

# THE VERMILLION

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette Student Newspaper January 25, 2024

## Louisiana suffers freezing temperatures

**Ellie Moore**  
NEWS WRITER

This past week, the state of Louisiana experienced extreme winter weather with freezing temperatures spanning Jan. 15 through the 17, with the temperatures warming up on the 17.

Governor Jeff Landry issued a state of emergency due to the severe weather conditions that were to impact the state of Louisiana between Sunday, Jan. 14 and Wednesday, Jan. 17. The governor encouraged people to prepare for the winter conditions. He also assured people that the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness was ready to supply any resources local emergency crews needed.

The freeze caused ice to form on power lines which caused several outages around Lafayette leaving several people without heat in the freezing temperatures. Slemco, an electric utility company, told KATC 3 that 6,000 of 10,000 Slemco customers were without power.

This freezing weather is coming from an arctic cold front. This freeze is actually related to climate change. Despite the world as a whole warming, weather is also becoming drastic and unpredictable which is why Louisiana is experiencing a freeze.

According to Nola.com, "warmer Arctic Circle temperatures causing unusual waviness in Jet Stream patterns, resulting in the rapid delivery of icebox conditions into south Louisiana."

Barry Keim, an LSU climatology professor, told Nola.com, "Louisiana tends to be cooler and wetter in El Nino

winters, which is caused by enhanced storm formation in the western Gulf and those storms tend to track over Louisiana."

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette emailed students, faculty and staff on Jan. 16 stating that the campus would be open on Tuesday, Jan. 17. They encouraged students, faculty and staff to take caution when traveling to campus. UL Lafayette stated they had taken measures to make campus safe, but encouraged everyone to be cautious while on campus.

Later on Jan. 16, UL Lafayette emailed students, faculty and staff to inform them that the campus would be closed

due to changing weather conditions. Classes and offices were closed, but most dining options operated as normal.

UL Lafayette students shared how they got through the freeze this past week.

Reagan Richey, a sophomore majoring in nursing, shared how she was affected by the drastic weather.

"Especially after the summer we had, I am definitely not acclimated to this cold. With power outages and pipes freezing, I am thankful we had a day off of school to adjust and get everything solved before having school again. I just hope that was the worst of it," Richey said.

Connor Guidry, a sophomore nursing major, shared how he was concerned

when UL Lafayette planned to remain open on Tuesday, Jan. 16.

"We didn't have school when it froze so I wasn't concerned, but when I got the email saying that they were originally going to be open I was very concerned. Especially when they said to drive with caution," Guidry said.

Guidry continued, "We didn't lose power or water, but my car did get frozen over which was a first, and driving in the sleet Tuesday night was definitely an experience."

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Photo by Morgan Parker

Ice formations on wrought iron fence outside the Rose Garden.

## Creator of 'Blue Dog' paintings featuring in upcoming exhibition in the Hilliard on Jan. 27

**Gabriella Enamorado**  
NEWS WRITER

The Hilliard Art Museum will be showcasing the works of one of Louisiana's most celebrated artists, George Rodrigue, who is known for his Blue Dog paintings. On Jan. 27th, 2024, the Hilliard will be opening the exhibition in tribute to Rodrigue called, "Sitting with George Rodrigue."

The Hilliard Art Museum will be

showing his paintings of influential cultural and political figures, as well as his Blue Dog paintings that have been an iconic "symbol of human existential queries".

George Rodrigue's work was heavily influenced and inspired by his Cajun roots. Upon returning to Louisiana after attending an art school in Los Angeles in the 1960s, he saw that the Cajun heritage was dying. His work showcases the Cajun culture in many ways and his portraits

along with his Blue Dog paintings demonstrate that.

Jacques Rodrigue, George Rodrigue's son, shares what his father's inspirations were, how he wants people attending the event to gain insight on his father's career and how the people of Louisiana deeply influenced all of his work.

"I hope that everyone in Lafayette and the surrounding region will have the opportunity to view these original paintings in person, allowing them to gain a deeper insight into his entire career and the imagery in the Blue Dog works," said Jacques Rodrigue.

Along with George Rodrigue's painting of the Blue Dog, there will be many other pieces in this exhibition that have never been showcased in Lafayette. Such as the "Aioli Dinner," which will be displayed in Lafayette for the first time.

"The painting played a crucial role in my dad's development as an artist and is genuinely a pivotal piece," said Jacques Rodrigue. "We have already received inquiries from many relatives of the actual people depicted in the painting, and we hope that anyone descended from those who attended those dinners will have the opportunity to see it in person."

Jacques Rodrigue and his brother are hoping for the painting, "Aioli Dinner," to receive recognition as one of America's most significant paintings as well as hoping to find a permanent home for this piece.

Ben Hickey, the Hilliard's interim director, says that he is happy to temporarily host this iconic painting and hopes to introduce George Rodrigue's paintings to a new generation.

"I'm really excited that that is something of a homecoming and given the kind notion of memorializing George, I think that symbolically is important," Hickey said. "I think this exhibition is a great opportunity to reintroduce George's work to the community. Introduce it in a really meaningful way to a whole new generation, maybe even two generations of people who are less familiar with it."

The Hilliard hopes to celebrate George Rodrigue's work, along with everyone who helped make this exhibition happen, and hope that people gain a deeper insight about his career and who he was.

"George has people who care about his legacy. There's the Life and Legacy Foundation run by Wendy Rodrigue. There's the Rodrigue family trust, who owns a lot of the work that they're lending to the museum and then of course, there's the Rodrigue Foundation for the arts, who has been responsible for touching the lives of countless students in the state," said Hickey. "I feel like this exhibition is a way of acknowledging all of that work that people have been doing, and then celebrating that."

This exhibition showcasing a large display of George Rodrigue's work will show many of the original paintings, which will allow people to see the crucial role that the Cajuns played in shaping the imagery, especially in the Blue Dog works.

George Rodrigue took great inspiration from Cajun culture, evident in all of his paintings that will be showcased.

Jacques Rodrigue has said that his father's work led to the creation of one of America's iconic pop art symbols, the Blue Dog, which had solidified his father's position "as one of the most significant painters in all of American art."

"Dad was a cultural icon, not only in Louisiana but throughout the entire United States. The Cajuns represent a distinct cultural group that could only have existed in the United States," said Jacques Rodrigue. "I anticipate that exhibitions like this one and the upcoming first-ever feature-length film about dad will contribute to raising awareness of his endeavors to visually portray this culture."

The legacy of George Rodrigue will be showcased at the Hilliard Art Museum, where many of his iconic paintings that portray the Cajun culture will be shown, as well as the Blue Dog, seen in his work, "Cajun Man."



Image provided by the Hilliard Art Museum

Promotional poster for "Sitting with George Rodrigue."

### News

#### ENGINEERING A NEW BUILDING

A discussion about the upcoming engineering building and what its purpose will be for engineering majors.

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Ragin' Cajun Volleyball 2023 has come to an end. Sports writer Kaydence Vital recaptures a successful season.

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#### SPRINGING INTO SUCCESS

Vermilion staff members write about their plans, goals and resolutions for the new semester.

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# College of Engineering planning to expand with a new building

**Bruce Tete**  
NEWS WRITER

For years, a gap has been growing between what skills the engineering industry needs from workers, and what skills education can provide. To bridge this gap, in 2022, the College of Engineering of University of Louisiana at Lafayette announced it was building a new state-of-the-art building. Groundbreaking is set to happen in the late spring or early summer.

Dr. Ahmed Khattab, the dean of the College of Engineering said, “The new

building is not just a building but it’s part of the college’s vision for engineering education’s future.”

This building will be known as the Engineering Student Centered Collaborative Building. With emphasis on the “Collaborative” because currently the five main engineering departments: chemical, civil, electrical, mechanical, petroleum and engineering and technology management are rather isolated with collaboration being quite rare.

“In real life engineers of all disciplines work together,” said Assistant Dean

Corrine Dupuy, so one of the main goals of this new building is to foster collaboration between students from across the different engineering departments.

With a student centered approach to its design, collaboration will be built into the building. The third floor or the bridge will be the heart of the Engineering Center of Excellence, or ECoE for short. In the bridge, students will be able to meet with tutors and mentors or reserve rooms by using convenient wall-mounted tablets. Huddle rooms, seminar rooms and other spaces for collaboration will

all be open and available to engineering students of any classification.

On the second floor is what is called the Student Collaborative Center, which will be a comfortably furnished space for students from across the college to work together in and potentially meet with alumni industry visitors. The Student Collaborative Center will also have offices for all major student engineering organizations such as the Louisiana Engineering Society, the National Society of Black Engineers and the Society of Women Engineers.

The first floor will house the main star of the show: a state of the art makerspace.

“This is not a workshop or machine shop for students. No, this is a place for a community of learners and innovators where students can get together to learn, to innovate and to build their own projects that don’t have to be connected to a class or course,” said Dean Khattab.

All an engineering student will need is their UL Lafayette ID card and they will have full access to state-of-the-art equipment with which they can make their own prototypes. And besides the makerspace’s Director and Faculty Advisor it will be a completely student-run space.

But the building won’t be all work as every floor will be full of hangout spaces that “students can go to 24/7 to study, relax, play ping pong, whatever,” according to Dupuy. And with a cafe and abundant seating, the building will also be a place to relax, socialize and form connections across disciplines.

While the college of engineering is still waiting for a construction date, groundbreaking will happen this year either in late spring or early summer. Construction will last between 18 months and two years and the building will be located next to Madison and Rougeau Hall. Once it is built, Madison will be used mostly for research and teaching labs.



Photo provided by Corinne Dupuy  
A collage of mockups for the new College of Engineering Building design.

## Police Reports

Compiled by Kay Padilla

### Jan. 20

- At 8:35 p.m., officers responded to a non-criminal injury at Bourgeois Hall. A subject was transported.
- At 5:00 p.m., officers were dispatched to the Hilliard Art Museum in reference to graffiti on a sidewalk.
- At 10:57 a.m., an individual wanted to provide information about suspicious circumstances that occurred at Baker Hall the previous night before.
- At 2:12 a.m., officers were dispatched to Baker Hall in reference to a disturbance. One suspect was arrested for remaining after being forbidden.

### Jan. 19

- At 10:25 a.m., officers were dispatched to Heritage Apartments in reference to a suspicious person.

### Jan. 18


- At 12:01 p.m., officers responded to a parking lot vehicle crash between a white 2015 Nissan Altima and a white 2018 Honda Civic that occurred in Olivier Parking Tower.
- At 11:31 a.m., officers responded to a parking lot vehicle crash between a gray 2023 Honda Civic and a gray 2018 Kia Forte that occurred in Olivier Parking Tower.
- At 8:31 a.m., officers were dispatched to a theft complaint that occurred at Fletcher Hall. Upon investigation, it was found that a burglary of a keyboard, mouse, microphone and USB hub occurred.


### Jan. 17


- At 11:31 a.m., an officer responded to a report of a hit and run between a black 2018 Chevrolet Silverado and a gray 2015 Jeep Grand Cherokee. There was damage to the passenger side rear bumper of the Chevrolet.

### Jan. 14


- At 10:47 p.m., officers were dispatched to Bonin Hall in reference to someone making threats on a phone app.











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## Student Publications

#### THE VERMILION

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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

# Gifted students, a discussion of burnout and ways to prevent it

**Adhamm Safford**

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

At the beginning of this semester, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette transitioned its master's program for gifted education to being entirely online, prompting discussion about students who are labeled as gifted, what modifications to course instruction may need to be made for them and why there seems to be a significant number that burn out when they get to the university level.

In Louisiana, gifted education falls under the umbrella of special education, meaning that services for gifted students are protected and teachers in the program must either have a master's degree in gifted education, or a master's degree with 18 graduate hours in gifted education.

While the criteria for a student to be labeled as "gifted" varies from state to state, they typically exhibit similar traits: they learn faster, retain more information and explore deeper and more complex topics. They might also have a particular talent, such as for visual arts, music, and so on.

UL Lafayette's master's in gifted education offers courses that examine what the characteristics of gifted students are, what challenges they face and what kind of support they need.

Originally offering a mix of in-person and online class, the program has now shifted to a completely online delivery. Dr. Christine Briggs, director of the College of Education and Human Development's Center for Gifted Education, said that this was to better fit the schedules of the program's students, who are often full-time teachers with commitments to school or family.

Briggs also discussed the prevalence of burnout among gifted kids. While some are comfortable and work well under pressure, others may be pushed too much, whether by their school, family or themselves.

"So oftentimes we accelerate our gifted students, and they've taken a lot of AP classes and a lot of more advanced classes in high school, and when they get to university they're tired," Briggs said.

Other times, the opposite happens, where a gifted student isn't challenged enough in school and doesn't know what to do when a challenge finally arrives.

"My eldest son had a friend in high school who took AP classes, could write the paper the night before and make great grades, he lettered in track, he was just fabulous. He got a full ride to the state university for four years," Briggs shared. "He did his first semester and all of a sudden he's with kiddos that are just like him and he couldn't pull it out the same way because he never knew how to struggle. And that's part of the reason we want to provide the kind of services we do."

Briggs noted that often when we're interested in something, burnout isn't as likely. She said the university environment is one where students may discover new passions or fields of interest that they didn't have access to before or just didn't know about.

"And I really see the university life as an opportunity to pursue something that you're interested in," Briggs said. "I think that it's not just a preparation for a world of work, I think it's a combination of doing something that you really like to do and that you are passionate about, and what's wonderful is when that can

roll into a career that's meaningful and provides you with joy."

Briggs closed with advice applicable not just to gifted students, but to all incoming undergraduates. She recommended not taking too many classes, as well as finding some kind of group or organization where you feel like you belong while you're at the university.

She also stressed the importance of realizing the hard work that comes with pursuing a degree, and preparing yourself for that challenge by not being afraid of asking for help.

"Don't be afraid to ask your professors for help, don't be afraid to ask your colleagues for help. Because that doesn't mean you're a failure, it just means you want to work together," Briggs said.

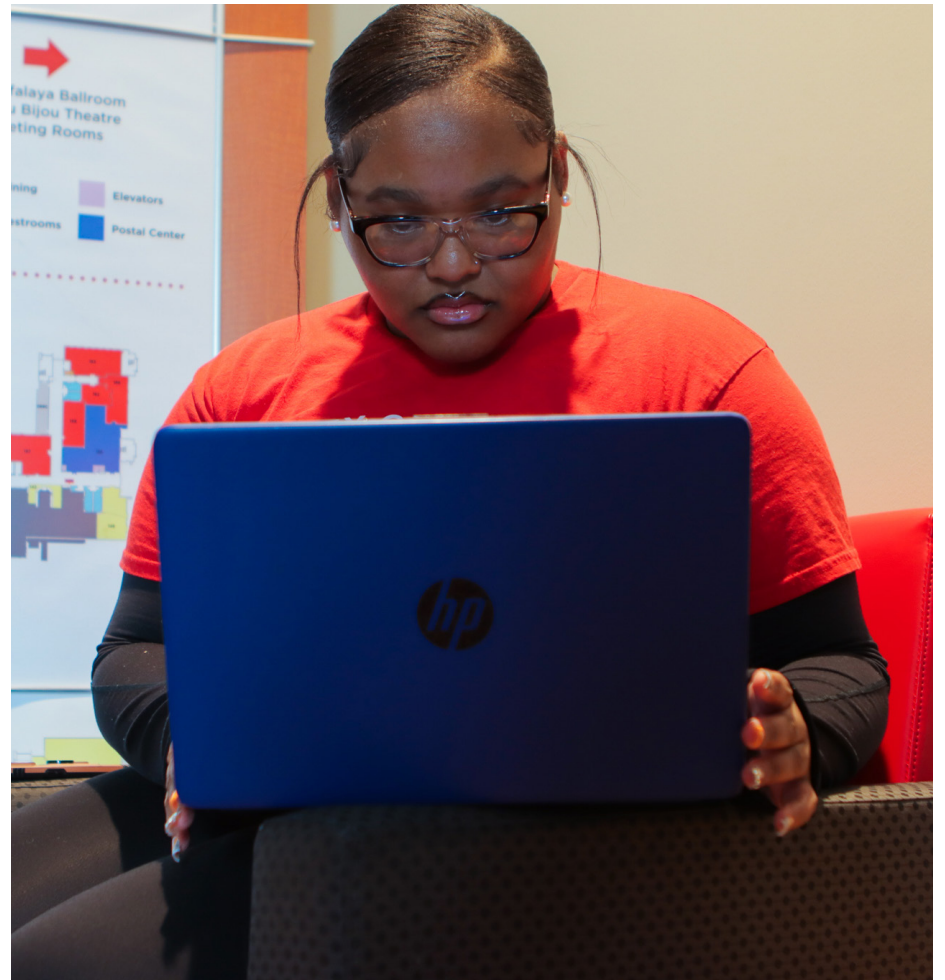


Photo by Alyus Dick

Student studying for an online class.

## Sports

# Louisiana Football Season Review

**Charles Martin**

SPORTS WRITER

The only way I could think of describing the 2023 Louisiana football season is just like I'd describe the 2022 season, it is mediocre and it does not look to get any better.

Under head coach Michael Desormeaux, in his second year at the position, the Cajuns finished the season going 6-7, going 6-6 in the regular season and losing the R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl to recently promoted Jacksonville State.

The season started off extremely promising as Louisiana took on Northwestern State in the first game of the season, beating them 38-13 in front of 18 thousand fans at Cajun Field.

That opening would propel the Cajuns to a 5-3 start where we would see the rise of freshman quarterback Zeon Chriss, taking over for senior Ben Wooldridge after he suffered a season ending injury in week three against UAB.

Zeon Chriss in his time as the quarterback for the Cajuns proved to be electric. Chriss would lead the team to 32.3 points per game and with a record of 3-2 as the starter. His ability to escape

pressure and make plays with his legs was just fun to watch.

He did have some issues that came with being a freshman starting for the first time, throwing some bad passes or making bad reads that led to turnovers.

The fun did not last though as Chriss would go down in week 10 against Arkansas State, the injury he took taking him out for the season.

Following this injury the Cajuns would go on a three game losing streak, including an 34-31 overtime loss to the Southern Miss Golden Eagles who finished the season 3-9.

Despite the skid the Cajuns would manage to pull themselves together for their final game against in-state rivals ULM for Cajun Field's final game before it was to undergo major renovations.

The Cajuns got the victory with ease as the Cajuns rolled over the Warhawks 52-21. Running backs Elijah Davis and Jacob Kibodi had a good day on the ground as they combined for over 150 yards and three touchdowns.

The offense though did not show up when the Cajuns traveled to New Orleans for the bowl game against Jacksonville State. Looking at the final score one might be fooled for a second as the Cajuns lost the game in overtime 34-31 to the Gamecocks.

The offense only put up a measly seven points the entire game the other 27 points game off of defensive scores, like Jalen Clark's fumble recovery for a touchdown on the second play of the game.

While a performance like that by a defense would normally mean victory, that is only the case if the offense can score. Not only did the offense not score, they could not seem to stay on the field for longer than two minutes.

The amount of time the defense was on the field eventually took its toll as they began to tire in the second half which allowed the game to go into overtime where the Cajuns would end up losing.

While Louisiana was not much of a passing team, the receiving corps was a consistent help to the three different quarterbacks that saw starts for Louisiana.

Six receivers had 20 or more receptions with junior Jacob Bernard leading the team in both receptions (39) and receiving yards (476), though he did not lead in receiving touchdowns only catching one.

Senior tight end Neal Johnson would lead in that category, being the go to target in the red zone catching five passes for touchdowns and totaling 383

yards receiving. Another two receivers with four touchdowns would end the season, senior Peter LeBlanc and sophomore Robert Williams.

While the offense was scoring points, it was the defense that helped to ensure that the leads were kept and plays made when needed.

One of the most impressive parts of Louisiana's defense was their pass rush as they ended the season tied 29th in the nation in sacks at 33, with team leader being sophomore linebacker Cameron Whitfield (9).

They were also a few ballhawks to be found in the secondary as three defenders nabbed three interceptions a piece. Two were safeties Tyree Skipper and Tyrone Lewis Jr. and the third was corner Jalen Clark.

Sadly though with the age of the transfer portal now fully upon us and a number of key players have entered it since the end of the season.

The biggest is quarterback Zeon Chriss who transferred to the University of Houston back in December. Another important piece on the defense is edge rusher Kendre' Gant who recorded six sacks and 64 tackles, he too has committed to Houston.

In order to fill the gaps of those that have transferred and graduated Coach Desormeaux and the rest of his staff have to focus on recruiting and getting transfers out of the portal.

As far as high school recruiting goes, it does not look good for the Cajuns as they have the worst class in the Sun Belt according to 247sports, though that does not mean that there are no good players.

Two of those players that have signed with Louisiana include offensive tackle J'Marion Gooch from Garden City, Kansas. Gooch is a 6-foot-8 300 pound beast who is considered the 10th best tackle in the country and 99th best recruit in the country.

The other is three star quarterback Daniel Beale out of Catholic High School in Baton Rouge. This could prove big for a Louisiana quarterback room that has been drained from the portal and graduation, plus the past few seasons has shown the Cajuns could use the depth.

Hopefully next season will see Desormeaux and the Cajuns finally improve to a proper winning record including a bowl victory that has eluded them since 2021.



Photo by Alyus Dick

Cajuns huddled up during game against Southern Miss on November 9th, 2023.

# Cajun Crossword

Compiled by Ava Blanchard and Morgan Parker

No. 13

## INSTRUCTIONS

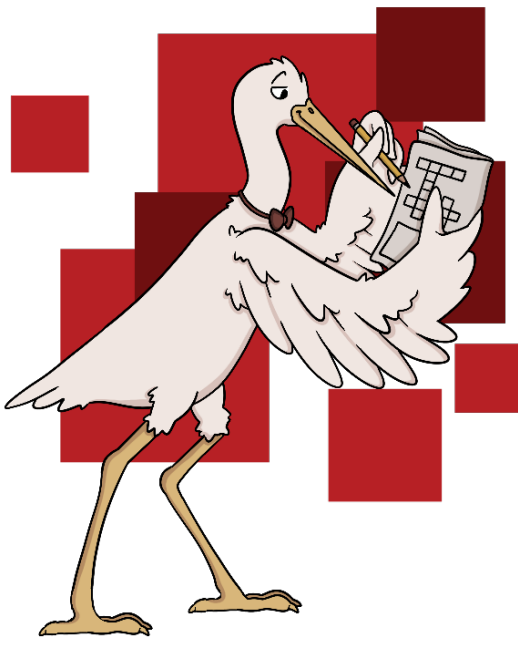
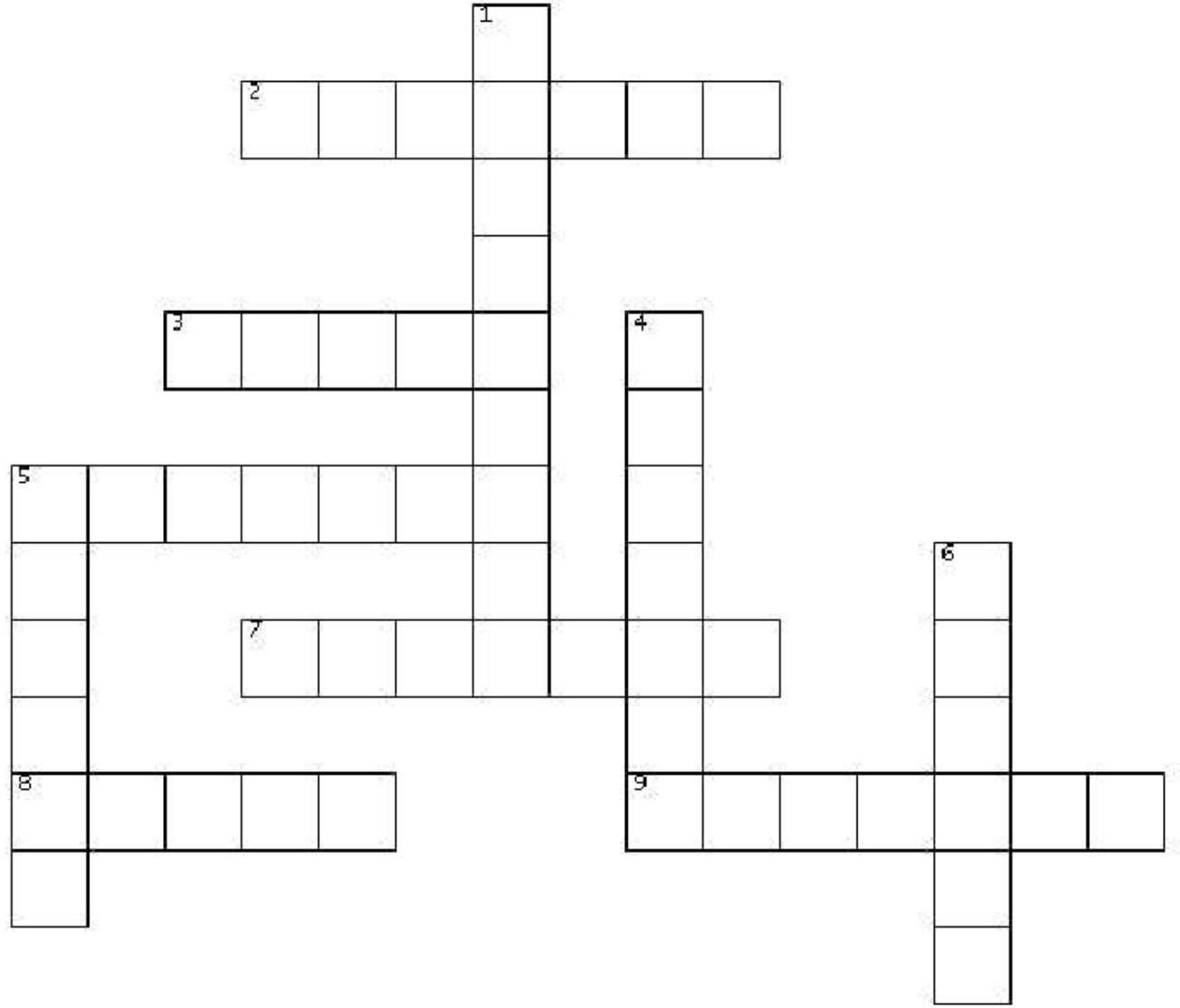
The answers can be found throughout the newspaper, so make sure to thoroughly read each story. Try to find all them and see if you got them correct in the answer provided in the next issue's crossword search!

### ACROSS

- 2. A problem faced by gifted kids
- 3. What culture did George Rodrigue see dying after coming back to Louisiana in the 60s?
- 5. Which Cajuns basketball player scored 25 points against Arkansas State? (last name)
- 7. Which day did UL Lafayette close for the freeze?
- 8. Which Hunger Games was Coriolanus Snow a mentor in?
- 9. Who did Kaydence Vital say was the "spark plug" for UL Lafayette's volleyball win over Texas Southern? (last name)

### DOWN

- 1. "In real life \_\_\_ of all disciplines work together," according to Assistant Dean Corrine Dupuy
- 4. Who led Louisiana football in receptions and receiving yards? (last name)
- 5. Who is the father of the Emoji? (last name)
- 6. What media influence has led to a rise in tween consumerism?



## Cajun Candids Tree Planting

Photos by Natalie Richenberger



# Ragin' Cajun Volleyball: A recap of their victorious 2023 season

**Kaydence Vital**  
SPORTS WRITER

Looking back at the 2023 Volleyball season, the Cajuns have persevered in each game. Volleyball season for the women ended with a record of 19-13. The team started off their season winning.

A combined 21 kills from Emery Judkins and Celeste Darling sparked the Ragin' Cajuns' teams come-from-behind (16-25, 25-14, 27-25) taking the win against Tulane. This game, Louisiana flipped the momentum over in the second set when Shyia Richardson served out the remainder of an 8-0 run that opened a 13-8 lead.

The Cajuns led by at least 5 points the rest of the way and began to pull away when back-to-back kills from Darling stretched the lead to 17-10.

As the season progressed, the Cajuns not only took wins, but they also earned a few losses.

They took their first loss by a reverse sweep against Mississippi State and claimed a 3-2 (21-25, 21-25, 25-14, 25-20, 15-13) win on Sunday, August 27 in the finale of the tournament at the Newell-Grissom building.

The Cajuns stormed out the gates with 30 kills in the opening 2-0 match, over the Bulldogs (3-0). It was highlighted by claiming the first four points of Set 1 and leading wire-to-wire. A pair of Shyia Richardson kills kicked off a 5-0 run that stretched the lead to 21-14 and allowed UL to separate from MSU.

As the season progressed, the Cajuns started to become more of a team which allowed for their chemistry to grow and really be shown on the court.

As the season continued, the Cajuns traveled to Jacksonville, Florida to compete in the UNF Invitational at the University of North Florida campus. The tournament started out with a win against Charlotte.

They outperformed Charlotte in a clean sweep (25-11, 25-15, 25-22) in their opening match. Louisiana (5-4) was decisively more efficient than Charlotte (4-3) committing only six attack errors and hitting .309 (35 K, 6

E, 94 TA), and used its defense to force the 49ers into 25 attack errors and a .068 hitting percentage.

The Cajuns dominated at the service line with an 8-3 edge in aces and on the frontline by out blocking the 49ers by a 7-1 count UL held a 53-48 edge in digs paced by four players with at least nine digs.

However, in their second match it was North Florida making the final move to fend off the Cajuns and post a 3-2 (25-18, 25-20, 21-25, 23-25, 15-12) win on Friday, September 8.

The last of the 28 ties and 16 lead changes in the match pulled UNF out of a 10-9 deficit in the winner-take-all fifth set. The late reversal turned away the Cajuns (5-5) who had earlier used the combination of kills from Mya Wilson and Lauryn Hill to forge ahead 7-3.

They made up for that loss in their final match, closing out with a 3-0 (25-16, 25-23, 25-15) win over Texas Southern on Saturday, September 9.

Darling was the spark plug for a Cajuns offense that hummed along at a rate of 16-plus kills per set in collecting the sweep. Louisiana (6-5) found the floor for 49 kills on 106 swings at a .368 percentage (49 K, 10 E, 106 TA).

The win over Texas Southern (0-10) marked a successful conclusion to UL's season opening, 11-match road stretch.

Throughout the season, the Cajuns continued to progress immensely. They ended their season off with a win against App State 3-2 (12-25, 25-16, 25-16, 16-25, 15-8) and a sendoff for their seniors.

Junior Shyia Richardson and sophomore Lauryn Hill scored three kills apiece to carry the load in Set 5 and helped ensure that the Cajuns would send their seniors off with a win in their final match at home.

Overall, the Ragin' Cajuns Volleyball team had a successful 2023 season. The Cajuns look forward to a greater season and a successful continuous future for the 2024 season!

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Photo by Alyus Dick

Cami Hicks, raring to spike at game against Troy on September 22, 2023.



Photo by Alyus Dick

Shyia Richardson(6), Chelsea George(8) and Mio Yamamoto(24), carefully calculate the movement of the ball at the game against Troy on September 22, 2023.

## Two special talents have emerged in Cajuns basketball's '23-'24 campaign

**Isaac Henry**  
SPORTS WRITER

Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns men's basketball handled business against the South Alabama Jaguars Saturday afternoon in a comfortable 88-79 away performance, marking three straight wins for the team.

This stretch of play over the last two weeks vaulted the Cajuns to 4-3 in conference play and makes the team 4-1 since the James Madison dustup on Jan. 4.

Kobe Julien has taken over the Cajuns' offensive system: he is the captain now.

In the last four games, Julien is

averaging 20.5 points on 73% true shooting. The best part: he's only having to play 30 minutes a game to get these opportunities.

Julien is taking full advantage of his offensive environment and using his extra experience to become the Cajuns' best tough bucket-getter. His range of movement and feints mean getting open off-ball and shooting off the catch, isolation work with a reset dribble, or drawing help show these are skills he's been polishing for a long time now.

Make no mistake: Julien can be a two-way player too. As the rest of the team is built on switching and help, all this offensive production wouldn't

mean much if he was a liability in that department.

On defense, Julien can surprise smaller wings or guards looking for a switch by keeping up and forcing them into tough decisions, as illustrated by his three blocks against Texas State on Jan. 17.

On Saturday, he made his 24 points and eight rebounds look natural. With the game at 43-41 early in the second, Julien finished off a wild rally with a smooth layup and a drawn foul to help the Cajuns stave off the Jags.

Julien has done this all season, sprinting to missed shots to sneak in second-chance points and using his body control to get to the free-throw line,

which he does more often than any non-big Cajun.

Speaking of big, another key in these victories has been newcomer Hosana Kitenge, whose 25-point explosion put the Cajuns clear of Arkansas State on Jan. 13.

Listed at 6-foot-7 and 270 lbs., Kitenge's frame and stature has been a boon for the Cajuns, who anticipated a change in playstyle with the departure of their biggest bodies, Jordan Brown and Isaiah Richards, from last season.

On offense, Kitenge seems to have gotten comfortable finishing around the basket, but new facets of his game, like handling drives in transition and a shot that can hit around 15 feet out, keep defenders guessing.

"Yeah, more productive. I still want him to rebound the ball a little bit better," head coach Bob Marlin said of Kitenge's recent play in a Jan. 15 press conference.

"He's scoring inside, he's playing with confidence, he's our leading scorer in conference play," Marlin said. On defense, the flashes have been equally impressive, as he's managed to rack up nine steals and five blocks so far against conference opponents. He is a knowledgeable help defender, meets his matchup high, plays with pace, and can switch and shuffle fluidly.

As if to answer Marlin, Kitenge put up a spectacular effort on the boards in Saturday's win, finishing with 11 total including four offensive rebounds. He can box out as well as anyone and has shown willingness to dive for loose balls and wrestle with bigger opponents.

Up next, the Cajuns will head back to the Cajundome to face the Arkansas State Red Wolves on Thursday, Jan. 25.



Photo provided by Louisiana Athletics

Kobe Julien (#4) takes a shot during a win over the Rice Owls on December 22, 2023.

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# Allons

## Are awkward tween phases still a thing?

**Marie Ducote**  
ALLONS WRITER

We all remember those awkward tween years right?

You know the ones filled with acne, wishing for that growth spurt (that never happened) and being shy around your first crush.

You did not have to worry about a job, college or thinking about what you want to be when you grow up.

Only things you had to worry about were getting your homework done and waiting for the new episode of “Hannah Montana.”

But that was then and this is now. A lot has changed since I was 9 or 12. I started noticing this change during Christmas break when I was stuck at home and needing to pass the time I started scrolling endlessly on TikTok.

Every other video was women about my age or a bit older talking about their experiences recently in Sephora and Ulta. Specifically about the recent influx of middle school age girls in these stores buying (usually expensive) skincare and makeup brands like Drunk Elephant, Sol de Janeiro and Rare Beauty just to name a few.

The discourse in these videos always comes back around to the same topics: should children be allowed in Sephora and Ulta, why are children using anti-aging skincare and the rude behavior of the children in these stores.

While watching I started to think back to my tween years and what my interests were.

What tweens are interested in now than they were interested a decade ago are different.

Growing up I loved playing with makeup and asking my mom about all the different products that were in her makeup bag.

I can vividly remember owning this “High School Musical” eyeshadow pallet and putting it on my eyes whenever I had the chance.

One of my favorite gifts was this makeup kit that was filled with lipsticks, blushes and eyeshadows. This kit came in handy during dance recitals.

Social media has grown in the past few years with TikTok exploding in popularity and influence. TikTok is being absorbed in the same way that YouTube and Instagram are. People my

age remember the heyday of beauty YouTube (about 2016-2018) with beauty influencers like Jeffree Star and James Charles being popular channels doing makeup reviews.

Let’s go back to why children are using anti-aging skincare. A question that has been raised is what is compelling primarily middle school age children to use products that are made for older skin.

It can be traced back to TikTok and the beauty influencers recommending these products to their adult audience. The younger audience is taking advice that was meant for adults.

In the past couple years stores and entertainment that are geared towards tweens have become almost non-existent. Staples of my childhood and tween years like The Children’s Place and the pink explosion that was Justice have either closed down or moved exclusively online.

A place like Justice is where I started to find my own style of clothing. Which has gone through an evolution from the sparkly pink shirts and skirts of Justice to the My Chemical Romance shirts and skinny black jeans of Hot Topic.

Now I would say my style is somewhere in the middle. I wear brightly patterned sweaters while listening to MCR.

The younger generation will always want to grow up fast even if we, the semi-older generation, tell them to cherish this time in their life.

I think we give them the advice to have fun in the moment because we learned from our mistakes of wanting to grow up fast.

The awkward phase is a rite of passage for everyone.



Graphic by Sarah Guidry

## Why are there no more preteens?

**Kay Padilla**  
ALLONS EDITOR

I think tweenhood has been erased from childhood developmental stages. Tweenhood is the gap between being a child and being a teenager. Typically the ages of 10 through 12 are considered the “tween years.”

These are the ages when puberty starts to develop, and with that comes the awkward phase of trying to decipher when you move from the children’s clothing section to the junior’s. It also means many different eras of self-expression through makeup, hairstyles, clothing and more.

I feel like every generation has gone through this stage of child development. Everyone has embarrassing photos of them as tweens. It’s almost like a rite of passage. But I fear that this tweenhood stage no longer exists. And I blame many things for that.

For starters, there are not a lot of places for tweens to hang out anymore. I know when I was a tween, many tweens hung out in roller rinks and skate parks. As well as staying after school for sports and other hobbies. But in today’s time, these places aren’t really safe anymore.

If I had a tween, I would not feel okay with letting my child be in these places without supervision. The world has become a very scary place recently and I understand why places like parks, neighborhoods, malls, libraries and parking lots no longer are filled with tweens or teens.

Another big factor is that adults no longer like children. Or anyone under 18 at that. If tweens and teens hang

out in parking lots, malls or parks and they happen to be a little too loud and rowdy, they get the police called on them. Loitering is what they would be considered doing.

With the decay of safe places for tweens to physically hang out in, they have had to resort to hanging out online. Social media has influenced the younger generation drastically. They have easier and quicker access to the newest trends. With TikTok’s algorithm, the lines of which content is marketed towards what demographic have been blurred.

Tweens can see more clearly the trends that teenagers are doing, and therefore copy what teens do. This has led to the death of the tweenhood stage of life. Tweens are dressing and acting like teenagers because there is no longer the need to go through the awkward stage of tweenhood.

This social media influence has also led to a rise in tween consumerism. Although I do acknowledge that tween consumerism has always been a thing, I believe it has ramped up recently due to TikTok. Especially with TikTok Shop selling items for insanely low prices.

When I was a tween, it was cool to have Nike socks, EOS lip balms and Jansport backpacks. But despite the high demand for these items, they were quite affordable. In today’s day and age, the tween items of interest are more expensive.

Sol de Janeiro, Drunk Elephant, Rare Beauty and Uggs are some of the new popular tween items. These items tend to be pretty pricey. A Sol de Janeiro perfume spray costs about \$40. And a one ounce anti-aging facial serum from Drunk Elephant costs about \$90.

I think this is only adding to children “growing up” faster. Over the years there has been a serious shift in the ages in which certain developmental stages happen. As younger kids get into trying “trendier” clothing, music or products, the older they appear to be.

Although it weirds me out how the younger generation is deleting the tween phase, I understand why it happened in the first place.

They were forced out of hangout spaces and were sort of forced to spend most of their formative years online. It only makes sense that they learned how to be teenagers ahead of time from teenage influencers.

# Emojis and the death of emoticons

**Amare Auzenne**  
ALLONS WRITER

According to Reader’s Digest writer Claire Nowak, the first emoticon ever recorded was published in Puck magazine as a set of four in 1881. Precursor to what is understood as a ubiquitous part of the text-based communication we’ve come to know in our smartphone era, the emoji’s forefather, the emoticon, may be worth clinging to in our advanced era.

Described as “typographical art” by Puck, the cultural idea of the emoticon, and of the integration of the visual as an integral part of text-based communication had a long way to go from the four starter faces. A journey that would begin, once again according to Nowak, back in 1882 when a member of faculty sought to keep communications on the Carnegie Mellon Message Board clear using two emoticons: one for serious threads and one for fun threads.

From there proliferation of emoticons became a natural next step, finding use in emotional expression over text, and within the hardware limitations of the era. Common parlance may not have entirely shifted under their weight, but the wheels of body language replacement were greased. The need for such a replacement was so ubiquitous in fact, that there was a concurrent development of a similar emoticon usage trend in Japan in the form of kaomoji.

Innovation on this homegrown form of expression lay right around the corner with Shigetaka Kurita, and his work with creating the first emojis for the mobile company DOCOMO, according to Arielle Pardes of the WIRED. His creation’s spread from 1999 was first between cellphones companies in his native country, but with the world-wide

adaptation of more complex phone technology, the emoji would find use beyond the 12-by-12 pixels Kurita first made.

This however isn’t the end of the story in my eyes, as a means of communication the usage of the emoji in our modern era can ring simplistic. A faux standard the likes of which anyone who held onto their ability to post a real gun emoji with both hands could tell you about. Minute differences in expression the likes of which weren’t a worry of yesteryear’s emoticon. The air of committee lingering in the development of an internationally recognized cue system.

Committee that as Pardell notes in her article does, slow going, work at diversifying this pictographic language beyond the normative bounds of society, or by attempting to acknowledge the true range of the human experience. Representing the food of more cultures, adding race options, adding women period, all great strides in their own right for the establishment of this new layer of expression that in my opinion needn’t supplant its forefathers.

For the purpose of quick picture representation of gendered, racial or cultural expression the emoji still remains unmatched in its field, but for the purposes of emotional conveyance? The storied history of acronyms and emoticons which once littered netspeak as we used to understand it should still have their place in the language of today. On many keyboards perhaps they’re not as quick to be drawn as they should be to maintain this relevance, but they should be.

As a means of unisex, and variable expression the emoticon remains unmatched even by the emoji. With many expressions having a set micro-

differences between their various emoticon representations and their singular emoji counterparts, perhaps the brand of frustration one wishes to express cannot be attained by a mere angry face, but certainly can using a set of Japanese characters arranged into an enraged expression.

No mention of the respect put on the digital legacy of the people who were the first to manually type the faces that have remained in use for many years. They serve as reminders that communication is something that will remain fluid for as long as there are people who wish to communicate. More fluid than any

set of agreed upon emojis can express, regardless of their numerous patch updates.

There exists a future that we can create where we are unburdened by the limitations of our technology as we know it. There exists a future with room for innovation and growth that still makes use of principles which used to define our lives. One where living in harmony with our past serves not to hinder us, but enhance our everyday lives. We could step into this glorious tomorrow together.

We could achieve a better today by keeping kaomoji circulating even while using emojis.



Graphic by Caitlyn Chase

# Snow may land on top but the new 'Hunger Games' film didn't

**Nyria Mustiful**  
ALLONS WRITER

As a tried and true fan of the "Hunger Games" trilogy, I was overjoyed when it was announced that "The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes" was receiving its cinematic installment into the franchise. As a fan, I must issue the disclaimer that this is indeed not a continuation of the original series, but more of a prequel, detailing how President Snow, our esteemed villain, became the vile snake we know him as today.

"The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes" focuses on young Coriolanus Snow, played by actor Tom Blythe, in his years of study at The Academy, an elite school for Capitol youth. As he is in his final year of The Academy, Coriolanus hopes to be awarded the Plinth Prize, a substantial monetary scholarship that is awarded to the highest performing student in the graduating class.



Graphic by Lillian Babineaux

However, he was thrown for a loop when it was announced by Dr. Volumnia Gaul, Head Gamemaker, that each of the 24 prized pupils will have to mentor the tributes in the 10th Hunger Games as their final test and as a way to bring more viewership to the spectacle. Desperate to escape borderline poverty and to restore his family's former glory, Snow knew he needed to have the winning tribute.

Snow's path to success was substantially thwarted when Dean Casca Highbottom announced that his assigned tribute would be none other than the female tribute from District 12, cunning songbird Lucy Gray Baird, played by actress Rachel Zegler. It was known throughout the Capitol that District 12 tributes never made it far in the Games.

With this knowledge, Coriolanus was immensely apprehensive of Baird's prospects, until she caused a charade at District 12's reaping. As Lucy Gray walked up to the stage to claim her spot as tribute, she put a snake down the dress of the mayor's daughter. After a brutal slap from the mayor himself and a melodious send off from one of her fellow Covey members, Lucy Gray takes the mic on stage and bursts out into song.

Though most in the Capitol believed Lucy Gray to be mentally ill or socially deficient, Snow saw an elaborate performer that would most definitely draw attention to this year's Games and just might be the solution to all of his problems, if he played both of their cards right. As Snow ends up saying 65 years later, the Games were indeed all about moves and countermoves.

Once Snow and Baird finally met,

it was clear that their fates were now one and that the two intended to be an unstoppable duo. Through recognition, promotion, camaraderie and inevitable betrayal, the relationship between Coriolanus and Lucy Gray is fiercely tested. When all is said and done, even though the price he paid was considerably hefty, Snow achieved his goals and fulfilled his family motto: "Snow lands on top".

Upon viewing the film, I can say that from a cinematic point of view, I thoroughly enjoyed it. I believe that the world of the past Panem was perfectly captured through everything, from scenery to wardrobe. I enjoyed that certain elements such as old school televisions and sound equipment were included, while still catering to the modern period with things such as prototypes of drones and beta face recognition technology.

My favorite aspect of the film was indeed the costumes and wardrobe. I feel as though every character had their own style that was consistent throughout the film. Even less significant characters had visible identities via their appearance. Evolution of characters, such as Snow and Baird, was also documented well through fashion and hair changes.

Unfortunately, as someone who has read the adapted novel that the movie is based off of, I feel that the film missed many marks in terms of a solid book to movie adaptation. My biggest qualm with the film was the way that it sugarcoated just how sinister and conniving Coriolanus Snow was.

In my opinion, the film only treads along the cusp of his villainous nature and more so flirts with the

possibility of him being a victim of his circumstances, rather than the ruthless monster he truly is. This is showcased most in the portrayal of his and Lucy Gray's relationship. In the film, it appears as if he actually loved her and held her in a high regard. Sorry to disappoint you hopeless romantics who only watched the film, but this was definitely not true.

In the novel, Snow and Baird's relationship was more akin to owner and possession, from Snow's perspective. Lucy Gray was simply a pawn in Snow's game, similar to Katniss Everdeen in the original trilogy. Though he may have flirted with the idea of her being attractive, his intentions never wavered beyond personal advantages.

The novel gives more insight into the inner workings of Snow's mind with his internal dialogue and thought process being laid out before the reader's eyes. Though this indeed made the book move a bit slower than I cared for, it gave the proper information needed to fully grasp just how wicked Coriolanus Snow really was from the beginning.

As far as how the film ties into the overall "Hunger Games" universe, I feel like it ties in very well but more so in a deliberate way than in a natural one. There were clear alterations made to the film that differ from the novel that made it align more with the trilogy films, and while I'm sure that was done for those who haven't read the novel or novels, I as a reader didn't take too kindly to it.

In my heart of hearts, I would say that "The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes" was a great film, but it definitely left something to be desired from a reader's point of view.

## Beaucoup

### Spring Semester Goals

The Beaucoup writers express their goals for this upcoming semester and how they plan to attain and achieve these goals. Here are their thoughts.



Graphic by Meg Norwood

**Kay Padilla**  
ALLONS EDITOR

My goal for this upcoming semester is to exercise more and start my assignments earlier. I tend to hole up in my apartment and procrastinate on my work, so this semester I want to finish my homework earlier and have more free time to exercise. I think being able to balance school and personal life is very important.

**Adham Safford**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I know I'll definitely be writing a lot more this semester, since I'm taking three classes entirely focused on creative writing. My main goal is to finish the first draft of a novel for one of those classes. I think I've tried writing a novel around three different times in my life, but I always gave up pretty early. But right now I'm almost 20,000 words in and still

I also wish to learn how to separate school from my personal free time. School is very consuming and I often find myself searching for an ounce of free time. I plan to keep up with these goals by using my Google Calendar as much as possible and waking up earlier.

I chose a lot of morning classes as a way to force myself to wake up earlier and maximize the most I can out of my day. I also put in more steps this way because I have to walk to various classes.

going strong, so I'm feeling hopeful. Also because my grade relies on it.

I've also been reading a lot more lately, and that's something I want to keep doing. Last semester I had a class that was devoted to "Moby-Dick" and that book got me hooked onto reading again (and made me overly interested in whales). My brain is a sponge that thirsts for words.

But I guess my biggest goal is to graduate and have a good idea of what I'm going to do once I'm out of here.

**Nyria Mustiful**  
ALLONS WRITER

My current goals for this semester are going to sleep earlier, waking up earlier, not skipping class and getting straight A's this semester. So far, I'd say that I'm doing pretty well at achieving them.

I have set my phone to go into Sleep mode at a certain time so that I can avoid texting and scrolling late at night. I have begun conditioning myself to wake up at

**Marie Ducote**  
ALLONS WRITER

My goals are to pass all my classes which I will do by studying and paying attention to my teachers. I want to read more for fun not just for classes which can be difficult when you are swamped with homework. Finding a balance between doing well in college while also taking breaks when I need them.

I have a habit of feeling guilty when I

7 a.m., even when I don't have morning classes.

I also have challenged myself to complete assignments the day they are assigned so that I have limited cramming moments throughout the week. All in all, I think my goals for this semester are going to shake out just fine.

am not doing things that are productive. I have to remember that breaks are needed and it is okay not to be productive all the time. This is going to sound like an odd goal but organize my room!

Being more organized will be achieved by getting rid of things I do not need anymore. I have to have small goals so I can work up to the big ones in the future. With these goals, I will hopefully have a very successful year.

# SOUNDING OFF

**"What classes are you dreading or excited for?"**



**Amelia Thibodeaux**  
NURSING SOPHOMORE

*"Biology 318 and 261 at the same time. And I'm looking forward to the online jump roping class."*



**Ellie Trosclair**  
FINANCE JUNIOR

*"I'm most excited about my Finance 320 class... I'm not excited about my physics class, but that's because I'm not good at physics."*



**Eva Lemoine**  
MARKETING SOPHOMORE

*"I am most excited for my marketing class, but I'm dreading my QMET class."*



**Brooke Spalitta**  
MARKETING SOPHOMORE

*"I'm most excited about my marketing class, getting into those core classes is exciting. I'm least excited for my ECON class."*



**Samantha Jones**  
PSYCHOLOGY SENIOR

*"I'm kind of excited for all my classes. It's my senior year... a lot of them are going to be more interesting than I first assumed they were."*



**Ryder Romero**  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOPHOMORE

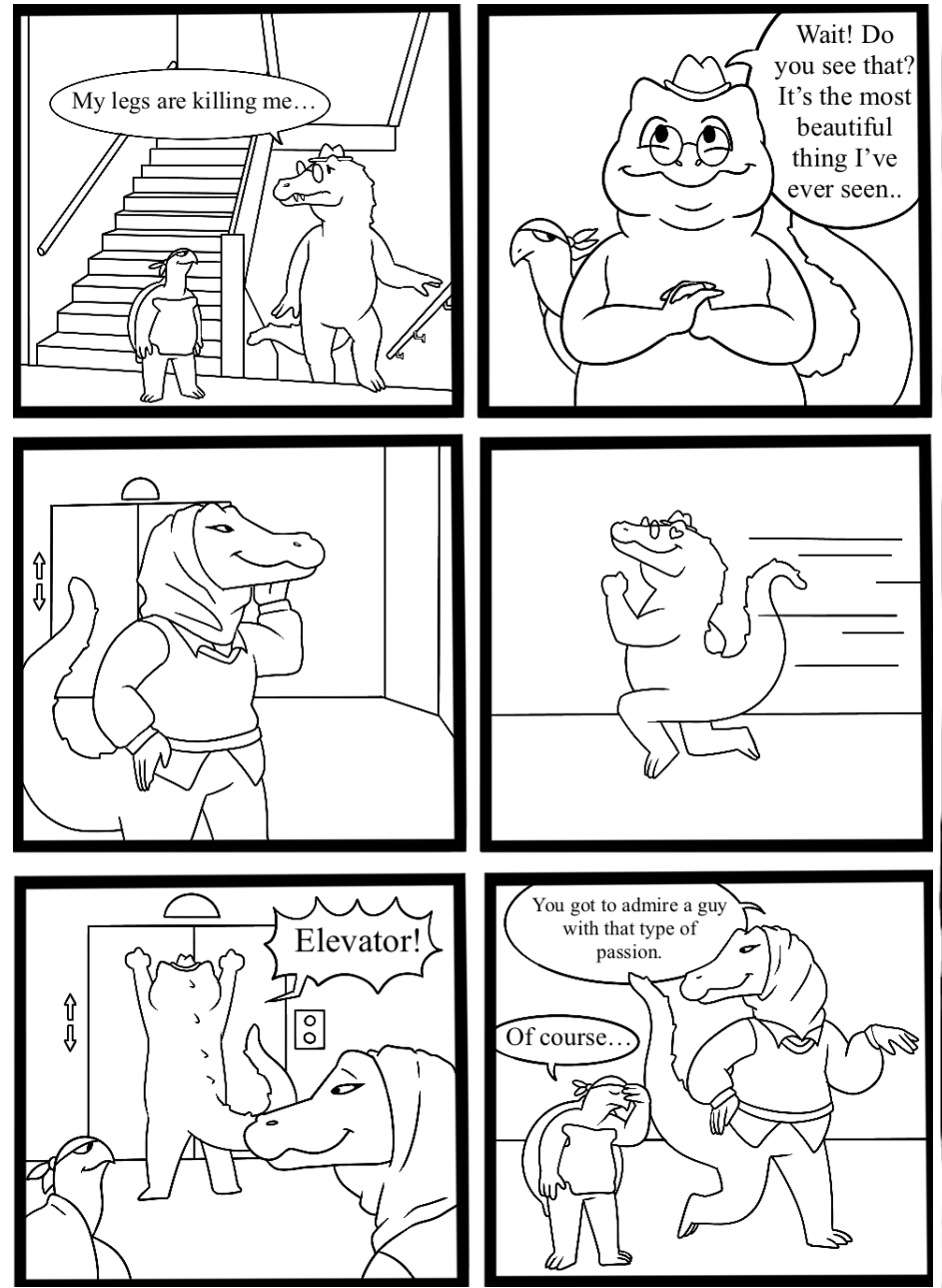
*"I'm excited for my conspiracy theory class, Criminal Justice 401."*

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 & Adhamm Safford.

## COMIC

# True Love



Comic by Lauren Gerald

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