



Speaking the unspeakable: A student’s passing and the stigma around suicide

Adhamm Safford
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On Sunday, April 7, a student was found dead on the University of Louisiana at Lafayette’s campus. The ULPD determined there was no foul play involved, and their report of the event classifies the incident as a suicide. A day later, an email signed by Dean of Students Margarita Perez was sent out, describing the tragedy as “an unspeakable loss.” The word “suicide” was not used in the email.

While news, as well as photos, of the death were quickly circulated over social media, and multiple students saw the student dying, the University’s Emergency Notification System (ENS) was not triggered.

Lance Frederick, the ULPD’s public information officer, stated that this system is used only “if a serious crime, a natural disaster or a man-made emergency occurs that poses an immediate threat to the health and safety of the UL Lafayette community.”

An Instagram post was made by the student before his death alleging that a faculty member at UL Lafayette sexually assaulted him. Eric Maron, the university’s senior communications representative, said the allegations are being looked into.

“The University of Louisiana at Lafayette prioritizes the health and welfare of our students and takes accusations of this nature seriously. The university is investigating the allegation, but does not comment on personnel matters,” Maron said.

Lance Frederick also confirmed that the ULPD was made aware of the post and is currently conducting an investigation.

an updated ENS, better welfare check protocols, a counseling system with trained professionals working alongside the graduate students and an updated response from the university.

Wren, a senior majoring in political science, echoed a similar sentiment of disappointment in the university’s response.

“I was extremely disappointed from the start with the university’s response. I had to find out my friend died from a Yik Yak post 14 hours before the university released its lukewarm “unspeakable tragedies” email. I then had to inform other students– and some professors– about the precise nature of one of those unspeakable tragedies, while combating misinformation about my friend’s death,” Wren said.

Wren further criticized the email that was sent for its lack of clarity.

“This vague, nebulous email from the university not only placed a huge weight on the people grieving, but it also ignored the reality of the situation– people are talking about his death, people saw it happen, there are videos circulating, people need the administrators in charge to recognize and acknowledge that pain,” Wren said.

Perez did not respond to request for comment.

Lirette felt there’s much more the university can do in terms of mental health support.

“I feel like the university could hold a lot more mental health days. Having one each semester is not beneficial, a lot of us struggle from the beginning to the end of the semester,” Lirette said. “Maybe an appropriate amount of mental health days would be two or three, just throughout the semester. You know, like the beginning when everyone’s



Photo by Alyus Dick

A protest against the university’s response was held on Monday, April 15.

struggling with suicidal thoughts fear they’ll be perceived as weak if they reach out for help, and added that “the care they receive from healthcare professionals might be inadequate; that is, it might address their physical needs without taking care of the emotional or psychological needs that caused the attempt in the first place.”

To end the stigma of suicide, the AAS suggests widespread education efforts on the causes and prevention of suicide, as access to resources and support.

Education, resources and support regarding suicide are not possible if we aren’t able to, firstly, talk about suicide. At the past Ragin’ Recognition Awards, a moment of silence was held, but the topic and the word suicide remained unspoken.

Lirette was a friend and fellow band member of Basil, and shared that she was glad the university community could come together in solidarity and draw attention to mental health and suicide.

While this tragedy and the administration’s handling of it has been a rightful point of criticism of the university, it’s important not to forget the person. Lirette wanted people to know, even if just a little bit, about the incredible person her friend was.

“His fashion was incredible. That dude would show up on the field dressed out, dressed better than anybody on the field in 100-degree weather, and I would be like ‘damn, if it only was me,’” Lirette said.

Lirette added that Basil was always willing to reach out a hand of support to other people, always with a smile on his face, and she wished for more people to know him as a person.

“He’s not some taboo topic, he’s not

some taboo person, you know? He’s Basil. And he’s a special person, and I think a lot of people would agree with me.”

Wren wanted Basil to be remembered for more than his death as well.

“Basil was extremely kind, he had this puckish grin (like the character from Shakespeare) that would light up his whole face. He loved doing tarot. He was patient. He played clarinet. He always wore sandals. He was so genuine and earnest. He enjoyed philosophy. He was wicked smart, a talented artist, too. He was so loved. There are a million things I could write about Basil and not a single thing would even come close to the real person,” Wren said.

Suicide is not an inevitable end for those struggling with depression or other mental health issues. Support can come from a community, from family, friends or partners. That support, along with effective coping skills and feeling connected to something in life, can go a long way.

One source of support is the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, available 24/7, which connects callers to a trained crisis counselor that will listen, offer support, try to figure out ways to help you feel better and connect you with relevant help and resources. Support resources can also be found on their website.

Nobody is truly alone. Support resources are available both on and off campus, and there are countless communities to become a part of and find lifelong connections in.

Mental health care is vital. While it takes many forms, the connections we make with the people that enter our lives play a big part. Check in on your friends, and on yourself.



Photo by Alyus Dick

Signs being displayed during the protest.

In the wake of this tragedy, many members of the university community have reached out to Counseling and Testing for assistance, according to its director Dr. Brian Frederick.

Brian Frederick stressed the importance of supporting each other through this time.

“No one is alone at this moment. This is a time when safe, adaptive coping skills such as prayer/meditation, understanding and service to others are of vital importance. Supporting others is a way of supporting ourselves as we work through grief and loss,” Brian Frederick said.

An uproar came soon after Perez’s email was sent. Many professors, despite wanting to support their students, were left confused, unsure of what had happened.

Jacy Lirette, a senior majoring in visual arts and friend of the deceased, criticized the vagueness of the email.

“A lot of my professors did not know what was going on. They found out from social media or their students. And it left people digging for information that they should not have dug for,” Lirette said.

On April 15, a protest was organized outside the Student Union in response to the university’s handling of the situation. Among the protest’s demands were:

overwhelmed with all the schoolwork, the middle when mid-exams are happening, and final when people are stressed for finals.”

Wren was a friend of the deceased, Basil Brown. Speaking on the death’s spread on social media, Wren was conflicted over the differing stories being spread.

“Part of me is comforted to know that so many people care about Basil’s story and are doing what they can to call attention to it,” Wren said. “Another part of me is frustrated, there’s a lot of misinformation circulating on social media about Basil and his death– and it’s hard to consistently correct the record.”

Suicide has long been stigmatized and considered a taboo topic to even discuss.

Dr. Christine Yu Moutier, chief medical officer for the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention, said this stigma discourages people from feeling like they can talk about their mental health and if they’re having suicidal thoughts.

“It keeps them from being able to take the step to open up, to talk about what they’re experiencing, and then to get the help that they need,” Moutier said.

The American Association of Suicidology (AAS) wrote that the stigma around suicide can make those



Photo by Alyus Dick

Protestors sit together with with signs during the demonstration.

News

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

A total solar eclipse swept over much of the United States on April 8, and was partially visible from Lafayette.

Sports

SWEET 86

Louisiana softball continues their Sun Belt streak with their 86th consecutive series win.

Allons

COWBOY CARTER COUNTRY

Allons writer Kayla Crane reviews Beyoncé’s latest album, a bold new venture from the veteran artist into the country genre.

Beaucoup

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

The Beaucoup section attends the university’s annual dance concert, An Evening of Dance, and share their thoughts.

Scootin' with Scooter's Coffee

Lili Nguyen
FOOD REVIEWER

Scooter's Coffee is a franchise originally from Bellevue, Nebraska that serves a wide array of espresso drinks, hot drinks, iced drinks, food, smoothies and teas. It operates as a drive-thru only. Scooters Coffee in Lafayette opened in November 2023.

Drinks I tried included Prickly Pear Infusion, Iced Caramelicious and Iced Cinnamon Toast Crunch Latte. Prickly Pear Infusion is an energy drink, while Iced Caramelicious and Iced Cinnamon Toast Crunch Latte are their iced drinks.

The Prickly Pear Inclusion had such a pretty ombre color consisting of pink and yellow hues. The drink itself had a tangy, refreshing pear taste. It is made with their

exclusive energy drink. This drink was my favorite out of the three.

Iced Caramelicious had a good balance of coffee and caramel. I love sweet coffee drinks. Iced Cinnamon Toast Crunch Latte tastes similar to Iced Caramelicious with the exception of being topped with cinnamon toast crunch cereal instead of a drizzle of caramel. The cinnamon toast crunch added a nice crunch to the coffee drink. I found myself eating the cereal topping after I finished the drink.

Following, the food I tried included the Caramelicious Muffin, Maple Waffle Sandwich and Everything Bagel Sandwich. The Caramelicious Muffin was divine. It was soft, moist and perfectly paired with the Iced Caramelicious. The Maple Waffle Sandwich had a perfect balance of sweet and savory. The sweet

waffle paired with the savory sausage, egg and cheese was a perfect match made in heaven.

The Everything Bagel Sandwich was the last thing I tried. I thought it was yummy and a classic to me. I normally get a bagel sandwich everywhere I go.

When I asked Jeff Fontenot (Lafayette Scooter's Coffee Owner) how he started Scooters, he said, "I was always looking for a business of my own and I came across Scooter's Coffee in Nebraska. I didn't know what Scooter's Coffee was, so I reached out to a couple of franchisees and went out there and tested some of their products. We liked the system they had. It was only a drive-thru. We focus mainly on our drive-thru so we are getting our customers in and out and I just love the brand they were promoting.

It was nothing like this in Lafayette so that's the main reason I wanted to bring it to Lafayette."

I asked him his future plans for Scooter's Coffee and he replied, "I want to expand pretty heavily. Acadiana, Lafayette, Louisiana area. I have a total of two more locations that are going to be open by the end of this year. I have nine total that's going to be in the Acadiana area. I'm very excited and we're very fortunate to be able to bring this to the Lafayette community."

Scooters Coffee is located at 2492 W Congress St, Lafayette, LA 70506. They are open every day from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Scooter's Coffee is conveniently located near Cajun Field, so I love going after class. My favorite drink from them is the blended Pistachio White Mocha.



Photo by Joe Bozzelle
Food from left to right: Everything Bagel Sandwich, Caramelicious Muffin, Maple Waffle Sandwhich



Photo by Joe Bozzelle
From left to right: Prickly Pear Infusion, Cinnamon Toast Crunch Iced Latte, Caramelicious Iced Latte.

Police Reports

Compiled by Marie Ducote

Apr. 13

- At 8:54 a.m., an officer responded to a professor threatened via email by a student. No criminal activity or threats of physical harm were in the email.

Apr. 12

- At 2:44 p.m., an officer was dispatched to Girard Park in reference to a student illegally carrying a firearm at a UL Lafayette event. An arrest was made.
- At 8:54 a.m., an officer was dispatched in reference to white Apple AirPods with a charging case being taken from Agnes Edwards laundry room.

Apr. 10

- At 3:36 p.m., an officer was dispatched to ULPD in reference to a walk-in complaint concerning a disturbance which had already occurred.
- At 1:36 a.m., a male committed battery against two females at Legacy Park Apartments, then left the area. A report was generated and the incident is being investigated.

Apr. 9

- At 6:05 p.m., an officer made contact with the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office to conduct a welfare check on a student that sent a concerning email due to failing. Contact was made with the person, his mother and girlfriend. It was discovered that he now resides in Alabama with his girlfriend and did not need medical assistance.
- At 2:38 p.m., a report of a burglary of various soft drinks was made. An investigation was conducted.
- At 12:13 p.m., an officer spoke with a former student athlete regarding instances from Fall 2021 to Fall 2022. Title IX was notified.

Apr. 8

- At 11:24 p.m., a welfare check was conducted in reference to a third party report of possible domestic abuse due to an audio recording heard. No abuse was reported nor were there signs of abuse on the person.

Apr. 7

- At 4:49 p.m., officers were dispatched in reference to a possible drug violation.

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.
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Student Publications

Senior Art Exhibition

The Bachelor of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition is composed of works by seniors completing degree requirements in the Department of Visual Arts. The first exhibition was April 4-12, and the second exhibition is April 17-23. Both exhibitions are held in the Fletcher Hall Gallery. Below are a selection of works to be exhibited and a brief description from the artists.



Bailey Saucier
PRINTMAKING

“My work investigates what it means to be between two places and finding yourself in a place of instability and change. I represent this destabilization through imagery of travel.”

Da’John Williams
COMPUTER ART & ANIMATION

“My work is about the harmful impact of gambling addiction and how hard it is to stop due to the predatory tactics of casinos.”

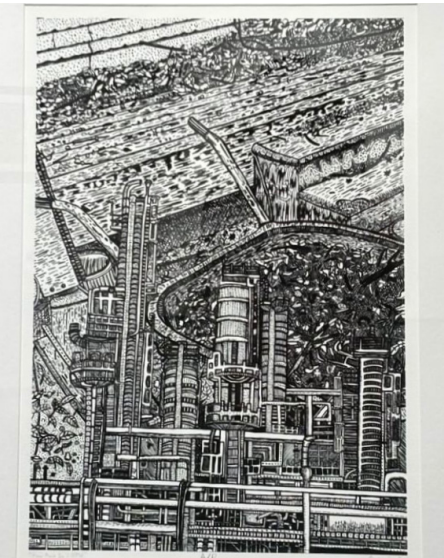
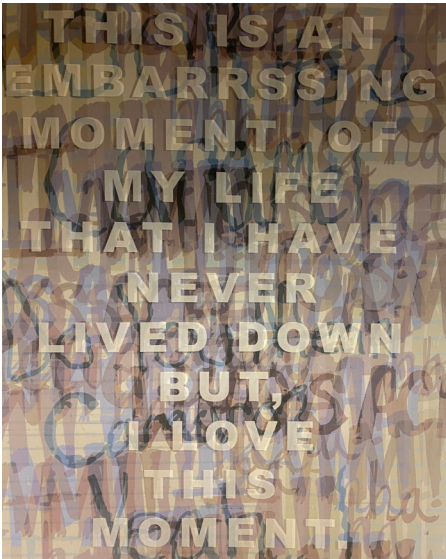


Jacy Lirette
COMPUTER ART & ANIMATION

“My work explores the untold twin connection. Two girls who are in different universes are celebrating their birthday and find that strange events are beginning to occur.”

Kylar Harrison
PRINTMAKING

“My work explores my relationships with my family.”



Connor Foret
PRINTMAKING

“My work is about considering waste that we create in our day to day and the industries that create and support these systems.”

The 2024 total solar eclipse: The first in seven years, next one coming 2044

Ramudhi Kariyawasam
NEWS WRITER

On April 8, the United States experienced a total solar eclipse, the first in nearly seven years and possibly the last until 2044.

Millions of people throughout North America gathered along with their trusted eclipse glasses to view the possibly once-in-a-lifetime experience.

A total solar eclipse occurs when the moon moves in between the path of the sun and Earth and entirely blocks the face of the sun from Earth’s view, momentarily darkening the sky throughout many parts of Mexico, USA and Canada that were part of the “path of totality.”

Earth only experiences a total solar eclipse about once every year or two, but there can be at least two total eclipses that occur somewhere around the globe.

According to NASA, 13 states in

the USA were included in the path of totality, those closer to Louisiana were Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas, being approximately 108 to 122 miles wide.

The 2017 total solar eclipse was only 62 to 72 miles wide, traveling from the northwestern USA to the southeastern portion, only having around 12 million people in the path of totality.

The recent total eclipse, however, contained 31.6 million residents in the path of totality, as the path covered more vastly populated cities, such as Dallas, Texas, than the last total eclipse.

In addition to having a larger audience, the 2024 total eclipse began between noon and 4:30 p.m., lasting approximately 4 minutes and 28 seconds.

During this time, the moon was entirely covering the sun, with only the bright border of the sun, known as the corona, being visible.

Viewers could also remove their

glasses during this period to view the eclipse, as their eyes would not be harmed.

A few prominent highlights of the eclipse were the observations.

From some locations, like Dallas, Texas, viewers shared seeing bright planets like Jupiter and Venus, with Mars and Saturn being faintly visible in some regions.

Animals also seemed to act peculiar during totality. Due to the darkening of the sky and its mimicking of dusk, many animals began to initiate their nightly routines, like birds flying off to their nests and preparing for rest, while the nocturnal animals awoke.

Some telescope viewers could also see pink flames sneaking up from the sun. NASA explains these bright pink flames as being prominences, “unstable clouds of plasma suspended above the Sun by strong magnetic forces.”

Although Louisiana was not in

the path of totality, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Science Museum organized a Solar Eclipse Program for the community to make that day as memorable as those in totality.

People from throughout Acadiana, including children, attended an eclipse viewing, where they were able to view the total eclipse through a special-lensed telescope that projected the solar eclipse onto a display, where a nearly 87%-covered sun could be seen.

Although another total eclipse could occur sometime in the future, it cannot be guaranteed that it will be in the USA again.

NASA estimates that the next total eclipse will pass through the country on Aug. 23, 2044.

Solar eclipses may be some of the few times millions of people around the world gather to marvel at our solar system’s significance, beauty and the immense impact it has on their lives.



Photo courtesy of NASA
The 2024 total solar eclipse.

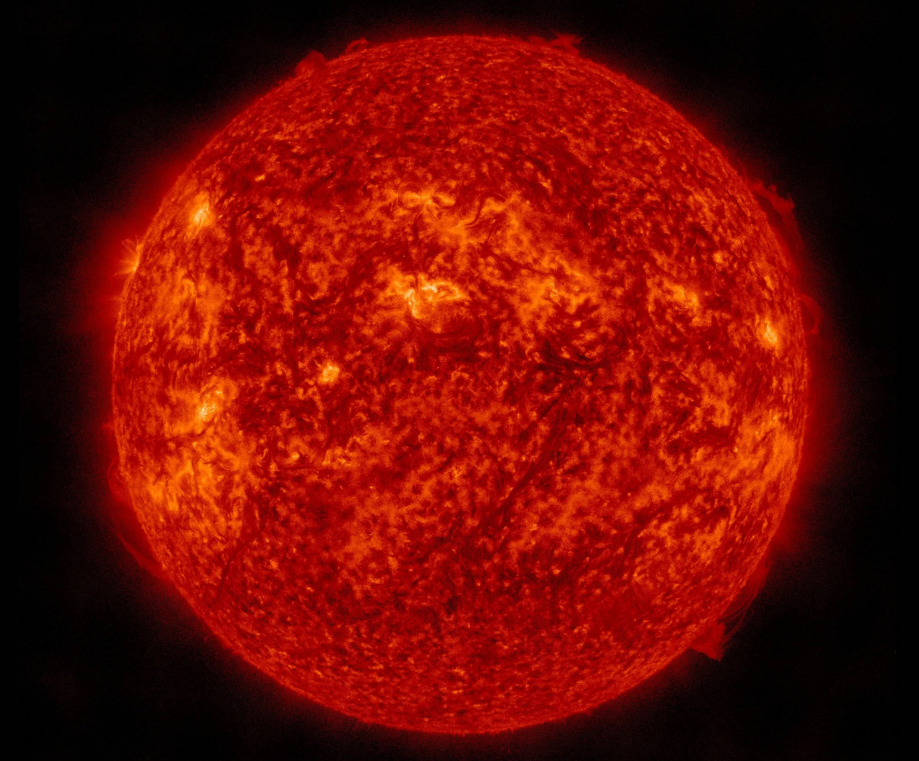


Photo courtesy of NASA
An image of the sun captured right before totality in Dallas, Texas.

Cajun Crossword

Compiled by Morgan Parker

No. 23

INSTRUCTIONS

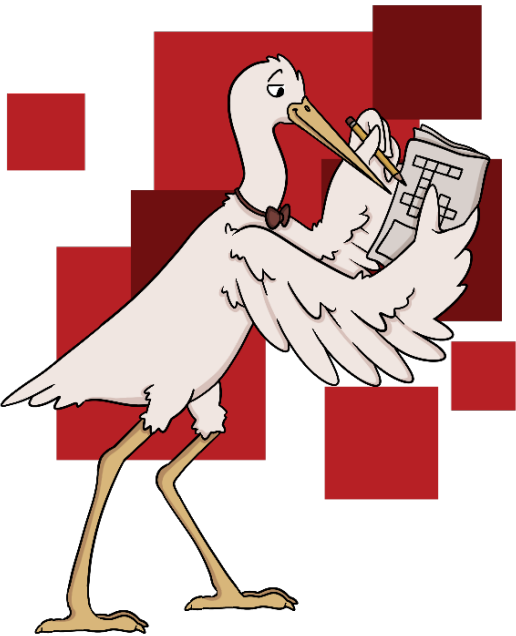
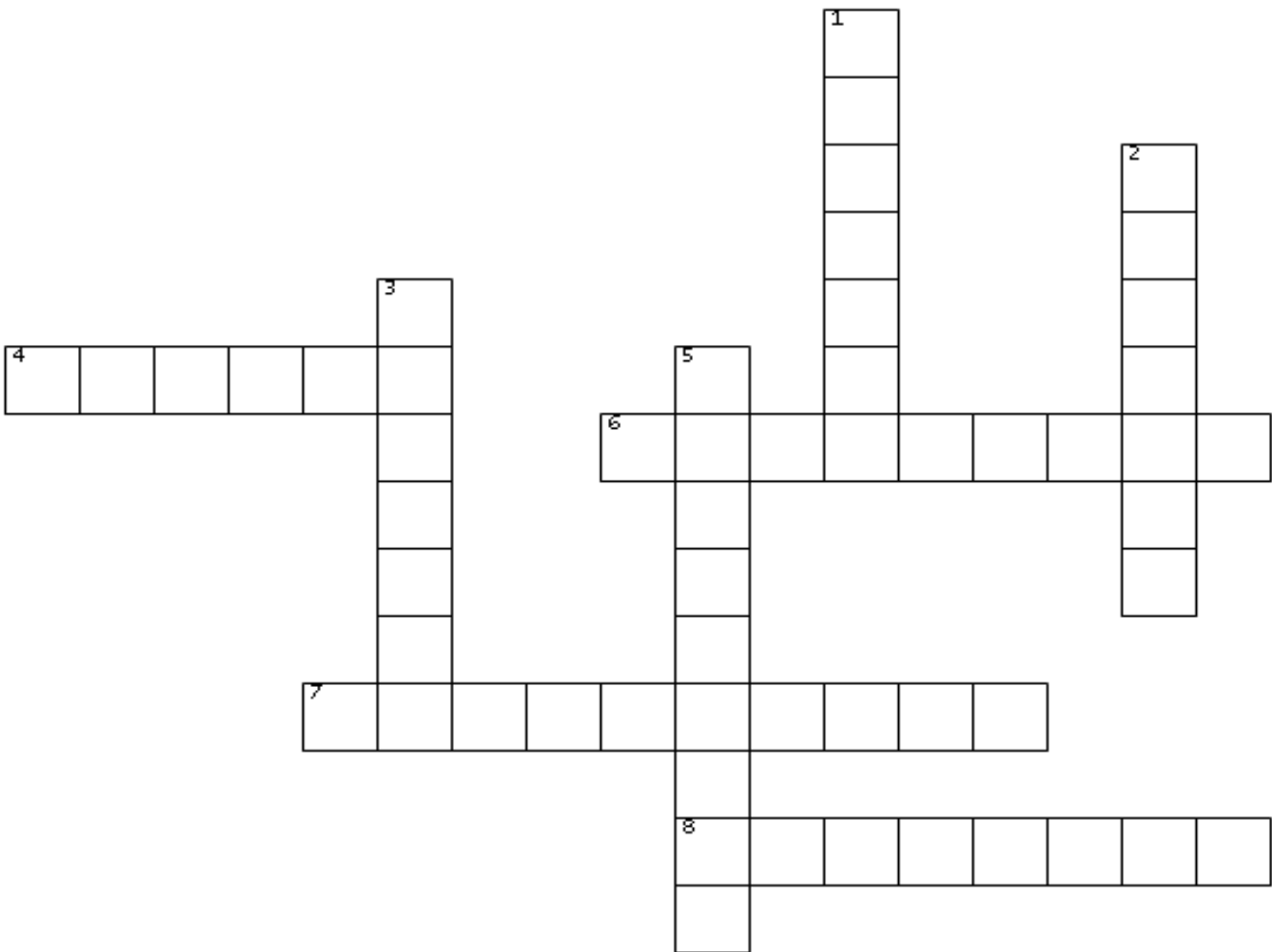
The answers can be found throughout the newspaper, so make sure to thoroughly read each story. Try to find all of them and see if you got them correct in the answers provided in the next issue's crossword search!

ACROSS

- 4. What is the bright border seen around the sun during totality?
- 6. Lili Nguyen's favorite drink is the blended ____ white mocha.
- 7. A source of support available on campus.
- 8. What music video was 14 minutes?

DOWN

- 1. Now Americans can see what their tax dollars go to in an ____ with social media.
- 2. What is the name of Beyoncé's fans?
- 3. Which Cajuns baseball player hit the lone RBI of the game on Saturday, April 13? (last name)
- 5. April 12's softball game marked the Cajuns' _____ win of the season.



Cajun Candids Bachelor of Fine Arts Senior Exhibition

Photos by Morgan Parker



Sports

Sun Belt dominance: Cajuns win 86th straight conference series

Charles Martin
SPORTS EDITOR

The Sun Belt dominance of the Louisiana Ragin’ Cajuns continues as the ladies record more dominant wins over the Texas State Bobcats in San Marco, Texas.

They entered the series ranked 21st in the country. Their wins over the Bobcats mark their 86th consecutive Sun Belt series win.

The first game of the weekend on Friday, April 12 was a shutout as the Cajuns won 7–0, only their first shutout of the weekend.

The Cajuns would let junior pitcher Sam Landry take the mound to start the game. Landry would pitch all seven innings and not allow a single runner home.

In the outing she would walk six, strike out seven, and only allow four hits as she finished the game with 122 pitches. Her performance would mark win 15 of the season.

It takes more than pitching a shutout to win though. Your batters need to be able to score at least a run in order to win.

Louisiana did not disappoint in the slightest as the Cajuns would score seven, five of those runs coming off of homeruns.

The Cajuns would lead off with designated player Laney Credeur, she would go two of three with one hit being a double and the other being a home run in the seventh inning.

Center fielder Mihyia Davis and second baseman Alexa Langeliers each recorded two hits in four at bats. Langeliers would get three runners home with a home run in the third inning.

Runs were also driven in by first baseman Sam Roe, third baseman Brooke Ellestad and shortstop Cecili Vasquez.

Vasquez’s RBI was a solo home run in the seventh.

This dominant win would mark the team’s 10th consecutive win which they continued Saturday afternoon in game two of the series in San Marcos.

In Saturday’s game the Bobcats would once again be shut out and embarrassed by the ladies in vermilion as the Cajuns won 6–0.

The shutout would be pitched by sophomore Chole Riassetto who only pitched 87 times in the outing.

She recorded just three walks, only one walk and two strikeouts in her seven innings. She would stamp her 10th win after she ended the game in the bottom of the seventh.

Riassetto managed to be economical in her shutout when compared to Landry the night before.

Riassetto made her pitches hard for batters to make good contact with, forcing eleven groundouts with two being turned into double plays.

An additional six outs came from flyouts popped up by the Texas State batters.

The Cajuns did not have the explosiveness of the night before, but that did not matter as the Cajuns got hits and got on base throughout the game and managed to drive those runners in.

Ellestad recorded two hits for the game but was left on base both times she got on base. Davis drew a walk and hit a triple, sending two runners in with the hit as well.

Right fielder Samantha Graeter had recorded one hit in two at bats. With that one hit she drove in a run and then scored an additional run herself.

Shortstop Vasquez would drive in two runners with her second home run of the series, home run number six on the year for her.

The streak would end on Sunday as the Cajuns would fall for the first time

of the season to a Sun Belt opponent as they were shut out by the Bobcats.

The Cajuns would have their 11-game win streak snapped 0–5.

The Cajuns would rotate between both Sam Landry and Chole Riassetto with Landry getting the start in the circle.

Landry would pitch 3.1 innings where she would let up four hits and four runs with only a single strikeout.

Riassetto would pitch 2.2 innings where she would only allow two hits and a run, striking out one and recording a walk as well.

The loss was given to Landry, bringing

her season record to 15–7. The batters were so cold that Mr. Freeze would have seemed warm by comparison as only four batters recorded a hit against Texas State’s Jessica Mullins.

Left fielder Maddie Hayden, Creuder, Langeliers and Vasquez were the only batters to record hits, none of which were extra base hits. A total of five were struck out with the rest being put out.

Though a speedbump had been hit with Sunday’s game against the Bobcats, the Cajuns will continue to roll on as they prepare for their next series against the Southern Miss Golden Eagles.

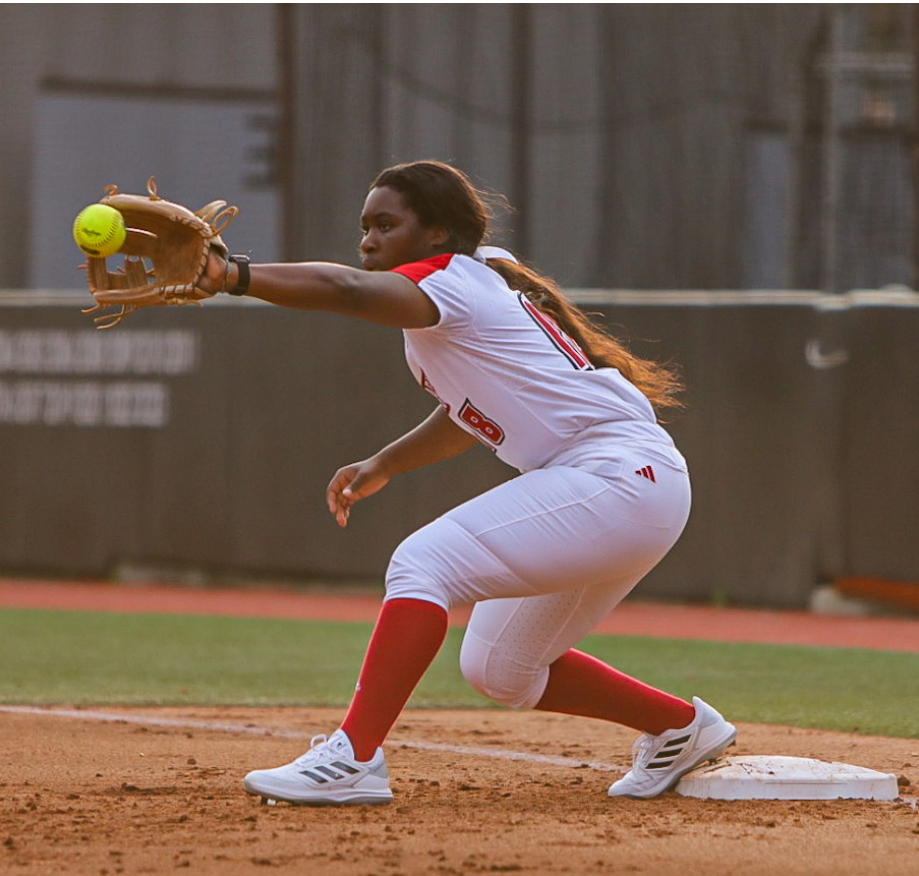


Photo by Alyus Dick
Sam Roe (18) makes the play for an out at 1st.

Baseball earns fourth consecutive home series, wins against Marshall

Isaac Henry
SPORTS WRITER

Louisiana Ragin’ Cajuns baseball found itself in a unique position last week, entering their home matchup against the Louisiana Tech Bulldogs on Wed, April 10 ranked at No. 19 in the nation, on a 16-game win streak with a Sun Belt-leading 11–1 record in conference games.

The team went on to lose the streak in disappointing fashion, giving up 15 hits in a game that was never really close.

In a postgame interview, Head Coach Matt Deggs gave the Bulldogs respect in

the upset and offered some perspective on the win streak ending.

“They came in and outplayed us tonight,” Deggs said. “They have an Omaha-type team. I truly believe that if they catch a break or two they’ve got the arms, they’ve got the older hitters. They came in and won the fastball tonight, they had more strike zone discipline than us, they put the ball in play more when it mattered.”

“I told the team in the dugout, I’m so proud of them. They got to do something that 99.99% of people that play this game at a high level never get the chance to do,” Deggs said. “We’ll take

tomorrow off, come back Friday and look to play better baseball.”

Coming back to the Tigues on Friday, the Cajuns faced a middle-of-the-road Marshall Thundering Herd that had split its last six conference games and been taken into extra innings in its midweek game.

Junior pitcher Andrew Hermann drew his fifth start of the season for the Cajuns and started off strong, striking out three batters and only allowing one on base on a full-count walk through three innings.

On the offense, though, the Cajuns bats struggled to barrel up on Marshall’s workhorse pitcher Drew Harlow, who was already seeing his ninth game of the season with a majority of the pitching load.

pitched his heart out and had a good-riding fastball that was hard to get to.”

“Lee really let us take a breath right there with that oppo jack and Higgs had a big night which we needed out of him,” Deggs said. “LP came in, slammed the door right there and finished strong for us, and that’s been our formula and it’s been working.”

On Saturday afternoon, freshman Chase Morgan got the start for the Cajuns. The formula of this game was similar to the prior night, with both teams in striking distance the whole way through.

Morgan would pitch an incredible eight-inning shutout, ending the night with 11 strikeouts, just three walks and one recorded hit. Maddox Mandino would bring in the lone run of the game in the third, reaching on fielder’s choice as Higgs scored.

“We were just able to scrape a run together right there,” Deggs said in a postgame interview Saturday.

“I will credit our hitters, as good as Blevins was today, we did hit a lot of balls hard. Back to [Morgan], he is effectively wild a little bit with his fastball, that’ll knock a hitter off his mark, because he keeps coming back into counts,” Deggs said. “Then, he can land a breaking ball and a changeup any time he wants.”

Next up on the schedule for the Cajuns is a three-game away series against the Coastal Carolina Chanticleers starting Friday, April 19 followed by a midweek match against the Houston Christian Huskies on April 24.

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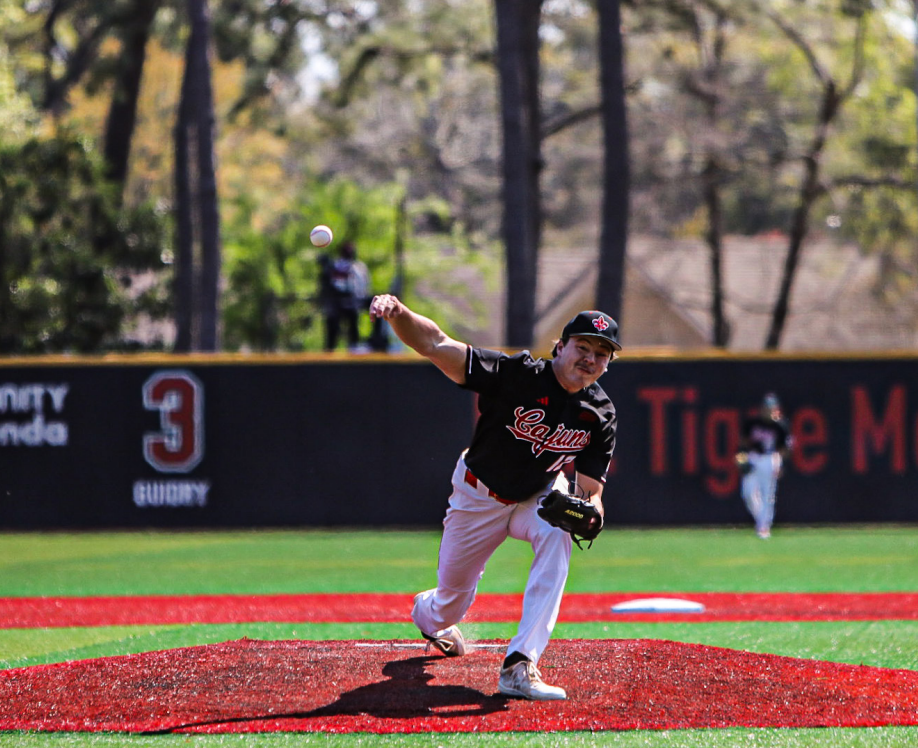


Photo by Alyus Dick
Jack Martinez (13) pitches against the Old Dominion Monarchs on March 23.

Allons

Does social media pose a threat to free speech and democracy?

Kay Padilla
ALLONS EDITOR

A question I have been asking myself recently is if social media is a threat to free speech and democracy. This came up in a discussion in one of my classes.

We asked ourselves if everyone having access to social media and the ability to post at any moment actually helped our democracy. There were mixed reviews, which is normal because there is no right or wrong way to answer it.

If we are realistically looking at it, if we come to the conclusion that social media hinders free speech and democracy, there would be riots when we would try to restrict social media. That is normally how the American people act, some examples are alcohol, seatbelts and guns.

So I would like to take the approach of how we can better social media as it is right now.

To me, I think social media is a tool for free speech as well as keeping democracy alive but it has many faults.

On apps like X, Instagram and arguably Facebook it is very easy to say what you want. There are almost little to no restrictions. There are certain graphic images and words that are taken down but those are extreme cases.

X especially is very open with their rules and regulations on what can and can't be posted. In my opinion, this is horrible. I cannot tell you how many graphic images, videos or statements I have seen on X.

But in a way, that is what the internet is for. No matter how deplorable or disgusting the comments or tweets are,

they show what the person behind that account truly feels.

Although I absolutely don't condone half of what X users say or do, it does show how people really think when they aren't "afraid" of their posts being deleted or banned for violating community guidelines. This is also mainly because X has little to no serious community guidelines.

Throughout the 21st century, social media has grown along with political literacy, even despite what popular opinion may think. Politics used to be a thing that only adults worried about.

There were young people involved in politics before the 21st century, but it has exponentially grown with the rise of social media. And that is simply due to the fact that young people are able to instantly get information about politics.

Knowledge is power, and having that knowledge a few clicks away is powerful and scary. Scary to those who do not want young people to be aware of politics. Politics used to be, arguably still is, run by an older generation governing the younger generations.

But with social media, there have been many younger and more inclusive people in places of power. Different sexualities, gender identities, disabilities and many more inclusivity markers have been made less taboo.

I like to think that was social media's doing, people took to social media to proudly declare that they are queer, disabled, etc. and that should not be seen as being less of a person.

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the January 6 riot and the attacks on Palestine

have been pivotal moments in history as well as social media history. Millions of people across the Earth can see historical events play out minute by minute all from social media platforms.

Due to loose community guidelines on some of these apps, people are able to see how gruesome pandemics, riots and war actually are. I know I have seen tragic videos from the pandemic where hospitals could not handle the influx of patients, both alive and dead.

I think this is where the fear of social media disrupting free speech and democracy comes from. The American people can see for themselves what their tax dollars go to. As well as the actions of the officials and leaders that they vote in.

Not that they couldn't see it before the rise of social media, but now it is almost instant. There is no buffer between information and the American people

anymore. Social media has bridged language and geopolitical gaps for people all across the Earth.

Americans will always want their right to freedom of speech. Trying to restrict free speech on social media platforms is crazy to me. Because people will find a way to say what they want to say. No matter what side you are on in an argument the "other side" always seems to have backward morals and outlandish ideas.

Social media is a dangerous tool if you want to silence people. As much misinformation and outright morally wrong opinions people on social media platforms may have, there is just as much informational and ground-breaking knowledge.

Free speech on social media seems like an untamed monster but this is where ideas and changes are born.



Graphic by Meg Norwood

A new sheriff has rolled into town, and her name is 'Cowboy Carter!'

Kayla Crane
ALLONS WRITER

To preface this review I would like to note that I have never been a fan of country music. When anyone asks what kind of music I listen to I specifically say "anything but country." My dislike of the genre is not a dig at the music but it has never appealed to me and to be honest I've never really given it a genuine try, but when Beyoncé announced her next album would be country I knew I had to be tuned in.

Beyoncé's 27-track album, "Cowboy Carter," was released on March 29 and is the second act in her "Renaissance" series. The first act, "Renaissance," was a dance album which won her four Grammys and made her the person with the most Grammy awards ever, with 32 wins.

Prior to the release of the new album the discourse surrounding it was mixed. Obviously, Beyoncé's fans, the Beyhive, were excited and supportive. They seem to take any new music from Beyoncé with excitement, no matter the genre or aesthetic. Unsurprisingly, others outside of the Beyhive were skeptical about Beyoncé's venture into this new genre, but most casual listeners don't realize Beyoncé has made country music before.

On her 2016 album "Lemonade," Beyoncé sings of lessons from her father on the song "Daddy's Lessons," which

happens to be my favorite song from that album. Although the song was not the lead single of the album it was significant enough to get Beyoncé invited to the Country Music Association awards, or the CMAs, to perform the song alongside The Chicks, formerly known as the Dixie Chicks.

Beyoncé's surprise performance had everyone who was at the performance on their feet. Despite the good reception from the Beyhive and those at the performance, Beyoncé received backlash over the performance.

Online, some fans of the award show criticized her attendance of the award show by deeming her not country enough to be performing. Others cited her politically-charged album "Lemonade," and a recent Super Bowl performance, which showcased topics like race, black power and the Black Lives Matter movement, as reasons for her to be excluded.

Although the country genre is associated with more conservative ideas it still was shocking that an artist as beloved as Beyoncé would be exiled from the space.

In an Instagram post ahead of the album's release Beyoncé revealed the inspiration for the album was because of an unwelcoming experience she'd had, prompting her to look deeper into country music.

"It was born out of an experience

that I had years ago where I did not feel welcomed... and it was very clear that I wasn't. But, because of that experience, I did a deeper dive into the history of Country music," Beyoncé said.

After her negative introduction into the country genre, I look at "Cowboy Carter" as a revenge album, and revenge has never sounded so sweet. This album is a redefining of what country is and can be. Beyoncé proves that her art cannot be limited by imaginary boundaries and her album excels because of her denial of those boundaries.

Beyoncé has an ability to transport her listeners into the album and make an immersive experience. The songs made me feel as though I was riding a horse or getting eaten up by mosquitoes while at my paw paw's house in the woods. I felt the love and intensity of her more serious songs like "16 Carriages" while also enjoying the playfulness of her more fun songs like "Levi's Jeans."

I thought her transitions from song to song were creative and I loved the radio theme she had in between songs to introduce the next one. I thought they were well used and I enjoyed the cameos from legendary country artists like Dolly Parton, Linda Martell and Willie Nelson.

One of my favorite songs on the album was "II Most Wanted," featuring Miley Cyrus. Not only was Cyrus on the song but she sang with Beyoncé the whole time. The most notable part of the song

was the end when they take turns belting the chorus with an undeniable amount of emotion, making me tear up.

Although you can't get much better than Beyoncé and Miley Cyrus singing their hearts out in a duet, "II Hands to Heaven" takes the cake as my favorite song on the album. The beat of the song and visuals of the lyrics are transformative. The song makes me feel like I'm dancing in the desert and the sun is going down but I'm not scared because I feel so happy.

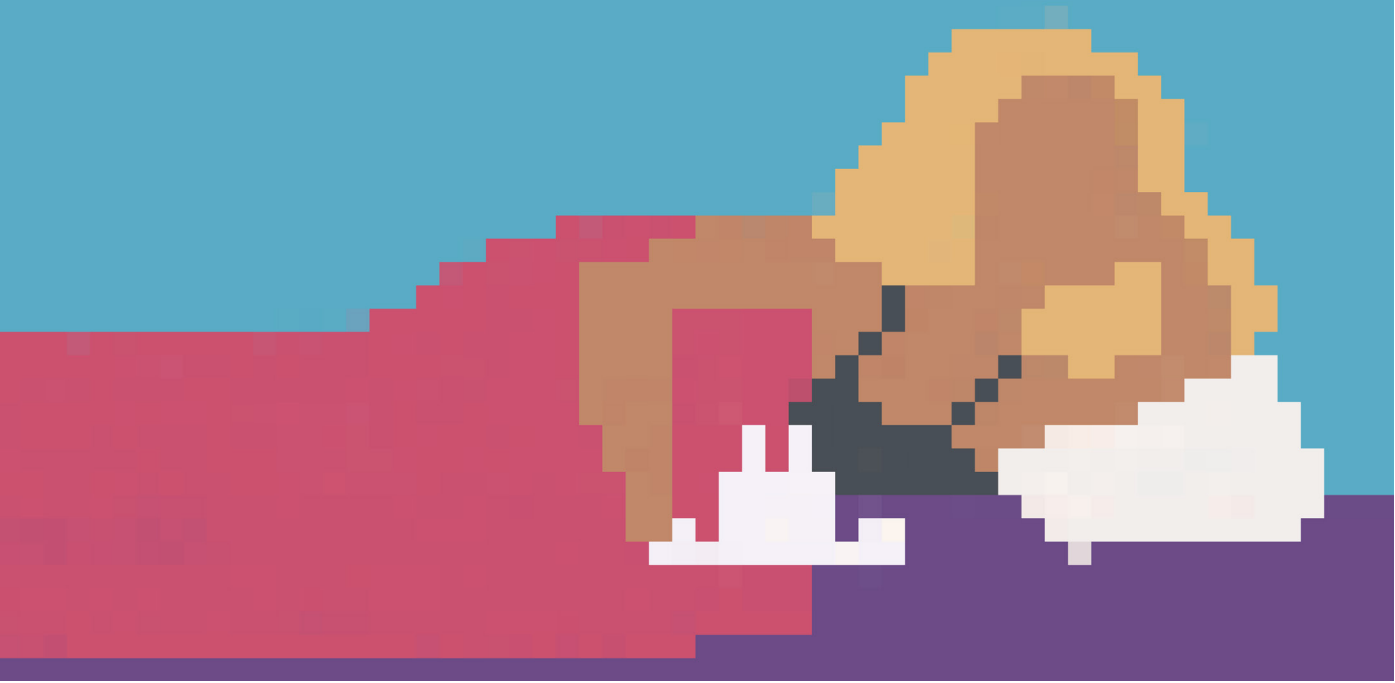
I know it seems suspicious that someone who doesn't usually like country loves Beyoncé's country album, even though she isn't usually a country artist, but I think my enjoyment of the album attests to the artistry of Beyoncé. She immersed herself into a genre so well that she was able to remain true to it while also putting her own spin on it and allowing someone like me to enjoy the genre as well.

She was able to pay homage to country greats while simultaneously pushing the genre forward. She's changed how the genre can be thought of and has used this opportunity to share her platform with other overlooked black country artists like Taylor Adell and Willie Jones.

This album is Beyoncé's unofficial response to the backlash she received in 2016. Her being shunned from country gave her a reason to remind everyone she can do whatever type of music she wants and do it well. This album is Beyoncé's demand for respect and it worked. "Cowboy Carter" makes Beyoncé the first black woman ever to have a country album at number one on the Billboard Top Country Albums chart.

The most striking thing about the album is not its success or the history surrounding why she wrote it in the first place, but the way the lyrics in some of her songs reflect that when she was creating the album she knew she was creating a new and impressive piece of art that would break barriers.

In the last verse of her final song on the album, "Amen," Beyoncé directs her audience to "say a prayer for what has been" because "them old ideas are buried here." The old ideas of what country can be and who can participate are put to rest with this amazing album as Beyoncé rides off into the sunset on her white horse, kicking dust into the eyes of the people who doubted her.



Graphic by Caitlyn Chase

Did internet kill the video star?

Marie Ducote
ALLONS WRITER

Quick history lesson: On Aug. 1, 1981, one minute after midnight Eastern Time Music Television (MTV) gave us its first images which were the space shuttle Columbia launched countdown footage and the launch of Apollo 11 with a voiceover saying, “Ladies and gentlemen, rock and roll.” Then an astronaut placed a flag with the MTV logo changing colors. And with that, the 24 hour music video channel was born.

The first music video to play on this fledgling channel was the appropriately titled “Video Killed the Radio Star” (1979) by the Buggles.

Even though MTV popularized the music video they have always existed in some form. A predecessor to the channel was the music video show “PopClips” (1980-1981) created by the Monkees’ Michael Nesmith. The show aired on Nickelodeon.

Before “PopClips” and MTV music videos were known as promotional clips. The Beatles can be seen as an early example of utilizing promotional clips; in doing research, many articles pointed out how the visuals and music were used in their films “A Hard Day’s Night” (1964), “Help” (1965) and “Magical Mystery Tour” (1967).

But once the fab four stopped touring in 1966, due to exhaustion and their sound becoming more experimental making it difficult to replicate live, the

band made promotional clips (they were also doing this pre-not touring) to send out various shows instead of making live appearances. Well-known songs by The Beatles to have a video attached are “We Can Work It” and “Day Tripper” (both 1965), “Strawberry Fields Forever” and “Penny Lane” (both 1967).

The video for Queen’s “Bohemian Rhapsody” (1975) was first shown on the show “Top of the Pops” (1964-2006).

As I mentioned before MTV was revolutionary here was to see your favorite musicians from the comfort of your couch. This was the channel that helped solidify the image and stardom of Madonna and where the 14-minute music video for Michael Jackson’s “Thriller” (1983) first premiered.

But a lot has changed since 1981 MTV doesn’t play music videos anymore (MTV Classics still does) just a lot of reality TV.

The music video gave another way for fans to see musicians they like without having to go to a concert. But with social media you have more access to your favorite celebrities. You can see them document their life in real time. My TikTok for you page has been filled with four different angles of the same three Coachella performances (Lana Del Rey, Chappell Roan and Sabrina Carpenter).

So with the wide use of the internet and streaming services making music easier to access I have always wondered

if the music video is still necessary. Well I still think so. The visual aspect of music is just as important as the song. When you think of The Beatles do you picture them in their Sgt. Pepper costumes? When you think of David Bowie do you picture Ziggy Stardust or the lighting bolt painted across his face?

The visuals of the musicians give a way to make them identifiable to their audience. And the music video is an extension of that.

YouTube is my way of watching music videos and they still rack up billions of views. I can vividly remember waiting for the premiere of the “Thank U, Next” video (Ariana Grande, 2018) with friends at school. That music video broke the record and became one of Youtube’s most watched music videos within 24 hours of its premiere.

I remember watching the premiere of Taylor Swift’s “Look What You Made Me Do” at the 2017 MTV Video Music Awards with my mother.

They teased that music video the entire broadcast. Every time Swift releases a new video the internet is buzzing wondering what it will look like.

When Miley Cyrus was starting to slowly distance herself from her Hannah Montana/Disney image that made her a household name she released “Can’t Be Tamed” (2010) and its accompanying music video.

Cyrus fully shedding her Disney image can be seen in her first post



Graphic by Ellie Schmidt

Disney album “Bangerz” (2013) where she traded her long brown hair for a bleached blonde pixie cut.

More ways we saw Cyrus trying to have a more mature image is through the videos for “We Can’t Stop” and “Wrecking Ball” (both 2013). Both videos got the media talking about Cyrus’ move towards a more provocative public image.

And who can forget the career defining music videos of Lady Gaga and Beyonce. Some videos that always come to mind when I think of them are “Telephone” (2010, both of them are in it), “Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)” (2008, Beyonce) and “Poker Face” (2008, Lady Gaga).

So in our social media-dominated world, the music video still has a lot to offer in showing artistic expression.

Beaucoup

An Evening of Dance

The Beaucoup section attended the UL Lafayette’s School of Music and Performing Arts Dance Program’s 2024 production of An Evening of Dance. Below are their thoughts.



Photos by Joe Bozzelle

Kay Padilla
ALLONS EDITOR

I enjoy the Dance Program’s productions. As a former dancer, I love being able to see amazing choreography and technique throughout each of their productions. An Evening of Dance did not disappoint. A few of my coworkers were in the production this year and I loved being able to finally see their hard-learned work.

My favorite piece was “Purple Rain” choreographed by Anna Maria Hebert and Julia Toups. The simple costuming really popped out by having

bright lights pointed at the dancers. It almost felt like the lights were a part of the choreography, reflecting and accentuating their movements.

All the numbers were great but “Why so serious” choreographed by Ishita Pal was fun to watch and listen to. They included objects that made sounds like colorful sticks and flowing fabrics. It was very interactive and there were no low points in the dance. It was always building.

“The Dividing Pair” choreographed by Caroline Slayton really pulled at my heart because it included a video of her as a child and it was very nostalgic.

Adhamm Safford
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I don’t know much about dance, beyond the moves I break out in the office to aggravate people from time-to-time, and I’d never been to a show like this before. But I was captivated the whole way through.

I was struck not just by the variety in dance styles and music, but by the costumes and changes in lighting, and the vastly different stories and moods each choreographer wanted to capture.

Marie Ducote
ALLONS WRITER

An Evening of Dance was a nice way to spend a Friday night. First I like how there was a variety of music genres with each performance. There were 11 dance performances in total. Top ones for me were the first dance titles “Purple Rain” where they danced to Prince’s “Purple Rain.” I liked how the choreography went with the song.

The second performance titled “000” had two songs “Not My Responsibility”

Nyria Mustiful
ALLONS WRITER

An Evening of Dance was such an amazing show and experience! There were so many diverse types of dance showcased, such as contemporary, jazz, hip-hop and so much more. There were eleven performances in total and each one was as special as the one that came before it.

One aspect of An Evening of Dance that I enjoyed was just how much the students/performers were involved in the show. Every single dance that was performed was choreographed by students in the company. It highlighted the creativity and talent of the students even further.

Another aspect of the show that I enjoyed was the way that lighting was



by Billie Eilish and “Death” by Melanie Martinez. These two songs fit perfectly together and were a nice contrast from the first dance.

Some of my other favorite performances came after the intermission. The sixth dance “The Human Condition” took things slower compared to the previous dances.

“Dividing Pair” started off with a home video of the dancer as a child. Then segwayed to a solo to “Dawn Chorus” by Thom Yorke. The home video with the song made it an emotional watch.

very instrumental in setting the mood for each performance. In performances such as “Purple Rain,” “000,” and “Why so serious,” light was used to highlight the emotion and assist in the storytelling of the dance.

My favorite performance of the night was “Coming Home.” I enjoyed the “Dirty Dancing” inspiration and thematic influence that was present from start to finish.

I also enjoyed that the dance highlighted the connection between the past and the present through the music selections, “Stay” by Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs and “Coming Home” by Leon Bridges.

Overall, An Evening of Dance was a really enjoyable experience for me and I hope to visit another show from the Dance Program in the future!

SOUNDING OFF

“What is the worst food of all time?”



Madison Brinkman
ENGLISH SENIOR

“This is hard because I like most foods.... I’m gonna say liver.”



Mason Suter
ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY
MANAGEMENT SOPHOMORE

“For me, it’s tomatoes. I absolutely despise tomatoes.”



Derriana Hall
INFORMATICS FRESHMAN

“I’m not really a picky eater... Anything pork, just because I grew up not having pork so I kinda got adapted to not eating pork.”



Alasca Wilson
NURSING SOPHOMORE

“Chitlins. It is guts from an animal and they stink really badly, that’s a big no-no for me.”



Rachael Conway
POLITICAL SCIENCE SOPHOMORE

“I’ve always hated corn on the cob. I had braces for six years, I could never eat it, and then once I didn’t have braces I was like, I’m not eating it, it’s not good.”



Parker Mills
FINANCE SOPHOMORE

“I hate sour cream... I could literally eat out of a trash can. It’s just something about sour cream pisses me off; am I allowed to say that?”

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 Adhamm Safford and Meg Norwood

COMIC

Pain in the Glass



Comic by Lauren Gerald

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