

THE VERMILION

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Halloween orchestra concert

Gabrielle Mouton
NEWS WRITER

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette Symphony Orchestra is putting on their 31st annual Halloween concert on Thursday, Oct. 29, to kick off the Halloween weekend festivities. Taking place at 7 p.m. in the Angelle Hall Auditorium, orchestra members will be dressed in costume, and attendees are encouraged to do the same.

Speaking with Michael Blaney, director of orchestral activities, he emphasized that this concert is for everyone, including those who have not been to a classical music or orchestra concert. He said, “This would be a great one because it’s a very welcoming show.”

Since 1995, the orchestra has prepared a concert full of autumnal and halloween-spirited music, and this year, there will be “various little antics,” as Blaney calls it, for audiences to enjoy. There will be collaborations with singers from the UL Lafayette School of Music and some dancers from The Ballet Studio in Lafayette.

These performances will accompany the concert program, which features some pieces audiences may recognize upon hearing. “You’ve probably heard them in a movie, or heard them in a commercial,” Blaney said.

Starting off will be John William’s “Star Wars Medley,” and following will be standout pieces like Modest

Mussorgsky’s “Night on Bald Mountain,” and Sergei Prokofiev’s “Montagues and Capulets” from “Romeo and Juliet.” Blaney recalled that the orchestra has prepared these works since the beginning of the semester, and many of them are challenging for beginners.

“I definitely stress the artistic side of things,” Blaney said. “But we’re having a lot of fun with it.” The orchestra has a combination of newer undergraduate students and seasoned veterans of the program who are graduates. “They all really help each other,” Blaney said.

One of the more intricate and difficult pieces is Carl Nielsen’s “Aladdin Suite,” which Blaney is most excited to present. The orchestra will be divided into four sections to emulate a marketplace, and each section will emulate the different market groups, such as food vendors and florists, through their sound.

“It’s just this kind of cacophony of sounds that fit together to make a really unique piece,” said Blaney.

Talking with three different students, they all share their different experiences and what they think audiences should look forward to.

Sophomore cello player Makai Tatum shared that she is looking forward to the costumes. “I’m most excited about dressing up,” she said. “It’s super fun for all games and it’s one of the best concerts we do.”

Blaney recalled that sometimes the orchestra members get together to have

matching costumes, giving an example that one year they had a “Scooby-Doo” group and another as convicts.

Junior upright bass player Evelynne Bowles is anticipating getting to play the bass again. “I’m most excited to get back out there and make music,” she said. “Playing music on stage for other students and families, it’s such a thrill.”

Sophomore international graduate James Lee is marking this as his first time performing in an orchestra as a pianist. He joked that his favorite piece is the

“Star Wars Medley” but has never seen “Star Wars” himself. Lee has enjoyed all preparation for the concert. “It really has been a pleasure to be in the orchestra so far,” he said.

Much work has been put into this production, and all money from the concert goes towards the UL Lafayette School of Music. “The goal is for students and audiences to have a good time,” Blaney said.

Admission is free for all UL Lafayette students and \$10 for the general public.



Photo by Gabrielle Mouton
UL Lafayette Symphony Orchestra rehearsing for the Halloween concert

Mister UL pageant: A new tradition

Gracelynn Guillory
NEWS WRITER

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette is introducing a new male pageant to campus. Mister UL Lafayette, an event inspired by the University’s Miss UL pageant, will give male students an opportunity to represent the University and become involved in campus life. Mister UL is designed to build on the tradition of Miss UL, while creating a new opportunity for students to showcase their personalities, talents and commitment to the University.

The competition will give participants a chance to demonstrate what makes them stand out while representing the Ragin’ Cajun community.

Zaelyn Thompson, a member of the University Traditions Board, originally proposed the idea to create more opportunities for male students to become involved on campus. Although similar competitions have been attempted in previous years, Thompson said the idea was refined to create a university-wide event.

“What really inspired it was just trying to get men in general to get more involved,” Thompson said. “Within the position that I am in on the Traditions Board, I want to create that opportunity for them.”

The Mister UL pageant will feature several categories, including formal wear, career wear and casual wear. During the career wear portion, contestants will dress to represent their dream professions.

Preceding the onstage portion of the pageant, participants will complete interviews and submit personal statements.

An onstage interview segment will also allow contestants to demonstrate their public speaking skills.

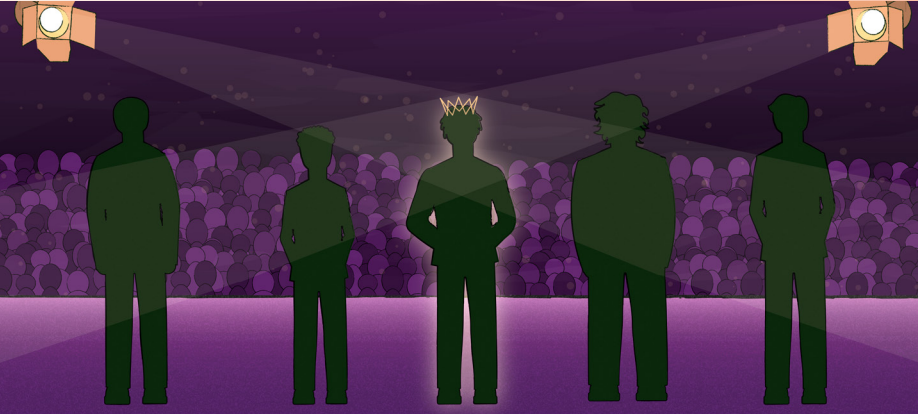
Thompson said the pageant is designed to provide students with experience they can apply beyond the University, particularly in professional settings and future careers.

The student selected as Mister UL will represent the University at university-sponsored and community events.

The titleholder will also help encourage future students to participate by sharing his experience and offering guidance to future contestants.

The position also provides an opportunity to encourage student involvement and strengthen connections across campus.

By creating a competition specifically for male students, the University can expand its existing traditions while giving students another way to participate in campus activities.



Graphic by Morgan Parker

The introduction of Mister UL comes as the University continues to offer students opportunities to get involved beyond the classroom.

Competitions such as Miss UL can bring students together, recognize student involvement and celebrate the personalities and achievements of members of the campus community.

To be eligible, contestants must be in good standing with the University and the student code of conduct, have a minimum 2.5 GPA, meet the competition’s gender eligibility requirement and be Louisiana residents, or have lived in the state for at least 30 days.

Thompson said leadership, character, integrity, professionalism, uniqueness

and school spirit are among the qualities he hopes to see in the winner.

As the competition begins, Thompson said he is most excited to see how the event affects the University and its participants.

“I want people to learn from it, improve on it and, hopefully, the men that participated in the competition, I want them to learn something from it as well,” Thompson said.

As a new addition to campus, Mister UL will have the opportunity to establish his own identity while following the example set by Miss UL. The competition’s success will depend on student participation, campus support and the ability to create a meaningful experience for those involved.



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Four members of The Vermilion write on urban legends they find true.

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News

Public debate hosted on campus

Andrew Courville
NEWS WRITER

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette chapter of Turning Point USA (TPUSA) hosted a “Prove Me Wrong” event at the Student Union on Oct. 21 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The chapter describes the event as an opportunity to “provide students with an open forum for respectful, voluntary discussion and the exchange of differing viewpoints,” according to the description on Campus Groups.

The “Prove Me Wrong” debate format typically consists of a speaker from TPUSA’s Campus Speaker Bureau and a second microphone for anyone to walk up to and debate the speaker, for a limited time, about any topic. It was planned in coordination with the TPUSA national organization to engage young voters.

This event featured Lily Kate, who’s described on the TPUSA website as a “Gen Z conservative commentator and content creator.” She’s passionate about topics including femininity, masculinity and Christianity.

On Wednesday, students started debates about topics such as abortion, diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, and how they relate to gender and racial divisions in the United States.

Anyone interested in learning more about Kate’s political ideology can find her on numerous socials.

In the past, she’s been active on Instagram and as a podcast host. She currently hosts the “Let Him Mansplain” YouTube channel. She authored and published “We Can’t Do It: 50 Reasons Feminism Failed and Why Tradition Is the Ultimate Rebellion.”

The “Prove Me Wrong” debate format



was often used by TPUSA’s founder and former executive director, Charlie Kirk. He was killed September 2025 at a “Prove Me Wrong” event at Utah Valley University.

Erika Kirk, his wife, has since taken his place and continued the organization’s mission.

College students are primarily members of Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012.

They make up about 20% of all eligible voters this election, 50 million people, as opposed to the 2022 midterms when they constituted just 9%.

They’ll continue to be a growing voting demographic, as the youngest are currently 14 years old.

Although issues vary widely by race, gender and political affiliation, this generation is focused on cost-of-living factors, like the economy, inflation, housing and healthcare.

Regardless of whether students agree or disagree with TPUSA’s mission and values, this was an interesting day on campus.

Students of different backgrounds and opinions gathered to hear their peers talk about what was important to them ahead of the Nov. 3 midterm elections.



Photo by Alyus Dick
Lily Kate at “Prove Me Wrong” event

Food Review

A spooky taste of Mercy Kitchen

Isabelle Brumley
BEAUCOUP EDITOR

Located at 1312 Verot School Rd., Mercy Kitchen is a Lafayette restaurant specializing in modern American cuisine. Its menu features handcrafted cocktails, shareable appetizers, gourmet sandwiches and dishes made with locally sourced ingredients.

Lafayette natives Stuart and Colleen Ottinger opened Mercy Kitchen in 2021 to bring the dining experiences they enjoyed while traveling back home. Located in the former Bon Temps Grill space, the restaurant combines creative food and drinks with a welcoming atmosphere.

The restaurant’s atmosphere was especially memorable because of its Halloween decorations. Upon entering, customers are greeted by themed decor featuring “The Addams Family,” “Wednesday,” “Gremlins,” “Chucky” and other classic horror movie characters. String lights, neon signs, skeletons, cobwebs and creepy crawlies completed the spooky setup.

My colleague and I had the pleasure of visiting Mercy Kitchen on Wednesday, Oct. 21. Since this was my first time hearing about the restaurant, I was unsure what to order. After taking a few minutes to admire the decorations and look over the menu, we decided on our meals.



Photo by Ellie Schmidt
Decorations inside Mercy Kitchen

We began with the Hallelujah Bread, one of the restaurant’s signature appetizers. I also ordered the crispy chicken sandwich with frites, while my colleague chose the Pink Pony Club sandwich.

The Hallelujah Bread had a rich, cheesy flavor with hints of herbs and truffle oil, making it a savory start to our meal. My crispy chicken sandwich had a crunchy exterior and tender chicken, with sweet honey mustard slaw balancing the tangy pickles and spicy aioli. My colleague’s Pink Pony Club offered smoky, savory flavors from the bacon and prosciutto, while the honey-truffle dijonnaise added sweetness. The Gouda macaroni and cheese provided a creamy, cheesy side.

Beyond our selections, Mercy Kitchen offers other distinctive dishes, including Crab Rangoon Dip, Truffle Fries, Gouda Mac Attack with braised short ribs and the Mercy Burger.

Overall, I enjoyed my experience at Mercy Kitchen. Its creative menu and elaborate Halloween decorations made the visit memorable, offering a dining experience that stands out from the ordinary.

If you would like to visit Mercy Kitchen, they are open Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Photo by Ellie Schmidt
Mercy Kitchen’s Hallelujah Bread

Police Reports

Compiled by Caitlyn Comeaux

Oct. 24

- At 6:19 p.m., an officer met with a Coronna Hall resident in reference to a battery that occurred. The incident was referred to the Title IX office. No arrests were made.
- At 5:39 p.m., officers responded to a medical call involving an individual who lost control of their bicycle and fell onto the sidewalk, briefly losing consciousness and sustaining a large head laceration. The individual was transported to the hospital.
- At 1:22 a.m., a large group was observed swimming in the fountain at the Quad. They were identified and released on a warning and the report was forwarded to the Dean’s office.

Oct. 23

- At 1:19 p.m., officers were informed about a pair of suspicious individuals in possession of a firearm in the Rose Garden courtyard. The subjects fled the area, but were located and arrested. They were also found in possession of a bag of marijuana and a glock magazine.
- At 8:41 a.m., officers responded to a call about a fight in Bonin Hall. Both individuals involved were arrested and released on a summons.

Oct. 22

- At 10:56 a.m., officers received a call regarding a hit-and-run on E. Lewis St. between a 2013 grey Nissan Altima and a 2011 white Ford F150. An arrest was made.

Oct. 21

- At 1:47 p.m., officers were dispatched to Agnes Edwards Hall in reference to a subject who was receiving threatening text messages.

Oct. 20

- At 6:59 p.m., officers received a report of harassment that took place at the Student Union. The Title IX office was notified.
- At 1:10 p.m., officers responded to a crash in the parking lot of Martin Hall between a 2024 Kia Sportage and an electric scooter.

Oct. 19

- At 6:13 p.m., officers responded to a parking lot crash in the Taft Parking Garage between a 2021 grey Kia Soul and a 2021 black Lexus R35.

Weather

Thursday 10/29	Friday 10/30	Saturday 10/31	Sunday 11/1	Monday 11/2	Tuesday 11/3	Wednesday 11/4
						
High: 83°F Low: 57°F	High: 83°F Low: 65°F	High: 82°F Low: 67°F	High: 85°F Low: 68°F	High: 85°F Low: 66°F	High: 85°F Low: 62°F	High: 81°F Low: 58°F

Isabelle Brumley
BEAUCOUP EDITOR

- The National Weather Service currently expects mostly dry conditions for much of the week, with warm afternoons in the low-to-mid 80s; rain chances may increase heading into Halloween.

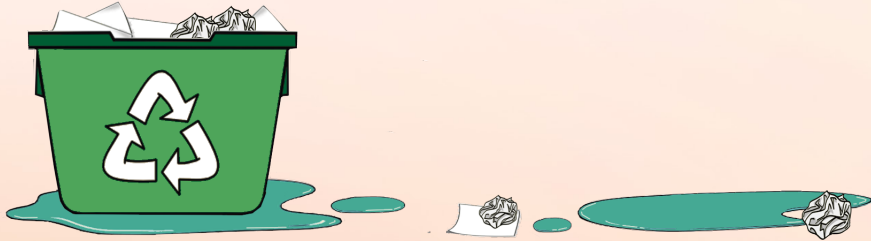
WHERE’S ALLAN?



Halloween is coming soon! I’m excited to see all the spooky decor. There is some pretty cool paint on the windows of this store. Where am I?

Win a free sandwich from Roly Poly

The first UL student to recognize where The Vermilion’s mascot, Allan the Alligator, was photographed on campus, and email the correct location of Allan to **TheVermilion@louisiana.edu** will receive the prize. The Vermilion will continue this contest each week until the end of the semester. Participants cannot win more than once a semester, and must be attentive to their emails.



PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER
AFTER READING!

Sports

Quiet offseason haunts Pelicans as team loses first three matches

Alyus Dick
PHOTOGRAPHY COORDINATOR

The New Orleans Pelicans are off to an 0–3 record to start the 2026–27 NBA regular season. The Pelicans dropped their first three games against the Indiana Pacers, Utah Jazz and Denver Nuggets, each by a margin of six points or less.

Once again, the NBA kicks off another regular season, and once again, the Pelicans are off to a rocky start. After making virtually no moves in the offseason, the Pelicans’ front office decided to run the season back with the same roster. There should be nothing inherently wrong with a team deciding not to make changes to a squad they’re confident in. However, this is far from the case down in New Orleans.

A season ago, the Pelicans were actively competing for last place in the Western Conference. They posted a 26–56 record overall, going 1–9 in the last 10 games of the regular season. This was a far-cry from where many Pelicans fans had the team finishing before the season started.

The 2025 offseason saw multiple moves from the Pelicans’ front office that, at the time, looked to make for a competitive team. Then newly appointed General Manager Joe Dumars made trades for guards Jordan Poole and Saddiq Bey, followed by acquiring center Kevon Looney. Additionally, he drafted

Oklahoma guard Jeremiah Fears and Maryland center Derik Queen. With the newly acquired pieces, Pelicans fans were hopeful for a possible run at the Play-In tournament. Those expectations would instantly be shot down when the 2025–26 season started with an 0–6 record for New Orleans. This would ultimately shape how the rest of the season went for the Pelicans with their longest losing streak lasting for nine games, which happened twice that season.

Despite the team’s shortcomings, the two rookies each had solid seasons that showed promise for the future. Queen averaged 11 points, seven rebounds and three assists, while getting one block per game. Fears averaged 14 points, three rebounds and three assists, while also averaging a steal per game. Both players were thrust into key roles in their rookie campaigns as each started more than half the games played that season.

Forwards Trey Murphy III and Zion Williamson led the team in scoring for the 2025–26 season, each averaging 21 points per game. Following them was Bey, who averaged 17 points, five rebounds and two assists in his first season with the Pelicans. As for Poole, the veteran guard sat at the end of the bench several times due to an inefficient 37% shooting and poor defense.

The 2026 offseason saw several teams make big signings and trades to improve their roster. While reports were coming out from all directions about every other franchise making moves, the Pelicans stayed quiet. Their only notable moves in the

offseason were re-signing veteran center DeAndre Jordan and signing free agent guard Bennedict Mathurin. The Pelicans hired Jamahl Mosley as their new head coach, hoping that a change in playcalling, mixed with internal growth, is all they need to turn things around.

The Pelicans opened the 2026–27 season at home against the Pacers, which ended in a 123–120 loss. New Orleans had a lead as large as 10 points in the game, but ultimately got outscored in the fourth quarter as the Pacers took the game.

The Pelicans led the Pacers in rebounds, steals and blocks. However, the team shot only 43% from the field compared to Indiana’s 52%, while also losing the turnover battle with 15 turnovers.

New Orleans dropped their next game to the Jazz, who had control of the lead for almost 80% of the entire game. The Pelicans had the lead for much of the fourth quarter, but a costly foul and go-ahead free throws from the Jazz

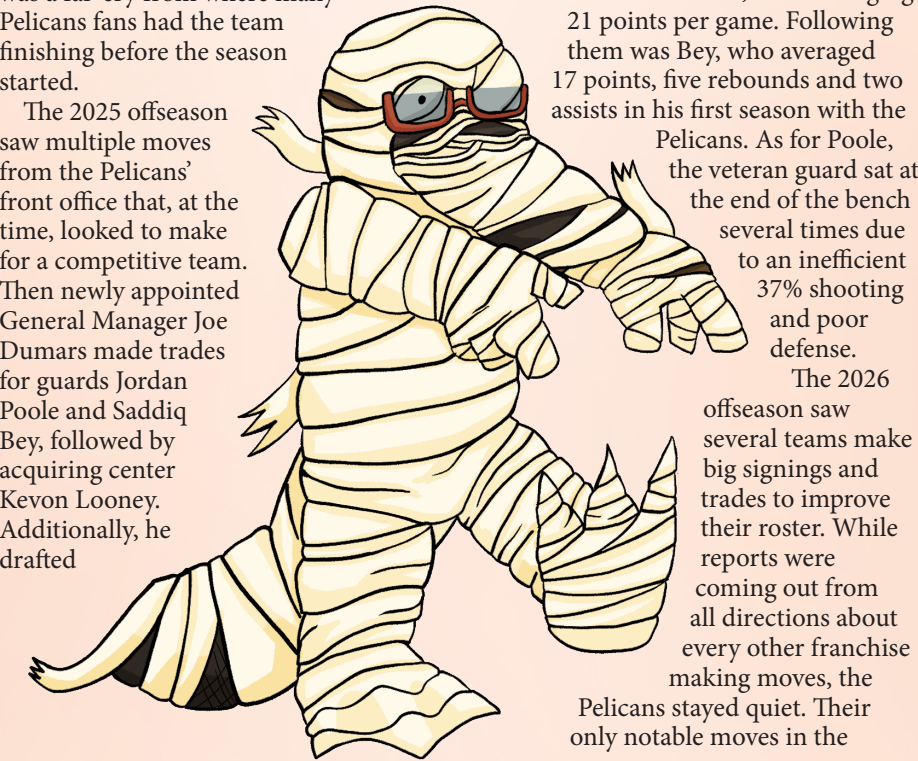
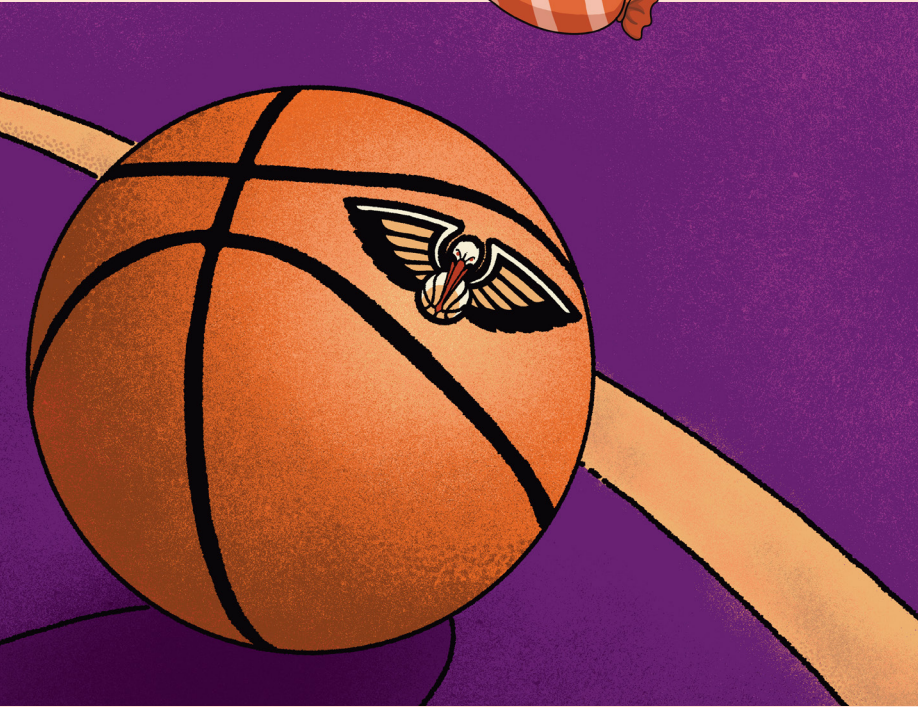
dropped the team to 0–2. The Pelicans shot a poor 31% from beyond the arch and lost the rebound battle against Utah. Williamson led the Pelicans in scoring with 23 points in the team’s 120–119 loss.

The Pelicans would proceed to drop their third straight game after an overtime defeat against the Nuggets with a score of 141–135.

This would be the Pelicans’ game to lose, as they led by as much as 23 points and had a 19-point lead heading into the fourth quarter. The Nuggets would rally from behind to tie the game with 17 seconds left in regulation to force an overtime.

The Pelicans would only score nine points in overtime, dropping to 0–3 on the year.

The Pelicans are right back where they were a year ago, with a schedule that won’t be getting easier. Their next game will be a rematch at home against the Nuggets on Oct. 28.



Graphic by Vallen Power

Allons

Haunting harmony: How much horror music adds to the genre

Reagan Wall
WRITER

Have you watched a horror movie so terrifying you had to look away and mute the TV at the same time? Sometimes, the most frightening part of horror isn’t what we see. It’s what we hear.

Music is a vital feature of horror movies and TV shows because it elicits emotional responses and adds an unspoken undertone that can completely change a scene’s meaning. In fact, music has a psychological effect on human brains.

According to an article from Harvard Medicine, autonomic nervous systems, which control heart rate and breathing, are directly affected by the tone of the music and an individual’s response to acoustic cues.

Music directly affects the brain’s responses and, in turn, people’s

emotions. There are many examples of music’s effect in today’s popular horror media.

For instance, the award-winning sci-fi horror Netflix show, “Stranger Things.” The instrumental synth background music emphasizes the unnerving retro-horror plot. In particular, the repetitive beat, which resembles the sound of a heartbeat, sets the tone of danger lurking, therefore building suspense.

The eeriness of “Stranger Things” is also created by songs with lyrics that accompany key moments in the show. In the third season, Vera Lynn’s 1939 song, “We’ll Meet Again,” plays into a major plot twist that altered the course of the season.

In the historical context of when it was released, the voice of “We’ll Meet Again” is singing to a loved one who is away at war. The narrator is saying goodbye to this person with the hope they will meet them again someday.

Although “We’ll Meet Again” is, at its core, an endearing song, in “Stranger Things,” the lyrics, along with horrific imagery of the scene while it plays, transform the song into a haunting one.

Additionally, in the final season of “Stranger Things,” the 1954 song by The Chordettes, “Mr. Sandman,” is also used to convey a feeling that is opposite of what was originally intended.

The narrator of this song asks someone called Mr. Sandman for a lover because they are lonely. The core message of the song is that the speaker wants Mr. Sandman to deliver their dream man.

Comparatively, in “Stranger Things,” Holly Wheeler, a young girl who is lonely because she is isolated at school, becomes friends with a man who calls himself Mr. Whatsit. When Mr. Whatsit’s true identity is exposed, “Mr. Sandman” plays in the background.

Holly Wheeler wanted friends, just as the narrator of “Mr. Sandman” wanted a lover. However, the “friend” that was brought to her was revealed to have a sinister ulterior motive. Therefore, playing “Mr. Sandman” during the pivotal identity reveal gives the scene an unsettling connotation.

By looking at the soundtrack of “Stranger Things,” it is clear that it is common for horror media to weaponize nostalgia from music to amplify fear.

Another popular media example is the recently released indie horror movie “Obsession.” In the final scene, the main character Nikki realizes her life is ruined

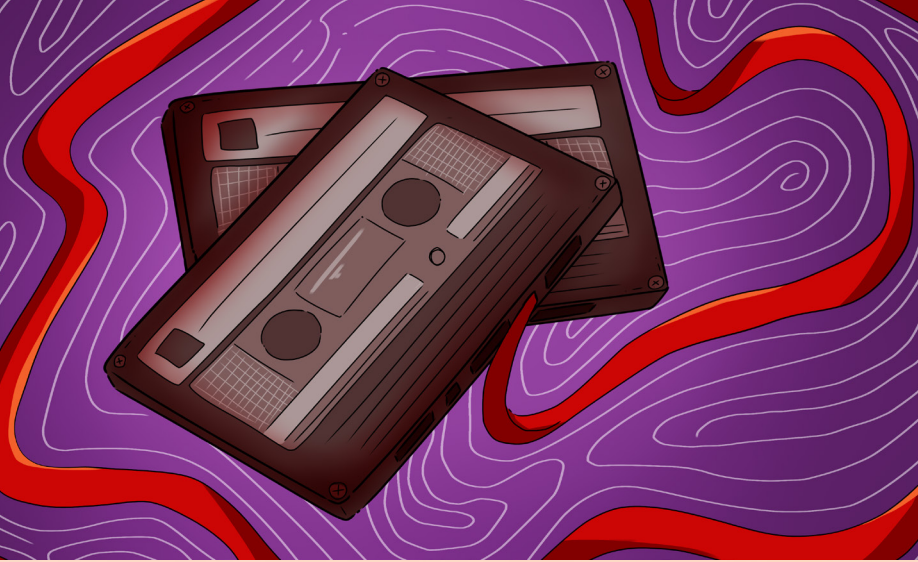
because of actions she did against her will. As viewers hear Nikki’s gut-wrenching screaming, they can also hear the Little Dipper’s 1960 love song “Forever” playing.

The narrator of “Forever” is asking their lover to hold them and love them forever, because they are deeply in love. In comparison, all of Nikki’s problems are a result of becoming possessed by an obsessive version of herself.

When the lyrics of “Forever” are viewed through Nikki’s situation, the theme of everlasting love shifts to fit Nikki’s romantic fixation that was anything but love, which intensifies the haunting nature of the scene.

Traditional pop like “We’ll Meet Again,” “Mr. Sandman” and “Forever” have a distinctive sound compared to modern pop music. As a result, the contrast between the classic heartwarming songs and the creepy scenes works together to disturb viewers.

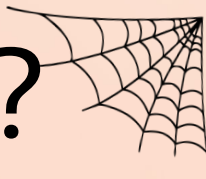
The right soundtrack can make on-screen horror jump from unsettling to downright horrifying, and that is the harmony of horror.



Graphic by Ray Bardales



What are psychological thrillers?



Kinsey Waits
ALLONS EDITOR

What’s more frightening than a monster hiding at the end of a dark hallway? Realizing the person closest to you, whom you thought you knew, is not who they seem to be at all.

The genre of horror has been steadily growing in popularity over the past few decades. In 1970, 2% of all feature films were classified as horror. That percentage had increased to 12% by 2016, according to research done by the American Film Market.

Beneath the umbrella of horror, subgenres have emerged such as slasher, paranormal and psychological to name a few. Psychologically-thrilling horror movies are unique in that they rely more on fear of the unknown and mystery than traditional horror gimmicks.

One of the best known examples in psychological thrillers is “Gone Girl” directed by David Fincher in 2014. Before the film went on to gain critical acclaim and dozens of awards, it was a novel written by Gillian Flynn. The story’s central themes include uncertainty, deception and distortion of reality. Psychological thrillers draw on the mind’s fear of the unknown and destruction of trust, and “Gone Girl” is a perfect example of these tactics combining to create a truly unsettling atmosphere.

Audiences become invested in a plotline when they cannot possibly predict what will happen next. The phrase “on the edge of my seat” is an accurate description of how one feels on their first watch of “Gone Girl” because so much information is withheld from the viewer.

According to the National Library of Medicine, our minds are wired as prediction machines. The human brain is biologically aimed toward filling in gaps, but in a story like “Gone Girl,” that is impossible.

This inability to predict what is coming next creates cognitive tension, or suspense. The feeling of suspense is uncomfortable and registers in the

brain as danger. Since this danger is not tangible, your mind is forced to work harder to try and find answers. As viewers try to piece together what they know is true and what information is being manipulated, each character becomes a suspect.

Unreliable narrators are a tool used in this genre to create a sense of instability. Audiences build relationships of trust with characters, only for the metaphorical rug to be pulled out from under them at a pivotal plot point. This is not an oversight from the creators of the film, but another tool that uses human psychology to unsettle the viewer even more.

Another psychological fear is introduced: betrayal. According to Impact Psychology Services, the hurt of betrayal is a psychological wound that is unlike any other. In slasher-horror films, the audience tends to view the protagonist as an extension of themselves, because they have the same amount of information and are usually motivated by the desire to survive.

In psychological thrillers, this connection is turned on its head as different motivations are unearthed that further complicate who the audience

can and cannot trust. Manipulation, deception and distortion of the truth further the disconnect between the audience and character they once trusted or even saw as the “good guys.” This is shown in “Gone Girl” as the audience slowly realizes they cannot trust the character they may have thought was the victim.

These thrilling depictions of mistrust and betrayal stay with viewers long after watching the film. That is because psychological thrillers rely on possible human behaviors and fears instead of the supernatural or larger than life villains. It is possible for someone you know to be completely different than who they say they are. It is possible for your closest friend to break your trust. It is possible for someone you are in a relationship with to manipulate you.

These are the reasons that the plots of many psychological thrillers stay with their audiences long after the credits roll. “Gone Girl” leaves viewers questioning their own reality as well as trying to figure out how they would react if they were placed in the same circumstances as the main characters. This does not make the film necessarily more scary than other horror movies, rather, a

different experience of fear in the same genre.

Creating a good psychological thriller requires a delicate balance of tension, paranoia and suspense. While some films in this category do have more dramatic scenes, most cannot fall back on shocking chase scenes or jumpscares.

This means that instead of a momentary spike in fear when the audience thinks the villain is about to capture the protagonists, the creators must manufacture an environment in which the viewer is questioning who the real villain even is.

“Gone Girl” is only one example of this subgenre of movies, but the list is expansive and includes some of the most critically acclaimed films in history. Movies like “Psycho,” “Silence of the Lambs” and “Get Out” have cemented themselves in cinematic history and are frequently referenced in popular culture.

So, while movies like “Gone Girl” might not have a jumpscare moment where we all throw our popcorn into the air, they can be just as unsettling as some of the best horror movies. During this Halloween season, give psychological thrillers a try, and you might find yourself unable to turn back.



Graphic by Caitlyn Comeaux

The lost art of doing nothing

Maggie Jordan
WRITER

When was the last time you did absolutely nothing? No watching television, no music playing in the background, no scrolling on your phone – just sitting with yourself and your own thoughts. How long did you wait before reaching for something to entertain you? How frequently is that “something” your cell phone?

The “death of boredom” refers to the modern eradication of empty, unstructured moments due to the constant desire for instant gratification. Cognitive and psychological studies, such as one performed by Emerald Publishing, reveal an interesting paradox. By trying to kill boredom with constant digital stimulation, we have actually made ourselves more chronically bored, restless and cognitively fatigued.

Recently, people have been reaching for stimulation before even giving themselves a moment to be bored. Unoccupied moments are quickly filled

with something that will trigger a quick burst of dopamine so that a user feels a sense of fulfillment.

This search for constant stimulation has made cell phone usage almost automatic. It’s more shocking to see someone without their phone than with it. If someone is standing in a line or waiting for a class to begin, chances are you will find them with their phone in their hands.

Weekly screen time is not the only thing that is affected by the constant cell phone usage; according to a National Institutes of Health article from 2025, excessive cell phone usage can lead to poor sleep quality, an addiction to dopamine signaling, depression and even physical problems such as low vision.

Beyond its effects on sleep and mental health, constant scrolling can also affect how people engage with content and prolong their attention. Dopamine is typically released from the brain when you scroll on social media, causing you to continue to do so until an addiction has built up and you can no longer sit

in boredom. Searching for dopamine highs has also been seen to affect the education of students, especially those belonging to Generation Alpha.

As they are often growing up as “iPad kids,” a child who is dependent on screen time for entertainment or behavioral regulation, they have noticeably lower literacy rates and math skills, with shorter attention spans overall.

They may also lack fundamental skills, such as handwriting and critical thinking. According to Howard University’s The Dig, these issues often lead to difficulties with emotional regulation and impaired social skills.

So, why is the death of boredom so scary? When we eliminate every quiet moment, we also eliminate opportunities for imagination to take shape. Spontaneous creativity has become incredibly scarce.

New thoughts that would not appear without the stream of content consumed every day cannot appear without boredom.

Separating yourself from the media you see daily allows you to daydream and develop more in-depth thoughts and make connections regarding the world around you.

People fear doing nothing.

People fear those empty moments that can feel like wasted time because productivity and entertainment have become so central to our everyday lives.

Of course, this doesn’t mean that technology is inherently bad. Entertainment is fun, and as humans, we naturally seek the cognitive stimulation that it gives.

The problem emerges when

there is no moderation to the entertainment being consumed and we begin to struggle to exist without it.

But what happens when we become uncomfortable with the absence of anything demanding our attention?

What will happen when boredom becomes something of the past? There’s a constant complaint of being overwhelmed or overly distracted, but as soon as the opportunity to have a moment without something demanding our attention presents itself, we still choose to fill it.

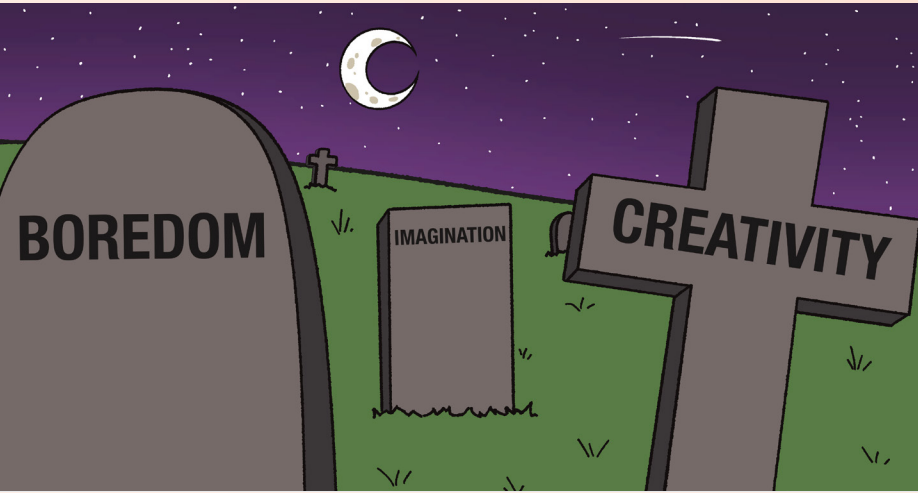
Boredom is not always pleasant, but it’s necessary for creating space for reflection, imagination and noticing the world around you.

Allow yourself to sit in your boredom. Turn off your phone and turn off the TV. Sit with your thoughts.

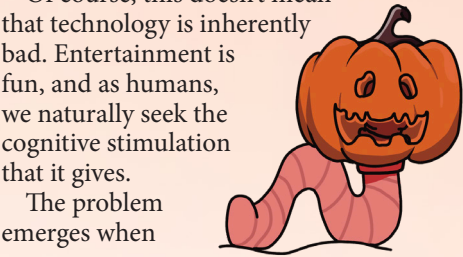
Find a creative outlet, such as something that forces you to be actively engaged instead of passively consuming content.

Sometimes, though, boredom will be just that: boring.

The value of boredom lies in allowing yourself to tolerate stillness rather than needing every moment to be productive in some way.



Graphic by Cade Plaisance



THE VERMILION

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SUBMISSIONS

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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Beaucoup

Urban Legends

The Beaucoup section writes about the urban legends they think could be true.



Graphic by Caitlyn Comeaux

Caitlyn Comeaux
MANAGING EDITOR

I am not even sure if this is an official or remotely popular urban legend, but I was told a frightening tale about scarecrows when I was on a third grade field trip that I still think about.

We had gone to some kind of farm, and the farmer who was giving us a tour explained to us that the scarecrows you see out in the fields were not just old clothes stuffed with hay on a post.

Joann Seow
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Though I don't necessarily believe in urban legends, I prefer to stay on the fence.

This is me being wary not to anger any "ghosts" or "demons" or any other mysterious, creepy figures that may or may not actually exist.

One I would say that I believe in of some sorts is Bloody Mary. I remember when I was little, I watched a horror

He said that scarecrows come alive at night, leave their posts and wander around the fields.

He warned us that they chase after anyone they find in the fields, and that crows are so scared of them because they know what they do at night.

I am almost certain that he was just trying to scare two dozen small children into not trespassing onto farmland, but I still find scarecrows unsettling.

Thankfully, I don't live near a farm!

movie with the concept of Bloody Mary, and that legend was forever ingrained in my mind.

I tried to be brave and prove to myself that it was not real.

I would stand in front of a mirror and chant the words "Bloody Mary" three times, but I never got past the second time in fear of what could happen.

Urban legends and mythical folklores give me the creeps whether or not they are real, and I prefer to protect my peace by not getting involved in any.

Morgan Parker
L'ACADIEN EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Out of all of the urban legends I've heard of, I think that the Navajo's tale about skinwalkers is the most likely to be true. I think most people have a sense of unease when they're in the woods at night. Coupled with the uncanny valley effect, which is when you feel uneasy about something that looks human but isn't, I don't think it's crazy to assume there may have been, or may still be,

Kinsey Waits
ALLONS EDITOR

Out of all the urban legends I've heard, I hope that Bigfoot is real. About a decade ago, my family and I took a trip to Tennessee. While relaxing in the hotel, my brother and I were scrolling through channels until we stumbled upon a show called "Finding Bigfoot" and were instantly obsessed.

We spent most of the night around the TV, drawn into

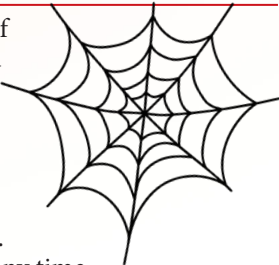
dangerous creatures that mimic humans.

The truth behind skinwalkers could also be that humans themselves are very good at mimicking the sounds of other animals, so it might be someone in the woods who is really good at impressions. Some animals too can develop prions similar to mad cow disease that could explain odd behavior exhibited by some wild animals.

Either way, I'm not whistling or staring off into the distance in rural America at night anytime soon.

the absurdity of a group of field researchers looking for clues about a creature that has never been proven to exist.

To this day, any time my family is gathered together, we rewatch our favorite episodes of "Finding Bigfoot," and at this point we have much of the dialogue memorized.



Cajun Crossword

Compiled by Vallen Power

No. 7

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

- 2. A traditional tactic in horror movies meant to scare the audience.
- 5. Mister UL is giving male students a chance to establish their own ____.
- 7. What is the main protein in the Pink Pony Club sandwich at Mercy Kitchen?

DOWN

- 1. Spontaneous ____ has become incredibly scarce.
- 3. The UL Lafayette Symphony Orchestra program features a " ____ " Medley and a piece called "Aladdin Suite" (two words).
- 4. Only notable free agent signing from the Pelicans this offseason (last name).
- 6. Who is the main character in "Obsession" (first name)?



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SOUNDING
OFF

“What is a superstition that you believe in?”



Tora Hassenboehler
VISUAL ARTS SOPHOMORE

“Whenever I’m working and it hasn’t been a bad day and I say out loud it hasn’t been bad today...”



Ryan Combs
NURSING FRESHMAN

“Aliens are real, I stand by that. And I feel like opening umbrellas indoors gives you bad luck...”



Gavin Hisaw
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING FRESHMAN

“I’m not really superstitious because I think things happen the way they’re supposed to happen...”



Olivier Petticrew
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY SOPHOMORE

“I am big on sports, I’m big on game days, like team socks, team clothes...”



Cali Pontiff
KINESIOLOGY FRESHMAN

“I see dragonflies as a sign that God is leading me in the right direction...”



Paige Hebert
CRIMINAL JUSTICE FRESHMAN

“I always have a bad day when I wear matching socks...”

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. Watch the full Sounding Off interviews on our Instagram @thevermilion.

Photos and interviews by Alyus Dick and Joann Seow

COMIC
Take One



Comic by Sadie Lynn Burrell

