THE WAKE

fortnightly student magazine *volume 23 - issue 7*

Flame or Not to Flame: The Gay 90's p. 7
"This Damn City" p. 8
The U and Palestine p. 12
I Walk Because it Takes Longer p. 15
Found in Translation p. 15
Mind Candy p. 17

Art by Alex Kozak

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VOLUME 23, ISSUE 7

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and for students at the University of Minnesota.

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Disclaimer: The purpose of The Wake is to provide a forum in which students can voice their opinions. Opinions expressed in the magazine are not representative of the publication or university as a whole. To join the conversation email **eic@wakemag.org.**

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Like to do art, poetry or anything creative ?

Send it to us!

We are looking for more creative submissions! Art, poetry, DIY coloring pages, photography or anything else you want to submit. Email art@wakemag.org for any of your fun and/or freaky submissions :)

The Wake Student Magazine
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wink! one page magazine

Dollar Store In's and Out's: V-Day Edition

Forgot it was Valentine's day? Need to shop on a budget? For some reason are coming to the Wake for V-Day gift ideas because you don't know your partner that well? Well look no further! Here are my personal hits and misses from the dollar store

IN: Love Gnomes

These funny little gnomes are not only on theme, but also pretty cute. Unlike most Valentine's day stuffed animals, I would display this on my pile of stuffies. 8/10

OUT: Socks

Just what anyone wants, knee high socks that are ugly and will 100% get a hole in them after your second wear. If your trying to get dumped these are great, if not, stay away. 3/10

IN: Candy

You can't go wrong with candy. Everyone loves it, its on theme, and its cheap. Just make sure to get some-thing other then candy as well. 10/10

Out: Headbands

Getting agressivly poked in the head? Messed up hair? Breaked after 10 minutes? If these sound like fun to you, the boy do I have a prduct for you. That being said, they can be cute on some people. 5/10

INSIDE

6 I Wrote This on the Bus Ride Home

6 From the UN to Everywhere Else

7 Flame or Not to Flame: The Gay 90's

8 "This Damn City"

9 Presidential Elections: What to Expect, Minnesota? The Dating App Dilemma

12 The U and Palestine

14 Stepping Off the Cross To Watch a Romcom

15 I Walk Because it Takes Longer

15 Found in Translation

16 Life as a Lover Girl: Valentine's Day Edition

17 It's Important To Listen and Speak from the Heart

17 Mind Candy

18 Six Reviews

20 Q & A with The Rural Alberta Advantage

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEB 14th

Indigo De Souza, Truth Club

Indigo De Souza is an anxious, alt-rock / indie artist whose music is sure to land you in the next lesbian commune come next Spotify Wrapped. Vulnerable and brutal, if you like bands like Wednesday, Haley Heynderickx, or Lucy Dacus, you'll love Indigo. Truth Club, an indie rock band also from North Carolina will open.

First Avenue
Doors at 8PM and tickets are $25

FEB 17-18

Monster Jam?

Uhhhh... monster trucks? I guess? Apparently world-renowned, come fuel your hyperfixation or entertain your youngest sibling as several ton trucks tear each other asunder.

U.S. Bank Stadium
Doors at 5 PM and tickets are $40

FEB 17-18

POP Cats 2024

A cat convention that isn't a convention, but rather an "annual immersive festival where the worlds of cats and pop collide." Buy cat-themed merch from cat-centric artists, adopt an actual cat, or obtain a cat-themed "cattoo." Bring cat allergy meds if applicable.

Union Depot
Tickets are $10

FEB 17

OISTER BOY's 2nd Annual Pajama Party

OISTER BOY, Scam Likely, Killed by Kiwis, Basketball Divorce Court
A night full of local (post-)punk / grunge gigs, grinding and thrashing through four fierce sets. Show up in your pajamas and show out—a lineup like this isn't easy to come by. 21+.

Turf Club
Doors at 8 PM and tickets are $15

FEB 18

Mystery Meat, ROC BARBOZA, Small Animal Hospital, Jenny Matrix

Breaking out onto the bigger stages, these (usually) basement-show acts will provide a mix of local hardcore and post-punk funk potent enough to be your trans-awakening and leave your eardrums ringing for days. Featuring riot-grrrl-inspired hardcore-ish punk rock headliner Mystery Meat.

7th St. Entry
Doors at 7PM and tickets are $15

FEB 22

Prize Horse, Downward, killusonline, Giallo

A night of honest-to-goodness, under-ground hardcore, Prize Horse's record release show features the hardest local acts likely to break onto the world stage (or at least break your nose). Fast, swinging, hip-hop-infused, and back-breaking, you'll need your battle jacket and battle plans to not die in the pit.

7th St. Entry
Doors at 7PM and tickets are $18

Letter from the Interim Finance Manager and soon-to-not-be Ad/PR manager

What's up reader,

Life has been random but fruitful.

I had no freaking clue what The Wake was when I applied to be its Advertising and Public Relations Manager. Also, I had never done anything AD, PR, or writing-related either. I discovered the application on the 2026 UMN community snap story. I thought, "Hey this looks cool, and I think I want to be a marketing major", so I applied.
.
Four switched majors and a college transfer later, I'm happy I took that leap of ignorance. Spoiler alert: I did not want to do marketing. At the time I didn't know what I wanted to do. Spoiler, spoiler alert: I don't know now either. But, I know more than I did before.

For example, I know writing is challenging. I've always had a format to follow when writing for school. When I wrote my first article for The Wake, I had to communicate what I wanted to communicate, without a thesis statement that was being graded. It forced me to make somewhat of a creative process and be decisive about what I want to say. That was tough but cool.

Also, I learned that fear of judgment is surmountable. When I wrote that first article, I fearfully realized "Damn. other human beings are going to read this". When you create something on your own, you have a personal attachment to that creation. It's hard not to worry about the judgment others will have. Then I realized that those fears are insignificant. It flat-out does not matter. That realization is liberating.

Most importantly, I got to be around an artistic, diverse group of individuals. I started the semester at Carlson and The Wake couldn't have been more different. Business is conforming and bland. At The Wake, people are expressive and passionate. The Wake was my weekly exposure to uniqueness. This small exposure was extremely refreshing.

It's okay to have no freaking clue what you're doing or what you want to do. At least try anything. Even if it's a leap of ignorance, there is always an insight you can gain. Insight about yourself and the world you live in.

Thanks and keep it real,
Andrew Palik

Wake Valentines

Valentines by Zoë Meyer

I Wrote This on The Bus Ride Home

The finer details of riding the bus with intention

BY YVE SPENGLER

I take this bus every day, but somehow, the familiar rumble of the ride felt different this time. I entered the poet's world, where coffee stains and thinning plush cushions create a home. Where the romantic buildings sing an accompanying tune with the humming sun— where taking one intentional bus ride can release you from the chokehold of your own immuring thoughts.

The ripened creak of the bus rolled us, a small community, into motion. It was early morning as I looked around and caught strangers staring through cold, smeared glass. Others slightly swayed to beats in their ears. Most eyes were captured into the worlds provided by their phones, like mine—

Why do we each prefer our solitude to each other? The comfort of anonymity tunes us into our own selves, free from the potential judgment of others. Each of us is in a private bubble, yet all connected by an invisible string, unobservable to unnoticing eyes. The screens turn off when

we jolt

to a stop, new faces trailed in like an army of ants. I looked through the windows, seeing an endless sky rapidly melting Minneapolis into silhouettes of ambiguous buildings and bare-boned trees. Deep voices of friends murmured together,

mingling into memories of falling asleep when surrounded by entrusted friends. There you are, in your own world, music wrapping you into the safety of your solidarity. The peaceful state of foreloneness in a crowded place. Acceptance makes itself known in these spaces —

can you hear it

when your lips move to the lyrics of your favorite song? It whispers of your goodness, your place in this world. Taking this bus ride with you,

I understand my simple existence alongside yours. There is no need to fall into a facade. Until she arrives, worries of the future can wait. Chains of the past can be unshackled. We are free within this poetic world to simply be. Give wonder back to yourself as you look out the window this morning, taking in the red graffiti on top of the bridge. You can finally feel the way you've needed to for a long time.

4

From the UN to Everywhere Else

How a common story in International Relations majors relates to the inequalities among NGOs

BY GABRIEL MATIAS CASTILHO

1

International Relations is a lovely area of study in Political Science. You get to learn about the disunity and unfairness of international politics while debating about which school of thought better describes your vision of the world. A story I heard many times is: you probably took this major because of a dream to become a diplomat and work in the United Nations, but you later end up deciding to work for another international Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). The initial appeal is big–after all, the United Nations are everywhere in the news. Whenever there is a large-scale conflict, headlines from every publication condemn their inaction.

Those publications, however, cast a shade on other international disaster relief organizations that struggle to obtain funds for their projects. It is not uncommon for relief NGOs to compete for private funds by convincing donors their disaster is worse and in immediate need of attention—which is hard when news coverage is not looking at it. In the book Chasing Chaos, Jessica Alexander describes the fundraising process during her time overseeing earthquake relief projects in Haiti as "moving from the nosebleed seats to the orchestra." According to her recollection, one photographer asked a bunch of children to sit in a partially collapsed school so he could take pictures whose message was: look how eager Haitian children were to return to their education! Resorting to "disaster porn" has become the go-to method of attracting attention of celebrity donors who would ensure constant support for relief projects for those organizations.

When tsunami response teams flocked all over Sri Lanka in December 2005, Alexander observed the large influx of relief money and found herself comparing it to her work in Darfur. There, everything had to be cut short and none of their goals were met due to a shortage in funding. A phenomenon I find curious is, just like those students who later learn of the NGO world, donors learn these crises took place only after they occur. By then, however, it will already have been too late.

2

Flame or Not to Flame: The Gay 90's

Known by all, feared by the queers

BY SHANNA SIVAKUMAR

Perhaps the most (in) famous club in all of Minneapolis, Gay 90's is a name known by all and feared by the queers, which is ironic, if anything.

I remember first hearing about the club my sophomore year from one of my only cishet friends, relief and excitement in her voice at the thought of going to an 18+ club where she won't have to deal with the casual misogyny and nonconsensual wandering hands of straight men. At the time, something about her eagerness sat unsettlingly in my chest. After all, every woman should feel safe in any nightlife space they enter, and there's nothing wrong with that. So why was I uneasy? I took the issue to a trusted lesbian source and we talked about it, did a little deep dive into the modern day queer experience and came out feeling irritated over the slow but steady spread of cishet people—especially straight women— coming to queer clubs for a night out.

But after talking to other queer people and diving into online forums, I found that straight gentrification was just the tip of the gay iceberg. And while straight women find safety and solace in the queer community, I actually don't think the amount of groping has decreased— especially as more and more cishet men step foot into the establishment. And to further push the knife in, queer people have also reported being groped by other club-goers, stolen from, and treated poorly by bouncers. Some have even reported violent attacks and robberies that occurred right outside the club.

But perhaps it's unfair to speak of Gay 90's without learning of its place in queer history. Fear not, because I have done my research. The Gay 90's was established in 1948 as a straight(!) supper club and built next to a gay bar called Happy Hour. In 1976, the two buildings fused and Gay 90's expanded into the large gay complex we see today. As I went digging, I was surprised by the popularity of the LGBTQ+ spaces in Minneapolis and St. Paul. One of the more interesting facts about the queer scene here was our exceptionally large bars and clubs. Due to the long and cold winters, bar hopping was not a commodity in the state. This resulted in big queer spaces such as Gay 90's and Town House (now a soccer-culture club called the Black Hart of St. Paul). So it's rather heartbreaking to watch as these historical landmarks either disappear or lose their meaning.

And I can't speak for the whole of Minneapolis, but at least at the University of Minnesota, Gay 90's is a landmark destination once you've stepped foot on campus. Whether it's for its supposed inclusivity or its 18+ age requirement, I don't know, but most everyone that enjoys going out to the bars and clubs have been to the establishment at least once.

As for personal experiences, the one time I ventured to Gay 90's, I was almost rejected at the door for having an expired permit at the time (yes, permit. yes I can't legally drive, nobody's perfect please stop throwing tomatoes at me everytime I step foot onto public transport). I mean, I understand her frustration, but it was a legitimate permit, not a fake! Additionally, the bouncer was irritated with me, and I would like to give her the benefit of the doubt and say maybe she was having a bad night or just genuinely tired of interacting with drunk college students, but no one can really say if she was acting out as a result of her circumstances or out of animosity towards me. (I still got into the club though!) I don't know... AITA? Help me.

Sure, it can be argued that these are risks that exist in any nightclub, so why point out one of the only queer ones? And while that may be true, is it wrong to ask for a safe space meant for queer people? Especially when so much of our culture and history exists in nightlife. Safety shouldn't be a luxury, but it's begun to feel like one— and Gay 90's has become one of the main perpetrators.

“This Damn City”

Balancing State-Sponsored Violence with Resistant Histories

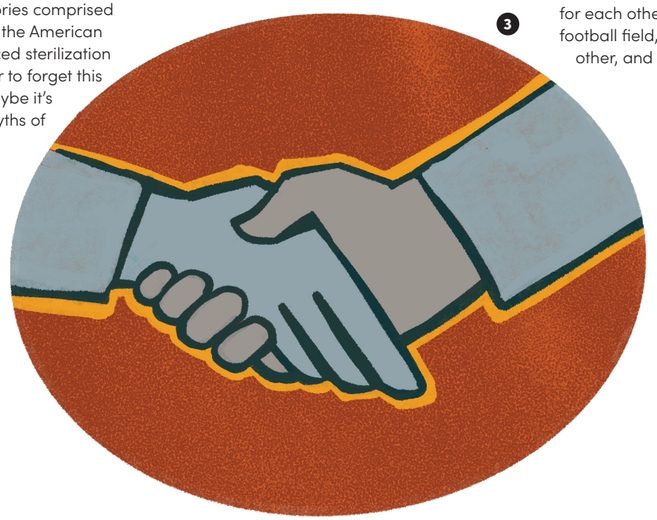
BY WINKS

During long nights on my weary way back from somewhere, I occasionally catch glimpses of the Minneapolis skyline looming over downtown. ‘Don’t you do this to me,’ I always think to myself. ‘This damn city.’ It catches in my throat; I want to turn away. And, shining, the lights of the business district burn on, indifferent. I find it ironic that such a symbol for a city comprises only the most fervent corporate interests. Still, the skyline reminds me of all my best memories here as well as my worst—its symbolic ambiguity is both heart-wrenching and exhilarating.

I’ve come to know this city’s history firsthand in my own way, spelunking the prohibition holdouts in Lilydale and running through the waterlogged walkways under the mill ruins; volunteering in unhoused encampments and hearing testimony from Rondo residents who watched their homes be bulldozed as children; I don’t know how much it warrants saying, but Gen Z seems to live in a detached and infinite present, out of touch with their pasts, surrounded by so much technology, media, and socio-political monoliths. Maybe it’s extremely difficult to picture the city being any different than it is now—we forget that our neighborhoods, the deeds to our homes, and our school systems are all still segregated, that structural racism wasn’t just centered in the South. In the name of “progress,” these local histories have been expunged from (or understated in) our history books—early Indigenous histories comprised of war crimes, concentration camps, and mass hangings; industrial histories comprised of union busting, Klan rallies, being the American “Anti-Semitism Capital,” and the forced sterilization of people of color. Maybe it’s easier to forget this all happened in our backyards. Maybe it’s easier to buy into contemporary myths of forgetting.

Before this myth lived the spirit of resistance—if productive interests have had our pasts forgotten, then our antecedent anecdotes of rebellion have been forced to be forgotten even more. In hopes of memorializing or energizing resistant spirits, I will summarize a more holistic account of history. Here’s a list of fun facts in no particular order:

- Both the “Baldies” and the Anti-Racist Action (ARA) group emerged from the hardcore punk scene in Minneapolis in late 1980s. The “Baldies” were a loose group of skinhead anarcho-punks who jumped neo-Nazis and any other bigots they came across. The ARA spread across the world, having no doctrines other than advocating for bodily autonomy and anti-racism. Many view this as the beginnings of Antifa.
- AIM (American Indian Movement) started in Minneapolis in 1988. The grassroots organization continues their work country-wide today, addressing, discussing, and demonstrating against the systemic injustices that Native American folks face today. The group’s ongoing projects include preventing pipeline construction and providing defense to Native unhoused encampments.
- The Nonpartisan League (NPL), its splinter-groups, and countless labor unions helped fight off and disband the secret anti-labor intelligence agency of the CCA (Civic and Commerce Association) and CA (Citizen’s Alliance). Additionally, they set the precedent for preventing courts from providing injunctions against striking workers (Wonderland theater) and fought off the formation of a large, consolidated, and corrupt police force for 14 years (1917-1931).
- Minneapolis has a long history of mass protest and occupation against excessive state violence and predatory housing practices: there’s the Dakota War of 1862; the “long, hot summer” of 1967; Occupy Minneapolis in 2011 and 2012; Jamar Clark in 2015; Philandro Castile in 2016; Justine Damond in 2017; George Floyd in 2020; Daunte Wright, Winston Smith, and Deona Knajdek in 2021; and Amir Locke in 2022. Throughout this entire time, activists have been defending communities of unhoused folks from eviction and police violence as well.



3

If there is anything the long history of Minneapolis has made clear, it’s the fact that the state will always respond to civil unrest and disobedience with extreme force, no matter how conscionable the cause. This highlights the bravery of those who risked their ways of life advocating for equity, justice, and the right to stay alive. Sure, the state may crack down on your cause with police, the National Guard, informants, or trespassing orders, but the more people you have and the more persistent you are, the more likely you are to be heard and survive another day.

So how about that skyline, huh? Big, expensive, artificial. We don’t need to have it as a symbol of our city, our lived experience—we have our streets, our local music, our diverse communities, our labor unions, and our neighbors, willing to live and die for each other. We don’t need a monument, a football field, a city center—all we need is each other, and by god will we protect ourselves.

Presidential Elections: What to Expect, Minnesota?

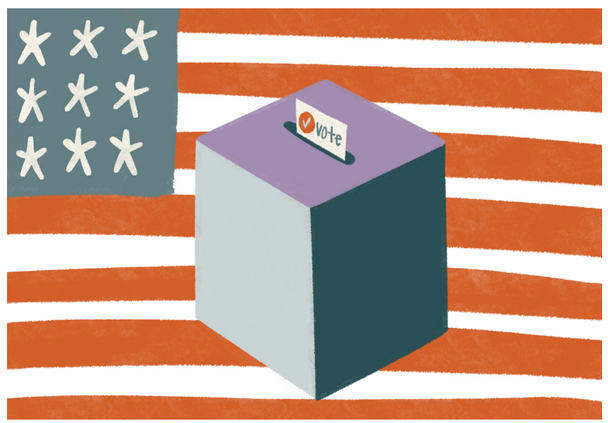
A hectic year is upon us.

BY GABRIEL MATIAS CASTILHO

The latest presidential election poll conducted in Minnesota revealed the two likely presidential candidates, incumbent Joe Biden (D) and Donald Trump (R), were neck and neck in the race for the White House. Biden scored 45% to Trump’s 42% in Nov. 17, but the polls indicated this number was within the 2.6% margin of error. All of this strongly indicates Minnesota will still be a battleground state, even though the state has routinely voted Democrat in every presidential election since 1972. However, the term “battleground” is no longer just CNN newsroom jargon anymore.

The Democrats currently hold the trifecta—control of the state House, the state Senate and the Governor’s office—but this is overshadowed by a growing rural-metro divide. The delicate reputation of the state police department becomes a double-edged sword: while it adds a global spotlight to cases of police brutality in the state, it decreases morale among officers and leads to less officer enlistment. This, in turn, makes law enforcement harder—at least according to police chief Brian O’Hara’s words last year when requesting an increase to the department’s budget. Homicides are still well above 2019 rates for the Twin Cities, and thefts from empty vehicles skyrocketed this year.

What does this mean for the future of the state in light of the upcoming presidential election? How might residents of the cities react following the 2024 presidential election? Honestly, I might not have a clear answer to that question, but I know residents of the cities will likely have a very different reaction than that of residents of rural Minnesota. With one side claiming a “civil war” is coming and the other trying to make sure the state does not repeat 2020, Minnesota is for sure expected to have a hectic year ahead.



3

1

The Dating App Dilemma

What is the true purpose of these hellscapes?

BY GEORGE FASEEMO

You’re on a dating app. After scrolling for a while, you notice something strange. Past the unfunny jokes and lazy sexual innuendos, you find a fatal error: someone has decided to try to reach across the vast expanse of loneliness that so many are swallowed in (see: Loneliness Crisis), and has, seriously and unironically, tried find someone to spend their lives with. This is a massive mistake.

This is not the purpose of dating apps. Some would propose that they’re obviously for cheap hookups and underwhelming flings, but that’s not entirely accurate either. To understand the true nature of these apps we have to look deeper at what they fundamentally are.

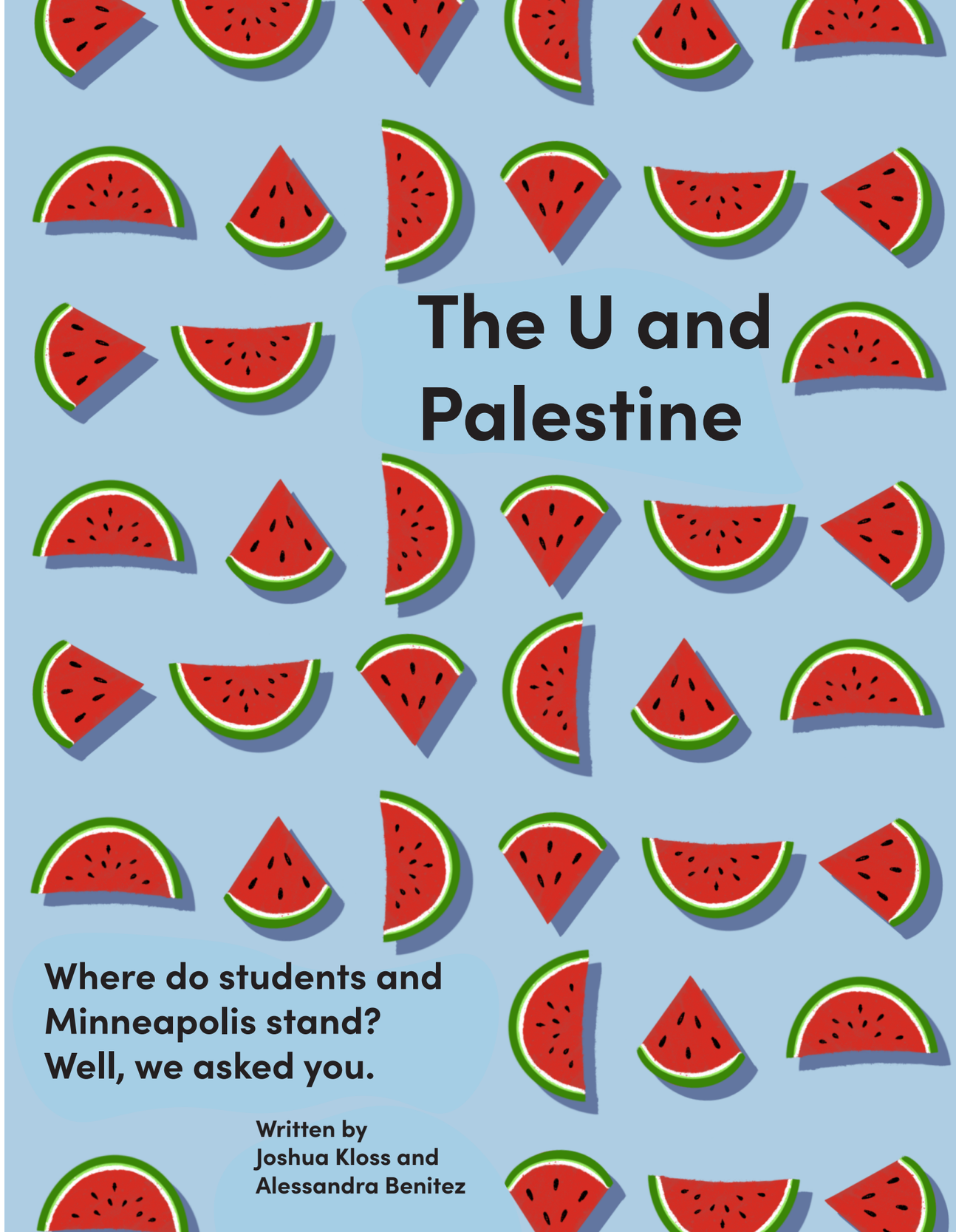
Dating apps are, unsurprisingly, programs. But this obvious fact is actually quite crucial: the logical structure of these programs necessitates the gamification of dating—embracing the game theory that shapes countless academic fields. In this, a person—well, a user— must try to maximize the attractiveness of their profile, and swipe right on people who have a similar (imagined) attractiveness level. So, if you’re trying to maximize the utility of your dating app and view yourself as a 6, you’ll try to like other 6’s. This is, without question, the most effective way to navigate dating apps, and is also, without question, pretty gross. It’s all the same language and philosophy of the sleazy guys of our collective past: the type of guy who views dating as a marketplace and sex as a reward—the Barney Stinsons of our media.

This isn’t supposed to be an indictment of dating apps. Much like in non-dating app dating (also commonly referred to as “dating”), we can all choose who we interact with—who we try to create romantic bonds with, and in what ways we want to approach building those connections. In my view, there’s no ordained “right way” to do these things. While the actual apps for dating are based on a deeply cynical logic, they have the ability to birth genuine connections and life-long relationships. Ultimately, it’s up to you to decide whether you want to be a Barney or a Ted. Or maybe a third, better thing—Ted sucks too.

Routine Check-Up

By Jos Manrique Ordo Ez

Has something changed?
My chest tightens. Atriums suffocating.
Ventricles collapse. The pillars
Of my heels wear off.
They crumble.
What have you noticed?
The soreness
Talks to me. It asks
How does it feel to breathe pure
Skepticism. Its voice is asphyxiating.
        History with medication?
We broke up. They started cheating
On me. I was made for them. I
Need them. My whole heart
Explodes for them.
        Got plans for the weekend?



Though it feels as if people are talking about Gaza less than they were a few months ago, the reality that Palestinians are facing continues to worsen. Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have completely destroyed the north of the Gaza Strip; people who menstruate have no access to sanitary products; many cannot evacuate hospitals because of their wounds, and yet, there is no one to care for said wounds. Simply put, there are no healthcare options left in Palestine while there are thousands of individuals who desperately need them. Those who have managed to survive the past 108 days have nothing left, not even their truth. Recently, photojournalist Motaz Azaiza shared on Instagram that he's evacuating Gaza and finding refuge in Qatar. From the beginning, Azaiza has been diligent about sharing the reality that civilians in Gaza are facing. His work was monumental and truthful, and now he's forced to leave hundreds of stories untold.

Palestine is going through a genocide. Yet, multiple countries around the globe are indifferent to this suffering. Major world powers such as the United States and the United Kingdom continue to back Israel, with President Biden showing unwavering support for the state of Israel and, recently, condemning the actions of Houthis in Yemen, who have attacked and targeted many Israeli-linked ships in the Red Sea. However, several countries have also publicly condemned Israel's ongoing bombardment on Gaza. South Africa accused Israel of genocide before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), but the recent ruling fell short of enacting an actual ceasefire. The two previous times there was a call for ceasefire in the United Nations, the US has vetoed it. But, as of January 25th, Minneapolis has joined the list of cities that have passed a resolution calling for a ceasefire in the Middle East. The resolution is not unlike those of Seattle or Atlanta, who also passed resolutions in support of peace. The one proposed by Minneapolis is four-fold in its demands: it asks for the end of United States aid to Israel, the release of all hostages taken by Hamas and the Israeli military, and calling for a permanent, full cease-fire. As of recently, however, Mayor Frey has vetoed that resolution, putting its future into uncertainty.

The resolution initially passed through the Minneapolis City Council with a 9-3 majority vote, which in part reflects the overwhelming public support for a ceasefire and shows that pro-Palestinian efforts of Minnesotans have not dwindled since October. Protesters with the Anti-War Committee have continued dropping banners to raise awareness in populous spots like the Mall of America on Black Friday, above interstates and highways, and so on. Protesters also convened outside Senator Amy Klobachar's office, organized by the group Jewish Voice for Peace - Twin Cities, to put pressure on Klobuchar to call for a ceasefire.

However, students on campus remain engaged in the fight for Palestine, too. One such group, organized by students here at the U, is the immensely dedicated Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). The protests and demonstrations that they've organized, alongside other local groups like the ones discussed above, have mobilized students to show their support for Palestine. But, despite tremendous public support for Palestine and open calls for the United States to finally end its aid to Israel, the genocide persists, and the whole country, as well as our own campus, remains divided on stances on Israel. Students rallying in support of Palestine at Columbia University in January were victims of a chemical attack when assailants—who protesters alleged are tied to the Israeli Defense Forces—threw "skunk," onto protesters, resulting in serious burns and requiring medical attention for some. In a world where it can be dangerous, then, to condemn a genocide, The Wake magazine wanted to dedicate this feature article to be a forum for studnets to anonymously and comfortably share their opinions and feelings about what is all unfolding in the Middle East.

The first question posed to poll respondents asked what they felt was most important for The Wake to address in our discussion of the Middle East. One response stuck out, emphasizing the importance and "difficulties of a Palestinian in Gaza to separate themselves from Hamas. It's the governmental body that Israel funded, and the only thing that stands between Palestinians and illegal Israeli settlements."

Hamas is a militant group, whereas Israel is a state. As such, it wouldn't be unfair to say that Israel, being an officially recognized state that receives funding from the United States—and your own tax dollars— there are certain responsibilities that Israel should live up to, such as limiting the loss of civilian life. Yet, they have decimated Gaza. In mentioning Hamas, it is important to amplify what other students were saying on the poll. Another student responded that The Wake should shed light on "the history of the conflict...this didn't begin on October 7th." Indeed, the conflict in the Middle East is a historical as well as a contemporary issue. Israeli violence against and brutalization of Palestinian people can be found even before the first ever officially recognized Nakba. And even before October 7th, Israel has bombed Gaza. The violence is not new.

"Ideally, if addressing the Palestine situation, [The Wake] should try and give a balanced overview. It's a very polarizing issue, and people forming opinions tend to jump to the extreme of either side." Truly, I couldn't have said it better myself. The situation is one that tends to polarize even groups of people that tend to agree with one another. I myself have disagreed personally with people whom I thought to be very likeminded to me on other issues. Furthermore, another respondent notes that it is important to acknowledge "the spread of propaganda and misinformation from both sides." I'm sure you've seen it: deliberate information spread on social media platforms from the IDF; one such example includes spreading a fake Hamas website on the social media platform X. Or maybe you've seen photos of children who were captioned as Israeli, but were in fact Palestinian, shared on Instagram by celebrities you might follow, such as Jamie Lee Curtis, who shared a photo of Palestinian children with the caption "Pray for Israel," after October 7th; and Justin Bieber, who shared a statement in support of Israel while showcasing a photo of destruction in Gaza caused by Israel. In light of the heavy flow of misinformation and unfair reporting by major news outlets, it's important to remain critical of all the resources you can consume to learn about the issue—that means even this article!

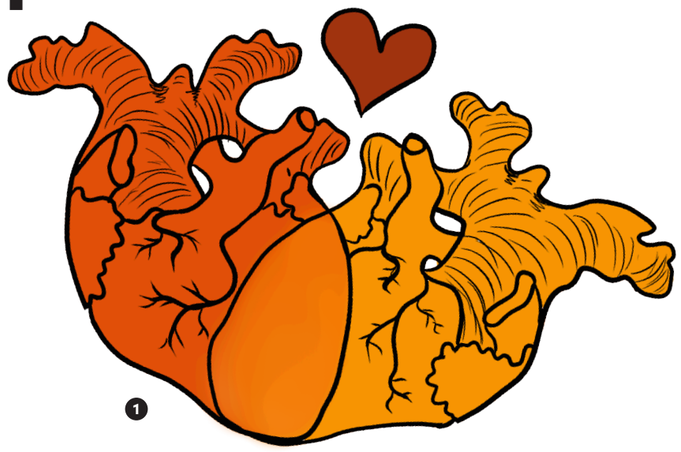
One student says that, "many Jewish people, including myself, don't believe that Israel represents Jewish people. It is not anti-semitic to criticize Israel, especially when they are not following the Jewish value of never again." And, when posed the question "What do you feel is important for students here at the U to know," one poll respondent said that "Anti-zionism is not anti-semitism and conflating the two does a lot of harm to Jewish people." Going forward, one student said that "Students need to look at the whole history of the conflict."

The issue is, of course, heavily nuanced, so much so that we can't give it the attention it deserves. For this reason, we encourage you to seek out more information on sources that you can look to in order to learn more about the long history of settler colonialism in Israel. As we've mentioned in a prior feature, The Hundred Years' War on Palestine by Rashid Kahlidi, Steven Salaita's essay, "A Practical Appraisal of Palestinian Violence," or the movie "Gaza Fights for Freedom," are all valuable resources one could start with.

Ultimately, the genocide that is unfolding continues to happen, wether you are paying attention or not. Currently, Jacob Frey has vetoed the Ceasefire Resolution, which means that "it's important to mention that grassroots organizing, insisting on taking up sauce repeatedly, and direct action all work." As mentioned in our earlier article, protesting is important work that you can get involved in right here at home. Find a cause that most speaks to how you feel on the issue, and find ways to get involved—protesting doesn't have to mean you're out on the streets marching, but you can even do important work from home. Some local organizations that are worth mentioning include the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), The Jewish Voice for Peace (SJP), and The Minnesota Anti-War Committee (AWC). And where you might not want to protest, you can certainly learn.

After all, you read this article, right?

Stepping Off The Cross To Watch A Romcom



1

FOMO is Hell

BY ASHLEY SUDETA

If you celebrate Christmas, part of what makes it such a wonderful holiday is getting to spend it with the important people in my life. As December 24th melts into Christmas day, it's just me, my brothers, my parents, and an old man in a robe ranting about how tragic it is that OUR SAVIOR WAS BORN IN A BARN! Ah, midnight mass is quite the experience.

Growing up Catholic meant that major religious holidays like Christmas and Easter felt more regimented than the way my more irreligious peers appeared to celebrate it. As snow piled up on the lawn and Mariah Carey blared in every store, my family made it a habit to light our Advent candles every Sunday with a prayer. The story we listened to every Christmas Eve wasn't about reindeer on the roof, but Jesus' genealogy (son of David, son of Abraham, son of – you get the point). While I was well aware of "the Christmas spirit" in a more friendly sense, I also knew the original meaning of the holiday and often worried about its ties to my postmortem destination.

The two sides of Christmas, the secularized sequel to Thanksgiving and the holy birth of Jesus Christ, sat as uncomfortably inside me as the 4 sugar cookies I had for Christmas breakfast. Opening gifts with my family was fun, but I worried that the joy of the holiday detracted from my reverence. Every fun, commercialized tradition was frosted with guilt and a sense that I was doing the holiday "wrong."

Secular holidays never stirred up these feelings though. I never felt the underlying fear that I wasn't observing them in the correct way or was feeling the wrong things. After all, I associated Valentine's Day and Halloween with certain color schemes more than actions that I was obligated to partake in. So, while there are societal expectations for what someone might have planned on these dates, the consequences of noncompliance felt more along the lines of FOMO, than the threat of burning in Hell.

To address the technicalities, yes, Valentine's Day has religious roots. However, I think we can agree that it practically qualifies as secular at this point. Valentine's Day tends to get a bad rap today. People credit it with straining relationships, creating feelings of loneliness, and of course placing too high of value on romantic love. I can't deny this, but thankfully I haven't experienced much of it myself. Part of why I have such a positive perspective of the holiday may be due to my complicated relationship with religious holidays — you have to choose your battles. Compared to Easter or Christmas, secular holidays always felt more optional to me: there was less pressure, less Mass attendance, less threats of burning in Hell. The bar was lower. Through this I found that deconstructing the expectations and standards around holidays has helped me enjoy them more.

I know, this is easier said than done, but it doesn't hurt to point out the obvious —external expectations cause us to pass unfair judgments on ourselves. For example, on any normal day it would be a miracle if I managed to study and go to sleep early. The restraint, the responsibility! Bravo! But when I stay in on the day that I was "supposed" to go out with a green borg? Shame on me for committing the crime of being boring in my youth. We reserve these double standards for ourselves. Still, for all the times I've felt inadequate, I've also had fun celebrating holidays in unconventional ways or by doing nothing at all. Realizing that a "celebration" doesn't have to be dramatic or traditional opened the door to me observing holidays on my own terms. There's no punishment – religious or societal – for doing things the way you like. Having a good sandwich can be a St. Patrick's Day celebration, doing nothing is good enough for "Halloweekend." As long as you're happy with it, you're doing it "right." This year I'm celebrating Valentine's Day by watching "The Lego Batman Movie" with my roommates. I'm excited for it and that's all that matters because celebrations are about the fun, not the pressure.

1

I Walk Because It Takes Longer

I Like Getting From One Place To Another

BY BIANCA LLERENA

I walk because it takes longer.

Not because I've got nothing to do, or because the bus was late, but just because I can. Because I like the journey home, how the cold turns my cheeks red, and how, for just a few minutes, my only purpose is to get from one place to another.

Even when the wall of icy wind coiled around my winter jacket with a broken zipper, I couldn't really bear catching the bus and making it home with time to spare. It just felt dumb. At the beginning of the year, when the straps of my backpack rubbed against my tank top and imprinted along my shoulders, I left the house thirty minutes before class and took my time.

I skipped breakfast and had a late dinner, but I couldn't really care because I was doing something that, although not seemingly productive, had to be done. I had to make it home and no matter how long it took, there was no other way than through it.

And maybe the fact that it's the perfect excuse to put in my headphones and turn the volume up all the way helps. I've walked the same sidewalk dozens of times so I don't really have to worry about the route, I can just focus on the "now" (which, in my mind, is a rare occurrence).

Walking to a place feels kind of like when two tracks of an album sort of blend into each other and you realize that a space has been created. Like, the space wouldn't really exist without the other songs but somehow stands on its own? I like to imagine this, and as the minutes keep going, I keep passing houses, bikers, naked trees, and I would consider that as time well spent.

4

3

Found In Translation

The Language of Our Love Will Always Be the Same

BY AMINA AHMED

The monotony of our lives has led us to become blind to the passage of time. This epiphany hit me a couple of weeks ago when my siblings and I were visiting an old family friend. Our families used to be inseparable, and I quite literally grew up alongside their children. I hadn't realized how much time had passed until I saw that the baby of the family now reached my shoulders. The boys I used to wrestle with towered above me like I hadn't schooled them in basketball only a couple of years ago.

More than any other physical change, I noticed the change in our speech. The conversation halted at awkward moments and failed to run smoothly. An unfamiliar pit in my stomach wreaked havoc within me by the tension in the room. I'd never imagined that our interactions would change, and now it was even more difficult to imagine remedying the chasm that time had caused between us. There was a moment in the evening, though, when the familiar warmth of laughter spread through me.

One of the boys had brought up my childhood home we'd moved out of. How we used to play hide-and-seek in the dark and hide under the furniture. A deep and familiar knowledge of the layout was necessary to even play, one that indicated a level of intimacy that could only be reached by the closest of friends. We talked about the park across the street and its dented swings. Simply reminiscing on our shared memories affirmed what I had already known: these people knew and saw me. We were all so irrevocably imprinted on each other's lives that we could easily fall into our rhythm again.

Just as the comfort I was used to surged through me and the temporary walls I had put up began to fall, their mother's voice trickled through the kitchen into the living room and greeted me like an old friend.

"Waa nyaattee?" Have you eaten? She asks.

Life as a Lover Girl: Valentine's Day Edition

Don't get so absorbed in living life as a lover girl that you forget to treat yourself with love too.

BY LA LA LA

2

Although some might believe that Valentine's Day is a money-making scheme orchestrated by greeting card companies, Valentine's Day is said to be rooted in a centuries-old history. In third century Rome, Emperor Claudius had banned marriage for young men to increase the number of men available to enlist in the army. Despite this decree, legend has it that St.Valentine risked his life to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. Upon being discovered by Claudius, St.Valentine was tragically sentenced to his death and executed on February 14, 269, the date on which he is now memorialized or Valentine's Day. While waiting for his death, he continued to write letters expressing his love and devotion to his own lover. As such, St.Valentine became a symbol of romantic love; Romans would pray in his name in the hopes of finding or immortalizing their love.

The origin of Valentine's Day, regardless of whether it is fact or fiction, makes me downright giddy. As someone who has always been enchanted by the idea of romantic love, I will gleefully engage in any related experience whether it be discussing the subtleties of a friend's conversation with her class crush, cozying up to watch a classic romantic comedy, or experiencing that all-too-familiar rush of butterflies myself. I just love love. When painted, my nails are almost always painted a fiery shade of red. I wear a pendant of an envelope sealed with a heart around my neck every day. This past Halloween, I dressed up as Cupid (heart-shaped wings to boot!), and I am not ashamed to admit that I have penned a few love letters myself. For me, the season of love is year-round.

In my defense, there are times when nothing can shake the mundanity out of life like having a new crush. The quickening heartbeat, accidentally-on-purpose encounters, and played up back-and-forth become scenes that I continuously replay in my mind.

My freshman year of college, I developed a crush on a boy I had several classes with. Despite not knowing much about him other than the sneaking suspicion that we did not have too much in common, I was convinced I had found love in that lecture hall. I would constantly fantasize about running into him in the dining hall or making eye contact with him across a crowded party. Having the opportunity to engage in a five-minute conversation with him would always be the highlight of my day. I was hopeless, and my time would have been better spent thinking about practically anything else.

As American novelist Melissa Broder writes, "Romantic obsession is my first language. I live in a world of fantasies, infatuations, and love poems. Sometimes I wonder if the yearning I've felt for others was more of a yearning for yearning itself. I've pined insatiably and repeatedly: for strangers, new lovers, unrequited flames. While the subjects changed, the feeling always remained. Perhaps, then, I have not been so infatuated with the people themselves, but with the act of longing."

I could not identify with this sentiment more. How many times have I seen a stranger whose face I have not been able to forget? In fact, I once attended an open mic night just to hear a guy whom I had met once and whose voice I adored sing. Yikes! When we begin to imagine a life in which a certain someone has taken center stage, our other faculties go out the window.

Although I want someone to hold a boom box up to my fourth-floor apartment window as much as the next girl, I worry that hyperfixating on the possibility of stumbling across love sucks the fun out of being young and carefree. For instance, I don't think I have ever had a night out when the thought of potentially meeting my elusive soulmate has not crossed my mind. Until that day comes, I want to live my life for myself rather than wait to be swept up in someone else. And so, lover girl to lover girl, make sure you're also taking care of your own heart. Write love letters addressed to yourself, gift yourself a dozen roses, and take yourself dancing. On this Valentine's Day, leave some of the love you've been giving away for yourself.

2

It's Important To Listen and Speak from the Heart

I Feel The Overwhelming Urge To Live And Live And Live Again

BY NIKITHA MANNEM

It can be annoying when one finds themselves being nagged by grandparents: "Everything is so different now", "Young people don't work as hard anymore", or even "What are you wearing?" There's such a gap of understanding between generations that we make fun of and loathe each other for the things we carry into adulthood from childhood. The harsh line between people of different ages hides the important conversations that could be happening. While younger generations get caught up in the negative judgments that could occur, we skip the possibility that it could be profound and life-changing. Having deep conversations with older generations gives us a glimpse into a past not romanticized or straight from a textbook, but one that humanizes what happened and allows us to feel it all around us. Much like visiting a historical sight, immersing yourself in such conversation opens gateways to human nature outside of what modern society sees as the "norm".

Walking down the first paved road, putting on family jewelry passed down from generations ago, opening a weathered book. These make one feel connected to the history of humanity. There's a certain allure to the "old" that younger generations have; an undying love for vintage and reliving the type of youth that died long ago. However, all of this glamor is at the cost of real human connection.

Having a conversation breathes life into words, paintings, jewelry, books, and even simple pavement and stone. Items wither away and can only show you a piece of the larger story, a person can convey their truth in a dazzling way that brings back the excitement and connection of living life. There's a spark, a memory, that comes back to life and lives a little longer, a memory which can then be passed down to another generation.

Mind Candy

Romance genres are an escape, but limerence is real

BY MARIE RONNANDER

Since my first read of "The Princess Bride", I've been captivated by the idyllic pursuit of love. This means that romance novels are my bread and butter. If anyone asks, my favorite book is "Pirenisi." But I will happily run a lavender bubble bath, light some pink candles, and read the entirety of "Pride and Prejudice" in one sitting.

Perhaps for this reason, I have a (nearly) unabashed tendency to fall in love. I fall for sweet stories filled with shy smiles with quiet voices that burst into bubby laughs. I'm a lover of Love and all of her tropes.

Real life, however, isn't a fast-paced romcom full of silly banter and outlandish plots that quickly "cuts to the good stuff." That expectation shouldn't permeate into the day-to-day. Unfortunately, my wildeyed faith in a true-love-story has caused me to lean into that hope.

What I mean to say is that my rose-colored glasses, while casting the world beautifully, don't exactly give me 20/20 vision. Where I see romance in Romeo's fatal dedication to Juliet, others see a lovesick fool. Where I've seen love at first sight, others just see... well, a stranger staring a little too intensely. But in reality, maybe that random person I met in my favorite bookshop won't be the love of my life.

And maybe, someone baking you banana bread isn't supposed to be a sweep-you-off-your-feet romantic gesture. And that's okay. Sometimes acts of kindness are more meaningful than acts of love. Because, after all, life is tiring enough without the twists, turns, and turmoil that follows the protagonist of a romance novel.

5

Orquídeas

Kali Uchis

BY MARIE RONNANDER

In English, Orquídeas translates to orchids. For centuries, this flower has been perceived as a symbol of love, luxury, and sexuality. And Kali Uchis' new album is exactly that. The cover art speaks volumes. She's pressed to glass with nothing but the pink and purple hues of the glittering flowers surrounding her.

Kali Uchis is a rare musician who has found success in the american-capitol world through two musical languages. She experiments with bolero, Spanish guitar, and stirs in a sweet mixture of harps and bells with an electric background. Her lyrics flow in and out of Spanish with ease, combining the two languages with an enchanting and nearly hypnotic voice.

There are two sides to Orquídeas. First, we see the villain that Uchis sees within herself. Como Asi and Me Pongo Loca paint her as a temptress carefully designed to break a man's heart. But as the album rolls on, we see a realization that she was the one with a broken heart. "Diosa" is her eyes opening to her connection to the power of her own femininity. Te Mata is the truth unfolding to her; she doesn't need to see herself as a diabla or live in the guilt of the past.

The orchid is the national flower of Colombia, the birthplace of Uchis' father. This album is a nod to her heritage, as well as taking back her peace as a woman. It's sultry, rhythmic, and absolutely stunning.

Mean Girls

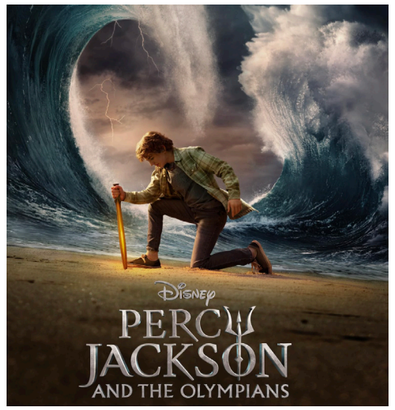
Samantha Jayne, Arturo Perez Jr.

BY SOPHIA GOETZ

I'm no theatre kid, but, to my knowledge, this is how musicals work: characters don't just express their emotions—they belt them out in an expository blast. Even if it appears strange or absurd at first, you can usually get into the groove if the performers and material are interesting enough. But "Mean Girls," rather than taking flight, just grinds away.

Adhering to the original film's plot, Cady Heron, a math whiz, has a crush on Aaron Samuels. Regina George, the infamous mean girl prototype, pretends to speak up to Aaron (whom she used to date) for Cady, but all she's really doing is reaffirming her claim to him. Cady is then inspired to try being a mean girl for herself in order to retaliate against her backstabbing frenemy.

Here's my issue: "Mean Girls" (2004) benefited from stealth, wit, as well as a number of talented young performers. And, while it never moralized explicitly, it did have a serious underpinning: everyone deserves kindness, regardless of their social status. However, in the fiery number "I'd Rather Be Me," Cady lashes out at expectations of "how girls should behave," claiming that "sometimes what's meant to break you /makes you brave." That is fair enough, except that that number contradicts the core concept of the original "Mean Girls." Instead of acknowledging that mistreating others is the quickest way to demean yourself, it encourages excuse-making: a badass is the best thing a woman can be; it is acceptable to mistreat other women if they have wronged you. If that's feminism, then the mean girls have truly won.



Percy Jackson and the Olympians

Chris Columbus, Thor Freudenthal

BY JACOB KAPPENMAN

The Disney Plus original adapts the famous book series of the same name, following Percy and his companions as they search for Zeus' missing Master Bolt. For this review, I will judge how the show stands on its own, not how well it was adapted.

The series looks and sounds terrific with amazing production design and CGI, which is expected with a budget reportedly between $12 Million and $15 million per episode.

However, the pace and plot are rushed, hurting my investment. The show would have benefited greatly from taking its time in the first few episodes, instead of rushing to the quest. Despite the quick pace, the action feels slow. This causes enemies throughout to come off as non-threatening. Examples of this are Mrs. Dobbs, Alecto, and the Chimera, who all love to take their time and walk towards our heroes.

A strong point of the show is the interactions between the main characters. As they adventure, the trio bonds together well, which informs the decisions they make later in the show.

Performances from the main characters— Percy, Annabeth, and Grover— played by Walker Scobell, Leah Jeffries, and Aryan Simhadri, respectively, are competent but nothing special. However, Virginia Kull gives a standout performance playing Percy's mom, Sally Jackson. The best scenes in the show are flashbacks to Sally struggling to raise Percy on her own.

I had fun with the show and look forward to season two, but I worry if this is the best product they can deliver.

EDM Review

SVDDEN DEATH

Harbinger

BY GABRIEL MATIAS CASTILHO

Stop. Take a deep breath. Open your mind...because it is going to be blown. Californian DJ and producer "Danny" Howland–known as SVDDEN DEATH–released a nuclear Riddim album called "Harbinger" on Jan. 19. The album is so dangerous it can cause whiplashes, but that was intended. What a way to start the year!

The album's content does indeed reflect how dangerous it is. For one, the torture-ridden artwork coupled with the neck-snapping breakdowns and the concerning names of the songs create a complete landscape of horror. The pacing of the songs will get you off guard–as "Yargonaut" teaches us: how come the song can have such a terrible introduction while having one of the heaviest drops I have ever heard?

Insomniac electro/rock artist HVDES joins Howland on the fun later with "Don't You Dare Go Hollow" to remind us that "nothing lasts forever". It's like a horror movie: calm melodies are followed by ear-ripping content. There is even creative horror in the mix with "Ten Toad Anthem", a song with melodies created from frog croaks.

If you are looking to escape from madness, even this album can help you. My favorite song of the compilation, "Forgive Forget", is more melodic than you would imagine. Arcade machine sounds and colorful arpeggios contrast with vengeful lyrics like "when the pain makes it hard to stay / I will never, never forget, never forgive you".

If you decide to give this album a try, understand your whole day will forever be changed. Brace yourself for the impending doom.

2024 Oscar Nominations

Phenomenal or Flop?

BY SHANNA SIVAKUMAR

Reviews are typically about movies, television, or new music, but as an amateur film buff, I felt it necessary to talk about the 2024 Oscar nominations that came out January 23rd.

With the spectacle that was Barbenheimer, nominations for both Greta Gerwig's "Barbie" and Christopher Nolan's "Oppenheimer" were guaranteed. And while "Oppenheimer" has been nominated for 12 Oscar awards (including best picture and best actor in a leading role), a certain demographic was shocked at Barbie's mere... 8 Academy Award nominations...? After thorough research (scrolling through Twitter), I've concluded that most of the online discourse is due to Margot Robbie not getting nominated for her role as "Barbie" while Ryan Gosling does for playing "Ken," which is a valid qualm for a movie that was centered around introductory feminism.

But with every award season comes the yearly debate of representation in media, and this year's nomination includes a remarkable step forward: Lily Gladstone's nomination for Best Actress in a Leading Role in "Killers of the Flower Moon." Her nomination marks the first Native American woman nominated for Best Actress at the Oscars. To see a meaningful and accurate depiction of indigenous people and culture win possibly multiple academy awards is something I don't think the general population is celebrating enough.

Other personal highlights include Celine Song's "Past Lives" receiving two nominations (my personal favorite film of 2023!) and Colman Domingo's long-overdue nomination for "Rustin." And while it can be argued that award shows are overrated, I think I'll be seated for this year's Oscars.

Grief Chapter

Mother Mother

BY VISHALLI ALAGAPPAN

The beloved Vancour-based rock band Mother Mother have released four of tracks to tease their new album "Grief Chapter," expected to release on February 16, 2024.

The first single released was "Normalize," an exploration of our own uniqueness and originality in the face of what is considered normal. The main themes are questioning what is considered normal and realizing that parts of you are dying as you give up parts of your ingenuity to blend in. I found verse two intriguing where they talk of painting pain like Frida Kahlo and wondering if it looks like another Picasso— putting the mouth where the eyes and ears go. I interpret this sentiment as the fear of vulnerability bolstered by the fact that your lived experiences may not be unique enough to stand out and creating novelty from performative peculiarity. This is at odds with what is conveyed in the rest of the song, but as someone who doubts the originality and authenticity of my own work, I resonated with these lyrics.

Another song that reminded me why I love this band was "The Matrix." This song tries to answer the million dollar question: what are you supposed to do with this life? It rejects the determinism of life and weighs the comfort of nihilism against religious existentialism. A lyric that had me absolutely clutching my pearls was "F*ck no to my one sweet life squeezed tight in a vice grip." I also appreciated the fun guitar riff in the outro.

The other two songs, "Nobody Escapes" and "To My Heart" were not particularly remarkable, but all songs have the typical Mother Mother sound: folksy rock and angelic vocals. If you liked Oh My Heart or Touch Up, I can guarantee that these four songs will make you fall back in love with the band.

The Rural Alberta Advantage

BY SHANNA SIVAKUMAR

The Rural Alberta Advantage is a Canadian indie-rock band based in Toronto, Ontario that formed in 2005. The band consists of an incredibly talented trio led by lead vocalist and guitar player Nils Edenloff, bassist, keys, and backing vocalist Amy Cole, and drummer Paul Banwatt. You can see them in Minneapolis on March 23rd of this year at First Avenue to celebrate their fifth studio album, "The Rise & The Fall".

👁: How did the band form?

Nils: [laughs] Well, we kind of, uhh met at an open mic night back in the day. We've been together since, probably, what is it, 2005?

Paul: Roughly.

N: Roughly. But yeah, we were all hosting an open mic night here in Toronto, and then, well, the place closed down, and no one was showing up to it, so, it's not us, I guess. But we were just kind of playing together and friends would come to see us and that led to shows here and there, and yeah, one thing led to another and we just got louder and more aggressive, I guess [chuckles] since our open mic days.

👁: How did the name, The Rural Alberta Advantage, come about?

N: So, I was writing a lot of songs about— I'm originally from Alberta— the province I grew up in after moving here to Toronto, and a lot of songs that we were kind of when we first started playing were these songs about Alberta and tied to home. And I was talking with my brother, he was hanging out at our cabin down in southern Alberta and was asking how my weekend was, and he said he was hanging out with some friends, kind of exploring the rural "Alberta Advantage". And [the term] "explore the Alberta Advantage" was kind of the provincial slogan in Alberta for the longest time in my youth. So yeah, it was kind of a play on that. And it just sort of fit well with the music we were writing.

👁: How would you describe your sound?

P: I think... it's like a combination of indie rock, folk, uh... some electronic influences, and then kind of just a mish-mash of styles. I dunno, we don't like to put ourselves in too much of a box so I guess indie rock is the closest one we can think of [laughs].

Amy: There's like, new ones [genres], like stomp and holler. It's like some new, like— 2010s— like Mumford and Sons... there's like a bit of that, but more with electro-influences and a bunch of different stuff.

N: It's also interesting how people describe it. Like yeah, punk-country or something like that [laughs], which you don't really hear, but you know, I guess it's good to not be in an easy-to-define box.

👁: What does the creative process behind a song look like?

N: Every song is different, you know. We've had ones that just kind of organically form in the space of the three of us playing together. But a lot of times, you know, I might bring the... kernel of an idea and we kind of work on it and build something around that and then we kind of then change our mind and tear it down and build it back up again. Just keeping this inner process of reworking songs. So everyone's involved in the process and we all feel very engaged in the end product.

👁: What is the inspiration behind this album, "The Rise & The Fall"?

N: We were working on [this album] all through the pandemic. We kind of, initially started working on stuff before the pandemic. It's hard to define where the songs kinda come from or what they touch on. But I feel like a lot of it's just sort of, you know, about relationships and people that maybe you're far removed from and stuff like that, I guess.

👁: I read that something a fan said also helped inspire this album, is that true?

N: Yeah, I think someone at St. John's mentioned that. I think it's sort of like, you don't realize— when you're making an album or writing songs— how it's going to affect people or how far away people are gonna be touched by your music. Yeah, I think being cut off from people in the pandemic gives you an appreciation for, you know, the closeness you can have with people despite being far away. A lot of songs revolve around that to a certain degree, I guess.

A: Well, I think a lot of it is, like, we've been talking about— through the pandemic, we sort of had to— we were kind of forced to approach our creative process and our building of the songs that we talked about in a different way than before. And it's thanks to the development of new technology like Zoom, like for a couple songs— we even tried to practice over online and at our [respective] houses a couple times and it was a disaster [laughs]. We couldn't— the timing— like we tried but it didn't work. But what it did help with, was when we were, you know, building our different parts of the song once Nils would come in with an idea, we could all sort of, demo our own things onto the software we're working on. We'd be trading files back and forth and sort of developing these things remotely, which we are not used to. Normally, we think it's critical to both be together when we're working on something— in the same room— and then road test the song live, before we go record them. In this case, we couldn't do either of those things. So in that way, that made the record different, just from a "constructing the record itself" process.

👁: What makes this album different from your previous releases?

And I do think you can hear it in the music— I think you can hear us all appreciating what we bring to the music— there's space for everything. We've always tried to not put too much on a song, but in this [album] especially, every part that's there is there because we all believe in it and think it's special and I think the songs really work because of that.

N: Also, I think one of the things we realized during the pandemic, is that despite [the fact] that all of us had the chance to go and work on our parts, it gave us this real appreciation— that something special happens when the three of us get together that maybe we didn't realize before. But when we were all isolated, it was hard for those inspirational moments to happen. So it definitely gave us an appreciation for what the three of us all bring to the table and create together as one.

👁: What can we look forward to at your Minneapolis show in March?

P: I mean, Minneapolis in particular is a really special place for us to play because it's one of the first U.S. cities that really showed us a lot of love. It makes us feel really special coming there and it's never changed. It's always been this, like, really amazing feeling playing for people and getting support from the incredible local radio stations, so yeah. Coming to Minneapolis is always one that we see on the calendar and get excited about. And so we always try to play a little extra special show when we're over there because of that. 👁

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