutes into the game, the Cajuns were still up, leading 22-18, which was what most of the first half was, the Cajuns leading but the Red Wolves always managing to stay within arms reach.

That story would change in the last eight minutes as the Cajuns went 19-10 to end the first half, leading by 13 with a score of 41-28.

Following the half the Cajuns would score first with Joe Charles grabbing an offensive rebound and dunking it to put the Cajuns up 43-28. After four minutes the Cajuns would find themselves up by 16, their biggest lead of the day.

The following six minutes would see both teams exchanging points at a far greater rate than the first half as players on both sides began to feel the exhaustion of the first half's good defense.

With 10 minutes left in the game the Cajuns still found themselves up 59-44, a 15-point lead, though it would be expanded off a Joe Charles 3-point jump shot, assisted by junior guard Themus Fulks, to put the Cajuns up 62-44 before a timeout was taken by the Cajuns.

Following the timeout both teams would continue to exchange baskets with the Cajuns eventually holding a 19 point lead with eight minutes left, up 65-46.

Now, for most teams this is where the game would be over, but no sport at this school can ever let you have a simple win. It does not help that Arkansas State did not want to lose.

The next five minutes would be all Red Wolves as they climbed back to only be down 69-62, a mere seven-point deficit.

The last three minutes were a hectic push by Arkansas State to close the

remaining deficit, but the Cajuns managed to keep them at arm's length just like at the beginning of the game, though it proved a challenge after Joe Charles was ejected before the game with his fifth foul of the game.

The Red Wolves would manage to fight back hard and come as close as four points from tying with 26 seconds left in the game. It would end with a foul on Arkansas State, allowing Julien to make two free throws that would contribute to the final score of 81-75.

Kobe Julien led the team in scoring, recording 21 points, only trailing Arkansas State's Taryon Todd in most points in the game. Julien now leads the Sun Belt in points per game, averaging 18.2.

He had a field goal percentage of 41.6% shooting 5-12, including 1-3 on 3-pointers. His free throws were near-perfect going 10-12, meaning he was the last guy the opponents would want to foul.

That free-throw percentage is still not as good as Themus Fulks', who went 9-10 and led the team in assists with five. This contributed to an all-around great team percentage for free throws, as the team recorded 81.3% making 26-of-32 attempted free throws.

The Cajuns also led in 3-point percentage with 41.7% made, led by junior guard Kentrell Garnett who made 3-of-5 attempts. Garnett also had a high percentage in shooting, making 4-of-7 from the field.

The Cajuns now move to 6th in the Sun Belt with a record of 5-3 in conference and move up to an overall record of 12-8. As of Sunday they have yet to take on the Texas State Bobcats due to the delay of the Arkansas State game.



Photo by Alyus Dick

Guard Michael Thomas (2) takes the ball up the court against Arkansas State on Jan. 26.

Lady Cajuns fall short against Troy

Kaydence Vital
SPORTS WRITER

On Jan. 20 the Ragin' Cajuns women's basketball team took on Troy University in the Cajundome and celebrated their alumni and former players.

The Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns Women's Basketball, missing eight of their players with either illness or injury, led the entire first half against Troy but fell short, ending with the visiting team taking home the win with a final score of 65-57 at the Cajundome.

Sparked by three treys from Brandi Williams and a combined 13 points from Tamia Robinson and Aasia Sam, the Cajuns (6-10, 2-5 SBC) built a 33-26 halftime advantage.

Even though the Trojans (9-8, 6-1 SBC) came out with nine points in less than two minutes to draw even at 35-all by the 8:24 mark of the third, Louisiana stayed in step.

The Cajuns hit five field goals every time a tie was created over the next five minutes, closing with Nubia Benedith's layup at 2:49 that made it 45-43.

During halftime, the team brought back their former players and gave them recognition for their time as Ragin' Cajuns.

The game was made to celebrate the women who put in their time and effort while they were students at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Troy's first true scoring run of the contest followed, Nia Daniel hitting a triple at 2:40 to start a 7-0 run for a 50-45 lead just inside of a minute left in the third.

The Cajuns battled back to avenge last week's loss, a Uniyah Franklin layup and Sam's buzzer beater trimming the deficit to 50-49.

Williams drove to the hoop for a layup at 8:48 of the fourth quarter to forge a 51-all tie, the Cajuns drew hard luck on the offensive end the next six minutes—the next goal wouldn't come until 2:05 remained and the Trojans took over.

Despite the adversity of a second straight game, the Cajuns played with the outcome hanging in the balance late in the fourth quarter.

The Cajuns saw seven players convert multiple field goals and shot 45% (23-

of-51), marking the fifth time in seven SBC games shooting 40-plus. Louisiana connected on six-three pointers and limited the Trojans to only one make from beyond the arc.

Williams produced a team-high 16 points on 6-of-12 shooting which included a 4-of-5 showing from three-point range.

Alicia Blanton contributed a season-high nine points, Sam, and Robinson each delivered eight points and Franklin scored seven.

Despite the loss against Troy, the team played with everything they had. They recently announced their player of the week, which is Alicia Blanton. This

game, Alicia had nine points, 4FGM, 1-3FGM, and 0 FTM, and notched her season-high total in points twice!

With the team leader board for this game, Brandi Williams came out on top with 16pts, 6 FGM, 4-3FGM, and 0 FTM. Following her was Alicia Blanton, Aasia Sam and Tamiah Robinson.

Louisiana moves to the back half of its January ending. The Ragin' Cajuns still have a lot of seasons left for 2024, and we know they are hungry and ready to make a comeback from this recent game.

The Ragin' Cajuns have been doing excellent this season, and we believe they will continue to grow and end their season off right.

For their next game we were going to manifest a win, but what we really want is to see that same fight and energy come to life through all four quarters and not just the first half. I want to see the rest of the team shine through.

As of the time of writing, the Ragin' Cajun women's basketball team hasn't yet played their next games. They have a four-homestand welcoming Coastal Carolina and Texas State to the Cajundome from Jan. 25-27.

The second stage of the homestand starts with a 5:00 p.m. tip off against Coastal Carolina on Thursday, Jan. 25 followed by a 2:00 p.m. contest against Texas State on Saturday, Jan. 27.



Photo by Alyus Dick

Guard Tamiah Robinson (13) passing out of a shot over the Troy Trojans on Jan. 20.

Cajun Crossword

Compiled by Morgan Parker

No. 14

INSTRUCTIONS

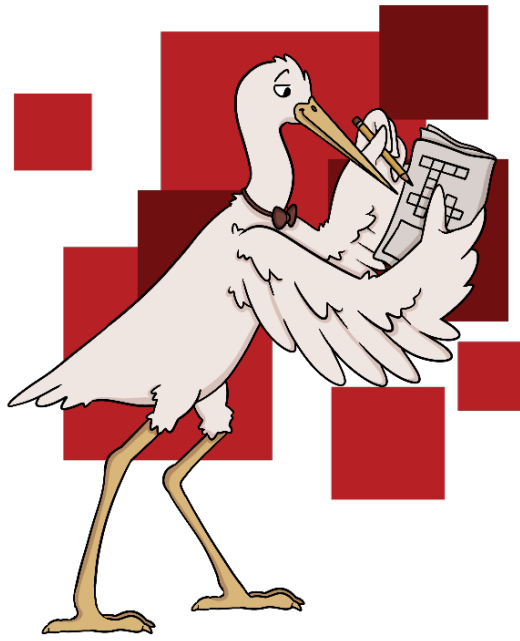
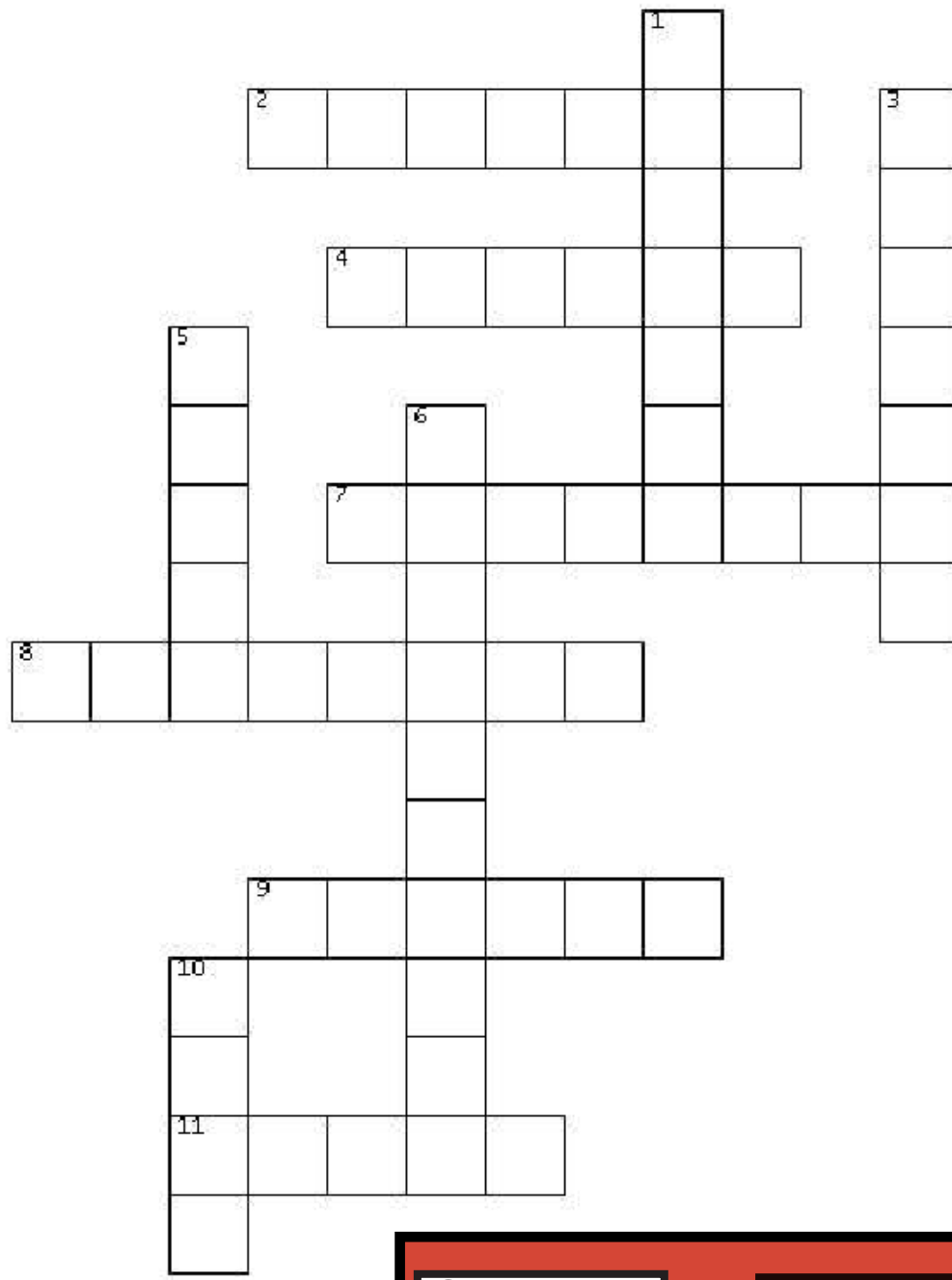
The answers can be found throughout the newspaper, so make sure to thoroughly read each story. Try to find all them and see if you got them correct in the answer provided in the next issue's crossword search!

ACROSS

- 2. Who was player of the week for women's basketball (last name)
- 4. What country are axolotls native to?
- 7. What is BookTok similar to?
- 8. Where did Kay's parents grow up?
- 9. Who leads the Sun Belt in points per game in men's basketball? (last name)
- 11. Which presidential candidate has 40 charges against him for falsifying business records? (last name)

DOWN

- 1. What medium did Simone Biles and her husband Jonathan Owens do an interview on?
- 3. Cajun Field is being renamed to Our Lady of _____.
- 5. Who is the interim head coach of the Ragin' Cajuns track and field team?
- 6. What is the SGA Chief of State Kate Hughes' major?
- 10. What is Snow Bigfoot?



Cajun Candida Women's Basketball vs. Texas

Photos by Alyus Dick



The road to Birmingham is set for Ragin' Cajuns track and field

Issac Henry
SPORTS WRITER

On Jan. 26, the Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns rolled into Houston to compete in the Robert Platt Indoor Invitational for track and field competition. The team set itself up well for future competitions by placing in the top-10 three different men's events. Fresh faces defined the two-day event for the team, as several freshmen set personal bests and led the Cajuns in their respective events.

Men's 800 meter sprint would see the first of these top placements, with junior Joe Patterson finishing with a 1:53.33 time, good for eighth in the event. In the women's 800, junior Haley Salsbury finished 18th with a 2:20.89 heat.

For men's pole vault, Swedish freshman international transfer Teodor Borgius would give the Cajuns sixth with a 16-foot .75-inch jump, and Cammi Martinez and Lauren Roberts would snag points for women's with 11-foot 7.75-inch efforts.

In women's mile, freshman cross-country runner Isabelle Russell completed a 5:09.41 for a new personal best, and in men's, Nathan Fontan finished with a 4:24.03, good for 22th. Fontan also set his personal best in the men's 3,000 meter run with a 8:48.02.

Italian freshman transfer Federico Bovo represented the Cajuns in the men's high jump, and turned in a 6-foot 6-inch jump, a personal best which placed 15th on the day.

Shot put saw freshman Praiyer Jones land a 50-foot 1.75-inch attempt, again a personal best placing 12th in the competition, and womens' freshman Jayden Jackson set a 44-foot 2.75-inch put for 13th.

Sophomore Reem Tammam set her personal best in triple jump with a 40-foot 7.5-inch try, good for fourth on the day. Junior Taylor Walls placed fourth in women's long jump with a 18-foot 9.75-inch jump, with Tammam landing a 17-foot 8.25-foot jump for 20th. Freshman Montrell Morris turned in a 22-foot 5.25 jump for 21st in the men's category.

Sophomore Oliver Jack led the Cajuns in weight throw, placing 15th with a 54-foot 3.25-inch toss for 15th place, and for women's, junior Marin Barras landed a 52-foot 3.25-inch throw, good for 12th.

The men's distance medley run would see Team A finish third overall in the competition, as juniors Peyton Chiasson, Samuel Avants, Andrew Hoyte-Small and freshman Andrew Leck would earn bronze with a 10:01.71 effort good for a 13th-best 2024 D1 time and the second-fastest time in program history.

Team 'B', juniors Reece Shelby and Luke Benoit, sophomore Landon Meche, and freshman Brandon Beavers would finish with a 10:47.11.

This next stretch of meets, wrapping up with the South Alabama Invitational next Sunday, Feb. 4, are important proving grounds for both the athletes,

head coach Tommy Badon and the Cajuns' staff, culminating in the Sun Belt Conference Championships starting Feb. 19. Whether Louisiana will continue to place as one of the best programs in the conference or not for years to come rests on these underclassmen, transfers and newcomers.



Photo provided by Louisiana Athletics

Junior Abbey Marie Ratcliff runs the 5,000 meter at the Louisiana Classics on Mar. 17, 2023.

Allons

Is your life going to stop if you don't know your fav celeb's every move?

Nyria Mustiful
ALLONS WRITER

As a fellow pathological bystander in today's society, I too am thoroughly engaged in the lives of those with major influence and social standing. If I'm being wholeheartedly transparent, I really only have social media to escape temporary boredom and be nosy in the lives of those I follow, celebrities and familiar faces alike.

As of late, I've noticed that fandom has been taken to a new level, with fans seemingly being overbearingly invested and even excessively critical of those that they follow. I'm aware that this isn't really a new concept, however, I think that simply wanting to consume what is being presented to us through media has turned into us fans expecting to get exactly what we want to see when we want to see it.

An example of this would be a phenomenon I like to call "Post Your Pregnancy Pronto." Essentially, it's the insensitive demand of celebrities that people suspect are pregnant to just come outright and say that. This has happened recently with celebrities like Halle Bailey, Kali Uchis, Kylie Jenner, etc. All of these women are indeed in public relationships, so I can sort of understand how people may believe that they're entitled to this development as well.

However, the lack of sensitivity and understanding for the fact that pregnancy

is a precious experience and that these people are still entitled to some sort of privacy is really what grinds my gears. Being a fan and wanting to share in the excitement is great, but there's a better way to do that than hounding and harassing people to share something so delicate and intimate.

In the case of Halle Bailey, I, along with many others, felt like she and her partner DDG, formally known as Darryl Dwayne Granberry Jr., somewhat gaslit us into believing that we were insane for thinking she was pregnant. While that was slightly irritating, even for me, I completely understand why they chose to take that route.

Their relationship itself has been under fire since it began, largely due the fact that people seemingly haven't adjusted to the fact that Halle Bailey is no longer a Disney child actor, but a full-fledged grown woman who can make her own life choices, even if one of them is dating a not so well liked rapper. It also doesn't help that DDG has publicly disrespected Bailey in a diss track, but that's neither here nor there.

Though I'm sure they believed that delaying the release of the information would quell the potential backlash, it would later be apparent that the tactic wasn't enough. People all over social media were fiercely attacking Bailey and Granberry, demanding that they stop with the cover ups and confirm the pregnancy. I'd seen comments on

various Instagram posts surrounding the pregnancy that said things like "Just say it already!" or "OMG give it up".

This, to me, raised the question of whether or not we as fans are entitled to every single detail of a celebrity's life just because we're fans of them and so much of their life is public. In my honest opinion, the answer is a hard no. At the end of the day, while they have a certain level of status and stature that we gave them, they are still normal human beings. They live normal lives and do most of the same things that we do on a day to day basis.

I understand that being in the public eye does mean that a lot of their business is privy to exploitation, but that doesn't mean that it is a requirement that the information be shared. I'd also like to shed some light on the fact that many of us don't know how to just read/listen and scroll.

Another situation that ties into this would be the interview that world renowned gymnast Simone Biles and her husband, Green Bay Packers safety Jonathan Owens, did on The Pivot podcast. Basically, Owens was asked how he and Biles met and during the explanation, he made the comments that he "didn't know who she was" and that he was "the catch" in their relationship. Obviously, in this age of cancel culture, these comments were heavily scrutinized.

Fans of Biles, especially women, were outraged at Owens' comments. Given

the notoriety of Biles and Owens' relative lack thereof prior to their relationship/marriage, it was perplexing to many how he could possibly say those things about her and their relationship.

Biles' fans even began to question the validity of their marriage and her security within herself, commenting things like "Girl, leave him immediately!" or "You must be real insecure to stand by a man who said that". Biles and Owens' response to the hate was nothing short of a heroic effort to block the negative energy. Both Biles and Owens made several Instagram posts and stories about how their relationship will continue to thrive despite others' opinions.

I'm going to keep it real with all of you. Having listened to the full podcast episode, I believe that what Owens said about him being "the catch" in the relationship was valid. From what he described, Biles sought him out first and made every single move of advancement when it came to the relationship making progress. To me, that could definitely be perceived as being "the catch". Now, him not knowing her prior is a load of crap and that's just that.

Their joint reaction to the backlash, while somewhat understandable, was unnecessary and more so validated people's concerns and points of view towards their relationship. If it was indeed as solid as they portrayed, there wouldn't have been such a need for them to "clap back".

On the other hand, and I say this with love, people need to mind the business that pays them. Whether or not these people's marriage is stable or Simone Biles loves herself is none of our business. For so many people to have the audacity to make out of pocket comments about them is crazy. These people may be famous, but they're still just people.

I wholeheartedly understand that we all have opinions and the ability to express them but some things are just better left unsaid. At the end of the day, realistically speaking, negative comments most likely will do more harm than good in any given situation. We never know the impact of what we say has, no matter celebrities' public response or lack thereof.

I say all of this to say that though we are fans of celebrities, we need to remember that we are not at all entitled to any of their lives and they are people too.



Graphic by Ewurum Chinememma

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Is it really hot outside or is it the consequences of man's actions?

Kay Padilla
ALLONS EDITOR

Global warming has been a buzzword for a few years now. Although it is not a new term or doesn't need to be a buzzword because it is a very real thing. Global warming has been discussed since the early '70s.

It has also become a political debate. I love a good political debate as much as the next political science major, but there is nothing to debate when it comes to global warming. At least to me, I like accepting scientifically proven facts as truth.

Science is not always correct. But if my major has taught me anything it is that things need to be proven a multitude of times and accepted by science experts before it even is put out to the world.

Global warming is the gradual increase in Earth's average surface temperature primarily due to human activities releasing greenhouse gasses

into the atmosphere. These gasses trap heat from the sun and alter the planet's climate. Scientific research and evidence have pointed to human activities as the primary driver of global warming.

The Paris Agreement was adopted in December of 2015 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This is basically an agreement to hold each participating country accountable for their emissions and have transparency to encourage a commitment towards working for a more sustainable future.

Facts aside, global warming can be felt around you at this moment. I was questioning my mom about how our ancestors were able to hunt, migrate and live in weather like this without air conditioning units. And she told me that our ancestors did not have our weather, they had cooler temperatures and there was no need for air-conditioned escapes because their bodies were naturally tuned for it.

I stepped back for a moment and realized that global warming wasn't just something I read on the news or scrolling through my phone anymore. I am living with the real consequences of not taking care of our planet. There is no more taking steps to prevent things from literally heating up.

This past winter in South Louisiana was warm. We usually have a false fall, then two weeks of normal weather and then we kick off our winter weather. But that didn't happen this past winter season, it was arguably worse.

I waited for weeks for winter weather to settle in, and it never did. At least in my hometown, we didn't have cold temperatures all of December. The first few days of January did have freezing temperatures, as well as the rest of the month.

My mother commented on wishing this was how we spent all our winter seasons, and I understood her point. She was born in a tropical country where it was warm

in the summer and cool in the winter. So she isn't used to 60 degree weather, much less below freezing temperatures.

I laughed at her comment and told her, "Mom I don't think you want that, it means our planet is dying." And she corrected me and said, "WE are making our planet die."

I stayed silent for a moment because I realized that I had a flawed way of thinking about global warming. It was only made worse by my mother correcting me because I like to sarcastically tell her that I am smarter than her.

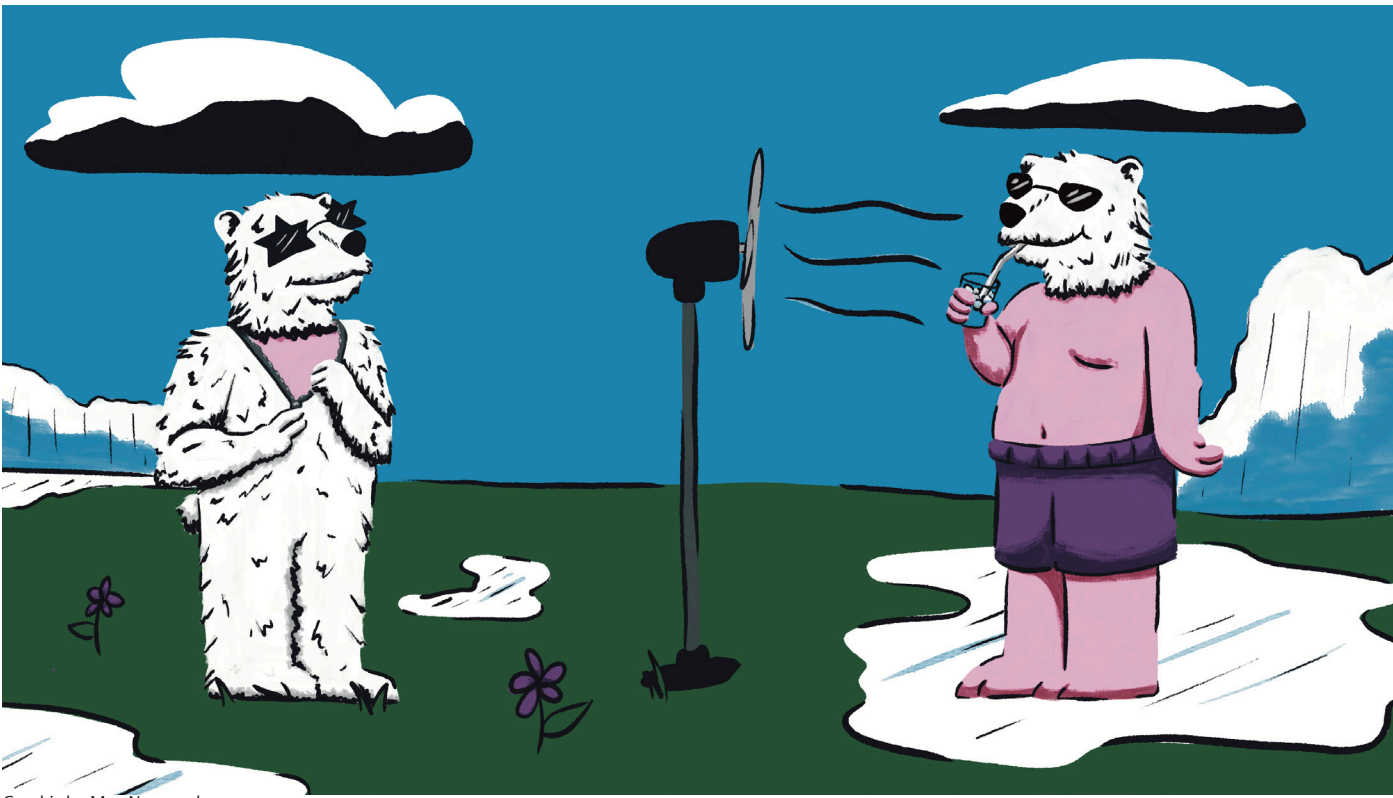
I had this idea that global warming was the physical Earth's fault. My mother corrected me for a second time in the span of two minutes and told me that every human on Earth is currently at fault for global warming.

My parents grew up in Honduras, though they experienced hardships in their home country, the one thing they applauded was how they were taught to recycle and clean their piece of Earth. They brought these lessons to America as well. They taught me to recycle plastic bags and items as much as possible, as well as replant anything that we cut down or take.

This way of life comes from living in a "hunter" way of life for generations. Now we are in the age of using plastic very heavily and caring for the Earth has dropped significantly in new generations.

It's very sad to say that my parents and I grew up in two different worlds, even though we live on the same planet. It is even sadder to see that the Earth's climate is changing extremely fast because I am not experiencing the same weather as I did five years ago.

And humans aren't the only ones affected. Animals are dying out slowly but surely, there are fewer and fewer trees on Earth and our fossil fuels are being depleted. All because we refuse to aid ourselves and create a viable future for our descendants. I don't want to teach my future children what a polar bear, a river or a tree are using my pictures from the past.



Graphic by Meg Norwood

Campfire horror and the digital age

Amare Auzenne
ALLONS WRITER

The image of using chiaroscuro lighting to accentuate one's face in the process of weaving a tale of terror and intrigue is one as enduring as marshmallows over fire. The scary story, and its close associate the urban legend, have been mainstays in the public consciousness for years, but that intertwined quality seems to have lessened in the years between reports of Gef the Mongoose and the current year.

Icons of the cryptid world, and veritable tabloid stars, urban legends had a home in the hearts and minds of everyone from the simple storyteller to the true believer to the fraudsters in our midst. Sasquatch's home ever in debate, and his Hisuian variant the yeti snowballing in popularity as a pop culture fixture featured in films like "Monsters Inc." when in need of an abominable snowman.

A name familiar to most, the Loch Ness Monster garnered theories around its existence from being driftwood all the way to being the final true dinosaur

keeping the spirit of the urban legend alive. Blurry photos providing proof of Nessy burrowing their way into the imagination of the public in much the same way as Bigfoot's infamous turn. Acting to the sea what Sasquatch and his cousin are to land.

The urban legend's spirit was so insatiable that even nowhere places like desert settlements, Fresno and the entire state of New Jersey got in on the action with their own respective sightings. The ever popular UFO giving hope that perhaps this universe isn't so lonely and inspiring terror that there is in fact someone else home. The Fresno nightcrawler inspiring memes about why sentient pants haunt the suburbs. The Jersey Devil proving Jersey Is Hell.

In my lifetime however, this experience as I had been taught to recognize it never found me, no campfire stories, and all rumors of the supernatural half-hearted pistakes of the legacy of the urban legend. The void of the supernatural rumor mill, suspicious in its absence, yet inconspicuous in its disappearance. A white out spill normally only reserved for things we culturally have wished

to bleach our brains of organically, or perhaps more like an emptied room.

The urban legend didn't get erased, it just moved to a new place.

The boundless frontier of the internet was the next stage of the unknown, a place where it could morph to find a home in a world that was becoming increasingly well suited to fill in the gaps where the art form thrived. With the democratization of publication the internet provided anyone with time, a computer and a little dedication could find themselves at the birth of a modern day tale of horror.

Often these tales took the name of Creepypastas after the website with the same moniker and the ubiquity of some of the tales migrated, created or otherwise hosted there are what lead me to believe the urban legend didn't so much disappear. It just got a new digital pad.

Figures such as Slenderman, who while associated with Creepypasta was actually a forum creation and migrant to the website, are as ubiquitous in the minds of anyone who has been surfing the web as cryptids of old are to the zeitgeist at

large. By using the unique qualities of the internet to achieve their fear factor, in particular the image editing in the early days, the defining images of these horror stories proved replicable and striking for the digital age.

Slenderman himself beginning as a mere creepy edit of an old photo to capitalize on the idea of something being present that was hitherto uncovered, proving fairly easy to make and propagate. Ben Drowned's iconic grimacing visage as an advertisement for the story of the game he haunts. Jeff the Killer's rudimentary, overexposed uncanny face like a deep fried Heath Ledger Joker reaching far beyond even his tale.

In keeping with tradition, all of the stories are perhaps not literary masterworks, but all earnest attempts to keep their target audience up at night. Peeking out from their duvet scared of the unknown and all it could hold. Always able to get another campfire tale from all the other amateurs sitting around the digital campfire. Always tempted to take one more glimpse beyond the real.



Graphic by Julia McDow

How BookTok has affected our reading habits and discussions

Marie Ducote

ALLONS WRITER

Last issue I covered tweens and TikTok, but as a big reader I spend a lot of my time on the book side of the app. Or as it is, colloquially known, BookTok. This side of the app is characterized by creators reviewing and doing deep dives on their favorite books and series. It has been a popular place for people to get their book recommendations.

What fascinates me about BookTok is how it has influenced how books are sold. If you walk into any Barnes & Noble you will find a table showing off all of the popular books on the app. The article “BookTok Helped Book Sales Soar. How Long Will That Last?” from Publishers Weekly Jim Milliot writes, “In the first six months of 2023, adult fiction was once again the only category to register an increase, with sales up 4.2%. The biggest driver of those gains, of course, has been books that have the backing of BookTok.”

Bestseller lists like The New York Times are filled with the most talked about books on TikTok. For example, “Fourth Wing” and its sequel “Iron Flame” by Rebecca Yaros are number one and two on the Combined Print and E-Book Fiction. These two books are also on the NYT’s Hardcover Fiction list also at number one and two.

More BookTok famous books can be spotted on the NYT Paperback Trade Fiction: “Icebreaker” by Hannah Grace (number one, the book also shows up

on the number six spot Combined Print and E-Book Fiction), “A Little Life” by Hanya Yanagihara (number three, can be found at number 13 on Combined Print and E-Book Fiction) and “The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo” by Taylor Jenkins Reed (number eight).

The way BookTok functions very much reminds me of BookTube. Both have book reviews and the same popular authors. Two authors that come to mind that have had crossover success on both platforms are Colleen Hoover and Sarah J. Maas.

I remember when I was watching BookTube on a regular basis they would always come up in the videos. Hoover and Maas books showed up a couple times on the NYT lists.

BookTok in many ways reminds me of a virtual book club, a place where people can commune and talk about their new favorite books. It is no wonder that it boomed in popularity during pandemic. The creators that populate the app gave the viewers a sense of community in a time where many of us were stuck in our houses. Our only connection to each other was our screens.

In a time where most of our reading is done on our phones and laptops the book influencers have shown the physical book will not disappear anytime soon. Creators proudly waved their copies as they talked enthusiastically about it. As someone who prefers holding a book than an e-reader, I appreciate that a physical copy has not gone out of style.

Now there has been criticism leveled against BookTok which is understandable when something gets popular.

One of the critiques that is brought up is if the books that are getting the most attention are good?

Is the writing of good quality? If the only same five books ever get mentioned on BookTok creating an echo chamber of praise how can up and coming authors ever get their books talked about?

I think when it comes to determining if a book is well written it is up to the reader and their personal taste. There are a few popular books I have read that I didn’t particularly like, but those books are probably someone’s favorite.

Some of the criticism I do agree with is the whole culture of how many books you can read in a month or in a year. The more books you consume in a short amount of time the better a reader you are. I disagree with this viewpoint. I consider myself a slow reader. I like to sit and think about what I have read. If you read books at basically the speed of light are you comprehending anything you have read?

Another criticism that is worth mentioning is BookTok’s tendency to overconsume. You scroll through enough video book hauls will pop up on your For You page where the books being shown off feel more like trophies and not pieces of paper being held together by glue. Buying the book has become more important than actually reading it.



Graphic by Lucy Shields

Former BookTuber Barry Pierce in the article “In the shallow world of BookTok, being ‘a reader’ is more important than actually reading” draws upon his experience on BookTube and how he sees many similarities between it and BookTok.

Pierce writes, “They’d receive boxes upon boxes of books that they’d then ‘haul’ (basically, just to show off) and then you’d never see those books mentioned again.

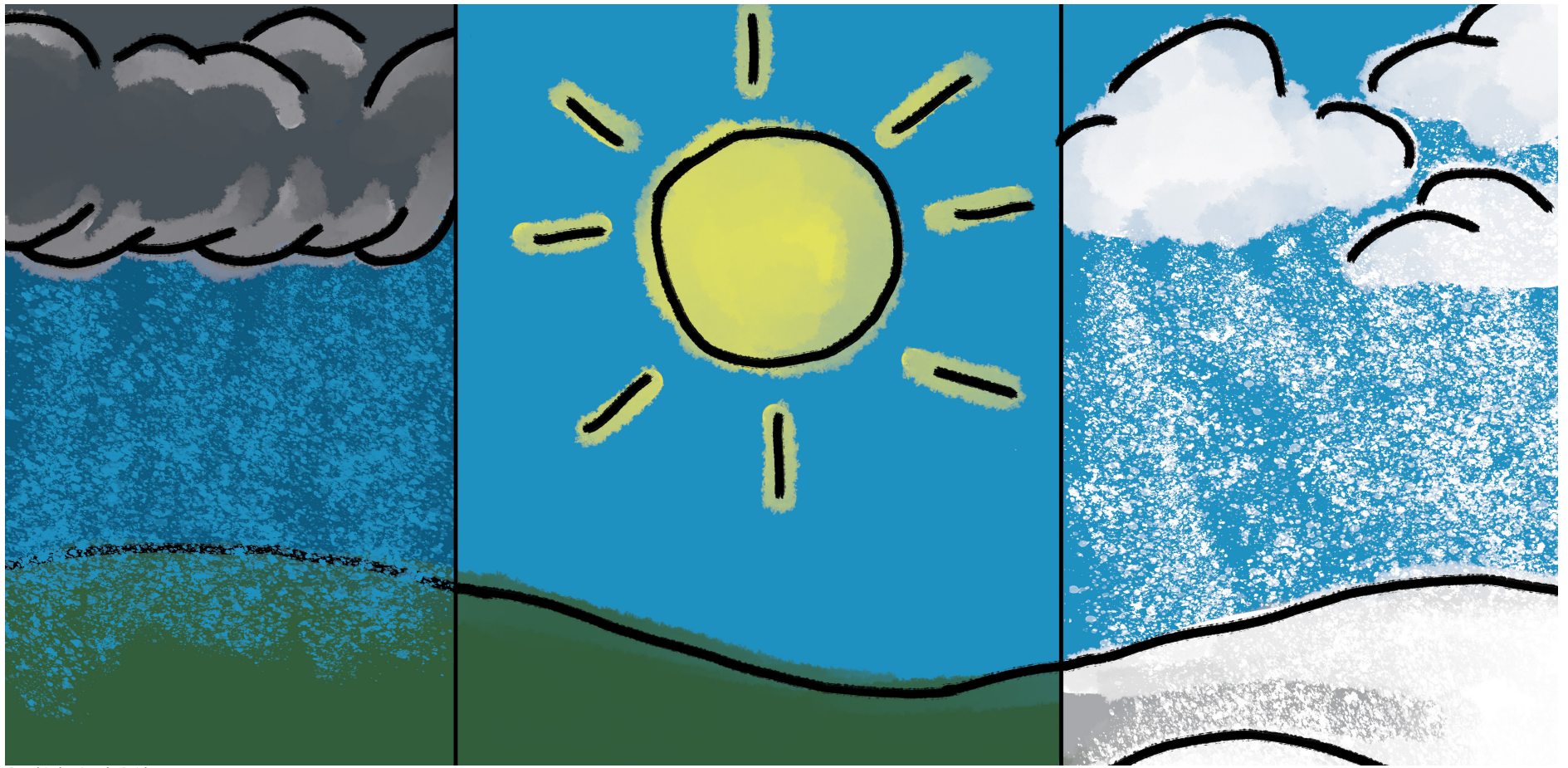
The act of reading became replaced by the act of being a reader. Actual reviews became few and far between and many of the smaller, genuine readers on the platform jumped ship. It feels like BookTok has got to the same place, only much faster.”

BookTok is a place I do have hope for in terms of encouraging people to read, but it is also a place that will evolve with time.

Beaucoup

Ideal Weather Conditions

The Beaucoup section write about what ideal weather conditions they would like to live in.



Graphic by Sarah Guidry

Kay Padilla

ALLONS EDITOR

My ideal weather would be hot and sunny. I think my body is accustomed to living in humid 100° climates. There are many ways to cool off when it’s scorching hot. You can run under a hose, sit under a tree or run a hose under a tree and sit. It is easier to cool off in the heat than to warm up in the cold. I also enjoy

hurricanes, only because they are easy to survive.

Other natural disasters, like tornadoes and earthquakes, don’t give much warning in advance.

A hurricane gives you the decency of at least a few days’ warnings. I think my ideal weather would be Louisiana weather. There are cooler places, but they come with worse natural disasters or the hassle of dealing with snow and ice.

Adhamm Safford

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I think my ideal weather would be leaning toward the colder side. I feel like I sleep a lot better when it’s cold since I can get all bundled up and cozy. Plus I get to wear my favorite jackets and sweaters.

I’ve never been a fan of the heat, maybe partly because I lived on an island by the equator where our only seasons were

summer and rainy summer). I also took a motorcycle trip through Texas and New Mexico in the summer and I was just cooking under the sun.

I’d really like to live somewhere that gets snow, too. I say that having only seen snow (real snow, mind you) once in my life, so I don’t know how annoying it actually is to deal with, but it looks pretty and I want it. As long as I don’t have to drive in it, anyway.

Amare Auzenne

ALLONS WRITER

My ideal weather type is the kind of cold, windy and overcast that would drive most people insane from lack of sunlight experienced and nippiness. It may not be the most common kind of weather to love, but getting to, or below, 65 with nothing except gray ceiling above is joyous to me. No sweating, a nice, dry

gust of wind? The only things necessary to make chilling outside actually chill.

As far as weather to survive however, I think the warmer climates are the way to go. Regardless of how much I love a good, abnormally frosty Louisiana winter’s day the frostbite would take me in a matter of days. As far as natural disasters go, I think earthquakes seem survivable. The ground moves. Most of the time the building doesn’t fall over. Spooky.

Nyria Mustiful

ALLONS WRITER

My ideal weather conditions would be akin to the weather in Washington State, I think. I’d like to live somewhere moderately temperate versus the weather being severely inconsistent, like it is in Louisiana.

Lately, I’ve been really into breezy and misty weather. It’s very serene and calming to my soul. I would like a bit of shock every now and then though.

The occasional earthquake followed by a tsunami, while I’m sure would be quite traumatizing, would probably be my ideal natural disaster setup. I honestly believe that I’m just really into water-based weather phenomena. If it includes water, I’m definitely down. An accurate way to sum up my ideal weather with a cinematic reference would be to say that I want “Twilight” weather with a hint of “San Andreas”.

SOUNDING OFF

"What is your favorite song right now and why?"



Sarah Moosa
ADVERTISING SOPHOMORE

"My favorite song is 'Worth the Wait' by Kali Uchis. The beginning really gets you, y'all should listen to her album."



Adrien Henry
KINESIOLOGY FRESHMAN

"Lil Boosie 'Set It Off.' It just turns you up."



Abigail Esteban
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING FRESHMAN

"Right now... 'the 1' by Taylor Swift. The song is about how she's feeling after a breakup."



Linaisha Roberts
ENGLISH FRESHMAN

"I say right now 'yes, and?' It's been so catchy and I like the beat."



Yvonne Givens
CRIMINAL JUSTICE FRESHMAN

"My favorite right now is 'Like A Wife' by Webbie... I like the way the beat of the sound goes."



Skyler Logan
NURSING JUNIOR

"Beyonce 'HEATED.' It's very fun and allows you to express yourself."

Sounding Off is a section devoted to the voice of students. Views expressed in Sounding Off do not reflect those of UL Lafayette administrators, faculty, staff or other students.

Photos and interviews by Kay Padilla and Adhamm Safford.

COMIC

An Exotic Lunch



Comic by Lauren Gerald

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