Dear Reader,

The main message I want to communicate in this letter is one of gratitude. To the staff of Prism, for both seeking and spreading knowledge. To the entire editorial staff, especially Dalal, for their care and dedication. To Vedrana, the incoming Editor in Chief, for her competence and work ethic. To you, the Reader, for picking up a copy of this magazine.

When listening to the “Hamilton” soundtrack, I heard portions of George Washington’s (actual) farewell address that I think I can modify for my final letter as Editor in Chief of Prism. “Though, in reviewing the incidents of my administration, I am unconscious of intentional error, I am nevertheless too sensible of my defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty [Honors Program] to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope that my country [magazine staff] will never cease to view them with indulgence; and that, after forty five [2] years of my life dedicated to its service with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.”

Though it may be a while before I am “consigned to oblivion,” the notes of this address ring true. I am not perfect, and neither is this magazine; you may find a few misplaced commas, despite our best efforts. But I gave it my all, and I deeply care about every member of this staff. We made something to be proud of – we made an enlightening, entertaining product.

My mission with Prism was to create a teaching magazine, where every staff member and reader walks away knowing something new or learning a new skill. We aimed for unconventionality. You will judge if we have succeeded.

While I still have my soapbox, I want to give out some personal words of thanks. To my mother, you taught me to be thorough. The nights I see you awake, painstakingly editing a line of code – your attention to detail is in this magazine.

To my father, you made me want to teach. When I try to pass on whatever knowledge I have about writing and storytelling, I think of your dedication to your students.

To my Nanny, you inspire me. Long after your passing, I strive to mimic your grand vision and immense kindness in my life. I dedicate everything I do to you, and Prism owes you its originality. I hope that, if I reflect your values and urge others to do the same, your legacy will endure forever.

Now back to you, the Reader. Thank you thank you thank you. I hope you like this magazine, but more importantly, I hope that you go forward doing well and doing good.

Polite Valediction,
Caroline Nickerson
Prism Editor-in-Chief

Hello Reader!

I’ve worked on this magazine as part of the design staff for three semesters now and as design editor for another two and I have to say that though I’ve always felt I was leaving an imprint on Prism, I’ve come to realize Prism has left its imprint on me as well and that though I’m sad to be stepping down as design editor, I’m excited to see where the future of this publication goes. I’ve given us a new brand, held several design workshops for our staff, and spent hours editing spreads. I’ve done everything in my power to leave a legacy behind, but my real legacy lies in my staff. I’ve gotten to see a group of people grow and improve creatively and learn and build their skills and I am so, so proud of them. I’m hanging this magazine on my fridge.

I would like to give thanks to my dearest Caroline for working harder than anyone I know to produce the end-product that you are holding in your hands, my dedicated design staff for being so willing and ready to learn, and you, reader, for taking the time to look at all of our hard work. I hope more than anything that we’ve done you proud.

Go forth and conquer.
Dalal Semprun
Prism Design Editor
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Partners in the Park

Written by Alena Poulin
Design by Emily Crowell

As someone who has been involved with Girl Scouts for over a decade, people often assume that I have gained the camping experience to go with it. However, while I’ve roasted the occasional s’more over a campfire in my day, none of it could compare to the outdoor experiential learning provided by Partners in the Parks (PITP).

PITP is a program put on by the National Collegiate Honors Council, which aims to get honors students out into nature to experience and garner an appreciation for the national parks. Through UF Honors, I was able to attend a PITP trip to Cedar Breaks National Monument in Cedar City, UT, over the weekend of Martin Luther King, Jr., Day.

During the trip, I snowshoed into the park with four other students and two professors from the Southern Utah University Honors Program to the yurt where we would be staying. We carried in our food, water, clothes, and supplies for the next three days. Once in the park, we began the real fun and learning. We met with several rangers from different areas of the National Park Service and talked to them about their jobs and how they got to the place in their careers that they are at now. I was also able to develop relationships and network with other academically driven students from honors programs at different universities, as well as participate in lessons given by professors from a variety of disciplines.

The trips put on by PITP are not all work and no play, though. We were also able to participate in winter activities, such as sledding and snowshoeing, taking full advantage of the snow-covered scenery—which, to say the least, was much different from that of sunny Florida.

This experience gave me a deeper appreciation for nature and its diversity, helped me to better understand the urgency with which it needs our protection, and allowed for self-reflection and personal growth. I feel privileged to be one of the Partners in the Parks.
Our honors program is based out of the infirmary. Does no one think that it's strange? To me it’s a reflection of how little the Honors Program is valued by the UF community. They don’t even get their own tuition dollars. The argument is that it’s UF—all of us are smart. So why do we need an honors program? And the system as is, is thought to be fair and functional.

If you look sideways at the issue, the way some people think about the honors program is the way they think about Black students. That is, they don’t think anything needs to change. 7192. That's the number of first year students at this University. 440. That's the number of Black first year students. It's no wonder that we feel alone. And, even worse, we feel like tokens, like insignificant symbols of diversity on flyers. The University of Florida in general is majority-white, and the same is true of the Honors program to an extent that I’ve not yet grown accustomed to.

“There are opportunities still, with, actually, more visibility,” says TehQuin Forbes about his Honors experience. TehQuin is a Black fourth-year student with a strong presence on campus. Representation in Honors is something he’s not only passionate about—it’s his life. His list of involvement is long even when it only includes Honors programs, and he is well deserving of this recent induction into the UF Hall of Fame.

“The percentage of students who choose not to disclose their race is the same as the number of Black students in Honors. It’s funny that the number is the same. I am so involved because I want that visibility—I want to show it’s okay to be in Honors—not just for people who are like me, but also for other people of color.”

He has a point. When you’re Black in Honors, you’re not just representing yourself, or even just your own minority group. There’s this idea that anyone who sees us succeeding here would feel more empowered. Think of all those times someone asked, “Where is the representation? Where are the people of color?” and the answer was to point at one, single person. The Oscars issue is a joke to some but a reality to us. People like to play with the hashtag “#OscarsSoWhite,” but what about “#HonorsSoWhite?” What about “#UFSoWhite?”

I am a Black student in Honors. There are days I ask myself why I’m sticking it out here. They’ve never had to learn how to adapt to a space completely alone and not only survive, but also flourish. They’ve never had to explain away their ill treatment to stay sane. They don’t think about it. We know people are on fire for learning. That is why they’re here. But do you all know how much goes undiscovered because we don’t think about it? Knowledge is still power. Black knowledge is power.

And the truth is, we don’t think about it either. Black students are so used to fighting with one hand tied behind their back, Battle Royale style that they are used to the disadvantages. I think that this is the key to increasing Black enrollment, in the University and in the Honor Program. Recognize us for the value we are, the value we can bring. We don’t care about the flyers; tell us we’re worth it. Interact with us like any other student you’re trying to recruit. Often. UF doesn’t even send recruiters out to speak to our demographic, so why are you surprised when we go to another college that actually acknowledges we exist? Tell us UF is possible for us.

Ciara Styles, a third-year honors student from Orlando, didn’t even apply because she didn’t think she could get it. She’s here because of the Lombardi Scholar program.

“Looking back, I felt unqualified. The info sessions only tell you what you need and don’t emphasize the benefits. Now I know Honors is what you make it, but then there was no draw—there could be a draw with representation.”

“You can’t just say, ‘Oh, I’ll keep doing what I’m doing,’ because that just keeps on getting you all these white children,” Styles adds. “There needs to be something for students from underrepresented backgrounds, like an H-Camp just for them, but again, I worry about not having enough participants to even initially foster this.”

The consensus? Visibility is lazy, inclusion is commendable. “There’s no real celebration of differences. You don’t seek me out for anything else in Honors—and a lot of organizations do this. UF as a whole has this problem,” said Styles.

UF has grown content. This is the main issue. With such a rich history of racism, we can’t start patting ourselves on the back when only one out of sixteen students are Black. It’s actually really sad, because when the university doesn’t care, we have to deal with the consequences. We are leaving and will continue to leave if nothing changes. Honors is a community of scholars, and we’re confident that, perhaps through more targeted outreach, it could lead the way in terms of university inclusivity. We hope that this article helped address the issue, helped increase the visibility, and we’re grateful Honors gave us the chance to talk about it.
No sleep. Caffeine. Looming deadlines. Sometimes, a student has to burn the candle from both ends. Lloyd Justo of Prism ventured into Marston at 4 AM the week of mid-terms to document the University of Florida’s unsung heroes: students pulling all-nighters. These are their stories.

Daniel, a first-year computer engineering major, usually “can’t be found” during these early hours. Still, he reported that he was “feeling okay.”

Roberto and Steve, both engineering seniors, often stay up the entire night before an exam. Roberto said he was extremely tired, and Steve credited his continued consciousness to the fact that coffee prevented him from sleeping.
Kaleb and Kaylyn, both junior family, youth, and community sciences majors, study together in an attempt to stay awake. They stayed at Library West from 10:30 PM until 1:15 AM, but then migrated to Marston. Kaleb said he was writing a paper about “social and economic perspectives on community issues.” Kaylyn drank her last cup of coffee at 1:30 AM. In general, she recommended that late-night studiers “stay away from sugar,” as it can interfere with focused studying – she definitely regretted her chai tea latte with a shot of expresso.

Maury, a senior, and Thomas, a sophomore, are both computer science engineering majors. Maury, a senior indicated that she, as a person, “always ends up doing an all-nighter.” The Prism medical staff have diagnosed her with “senioritis.” Thomas, studying for digital logic, told us that he was “calling it a night” because of his looming 7:25 AM presentation. Thomas felt “very accomplished.”

< Our last subject, Austin, remained positive despite his unfortunate and unintended prolonged study session. Though he missed the last bus home by five minutes, he flashed us an upbeat two thumbs-up. His thoughts on the matter? “Whatever.”
Community. Safe Haven. Family.
To its members, Islam on Campus is so much more than just a club to attend at UF, more than just a service organization, more than just a religious group. Yes, it is all those things, but it also provides a platform for connection and education.

“I was able to instantly meet and connect with people from all over that had similar ideals and backgrounds,” said Amna Qureshi, a freshman psychology major. “Islam on Campus allowed me to become part of a welcoming community, which has really helped with homesickness and made my transition to UF from Orlando much easier.”

“Many students at UF join organizations to find their home away from home and that’s what Islam on Campus has done for me in my two years thus far,” said sophomore Azmeer Khamisani, majoring in Applied Physiology and Kinesiology and minoring in business. “I've met people I hope to know for more than just my college tenure. It has given me opportunities to grow as a leader and gain spiritual knowledge in an accessible way to students.”

Yet Islam on Campus isn’t simply for the fellowship of its members. They’ve put on events ranging from Fast-A-Thon, Islam Appreciation Month events, bonfires, and social and spiritual events.

“I absolutely love listening to the awesome speakers that we bring out to talk about relevant topics regarding spirituality and the role of Muslim students when facing trials and tribulations,” said junior Rashhan Siddique, majoring in electrical engineering.

“We try to bring a community of Muslims together at UF and work with other organizations to hold events, especially social events for the education of the public and UF students,” added Khamisani.

For Sama Azam, a senior majoring in Anthropology, IOC’s Fast-A-Thon not only was a celebration of rites sacred to her, but also an opportunity to share her faith and culture with friends.

“I feel that the traditional introduction speech the Imam makes before breaking the fast during the annual Fast-a-Thon is very moving,” said Azam. “All members partake in the event, and both Islamic and non-Islamic people listen keenly as he speaks of the moral reasons behind fasting and the beauty of Islam as a whole. I took a friend of mine and although she considers herself an Atheist, she found that the imam’s message was very insightful and...
Another of IOC’s largest events is their participation in Islam Appreciation Month. Designed to “build bridges and break barriers,” inter-faith mingling and interactive activities provide an opportunity for non-Muslims and Muslims alike to find common ground and gain a deeper understanding of Islam. Celebrations ranged from a fair with henna artwork and cultural food, to lectures addressing Islamophobia and common misconceptions about Islam, to a bonfire where Qiyam, a traditional prayer, was spoken over s’mores and hot dogs, to even Hijab Day, where participants alike were able to don a hijab for the day to explore a woman’s role in Islam.

“Islam on Campus has three words that represent their purpose on their website: learn, practice, and share,” said Qureshi. “IOC encourages continuous learning, practicing what is learned, and to share what is learned with others.”

“After speaking with several people of different faiths and backgrounds, they all enjoy and appreciate what IOC does by holding events to break barriers about Islamophobia and holding events such as Fast-A-Thon to unite the Gainesville community to raise money for the less fortunate,” said Siddique. Nevertheless, anti-Islamic sentiment has not disappeared simply after a few successful campus events. Less than welcoming attitudes persist occasionally, and IOC hosts campus-wide events in an effort to better educate the Gainesville community on the differences between the religion of Islam and those who practice it, including those who take it to violent extremes.

“As Muslims, it is our duty to enjoin good and forbid evil, and this includes denouncing terrorist organizations like ISIS because what they claim about Islam is absolutely false,” said Siddique. “I believe that Muslims should combat the negative perceptions about Islam but at the same time, it is for ALL of us, Muslims and non-Muslims to learn about the religion and the history of the negative perceptions and Islamophobia.”

“Overall I do feel like Gainesville is a safe, friendly and supportive environment but there have been a few exceptions every now and then, as expected,” said Khamisani. “I do not personally feel a responsibility to combat negative perceptions directly because then it becomes a back and forth between attacking and being defensive. The best way is for people to let their actions be their argument.”

Moving into the future, Khamisani, Qureshi, Azam, and Siddique all agree that IOC should send out a message of peace, and continue to act as a non-discriminatory educator for the UF community and beyond.

“The one message I hope this organization sends is simply one that makes people aware of the difference between religion and the people who follow the religion,” said Khamisani. “Islam preaches peace, regardless of what is going on in the world right now.”
Here at UF, we tend to be incredibly proud of our athletic programs and the great athletes that come out of them. This is for good reason; so many of our athletes have gone on to accomplish great things in their respective sports. For example, we have created numerous Olympic athletes and gold medalists like soccer player Abby Wambach, professional swimmers Dana Vollmer, Dara Torres, and Ryan Lochte, and Olympic gold medalist track and field runner Bernard Williams. Most notably at UF, we tend to revere our Heisman Trophy winner football players: Tim Tebow, Steve Spurrier, and Danny Wuerffel. In 2011, we even erected three bronze statues to honor these men outside of Ben Hill Griffin Stadium.

Although the amount of pride we gators have for these athletes cannot be understated, it is also important to recognize the great achievements of UF alumni in areas outside of the sports arena. Few members of the Gator Nation are fully aware of the long list of accomplished scientists, authors, artists, TV personalities, directors and politicians who have matriculated through UF. In fact, two alumni of UF were awarded Nobel Prizes, and eight alumni have become NASA astronauts.

The two gators to receive the Nobel Prize are Robert Grubbs, an organic chemist who won his Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his work on the olefin metathesis mechanism, and Marshall Warren Nirenberg, a biochemist and geneticist who won a Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for “breaking the genetic code” and describing how it operates in protein synthesis. Multiple petitions exist online for the creation of statues to honor the great accomplishments of these men, just like our Heisman Trophy winners. It’s true, as members of a top 40 US institution, we should be just as proud of our outstanding academicians as we are of our outstanding athletes.

UF has also yielded many notable creators of useful inventions, novels, and works of art. For example, gator alumnum and scientist John Atanasoff invented the first electronic digital computer. Also, famous crime fiction and detective novelist Michael Connelly graduated from UF, along with Carl Hassen, author of the wildly successful novel-turned-film Hoot. Also, UF alumnus and pop artist James Rizzi achieved fame and recognition for his “linear, childlike style, vibrant colours and zany imagery”.

The list of great members of the Gator Nation would be incomplete without mentioning the many iconic entertainers and personalities that have come through this institution. Beloved actor, dancer, and entertainer Buddy Ebsen graduated from UF before starring in successful 1960s films, Beverly Hillbillies and Breakfast at Tiffany’s. Former gator Faye Dunaway, star of Bonnie and Clyde and Chinatown, received an Academy Award for best actress in 1977. Another great gator alum in the entertainment industry is Jonathan Demme, Academy Award winning director of Silence of the Lambs.

Also noteworthy is that Melinda Lou “Wendy” Thomas, daughter of Dave Thomas, owner of the Wendy’s restaurant chain graduated from UF. Also, GOP presidential candidate and Florida senator Marco Rubio graduated from this great university.

Great UF Grads: INVENTIONS & INNOVATION from UF

Article by Laurel Tanke
Design by Andi Crowell
Courses in history generally refer to the Renaissance as a “rebirth” associated with monumental changes manifested in art, architecture, and science. Scholars tout the contributions of classical antiquity to the Renaissance, but many times, they say little of the contributions of the Middle Ages. Yet the developments made in the Middle Ages helped to make possible the “rebirth” that occurred in the following centuries.

Next fall, the Honors Program will offer a new course, “Engineering the Renaissance,” that explores these developments through a study of the field of engineering around the time of the Renaissance. The three-credit course will be team-taught by Dr. Mark Law, an engineer and the director of the Honors Program, along with Dr. Mary Watt, a professor of Medieval and Early Modern Studies.

“The course will focus on innovations of the late medieval period and the early Renaissance,” explains Dr. Law. “[We will examine how] innovation was driven by society and vice versa.”

The course requires an interdisciplinary approach with an emphasis on both engineering and Medieval and Early Modern Studies. Dr. Law came up with the idea for the course after “stumbling across” Cathedral, Forge, and Waterwheel, a book detailing some of the innovations of the Medieval Ages. He contacted Dr. Watt about creating a course related to this subject and these ideas.

“I was extremely excited by the possibility of exploring how the cultural spirit of the late Middle Ages drove the innovations in engineering that led to the marvels of the Renaissance,” explains Dr. Watt. “[I had worked with Dr. Law] before on several administrative matters so I already knew what a dynamic and engaged educator he is. A few of our shared interests suggested to us that combining our two fields could create a really great learning experience for students and for us.”

To facilitate this experience, Dr. Law and Dr. Watt will incorporate several different teaching strategies. They will devote one of the three hours each week to lectures, films, and readings, and they will use other two hours for projects and discussions. Building endeavors are among Dr. Law’s ideas for projects.

 “[Students might] construct a windmill and measure its power output,” Dr. Law proposes.

The engineering applications are clear, but the historical aspects of the projects will be an integral piece of the endeavor as well.

“I am hopeful that as students approach the building projects I can provide them with the information and perspective they need to think about the purpose for which these machines were originally designed, the historical context in which they were imagined and the challenges their realization presented to the original builders, “ Dr. Watt explains.

Furthermore, through the course, students may gain insight into the ways in which the historical perspective can inform the present one.

“I would like students to understand the crucial role that imagination and creative innovation play in creating a world that not only serves our present needs but can also adapt as our needs and sense of place in the world evolve,” Dr. Watt says.

The course is designed for both engineering and humanities students. In fact, Dr. Law states that he hopes the course will “attract and equal number” of these students. Though the course will be offered for the first time in the fall and is only scheduled for that semester, he is open to offering it subsequent semesters as well.

“I would love to see it offered regularly, but it depends on student interest,” Dr. Law says.

If the “student interest” is there, it will not only mean that the course will likely be offered again, but it also means that, just maybe, the Renaissance will be seen as a time of rebirth made possible by the engineering advances of the Middle Ages.
Study Edge founder Ethan Fieldman shared some of the story behind his incredibly successful company, his thoughts on education, and his experience as an Honors gator.

Q: What was your experience in the UF Honors program like?
A: I graduated 2003, and back then the Honors program didn’t have as many requirements. It’s grown to be something much more exciting. I’m really jealous of Hume, because there was no honors dorm when I attended. I liked living on the honors floor of Weaver hall -- it was great. It helped make a big university smaller, and I still have a core group of old honors friends. One of my favorite memories is MudFest sophomore year. Back then, it was really physical and really competitive. Even though we were the “honors” team, we had a bunch of really big guys on our team. We ended up being the first honors team to win the main event.

Q: Many members of your staff are former honors students. Is that a coincidence or is there something behind that correlation?
A: 90% of full time tutors at Study Edge are former honors students. Study Edge looks for creative, hardworking people, the cool nerds at UF, because they have to be fun and exciting on camera. The Honors program happens to look for similar qualities. It’s not something a candidate needs to have, but we give preferential treatment to honors students, and it’s definitely something someone should put on their resume if they want an internship or job.

We’re always hiring students, and currently have over 100 students working for us part time. We also have this really cool internship opportunity in the fall to help us with the real life 101 course. You can get one or two credits from the Honors program for it, and we’re working with them to make it the best internship, with credit, pay, and experience. We go through real life topics that aren’t taught in college, like taxes, health care programs, how to buy a house, and other stuff you need to know after you graduate. For example, we did this really great video with Dr. Emma Humphries from the Bob Graham Center for Public Service where she explains the difference between a primary and a caucus. It’s three minutes and it’s really funny. We take videos from our internship and put them up for free to watch.

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about how Study Edge started or some of your inspirations?
A: I was a National Merit Scholar, so UF gave me what seemed like a lot of money, but I was having a lot of fun and didn’t realize how fast it could run out. I printed flyers from Target Copy advertising a review for the next managerial accounting exam for an optional five-dollar fee at a room in my fraternity house. 110 people showed up. The next time, I charged ten dollars, 300 people came, and I made $3000 cash.

As a company, our inspiration is really to do what students want.

Q: How has your college experience influenced the Study Edge model?
A: I might be getting philosophical here, but the problem with weed out courses is that the professor cannot be on your side. They have a set number of people who can pass and who can fail so that there aren’t too many people in the major. They know exactly what is on the exam, but they have to hold back on what they can tell you, because they have to be on the side of the exam. You can’t have a situation where everyone does well and learns and gets a good grade. I don’t think professors should write their own exam. It’s like banks regulating themselves. For example, high school students taking Algebra 1 have to take an end of course exam written by the government. Teachers do everything they can to teach what is on the test. They’re on the side of the student. If we had nationwide exams, we would be able to know how UF students are doing in their courses in comparison to students at other universities. Also, what bothers me is that different professors will teach different concepts even though they teach the same course. So students in the same course with different professors can’t study together and don’t learn the same stuff, even though they both need the course. Professors should really work together to design courses and write exams.

Q: What are some of the most interesting and rewarding aspects of your job?
A: We’ve had a lot of opportunities to collaborate and big companies will come to us. The College of Education at UF reached out to us and we created Algebra Nation, which is a free platform to help students and teachers with the end of course Algebra 1 exam. Over a quarter of a million students use it.

The people who work here are cool and I get to come in and hang out with friends. It’s fun. The only days I take off are home football games. We get a lot of thank-yous from students. We get appreciation and feedback from students, state legislators, and teachers. We keep prices down and aim to provide a high quality product. We’ll get parent emails a lot saying thanks. The fact that we have set memberships is really nice, because it doesn’t matter if you have a lot of money. Everyone gets the same best effort that we have. I like really like our pricing model and it’s gone really well. Nobody’s done a monthly membership model for tutoring before. Also, it’s a small company and there’s no board of directors. I can make decisions and our tutors make decisions. I like that we make a lot of changes every semester.
In the 2010-2011 school year, Michelle Marie founded the University of Florida Alzheimer’s Outreach Organization so that students could foster emotionally rich relationships with residents in the memory ward of an assisted-living facility. In 2016, this organization continues to bring together a small variety of students to Brookdale Senior Living Solutions, formerly known as Emeritus Retirement Home. Every Sunday, from 1 to 3 PM, the club’s officers and volunteers bring their instruments, magazines, books, and unbridled compassion for the elderly to the home. In fact, you may have heard of this club before in the Honors Daily, through their posts and occasional calls for volunteers.

Alzheimer’s Outreach volunteers exclusively visit the residents who suffer from forms of memory loss, such as dementia or Alzheimer’s, and interact with them. Common activities include bingo, one-on-one conversations, walks in Brookdale’s garden, and ice cream socials. Members also have the opportunity to participate in Gainesville’s annual Walk to End Alzheimer’s in October.

One of the most poignant features of the club is why members decide to join—their reasons are often personal, altruistic, or both. Alzheimer Outreach’s Organization’s current vice president, Di Xia, started volunteering in early 2014 because of her experience as one of her grandparents’ caregivers when they were diagnosed with senile dementia in 2012.

“Volunteering with UF Alzheimer’s Outreach gives me the satisfaction of being able to help,” Di shared. “As time goes by, I find that the ties that I have developed with the residents make the volunteering experience even more meaningful.”

In fact, she has a remarkably close friendship with one of the residents. On rare occasions in which Di is unable to volunteer, this resident asks the other volunteers, “Where is Di?”

This organization offers incredible opportunities for first-hand interaction with memory care patients. Its volunteers show incredible passion and dedication, fully embodying the spirit of kindness.
Advice from Honors

Mark Law
The advice I usually give is to explore the diversity of campus. We have about as many majors as anybody in the country, so we have experts in everything from spiders to Shakespeare. So if you’re interested in something, like if you’re Pre-Med but if you’ve always been interested in the Middle East, then take a course in it, because you won’t get the opportunity later in life. You might end up discovering a passion you didn’t know you had.

Kristy Spear
So, I would say, definitely don’t shy away from those diverse experiences. Don’t try to get too tunnel-visioned and narrowly focused, because there are a lot of things to get involved with here. But also try to find the right balance for you, so if you are trying a bunch of different things, find those things that you are really passionate about and try to focus on those and be successful in those as opposed to spreading yourself too thin.

Nardin Derias
I wish that when I was a freshman that someone had told me it was okay to fail. Transitioning to college is no easy task, but acknowledging when we need help and being able to get back up from failure and rejections is how we learn and grow. When I was a freshman, I was afraid to ask for help, but I would like to tell incoming Honors freshman that it is alright to ask for it if you need it. We have so much support within the Honors Program: the Honors advisors, your Honors Gators. Everyone wants to see you succeed. Always follow your heart, pursue your passions, and do not any potential roadblocks stop you from achieving your dreams.

David Prida
Never be afraid to ask for help. In high school, many of us were very successful students, so it’s almost strange to be lost or confused. But once I realized that there were so many people willing to help, it made all the difference.

Regan Garner
Well, for Honors students, I think good advice would be chill out sometimes. We want you to strive, but to strive in a healthy way, and to stay healthy mentally as well as physically. Keep working out, keep talking to your friends, things like that, while you strive—use the Honors Daily as a resource to give you all kinds of ideas about things to do and see, but don’t let it paralyze you with all of the things you have to do. So do that, and don’t try to do everything. And don’t worry if you don’t get into Cicerones, because it doesn’t matter.

Melissa Johnson
I really like to tell students that the program won’t be what you have envisioned it to be. It’s not like other honors programs in the country because it’s a full-fledged holistic experience. The Honors Program won’t do anything for you unless you choose to be engaged with it. The students that get the most involved get the most out of it.

Amanda Gramacy
I would say just to really step out of your comfort zone. Have more self-confidence. Out of high school, you may think, “Oh I want to do? What I was involved in in high school?” Yet you’d be surprised at what you would actually end up enjoy doing. You never really know what could attract you, so I would just come in with an open mind and try to be someone you weren’t, maybe?

Amy Sapp
Do NOT be afraid to try, try, try and fail, fail, fail. I applied for 12 positions freshman fall and received only 1 of them! Today, I wish I could go back to my 18-year-old self and say, “It’s OKAY to FAIL!” Trust me. It is! Also, do not be shy about reaching out to individuals whom you admire and asking to grab coffee with them. I learned this while living in NYC and DC last year; often, those individuals who are the most talented are also the most eager to invest in you. Be honest, open, and confident.
and, based on the last local elections in Baden-Württemberg (one of the Germany’s 16 federal states) in March, shifting from democratic to more right wing parties.

Initially supposed to go to France, the 13-year-old boy’s family was forced to make alternate plans. The person they trusted for safe passage to France reneged on the agreement.

“The smuggler just took the money and disappeared, so we had to figure out the way on our own and start walking,” the boy clarified in near-perfect English.

In addition to English, he speaks his native Kurdish and Arabic, as well as some German. His language skills were an advantage as the family entered through Turkey and continued their painful journey to Germany. Sleeping in the woods, dealing with the cold weather and poor amount of food supplies, they eventually managed to reach safe ground.

“We brought mostly clothes. I wanted to bring my PlayStation 3, but of course, I couldn’t,” the boy joked, with a laugh and slight shrug of his shoulders.

The refugee camp in Mannheim is a former military complex, where around four thousand refugees, mostly families, currently live. The camp is clean and big with consistently structured military buildings. It is suitable for children who can freely ride bicycles, rollerblades and little scooters without the danger of traffic.

The police protect the camps at all times, which is more than necessary considering the camps were burned down by the right wing extremists. According to the “Tagesschau,”

The short boy runs toward the ball, laughing as his tiny legs weave among his little friends on the football field. Right foot, left foot, then a turn, and he makes it to the goal. Though missing his mark, he dashes back for a new attack. His verve make him look just like any other boy engaged in play -- except that he carries a legal and social label that reads “refugee.”

Mannheim’s Institute of Sports organizes these football training sessions for children 8 to 15 years old – an essential part of the project to ease assimilation for refugees in Germany.

Four months ago, the 13-year-old boy trudged from Iraq to Germany with his mother and two older sisters, searching for a safe and normal life. They fled from religious- and war-related conflicts.

For the boy’s family, this is the second camp they were sent to, after Heidelberg, a city south of Mannheim. Soon, they will be transferred to a new camp. The identity of the boy will be protected for his safety. Visibly concerned, he cast furtive glances to each side and nervously shoved his hands into and out of his tracksuit pockets.

“I’m afraid that if they (the Iraqi people) find out that we’re here, they will come and kill my sisters,” the boy divulged. The boy and his family are among the wave of more than million migrants and refugees who came to Europe in 2015 as so-called “Syrian refugee crisis.” The constant media coverage includes statistics and issues associated with the crisis, as well as Eurostat’s list of top five countries of origin for the refugees – Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo and Albania.

Germany is, by far, the most desired country to settle in. The opinions of Germans toward the migrants are diverse.

the German daily news broadcast, there were 924 cases of mistreatments of the refugee camps in 2015, which includes breaking the furniture, threatening refugees’ safety and the burning down of the camps’ facilities. Despite the Mannheim camp’s safety characteristics, it is also somewhat isolated. Though permitted to leave, the refugees very rarely venture out of the camp and into the city center.

“I like it in the camp here; it’s better than in my own country. But it’s also boring. Just eating - sitting, eating - sitting. We will become fat,” the boy teased. His laugh was honest and audible. A wide smile lightened some of the gloomy shadows on his dark complexion.

“I don’t really like the food. It is not tasty and they don’t put any salt in it. In Iraq, we’re used to salty food, with lots of spices and sauces,” he confessed.

To pass the time, he likes to play football and violent video games, through which he learned English. Every Wednesday and Saturday, two trainers or coaches from the Institute of Sports come to coordinate the football training sessions. One of the coordinators is Dominik Hölter, 24, from Stuttgart, Germany.

“It feels great to be part of this project because you get to see the smiles on children’s faces,” emphasized Hölter, a business master’s student in Mannheim. “The reason why the Institute of Sports organizes the games is to improve the children’s lives. Of course, children always want to play, but when they see us, they become very fascinated to see people from outside.”

The language barrier remains the biggest difficulty for this project. Most of the children speak only in their own languages and dialects. The Institute’s main coach speaks Arabic, so it makes it easier to communicate. When he’s not there, the 13-year-old Iraqi boy helps with the
The Refugee Crisis Within Germany

When there were actually many more people is extremely expensive, the German economy can handle it. Additionally, those people think that it's not the German problem. Gertis views politicians and citizens who say that it's not the German problem with skepticism. Those people think that the refugees should not intervene with the German life. Describing his thoughts and to ask a rather heart-glimmering brown eyes, and then interrupts his thoughts and to ask a rather heart-breaking question.

The right-extreme parties are mostly successful in the places with the least refugees and migrants. In general, that's funny, because those people who experience the immigrants the least are worried the most. I think that says a lot about the situation and the mindset of people,” clarified David Gertis, 25, a business mathematics master’s student originally from Engen.

At the beginning of the current migration crisis, the Germans were extremely helpful, collecting even more supplies, such as clothes, furniture and food, than there were workers and volunteers to sort them out and distribute. That same general public is now more scared for the future of its country. Gertis views politicians and citizens who say that it's not the German problem with skepticism. Those people think that the refugees should not intervene with the good and peaceful German life. Additionally, he thinks that even though the financial calculations indicate that accepting that many people is extremely expensive, the German economy can handle it.

“Let’s think of the second World War, when there were actually many more German refugees, probably around 10 million. So think about 10 million people leaving their own country, and what did the people do at that time? They helped us. Isn't it our obligation now to help in a situation where it is not so hard for us to help?” Gertis asked.

In opposition, Alternative for Germany (AfD), is gaining more support from the citizens based on opposition to German chancellor Angela Merkel’s open-door refugee policy. In the German media, the party has been labeled as the “right-wing” and “populist”, even though its representatives claim for the party to be conservative and just like any other political party. AfD has been criticized for opposing everything without offering a concrete solution. “Der Spiegel,” the Germany’s most popular political magazine, puts the party into the populist frame, gaining support mostly from Internet and from developing quick, provocative messages. Despite growing criticism at home and abroad, Merkel continues to insist that Germany can and should accommodate up to 1 million refugees this year. Claus Nielsen, the AfD’s Mannheim spokesman, questioned the disproportional distribution of refugees in Europe.

“We want all the European countries to help us, but no other European country would help. A concrete example: France will take 30,000 refugees, and that is what is coming in one weekend to Munich. The UK will take 7,500. The interesting question is: Why isn't the United States of America taking any refugees?” said Nielsen, who is originally from Denmark.

The biggest issue Nielsen and AfD see is the lack of strategy in Merkel’s plan. “Mrs. Merkel has no idea what to do with these people, she has no idea where they should live, how they can work in Germany and that is the big problem. She has no plan,” he argued.

Likewise, AfD conservatives have not proposed concrete solutions for the crisis. However, they want the problem to be solved outside of Germany. “We should help the foreigners in the countries where they’re coming from, and not in Europe,” emphasized Nielsen. “We should help them in Syria, in Egypt with jobs, with humanitarian work and everything, but not let them move to Europe.”

A somewhat different perspective comes from 26-year-old business mathematics master’s student Vitali Bauer, a Russian German whose family came from Russia to Germany in 1997, when he was 8 years old. Bauer distinguished between different waves of immigration, mainly the people who came to Germany from the Soviet Union, the ‘60s and ‘70s wave of guest workers, and the ‘90s migrants from former Yugoslavia.

“Today, Germany needs more highly educated workers. That's why I think the integration of current refugees won’t work as it did, for example, 20 or 30 years ago,” explained Bauer. “I think the best way to integrate people is to let them work and let them do something useful. As far as I know, most of the immigrants now don’t have the qualifications to get a job.”

The shift in public opinion in Germany towards the refugees is growing exponentially. The people were welcoming at the beginning of the immigration, and now, as the negative media coverage and reports about the refugees started blowing the everyday newsfeeds, the citizens are more anxious about the whole situation. The rising right-wing parties opposing the refugees coming in have gained more followers and political power. From this point on, the refugees have all been put in one basket associated with bad and negative connotations.

Despite the different public opinions and political debates about the correct decisions and solutions for the refugee crisis, all the little Iraqi boy wants is a normal life in Germany. Describing his simple and honest hopes and expectations for the future, the boy, who will turn 14 on May 7, eagerly raises his eye-brows above big glimmering brown eyes, and then interrupts his thoughts and to ask a rather heart-breaking question.

“What do I need to do to become a professional football player? Do you think that's possible for me?”
When we see the word antibiotic what comes to mind are life-saving drugs, medicinal treatment, and germ-fighting antidotes, remedies, etc. But there’s another word, a far less positive word, that is associated with our use of antibiotics today: epidemic.

Define epidemic: a widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time.

Antibiotics are supposed to help prevent epidemics. And yet, they may actually be causing the worst epidemic facing the human race today. The very thing that has been fighting infections for years could now be the cause of mankind’s destruction. Why? Antibiotic resistance.

Most freshman biology classes explain how an antibiotic works. Antibiotics were developed to fight infections caused by bacteria such as meningitis, MRSA, strep throat, and even simple infections such as sinus and ear infections. They work in one of two ways:
1. They stop bacteria from multiplying
2. They kill bacteria
 Either way, the result is the same. The infection is stopped and the patient is cured. But that is assuming that the antibiotics are not facing bacteria that have evolved and adapted to become resistant to traditional antibiotics. There remains the possibility that we are facing a whole new strain of “superbug” on which antibiotics have no effect.

Penicillin was introduced into bacteria populations in 1943, and by 1945 penicillin resistance had been identified in some strains of bacteria. Originally, resistance was attributed to genetic mutation in bacteria that resulted from selective pressure. However, scientists soon realized that an overuse of antibiotics was putting a biological pressure on bacteria that caused more rapid mutations and adaptations. The process of conjugation (transfer of genetic material between bacteria) then allows resistant bacteria to transfer their resistant genes to other bacteria. Resistance is spreading faster than ever and is now rendering certain antibiotics null and void.

What is meant by the “overuse of antibiotics”? How can we use too much of a life-saving medicine? It turns out that antibiotics are being over-prescribed. According to the World Health Organization’s antimicrobial resistance coordinator, Dr. Charles Penn, antibiotics are often prescribed for no useful purpose. There is a poor understanding of the difference between viruses, bacteria, and other pathogens. For example, antibiotics are sometimes prescribed for cold and flu viruses and create no positive effect. In fact, dosing ourselves with an unnecessary amount of antibiotics only attacks bacteria present in your body that are not harmful. These bacteria must then develop resistance and may then transfer that resistance to more harmful bacteria.

The misuse of antibiotics is another contributor in the development of bacterial resistance. A common occurrence among patients who take antibiotics is not taking the recommended dosage. Patients stop taking their antibiotics once they start feeling better instead of finishing the full round of treatment. As a consequence, the antibiotics do not finish killing off the bacteria. Now the bacteria have been exposed to the antibiotic and can develop resistance and return with a vengeance. The previous antibiotic used will not be effective and a more powerful one must be prescribed. If this cycle continues, superbugs can develop. Superbugs are resistant to even the most powerful antibiotics and cannot be treated, resulting in dire consequences for the person infected.

The Mayo Clinic documents approximately 23,000 deaths from antibiotic-resistant infections annually in the US alone. Worldwide numbers have been estimated as high as 700,000 deaths annually. In the past decade, the science of developing new antibiotics has slowed, whereas bacteria are adapting faster than ever. If the upward trend in antibiotic resistance continues, society could end up back where it started: dying from simple infections. What were once our greatest weapons have turned against us, leaving more dangerous enemies in their place. We are one step away from creating a superbug that cannot be treated. An epidemic is just waiting to happen and antibiotic resistance will be our downfall.
We’re all used to the marketing ploys: “Antibacterial soap kills 99.9% of germs!” It might come as a shock to know that this claim is misleading. Then again, when aren’t advertisements misleading? Cleaning companies define “germs” in many different ways and often will not include viruses, fungi, or protozoans in their definition. Germs may also be the good bacteria that are naturally on your hands. So what do antibacterial products really do?

It turns out that there is little difference in the effectiveness of antibacterial soap and regular soap. Antibacterial soaps tend to contain only one or two more ingredients, the most common one being triclosan. Triclosan is the “bacteria-killing” ingredient that actually doesn’t kill bacteria. In 2013 the FDA released this statement:

“Millions of Americans use antibacterial hand soap and body wash products. Although consumers generally view these products as effective tools to help prevent the spread of germs, there is currently no evidence that they are any more effective at preventing illness than washing with plain soap and water. Antibacterial products are not providing any benefits. In fact, they may be harmful. Similar to the vast overuse of antibiotics leads to antibiotic resistance, overuse of antibacterial soaps can lead to bacterial resistance. Because the antibacterial products are being used constantly, the bacteria are evolving resistance to these soaps and more superbugs can develop. Not only are we creating bacteria that are going to be immune to basic cleaning supplies, but antibacterial soaps are also harming our good germs. When we use products with triclosan, the ingredient cannot tell the difference between good and bad bacteria, it just tries to kill whatever it comes across. By attacking our good bacteria, we are weakening our immune systems and making us more vulnerable to the super-bacteria.

Just as we should stop using so many antibiotics, we should stop using so many antibacterial cleaners! The age of resistance is upon us due to overuse of such products!
For many years, Florida water sources have been under duress. Water quality has diminished throughout the state. The culprit? Much of the time, the problems associated with water pollution can be traced back to the agricultural industries in the state. In an attempt to combat the agents of pollution (such as nitrates from the fertilizer industry, cattle farm sewage, pesticides from crop monocultures, and other various forms of non-point source pollution), the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) began officially implementing Best Management Practices (BMP’s) in 2009. Although they have existed informally for many years, as far back as the 1970’s, BMP’s have only recently become the popular state-imposed solution to protecting water quality. The type of practice varies among the industries and different businesses, but all are focused on reducing and mitigating the negative environmental impacts that result from agriculture to the Florida aquifer.

The current Commissioner of FDACS, Adam Putnam, has been heavily involved in promoting BMP’s. He touts BMP’s as a state solution towards environmental problems. Commissioner Putnam has been critical of federal intervention into agricultural water quality issues by the national Environmental Protection Agency, as he does not want the EPA to enact a “power grab” on Florida’s water programs and “threaten” the “sound environmental programs” that Florida agriculture has developed with larger proposed federal regulation of water by the EPA. BMP’s are broken down into two types of BMP’s: structural and management. Management BMP’s are the most common, and they include nutrient and irrigation management. Structural BMP’s include water control structures, fencing, and tailwater recovery systems. BMP’s are usually recommended as “economically feasible”.

There have been many supporters of BMP’s throughout Florida for the last five years at a bipartisan level. In 2013, the State legislature passed an Everglades restoration bill that affects the Everglades by continuing to promote BMP’s, as according to the sugar companies BMP’s have helped to contribute to more than a “55%” reduction in phosphorous levels in the Everglades water ecosystems. The BMP practices for diminishing the effects of phosphorous pollution are varied and more complex than simply reducing consumption. Fields will first be leveled, followed by filling canals. From there, the canals and ditches will be regularly cleaned, cover crops and culverts will be added, and canals will slowly be drained near “exit pump stations”. Because of the documented success, US Sugar, Florida Crystals, and other large corporations have increasingly begun touting the environmental improvements through BMP’s in South Florida.

BMP’s also have been applied to other areas of civilian life, including landscape architecture and residential neighborhoods. Ms. Jen Marvin is the GI-BMP coordinator at the University of Florida within the Center for Landscape Conservation & Ecology & Environmental Horticulture Department. This department is run through the UF/IFAS extension offices, which help with directly addressing agricultural solutions on a statewide basis. Ms. Marvin works as the education and training coordinator for this program that follows “9 principles” set forth within the various manuals for the “Florida Friendly Landscape program”. Green industry professionals can take courses online with UF and complete the courses to earn the GI-BMP certificate. Ms. Marvin is proud to note that over “37,000 professionals” have so far passed the courses and earned their certificates. Some of the benefits of BMP programs like the GI-BMP program are that it is a “one-time certification” and that certification attracts more customers and employers, according to Ms. Martin. The central principle of “right place right plant” helps to enforce native vegetation, while the manuals also describe in detail how modern techniques like Integrative Pest Management reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers in residential lawns. However, the program is working on addressing challenges like language barriers and cultural attitudes to environmental protection. Ms. Marvin says that it is a huge challenge to change behavior, as people “can have all the information”, the wanting still not change. Still, the backing of UF and science research has helped bolster the program in recent years, and Florida is one of only two states that have residential certificate programs like this. State officials also work in conjunction with UF Extension agents and the water management districts. Mr. Darrell Smith is Assistant Director of the Office of Agricultural Water Policy under FDACS.

As assistant director, Mr. Smith collaborates with the staff and Commissioner Putnam in overseeing “41 other positions” and ensuring development of water supply planning with the assistance of the FDEP. Mr. Smith is optimistic about the progress that BMP’s have had, especially in the St. John’s River area, Lake Okeechobee basin, and the Suwanee River Basin. Mr. Smith states that Commissioner Putnam is very much for a holistic “water policy” and several Florida state senators are interested in “making water a priority.” Mr. Smith also acknowledges that the cattle industry was “one of the first” to implement BMP’s consistently, along with the citrus industry. To Mr. Smith, BMP’s are successful when they help to develop “good working relationships” with farmers and agricultural businesses. Mr. Smith admits that BMP’s can be limited in their success because of “limited technology” and the how the pace of technological breakthroughs lag behind production. Mr. Smith also emphasizes that BMP’s work very well in tandem with “conservation easements” and “water trading” programs, which are increasing in Florida. As long as “research funding” for new technologies go hand in hand with BMP’s, Mr. Smith is confident BMP’s will continue to be successful and well received amongst the agricultural industries.

Other experts also are optimistic about BMP’s. Professor Borisova is an Assistant Professor at UF and works as an Extension specialist with IFAS and as an economist for Water Economics and Policy within the state. As an economist, Professor Borisova examines “all the practices” that agricultural companies and the state government utilize. BMP’s, she mentions, are “just one of many strategies” for addressing pollution reduction in the state. BMP’s are very site-specific, and each one will have different costs. This can be a challenge of BMP’s, she says, as “reaching producers who haven’t committed” yet can be difficult. Professor Borisova, like Mr. Smith, emphasizes the importance of “new types of technology”. She is very excited for precision agriculture as it has been successful in the strawberry industry. She says that while fees for water withdrawal from an economic standpoint can have benefits, she wonders which
price would be appropriate, as too high a fee would severely affect the “livelihood” of the average farmer. Professor Borisova says that nitrates also as pollution sources can be “difficult to trace” and that can lead to delays in North Florida with BMP’s curbing nitrate pollution. Professor Borisova also notes that culture and locations are very important for the success of BMP’s. In South Florida, farmer “get points for implementing BMP’s” and have more “concrete goals and feasible targets” to reach. Professor Borisova says that the counties that have adapted Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL’s) from the national Clean Water Act have been successful at encouraging more farmers to use BMP’s. Still, Professor Borisova is confident in the new technologies and is working hard to make sure they are economically practical.

On the other hand, there are increasing dissenting opinions from environmental experts and advocacy groups. Dr. Robert Knight is the Director of the Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute based in Gainesville, FL. This non-profit organization is working with several environmental groups and consultants in developing plans to effectively manage the water quality of Florida’s springs. “BMP’s are written to provide nutrient reductions only if they do not add cost to the farmer,” he says. This means, in his opinion, that BMP’s fall far short at being “measurably effective” in North Florida in terms of nitrogen reduction. Dr. Knight does concede that in South Florida with phosphates BMP’s have been effective. Dr. Knight proposes that there should be a “higher fee on fertilizer” to help dissuade overuse of fertilizers, as well as “more advanced BMP’s” need to be “mandatory in all spring sheds” especially in North Florida. “Water use monitoring, reporting, and taxing are essential to encourage efficient water use,” he explains. Other environmental professionals also are curious about the enforcement of BMP’s. Dr. Tom Hoctor of the Landscape Conservation Center at UF works with development plans within Florida, and uses modeling and environmental plans to help conserve Florida natural resources with projects like the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

Dr. Hoctor mentioned although he is not an expert on BMP’s, he has had much discussion with professionals within the state government and outside the FDEP that have varying opinions of the effects of BMP’s. He suggests that more regulation needs to be added. Voluntary BMP’s, Dr. Hoctor explains, are only as effective as the data that is being produced suggests. Incentive based conservation programs work well, he says, as well as federal programs that work on dispersed water storage.

BMP’s have recently been under further scrutiny as an increased in tax revenue is required to sustain certain programs. Recently a bill passed in the state legislature, (H.B. 7003), that increased regulations on water near Lake Okeechobee, but also “loosened” regulations on landowners near the lake to opt for BMP’s and other “business-friendly” programs. In fact, these financial incentives and subsidies for BMP’s in this region are estimated to increase BMP’s for “$10 million” in the Everglades region and “$15 million” for projects near Lake Okeechobee. Groups like the Everglades Foundation, Sierra club, Florida Springs Council, Audobon Society, and Earthjustice all opposed the bill. The Everglades Foundation notably said that the bill has no concrete deadline for cleanup of Okeechobee, eliminates the mandatory regulations, and does not enforce the voluntary BMP program. The Florida Springs Council went as far as to say that the program is “ineffective” and will have “little positive effect” in restoring Springs.

The success of BMP’s in the future depends highly on the agricultural sector and how committed agriculture will be to current and also more advanced BMP’s. Many Florida citizens are concerned BMP’s are not strong enough to effectively address water quality. Still, there has been success in certain regions, spurred by increased financial incentives as seen in the Northern Everglades. Only time will tell if regulations will be added to enforce BMP’s to become the widespread sustainable standard for Florida’s water security that Commissioner Putnam aims for.
Comparison to the lives they lived, didn’t have them. I feel truly blessed; in provided, because I know that my parents

Even as a mixed-race person, I always feel like I haven’t experienced much discrimination because people have always assumed that I am white—or don’t know what I am and just don’t know what to say. I don’t think I was ever treated differently from my peers due to my race, but I also feel like in the past there was nobody who really understood me or my background. I feel like lot of people here have given everything on a silver spoon.

After comparing my own life to the lives of my parents, I have decided that I want to take a lot of time in my future to do mission work in poorer countries. After seeing how much I have and what my parents went through to get me to where I am, I feel like I have a moral obligation to give back. My life has been so good in comparison to kids in other countries—I attend a great university, have parents who provide for me, and have a lot of luxuries in life that others don’t have—so I have to give back. I always ask myself, ‘What is the point in having so much if I’m going to do nothing with it?’ I really can’t think of anything better to do with what I have than to share it with those who need it the most.

‘My story is a little bit different; my parents are immigrants, but I am actually also an immigrant myself. I lived in South Africa for a while, and I am definitely much more fortunate to be living here now. I always feel safer and protected now that I am here, and coming from another country helps me to appreciate the security of my life in America.

Being here in the United States is a very different experience from a cultural perspective as well; being from Naples, FL, I was one of two Indian students at my high school, and no one really understood my cultural beliefs. South Africa was a very different atmosphere, and seeing these differences in culture really helped me to appreciate the different values of diverse individuals, even if the people around me didn’t really have that same appreciation. I liked meeting different types of people in Naples, but I felt like there were not a lot of people who

At UF, including myself, grew up in certain areas where their high school’s population was mostly one race and the people who were different stood out. But now that I’m here, I feel like I have a more diverse community that I fit into more easily. When I joined UF’s Filipino Student Association, I didn’t know much about Filipino heritage, and really didn’t know any other Filipino teens, but I’ve learned a lot and now I appreciate my background and my mom’s history so much more. I’m so grateful for the sacrifices she made to come here so that I could live a better life than she did in the Philippines, and I’m grateful to have found a community with similar backgrounds so that I never forget these roots.'
"My dad is always telling me his story of coming to America. He came here on a boat completely packed with other people, experiencing the horrors of people jumping overboard due to hallucinations, dying from dehydration, and more. He was the first in my family to come to the U.S. from Haiti, and then made many trips back to bring my mom and his siblings to safety. Just thinking about all that he went through so that I could have a better life pushes me to work harder every day. Even if my parents get on my nerves sometimes, I am beyond grateful to have them, because I know that they had to take such a huge risk to be here.

I am very appreciative of everything I have, because as hard as I have to work to earn things, my parents worked so much harder. This always pushes me to become the best that I can be so that someday I can provide for them even more than they had to provide for me. One way that I am trying to do this is by always pushing myself in my education. I am so lucky to have been getting an education here at UF, and I want to turn it into a career that will allow me to provide for my family and to help others.

I have decided that I want to pursue a career in women's health. In Haiti, a lot of women either don't have access to health care or don't know where to get access, so in the future I hope to be able to open a women's health clinic there. I have heard stories of my mom not even being able to give birth in a hospital, which is so foreign to me. The fact that I don't have to worry about these kinds of things is really a blessing, and it's my inspiration for wanting to do medical mission work in Haiti. I am so grateful for everything that I have and am so lucky that I could even have the opportunity to give back in ways like this, because without my parents, I would have nothing."

"I think that I value my education and all of the opportunities it brings more than some of my peers do, because I know my parents worked so hard to get me these opportunities. I know I have to work hard and can't fail or drop out, because they went through so much to get me to where I am and I want to be able to turn around and help them later in life. If I don't dedicate myself to my education now, it will feel like all of their work went to waste, and I will have nothing to give back for it.

What really pushes me to work hard is the story of how my parents got here. My parents came to the United States from Mexico only ten days after getting married; my mom gave up her life with her family and came to an unknown place because she wanted to be with my dad and to raise a family that would have greater opportunities than she did. Everything that I have is from my mom and dad and the sacrifices they made, and to see what they have become really motivates me to keep working when my life seems difficult.

Life is different now that I'm not with my family and I'm here at UF. I came from a mostly Hispanic school, and here I feel like I'm not around as many people who understand my culture and my background. However, I have found groups such as Hispanic Students Association who make me feel so comfortable and remind me that there are other people here with backgrounds similar to mine. My life at school is driven by my future and my motivation to get an education, which comes from my family back home, and it's nice to have a sort of on-campus family like HSA to help me think about my past as well."

"Coming from an immigrant family, I'm a lot more appreciative of everything I have because I know my parents had it so much worse. They always tell me stories from when they were in the village in India, like how my mom and her siblings only had one toy which they only took out on special occasions, or how my dad used to have to bike to the grocery store in the rain so that his family could eat. I compare these stories to where we are now, and it makes me work harder knowing they had to struggle so much to get here.

As students at UF we are all bright and hardworking, but sometimes I feel like not all of my peers understand the value of hard work in the same way I do. Sometimes I see that other students don't spend as much time as they should on their homework or don't study much for exams, and when they don't do well, they blame the professor for making the class too hard, and sometimes their parents do too. If I were ever to say something like that, I know that my mom would not accept that excuse and would tell me to keep working harder. After all of the work she did, coming from so little and making so much out of herself, she always tells me that what you put in is what you get out.

I am so grateful for everything I have now, especially my education, because I know that I would not be able to get anywhere without it. The amount of opportunities I have here has always made me want to help spread education to those who aren't lucky enough to already have it. In the city where my parents grew up, there is a small school that my grandparents donate to, and one of my goals for my future is to go and volunteer there. There are so many kids in India who don't have access to education; my parents are lucky that they did and I am even luckier, but I want to be able to help others who didn't get so lucky. My parents gave me so much, so there is no excuse for me not to give what I have back to others."
Bursting with heart and ambition but slow on delivery, the soon to be released novel “Juniper Lane” leaves its reader feeling sweetened and hopeful, but simultaneously somewhat dissatisfied.

From the opening chapter of “Juniper Lane,” the newest novel by Big Bang Press, a Kickstarter company that publishes original work of popular writers in the fanfiction community, the reader is pushed to analyze a personal narrative of love, loss, and reconnection.

The author, debut novelist Kady Morrison, establishes her scenario within the first few pages: Mim Robinson—full name “Mimosa,” a word choice which piques humor but unfortunately never manages to sound entirely natural for the character—is shy and pitifully nervous when she arrives on Juniper Lane, an overly affluent suburban satellite community of 50 and 60-year-olds in Barn Ridge, Ohio, whose admittedly shallow lives revolve entirely around lackluster social affairs, garden gnomes, and exceptionally juicy gossip.

Mim has come back to Juniper Lane, estranged from her family, after a nasty break-up from an abusive ex-boyfriend, and is riding on the coattails of some serious personal trauma. She seeks immediate solace in the steady monotony and upscale negligence of life on Juniper Lane, dedicating herself to fitting neatly into the cookie-cutter social hierarchy. Kady Morrison portrays this lifestyle somewhat satirically in the book, mainly as a series of charity-fueled events where catty women make appearances at garden parties and mutter over sugary cocktails about the private business of their neighbors.

Enter Nadia Bahjat, the only other 20-something on the street, who hates the over-puffed Juniper Lane residents and has plenty of her own complicated family and relationship problems. Nadia manages to break every single one of Juniper Lane’s absurd social laws; she wears dark, bold lipstick, she aspires to be a professional chef, she dyes her hair, and is a blatantly uncloseted lesbian. Really, think of the scandal!

Throughout the novel, Mim and Nadia also begin to work through the painful steps toward recovery from abusive and unfulfilling relationships. This character development is perhaps the strongest point of Morrison’s writing; Mim and Nadia’s budding romance repeatedly takes a backseat to deeper themes of acceptance, family, and self-care.

Mim’s both emotionally and physically abusive past relationship throughout the book feels viscerally real, messy, and thought-provokingly complicated. There is nuance and grace in coping with the aftermath of a separation and subsequent rebirth of self-confidence and acceptance, and Morrison beautifully emphasizes this. Similar but no less subtly intricate, Nadia’s own flawed relationship with her parents will pull with emotional intensity on every reader’s heartstrings.

The real problem with “Juniper Lane,” despite its many redeeming and frankly awesome other qualities, is that despite being an original work of sizable merit, it reads just a little bit too like a long-form fanfiction.

Personally, as an individual reader I’m all about fanfiction. I’ve been reading it since the 6th grade, I’ve gone through as many different fandoms, forums, and websites I could get my hands on. I’ve admired Big Bang Press’s mission to bring the original work of prominent fanfiction authors into the light since it first launched off of Kickstarter.

However, Morrison’s plot feels too underdeveloped in places, remaining focused on a resolutely character-driven narrative spotlighting only it’s two primary characters. It’s a good story, but Mim and Nadia’s relationship ends up relying perhaps too much on occasionally overused cliches, oblivious satire, and dramatically glossy, far-reaching skips through time and space to fill in the gaps of the plot.
When reading “Juniper Lane,” you balance on the slippery edge of a diving board at the deep end of a pool, bouncing up and down in the breeze, precariously waiting with to dive. It’s not the jump itself that deters you—it’s the unknown waiting below. “Juniper Lane” simply doesn’t deliver on this great unknown, for its setting, plot, and characters. The result is uneasy and half-formed; a sentence perpetually waiting on the tip of your tongue, a breath that awkwardly catches in your throat seconds before you take the plunge.

In the basic skeleton structure of a long-form fanfiction, “Juniper Lane” ticks off more than a few boxes for the standard arsenal: snappy, cheeky dialogue, natively emotional outbursts functioning as climactic moments, cinematic imagery, and featuring multiple minor characters who serve as cameos to a wider universe. When reading fanfiction, the audience is in on the joke, and knows all about the bigger picture, but in “Juniper Lane,” readers aren’t quite so lucky.

Instead, they are left puzzled over the semi-cliché tying of loose ends, such as the classic “lesbian road-trip” ending that Mim and Nadia happily embark upon at the close of the book, or the “dream-like sequence of X character’s self-determining moment,” such as when Mim goes to a music festival rather unexpectedly, and indulges a wild, hazy night of drugs and realizations.

Overall, lasting take away: the crowning jewel of Morrison’s debut “Juniper Lane” is in it’s straight-forward unrolling of foundational fabric in relationships of every kind. For the reader, this fabric tears through the cracks. Morrison does, however, leave out that old favorite, the patented mid-point sex scene so common in many fanfiction writing styles. While it was by no means necessary, I found myself wishing for one or two sexier moments, just to even out the tentative, restrained air that saturated Mim and Nadia’s romance.

The novel is too preoccupied with delivering the glorious and affirming personal story and romance of Mim and Nadia, which although intriguing, causes more than a few more novel things to slip through the cracks.

Despite structural drawbacks that leave holes in the plot and underdeveloped minor characters sitting on the sidelines, “Juniper Lane” is a thoughtful and entertaining read, packed with lovely nuggets of LGBTQ advocacy. There’s even a bisexual character who actually declares her identity, which is a refreshing change from writers who prefer instead to keep bisexual characters hidden in subtext and a strong emphasis on the importance of respect and consent in all relationships.

Overall, lasting take away: the crowning jewel of Morrison’s debut “Juniper Lane” is in it’s straight-forward unrolling of foundational fabric in relationships of every kind. For the reader, this fabric tears and stretches, weathering abuse, support, and most importantly, growth.

"Maybe This is Our Year" Written by Matt Smith
Designed by Rachel Gordon

108 years. That is how long it has been since the Chicago Cubs have won their last World Series in Major League Baseball. To help put this in perspective, the last time the Cubs won the World Series, marijuana, morphine, and heroin were all readily available over the counter at local pharmacies in the United States. Of course, there are other teams in baseball that have never won a World Series (like my Tampa Bay Rays), but it is the strenuous path the Cubs traveled that makes this drought unique. However, after an impressive 2015 campaign, could this year finally bring an end to one of the most historic streaks in all of sports?

In the three and a half decades following their 1908 victory, the Chicago Cubs made it to seven World Series Finals. Unfortunately for the team and their supporters, they found a way to lose all of them in heartbreaking fashion. This, however, was just the start of the turmoil the Chicago Cubs would experience. In 1945, the curse of the infamous “Billy Goat” was born. In game four of the World Series, the management at Wrigley Field (the field where the Cubs play) asked owner Billy Sianis and his billy goat to leave the game due to the poor smell. In frustration, Sianis declared that the Cubs will, “never win a World Series so long as the goat is not allowed in Wrigley Field.” 70 years later, the curse still holds. Prism Magazine thus makes the recommendation that Wrigley Field consider changing their policies on billy goats for the 2016 season.

Fast forward to 2003, the world discovered Steve Bartman. In the NLCS (the round right before the World Series), the Cubs were winning 3-2 in the series against the Florida Marlins and were winning in the top of the eighth inning, 3-0. The Marlins hit a foul ball down the left field line and Steve Bartman, a Cubs fan sitting in the stands down the left field line, reached out to catch his own souvenir at the game. Unfortunately, he obstructed the play and prevented the Cubs left fielder, Moises Alou, from possibly catching the ball. The Marlins went on to score eight runs in the inning and won both the game and the series. Steve Bartman was escorted from the game and received numerous death threats from people in Chicago. He was forced to change his name and move from the city for his own safety. This reaction illustrates both the passion and craze the Cubs fans have as they awaited another World Series Championship.

Still, 2016 is a new year for Cubs fans. It is a year to be excited and optimistic for the season to come, and rightfully so. According to sportsbooks in Las Vegas, the Chicago Cubs have the best odds to win the World Series of all the teams in baseball at four to one. Those odds are four times better than the Kansas City Royals, the reigning 2015 World Series champions! There is really no observable weakness to the Cubs’ roster this year. They have one of the best managers in all of baseball in John Maddon, which is vital for season-long success. The Cubs have a deep pitching rotation that can keep the team in any game night in and night out, headed by ace Jake Arrieta. However, probably the most impressive aspect of this year’s Chicago Cubs team is the offensive fire power. The projected starting roster is bolstered with several young talents, including the recently signed Jason Heyward, who will provide a powerful bat for the team from the left side of the plate. According to fangraphs.com, the 2016 Chicago Cubs are projected to win 97 games, which is second only to their division rivals, the St Louis Cardinals. These numbers and projections should make all Cubs fans optimistic and excited for the upcoming season.

There are a lot of preseason talks about the Chicago Cubs this year and rightfully so. This is one of the biggest franchises in all of sports, with a very realistic chance to end their 108 year drought. I will always be a Tampa Bay Rays fan at heart, but seeing that they are still in a rebuilding phase as a club, I am hopping on the Cubs bandwagon and hope to see the diehard fans get what they have been begging for for decades. Let’s Go Cubbies!
“Saturday Night Dead,” a headline as old as the show itself. 41 seasons in, Saturday Night Live has faced constant criticism for failing to deliver upon its comedic promise. Its mammoth cultural significance is matched only by its ability to attract almost constant criticism by critics and audiences alike, both hearkening back to the “old days,” when their favorite cast members played their favorite characters -- before being replaced by new actors and writers with new voices.
It’s the stylistic and tonal changes of SNL that make the show evergreen—and the constant butt of critics’ jokes. The audience warms up to the players and grows fond of their familiar comedic rhythms. Once a player abandons the show, their role is not assumed with another carbon-copy comic; rather, these holes in the cast are filled with new, fresh voices who gradually command the show, even if the audience is at first reluctant to hand over the reins.

The show goes through periods ruled by particular comedic styles, enforced by the primary players who perform them. The first cycle—the show’s “golden years”—made stars out of Gilda Radner, Chevy Chase, John Belushi, and their peers. Five years after the show’s first season, the original cast left to capitalize upon their stardom, thereby setting the standard of the cyclical recast and retool period that has kept SNL alive since 1975.

The most common criticism SNL has faced since its inception is that the show has “lost its teeth” and replaced its edge with inoffensive gloss. The first few seasons, featuring the work of future U.S. Senator Al Franken, actor and filmmaker Albert Brooks, and idiosyncratic performer Andy Kaufman, were rougher—the show was unafraid to cover darker territory or even target at the network executives who wanted it dead.

Now, SNL finds hosts in athletes and pop stars, features a musical monologue several times a season (usually performed by non-singers), and panders mostly to a younger crowd instead of its stalwarts. But these shifts in the show’s structure reflect casts, culture, and experience that haven’t remained the same since 1975. If the show didn’t constantly reinvent itself, then it would no longer exist. Saturday Night Live refuses to be a relic. It will continue to shapeshift and absorb what its audiences like and what its writers and actors create, factors which won’t stay the same for very long. And for all the changes the show will undergo, the barbs will continue right alongside them. I venture that, as long as it remains a topic of critical contention, SNL’s perpetuity on television is ensured.

What We Can Learn From DJ Khaled

Article by Hope Basile  Illustration and Design by Meryl Kornfield

Apparently we have a lot to learn from DJ Khaled. DJ Khaled can show us how to be successful. Or maybe his snapchat is just a way for him to demonstrate his success to others.

DJ Khaled’s use of snapchat sheds light on how many people use social media everyday. Social media is often used as a way to get affirmation in our lives. But social media can also make us feel worse about our own lives. Many people get depressed after looking at social media. So much so that the term “social media depression” has been popping up.

Social media can become a very self-centered approach to interacting with others on a daily basis. Many celebrities spam the internet with hordes of selfies and self-promotion. Spending too much time obsessed with social media can take away from the more important things in our lives.

Even the New York Times notes that DJ Khaled’s snapchats have taken a turn from how to be successful to full-blown self-promotion.
Vintage Fashion

Photographed & written by Stepfanie Lam

- Model: Alyssa Egnew, senior, civil engineer
  Classic knee-length striped skirt paired with a chain of pearls and red heels.

- Model: Sheila Capote, senior, chemical engineer
  A timeless black dress, paired with nude pumps and a white leather belt.

- Model: Alyssa Egnew, senior, civil engineer
  Turquoise fit and flare retro print dress with a boat neck neckline, paired with a leather turquoise belt and black heels.

- Model: Tanya Therathanakorn, senior, chemical engineer
  Navy polka-dotted dress with a chambray top, paired with an 80s vintage crossbody bag from Japan and black ankle booties & sunglasses.

- Model: Sheila Capote, senior, chemical engineer
  Black and white striped short sleeved top, paired with 80s high waisted shorts and brown oxford heels.

- Model: Alyssa Egnew, senior, civil engineer
  Navy polka-dotted dress with a chambray top, paired with an 80s vintage crossbody bag from Japan and black ankle booties & sunglasses.
Before the mid-1960s, “used” or “secondhand” clothing was only for those who could not afford to purchase new clothes. However, fashion has since then changed, with certain vintage pieces costing thousands of dollars. The term “used” became “vintage,” with old pieces of clothing becoming more valuable with age. I was inspired to undertake this project by my grandmother – specifically her numerous black and white photo albums filled with vintage pieces from the ‘50s and ‘80s, which I still enjoy looking through. I really admire the air of elegance and timelessness this type of garment gives the wearer, as well as the intricate details in the clothing that one does not often find today.

Model: Alyssa Egnew, senior, civil engineer
Classic knee-length striped skirt paired with a chain of pearls and red heels.

Model: Sheila Capote, senior, chemical engineer
A timeless black dress, paired with nude pumps and a white leather belt.

Model: Tanya Therathanakorn, senior, chemical engineer
60's inspired blue polka-dotted chambray dress with a long line of buttons at the front, paired with a vintage wrist watch.

Model: Tanya Therathanakorn, senior, chemical engineer
Sleeveless lace-trimmed chambray top, paired with a pair of high-waisted shorts and brown oxford shoes.

Model: Tanya Therathanakorn, senior, chemical engineer
Classic black fit-and-flare dress, paired with brown oxfords.
Extreme Bookworms

BY EMILY CROWELL

Extreme bookworms eat their way through more than just an obscene amount of reading material. Not sated with simply reading novels, several avid readers have taken their experience to a whole new level, some traveling across states in pursuit of book festivals and author stalking (but in a perfectly legal, non-threatening way), and some taking on the blogosphere to write of their bookish love and to share their thoughts with the world.

Los Angeles, Atlanta, Miami, Charleston, Orlando—while reading usually just metaphorically transports readers to new worlds, ardent bookworms take reading to a whole new level and actual travel across the country to meet authors as part of their reading experience. From book festivals, to individual author signings, to book release parties, the novel experience is no longer bound simply by physical pages.

“It is probably slightly a little bit weird to fly across the country to go to a book signing, BUT in my defense... I got nothing; I am the way I am,” said Isabella Plummer, a freshman exploratory major from Orlando. “Traveling and reading are my two great loves. Honestly, book signings are super fun, especially with friends, and they are great excuses to go to new places. I’ve gotten to visit Charleston, Miami, Atlanta, Los Angeles— all places I wouldn’t really have a reason to visit if not for these book signings. But even if these book festivals were just in Orlando, I would still love going because it would mean getting to make awkward, Fangirl-y conversations with authors whose books I love.”

Plummer’s first large book festival was Yallfest, a young adult book festival in Charleston. She later traveled to its sister festival, YallWest, in Santa Monica, California.

“I found out about Yallfest through the power of the internet. And then it was announced at Yallfest that they were starting a sister festival on the West Coast. Through the exceptional generosity of my parents and the wonderful magic of graduation gifts, I went,” said Plummer.

Shannon Ware, a freshman exploratory major, also took the pilgrimage to Charleston to attend Yallfest. Combining panels and signings, Yallfest celebrates both the love of reading and those who aspire to become authors themselves one day.

“It was a little weird to meet the authors, and at first I didn’t like it because I wanted to immortalize the story and pretend that, in a way, the characters I loved so much were actually real,” said Ware. “Meeting the author made me remember that the story was just a story. But in the end I was happy that I got to hear their voice in real life.”

Yet the love of reading doesn’t just manifest itself in traversing across the nation to meet authors. Senior Anna Morgan, double majoring in English and Classical Studies, transcends distance with her blog shelflife11.blogspot.com, where she reviews her current reads in conjecture with brief updates about her life, and how it relates to her reading experience.

“I love the ability to travel to another world that I get to create, and also the sense of camaraderie I get from meeting fellow book lovers and enthusing about our favorite titles,” said Morgan.

Near or far, reading isn’t just a cozy, solitary experience on a couch anymore. For those who wish to pursue it, reading can take you literal miles away, or simply on an imaginative journey available only a page away.

MOSI

BY SAMANTHA BODDUPALLI

Students from all over the world attend UF. If you were born and raised in Florida, you may feel as if you’ve visited all of the places worth visiting in this beloved state, and if you’re not from Florida, perhaps you’re not willing to make the trip all the way to places like the Everglades, or you’re looking for something cheaper than a trip to Disney World (we are college students after all). If you relate to the Everglades, or you’re looking for something cheaper than a trip to perhaps you’re not willing to make the trip all the way to places like Mexico, you’re in luck, because I have the perfect solution. Aside from the well-known attractions here in Florida, if you look hard enough, you’ll be surprised by the places that you uncover. One of these so-called hidden gems is the Museum of Science and Industry, or MOSI, in Tampa.

Now, I know what you’re thinking, a museum is the last place anyone would want to go for fun. However, MOSI is more than just a museum. In fact, during my visit there, I didn’t even feel like I was in one. The wonderful thing about MOSI is that it aims to teach children that STEM (that’s a new version of ‘STEM’ fields; it stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) can be fun. I was lucky enough to speak with Grayson Kamm, the Communications Director at MOSI, who used to be a student here, but let’s be honest—he’s still a Gator. One of the things that resonated with me the most about our conversation was how he really seemed to love his job because he spends every single day making a difference. Who could ask for anything more? It’s easy to get lost in the creative spirit that the museum and its staff create. With about 450 exhibits, many of them involving hands-on activities, the people at MOSI truly work to make things interactive. Nothing about the museum involves simply reading off of a plaque. In fact, in the past, the museum has had countless visiting exhibits featured. Currently, MOSI features the coolest thing yet—an exhibit called Dinosaurs in Motion, which is made up of fourteen life-size dinosaurs. That’s not all folks! Mr. Kamm even told me that each dinosaur is a hand-crafted steel sculpture made of recycled material. Here’s where the “in Motion” part comes in—every dinosaur has some kind of mechanism that makes it move, involving mechanisms like pulleys and levers. As you move through the exhibits, these systems become more complex until you get to a 40-foot long T-Rex, whose jaws you can move with giant levers. In fact, visitors can make all of the dinosaurs move in different ways.
By JW Glass
Photography by Diego Rodriguez

Your dream is to hike the Appalachian Trail. But sadly, you don’t have the income or time to accomplish the 5-month journey. You probably think that as a Florida resident, your backpacking opportunities are limited. Fear not, as our state has over 1000 miles of trail—known as the Florida Trail.

However, even this trail can take around 2 to 3 months to hike. If you only have a week to hike, you may be out of luck.

For those with limited time, another great, and shorter, hike exists that gives you a complete sampling of exactly what central Florida has to offer. I’m talking about the Ocean-Lake Trail—a 63 mile trail that stretches from the shallows of Lake Okeechobee to the beaches of the Atlantic.

The trail is well marked, and maintained in part by the Loxahatchee chapter of the Florida Trail Association. And of course, there are two ways to tackle it, either starting directly from the lake near the “LOST” trailhead or by the beach at Hobe’s Sound. Nevertheless, you need to find some way to get back to your car, as this trail is not a loop.

The trail starts through the Dupris Wildlife Management Area, which is a relatively dry pine forest. After about 20 miles, you’ll be in the Corbett Area, which is home to vast fields, massive lakes, and even an enigmatic cypress called the “Hole in Wall.” As you continue, you’ll enter the Kitching Creek area, which hosts tropical hammocks, palmetto savannahs, and some of Florida’s only sand dunes. After finally exiting through a few miles of tropical tunnels, you will exit at Hobe’s Sound, and be face to face with the Atlantic Ocean.

The Ocean-Lake Trail may not be as prestigious as the Appalachian, but it is a hidden gem that shows the real beauty of Old Florida.
I recently read about one man’s transition into society after several decades of imprisonment. When he went to downtown Manhattan, he thought that people with white earbuds must be part of a government conspiracy driven by new technology—either spies or brainwashed robots. To an outsider of the 21st century, the prospect of carrying a personal library of sound with you everywhere and anywhere is certainly daunting. Taking a step back and looking around our campus, a remarkable number of people walk around listening to music here, too. As someone who spends a fair deal of time listening to or thinking about music, it strikes me that many people find it important enough to constantly have music playing in their lives. With this, I have always wondered: what are those people listening to? I decided to find out, stopping people around campus to ask what song they were currently playing. The results were strikingly diverse: no song repeated and genres spanned from Christian music to dancehall to hard rock and most everywhere in between. It showed that no matter the range of music I think I’ve discovered from writing this column for the past year-and-a-half, there is always more out there. Below are my results, the fifteen songs I found people listening to on campus:

- Alt-J: “Fitzpleasure”
- “Into the Woods,” title track from the musical
- Bynon and Bishop: “Hey Hey”
- Depeche Mode: “Enjoy the Silence”
- Dispatch: “The General”
- Israel Houghton: “Jesus at the Center”
- “A Million Miles Away,” from the musical Aladdin
- J. Cole: “Wet Dreamz”
- DJ Snake ft. Bipolar Sunshine: “Middle”
- Moth: “Hellyeah”
- Taylor Swift: “Welcome to New York”
- Aidonia: “Nuh Boring Gyal”
- Pixies: “Debaser”
- Future: “Purple Reign”
- Fun: “The Gambler”
Holiday Origins

Written by Colleen Alexis May

April Fool's Day

April Fool's Day can be traced all the way back to 16th century France. At this time, France was in the middle of switching from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar which, among other things, moved the New Year from April 1 to January 1. Instead of realizing that the New Year now took place in January, those too slow to adopt the new calendar celebrated the old year until the beginning of April. Then they realized they were fools and were the victims of practical jokes by those who had celebrated the correct New Year months earlier.

April Fool's Day also has its roots in older festivals like the Roman festival of Hilaria, where people dressed up in disguises, and the vernal equinox, where Mother Nature supposedly “played tricks” on people by giving them unpredictable weather.

After several hundred years, these celebrations lived on in the earth 18th century English holiday, “All Fool’s Day,” which is the closest relative to the April 1 holiday, full of tricks and pranks, that we know today.

Mother's Day

In its earliest form, Mother’s Day can be traced back to Greek and Roman celebrations of two mother goddesses, Rhea, the mother of many Olympian gods, and Cybele, a popular goddess of motherhood and fertility. Later, early Christians celebrated “Mothering Sunday” on the fourth Sunday in Lent to honor the mother of Christ, the Virgin Mary. This tradition expanded in the

Review: Fork and Pasta

Written by Ashleigh Braun

A new restaurant established itself as a vital part of the Gainesville scene about six months ago. Fork and Pasta, a build-your-own pasta establishment, has quickly captured the hearts--and stomachs--of UF students. The restaurant's convenient location on University Avenue right across from campus makes it a quick and easy place to stop and eat. Owner and founder Netta Kaiden said the concept for Fork and Pasta was inspired by food he experienced in other countries, and he dreamed of bringing the idea to the United States. The concept of build-your-own fascinates people, especially hungry students who are craving a hearty portion of delicious comfort food. One thing that makes this restaurant unique is that the pasta, which Kaiden learned to make from his mother, is made in house daily with fresh sauce and high quality ingredients. “My goal is to enrich the students by giving them high quality food for a good price,” Kaiden said. Fork and Pasta has done so well that Kaiden plans to start new ventures implementing late night and early morning hours. This means serving made to order paninis and egg waffles, a desert concept from China, until 3 a.m., and breakfast sandwiches early in the morning. The restaurant's convenient location on University Avenue right across from campus makes it a quick and easy place to stop and eat. Kaiden also has plans to redesign the menu with half-size portions including combinations of pasta, salad, and paninis. In the future, he hopes to expand Fork and Pasta with more locations across the United States. There is no doubt that Fork and Pasta will continue to thrive as it gives students a unique food experience with fresh, homemade ingredients and no shortage of flavor. This restaurant has quickly become a student favorite and will undoubtedly continue to be for years to come.

Contact netta.aiden@mail.com

Earth Day

Earth Day is a much newer holiday in comparison to the others on this list, beginning in the 1970’s. After decades of ignoring environmental concerns involving the burning of fossil fuels, industrial waste, and animal protection, Rachel Carson’s 1962 best-selling book Silent Spring spread new awareness of environmental and pollution-related concerns.

Inspired by student war protests and a recent and disastrous oil spill in California, US Senator Gaylord Nelson founded Earth Day. Nelson and his staff promoted events and rallies all over America to protest various environmental concerns, from deforestation to toxic waste dumping. 20 million people took part in the rallies on April 22, 1970, and by the end of the year, the EPA was formed, and the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts were passed.

Involvement in Earth Day activities grew from then on, and in 1990, the message of Earth Day was celebrated around the world, inspiring rallies in over 100 countries and establishing Earth Day as an international celebration.
This short story is a modern twist on the legend of the Minotaur in Greek mythology. There are various allusions and symbols related to the tale of the Minotaur, as well as a recurring theme of the struggle between human and animal within the speaker.

Day: Who the hell knows
Time: 6:00pm?
It will be dark soon. That’s when you don’t want to be outside. We pitched our tents in the shadow of an overhanging cliff, hoping for a little shelter from the biting wind.

Okay, I’m going to be honest here; we’re really not that worried about the wind. Not anymore. No one’s saying it out loud, but we’re all terrified out of our minds.

There’s only 6 of our original party of 14 left, and I’m praying to whatever power that may be that I won’t be the next taken. Gwen is still here with me, and I can’t help but wonder if Mom has even noticed that the two of us are still gone.

As a single mother working 2 jobs, Mom was never a very large part of our lives; she was simply too busy to make time for us. When Gwen had a bad nightmare, I was the one she came to. I was the one who would tuck her back in, staying with her until the tears stopped and she fell into a deep sleep.

Gwen is shivering in her sleep now, but we lost our sleeping bags days ago and I have no way to keep her warm. I watch my breath cloud the air in front of me in tiny, quick puffs. We’re like frightened rabbits, hunkering down as the temperature drops and the darkness grows ever closer.

Gwen stirred next to me. “Jason?” she mumbled. “I’m here. Did you have a nightmare?”
“Yes,” she whispered, “but that’s not it.”
“Then what’s wrong?” I was confused.
“I realized that even after waking up, I never left the nightmare. I’m still in the dream. We can’t escape. Jason. Jason, I’m so scared. I’m so -”

I hugged her close and whispered comforting words to her until the trails of tears had dried on her cheeks and she slipped back into her dream. I can’t keep her safe.

Positive Thought For the Day: I have a new appreciation for indoor heating.

Jason
Day: I still have no idea
Time: Noonish
Tom was taken last night. I didn’t hear a thing.
Our small party is taking a break from wandering through the woods. We’re all dehydrated and exhausted; I keep hallucinating that I can hear the sound of running water.

The creature is taunting us. Today, we took strips of bright red cloth and wrapped them around trees as we went to mark our path. This forest is like a maze and it seems to change daily.

We walked in a straight line, thinking that the woods had to end sometime, marking every twenty feet or so with a strip of cloth. After an hour or so of hard hiking, we climbed a ridge only to find a lone tree ahead of us tied with a piece of red cloth.

Gwen decided we should follow the cloth to see where we made a wrong turn, but I had a sinking feeling that someone or something else had tied that blood-red strip around the tree.

As we continued to walk, the woods became more and more dense. Our party continued to encounter the red strips of cloth interspersed about twenty feet apart, but I had a sinking feeling that we had never been in this part of the forest before.

The crowded understory was sponging the light from the sky. Even the trees seemed to carry malicious intent; their scraggly branches scratched our faces and tangled in Gwen and Rachel’s hair.

Finally, after hours of walking in silence (we don’t talk much anymore), we entered a clearing. I noticed instantly that something was wrong. Next to me, someone had dropped to their knees in shock, and my breath whooshed out in a rush as I noticed what had caught my eye before.
Hundreds. Hundreds of trees tied with cloth. Everywhere I turned, my eyes were assaulted by the accusing red. The creature is playing us at every turn. I should have realized by now that there is no escape. Tomorrow, the forest will change again and we will be as lost as we were to begin with.

As of now, we still haven't left the clearing. I'm forcing some stale bread down my throat, but it's hard when you're listening to the soft sobs of your sister and the mumbling nonsense of someone else driven to insanity. The red pieces of cloth seem to stare me down, and I can almost hear the monster laughing.

There is an animal glint in our eyes now. I can see it in when we look at each other, and I can feel it within me. I don't feel human anymore; I feel like prey. I would do anything to get out of here. Anything.

Positive Thought for the Day: I'm still alive.

Jason

Day: I won't even bother anymore
Time: I don't know, but it's dark

This all feels like a joke. Someone is pulling a prank on me. There are cameras in the trees and a laughing audience back home. Laughing at me.

I'm the only one left. Do I get a prize? A new car? A free vacation?

I'm writing with a flashlight between my teeth. My handwriting is shaky, but I can't seem to stop the tremors running up and down my body. It's not even from the cold; it's because I know this is the end.

The End.

Oh, God. Just saying it makes me want to scream. Gwen is gone and it's my fault.

I woke up last night when it came. Gwen and I were the only ones left of our group, huddled together in our small tent. We had already made our goodbyes.

My arms tightened protectively around her. I could feel her shaking from the cold in her sleep, and I was doing everything I could to keep her warm. Her breath hitched and it almost sounded like a sob, like she knew what I was about to do, even as she slept.

Her long, brown hair was tangled and dirty around the pale moon of her face. I could see her eyes twitching behind closed lids, lost in some dream, her only escape from this nightmare that was our reality.

It was then that I heard the heavy breaths of a large animal and the hard snap of twigs under large feet, coming closer. And then I heard the sound of the tent flap unzipping. It opened the tent slowly, methodically. I knew it wasn't in a rush and I knew it was coming for me.

Before the creature could enter the tent, I was filled with a great terror, forgetting Gwen, and I somehow found the power to speak.

"Please," I begged in a raspy whisper, "I'll do anything to live another night. Take her. Just let me live."

The creature made a harsh blowing sound, almost like a laugh. It was a sound of happiness.

And just like that, as I lay frozen in fear, I felt the warmth of Gwen's sleeping form disappear from my arms. The tent was zipped again and the footsteps retreated, significantly heavier with the weight of another body. I was the only one left. I was alone.

Now, I sit and wait for my prize. My prize. My prize for giving up my sister. My prize for giving up my humanity.

The tremors are coming on stronger now, and I don't think I can hold my pen steady for much longer. I can feel the night calling to me; I can feel it changing me. There is a desire in me to hear the crunch of bone, and the thought of it is filling me with pleasure.

I can only feel hunger. I am hunger. The thought is filling me with a sadistic rage, a thirst that can only be slaked with the spilling of blood.

I understand now. In giving up my sister, I have forsaken my humanity. I have become more animal than human. I am the creature's replacement, the new monster to haunt this maze of trees.

I hear the monster laughing in the distance, mocking me once again. Strangely, the laughter sounds close.

And it is now that I realize that the laughter is no longer the monster's, but my own.
So if you think your fears are big,  
I hope this poem disproves that myth.

What’s a yellow fruit with a distinct smell?  
A girl named Marley knows all too well.  
She hates bananas more than you know;  
And being in a room with them is a big “no.”  
The smell of bananas ruins her attitude.  
As a joke, her friends hid them in her food.

If you think this is weird, then please read on,  
Elena’s fear of milk is more than strong  
She drank it through her elementary years,  
But too much milk caused this full blown fear.  
Her friends gave her milk for April Fools’ Day,  
And now when she sees milk, she runs away.

Finally there’s Patrick who is scared of teeth,  
His early years were filled with grief.  
Patrick’s baby teeth never fell out,  
So he had 19 pulled - yes he kept count.  
It traumatized Patrick beyond belief,  
And now he’s scared he’ll chip his teeth.

PHOBIAS  
Poem and Photos by Ravenel Rudd  
Design by Caroline Nickerson
COUNSELING AND WELLNESS CENTER OPENS “GATOR MOTIVATOR”

With final exams just around the corner, UF students already experience sleepless nights, binge-drink coffee, and slowly lose the will to maintain their GPAs. To combat student stress, Gatorwell and the Counseling and Wellness Center (CWC) have initiated a new program.

From now on, the Yappy Hour, where students may pet service dogs and puppies, has been replaced with the Gator Motivator, giving students the opportunity to cuddle with real alligators.

“We thought that, if students felt a stronger connection to their mascot, they would gain some form of solidarity during their exam days,” CWC representative Margaret Steinman said.

Similar to other programs that bring rescue dogs from the pound as a service to the canines, the alligators brought will be rescues from people’s pools. If students fall for their gator, they can sign adoption papers on the spot to give these wonderful creatures a new home, though some students have experienced difficulties with keeping alligators as pets.

“When I found out my RA wouldn’t let me keep an alligator, I was so mad. They seem like such easy pets to take care of -- they only eat, like, twice a week,” freshman Brad Billford said.

Some of the eggs hatched by rescues have been very popular with students.

“The gnawing that the little ones do on my fingers makes me giggle! It is so cute to think that, when they are full grown, their bite force will be equivalent to dropping a small truck,” sophomore Samantha Porst said.

Some parents have voiced their concerns about the University condoning students getting close to reptilian beasts that have existed for 80 million years. However, the CWC has taken all the necessary precautions to eliminate unwanted interactions.

“There’s nothing to worry about. Through trial and error, we learned to feed the alligators before they meet the students. Besides, Shands is right down the block,” Steinman said.

Undoubtedly, students may feel stressed. School is tough. But the University supports everyone through their exams, with programs like this one acting as the first line of defense against stress. Just remember not to sit on the alligators and attempt to ride them like horses. They don’t like that.

This is a satire. The Prism staff loves and supports the idea of a yappy hour -- any Prism staff member that hates puppies is promptly dismissed.

Article by Aaron Sager
Illustration by Padmini Muralatharen
Design by Caroline Nickerson
Zou had his sleeves rolled up, which meant the work day was over, except if his cell phone rang, or an important email came in, or if he ran into a client somewhere between the stoplights and storefronts of the busy shopping district.

His wife, Roslyn, wore her favorite cardigan – lavender colored, with sleeves she pulled down over her wrists to hide the pale blue veins crisscrossing under her skin.

They didn’t hold hands today. His were shoved in his pockets. Hers held grocery bags, full of food she was still acquiring a taste for. In Connecticut, there was less writing on the labels. The labels here were covered in narrow rows of kanji, with splashes of bright colors and exclamation marks. Even with Zou, food shopping was an intense experience.

“Remember that I am also not from Japan,” he’d tell her when he saw her freeze up amongst the cans of soup and sacks of rice flour.

He was right – China wasn’t Japan. But the business world had its own culture, its own landscape that he’d learn to walk with firm footing.

It was that firm footing, in addition to his kind eyes, that persuaded her to accept his offer of marriage last year. They’d met earlier the same year when he approached her on the street. She was looking through a store window at the bubbling fish tanks inside.

“Did you call your mother today, my Roslyn?”

She looked down, watching the fabric of her long dress swish around her ankles as she walked.

“No,” she replied quietly. “She was difficult last time. She thinks dad is stalking her,” she added, sensing his concern.

He didn’t respond. Instead he removed his hands from his pockets and took her grocery bags from her so she could tug on her sleeves, as he noticed she always did when she spoke of things from home.

They walked like that for some time, until Roslyn froze up amongst the throngs on shoppers and pedestrians.

“What is it this time?”

“Zou. I accidentally stole this bracelet.”

She lifted her wrist to show him the bracelet – loose-fitting on her slender wrist, and thin like a trickle of silver water.

“Back in Asakusa. I tried it on and forgot to take it off.”

They had only stopped in the artisan’s shop briefly. She was drawn to it because it wasn’t lit up with halogen and chrome like the other stores they saw so often, and because an entire wall of the tiny shop was dripping with strands of jewelry, glinting faintly in the dim lamplight. She tried on that bracelet in particular because it looked like something a mother would give their daughter.

She began to cry.

“There is no reason to cry, my Roslyn. It is an inexpensive bracelet. By the time we return to Asakusa, the store will be closed.”

He kept his voice soft but his jaw tightened like a knot above his neck. There were so many people on this street today.

He was right – the sun was setting now, drenching the glass skyscrapers in sleepy pink light. Soon their silhouettes would recede entirely and in their place, flashing signs and lit windows would carve themselves into the night sky.

She nodded and walked on, wiping her eyes on the ends of her sleeves. She would return the bracelet tomorrow, just after dawn before Zou woke for his morning tea. She’d take the metro and look out of the window as the outside world blurred past, too fast for her to recognize anything at all.

That night, she thought, she would return her mother’s phone call.
v. Father's Love

The father rises before the morning sun and waits on the deck for her to join him. The tranquil hush over the water is almost tangible as it whispers reassurances to the grim man as an old friend comforts one who is all too aware that children are frangible.

But as regret is about to consume the poor man he sees his shadow in the gently rippling waves and then a small child is standing there head held high and with a smile he braves the bathtub waters, then shallow sand-laden shores and, at last, the ocean, where he gasps in salty air!

How refreshing to take a step back and allow time and the past to remind him of the irreplaceable joy he has found in the sea and the man feels his knotted worries unwind as steady as the sun rises from its watery bed for he remembers the first time he truly felt free.

And he also remembers his son’s little face with the bright eyes (so bright!) as they looked out toward the water as the harbor disappeared from view and he now knows without a sliver of doubt that bringing his son, his quick and curious little boy, with him on the journey was the right thing to do.

The sea, oh the sea, that magnificent creature who bares its back for the rider, the friend, and would loyally carry him, however roughly, to the veritable four corners and the end of the known world and further, much further until he has reached the jeweled infinity.

And as the man gazes into the water he begins to laugh quietly to himself because he realizes that he could sail forever and still be unable to render each shelf and reef and island in this blue world; mapping the land was simple, but the sea? Never.

vi. Child’s Fantasy

Meanwhile the child has arisen in the cabin to a state of curious wakefulness and he spies on the desk a closed scroll which he unravels immediately to witness once again his father’s scrupulous handiwork and the sight touches the child to his soul.

How he wonders at his father’s loving hands, which he has known as long and dear as life, crafting such a splendid work of art as the one that now lies before him rife with the miniscule penned in names of towns and cities that made the chart.

And how he sees! How he imagines the faded blue water on the map coming to life and roiling with storms to send chills down the neck of even the saltiest sea dog; how he imagines the coiling mass of iridescent scales on the sea monster’s back as it shrieks—oh! The things to believe in.

The maidens’ heads along the edges of the map are perpetually blowing wind but the inked swirls begin to churn as if risen from a slumber, a mermaid with sharp teeth and a string of pearls leaps from the waves and grabs onto the banister with inhuman screeches and eyes a burnt umber.

But now his imagination is flying fearfully free and he cannot reign in the nightmarish visions of tentacles ten men wide snatching him from the safety of the ship, and the almighty collisions of thunderclaps and lightning cracking through the angry black sky with a booming background hum.

The child lies in a pool of eldritch astonishments with his mind ever-so-delighted and frightened by all of these impossible, plaguing thoughts until at last the skies are brightened by daylight and his father finds him curled up like a map, fists as tight as knots.

Poem by Gloria Li
Design by Kayley Gerard
vii. Awaiting Land

“Careful, child, with that map, for I have penned each little island upon days of thought and observation, gazing down from the crags of a highland slope or circling around the lagoons of some foreign man’s sea nation.”

The father chuckles, withdrawing the map from his child’s coveting arms and smoothing it out so that the officious eyes which would later on land on the delicate handiwork of the chart could not be of imprecision suspicious.

“Father, you would not believe the many things I had seen when I gazed upon such pictures, the beautiful things I had seen in the things you had drawn and the terrifying ones too, like shipwrecks and—how the veiled thunder rings!”

“An adventurous mind, no doubt,” the father replies with tender nostalgia and something else in his voice, “but while the sea can render one speechless from awe, or a babbling admirer (your choice)—

there remains in the distance the lands shrouded by mist that this ship brings us towards and how those adolescent, wind-kissed landscapes and their people will strike in your young heart feverish chords!

And for the love of all adventure, which I share with you as well, I bid you accept this present from your father—a new ink well, a sharp-tipped pen, a roll of sheets—yours to determine their future contents.”

viii. The Present

And isn’t it absurd, how quickly fate rushes in to claim the unsuspecting father and his son? With great wings it will soar into the sky like thunderclouds to obscure the midday sun.

Isn’t it absurd, how flesh could be torn from flesh as if there ever needed to be something strange and supernatural to sever that beautiful paternal bond, two lives forever to change?

For it takes but a wave, a strong wave of the sea or of the hand to end this relationship and, all of a sudden, the planned endeavors of father and son disappear underwater with the ship.

For it takes not a life, a fragile human life which flickers ever candle-like in the wind of consciousness, but liquors of drunken naiveté that bring said life to bitter end.

And in newfound soberness the child floats away alone on a plank of wood that had been the wall of some poor windblown body’s cabin; and he shudders in terror at the things he had seen.

The gifts from his father he grasps tightly but as he comes to understand, this boy of but seven, he lets them sink slowly into the ocean; for no map on earth could help him find heaven.
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