As part of the Small World Initiative, an international research project to discover new antibiotics, NSU students are working with Biology Professors Aarti Raja and Julia Torres-Marcus to discover and research new strains of bacteria with antibacterial properties.

The Small World Initiative originated from Yale University in 2012 and, according to their website, aims “to encourage students to pursue careers in science through real-world applicable laboratory and field research in introductory colleges,” as well as to educate students on the lack of effective antibiotics. The project is currently being worked on at 199 schools of higher education throughout the world.

Raja, an assistant professor at the Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography, said that the idea of the initiative was to come up with a program where undergraduate students could be involved in research and to address the global concern of limited antibiotics.

“As we don’t have a lot of antibiotics out there, one of the things that they thought of was, ‘well, we need to go find more antibiotics,'” Raja said. “Well, as luck would have it, the majority of the antibiotics out there, I think about two-thirds of the antibiotics we have out there today, are made by microorganisms that are found in the soil.”

The initiative is an ongoing project, but as part of Raja and Garcia’s classes, which Raja brought to campus in 2014, students are only required to take part in the project for the semester in which they are enrolled. Students must collect soil samples from various areas in South Florida, analyze the soil for microorganisms in the lab and then grow found bacteria in the lab to find if it carries antibacterial characteristics. Each student is expected to keep up with a lab report explaining their methods, research and findings to submit by the end of the course. If, by the end of the semester, a student discovers a new microorganism or wants to continue research, Raja offers them the opportunity to do so as part of an independent study.

Frank Hiffmerman, senior biology major, said, “A lot of modern medicines and phenomena that we have today are naturally based, and now we have the chance to kind of see them as we go.”

One student at another university found a new microorganism that was producing an antibiotic, and now it’s in the process of being marketed.

Morgan Quarches, junior biology major, is a student in Raja’s microbiology class and has located seven bacteria with antibacterial properties.

“I could have potentially discovered a new antibiotic that can be used to help a lot of people fight off different bacterial infections. It’s really awesome,” she said.

Raja said that not every undergraduate has the opportunity to engage in research.

“With this kind of a project, you get the feel for research because you get to start working on something on day one in the classroom,” Raja said. “We don’t want students to memorize a bunch of facts. We want them to put it into practice. Once it’s put into practice, it sinks in more and they understand better.”

Ezana Assefa, senior biology major, said that one of the most important things he’s taken away from the project is understanding how science can be broken down and applied on students’ levels.

“A lot of labs are already ordered and everything is textual with the same results over and over again. With this project, it took a completely different spin and made it an actual experiment that each student was able to make their own. Not even the professor knows what to expect, and that gives it a much more experimental feel,” he said.

Raja applied to take part in the initiative on behalf of the school and underwent training in the summer of 2014. She said she hopes to offer the opportunity to more students in the future and implement the project in the curriculum of all biology I courses on campus, but she wants to see how positive her students’ reactions are first.

“It gives a real-world application to what you learn in the classroom,” she said. “We may be down here in South Florida in a small area, but now we are partnering with people from all over the world, and that’s pretty cool.”

Halden Munoz, a senior biology student, said that with bacteria continuously evolving, it’s important to find new strains that can prove to be helpful for treating various infections.

“It’s amazing to be part of a team that can help future generations of medications, finding diseases and finding something that can change the world,” he said.

For more information about the project or to get involved, contact Raja at a1290@nova.edu. For more information about the initiative, visit smallworldinitiative.org.
Fight procrastination at the Writing Center

By Erin Herbert
@erin_herbert

To give COMP students a place to work on their final papers before the end of the semester, the NSU Writing Fellows will host their third annualnsu's Kinda Long Night Against Procrastination on Dec. 2 from 5 to 9 p.m. in the Writing Center Room 127C of the Parker building. The Writing Fellows are a group of peer tutors who assist a class that he or she is assigned to and helps students with writing conventions and APA/MLA style.

The Kinda Long Night Against Procrastination is an event where students taking COMP courses can come together and work on their final papers in a productive environment within the Writing Center. Throughout the night, the Writing Fellows will be available to answer questions and give feedback and advice to the students.

Kevin Dvurak, the director of the Writing Center, said, “The Kinda Long Night Against Procrastination is an event primarily for the students enrolled in COMP this year — we don’t mind if non-COMP students show up — but the whole idea of it is to get a community of writers to come together, work together, talk together and collaborate together. Basically, to get their work done or to get a head start on their work prior to finals week.”

NSU’s Kinda Long Night Against Procrastination is based on a longer event called Long Night Against Procrastination.

Kamila Albert, Writing Fellow and master’s in writing student, said, the event is a smaller version of the larger, international event “Long Night Against Procrastination,” which started in Germany in 2010 with the idea to get students into a space where they can work on their papers.

Albert said the event openly acknowledges that students procrastinate and that it’s okay. “So, naturally, it was a success,” she said. “It spread to other countries like Poland, Austria and the U.S., and now it’s an international event.”

Last semester, the Kinda Long Night Against Procrastination event drew approximately 50 students. But there isn’t a fixed number to grow this year and will be opening more class rooms to accommodate students.

The Writing Center will provide snacks throughout the night, and Radio X will broadcast live from the Writing Center. The Writing Fellows will host their third annual Long Night Against Procrastination.

Megan Fitzgerald, Faculty Advisor
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The Current serves Nova Southeastern University from its location in Room 313 in the Student Affairs Building. The Current is NSU’s established vehicle for student reporting, opinion and the arts. All community members are invited to contribute. Opinions, commentaries and advertisements in this publication reflect the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the University or its officials. The Current staff or other advertisers. The Current will not publish unsigned letters except under special circumstances at the discretion of the editor-in-chief. The Current reserves the right to edit, publish or deny submitted works as it sees fit. The Current shall remain free of associations to contribute. The Current shall remain free of associations that may compromise integrity or damage credibility or otherwise create a bias, real or perceived.

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By: Ketsia Baldwin

Unity Music Festival coming soon

To promote unity within organizations and among students, the Inter-Fraternity Council will host the Unity Music Festival on Nov. 20 at 8 p.m. in the Flight Deck Backyard.

“The Unity Music Festival will encourage unity and philanthropy,” said IFP President Baison Madrigal, senior biology major.

The Unity Music Festival will have a battle of the DJs where each DJ will have 10 minutes to display their talents. The winner will be judged by crowd reaction. Most of the DJs will be NSU students, but student DJs from Florida International University and Florida Atlantic University will also perform.

IFC is composed of the social fraternities on campus, including FIJI, Kappa Sigma and Beta Theta Pi. Their goals are to promote respect, health and safety and to challenge members to expose fraternal ideals.

“The event is fun for everyone to come together to accomplish similar goals,” said Madrigal.

Currently, the three Greek councils on campus are: IFC, PanHellenic Council and the United Greek Council. The council came together to plan the Unity Music Festival.

“In this event, all councils will work together and show Greek unity, which is very important,” said UGC President Monica Sap, senior elementary education major.

In addition to fraternities and sororities, other organizations are encouraged to be a part of the event.

Madrigal said that attendees can purchase food and beverages from the Flight Deck and alcoholic drinks can be purchased for those 21 and over.

The event is free, but VIP tickets are available for $10, which includes food and front row seats. The proceeds will go to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which strives for world peace through cultural awareness and education. According to UNESCO, humanity’s moral and intellectual cohesion is important to establishing peace.

On Nov. 12 noon, during SEA Thursday, IFC will sell beaded bracelets for $1. Festival goers are encouraged to exchange bracelets to promote social interaction and unity. The Sheriffettes and Infinite Motion will perform.

DJs must sign up by Nov. 19. To participate or DJ for the Unity Music Festival, contact Madrigal at bm1010@nova.edu.

By: Miranda Moody

Learn about Islam with a Fastathon

To celebrate Islam and Muslim culture, the Student Events and Activities Board will hold a Fastathon, a day-long retreat from consuming food or water, on Nov. 19 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., followed by a feast in the Flight Deck back yard at 6:30 p.m.

SEA Board Multi-Cultural and Diversity Chair Jeevana Pakanati, sophomore biology major, said the purpose of the event is to bring awareness and take away misconceptions about the Muslim culture.

“We have seen all these events last year for SEA Board, being the Multi-Cultural and Diversity Chair, and I realized we never really focused on theReligiously guided and what Muslim culture and lifestyle really is about,” she said.

Part of Islam is celebrating Ramadan – a month referred to as the holy month. According to history.com, Ramadan focuses on fasting, introspection and prayer – fasting being a fundamental principle of the religion. During this time, there is no eating between dawn and sunset. This includes consuming food and water, chewing gum, taking medication and smoking. The two main meals for this holiday consist of suhur, which takes place before sunrise, and iftar, which takes place immediately after the sun goes down. These meals are connected with two of the five main prayers that are performed every day as part of the Islamic religion. Ramadan is said to present spiritual peace and during this time, acts of worship are expected to be stronger than on any other time of the year.

For more information on fasting and the month of Ramadan, there will be a table set up in the Don Taft University Center spine to explain what fasting is and to inform students about the culture. There will also be a photo booth with Arabic and other cultural attire for students to wear and take pictures to commemorate this event.

Along with the fastathon and the holiday season, there will also be a food drive during the event. Participants are encouraged to bring canned goods for donation to Feeding South Florida to help families in need.

For more information, contact Pakanati at jm2727@nova.edu.
“Every time we raise the minimum wage, the number of jobless people increases. It’s particularly a problem in the black community. Only 19.8 percent of black teenagers have a job, who are looking for one. You know, that — and that’s because of those high wages. If you lower those wages, that comes down.”—Ben Carson, on minimum wage.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the participation rate of black 16 to 24 year olds who are working or seeking work was 56.4 percent in July 2015, which is 3.5 percent more than July 2014. The number of unemployed black teenagers was 20.7 percent.

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Volunteer opportunities over winter break

Winter break is typically seen as time for students to rest and recharge after exams and spend time with friends and family. But winter break can also be a time for students to give back to the community through volunteering. There are many volunteer opportunities all around Broward County during winter break, but here are just a few opportunities to give your community service a kick-start.

Feeding the Hungry at the Jubilee Center
2015
When: Dec. 14-Dec. 18 from 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
Where: 2020 Scott St., Hollywood

Give back to the community by volunteering to help prepare and serve food at the Jubilee Center in Hollywood. The Jubilee Center serves meals to over 150 individuals in need every day. Volunteers are discouraged from bringing personal items and must wear closed-toed shoes in order to participate. You must be 16 years or older to participate unless supervised by an adult.

If you can’t make a time commitment to volunteering, the Jubilee Center also accepts canned food donations. These donations will be used to create pantry boxes, which will be distributed to local families.

For more information, contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 954-920-0160 or JubileeH sdf@jubilee.org.

Gift Wrap at the Galleria Mall for Heart Gallery of Broward
When: Dec. 13-14 from 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
Where: 2414 E. Sunrise Blvd., Fort Lauderdale

The Heart Gallery of Broward will hold their annual gift wrapping booth at the Galleria Mall in Fort Lauderdale and are in need of multiple volunteers throughout the holiday shopping season to provide gift wrapping services to mall patrons. Volunteers must be 18 or older to participate or must be 12 years old and accompanied by an adult. No gift wrapping experience is required to volunteer.

For more information, contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 954-918-3008.

Beach Patch
When: Dec. 19 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
Where: 19801 Sheridan St., Fort Lauderdale

Enjoy Florida’s winter weather and help maintain the patch at the Dania Beach Garden Park. Volunteers are needed to assist in the maintenance of the patch’s above ground garden system by replacing soil, weeding and harvesting crops. Volunteers must wear closed-toed shoes and are encouraged to bring reusable water bottles, sun hats and sunscreen. For water and healthy snacks are provided for all volunteers.

You must be 16 or older to work at the patch or must be at least 8 years old and accompanied by an adult.

For more information, contact Teina Howes at 954-357-5174 or jhowes@broward.org.

Beach Patch
When: Dec. 13-Dec. 23 from 10:30 a.m.-7 p.m.
Where: 1200 NW First St., Dania Beach

Give back to the community right outside of your doors by volunteering at the Dania Beach Garden Park. Volunteers are needed to assist in the maintenance of the patch’s above ground garden system by replacing soil, weeding and harvesting crops. Volunteers must wear closed-toed shoes and are encouraged to bring reusable water bottles, sun hats and sunscreen. For water and healthy snacks are provided for all volunteers.

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Animal and Farm Care at FRIENDS Ranch
When: Dec. 15, Dec. 17, Dec. 19 and Dec. 20 from 12:30-5:30 p.m.
Where: 10801 Sheridan St., Fort Lauderdale

FRIENDS Ranch is horse sanctuary in Fort Lauderdale in need of volunteers to assist in the care of their rescue animals and maintenance of their facilities at the ranch. Volunteers will help with tasks such as cleaning stalls or feeding animals. After the preliminary labor is done, volunteers will then be able to care for and interact with the rescue animals and assist in bathing, grooming and general upkeep of the animals.

Before volunteering, you must complete a new volunteer orientation/training session hosted by the Ranch. The Ranch hosts these sessions on the first and third Saturday of every month at 1 p.m. First time volunteers must also present a signed waiver and valid form of ID at their first session.

For more information, call the FRIENDS Ranch at 954-492-0168.

Volunteer opportunities to give your community service a kick-start.

Desperate for money and eager for work experience, I decided to bite up my resume through an entry-level job I thought I could excel at.

At the time, I was a freshman and had no clue what I wanted to do for my life, but there were a few things I knew about myself: I knew how to shop, I knew how to fold clothes, and I tend to be a relatively friendly person. So when I accepted a position as a seasonal cast member at the Disney Store that fall, I assumed that the following months of employment would be a breeze. I mean, how difficult could it be to put on a smile, carefully organize plushes and wish everyone a magical day? Apparently, not as easy as I had initially thought.

I was one of 19 seasonal employees hired that fall, and because we were overstaffed, I only worked maybe one or two shifts before being thrown into the madness of Black Friday. But despite my extreme lack of experience and unfamiliarity with many of the procedures, I was optimistic. So after a brief nap and with a turkey- and cow-filled belly, I threw on my costume — Disney-speak for uniform — and my Mickey ears. I kissed my guests, who were still at my house at the time, goodbye and left my house at around 10:30 p.m. to make my 11:30 shift.

I felt pretty good about myself. I was put in charge of pajamas and plushes in the back of the store — familiar territory. But once the clock hit midnight, my confidence smile faded away as a frenzied mob stampeded toward me like a pack of wildbeest. My heartfully organized rack of pajamas that I spent a full half-hour perfecting was torn apart within the minute as the angry parents fought over Rapunzel nightgowns and another set of Mickey Mouse loungewear.

Small children swarmed around me, tossing plushes across the store like footballs with their sticky hands — plushes that I carefully arranged by movie, size and theme — and screamed to their parents to buy them the giant Perry the Platypus. I was wagged in 20 different directions to search for races, reach unreachable items and answer questions that I did not know the answer to. I was constantly cleaning, only to have my area completely restocked. The store was at its maximum capacity for about four hours, and unfortunately for me, pajamas were the hottest deal of the evening.

By: Erin Hebert
@erin_hebert

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Volunteer opportunities over winter break

By: Nicole Cocuy
@CurrentNicole

WHERE: 606 W. Sample Road, Coconut Creek

Winter break is typically seen as time for students to rest and recharge after exams and spend time with friends and family. But winter break can also be a time for students to give back to the community through volunteering. There are many volunteer opportunities all around Broward County during winter break, but here are just a few opportunities to give your community service a kick-start.

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Three easy ways to beat procrastination

By: April Coan

My name is April Coan, and I am an academic success coach and the assistant director at the Office of Undergraduate Student Success. Throughout the fall semester, I will offer tips and suggestions in The Current, which will focus on topics like success in college and taking advantage of the unique opportunities available at NSU.

Monsters are real. They don’t exist in any physical form, at least none that can be seen, but they do exist in our minds. As children, we’re haunted by the monsters we believe are living under our beds. As adults, we’re haunted by procrastination. It seems like procrastination is always lurking beside us, waiting to attack us and make our lives infinitely more complicated. As adults, we’re haunted by the monsters we believe are living under our beds. As children, we’re haunted by procrastination. It seems like procrastination is always lurking beside us, waiting to attack us and make our lives infinitely more complicated.

As the semester draws to its inevitable end, our to-do lists seem to grow longer each passing day, and procrastination seems to grow stronger. With tasks piling up like sticks, papers and quizzes, it’s easy to feel overwhelmed and to put things off for later. Putting things off is a problem because it is temporary fix and usually makes things worse in the long-term. To beat the evils of procrastination once and for all, try these three simple steps.

Break it down. There’s an old saying that goes like this: “How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.” Sometimes when you have a lot of things to do, it’s easy to feel overwhelmed and give up. Unfortunately, that type of response isn’t very productive. Next time you’re feeling overwhelmed, try making a little progress each day, no matter how small.

Remind yourself why. When you have a lot of things to do, sometimes the reason why you’re doing things can get lost in the hustle and bustle of your everyday activities. Reminding yourself with pictures, inspirational quotes and other reminders can help you remember the purpose of your hard work and can give you the extra motivation to complete tasks now, rather than put them off for later.

Remove distractions. We live in a world full of distractions. Between emails, Netflix movies, tweets, Facebook posts, text messages and phone calls, it’s amazing that we get anything done at all. Sometimes, beating procrastination can be as easy as temporarily removing the things that distract you the most. Instead of gratifying your impulses with distractions, try completing tasks now and rewarding yourself with distractions later.

Just like a monster from a horror film, procrastination rarely disappears completely once defeated. It will more than likely come back. However, these three simple techniques should help you ward off the evils of procrastination each time procrastination strikes back.

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Three easy ways to beat procrastination

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How to prepare for interviews

By: Emilio Lorenzo and Emily Tasca

Interviews are like an audition. Just as any good actor or actress must utilize a variety of techniques to succeed in such settings, you as well must adopt a strong strategic strategy when being interviewed for a job or internship. Interviews can come in many different forms including phone, Skype, and in-person, and can feature one to as many as five interviewers. Taking the proper steps before going into each of these types of interviews can ensure that you are not only a successful interviewee, but can also lead to stronger job prospects and career growth.

The first step to a great interview is to research the company. If you are researching the company, managing the logistics of arriving for the interview, evaluating what the interview would entail, preparing questions to ask the employer and “story banking” examples to include with your interview responses. Research is very important because you want to show an employer that you are knowledgeable about the company.

For example, it would be embarrassing to go into an interview with FPL and ask them what the acronym means. Research is more than knowledge of a company’s products and services; it also entails understanding the mission and vision statement, values the organization stands for, skillsets/abilities needed in prospective position, as well as any other details or initiatives you discover by visiting their website or social media pages.

Once you have gathered all the necessary information through research, it is time to prepare for some of the logistics and prep-work that goes into an initial meeting. Obviously, if you are being interviewed over the phone or via Skype, you do not need to worry about driving distance or getting to the location on time. When it is an in-person interview, however, this is a factor that needs to be considered. As South Florida traffic can be unpredictable. A good strategy is to visit the interview location a day before your meeting to determine the amount of time needed to ensure you will arrive about 15 minutes before the scheduled time of the interview.

When you do arrive for the interview, remember that first impressions are very important. Ensuring that you make eye contact and have a proper handshake can contribute to the interview getting off on the right foot. Be prepared for small talk after that initial greeting, and, more than anything, have a positive demeanor, which shows how excited you are for this opportunity. Positivity is contagious, and showing that is a quality you possess will help the interviewers see how you can fit into the established culture of the organization.

Considering how important positivity is within an interview setting, it can be even more important when you are not physically there for the interview, such as in phone or Skype interviews. When being interviewed over the phone, it is always important to put a smile on as, although the employers cannot see you, they can easily distinguish if someone has that general excitement they are looking for in an applicant.

Even with a positive attitude, phone interviews can be tricky, especially if you are unprepared for unexpected or筝 hard questions. One quick tip when job searching is to always be prepared for a potential interview if you receive a phone call from an employer. You never know if that person will give you the "meat and potatoes" of figuring out if you are an ideal candidate. It's more than fine to respond honestly if you receive an unexpected call from the employer and they ask, "Is this a good time?" If you are unavailable to have a quality conversation, it can lead to lost revenue for the employer, and they may ask another question or request another call at another time.

The process of identifying potential stories or examples to include in your responses is known as "story banking," and can lead to a much more effective and impressive interview as a whole. Interviews can come in many different forms, and if you plan accordingly, you put yourself in a better position to be successful and reach potential career goals. Preparing for the interview can be tedious at times; however, the benefits far outweigh the workload involved. With proper preparation, you will come off as knowledgeable, experienced, and professional. You will be able to articulate why your skills and previous experiences relate to the position and make you a good fit within the organization.

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How to prepare for holidays on a budget

By: Jazmine Brown

You’re one of two people. One saves all their hard-earned money, the other loves holidays, and the other waits until December to do anything. Sometimes one of you may have to open your wallet in order to buy presents, but that doesn’t mean you can’t do it on a budget. Here’s how to get the most out of it.

Establish a budget

The first step to getting everything on your list is to know how much money you have to work with. Once you’re done saving, if you chose to do so, set aside the money you have to use to buy gifts by opening a separate checking account that you don’t touch for anything else; no, not even a drink at Starbucks. Self-control, young Padawan. Or you can put the money onto a Visa/Mastercard gift card, so that bank account, it’s all in one place and not easy to get confused with your other funds. By limiting your holiday funding to an isolated place, you’ll be less likely to abuse it, meaning that you can get everyone their presents.

Know where and when the deals are

By November, most stores are kicking in the holiday season. Always keep an eye out when an offer announce them. Black Friday and Cyber Monday are just two days out of an entire month or so of deals and doorbusters. Amazon, for example, has year-round deals on electronics, games, tools and sometimes need; electronics, home décor, clothes and toys. There’s no need to wait until Black Friday to get yourself killed over a 70-percent-off laptop when you can shop on Amazon from the comfort and safety of your home. Amazon has holiday deals on top of its already low prices. 12 days of deals in December, anyone? Some other steals that extend beyond the dark time that is Black Friday are: iTunes offers its best deals on iTunes gift cards in December, according to dealsnews.com, and, according to bankrate.com, tablets and e-readers should be as low as $40 this December.

Space out purchases out

Too many times, you buy one or two gifts once you get your paycheck. That way, you don’t buy your entire paycheck — or savings — in one shot buying all of your gifts at once. Even if you don’t have to, try use all your money at once. It’s best to wait in buying between your gifts so you always have some cash. Plus, you need to eat, and emergencies can happen.

Take advantage of coupons

Think of LL’s “Extreme Couponing. You may not end up paying $0 for your items, but you will save a ton, leave you more room to buy more expensive gifts or multiple gifts for the same person. Comb newspapers and those annoying circulars, and download the Groupon and RetailMeNot apps, available for both Apple and Android devices. Most stores allow you to combine coupons so you can pile the savings on.
By: Amanda Kaplan

**Features**

Mythbusters: The truth about vaping and hookah

By: Esmé Lalouet

November is the month of many things, including National Peanut Butter Lover’s Month. Not many can resist a peanut butter pie from the bakery, or even the random spoonful of peanut butter as a late night snack, but there are many uses for peanut butter other than baking. Cecilia Rokusek, professor of Family Medicine, Public Health and Disaster and Circulation Prevention in the College of Osteopathic Medicine, said, "First of all, let me say that peanut butter is a very good food, except for those with any type of nut allergy. For those individuals, it can be almost deadly.”

She said some debate that peanut butter is rich in calories and salt (if not unsalted) and high in fat, but the benefits far outweigh any of the negative values. As a matter of fact, peanuts are 45-50% fat, but 50% is unsaturated fat, which means they are subject to the federal prohibition of trans fats.

Rokusek said, "Additionally, peanut butter is high in carbohydrates, other B vitamins, vitamin A and C and a myriad of other minerals, including manganese, phosphorous, selenium, copper, iron and zinc.”

Rokusek said there has been a fair amount of research on the best health benefits of peanut butter, including decreased heart disease and decreased risk of recurrent kidney stones.

"Peanut butter has been shown to decrease diabetes by almost 30 percent. Peanut butter contains monounsaturated fat, which is good for you. It helps lower cholesterol,” said Rokusek.

But all things are good in moderation.

"One to two tablespoons, depending on body size and energy expenditure, and if it is a snack or in a meal such as a peanut butter sandwich, [is good],” Rokusek said.

Peanut butter is a good protein source that is an excellent source of bone-building magnesium, potassium and vitamin B6. Rokusek said, "In addition, peanut butter is high in carbohydrates, other B vitamins, vitamin A and C and a myriad of other minerals, including manganese, phosphorous, selenium, copper, iron and zinc.”

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**Potassium content**

Peanut butter is rich in potassium. Two tablespoons of smooth peanut butter, a 210 mg serving size, is considered a high-potassium by drugs.com.

Rokusek said, “Potassium is a macro-mineral, meaning that it is important in larger amounts in the body and is essential to the body [in regulating] fluid and mineral balance in the body and balancing fluids in and outside of body cells.”

Rokusek said that potassium helps to maintain normal blood pressure by blunting the effect of sodium. Potassium also helps to reduce the risk of recurrent kidney stones and possible bone loss (osteoporosis).

According to the DailyChalky.Clinic, Inc., the kidneys “keep the right amount of potassium in a steady pace.”

**Fiber content**

According to Find.com, one tablespoon of peanut butter contains 2.8 grams of fiber, which is about 4 percent of the daily recommended dosage.

Rokusek said, "Peanut butter contains both soluble and insoluble fiber. Soluble fiber itself helps to lower the risk of diabetes and high blood cholesterol. Insoluble fiber has been linked to the prevention of digestive disorders, including diverticular disease, constipation, intestinal ulcers, colon cancer and hemorrhoids.”

According to nutrition.md.org, fiber is important for proper digestion and adequate bowel movements. It prevents constipation, reduces blood sugar levels and lowers cholesterol. Fiber is filling and helps to control appetite, and diets high in fiber have also been shown to decrease the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

**Protein content**

According to bodybuilding.com, peanut butter contains plant protein important for energy and muscle building. It specifically repairs damaged tissue and helps boost the immune system. Protein is found throughout the body — in muscles, bones, skin, hair and tissues. For every two tablespoons of peanut butter, there are 8 grams of protein.

**Cosmetic uses**

Natural products used in cosmetics are not a new concept, according to lifeclock.org. However, with the development of organic products, more people are creating a market for these organic cosmetics. The peanuts used to make peanut butter are high in hydrogenated peanut oil. In cosmetics and personal care products, peanut-derived ingredients are used in moisturizers, skin care products and skin cleaners. Believe it or not, shampoos use peanut oil. The oil helps with dry scalp care because of its natural moisturizer contents, similarly in shaving cream and a variety of lotions.

"People often do not realize that peanut oil is in cosmetics, lotions, soaps and creams. Creams are often used for scaly or irritated skin,” Rokusek said. "Peanut oil is also found in vitamins, eye drops and eye pencil.”

With the numerous ways to use peanut butter, it’s no wonder this delicious snack is more than just a treat for your tummy. Whether you use it for late night binging during finals, to meet your nutritional goals for the day or even in your morning cosmetic routine, peanut butter is a staple in everyone’s life.
ON THE BENCH:

Thanksgiving is for family, not college football

By: Nicole Cocuy
@CurrentNicole

Every family has their own Thanksgiving traditions, but it is a feat to host a long table filled with enough turkey and stuffing to sustain a small village for days, an early morning game of football or a canal gathering around the TV to watch your family’s favorite team duke it out with this year’s bull. But no universal theme rings true for every household: Thanksgiving is about food and family time with family.

Many students who leave home in late August to move onto a college campus don’t reunite with their families again until Thanksgiving break, considering how expensive travel can be and how busy the average college student’s schedule is. Yet, due to scheduling conflicts, football players and members of their accompanying marching bands aren’t given the same opportunity to travel home for Thanksgiving and feast with their families because they are forced to play on the holiday.

Of course, nothing says “family bonding” quite like wearing matching jerseys and watching your school or your parents’ alma mater destroy a local rival, particularly if it’s a shared fandom. But while everyone else gets the privilege to root for their teams from the comfort of their living rooms with their families as they gaze down apple pie and sweet potato casserole, the players have to spend the holiday separated from their families, or families of the players and their marching bands have to end family traditions, rearrange plans and, if they can afford to, travel to the location of the game. It’s inhumane that these young adults, sometimes as young as 18, aren’t offered the same opportunities to take a break and catch up with loved ones because their peers want to watch the games from home on Thanksgiving for entertainment purposes.

My brother has been a member of the University of Central Florida’s Marching Knights for the past two years, and for the past two years, my family hasn’t been able to celebrate Thanksgiving with our extended family members — family members whom I usually only get to see on Thanksgiving. Instead, we have to pack our bags every year and create a makeshift Thanksgiving meal from a cramped hotel room once the game is over. Comparatively speaking, my family has it pretty easy. Orlando is a short three-hour drive away from home, but, unfortunately for others, including my brother’s roommate, a Marching Knight from Chicago whom we adopt every Thanksgiving, the trip to campus isn’t always affordable or easily accessible.

Granted, professional football players are also forced to play on Thanksgiving, but at least they are paid to do so. College football players and their supporting bands receive no financial compensation for sacrificing their holiday.

So this Thanksgiving, when you all are sitting at the table with your family, listing all of the things that you are grateful for, don’t forget to mention family and tradition, in reference to those who don’t have the same opportunity to spend the holiday with their families or have to give up traditions for the sake of everyone else’s desire for entertainment.

With an intense passion for the game, continuing her softball career into the realm of coaching was an easy decision for Julie LeMaire, head coach of NSU’s softball team. LeMaire began playing softball at a young age and continued playing through high school and college. LeMaire received a scholarship to Quincy University, where she played softball all four years. After ending her career as a collegiate softball player, LeMaire began the transition to the coaching side of softball, in order to give back to the sport that she loves.

LeMaire said, “I found out that I loved coaching and loved the game and wanted to stick in and give back a little bit more than I was able to give as a player. That’s when I got my first coaching job.”

Although she was initially hesitant to begin the journey to coaching, LeMaire credits it as one of her best decisions.

“When I was at Quincy, I was recruited by a lady who only lasted one year with us, and then she transferred back closer to home in North Dakota, and started coaching there,” said LeMaire. “Basically, I just kept in contact with her throughout my career, and she offered me a graduate position. I was a little hesitant to take it in North Dakota, but I did, and it was the best decision that I made. It was a great opportunity for me, and I’ve just stayed in coaching ever since.”

Coming off of a four-year stint as the head softball coach at Emporia University in Hays, Kansas, LeMaire will begin her first season coaching the Sharks this spring. LeMaire was initially drawn to NSU due to the great potential of the softball program has.

“NSU had a good history with softball, and I think I always recognized that NSU has the potential to be very good,” said LeMaire. “The university has really grown over time, and it’s always been something that I thought if it were to open back up, it’s something I would look into and see what exactly it was and what it had to offer. And coming back here I learned it’s a beautiful campus; it’s a great place to recruit to and play softball.”

As a former assistant coach at Lynn University, LeMaire is excited to return to the Sunshine State Conference and help expand NSU’s softball program.

She said, “NSU has always been somewhere that I thought could be very good in softball, and just having been in the conference and knowing how the conference is within athletics and softball, it definitely intrigued me to come back and basically be a part of the new direction for NSU softball. I decided that this was the place that I wanted to try to be a part of turning the success back around and getting it going on the upward.”

Although most coaches set season expectations in terms of wins and losses, LeMaire’s main expectation is to help NSU’s current players reach their full potential and stay healthy enough to improve over the course of a full season.

LeMaire said, “Expectation wise, it’s just to get the most out of the current players who we have. We have a very low roster; we have 13 currently on squad, so being able to keep them healthy is going to be important. And just evaluating the kind of players that we have and the direction that we want to move with Nova softball. I’m someone that tries to find the best in all of the athletes that we have, and being able to get them to compete at their highest level is very important to us.”

LeMaire doesn’t have exact expectations for the team; she wants to create a new culture going forward.

“The expectation, I’m not going to put a number on it or anything, or say we’re going to do this, but I think really being able to get our kids to buy into a new foundation, a new culture that we want to start in the future years.

To be able to get them to go as hard as they can every single day and get better as athletes every day, and be able to get them to perform at their highest standard. I know what our expectations are of the girls.”

But LeMaire knows that meeting her expectations for the team will not be a simple task. She acknowledges that coaching is a difficult career, and that many aspects of the job are a challenge.

She said, “The hardest part of being a coach is being able to manage everything and making sure that you’re giving your athletes the proper attention that they need.”

LeMaire also acknowledges that, although it’s challenging, helping her athletes succeed is one of the main objectives of her job, and it also one of the most rewarding.

“As a coach, you have to do the daily stuff in the office, and you’re constantly recruiting for the next team and the next group to come in, and you’re trying to put your players in the best situation to be successful for future years by putting good players around them, but yet you also want to put a lot of focus on making them the best players they can be in that moment too,” said LeMaire.

Through helping athletes succeed, LeMaire has been able to form personal relationships with the girls she coaches. LeMaire credits these relationships to be her proudest achievement as coach.

She said, “I could say we won 20-0 or undefeated in the conference play during my first year at Emporia four years ago. Or that we’ve won a regular season Championship and a Conference Championship, but when I get texts from those kids that I’ve coached along the way, during my last eight years as a head coach, and see that they’ve become a fan of me no matter where I’m at, even if it’s the place they were or not, it’s probably by far my most proud moment. They impact you so much, and you want to make sure that you impact them as well.”
By: Emalee Shrewsbury

Originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, Molly Blomer, senior software engineering major, has spent the past four years as the shooting guard for NSU’s women’s basketball team.

Blomer is the executive board for the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (S.A.A.C.), and along with her software engineering major, is also pursuing a minor in marketing. With her degree, Blomer will look into a career in web or mobile development.

I got the opportunity to sit down and ask Blomer more about herself.

How did you start playing basketball?
“IT was a long time ago, in second grade. Pretty much, my dad told me I was going to play basketball.”

What is your favorite aspect of basketball?
“How close I am with my teammates. Even in high school, my teammates were my best friends. I think that is something really special.”

What is the most difficult aspect of the game?
“Right now, it is knowing that I only have eight months left. That is probably the most difficult thing. It’s kind of sad.”

Coming into college basketball, did you strive to do anything specific for the team?
“I don’t think I knew what to expect. It was definitely a big change from high school. I think my view and role as a player has changed. In high school, it didn’t feel like I would have to change because here we are so successful, and I have a close relationship with my coaches and teammates.”

Would you like to pursue basketball after college? Maybe in coaching or even the WNBA?
“If I had the ability to, I think I would go overseas to play, but I am not sure if that is a part of my future. I kind of go back and forth about coaching, but probably not.”

What has been the most outstanding part of your basketball career?
“How successful we have been here. Going to the Elite Eight and Final Four three years in a row.”

How do you balance athletics and a major?
“For my major, a lot of my classes are project-based, and the professors are mostly relaxed. A lot of my assignments are online, allowing less time in class.”

How do you cope with stress?
“I don’t get stressed until it is last minute and I forget to do something. To cope with the stress, I usually am frantic to get things done, which is usually the case.”

Who have been some of the most influential people in your basketball career?
“Definitely my high school coach. We are still pretty close. My coaches here, definitely.”

How do you keep yourself motivated?
“This year, since it is my last year, I only have eight months I have to give it all that I’ve got.”

Do you admire any professional basketball players?
“I do — Kyle Korver. Our old assistant coach showed me an article, and the article was really neat. He is kind of like the same type of player I am, not that I am that good, but I kind of relate to him as a shooter. The article talked about how he went above and beyond to train in an underwater marathon. It was really cool.”

Athlete of the Week: Molly Blomer

Senior software engineering major Molly Blomer works as hard off the court as she does on the court.
Take a hike

By: Marie Ontivero

Take a hike

It's free, it's close, and it’s easy! Arch Creek Park has no entry or parking fees, is 31 minutes away and has linear and loop hiking trails that are considered easy by floridasites.com. Natural trails snake through the darker forest of Arch Creek. While on the trails, look out for the plant identifiers; this identifier is engaging enough to learn about the tropical wildlife in South Florida. The park got its name from a natural arch in the trees known as the “Gateway to Miami.” Sadly, the arch collapsed decades ago, but a limestone canyon is still a sight worth seeing. The park has a museum that details the long history of the archeological and geological site on which it sits. Also in the museum, there's a self-guiding trail map with interpretive information, and you can go guided walks, ghost tours and historic talks. Reservations are required for guided walks and tours.

In college, it may be easy to get caught up in the studies and stresses of school. A simple way to escape is to take a hike in the natural wonders of South Florida. Some are easy, some are hard, some are free and some are not, but any way you look at it, hiking trails in such a tropical environment are worth experiencing.

Arch Creek Park
1855 NE 115th St., North Miami
Open Wednesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Silver Springs State Park
1425 NE 35th Avenue, Ocala
Open every day at 8 a.m.

Silver Springs State Park has a general $8 admission fee per 2 to 8 people. The park has over 15 miles of hiking and biking trails leading through wetland and swamp areas. The trails provide a view of oak hammock and pine tree forests. Simply by walking the trails, visitors get a glimpse of the wide variety of ecosystems that Central Florida offers. Silver Springs is a premier location for bird watching, so keep a look out for wild turkey, bobwhite quail, hairy woodpecker, American kestrel and so much more. The Silver River Museum and Environmental Education Center is located at the camp’s entrance. The center is open to the public on weekends and holidays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., while admission to the museum is $2 per person. Children under 6 are free.

John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park
102601 Overseas Highway (MM 102.5), Key Largo
Open every day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The park is slightly off the beaten path and costs $8 per 2 to 8 people. John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park covers roughly 78 square miles, but the museum at the park is an essential part of the park visit. The museum, also known as their Visitor Center, shows the area’s history and aquatic wildlife in the area. The Visitor Center has a 30,000-gallon saltwater aquarium, and nature videos can be viewed in its theater. Once deeper into the park, there are hiking trails into the mangroves. The park provides a wide variety of tropical vegetation, like hardwood hammock trees and tropical fruit trees, as well as locally recognized animals. Watch out for mosquitos, as this is their natural habitat. The mangrove swamps and tropical hammocks offer visitors a unique and interesting experience. John Pennekamp Park is also well-known for its marine life and exquisite coral reefs that you can explore. The park offers not only hiking, but also boat and paddleboard rentals, guided glass bottom boat tours and camping.

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Cyber crazy

By: Roddia Paul

For those who will spend the holiday season away from the chaos of Black Friday and near their family, there are sales for you, too. After you’ve eaten all the stuffing you possibly can, and you can’t bear to move, shopping from home is perfect for you. This year’s Cyber Monday will be on Nov. 30, so you might want to start stretching your fingers.

Best Buy
Not only can you look forward to sales on Apple products, vacuums, cell phones, cameras and much more, but Best Buy will also have free shipping on all orders up until Jan. 2.

Pacsun
Everyone loves Pacsun but hates their prices, but this Cyber Monday, you can look forward to a great sale. All tops are buy one get one 50 percent off and there’s free shipping on all orders.

Home Depot
You can look forward to a whole week of cyber fun. Starting on Cyber Monday through Dec. 7, Home Depot will have sales on all items, free shipping and free in-store pick up on most online orders.

Target
You’ve hit the target with this one. This year, you can expect deals on over 100,000 items, including everything from clothing to toys. Start your holiday shopping off right.

Bloomingdales
This Cyber Monday, Bloomingdales is offering 25 percent off both regular priced items and items already on sale. You can also get free shipping, and the offer lasts until Dec. 1.

Express
Who doesn’t want cute clothes on sale? Express is offering $100 off $250, $50 off $150, $5 off of $50 and many other sales. Plus, shipping is free.

Starbucks
Floridians love drinking coffee in this 100-degree weather, so why not get your coffee on sale? Starbucks is offering $25 off $70+ and free shipping. This offer ends on Dec. 1.

Perfumania
Everyone has that one person they want to buy a gift for but have no idea what to get them. When in doubt, perfume it out. Perfumania is having a 35 percent off coupon with the coupon code CYBER13S. Sale ends Dec. 1.

Footlocker
Fresh kicks for the low low. With the coupon code LSK13WK3, you can get an extra 20 percent off all items. Get it while it’s hot — this sale ends Dec. 2.

International Men’s Day: Five feminist actors

By: Jazmyn Brown

We often admire celebrities who embody these types of goals. Here are four actors who don’t keep their stances on gender equality a secret.

Aziz Ansari
Comedian and actor, Ansari is widely known for his stand-up comedy and his role as Tom Haverford on NBC’s “Parks and Recreation.” Haverford is notorious for his womanizing ways, but this is contrary to Ansari’s real-life take on feminism. According to internationalmensday.com, “Haverford is notorious for his stand-up comedy and his role as Tom Haverford on NBC’s “Parks and Recreation.” Ansari researched these struggles, like sexual addresses the everyday struggles women face. Ansari’s research for types of goals. Here are four actors who don’t keep their stances on gender equality a secret.

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International Men's Day: Five feminist actors

Aziz Ansari
Known best for his role as the bad-boy vampire Damon Salvatore on The CW’s “The Vampire Diaries,” Somerhalder is an active humanitariam, conservationist, animal rights activist and proud feminist. He is the founder of the Ian Somerhalder Foundation, which seeks to positively impact the environment and its inhabitants, according to its website. The foundation collaborated with Connecther, an organization that seeks to empower women and girls, for the Girls Impact the World Film Festival, in which participants submit a short video about global women’s issues and possible solutions. Somerhalder and his wife, Nikki Reed, are judges for the contest. “The collaboration between GITW and ISF was a perfect fit considering ISF acknowledges that our youth are the most undervalued and underutilized natural resource on this planet — and we feel so especially about young women,” Somerhalder told SheKnows, an online media company for women. “Hollywood has enough attention. Let’s celebrate the women achieving the unthinkable in our local communities every day.”

George Clooney
Golden Globe Award- and Academy Award-winner George Clooney has a solution to the statistic that just 12 percent of protagonists in 2014 films were female: cast females for male parts, according to Vanity Fair. Clooney got this idea when actress and producer Sandra Bullock called him and requested the lead role in “Our Brand is Crisis,” a film that was—originally about a male political strategist, according to Vanity Fair. Immediately after, production began, and the film was released on Oct. 30, grossing $5.9 million in the box office, according to Rotten Tomatoes, a film rating and critique website. In 2012, Clooney and actress Viola Davis were featured on the cover of Entertainment Weekly. Davis spoke about race and women in the film industry, whereas Clooney focused on gender equality. “It’s much harder to get a film with a woman lead made. When a man hits 40 is when roles just begin to happen. And for women, it doesn’t happen. I find that to be a very concerning issue,” Clooney told the magazine.
Catching up with Caskey

By: Destinee A. Hughes
@DestineeAHughes

Catching up with Caskey, Orlando native, has been on the radar for quite some time now. With article features in Complex magazine, Hip Hop DX, All Hip Hop and many others, it’s no surprise that Birdman tracked the 23-year-old rapper down to sign him to Cash Money Records. With the completion of his Black Sheep Tour, Caskey finally had the time to chat about what and who inspires him the most in his thriving rap career.

When did you realize you had a talent for rapping?

“I realized it when I was 15 years old. My friends and I were freestyling, and it was really good at it.”

How did you end up getting signed to Cash Money Records?

“Birdman called me one day and told me to come to Miami. I came [to Miami] and he was there with a mouth full of diamonds. I played my music [for him] all night, and we just kicked it. We hit it off very well.”

How did he discover you?

“Previously, I still haven’t got the full story, but I believe that he saw a YouTube video that me and Kid Famous (currently known as The Rockstar) had done a while back, and he really liked it and looked up some more videos. He was looking for me for a couple weeks, which is weird because, during that time, I was really broke, but at the same time Birdman was looking for me.”

Describe your rapping style.

“I aspire to be compared to the elites, the Waynes and the Drakes, and I think I’m on that level. I think I have a unique voice and a unique sound. My music is real dark and spacey.”

What type of music do you like?

“I like everything. I’ve really been getting into chill and electronic music, lately. But, of course, I listen to rap every day, all day — it’s my favorite.”

Who are some of your biggest influences in the music industry?

“Lil Wayne, Young Thug, all of the great artists before us and anyone who pushes the culture forward.”

When do you plan on releasing your next studio album?

“I don’t know; I just got back from tour. So I’m working on my CD now. I think Birdman and I may put out another mixtape before the album, but we are working on it right now. I’ve already started recording.”

What’s been your favorite song you’ve recorded so far?

“It varies every day, but right now, it’s ‘Sun Goes Down.’ It’s about Orlando and the things that go on there — the afterhours and the day in a life of a grimy street kid.”

Describe your tattoo style.

“Goes Down.’ It’s about Orlando and the things that go on there — the afterhours and the day in a life of a grimy street kid.”

What do you want your audience to know about you?

“I don’t want them to know anything about me. I want them to know about my music. I want them to know that I’m super appreciative of anyone who listens to my stuff. I dedicate my whole life to this, so I really care. Also, go get my music. You can stream it on Spotify and watch it on YouTube. My Instagram name is @Caskey407 and my Snapchat is @TATSONMYNECK.”

Where do you see your career in 10 years?

“I see myself being the Kanye of my generation and being the biggest artist out there, but, at the same time, influencing artists to just be better and doper.”

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Off Shore Calendar

**NOV 17**

- The Have-Nots Comedy @Fillmore Miami Beach 9 PM
- Hamlet @Black Box Theatre 7:30 PM
- Skylar Spence @Skylar Spence

**NOV 18**

- Art After Dark @Norton Museum of Art 5 PM
- Food Truck Invasion @Wellington Ampitheatre 5 PM

**NOV 19**

- Daryl Hall & John Oates @Hard Rock Live 8 PM

**NOV 20**

- Guitars Over Guns “Choose Your Sound” Benefit Concert @Fillmore Miami Beach 7 PM
- Falling in Reverse and Attila @Revolution Live 6 PM
- Hamlet @Black Box Theatre 7:30 PM

**NOV 21**

- Hollywood ArtWark @Comfort Zone Studio 7 PM

**NOV 22**

- Food Truck Rally @ArtsPark 5:30 PM

**NOV 23**

- Daughty @Hard Rock Live 8 PM

**NOV 24**

- Daughtry @Revolution Live 8 PM

**NOV 25**

- Daughtry @Revolution Live 8 PM

**NOV 26**

- Daughty @Hard Rock Live 8 PM

**NOV 27**

- Daughtry @Hard Rock Live 8 PM

**NOV 28**

- Food Truck Rally @ArtsPark 5:30 PM

**NOV 29**

- The Murder Mystery Company @Marina 84 7:30 PM

**NOV 30**

- Hollywood ArtWark @Comfort Zone Studio 7 PM
About that sale

By: Joanna Kopiec

Everyone loves a good bargain. I’d even venture to say that discounted prices are a kind of blessing for many. Black Friday is a perfect example.

Black Friday sales make it possible for families to give gifts they may be unable to otherwise. It has the capability of being a beautiful thing, an enhancement to the holiday season. I’m not opposed to venturing out in the early morning hours to hunt down a special item. I’d be lying if I said that I’ve never done it, but thanks to the U.S. market, Black Friday has gotten completely out of hand.

For years, stores have been able to blowout sales earlier and earlier, and now they’ll finally crept their way onto Thanksgiving. Last year, there were stores opening as early as 6 at night. I was disgusted. Call me old fashioned, but I always viewed the holidays as a time to bond with those who mean the most to us, family or friends.

For me, and for many, the holidays begin on Thanksgiving. I’m a sucker for the grand feasts, the large tables with mismatched chairs to accommodate all the bodies and the chatter with family you haven’t seen in a year. By opening up stores on Thanksgiving, that sacred time is cut out in many ways.

For starters, it’s extremely unfair to the employees who forced to work that day. Usually in retail, opening hours have to arrive an hour early to prepare the store. I’d imagine that planning for a big event might require them to arrive even earlier. Why is it fair that these employees should miss out on spending time with their families? We all know they don’t protest because when it comes to your source of income, it can be pretty hard to argue.

Of course, stores probably wouldn’t be opening so soon if they weren’t sure people would show up. I’m not sure who to blame for this, but I’d argue it’s because of our culture. People living in the U.S. have become so materialistic and commercialized. We always feel like we have to have the best and when we’re trying to show how much we care about someone, we feel like we have to give the best. Like I mentioned before, sometimes that’s impossible without the help of an exceptional sale.

So by opening up the doors on Thanksgiving, stores almost force people who are in need of a discount on their Christmas shopping. If you don’t go out this year, maybe you’ll miss your chance to get that one gift they’ve been waiting for. It’s often not until later in life that people realize that what’s most important is spending time with who the gift is for rather than buying them a gift.

Balking the market itself may be unfair. Money does speak louder than words in many cases. For that reason, I don’t know how we’d fix the problem. The easiest way may be to change the current mindset of our society. But how do you change a culture of commercialism?

Is it even right to? I don’t have that answer. Maybe the best way to fix a problem is by recognizing it’s there. I’m not capable of changing the way an industry operates. Regardless of what I say, stores will still start their Black Friday sales prematurely this year.

This holiday season, I encourage everyone to spend time with those who matter most to you. Think about those who aren’t as fortunate.

Use Thanksgiving to actually be thankful for all that you have rather than yowl for something that you don’t. It’d be great if Thanksgiving didn’t become Black Thursday.

Loving the culture more than its people

By: Riddha Paul

Can we please address the elephant in the room? The one with a Bindi and gold chain, dancing Bollywood as he screams “Wise West.” He, like many of our recording artists, has no respect for culture. I cannot be the only one who is tired of and offended by music artists exploiting other cultures.

I’m not sure if artists are just that dumb or that naive — it’s probably a mixture of both — but putting war stripes across your face doesn’t make you anymore Native American than gold chains and saggy pants make you black. I get it, you’ve been in this business for uncounted years now, and you’re afraid to admit that you’ve run out of ideas, so you’ve decided to try something new to appeal to a different crowd. Well, that was your first mistake.

Artists wear costumes in their music videos and forget that these are not costumes. People actually look like this, live like this and identify with this. The first artist who comes to mind is Miley Cyrus. It is true that many, if not all, of our male black rappers have gold chains, gold teeth and tattoos and sport baggy clothes, but we have to remember this is all a part of their lifestyle, not their image. These artists actually grew up in urban and poorer areas where they looked up to men who had the gold chains.

So when artists, such as Miley Cyrus, who were born and raised in Tennessee insist on wearing what many identify as a part of black culture as a costume, I cannot help but feel insulted. The reason excessive gold chains and teeth have become a prevalent in the black community is because coming from nothing and then being able to afford these things was and still is a symbol of success and wealth.

The closer Miley, with her famous country singer father, has ever been to experiencing the oppression in the black culture was arguing with Nicki Minaj on BET.

Can we please just have a moment of silence for Selena Gomez and her disgusting attempt to dance Bollywood. With the release of her song “Come and Get It,” somehow, she got the idea that the song had a tribal vibe and she thought she’d pair this with a horrific attempt at Bollywood choreography. She wore her own version of traditional Hindu attire, and, to make matters worse, she sported a Bindi for several months after her performance.

Not only was her performance insulting, but the fact that she thinks a Bindi is a fashion accessory also makes me question intelligence. Bindis have religious value and are only supposed to be worn by married Hindu women. It’s an expression of devotion to Hindu? Double negative. I don’t see what made Selena think she was qualified to wear one.

My all-time favorite display of cultural appropriation has to be Katy Perry’s performance of her song “Unconditionally” at the AMA-award show. She exploited Asian culture to the point of no return. Not only did she use white face powder, but her attire was also a cross between a Japanese kimono and Chinese cheongsam. If you know anything about history, you’d know these two countries use to be arch enemies, and I have strong reason to believe they would not appreciate her mixing of their very different cultures.

In her defense, although these two cultures are considered Asian, I don’t think she realized their geographical or cultural differences. No two cultures are interchangeable, and that’s the problem with many people in the U.S.; we tend to classify people from the same continent as the same, forgetting that each individual country has their own beliefs, values and practices.

Stop exploiting culture to increase your sales. Not only do you look unintelligent, but you are also corrupting your viewers. I don’t think artists realize how much of an influence they have on the younger generation. Music artists are promoted on TV and praised on billboards, and they conquer social media, and, unfortunately, the minds of youth are very impressionable.

So the things artists display in their videos ultimately shape and influence the thoughts of our adolescents and young adults. All of a sudden, people think it’s okay to mock black dialect and classify all Asians as Chinese, and Bindis, henna, and Native American war paint have become fashion statements. People laugh at those who identify with certain cultures and then turn around and do the very thing they just mocked but are seen as cool for doing so.

The biggest problem with cultural appropriation in our music industry is that it stereotypes our communities. It makes viewers think that people of a specific race or ethnicity have to be a certain way and often is used to classify them as unintelligent. Most importantly, it makes the viewers see cultural customs as costumes open to be ridiculed. No one would find humor in an artist parodying as one of the U.S. founding fathers in their music video.

Social media exploded when Santa Claus, patron of Christmas, revealed his outfit for this year’s midnight rendering of the classic. The suit? Minimalist — red with white trim, completely devoid of Christmas cheer. People can’t seem to understand why his outfit isn’t embroidered with snowflakes, reindeer and pine trees.

One man, Jacoby Einstein, posted a 15-minute rant on YouTube about Claus’ negligence and anti-Christmas spirit. He encourages others to protest Claus with Christmas with lights that spell “Go away Santa.”

“My all-time favorite display of cultural appropriation was when Katy Perry’s performance of her song ‘Unconditionally’ at the AMA-award show. She exploited Asian culture to the point of no return. Not only did she use white face powder, but her attire was also a cross between a Japanese kimono and Chinese cheongsam. If you know anything about history, you’d know these two countries use to be arch enemies, and I have strong reason to believe they would not appreciate her mixing of their very different cultures. In her defense, although these two cultures are considered Asian, I don’t think she realized their geographical or cultural differences. No two cultures are interchangeable, and that’s the problem with many people in the U.S.; we tend to classify people from the same continent as the same, forgetting that each individual country has their own beliefs, values and practices. Stop exploiting culture to increase your sales. Not only do you look unintelligent, but you are also corrupting your viewers. I don’t think artists realize how much of an influence they have on the younger generation. Music artists are promoted on TV and praised on billboards, and they conquer social media, and, unfortunately, the minds of youth are very impressionable.

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Seriously Kidding

a satire column

By: Jazmyn Brown

Social media exploded when Santa Claus, patron of Christmas, revealed his outfit for this year’s midnight rendering of the classic. The suit? Minimalist — red with white trim, completely devoid of Christmas cheer. People can’t seem to understand why his outfit isn’t embroidered with snowflakes, reindeer and pine trees.

One man, Jacoby Einstein, posted a 15-minute rant on YouTube about Claus’ negligence and anti-Christmas spirit. He encourages others to protest Claus with Christmas with lights that spell “Go away Santa” on their roofs.

“Can the jolly man do his job properly in his anti-Christmas get up? No, I don’t think so. It’s just disrespectful,” said Einstein.

The Twitterverse jumped in, with hashtags like #callsucksforchristmas, #redvsblackdevil and #heavenarenosuchthings.

The vast consensus is that Santa’s outfit doesn’t mean Christmas! # santamaintainschristmas , said one angry Twitter user. Another wrote, “He might as well take a break this year. Christmas is cancelled, gays!”

A 2015 book titled “The Real Nick” revealed the process that Father Christmas has gone through since the 19th century. Mrs. Claus fashions the nicest of fashion in different shades of red, and, Claus chooses the one that he fancies most. The white fur trim is donated by the Coca-Cola polar bears, who live a couple streets down from the Claus family.

Many believe Claus’ plain red outfit signifies a war on Christmas. “We simply can’t entertain this sort of anti-Christmas behavior,” Einstein said in an interview with CNN. “Might as well change his name to Soggy with that hat. All he needs is born, a tail and a pitch fork.”

Claus released a statement in response to the hype. “Under no circumstances can I see why any one individual would think that this outfit, the same red design I wear every year, is not representative of everything I stand for. What other colors besides red represent Christmas, except maybe green?”

Several right-wing politicians called for their supporters to boycott Claus by making cookies for themselves and blacking out their chimneys.

Parents are furious that they’ll have to buy gifts for their children this year.

“In what universe does Santa Claus refuse his duty to embody the Christmas spirit?” said Shirley Slough, the father of two. “Now I’ll have to go out and spend my own money on my children.”

“What is Christmas? Christmas is pine trees, polar bears, wreaths, snow men and nativity scenes. He doesn’t embody any of that,” said Slough.

Claus said there’s no reason to believe that Claus isn’t happening this year.

“I’m still making my round-the-world trip, even for all you naughty, misguided adults,” he said. “This year, I may shoot for record time.”
No-Shave November: Why is it just for guys?

By: Afrin Naz

With No-Shave November here, you are probably curious about the meaning behind these lumberjacks, or, in some special cases, Merlin-like beasts. As a girl who practically has her dad's hair genes and most likely has the full capability of growing a beard, a little jealousy is inevitable when you hear your male classmates have the full freedom to participate in this shave-less month, and beard standards say you cannot.

According to the Daily Mississippian, the tradition actually goes back to Australia in 2004 where a group of men began this trend to raise awareness of depression in men and prostate and testicular cancers. In their first year, these men raised $40,000. Since then, there has been an exponential increase to outstanding $212.3 million in funds raised.

Before I researched the origin of No-Shave November, I was actually very much misled about what it was. Was this some childish joke? Some macho-bond initiation? Some boyish way to single out the girls? I’m glad to be corrected that the significance behind it is actually something meaningful. So as an avid supporter of breast cancer awareness, I totally support men in their beard-growing efforts and encourage women to support them in their facial hair endeavors and maybe establish some beard goals of their own. On the note of spreading awareness, my real question is: can I join in on the beard fun, too?

It’s a man’s world, but it isn’t nothing without a woman. If women jumped on board, No-Shave November would certainly gain more attention. Although moustaches on females do not parallel the current beauty standards, financial support would skyrocket.

Before razors, waxing strips or laser technology were around, women did sport moustaches. Maybe not to the same levishness as our male counterparts — women only do so much with their little testosterone. But I am sure that women, even with their little facial hair, were beautiful then as well.

The responses I might get from the general audience regarding my question may range from a reassuring “yes” to a roaring “no.” Some guys might actually support a girl’s facial hair endeavors, maybe some girls, too. Other guys and girls might find it absolutely gross and unhygienic. My girlfriends would try consoling me by saying that we have do our discrete No-Shave November because by this time Floridians are layering themselves with Uggs and sweaters for this killer 70-degree weather. Trading in our shorts for a pair of sweatpants or leggings is also a must. For those who don’t know, long pants mean a skipped shave or two. Keeping up with our girly needs is demanding, painful and just plain exhausting. Imagine if we could not shave for a better cause.

The societal issue with this dialect is that it is perceived as an improper usage of the English language, especially when the vast majority of this dialect is used within low-income, minority infused communities that lack proper educational opportunities. However, while society is busy ridiculing and mocking the African-American community, it completely ignores the other various languages, such as Spanish, which follow the same set of rules of omitting certain words and letters. The phrase “I love you” in Spanish is translated to “te amo,” and “Dónde estás?” is translated to “Where are you?” In both examples, the words “I” and “you” are omitted. Yet no one is condemning Spanish speakers for their lack of knowledge, because it is culturally respected and accepted.

Even popular British band Pink Floyd displayed the “socially improper” use of language in the popular song “Another Brick in The Wall.” Lyrics like “We don’t need no education, we don’t need no control” come out the speakers, leaving listeners in a state of rebellion, and they don’t question the improper use of double negatives. Yet when popular songs by Lil Wayne or Jay-Z hit the airwaves, they’re considered uneeducable and illiterate.

It’s disheartening that in this day in age the dialect of Ebonics, a black language, is correlated with those who lack education. Highly intelligent black poets, writers and authors such as Zora Neale Hurston, Toni Morrison and even Maya Angelou have all used this particular dialect in their writings. However, their dialect comes along with Pulitzer Prizes, honorary degrees and presidential medals.

Society is constantly looking for a way to remind African-Americans that they are not good enough. That they don’t fit the standard. Their hair, their body, their skin tone and certainly their language are nothing to be proud of. Not only have they been forced to convert to Christianity, completely Americanizing their culture and shaming their ancestral African roots, but they have been required to speak the American English language, with a subconscious fear of excusing illiteracy.

Ebonics is not slang, it is not a confirmation of a lack of education, and it certainly is not a language to be mocked. Ebonics is a dialect created by a culture of repressed yet innovative human beings. A misunderstanding of the dialect does not make African-Americans ignorant, it makes those who degrade it incorrigible.

I AM THANKFUL I ATTEND NSU BECAUSE...