

THE
FREDONIA LEADER

SUNY Fredonia's Student-Run Newspaper



**Special Issue:
All About Opinions**

Construction projects continue despite deficit
Why Dunkin' is better than Tims, from a WNY native
Blue Devils look ready after running with the Bulls
Who's the G.O.A.T.: MJ or LeBron?
Women's voices on the 2024 election outcome
Abbie's Thanksgiving food tier list

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“Your main goal in life should be to leave the world a better place than when you arrived.” -Melissa Wadsworth-Miller

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Becoming radicalized on book banning

MARIANA CRUZ

Special to The Leader

Growing up, a book I loved as a kid was Maurice Sendak's "Where the Wild Things Are."

I thought the monsters were cool and I liked the overall message. The book has stuck with me from childhood to adulthood.

I was in Reed Library when I saw a little display on one of the shelves. It was dedicated to books that were banned in some schools in the U.S.

Some of the banned books displayed that I had read before include "The Hunger Games," "The Diary of Anne Frank" and "To Kill a Mockingbird." These are all books that are banned in a good amount of states, and it didn't shock me that they were banned.

But then I saw it: "Where the Wild Things Are."

I don't know if the people who banned that book read the same book that I did. I couldn't for the life of me figure out why it would be banned.

I don't see the banning of other books as justified either, but learning that my favorite childhood book, in particular, was banned further proved to me how ridiculous the concept of banning books is.

Twenty-nine states in America have taken it upon themselves to ban certain books from being taught in schools. Texas has banned the most, followed by Florida and Missouri. Currently, the Southern states lead the country in that list.

In 2023, the most challenged books were mainly about queer themes. Other books that were banned included themes of race and racial prejudice. Being too violent, sexually explicit or dark are further reasons given as to why some books have been banned.

Well-known books that are assigned reading in schools are banned, like "The Catcher in the Rye," "Of Mice and Men" and "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian."

I read these books and I can understand to an extent why certain administrators want to ban them. I don't understand it in the sense that I agree they should be banned, but in the sense that, given the common political views in the South, I can definitely see a bunch of administrators from the South wanting to ban those books.

Now that I've been radicalized about this topic, I'm going to defend the book that changed my life and opened my eyes: "Where the Wild Things Are." I went out of my way to reread that amazing book after I learned that it was banned.

It follows this little boy, Max, who gets sent to bed without dinner because he's behaving badly and travels to this land with a bunch of monsters, the Wild Things, and hangs out with them. They crown him their king and they swing from trees and whatnot.

There is literally nothing that I could find wrong with the book.

But maybe that's just my bias speaking, so I asked some of my friends if they remembered reading that book. Some of them told me that the monsters scared them, some of them said they had never heard of it and a few told me that they also loved it in their youth.

So what if some people find it scary? Surely that can't be any grounds for banning it. When I was little, "The Lorax" kind of scared me and it's not like that's banned... right?

Okay, so, just because "The Lorax" is also banned doesn't mean that books with scary things in them should be banned. If anything, that supports my argument. In what world does a book having a scary-looking character mean it should be banned in schools?

A quick Google search taught me that apparently "Where the Wild Things Are" is banned because Max was sent to bed without dinner, which could be "psychologically damaging." The book had images of the supernatural and witchcraft.

Mind you, Max chased his dog around with a fork and caused all sorts of other mischief. The Wild Things that are so "damaging" were Max's friends and they begged him not to leave them. As for the witchcraft, if you consider Max and the Wild Things having fun in the jungle as "witchcraft," then I really don't have a rebuttal for that.

I understand a lot of books deal with themes that aren't suitable for younger kids, and I don't think that kids in elementary school should be reading about the crazy stuff that went on in Holden Caulfield's life, but the premise of banning a book just because it includes topics such as gender, sexuality or race is

Continued onto next page

Leader Poll

*Would you be buried in the same casket
as someone else?*

Yes: 6

Drew, Dan, Makayla, Isa, Chandler, & Abbie M

No: 5

Abby J, Matt, Mitch, Ryan, & Becca

Alternative answers:

I want to be composted: Elmer

extreme.

Banning books on this basis is restricting and it'll probably do more harm than good in the long run. There are no good outcomes from limiting what children and adolescents can be taught in a school setting. There are no good outcomes from limiting to this large of an extent what teachers can show their students.

Do I think that books should be banned in schools? No.

Do I think that banning "Where the Wild Things Are" is a preposterous example of book banning? Yes.

Justice for Max, the Wild Things and Maurice Sendak.

"There are no good outcomes from limiting what children and adolescents can be taught in a school setting. There are no good outcomes from limiting to this large of an extent what teachers can show their students."

— **MARIANA CRUZ**

Student

SUNY Fredonia

Leader Poll

Would you rather graduate a year early or stay an extra year at this school?

Graduate a year early: 4

Abby J, Abbie M, Becca, & Giulianna

Stay an extra year: 5

Mitch, Drew, Alex, Matt, & Dan

AI isn't as scary as it seems

DAN QUAGLIANA

Managing Editor

As a history and political science double major, artificial intelligence (AI) concerns me.

It concerns me because it's getting better and better every day, and it can write better than a lot of people I know. Right now is the worst AI will ever be from now on. The technology has probably improved in the time that it took you to read that sentence.

For tradespeople, like electricians or plumbers, AI probably isn't something to worry about. It's never going to replace those jobs — until we have mobile robots, but something tells me we're a long way off from that.

But like I said, I'm a history major. My entire academic career has consisted of essays. So... many... essays. And that's precisely what AI is getting better at.

That being said, it's not anywhere near where it needs to be to take my potential job away... yet. And so I'm not that

scared about it... yet.

If any of my professors are reading this, it's probably best if you ignore the rest of the article.

AI can do a very good job of helping you write out an essay, but it completely falls flat on its face if you try to get it to write the actual essay itself. The "intelligence" is indeed very intelligent when it comes to recalling facts and making outlines.

But recalling facts and making outlines is not what I have to do in my classes, as awesome as that sounds. I actually need to think and be able to connect different historical events together and explain the relationship between them. AI can't do that.

And believe me, I've tried to get it to.

Do you know how easy it would be if AI could write my papers for me? But whenever I try to get it to (again, if any of my professors are reading this, kindly ignore that part), it spits out something that resembles an answer to the question I gave it, but no more than that.

There's no actual thought behind anything it says, and

it's very obvious once you're actually reading it. Like I said, it does a very good job of reciting basic historical facts and events, but there's no analysis of those events.

AI-written essays don't hold a candle to the standard that professors expect, and, more importantly, they aren't even close to the standard that I expect for myself.

There's also no voice to an artificially-generated paper. In the time you've taken to read the first half of this article, I hope it's evident that it was not, in fact, written by a generative artificial intelligence program, but rather by a flesh-and-blood human being with a thought process behind him. I hope it's evident that I have an actual tone that I'm using to write this.

Every AI-written anything that I've ever seen has no tone behind it. It's just a dry, academic fact recital, which is the very thing I hope to avoid in everything that I've ever written.

So far, I've spent this entire article bashing AI and making it seem like it isn't good for anything — which is completely at odds with the headline of it.

I mentioned earlier that two things AI is good for are recalling facts and making outlines, and the latter is something I greatly struggle with. In the past, I've often written essays by just starting and seeing where the path of my brain takes me, which means I almost always had to rewrite the beginning of them.

But with AI helping me to write the outline for my essays, I've found that the process of my writing has gone much smoother. Introductions are always where I struggle the most, and seeing the information I've gathered laid out in front of me before I start writing is immensely helpful.

It's important to distinguish that I never directly use anything that AI spits out at me — everything that I've ever written has been in my own words. But as a tool to help me organize my own thoughts and my own research (which are famously unorganized), it is immensely valuable.

And in my experience, it's not really good for anything else. This might sound incredibly egotistical, but I'm better than it at everything else. I'm repeating myself at this point, but there's just no feeling behind anything that it gives you.

Take the new Apple Intelligence features, for example. Apple just rolled out a new iOS and Mac update that implements Apple Intelligence, which is basically just an Apple-ified ChatGPT.

One of its features is that it can summarize text messages for you... you know, the things that are already shorter than most Tweets? It can take a message like "THANK YOU THANK YOU You have no idea how much this means to me," and turn it into something that reads "Expresses thanks."

Who asked for this? How does this help me at all?

Yes, it turned that (already really short) message into two words. But it also took out all the feeling and the deeper meaning behind the message.

And that's the extent for what it can be used for. AI is good at helping you do your work, but not anything further than that. It won't be replacing any jobs in the near future.

In the far future? Maybe. But that's too far away for me to worry about at the moment.

In terms of belonging in the classroom, AI does have a place — it occupies that organization and planning niche that I've talked about. It can also be used to teach students how to find facts.

In one of my sophomore year history classes, we were given an AI-generated paper, and we had to use resources online to find sources for the information that it gave us. Not only was that fun (yes, I'm very popular at parties), but it taught me how to find information that I'm looking for.

It is indeed possible for AI to help students learn, provided they don't use it as a crutch to just get a passing grade.

Teachers and professors are concerned about it, and they absolutely have a right to be. But for anything deeper than regurgitating facts and figures, it's just not as proficient as it needs to be in order to be acceptable.

"It's not anywhere it needs to be to take my potential job away... yet. And so I'm not that scared about it... yet."

— **DAN QUAGLIANA**
Student
SUNY Fredonia

Construction projects continue despite multi-million dollar deficit

ALEX BUCKNAM

Asst. News Editor

Fredonia is facing budget issues, causing the administration to cut majors and look at potential minors to cut.

But why is there so much construction if Fredonia is facing such a big deficit?

The simple answer to this is that the construction money doesn't come from any of Fredonia's accounts, but is instead funded by a grant that comes from SUNY itself.

"We have the SUNY construction fund," stated Fredonia President Stephen Kolison in a meeting about the budget issues. According to the president, this is a grant that SUNY offers to all campuses.

In the 2024 fiscal year budget, New York State put \$24.6 million towards the State University Construction Fund (SUCF) to be shared across all campuses.

According to the New York State website, the construction fund is completely separate from the SUNY budget, meaning that the state legislature allocates different amounts of money to both.

So if the state government can allocate a set amount of money for construction to take place on campuses, why can't they allocate a certain amount to help solve Fredonia's problems?

According to a WXXI news report about SUNY students and professors who are raising alarms about budget cuts, SUNY schools face a cumulative total deficit of \$136 million, which is roughly five and a half times the amount of money put towards the construction fund.

If the state government can find ways to put the same amount of money into the operating budgets as they put into the construction fund, every SUNY school's deficit would be solved within five years.

This is something that students have been pushing for —

most Students for Fredonia (SFF) advocacy events always have a table to sign and send letters to New York's governor, Kathy Hochul.

At United University Professions (UUP) events, they have pre-written letters that students and faculty can sign to send to the governor. UUP is the union representing professional faculty and staff at Fredonia.

So why hasn't this happened already?

Well, the legislature attempted to solve it in 2023 — Hochul signed a budget law increasing SUNY operational aid by \$163 million.

Currently, it is unclear what SUNY or Hochul plans to do to solve these massive budget issues that each SUNY school is facing.

What can you as the reader do to help solve this problem? SFF and UUP members note that you can call your local state legislator. To find out who your state legislator is, you can go to <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials> and contact your state officials. SFF and UUP encourage sending Kathy Hochul an email, a letter or even calling her office to urge her to help out on these budget issues, to make sure that this time, the funding gets rightfully distributed between the campuses that need it the most.

SOURCES:

<https://www.budget.ny.gov/pubs/archive/fy24/ex/agencies/appropdata/StateUniversityConstructionFund.pdf>

https://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/govt-relations/state/SUNY-Report-on-Enrollment-and-Financial-Sustainability_January2024.pdf

<https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>

Leader Poll

How much sawdust do you think you could put in a bowl of shredded wheat cereal before the person eating it would start to notice?

Roughly 3 teaspoons: Mitch

5 tablespoons if the cereal has milk in it:

Alex

2 cups: Abbie M

Half the bowl: Matt

1 cup: Giulianna

Any amount, shredded wheat is good: Dan

2 tablespoons: Abby J

Life & Arts

Why Dunkin' Donuts is better than Tim Hortons, from the perspective of a WNY native

DAN QUAGLIANA
Managing Editor

OK, I'm fully aware that this article is going to get me canceled across the entire campus.

And don't mistake my intentions — I am in no way saying that Tim Hortons is bad. I've eaten their food and drank their drinks my entire life. I'm from Buffalo — there's no way that I could avoid Tim Hortons, even if I wanted to.

But the Town of Dunkirk, right down the street from SUNY Fredonia, is a very special place. It has a Dunkin' Donuts right next to a Tim Hortons.

I'm going to use two extremes to illustrate why this occurrence is so special — go down to New York City. Take a look around. You'll see a Dunkin' on basically every street corner, but there won't be a single Tims in sight.

Now drive an hour up I-90 to Buffalo, and you'll see the exact opposite result. Tims everywhere, as far as the eye can see! Dunkin' Donuts? What's that? (Yes, I am fully aware Buffalo has multiple Dunkin' Donuts locations.)

Before coming to Fredonia, I've never seen a Dunkin' and a Tims right next to each other before, and I consider myself pretty well-traveled.

Being able to experience the juxtaposition of the two coffee companies has led me to some interesting conclusions that the me of a few years ago would never even consider.

I now actually consider Dunkin' to be superior to Tim Hor-

"Being able to experience the juxtaposition of the two coffee companies has led me to some interesting conclusions that the me of a few years ago would never even consider."

— **DAN QUAGLIANA**
Student
SUNY Fredonia

tons.

I'll wait until the tomatoes stop flying.

...

I partake in this opinion for multiple reasons. But before I even list them, let me tell you all something else that will get me canceled and possibly chased out of Western New York by an angry mob.

I don't drink coffee.

"But Dan, how can you judge places that are mostly known for their coffee?"

Because I said so, and now y'all have to listen.

That means I'll be ranking (read: judging) these places based on everything **BESIDES** their coffee. Let the mayhem commence.

Non-coffee drinks

Dunkin' walks away with this one. It's not even close.

They have fun, fruity refreshers — and they're absolutely perfect for when you need a sugar rush early in the morning. (Wait, what do you mean I shouldn't drink that much sugar in the morning?)

Tims' refreshers are still good, but they taste much "waterier" than their counterparts. And you always have to stir them so the concentrate doesn't settle on the bottom.

Dunkin' also has matcha lattes, so that automatically makes it a winner in my book. Like, seriously, do we even still need to be in this section?

They **ALSO** have more flavors of plain 'ol tea compared to the Canadian company. What other chain restaurant of ANY kind has hibiscus tea? It's practically a delicacy that you have to order on Amazon, but Dunkin' has it at every location.

Donuts

As much as I love Dunkin', this isn't a Tims slander article — America might run on Dunkin', but I'm running away with an armful of Tims donuts. It might be childhood nostalgia, but they're just better than Dunkin's.

That's especially true when you're comparing donut holes. No other donut on the planet can even hold a candle to Timbits ... except maybe Paula's in Buffalo, but they're in a whole different league than the one that this article is looking to cover.

Munchkins, by comparison, are a lot drier and lumpier, compared to the soft, moist and smooth texture of the delicacies

Continued onto next page

known as Timbits.

Both establishments' regular donuts are acceptable, I guess. They taste pretty similar, and I have no complaints about either of them. I still think Tims' are better, but I'll take some from Dunkin' in a pinch.

Food

This, more than any other area, is where Dunkin' completely destroys Tims.

Dunkin' doesn't even have to show up to the fight, and they demolish Tims when their food is compared. Their maple sugar bacon breakfast sandwich is truly the food of the gods, and in the morning, it's the only thing I need for a complete and balanced breakfast. I treat myself to one at least once a week, and I start looking forward to the next one as soon as I finish it.

When I'm even just in the vicinity of Tims eggs, my stomach starts turning. Something about the smell just doesn't agree with me.

I will say, however, that Tims has better bagels — Dunkin' always burns them too much or undercooks them; they never make them correctly. Am I being too nitpicky? Maybe, but I'm very particular about my bagels.

Tims also has better lunch foods, but a coffee place isn't really where I'm looking to go for lunch. Sorry, Tims turkey bacon club sandwich lovers (and I include myself among you) —

Dunkin's breakfast foods far outweigh Tims lunches.

Was trying to compare two coffee companies based on everything except their coffee a good idea? Probably not. Will this article gain me more popularity points around campus? Again, probably not.

But I think it's good for Fredonians to be educated on the places they get their breakfast from. And next time someone from Western New York doesn't bow down and worship Tim Hortons, give them a chance to speak before automatically assuming they hate your culture.



Photo by DAN QUAGLIANA | Managing Editor

How social media impacts young people's mental health

GWENYTH KIRKWOOD
Special to The Leader

Whether we like it or not, social media has become a part of our everyday lives in the digital age.

Most people start their day off by going on some form of social media and finish their day by going on another. For younger generations, it has been a core part of our lives — something we grew up on.

As much as social media has connected us in ways we would never have imagined, it also has its downfalls. Social media can help build community and good relationships but it can also create toxic environments at times. In some ways, we can all admit that social media is doing more harm than good, especially when it comes to one's mental health.

The different uses of social media can have more negative effects on an individual's mental health than positive. For example, the day after Election Day was damaging to a lot of people's mental health. It could depend on whether your chosen candidate won or not, but you could have had mixed feelings about what was posted regarding the results.

Social media platforms have widely expanded throughout the years, from Myspace to Facebook to TikTok. Social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and X (formerly known as Twitter) serve purposes other than just

staying in touch. Their goal has become to provide a forum for people to express themselves and their opinions.

TikTok started as an app where people would lip sync and it has grown into an app where people can openly share their opinions on any issue of their choice.

Although there are many benefits to social media, there is also a darker side that seems to be taking a toll on the mental well-being of its users, particularly the younger generation. The problem isn't only that young people are spending extensive time on social media, it's that these platforms are intentionally designed to keep you engaged, which can have negative impacts on your mental well-being. When willing to engage with people via social media — even by simply just scrolling and not interacting with them — you are still participating in a way that can influence your emotions.

One of the most damaging effects of social media is the constant pressure to compare yourself to others, sometimes without even realizing it. It's nearly impossible to open any social media app without being flooded with images of perfect bodies, dream vacations and seemingly flawless lifestyles. Platforms like Instagram are flooded with posts showcasing an idealized version of life, highlighting only the "perfect" moments.

When I was in my years of discovering myself, I would often compare myself to others on social media without even realizing it. It was only until I got older that I realized these photos

"It's nearly impossible to open any social media app without being flooded with images of perfect bodies, dream vacations and seemingly flawless lifestyles."

— **GWENYTH KIRKWOOD**
Student
SUNY Fredonia

are often edited, filtered or even staged. It is just a facade most of the time, especially with influencers. But for impressionable teenagers scrolling through content, it feels very much real, not staged.

The trap of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is yet another way social media takes a toll on mental health. With constant updates and notifications, young people are always aware of what

their friends are up to. Whether it's a party they weren't invited to or a trending event they missed, FOMO can trigger feelings of anxiety and exclusion.

Today, young people face social pressure not only in real life but also in the digital world. The constant feeling that you need to stay updated on one's social media presence adds another layer of stress. This pressure to feel like you need to be in the loop through social media often leads to an unhealthy dependency, which can develop into a cycle. Whether you feel the urge to check your favorite influencers' Snapchat stories throughout the day, fearing you might miss out on something, or just want to check in on your close friends.

In my eyes, cyberbullying is one of the biggest problems that comes with social media. Unlike "traditional" bullying which might be confined to the school environment, cyberbullying will follow you anywhere you go. This is often common in young people who are still forming their identities.

Being targeted online can be incredibly damaging. Constant harassment, threats and hurtful comments can feel overwhelming, often leading to significant emotional trauma, especially if experienced at a pivotal point in your life.

While social media can have its upsides, we as a society include social media in our everyday lives and need to consider the consequences it has on the younger generations' mental health and well-being.

Leader Poll

Would you rather be able to eat anything you want and have it be perfect nutrition, or have to only sleep one hour a day and be fully rested?

Eat anything you want and have it be perfect

nutrition: 6

Becca, Drew, Alex, Abbie M, Matt, & Abby J

Have to only sleep one hour a day and be

fully rested: 3

Mitch, Giulianna, & Dan

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In The Leader Office!
S206 Williams Center

McEwen Café is superior to Mason Café

SARA LODESPOTO

Special to The Leader

As you read the title of this article, you might have some questions.

How can two cafés, both owned by SUNY Fredonia, with similar employees and prices, be different? Better yet, how can you have a favorite? Just because it's the same café, doesn't mean they have the same feel. I hope you'll understand what I mean by the end of this.

LOCATION

McEwen: 5/5

This café is located at the epicenter of the academic building. No matter what entrance you go in, it's likely that the first thing you'll see is the café. Whether you are trying to get to the library, the shortcut to Thompson Hall or one of McEwen's lecture halls, most times you will come across Pete's. It's essentially in the hallway — like those little jewelry stands you find in between stores of a mall.

Mason: 2/5

Now I know I'm not a music student, but trying to find the café was a hassle. Navigating through Mason, the café is located in the far corner of the building. It is conveniently right next to a side exit for easy access. However, since the café is in a room, compared to McEwen's open-area approach, it loses a couple of points. If the hanging blue sign reading "Mason Café" wasn't there, I wouldn't have found it.

LOUNGE AREA

McEwen: 5/5

There is an abundance of seats where you can eat your chicken salad on pita bread. High-top tables? Yes, including round tables and the bar-like counters facing the cement wall. Table for two? Wooden chairs and tables surround the perimeter of the ground-level lecture halls. Single-seater cushion chairs? Each pillar has at least two with the right arm extending out as a desk. This dining location is perfect if you are with friends or if you just want to be alone.

Mason: 1/5

This lounge area is located in a room a bit smaller than a typical classroom, connected to the café. At the center, the dorm couches huddle a chipped wooden table, forming a circle with tables for four outlining the room. Underneath the furniture is a beaten rug, which you can't tell if it's stained or if that's just the pattern. Advertisements for clubs, band members and recitals hang like uneven Christmas lights. A perfect shelf carved into the wall holds a crooked TV. An old microwave in the corner is barely visible as boxes barricade it, spreading to the other side of the room. While I sat on the couch, strangers sat in the sunken seats facing me. This lounge area isn't built for one person, but for groups of people gathering.

BUSY TIMES

How exactly did I judge this? I went up to the workers from both cafés and asked them when is their busiest time. The McEwen Café worker answered that their busiest time is from 10:50 a.m. to 11 a.m. The Mason Café worker explained that their busiest time is anytime between classes, which is very vague. My observation of Mason Café allowed me to conclude that the busiest time was from 12:50 p.m. to 1 p.m.

McEwen: 3/5

I had gotten in line when I thought students stopped joining the line. The worker was able to take my order for a black iced coffee after waiting in line for one minute and 10 seconds. After placing my order, within seconds, my coffee was done. That being said, the timing may differ based on your position in the line and how many people encompass it. Overall, they were really quick.

Mason: 5/5

Do people even go to this café? Even though the Mason employee was vague, the afternoon in-between classes should have at least drawn some students. While I was there, at most, five students ordered. Since I'm new to this café, maybe that was the busiest time? Honestly, I am not sure, but it was useless trying to time the line since there was none.

Leader Poll

Would you rather be able to converse with animals or have life-long fluency in every human language?

Be able to converse with animals: 3

Drew, Alex, & Matt

Have life-long fluency in every human

language: 6

Mitch, Becca, Abbie M, Giulianna, Abby J, & Dan

ENVIRONMENT

McEwen: 5/5

As students walked through McEwen, laughter and chatter echoed between the cement pillars. Girls chatted by the napkins, a man with a fruit parfait in hand walked upstairs and the couple in line wondered if they should get the salad or the sandwich. Sigma Gamma Phi sold raffle tickets at a pink booth to fundraise for breast cancer research. In those 10 minutes, McEwen came alive. A guy scrolled on his phone, sitting across from a girl working on homework on her laptop. Once the clock struck 11...silence. Everyone left. There were just the café workers and me.

Mason: 3/5

For the first few minutes, a couple of guys behind me bounced between conversations about the Sabres and classmates they all knew. Once the boys left, the noise left with them. It was quiet enough that you could hear the piano keys from down the hall. Even though the lounge area had more people, the café was louder than us. Students were glued to their devices, either working on assignments or decompressing in their seats on their phones.

FINAL RESULTS

So, yes, there is a difference. Obviously, you can tell which one is my favorite, and it's not just because I'm a communications major. McEwen Café is better in almost every aspect.

"How can two cafés, both owned by SUNY Fredonia, with similar employees and prices, be different? Better yet, how can you have a favorite?"

— **SARA LODESPOTO**

Student
SUNY Fredonia



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SPORTS

Blue Devils look ready after running with the Bulls

MATT VOLZ
Sports Editor

It's not too often that a Division III team squares up against a Division I squad.

It's even more of an anomaly when the Division III team makes it a game.

That's what happened at the University at Buffalo (UB) on Friday, Nov. 8, as Fredonia's men's basketball team nearly pulled off a stunning upset against the Buffalo Bulls.

In an early season matchup, and the first game of the season for the Blue Devils, the team came out hot early. Fredonia led by as much as 18 in the first half, jumping out to a 25-7 lead at one point.

Their offensive attack was led by two transfer students playing in their first game on the team, senior Brandon Kulakowski and junior Martin Garza.

Kulakowski put up a 23-point performance, while Garza added 19. Both had five 3-pointers in a game where Fredonia made nearly half of their shot attempts. That's certainly no small feat against an opponent that, on paper, is significantly stronger.

Unfortunately for Fredonia, the Bulls found their game down the stretch.

While the Blue Devils kept it close, much closer than anyone would have expected, it was Buffalo who emerged with an 87-78 win.

Part of the reason for UB's comeback was the fact that they were able to keep Kulakowski in check throughout the second

half. The senior guard scored 21 of his points in the first half, and he was kept to only two in the final 20 minutes.

Although it's a tough loss, the Blue Devils have plenty of reasons to hold their heads high.

First, this game was an exhibition matchup for Fredonia, so it won't count against their actual regular season record.

In fact, the exhibition only took place because of head coach Sean Smiley's connection to UB, where he played college basketball and briefly served as an assistant.

The true regular season didn't start until Wednesday, Nov. 13, in an 89-84 loss to Hilbert that featured another 20-point performance from Kulakowski.

Second, they managed to keep it this close against a team that theoretically should have wiped the floor with them.

Now, that's not to say the Blue Devils aren't a good team. But UB is a Division I program that can recruit athletes with things like scholarships, NIL (name, image and likeness) deals, national TV exposure and competition against top-tier opponents.

Remember, Fredonia doesn't have any of those same resources.

The sales pitch for schools like Fredonia has to focus on things like community and the ability to be part of a program for multiple years, developing skills on and off the court along the way.

It's important to remember the landscape of college sports is vastly different than it once was. Sure, the Division I schools were always at a much greater advantage because of their financial resources and scholarship offers. But that divide has gotten even steeper now. Because of relaxed transfer portal rules and the ability to compensate players through NIL agreements, there's even less of an incentive for a player to stay at a smaller school, or even go there in the first place.

Consider all this, and then remember how close this game was and how much Fredonia had the Bulls on their heels in the first half.

Most sports fans know that it's often irresponsible to judge a team based on one game, especially a game that doesn't count toward regular season standings or carry any kind of playoff implications.

But if the Blue Devils can be competitive against a Division I scholarship school, then it's reasonable to believe that they could find themselves at the top of the State University of New York Athletic Conference (SUNYAC).

"Most sports fans know that it's often irresponsible to judge a team based on one game, especially a game that doesn't count toward regular season standings or carry any kind of playoff implications."

— **MATT VOLZ**
Student
SUNY Fredonia

Leader Poll

What is your favorite song by your least favorite artist?

Enchanted (original version) by Taylor Swift: Mitch
Love Story by Taylor Swift: Drew & Abby J
Clean by Taylor Swift: Alex
_____ in Paris by Kanye West & Jay-Z because

I don't like Kanye West: Abbie M
Gold Digger by Kanye West: Matt
Always Remember Us by Lady Gaga: Giuliaanna
Say Don't Go by Taylor Swift: Becca

5th Quarter Column: Bad Blood renewed as Chiefs come to town

MITCHELL HORUCY
Asst. Sports Editor

A rivalry is described as a heated competition between athletes or teams that can affect the participants, management and supporters.

Over the past four seasons, the Bills and Chiefs have been the best example of this.

Before we get into their upcoming matchup, the Bills picked up a win over the Colts last Sunday with a final score of 30-20.

A win is a win, but this game was far from perfect for the visiting Bills team.

Quarterback Josh Allen played his first “reckless” game this season in my eyes. He had two bad interceptions, reminiscent of a younger Allen. However, he did enough to win the game, adding a rushing touchdown and distributing the ball very well.

The game ended with five players having 30+ receiving yards.

James Cook added another solid game to his season with 85 total yards and one touchdown.

The story of the game was Buffalo’s defense. Nickelback Taron Johnson returned an interception for a touchdown on the first offensive snap of the game for the Colts, further pushing his case for First-Team All-Pro.

The fun didn’t stop there, as the team combined for two more interceptions from safety Taylor Rapp and defensive tackle Austin Johnson.

Greg Rousseau added a strip sack that was recovered by Damar Hamlin.

Now onto the biggest game of the season, with Kansas City coming to Orchard Park.

As a fan of football, this game is almost everything you can ask for: huge playoff implications, two of the best players in the sport, a new chapter in a storied rivalry and an atmosphere that will put other NFL stadiums to shame.

With all that being said, this game does not make or break the Bills’ season.



Bills cornerback Taron Johnson (#7) intercepts a Colts pass on Sunday, Nov. 10.

Image property of the Buffalo Bills.

I’d even go as far as saying that unless either team gets blown out, this game won’t affect my outlook on the rest of the season that much, or even at all.

If the Bills lose, they continue their quest for the two-seed, which they have much better odds of than getting the one-seed.

If they win, they’d still need the Chiefs to drop a game and for the Bills to win out.

It will still be an amazing game, a game I predict will break viewership records for CBS.

Now, what will the Bills have to do to come away with a win and break the Chiefs’ nearly year-long winning streak?

The first thing they have to do is generate pressure with four pass rushers.

Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes has a higher passer rating (116.5) when facing five or more rushers than he does when he faces only four (109.0).

Chiefs starting left tackle Wanya Morris has been below average all season and has to be taken advantage of if you’re the

Continued onto next page



Bills safety Taylor Rapp (#9) tackles Colts receiver Alec Pierce (#14) on Sunday, Nov. 10.

Image property of the Buffalo Bills.

Bills.

Rousseau, who I've talked about in previous columns, needs to have a huge game. He's having the best year of his career with six sacks and 16 QB hits, a mark he ranks fifth in the league in.

Von Miller, who had a great start to the season before facing a four-game suspension, also needs to have a good game.

If the Bills can consistently bring four and generate pressure, while also being able to drop seven players back into coverage, that'd be a huge win for the home team.

As for the offense, they have a chance to take advantage of an unexpectedly average Kansas City defense. For a unit that has been elite for quite some time with Steve Spagnuolo at the helm, this year's KC defense has been far from what we're accustomed to seeing.

In both sacks and takeaways, the team ranks in the bottom 10 in the league.

However, they rank top 10 in both yards allowed per game and points per game.

It's a lot easier said than done, but if Allen can play turn-

over-free football like we've seen most of the season, I like the team's chances.

Another thing the Bills have to do is take advantage of their possessions.

The Chiefs are second in the league in time of possession at just about 33 minutes.

If the Chiefs shrink the game, it makes every possession for the Bills that much more important.

I think the game will go under the over/under of 46.5.

The loss of both Dalton Kincaid and Keon Coleman will be tough to overcome, but I think the Bills finally take down the Chiefs in Orchard Park.

PREDICTION: 23-19 Bills



Bills quarterback Josh Allen (#17).

Image property of the Buffalo Bills.



Bills running back James Cook (#4) scores a touchdown while quarterback Josh Allen (#17) celebrates on Sunday, Nov. 10.

Image property of the Buffalo Bills.

Early season struggles or same old Sabres?

MATT VOLZ
Sports Editor

Fourteen years is a long time.

That's how long it's been since the Sabres were a playoff team.

The head coach of that 2010-11 team was Lindy Ruff, who was fired in 2013 but brought back this past offseason.

Ruff is the winningest coach in franchise history, and the hope was that he would put this group of young players on the right track toward a return to the playoffs.

Through the first 15 games of this season, the Sabres are a .500 team, meddling at 8-8-1.

It's been a season of ups and downs, but it started with the downs as Buffalo won just one of their first six games. They followed that up with three straight wins, and then three straight losses.

However, since those three losses, the Sabres seem to have found some success, having won four of their last five outings. Because of that, I feel that Buffalo might be headed in the right direction, but I need to see more consistent results before I can make that judgment.

The overall story for the 2024-25 Sabres so far has been a lack of consistency.

They've had games where their offense has looked unstoppable, such as a 5-2 win over the defending Stanley Cup champion Florida Panthers on Oct. 12 and a 6-1 win over the New York Rangers on Nov. 7.

But they've also laid eggs at times, like when they blew multiple leads in an overtime loss in Pittsburgh on Oct. 16 or when goaltending was optional in a 7-5 loss to the Montreal Canadiens on Nov. 11.

As a result, it's tough to get an accurate read on them. Are they a group capable of going on a run, or are they bound to be in the league's basement again?

They've certainly had some bright spots to this point in the season.

Tage Thompson, a former All-Star forward, leads the team in goals and total points with 11 and 18, respectively. He is among the league leaders in goals scored through the first month and a half of the season.

Two of Buffalo's offseason acquisitions have also earned their contracts.

Jason Zucker, a middle-six winger who signed a one-year deal over the summer, has three goals and eight assists for 11 total points through 17 games. Zucker has been one of the team's biggest threats on a power play unit that otherwise hasn't produced very well.

The Sabres' power play ranks 22nd out of 32 teams, scoring on 17.3% of their opportunities. It's not great for Buffalo, but it's not awful when you remember that they started the season going 0-for-22 on the man advantage.

Zucker has scored two of Buffalo's nine power play goals this

season, and he's provided at least somewhat of a net-front presence that the Sabres desperately need.

Ryan McLeod, acquired in a July trade with the Edmonton Oilers, has been phenomenal in a middle-six center role. Speed and defensive ability are his two main assets, which have made him quite the threat on the penalty kill.

Buffalo's penalty kill unit is currently ranked 25th out of 32 teams, preventing opposing power plays from scoring at a 76.8% rate.

Some of the struggles on the penalty kill can be tied to Buffalo's aggressive nature when being a man down. It has paid off a few times, as the Sabres are currently tied for third in the league in shorthanded goals. But it also tends to put their young goaltenders in more difficult situations, which is not ideal for a team with two developing netminders in Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen and Devon Levi.

Luukkonen's stats this season have been mediocre if not slightly above average, with a .903 save percentage and a 2.83 goals-against average as of Friday, Nov. 15.

Levi, on the other hand, has struggled in limited action, posting an abysmal .870 save percentage and allowing nearly four goals per game.

Defensively, it's been a mixed bag for the Sabres.

Captain Rasmus Dahlin has played a bit below his standards, but below average by Dahlin's standards is still better than probably 75% of defensemen in the league, at least.

Owen Power, another former first overall pick on Buffalo's blue line, has been excellent so far this season. I would argue that Power has been the team's best player throughout the first 17 games.

A pair of defensemen, Connor Clifton and Jacob Bryson, are off to solid starts after being maligned for rough seasons in the past.

Clifton, playing in his second season of a three-year contract, has played top-four defensive minutes in some games and has been a stable presence on the blue line.

Bryson, a depth defenseman who has drawn the ire of fans for poor play in the past, returned from injury and has helped fill a void in November.

Despite solid play by some, Buffalo is also being let down by lackluster play from others.

Bowen Byram, a former fourth overall pick acquired in a trade with the Colorado Avalanche last season, has not lived up to expectations with the Sabres. Byram has contributed nicely on the offensive end, recording 11 points in 17 games, but he hasn't been great in the defensive zone, which is more of what the team needs.

Additionally, Mattias Samuelsson has not played up to par and is now dealing with yet another injury. The 24-year-old defenseman has missed significant time in each of the past two seasons, and he will now be out week-to-week with a lower-body injury.

Speaking of injuries, Thompson is also now out indefinitely

Continued onto next page

Continued from previous page

with an injury, which could be a major blow to the forward group.

The forwards, like the team overall, have been up and down. Although the Sabres have gotten great production from players like Thompson, Zucker, McLeod and J.J. Peterka, other key forwards haven't been quite as good.

Dylan Cozens, whom Buffalo is counting on to fill the void left by Thompson's injury, hasn't been close to what they've needed from him. I don't want to be too critical of Cozens, as he has gotten better in recent games, but 7 points in 17 games isn't going to cut it for a supposed offensive weapon who's being paid \$7.1 million per year.

His linemate, Jack Quinn, has also yielded disappointing results. Quinn has played in all but one game, and he only has one goal and five points to show for it.

If the Sabres want a chance at making the playoffs, they're going to need their top players to play like top players. That was an issue last season, as scoring for Buffalo's top forwards fell off a cliff, which was one of the reasons former coach Don Granato was fired.

There are rumors that Buffalo could be in the market for a substantial mid-season trade, but I'll believe that when I see it.

Aside from the Byram trade, General Manager Kevyn Adams has shown a reluctance to make any major moves during the season.

Adams received criticism this offseason for not doing more to improve scoring, and I agree with some of that. I'll give Adams credit where credit is due. Signing Zucker and trading for McLeod are two moves that have worked out well so far.

But, I get the feeling that more pieces need to be added to the puzzle.

Instead of banking on unproven players within the system, I feel that the Sabres should be going out and trying to add another offensive threat, especially now that their top scorer may

be out for a little while.

I fear that if Adams chooses to sit on his hands and do nothing to improve the team, Sabres fans may once again be sitting at home watching the playoffs, wondering what might have been.



Graphic by ISABELLA RIZZO | Art Director

Leader Poll

If you had to choose another member of The Leader's staff to be stranded on a deserted island with, who would you choose and why?

Abbie M (my love): Abby J

Abby J (I love her): Abbie M

Matt because I think he'd do well under pressure, stay calm and have some survival skills under his belt: Drew

Megan because if I am going to be stranded, I would at least want comedic relief: Alex

Dan Q as my funny answer and Megan as my serious answer because she has skills from watching Survivor and if we don't make it we'd at least laugh: Matt
Matt because we would both freak out to start, then laugh about it, then get things done and get the heck off the island: Becca

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Who's the best: MJ or LeBron?

I say MJ

MATT VOLZ

Sports Editor

In today's National Basketball Association (NBA) world, LeBron James is often heralded as the greatest basketball player to ever step onto the court.

I mean, if your nickname is "King James," there's probably a good reason for that.

I agree with saying that LeBron is one of the best players ever, and I don't think there's too much argument with that.

However, I do not agree that he is the single greatest player ever. In my opinion, that title should go to Michael Jordan.

Sure, LeBron has the all-time NBA scoring record and has passed Jordan in some other categories.

But it's important to remember the context of their career stats.

First of all, LeBron is currently in the 22nd season of his career. Jordan retired after his 15th season.

In that time, Jordan averaged 30.1 points per game in the regular season, while LeBron is currently around 27.1 points per game.

It's safe to assume that if Jordan had played for 22 seasons, he would have the scoring title instead.

In fact, Jordan won 10 scoring titles over the course of his career, leading the NBA in offense while competing with Hall of Fame scorers like Patrick Ewing, Karl Malone, Hakeem Olajuwon and others. LeBron has only won one scoring title in his entire career, although he faced some stiff competition as well.

But Jordan wasn't all offense. He was also a significantly better defender than LeBron has been.

Jordan was named to the NBA's All-Defensive First Team nine times in his career. He also took home the Defensive Player of the Year award for the 1987-88 season, and many fans

argue that he should have received the award more than just once.

That argument isn't heard too much about LeBron, who has only been named to the All-Defensive First Team five times and has never been named the best defensive player in the NBA.

Jordan also displayed an ability to grow his brand off the court better than LeBron has been able to.

Through his deal with Nike, Jordan elevated his presence to the point where he was not only the best basketball player in the world, but he was also quite possibly the most recognizable athlete in the world, too.

Jordan's line of Nike basketball shoes, called "Air Jordans," are probably the most prominent basketball shoes of all time.

In 2020, ESPN ranked the top 74 sneakers in NBA history. Two different types of Air Jordans were voted number one and number two, and five sets of Air Jordans were in the top 20.

LeBron's highest-ranked shoes came in 22nd.

Jordan was also featured in several high-profile commercials, most notably Nike's "Like Mike" campaign that encouraged kids to want to be just like Jordan.

Finally, my biggest argument for why Jordan is the greatest above LeBron is playoff performance.

In order to be the true G.O.A.T. (greatest of all time), a player needs to elevate their performance on the biggest stages.

There's no player that embodied that more than Jordan.

He had a knack for coming up big in the most important moments. For example, he hit two different shots to clinch playoff series over the course of his career. He knocked down a buzzer-beater to eliminate the Cleveland Cavaliers in the first round of the 1989 playoffs, and he hit the winning shot in the 1998 Finals against the Utah Jazz.

Jordan also averaged 33.4 points per game in his playoff career, an NBA record and a significantly higher mark than LeBron's playoff average of 28.4 points per game.

Jordan took his Chicago Bulls to the NBA Finals three straight times from 1991-93, winning each time and taking home Finals MVP each time.

After a two-year absence from the game when Jordan tried his hand at baseball, he and the Bulls picked up right where they left off.

From 1996-98, the team again went to the NBA Finals three straight times. Again, the Bulls won all three times, and yet again, Jordan was named Finals MVP each time.

LeBron has been to the NBA Finals 10 times in his career.

He has lost more times than he's won, with four wins and six losses.

Now, I want to make it clear that wins are a team stat, not an individual one. But the ability to lead your team to the promised land, no matter who you play for or who you're up against, is what can make a great player the greatest of all time.

That's exactly what Michael Jordan did.



Photo via economist.com.

Who's the best: MJ or LeBron?

I say LeBron

MITCHELL HORUCY

Asst. Sports Editor

When it comes to the G.O.A.T. of basketball, there's one clear answer: LeBron Raymone James Sr.

In almost every aspect of the game, he's one of, if not the best of all time.

Getting right into it, here are some head-to-head stat comparisons between the two.

LeBron currently leads Jordan in the following per-game stats:

Rebounds

Assists

Blocks are tied

Field goal percentage

3-point field goal percentage

Jordan leads LeBron in points-per-game by about three points, but LeBron was never labeled as a "dominant scorer," even dating back to his high school and early NBA days.

Some accolades LeBron has over Jordan are First-Team All-NBA, All-NBA appearances and All-Star appearances.

Jordan has him beat in All-Defensive team appearances, but only by one.

He also has a lone Defensive Player of the Year award, something LeBron doesn't have, even though LeBron should have one for his 2012-2013 season, but I digress.

A stat that LeBron blows most people out of the water in — even Jordan — is triple-doubles.

This is when you record 10 or more of three different stats.

For example, 10 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists is the most common way to record one.

In Jordan's career, he recorded a total of 28 triple-doubles, and LeBron is at 116 and counting.

The biggest talking point Jordan truthers use is Jordan's 6-0 NBA Finals record.

LeBron does have a losing record in the finals at 4-6, but that's four more times than Jordan made it.

Jordan didn't make his first finals until his seventh season in the league, while LeBron reached the finals in his third year.

While it took Jordan two fewer years to hoist the Larry O'Brien Trophy, LeBron was still a year younger than Jordan when he finally got his hands on one.

Another argument frequently used is that LeBron played with more All-Stars in his career, which is true by definition, but it doesn't tell the whole story.

Let's take the 2009-10 and 2010-11 Cleveland Cavaliers and use them as an example. In the last season LeBron played there, 2009-10, the team went 61-21, finishing first in the Eastern Conference. The following year, in their first season post-LeBron, they went 19-63, good for last in the East.

Now we travel to South Beach and the Miami Heat,

LeBron's second stop in his career. In the 2013-14 season, the team went 54-28, losing in the NBA Finals. The next season, they went 37-45 and missed the playoffs, but guess who wasn't on the team: LeBron James.

One more time for good measure: LeBron went back to Cleveland to bring the city a championship. He did so by having the best comeback in NBA history and a top-five comeback in sports history, but I digress. In his last season in Cleveland, the Cavs went 50-32, losing in the finals. The next season, they went 19-63, good for second last in the East.

Now, let's switch our focus to Jordan — surely the numbers will be similar.

After winning three straight championships, Jordan had to "step away" from the NBA, which basically was a suspension for gambling, but I won't get into that. In his season away, his team went 55-27, losing in a seven-game series to the eventual runner-up New York Knicks.

I'll close up my argument with one word: consistency.

LeBron has played 22 seasons in the NBA, and he's played 87% of the games he could've played since he entered the league.

He hasn't had less than 10 points in an NBA game since January 5, 2007.

I was 2 years old at that time.

I'm now a junior in college.

At age 40, soon to be 41, he's the best basketball player to ever live, and it will be that way for a long time.

S.

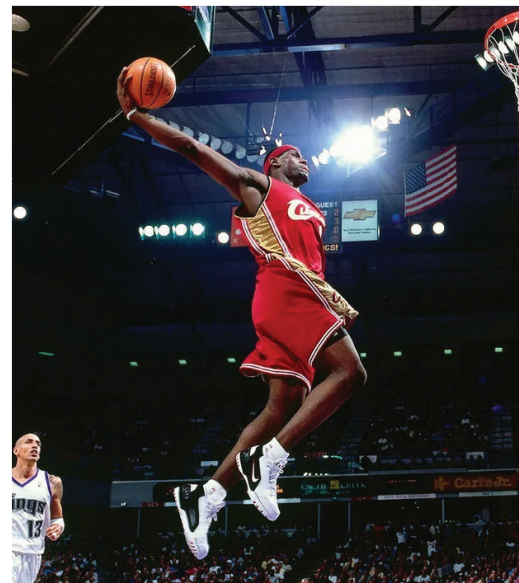


Photo via economist.com.

Apple Music vs. Spotify coming from a person who has both

ALEX BUCKNAM
Asst. News Editor

I have the wonderful privilege, as a broke college student, to say that I have both Spotify Premium and Apple Music, thanks to my father, who still pays for my Spotify!

But when it comes to which one I think is better, I would have to hand the trophy to Apple Music.

Before you try to cancel me, let me explain!

I still love Spotify and I consider it my first love. Spotify was my first music streaming platform, so I was naturally on team Spotify up until recently. Here's the story of why I suddenly switched streaming services.

I switched to Apple Music in March 2024, when I got a notification saying I could get three months for free. My boyfriend had been pushing me to get Apple Music ever since we started dating. He told me that I "need to get Apple Music so we can make a shared playlist together."

So to make him stop whining that I didn't have it, I caved in and started the free trial.

For the first two months, I was very hesitant about Apple Music. I couldn't understand the layout and I was having a lot of trouble navigating the app. This is something I have never experienced with Spotify and is one of the reasons I have heard in regards to why people think that Spotify is better.

But as the three-month trial came to an end, I was told I could get a student discount, which includes Apple Podcast and Apple TV. I still haven't used Apple Podcast or Apple TV, but at the time I thought I would. I ended up getting the discount, and I'm still paying \$5.99 per month today.

So that's the story, now back to why I think it is better.

Apple Music has a library section called "genres" (something Spotify does not have) which will sort all your favorite songs

and albums into what genre they are listed as. According to the Apple Support Team, this helps their algorithm to recommend songs or other artists/bands you might like based on what genre you are currently listening to.

I have had issues with Spotify recommending songs and artists that sound nothing like the songs I listen to, which has made it difficult for me to find more artists I would love.

For example, I added a song from the punk rock band Pierce the Veil (PTV) to my playlist and then Spotify recommended early 2000s indie songs that sounded nothing like PTV.

Apple Music also has a lot more sections in your library that Spotify doesn't have — like composers; this allows you to find who is writing the songs that you are listening to and lets you check out their other work, TV and movies so you can watch their music documentaries and music videos.

Another reason I think Apple Music is better is because it sounds cleaner and smoother through headphones. According to a CNN Underscore article, this is because Apple adds things in for iOS users to get better-sounding audio.

The last reason I have to go with Apple Music is based on how much they pay their artist per stream. According to Sugo Music, Apple Music pays their artists one cent per stream. You may be thinking, "One whole cent, there is no way Spotify can pay less than that," but you would be wrong. According to Printify, Spotify pays their artists at most \$0.005, which is half of a penny!

This may be "no big deal" to well-known artists who are already famous and get money from brand deals or social media posts, but it is significant for lesser-known artists who are on the rise, like the band Fwango who is on both Spotify and Apple Music.

To show you how little \$0.005 is, we can look at how much Fwango gets paid.

Leader Poll

Do you agree with Alex that Apple music is better than Spotify?

Yes: 2

Alex & Mitch

No: 8

Drew, Becca, Amarah, Abbie M, Giulianna, Matt, Abby J, & Dan

Leader Poll

What is the least amount of money you would accept in order to willingly go onto the boat involved in the Dave Matthews Band Chicago River incident?

\$10k on a bad day: Abbie M

\$50,000: Mitch

\$130,000: Alex

\$200k: Matt

No amount of money would get me on that boat: Becca

At first, \$0 no exceptions, but then I realized I was confused and now I've decided no amount of money would make me get on that boat: Abby J

\$100k: Dan

Fwango has roughly 59,000 monthly listeners on Spotify, meaning they would receive \$295 a month from Spotify for their streams.

Apple Music doesn't list out the total monthly listeners for every artist/band, so I can't tell you how many listeners Fwango has and how much they are getting paid, but if they have the same monthly listeners as they do on Spotify, they would receive \$590 a month from Apple Music. This is double what they make on Spotify.

Now I do give Spotify the upper hand here, I love Spotify Wrapped! Sadly, I haven't used Spotify much this year, so mine isn't going to show my exact listening data, which I'm very sad about.

Apple Music does have something similar to this called Apple Music Replay, but they lack cool facts like "Your music taste is like a vampire" (which is something I got in my 2023 Spotify Wrapped).

As much as I love Spotify Wrapped, I don't think I will be switching back to Spotify any time soon. I like having a shared playlist with my boyfriend and there is no way that he is switching over to Spotify.

"According to Sugo Music, Apple Music pays their artists one cent per stream ... According to Printify, Spotify pays their artists at most \$0.005."

— **ALEX BUCKNAM**

Student
SUNY Fredonia



Graphic by ISABELLA RIZZO | Art Director

The fight for change: Women's voices on the 2024 election outcome

AMARAH GHORI

Asst. Opinion Editor & DEI Chair

The results of this election have left many people across the country feeling fearful and uncertain about their future.

Although the uncertainty is there for many people, specifically women and people of color are having to grapple with this profound sense of uneasiness.

For many of us, the results signify broader challenges that we are facing.

These setbacks are due to the lack of equality and compassion shown towards women in this country.

Amid these challenges, we are finding that there is a shared commitment to resilience and a drive to fight for reforms.

Within the past year, talks of Project 2025 coming into fruition under the presidency of Donald Trump have been daunting for many.

Project 2025 is an initiative made to impose many harmful changes in our society. Some of the most notable changes include killing the Department of Education, imposing a national abortion ban, revising immigration policies and criminalizing gender-affirming care.

In the past week, Trump has begun appointing different heads of specific departments and many of these people have openly endorsed or contributed to Project 2025 in the past.

I, myself, am a first-generation American. My mom is from Jamaica and my dad is from Pakistan. Although they are citizens, I have felt such immense anxiety this past week when continuing to hear about Trump's plans to revoke birthright citizenship.

On top of that, he wants to revoke citizenship altogether for a lot of immigrants, even if they are here "legally." It leaves a lot up in the air.

Am I going to lose my citizenship even though I was born here? Will I have to worry about my parents, who, even though they are citizens, might still be at risk?

My parents have been married for almost 25 years and with that comes my fear of them being separated in these deportation plans under Trump.

I am not alone in these fears. Arnulfa Garcia, a first-year graduate student at SUNY Fredonia — and a first-generation American like me — has experienced her own fears surrounding immigration and citizenship policies.

"I am one of six daughters born here as the product of two immigrants," Garcia says. "The fact that our citizenship could be up for debate is crazy. My family and I have worked so hard to get where we are, and the idea that these achievements might be questioned strikes a genuine fear in my heart."

Garcia's fears about this election carry over to her fears over bodily autonomy and women's healthcare rights, which she feels are being dangerously politicized. "Never in my life would I have thought that I might be denied healthcare simply because I am a woman and because it's banned in my state," she

says.

This concern mirrors the concerns of many women facing restrictions on their reproductive rights.

The effects of these restrictions are "real and present," Garcia says, where many lives can be at stake and where we will end up having fewer rights than the generations before us.

Gabrielle Sordetto, a senior at Fredonia and a member of the LGBTQ+ community, shares similar fears about her rights as a woman, specifically in terms of reproductive choice.

"With *Roe v. Wade* already overturned, I worry about what comes next," she says. "What else will be stripped away? The constant fear of women being controlled is terrifying, and it's something I wish we didn't have to think about at all."

For Sordetto, the results of this election feel like a step backward, especially concerning gender equality.

Her experiences reflect the frustration and distress of many other women in this country as we watch the rights we thought were secure become threatened.

Clara Venturo, another senior at Fredonia, has experienced personal disappointment.

Venturo, coming from a Republican background, has developed her own opinions since coming to college and being exposed to different perspectives. These new perspectives have led her to feel strongly about women's rights and politics as a whole.

"It's disheartening to see a known sexual assaulter voted into office," Venturo says. "As someone who's experienced sexual assault, it's disappointing that this wasn't a dealbreaker for so many Americans. This shows a lack of respect for women that, I fear, could set us back significantly."

Venturo's concerns reach beyond just reproductive rights. She expresses her concerns about the implications of electing a person into office who has openly disrespected women and other marginalized groups.

She worries that "the men and boys growing up in this country will look to our president's actions as an example." These attitudes could harm women's progress toward equality and ultimately create more barriers for women in different work and professional settings.

Despite these challenges we are all facing with the outcome of this election, we must unite to make our voices heard and to protect our rights.

Sordetto believes the threats we are facing can motivate women to fight harder for progress. "We have come such a long way, fighting for our rights and what we deserve," she says. "This election may feel like a step back, but I hope it will make women stronger and more determined to take a stand."

We need to stand in solidarity and fight together because we are all fighting the same battle and experiencing the same struggle. It's a struggle that is collective across generations and many different backgrounds.

Similarly, Garcia emphasizes the importance of compassion and unity.

"We must band together and support each other, even if we don't always agree," she says. "We need to think about how this impacts not only ourselves but also our friends, our sisters and all the women out there who may live different lives than we do."

Garcia's message highlights the significance of advocacy, as we all must come together and empathize with each other and our diverse experiences.

For Venturo, the outcome has helped her hone in on her commitment to educating future generations. As she is pursuing her degree in education, she sees this election as an opportunity to teach open-mindedness to her future students.

"I'm hopeful for the day we not only see a woman in office but when women are fully respected as equals," she says.

She also plans to encourage her students to engage in critical discussions to foster an environment rooted in equality.

These are the changes we need to implement in our lives. As we look toward the future, all we can do is have hope in ourselves and be committed to fighting for equality.

Garcia urges women to stay grounded in empathy: "Think about each other; think about what we all stand to lose if we stop fighting now. We're all in this together, even if our stories are different."

Sordetto encourages resilience: "Don't let fear stop you. Let

it push you to be even stronger. We've come a long way, and we're not giving up now."

And Venturo, someone who hopes to inspire young people, says, "We're paving the way for future generations, for a society that values women equally. We need to hold onto that vision, to keep moving forward, no matter how hard it gets."

"This election may feel like a step back, but I hope it will make women stronger and more determined to take a stand."

— **GABRIELLE SORDETTO**

Student
SUNY Fredonia

Leader Poll

Before you get married, should you live with your significant other?

Yes: 9

Mitch, Becca, Drew, Alex, Amarah, Abbie M, Matt, Abby J, & Dan

No: 0

Lovercolumn: Navigating Breakups

THE QUARTERBACK

Executive Producer of Lovercall

THE MUSICIAN

Lovercall Producer

RADIO REBEL

Lovercall Producer

Hello!

We are The Quarterback, The Musician and Radio Rebel: producers and hosts of the radio show Lovercall, right here at Fredonia. Lovercall is an anonymous late-night talk show about love, relationships and more. Students who are guests on the

show use codenames to protect their identities when discussing potentially personal topics, hence the codenames of the writers of this column. This is your reminder that none of the hosts or guests are professionals, and everything stated is based on personal experiences.

"The Quarterback" is a 20-year-old cisgender man who uses he/him pronouns and is a junior at Fredonia.

"The Musician" is a 22-year-old gender-fluid person who uses they/she pronouns and is a senior at Fredonia.

"Radio Rebel" is a 21-year-old transgender man who uses he/him pronouns and is a senior at Fredonia.

On each episode, the hosts and guests of Lovercall participate in a variety of segments. The cast discusses a relevant news story, a date idea, a wacky game and a main topic for the

Continued onto next page

episode.

Listeners can submit their questions or seek advice either via Fredonia Radio's Instagram, @fredonia_radio, on YikYak or through the QR code provided in this column.

We answer your questions live on the radio, then add them to this column in case you missed the episode.

The show will broadcast weekly throughout the semester on Wednesday nights from 10 p.m. to 12 a.m. on WDWL 89.5 on www.fredoniaradio.com.

This column runs in conjunction with Lovercall and can be found in print and online at fredonialeader.org.

Date idea of the week

We hope to provide fellow students with a fun and unique date idea in every episode. These date ideas aren't just for romantic partners — you could go with your friends, classmates, or can even go solo for a fun activity in Fredonia.

For this week's date idea, we're keeping it simple and going bowling!

Bowling is something that you don't have to be good at to enjoy. Sometimes, it's actually more fun if you and your partner are both terrible bowlers.

Or, maybe you both need to use the bumpers — The Quarterback certainly does.

It's also something to do indoors, which is important as we turn towards the colder months.

But the best part of this date idea is how well it ties into our main topic.

After a breakup, many people have a hard time getting up and going anywhere as they struggle to find their happiness again.

Going bowling with friends is a simple activity that can help someone take their mind off the breakup and just enjoy some quality time with those closest to them.

And hey, if the breakup was a rough one, maybe you imagine the pins as your ex as they get knocked down... the Lovercall crew won't judge you!

Navigating Breakups

Typically on Lovercall, we discuss topics related to building positive relationships and how to maintain them.

But what happens when those relationships come to an end?

It can be tough to talk about, but breakups are a fact of life and it's important to know how to properly deal with them.

No matter how the relationship might have ended, there are ways to cope with it in a positive way and emerge stronger on the other side.

Verywell Mind, a website dedicated to providing mental health guidance, published an article detailing the seven stages of a breakup.

Each stage comes along with various thoughts or behaviors that someone may exhibit, and the article also provides coping strategies to help get through the stages.

The first stage is called ambivalence, where someone might be wondering if ending the relationship was the right decision.

You might also experience some mixed emotions in this stage. You may be relieved that the stress associated with the relationship is over, but you may also be hurting and miss your ex.

The most important coping strategy with ambivalence is allowing yourself to heal. Sure, feeling all these things is not fun, but they're things you need to feel in order to eventually get better.

If you're really questioning the decision to end the relationship, you could also make a pros and cons list of reasons why or why not to be with the person.

The second stage is denial or shock, and you may try to avoid confronting these difficult emotions in this stage as well.

People experiencing denial or shock may also try to hide the breakup from others, or they may try to stay in close communication with their ex in order to maintain a feeling of closeness.

Once again, it's important to confront all of these emotions and let yourself feel all of it.

It's also crucial to lean on those you depend on the most, whether that's a friend, a parent, a sibling or whomever else. These are the people who are in your corner, and they can lift you up when you are missing the strength to lift yourself up.

Additionally, try to limit contact between you and your ex. You may be able to re-establish a friendship later down the line, but you both need to be given time to heal in the immediate aftermath of a breakup.

The third stage is anger or resentment, and this is what the artists of angry breakup songs are singing about.

You might be arguing with your ex about the breakup, or you might even take the step to physically destroy any artifacts from the relationship.

In this stage, forgiveness is extremely important. Not only is it important to forgive them, it's also important (and maybe even more important) to forgive yourself for any mistakes you've made or anything else you might be upset with yourself for.

Obviously, there may be things you can't forgive them for. However much you choose to forgive them is up to you.

The next stage is bargaining, where you might be pleading with your ex to give the relationship another try or considering other ways to stay close to them.

Again, this is a completely natural thing to feel, but try not to romanticize the relationship too much. Remember that, despite all the good memories, there's a reason why you broke up.

The next stage is the stage most associated with a separation: sadness or depression.

You might find yourself crying a lot, but beyond that, you may also experience a sense of hopelessness and it may cause you to isolate yourself from social situations.

As is the case with each of the other stages, you need to allow yourself to feel all of it, and it's important to lean on those closest to you for support.

When you're feeling down, it's also helpful to try to redirect those thoughts. For example, instead of believing that you'll never find love again, understand that this relationship will help you to learn and move forward.



This brings us to the next stage, which is the stage of acceptance and healing.

This is when you start to let go of the relationship and establish a sense of closure, and it's also where we shift from coping strategies to healing strategies.

The main healing strategy here is to be grateful for the relationship — grateful for both the good memories and the lessons you learned from the hard times.

The Quarterback's mom says that you learn something from each relationship you're in, and she's absolutely right.

The final stage is one that signifies growth, as you've now successfully rebuilt yourself and can move on.

This might mean moving on to a new relationship, or it might not. You might choose to spend even more time with yourself even though you've healed and moved on.

The biggest piece of advice we can give you through all of this is to be gentle with yourself. It's OK to be having a hard time with this — nobody can rationally expect you to be perfectly fine when you're going through a breakup.

Remember that these stages are not linear, either. Not only can you bounce back and forth between stages, but you can also be in multiple different stages at once.

Always keep in mind that your own personal healing and growth are your biggest priority when going through a breakup.

And if you ever feel like you can't get through it, the Lovercall crew will always have your back.

Lovercall Calling...

Every week on Lovercall we answer your questions anonymously — all about love, relationships and more. Here's another reminder that none of the hosts are professionally trained, but we are college students living through the same experiences you are.

This week a Lovercaller asked, "More of a self-love question, but I've had a lot of traumatic things happen in the past year and I've started to hate myself again. My partner of four years and I also split within [this] year and I have felt absolutely heartbroken. I went through a very rough and depressing patch. I've been working through that, but I've been hung up on loving myself. How do I start to do [that] again?"

Loving yourself takes a lot of time and patience. There is not a quick solution and it certainly isn't linear.

There are many things you could do. First, Lovercall hosts recommend maybe going to therapy, or getting help from a more knowledgeable source than just Lovercall, considering it is a more serious matter. However, Lovercall hosts and guests recommended a few things that could help.

Try to find reasons to love yourself, whether that would be manifestations, picking up new hobbies, spending time with people that love you for who you are or spending time doing something you enjoy.

With self-love, it's very important to take time for yourself and listen to your mind and body when you might need a break.

With breakups, it will hurt, and it will suck. We as hosts are not sugarcoating that.

However, it's also a great learning experience to know what works and doesn't work for yourself in relationships. It's a step closer to understanding what needs of yours (and the other person) are and aren't being met. It also gives insight on what is important to you, and what isn't.

Use this as an advantage, to take those pieces of learned information to build yourself higher.

If you did something wrong in the relationship, how can you improve yourself to make the outcome better for relationships in the future? If you did something right in the relationship, reflect how that had a positive impact and see if you can con-



tinue with the positive pieces outside of relationships and in your own life.

Many times, when relationships end, they do not start again. Though it is important to reflect on that and mourn the relationship, at the same time, remind yourself that the end of the relationship is not a stopping point for yourself and relationships in general.

You will be able to move on, you will be able to learn and heal and you will be able to grow — it just takes time.

Reach out! Do you want to ask the authors of Lovercolumn a question? Do you need advice? Fill out the form by using this QR code.

Interested in being a guest on Lovercall? Email wdrvlonair@gmail.com or visit Fredonia Radio Systems, located in McEwen Hall 115 and open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

“The Quarterback,” “The Musician” and “Radio Rebel” are members of Fredonia Radio Systems and are involved in the production of Lovercall.

Abbie's Thanksgiving food tier list

ABBIE MILLER

Editor-in-Chief, Thanksgiving Food Connoisseur

S-Tier Items

Mac and cheese: Look at that picture and tell me your mouth didn't just start watering. That's right — you can't. This may be a hot take, but I firmly believe that mac and cheese belongs on everyone's Thanksgiving Day platter. It pairs well with every traditional Thanksgiving meal item, it can add some sauce to an otherwise dry turkey or stuffing, and you can even customize it for your audience. Enjoy bread-crumbs? Add some on top. Lactose intolerant? Use a non-dairy sauce. The variations are endless, and every one of them is delicious.

Stuffing: They don't call it "stuffing" for nothing. I'm stuffing my face with this. Once again, the options of what you choose to add and leave out make this dish versatile. For vegetarian diners, you can leave out the sausage and replace it with celery. For eaters with the time and money, you can add those fancy rosemary leaves to the top. For the rest of us, you can serve it however you want, because it is guaranteed to come out fantastic either way.

Rolls: Whether Hawaiian rolls or Pillsbury crescents, there is simply no way to go wrong here. Not even the crumbs that have accumulated at the bottom of the roll basket from years prior can dissuade me from including one of these on my plate. They can be used as an appetizer to prepare your guests for the meal ahead, a mid-meal appetite cleanser before moving on to the next item or a plate filler if you discover that all of your other choices are subpar.

A-Tier Items

Mashed potatoes: For me, mashed potatoes were a toss-up between S-tier and A-tier. However, their rightful place is in A-tier. They are a classic Thanksgiving meal item. They are also usually depended upon to be good no matter how inexperienced the chefs preparing them are. It is really hard to make mashed potatoes taste bad, so these are always a safe plate-filler. That being said, they are definitely not the star of the show in terms of tastiness and value.

Turkey: Turkey belongs in A-tier because while it is also a classic Thanksgiving dinner centerpiece, there is always the threat of a dry turkey. Even if the turkey is dry though, this is far from my biggest concern when it comes to this dish. The possibility of an inexperienced carver raises the stakes substantially, as nobody wants to take a big bite into what they hope will be delicious meat and instead be met with bits of gristle. Many times, a turkey is only as good as its carver.

Apple pie: I know that this may be a hot take, but I like apple pie better than pumpkin or pecan pie. With ice cream and whipped cream, apple pie belongs in S-tier, but in its minimalist form, apple pie is an A-tier item. There is something special

about that certain blend of cinnamon and the thickened juices from the apples that sets this dessert apart from its pumpkin and pecan counterparts. If I enter Thanksgiving dinner knowing that apple pie will be served at the end of it, I am always saving stomach space.

B-Tier Items

Sweet potato casserole: Sweet potato casserole is B-tier for me because when it's good, it's REALLY good, but when it's bad, it's REALLY bad. In my experience, there is a very fine line between a good sweet potato casserole and one that'll end up in the trash when nobody's looking. Sweet potato casseroles are also quite hard to come by, which means that when you are able to get it, you need to load up your plate while you can. It may be a gamble, but 100% of gamblers quit before they win big.

Pumpkin pie: The B-tier was made for pumpkin pie. To me, I only really enjoy pumpkin pie if I'm in a certain kind of mood. If it's the only available dessert, I'll eat it, but if my options are between this and an apple pie, I will always choose the apple pie. However, the warmth of the pumpkin, especially if juxtaposed with some cold vanilla ice cream on top, allows you to get one last experience of the fall season before winter rears its head, and I appreciate that.

Deviled eggs: Abby, the News Editor, told me to add this to my list. Abby, I hear you, but I have to admit that I have never in my life been to a Thanksgiving dinner where deviled eggs were served. I really like deviled eggs, so I would be more than happy to welcome them into our Thanksgiving spread this year, though. Lightweight if done correctly, this item may even serve as a nice appetizer to get your diners' pallets ready for the full meal.

C-Tier Items

Green bean casserole: With the crispy fried onions on top, this is B-tier. Without the crispy fried onions, green bean casserole belongs in C-tier. It takes a decent amount of skill and expertise to be able to pull off a good green bean casserole. This is also something that is not necessarily present in every Thanksgiving Day meal. Green bean casserole is one of those things that you may not notice when it's gone, but you'll definitely notice when it's there.

Pecan pie: Full transparency, I have never actually had a pecan pie. Not that I can remember anyway, which is sort of a testament to the limited power that this dessert item holds. Pecan pie belongs in C-tier because it is not really notable in any substantial way. I won't save stomach room for it, but I may try a bite off of my mother's plate. Pecan pie does deserve some kudos though because on the whole, I usually am not a fan of nuts in my desserts, but I can see it working out for this item.



Graphic created via tiermaker.com

Gravy: Gravy belongs in C-tier. Similarly to sweet potato casserole, when gravy is bad, it is VERY bad. Where gravy differs from sweet potato casserole is the fact that when gravy is good, it's just decent. Gravy is a tool that is very valuable to have in your arsenal as a Thanksgiving dinner connoisseur like me. It can improve dry stuffing or turkey by significant measures, but it is also not necessary with every Thanksgiving meal, in my opinion.

D-Tier Items

Cranberry sauce: Now hear me out, y'all. I know that my sister is already shaking her head at me, but what can I say? I don't like cranberries. I never have, and I probably never will. As a 21-year-old who has recently discovered the joys of the vodka cran, I fear I can only find excitement from cranberries in that form. For now, the cranberry sauce can stay in the can that it's molded in the shape of.

Corn: Almost everyone I know would be disappointed at whoever makes the decision to include this on their Thanksgiving Day menu. Unless you're my grandpa who loves corn so much that he has eaten 12 ears in one sitting, you can expect leftovers of this item for weeks to come. A stomach space filler that probably won't taste as good as half of the other dishes available, I would only put this on my plate in desperate situations.

F-Tier Items

Ham: Guys. What're we doing? Turkey is almost as known for Thanksgiving as Thanksgiving is known for turkey. Why are you adding ham to the equation? There's a huge bone right in the middle of it, the flavor does not incorporate as

well with the tastes of all of the other dishes and to top it all off, you are bound to disappoint someone. Maybe that someone will be me, or maybe it will be an innocent bystander who attended your Thanksgiving dinner because they assumed that you'd serve turkey like every normal person does. Either way, your audience will not be pleased with this meal choice.

Salad: If you EVER catch someone who looks like me putting salad on their plate at Thanksgiving dinner, it is not me. You have the wrong person. You mean to tell me that people actually decide to eat something that's healthy on the one day of the year when you're supposed to fill your gut with as much butter, fat, meat and bread as possible? Absolutely not. The only vegetable I will consume with my Thanksgiving meal is the green beans in the green bean casserole.

THE SCALLION



Satire and parody for Fredonia

I hate Kia Souls

MEGAN KIDBY
Scallion Editor

No, I do not want to see ya in a Kia.

In fact, I do not want to see these cars parked, on the road, in a driveway or even in a demolition derby. I want to see the Soul in hell where it belongs.

If I go to that dreaded place, I will most likely be seeing two things: a Kia Soul and an apparition of my old front ensemble instructor from my high school marching band who will ask me to play a piece I don't remember how to play over and over again.

Mr. Flahavan will actually go to heaven because he is the sweetest man I have ever known and he taught me so much and helped me through my darkest times, but there will be an evil clone of him standing over me asking me to play my old part from *The Witching Hour*.

Anyways, enough of my marching band rambling.

You're probably asking yourself why I'm speaking out now. Well I'll tell you.

I went on a trip to New Orleans a couple weeks ago with Leader members Amarah, Matt and our adviser Elmer. Before Elmer's lovely wife drove us to the airport, I was talking to Amarah and Matt about how I was super happy we were not taking Elmer's Soul because I have a disdain for the car. I also tell them about my pride in the fact that I have never ridden in a Soul in my life.

We get on our flights and make it to the New Orleans airport and I volunteer to order an Uber because I'm nice and we needed to get to the hotel. We grab our luggage and as we're walking to the pickup area, I check to see the car we're waiting for. As I look at the make and model, my breath hitches and I stop in my tracks.

It's a bright green Kia Soul.

As it pulls up, we realize we can't even fit all of our luggage into that stupid tiny car so some of us would have to hold our luggage with us. I would rather have watched paint dry in real time than get into that car while holding my suitcase, but for the sake of my friends (yes, even Elmer is a friend), I barely fit in the car and we were on our way.

My Soul hatred sadly does not run in the family. My sister is a Kia Soul lover and it has caused a rift in our relationship. Every time we see a Soul on the road, she HAS to point it out to me and I will then make fun of it, much to her chagrin. She will

then tell me that the Kia Soul is a good-looking car and that she would get the car if it wasn't so easy to break into.

AND THERE'S ANOTHER PROBLEM!

This car is so easy to hijack and break into. If your company made a car that had a TikTok trend going around where people hijacked your cars and drove them recklessly, maybe it's time to recall the car or at least fix the problem. Also, to the people who named the kids participating in this "trend" the Kia Boys, you missed a brilliant opportunity to name them the Kia Hamsters.

That's right, not only did the Kia plague the homo sapiens population of the world, it also reached the mesocricetus auratus population as well. Ladies, gentleman and non-binary friends, it hit the hamsters. In 2009, the television world changed forever when those f*ck*ng hamsters popped out of that stupid car and made the Soul "cool".

Okay I'm gonna be honest ... I actually like the commercial. It was a great way to advertise the car as something fresh and new, but to then keep the hamsters around for like eight more years without pay? It's an atrocity and very illegal.

So there you have it! My take on the Kia Soul. To be clear, if you drive a Soul, I do not judge you. They are affordable cars with good fuel economy. However, you won't be saying that when the Kia Boys steal your car and decide to drive Ring Road with it. Also, for those wondering what car I drive... I don't.

XOXO :)



Graphic by ISABELLA RIZZO | Art Director
Picture via motortrend.com.

Leader Poll

How long would you make it in a zombie apocalypse?

Hopefully forever but probably like a few months or maybe a year (I'd go insane):

Abby J

4 days: Mitch

1 month: Alex

However long my sister survives but at

maximum probably about 2 weeks: Abbie M

Shoot for 4 months, land on 3: Giulianna

2 weeks: Matt

10 days, 5 hours, 35 minutes, and 3 seconds:

Becca

3 days: Dan

Leader Poll

If I asked you to recite your high school's alma mater from memory, would you be able to?

Yes: 1

Matt

No: 7

Mitch, Abbie M, Drew, Becca, Alex, Abby J, & Dan

Alternative answers:

No but I can recite a song that we sang at every elementary school assembly: Abbie M

I was homeschooled: Giulianna

Yes and my sisters and I still sing our alma mater word-for-word whenever we're home ... we're all in our 20's: Matt

Leader Poll

Riverdale: so bad it's good or so bad it's bad?

So bad it's good: 1

Matt

So bad it's bad: 8

Mitch, Drew, Becca, Akex, Amarah, Abbie M, Giulianna, & Abby J

Leader Poll

How often do you make TikTok references?

Constantly: 5

Drew, Alex, Amarah, Abbie M, & Abby J

Somewhat often: 6

Mitch, Becca, Giulianna, Matt, Dan, & Isa

Rarely: 0

Never: 0

HOROS

ABBIE MILLER

Editor-in-Chief, Extremely Opinionated Individual

Since this issue is centered around opinions, I would be remiss if I didn't give you the answers you've all been waiting for. Why do I characterize the Horoscopes the way I do every issue? What was going through my head when I labeled Aries as "Papa's Burgeria" and assigned Sagittariuses to dress as the Jonas Brothers for Halloween? Why did I warn Capricorns not to get ahead of themselves at the beginning of the school year? With little to no explanation, find out how I rank your horoscope sign.



Aries

Second-best

While this may serve as a shock for one of the most commonly hated signs, I love Aries. They are adventurous and unapologetic for who they are, both qualities which I admire greatly. They also just happen to make amazing life partners.



Taurus

Definitely up there

Stubborn and strong-willed, you can sometimes butt heads with those around you. But your loyalty to those you love knows no bounds. You will go to the ends of the earth to protect your family, and that is a trait that puts you easily in the top five.



Gemini

#1, of course

Gemini's will always hold a special place in my heart because, well, I am one! I know some people will be butt-hurt at my choice to put my own sign at the top of my ranking, but what can I say? Gemini's are the best.



Cancer

Complete last

I apologize to all cancers, but I am ranking you in very last place. Every time that I hear the word "cancer," I do not feel good. I know it's not y'all's fault, but what can I say? Your girl's got trauma.



Leo

Second-last

I also don't know any Leos but every time I hear the word "Leo," I think of Leonardo DiCraprio, and he gives me the creeps because he only dates women younger than 25 despite being twice that himself.



Virgo

One of the greats

You are a part of the top 5 because of the strong qualities that make up those of your sign. You are incredibly intelligent and hardworking, which can sometimes cause you to push yourself too hard in order to achieve your goals. You never stop finding new ways to inspire and care for others though, which is a vastly-desired but seldom-found characteristic.

COOPES



Libra

Part of the top 5

You make up another member of the top five signs because of your fantastic humor and strength. You are resilient and open-minded, and you make everyone around you proud to know you.



Scorpio

Middle-of-the-road

In my experience, Scorpios are either very nice people or very self-centered ones, with a fine line dividing the two personalities. If you value spending time with others and connecting with their perspectives, you may be a part of the former group. If you find that you never make mistakes and that everyone around you is always in the wrong, you may be a member of the latter.



Sagittarius

On the upper side of things

People who are Sagittarius are friendly, considerate and always willing to try new things. I don't know many Sagittariuses, but the ones that I do know are gems. Your music taste is immaculate, too.



Capricorn

Towards the middle

Ricky Martin is apparently a Capricorn, and my tía really likes Ricky Martin, so y'all get points for that. I also feel bad for you because I know some of y'all's birthdays are the day after Christmas, and that sucks.



Aquarius

Lower on the list

All of the other signs are associated with cool animals like the fish (Pisces), the bull (Taurus) and the ram (Aries). What do you get? A vase. I don't know any Aquariuses, so all I really have to go by is the item associated with your sign. And based on the fact that you're a vase out of all (cooler) things, you cannot expect to get a good rating from me.



Pisces

Lower-middle

I don't know any Pisces, which is why you are, by default, less valued by me than some of the other signs. That being said, I like fish, which is the animal that represents you, so you definitely get points for that.



45 MIN
PARKING
8:00 AM
TO 5:30 AM
← →