Professor Laura Mullen resigns

Mullen received harsh criticism and threats after a controversial post about the Israel-Hamas war

AINE PIERRE
Online Managing Editor

Kenan Chair of the Humanities Laura Mullen says she has resigned from her position as Kenan Chair in the Humanities at Wake Forest for personal reasons. Mullen also announced her resignation to her poetry workshop class on Tuesday afternoon, saying that she would continue teaching her Fall 2023 classes but would not be returning in the spring, according to two students in the poetry workshop class. The Old Gold & Black has granted those students’ request for anonymity due to the threats Mullen has faced and the danger those threats could present to Mullen’s classes and the students in them. Mullen is also teaching a graduate-level Studies in Modern Poetry course this semester.

According to an English Department course plan obtained by the Old Gold & Black in September, Mullen was slated to teach Introduction to Creative Writing (CRW 100) and a topics course in creative writing (CRW 300). Professor Eric Ekstrand is now scheduled to teach CRW 100 in Spring 2024, according to Wake Forest’s course registration site. Banner. There is currently not a section of CRW 300 listed on the registration page for Spring 2024.

Dean of the College Dr. Jackie Kesas and Chair of the English Department Dr. Jefferson Holdenridge did not respond to the Old Gold & Black’s requests for an interview at the time of publication. The co-directors of the Creative Writing Program, Dr. Joanna Ruocco and Prof. Amy Catanzano, also did not respond to the Old Gold & Black’s request for an interview. Wake Forest’s Human Resources department also did not respond to the Old Gold & Black’s request for information. Dr. Dean Franco, director of Wake Forest’s Humanities Institute, declined to comment.

One student in Mullen’s class told the Old Gold & Black they were saddened by Mullen’s resignation.

“She has a singular talent for highlighting the qualities that make a student’s work unique and for offering advice which strengthens that quality,” the student said. “She has taken on such a special role for me as a mentor in creative writing. I have never experienced a professor so willing to devote time and creative thought to her students’ work and am incredibly grateful to have been able to experience that.”

Post sparks backlash, threats

Mullen, who taught courses in the Creative Writing program since Spring 2022, did not elaborate on her reasons for leaving, but over the past two weeks, she has received intense criticism and threats to her personal safety following a post she published to her personal X account on Oct. 12. The post, which was deleted on Oct. 19, read: “So it’s kind of a Duh but if you turn me out of my house plow my olive grove and confine what’s left of my family to the small impoverished state you run as an open prison I could be tempted to shoot you up your dance party yeah even knowing you will scorch the earth.”

Muslim Students Association hosts prayers for peace vigil

SHAILA PRASAD & CLAIRE O’BRIEN
Opinion Editor & Asst. News Editor

Editor’s Note: The Old Gold & Black agreed to grant anonymity to attendees or speakers at the Prayers for Peace vigil unless otherwise given permission by attendees or speakers. The Old Gold & Black spoke with event organizers, who originally requested that no media be present at the vigil, and obtained the Muslim Students Association’s (MSA) consent to report and take photographs.

About 100 people, including Wake Forest students, faculty and administrators, gathered on Manchester Plaza Wednesday evening to pray and remember the Palestinian and Israeli lives lost in the Israel-Hamas war. Speakers also called for an end to what they said is genocide and ethnic cleansing in Gaza.

“You can be sad about Israeli deaths and Israeli loss of life and also be sad about Palestinian deaths and Palestinian loss of life,” said an event organizer, whom the Old Gold & Black is granting anonymity due to their concerns about safety. “You can also just take a moment to pause and recognize the fact that, combined, there are probably over 10,000 people dead within three weeks.”

See Vigil, Page 4

Wake Forest announces plans for new child care and early education center

LUCY ROBERTS
Social Media Manager

After decades of advocacy from faculty and staff — ranging from committee discussions to thoroughly researched presentations — Wake Forest plans to establish a child care and early education center, with faculty, staff and students receiving priority enrollment.

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One year ago, the Old Gold & Black published an editorial emphasizing the importance of student journalism and, more broadly, the right to free expression. Our editorial followed the editorial board’s trip to our nation’s capital for a student journalism conference, where we had spent the weekend celebrating the enjoyment of the conference. Our editorial followed the editorial importance of student journalism and, published an editorial emphasizing the significance of student journalism and, on our campus and in our community. On a related note, the Old Gold & Black recognizes that informed debate can only occur when participants feel free to voice the contents of their hearts and minds. As we have reported these past weeks, many members of the Wake Forest community have been hesitant to speak publicly about the Israel-Hamas war, for fear of harassment, doxing or even threats to their physical safety. An environment where expression is met with violence (or the looming fear of violence) creates a chilling effect on speech that especially impacts students who are more vulnerable or who have closer ties to the conflict, such as Muslim and Jewish students, many of whom have shared that they do not feel safe expressing their views publicly.

Let us be clear: members of the university community should be able to express their views without fear that violence will befall them. The Old Gold & Black condemns threats of any kind levied against members of our community and calls for those who are making these threats to stand down immediately.

For our part, let this editorial serve as a reminder of our commitment to you, our readers, that we will work tirelessly to keep the Wake Forest and Winston-Salem communities informed. For the past month, the Old Gold & Black has reported on the Wake Forest community’s response to, and attempts to grapple with, the Israel-Hamas War. We have also reported on topics such as the U.S. News rankings, the state budget, campus safety and more. We plan to continue our reporting, and we welcome anyone who wishes to share their story or stories with the Old Gold & Black to reach out to us at wfuogb@gmail.com.
Resignation: Professor’s post sparks threats

Continued from Page 1
Reactions to Mullen’s post varied. Many, including Wake Forest students and alumni, criticized Mullen’s post as justifying attacks perpetrated by Hamas — a Palestinian militant group — against Israel on Oct. 7. Multiple people on social media and in the Wake Forest community called for Mullen to be fired. Mullen told the Old Gold & Black on Oct. 20 that “the post did not condone violence” but was an attempt to imagine and understand how the violence came about. (Editor’s Note: The Old Gold & Black follows AP Style guidance, which is to refer to Hamas as a militant group). As the Old Gold & Black reported last week, Rubin Presidential Chair of Jewish History Dr. Barry Trachtenberg said that while he believed Mullen’s tone was too flippan, he read the post as explaining, not justifying Hamas’ attacks. The student in Mullen’s class echoed Trachtenberg’s sentiments, saying that the post was likely misconstrued due to her “facetious word choice and flippancy.”

On Oct. 17, Wake Forest President Susan Wente and Provost Michele Gellespie released a statement on behalf of the university, saying that while Mullen had a right to free speech, they “do not condone or support” the views expressed in Mullen’s post. Mullen said that in addition to criticism, she had received numerous threats to her personal safety. Mullen said the threats intensified after the university released its statement.

Mullen also said she received letters from parents and a Jewish student offering support — the Old Gold & Black reviewed the letter from the student, which was unsigned and has since confirmed its authorship.

Contact Aine Pierre at pierau202@wfu.edu

Childcare: Planned center follows 32 years of advocacy

Continued from Page 1
According to a Oct. 27 university news release, the Board of Trustees approved a resolution to renovate space in the University Corporate Center (UCC) — located near campus on Reynolds Boulevard — to house the center. The release announced that, with renovations beginning in January, Wake Forest will continue to finalize vendor contracts and a child care and early education service provider in upcoming months.

The center will address the concerns of Wake Forest community members who must balance work or school with familial responsibilities. This obligation, which according to the Pew Research Center, 38% of all parents, has made more difficult due to a lack of childcare options in the area.

Faculty have long advocated for university-sponsored childcare options for at least the past 32 years, according to Dr. Simone Caron, a Wake Forest history professor who has served on Wake Forest’s Child Care Advisory Committee (CCAC) since 2017. The CCAC convenes faculty and staff who aim to understand and address specific childcare issues within the Wake Forest community.

“We were trying everything to build more support and more advocacy,” Caron said. “We were actually in the community putting things together, getting data, putting PowerPoints together, presenting all of this, looking at who provides daycare.”

The Faculty Senate also helped to bring the center to fruition.

“Many before me have advocated and worked with the administration and the Board of Trustees to get us to this point,” Dr. Arjun Chatterjee, president of the Faculty Senate, told the Old Gold & Black. “Projects like this require commitment from the faculty, staff, administration, and Board of Trustees. Moving a large and complex project forward is never easy, but in this case, it is absolutely worth the effort.”

For professors with children, the center will help address the critical lack of childcare options in Winston-Salem.

“Child care has hit an urgent point in the entire community,” said Dr. Amanda Gengler, an associate professor of sociology who teaches classes on care work and is the mother of a six-year-old. “So finding childcare at all is just extraordinarily challenging.”

When parents seek out childcare services in Winston-Salem, they are often met with miles-long waiting lists.

“When I found out I was pregnant, I got on a bunch of waiting lists of, like, 10 day cares across Winston,” said Dr. Andrea Gómez-Cervantes, assistant professor of sociology. “I just received a phone call maybe about a month ago, asking if I still wanted to be [on] the waiting list — and my son is almost going to be two.”

When parents are unable to access child care, they frequently find themselves facing the difficult question of whether they will be able to return to work. Data shows this dilemma is inherently gendered and often does not equally affect mothers and fathers.

According to a USAFacts analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, among employed parents, mothers are more often than fathers to miss work due to childcare commitments.

The new child care center aims to help relieve this burden, providing working mothers with necessary child care support.

“Child care responsibilities continue to disproportionately fall on women,” Caron, the history professor on Wake Forest’s Child Care Advisory Committee, said. “So if you’re the mother, you’re the one who’s probably out there trying to find [child care]…and doing the drop off and pickups.”

Throughout their 32 years at Wake Forest, Caron has been a relentless voice in the fight for accessible childcare at Wake Forest.

“I think that where my role came in as being a consistent bulldog,” Caron said. “...It was putting a plan together… it was looking at what kinds of options are available in our community. We actually put data together — how many centers are there? What ages are they serving? Where are they geographically located? Where are the deserts — where is there no child care?”

Several faculty members have pointed to the recent increase in female leadership at Wake Forest as an explanation for why these changes are finally taking place after 40 years of advocacy and discussion. For the first time in Wake Forest history, women occupy many of the top positions, including that of the President, Provost, Dean of the College and Chief Financial Officer.

“I think that right now we have leadership who directly know what it’s like to navigate careers in academia with kids, as mothers,” said Director of the Women’s Center Sheryl Sizemore. “I think that makes a difference just because we know that a lot of times, leaders are imagining what needs to happen…based off of their own experiences and what they’ve seen.”

According to Caron, in addition to clearing a path for parents to equally participate in the workforce, accessible child care will lead to better retention of faculty and staff at Wake Forest as potential hires have been dissuaded by a lack of child care options in the past.

“We’ve been competing against universities who all have childcare,” Caron said. “If you’re trying to attract the best and the brightest faculty to come here, and they have three options of other places they can go to… people would say, ‘What do you mean you don’t have child care?’”

Some of the roadblocks that advocates for child care solutions at Wake Forest which have encountered include economic struggles and, most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, pushing the issue of child care to the backburner.

“It has been a long fight,” Caron said. “We had gotten close a couple of times, and then at the last minute, it just disappeared for a number of reasons.”

However, with the success of this initiative and the planned establishment of the childcare center, faculty are optimistic about the future of female advocacy at the university.

“Hopefully, as women, as we continue to encounter problems and as we make our way into all other professions, if we see those barriers, if we can crack the door open, hopefully, we can work to open the door all the way,” Caron said.

Contact Lucy Roberts at robels20@wfu.edu

POLICE BEAT

- An individual consumed a large amount of alcohol at Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity. The individual became sick and was transported to Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. The report was filed at 12:59 a.m. on Nov. 1.
- Subjects took clothing from the laundry room that belonged to the victim on Oct. 26. The clothing was returned to the owner, who denied prosecution. The report was filed at 7:51 p.m. on Nov. 1.
- There was a violation of noise ordinance that occurred on Oct. 28 that was handled by the Winston-Salem Police Department. No citations were issued. The report was filed at 7 p.m. on Nov. 2.
- There was a violation of noise ordinance that occurred on Oct. 27 that was handled by the Winston-Salem Police Department. No citations were issued. The report was filed at 7 p.m. on Nov. 2.
- An individual stepped out in front of a patrol vehicle on Polo Road. After making contact with the individual and another individual who was with them, it was determined that they both individuals had consumed alcohol under age. The report was filed at 9:59 p.m. on Nov. 4.
- An individual was found lying outside on a bench, and it was determined that the individual had consumed alcohol under age. The individual was transported to Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. The report was filed at 1:04 a.m. on Nov. 5.
- An individual removed eggs and vegetables from a common area kitchen refrigerator in Luter Residence Hall. The incident occurred between Oct. 24 and Nov. 5. The report was filed at 4:52 p.m. on Nov. 5.
The Old Gold & Black spoke to five freshman students of the event behind the crowd and with their phones. All of the students told the Old Gold & Black they were Jewish. One of the students, whom the Old Gold & Black granted anonymity because of their safety concerns, said they felt it was their responsibility to attend.

“I felt that as a Jew, it was my responsibility to be here and to absorb the information and also share some of the information or act because in case anything was antisemitic or hateful,” they said. “I feel as though placing a media ban eliminates that possibility and is therefore just disrespectful and ignorant.”

The freshman went on to say while the vigil’s speakers were peaceful and respectful in tone, some of the words and phrases they used were “extremely disrespectful and hateful.”

Just to throw out a few examples — genocide, ethnic cleansing — using these terms in the context of what’s happening today is not only hurtful for me and my Jewish community here, but for Jews all around the world,” they said.

Campus police were present at the event. Chief of Police Regina Lawson said that the Wake Forest University Police Department has not received reports from students who have voiced concerns regarding personal safety as it relates to the Israel-Hamas war.

“We are paying close attention to what is happening on other campuses and around the country,” Lawson said. “We are prepared to respond to any concerns or incidents. Anyone with any concerns is encouraged to immediately contact UPD.”

Lawson is referring to tensions at universities in the U.S. Although many protests have been peaceful, some have devolved into clashes, and there have been instances of violence.

“Doxxing” trucks with a digital billboard displaying the names of students who signed a Palestinian solidarity statement parked at Harvard and Columbia. To dox means to publish someone’s personal, identifiable information, such as an address, usually on the internet. Closer to home, Chapel Hill Police are investigating an alleged assault of a Muslim person by someone who was allegedly wearing an Israeli flag.

Instances of violence and doxxing around the country have created a culture of fear around speaking out about the Israel-Hamas war at Wake Forest. The Old Gold & Black has previously reported that Muslim students fear speaking out because of doxxing and public blacklisting. Forexample, in general, refers to being excluded, usually from opportunities such as jobs or graduate schools. Pro-vost Michele Gillespie previously told the Old Gold & Black that the Provost’s Office is “aware that some students, particularly Jewish and Muslim students, are feeling that their psychological safety has been threatened.”

Vice President for Campus Life Dr. Shea Kidd Brown also attended the vigil and acknowledged the challenge that international crises, especially those that personally impact students, present to a college campus.

“Our Muslim and Jewish students may have different lived experiences and perspectives, but our human response to crisis is similar,” Kidd Brown said. “They’ve expressed fear, grief and the desire for physical and psychological safety; and they need support, community and space to experience their very real emotions.”

When faced with pain, Pyarali said that it is important for people from all walks of life to come together.

“I was so happy today because I saw my friends from every walk of life, no matter what their religion was, what the color of their skin was, everyone was there today,” Pyarali said. “I couldn’t be more thankful to have friends like that, and to have a community like that, which comes together. Because that’s not a common thing, that’s a very special thing.”

Christa Dutton and Maryam Khanum contributed reporting to this article.

This story is part of the Old Gold & Black’s ongoing coverage of the Israel-Hamas war and its effects on Wake Forest’s campus.

Contact Shaila Prasad & Claire O’Brien at prasps21@wfu.edu & obriec22@wfu.edu

Maryam Khanum/Old Gold & Black

The Old Gold & Black spoke with event organizers and obtained the Muslim Students Association’s (MSA) consent to report and take photographs.

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The flyer for the event, which was organized by the Muslim Students Association (MSA), said that “while our focus is on Palestine, this vigil is extended to all those affected by the ongoing crisis.” The organizer also said they felt Wake Forest was lacking a space to express student beliefs and views.

“We wanted to provide a safe space for Muslim students and any other students on campus, including Arab students, people of color and anyone feeling any sort of connection or pain to what’s happening right now,” the anonymous organizer said.

Organizers took precautions to preserve the anonymity of attendees in the wake of harassment campaigns against those expressing support for Palestine at American college campuses, including Harvard and Columbia. Flyers for the vigil said that taking photos and videos, as well as the presence of media, were not allowed at the event (the Old Gold & Black spoke with the MSA ahead of the event and received its consent to cover and photograph the event). Some attendees also wore hoods and masks to protect their identities.

The MSA said they received support from the university in planning the event and organizing security. Dr. Matt Clifford, associate vice president for campus life and interim dean of students, was present at the event and helped light candles.

“We’re trying to be extraordinarily sensitive to what our students are experiencing at Wake Forest, especially regarding antisemitism and Islamophobia,” he said. “They’re, unfortunately, on the rise, especially on college campuses, and we are not immune to that.”

Thousands of miles away from Wake Forest, the Israel-Hamas war continues to rage. On Oct. 7, the Palestinian militant group Hamas carried out a surprise attack on Israeli towns bordering the Gaza Strip — a Palestinian territory that Israel and Egypt have blocked for the past 16 years. (Editor’s Note: The Old Gold & Black follows AP Style guidance, which is to refer to Hamas as a militant group Hamas.)

The attacks resulted in the death of more than 1,400 Israelis. In response, Israel conducted air strikes and sent troops into Gaza. According to the Gaza Health Ministry, more than 9,000 Palestinians have been killed in the war.

The vigil

A podium on the stage on Manchester Plaza displayed the Palestinian flag, and small Palestinian flags and candles were passed out. Attendees prayed together on prayer rugs and out who were killed recently, and I know a lot of my friends and family have as well,” Pyarali said. “I thought this would be a good way for my friends at Wake Forest to come together and express solidarity for people who are dying right now who are innocent.”

Faizi recited an Islamic funeral prayer to honor those who have been killed in the Israel-Hamas war and the poem, “To Our Land,” by Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish.

“I pray for peace and an end to this cycle of violence — for Palestinians and the Israeli people,” Faizi said during her speech.

Her speech was followed by a speaker who condemned the bombing of Gaza and said that not all Israelis and Jews agree with the Israeli government’s actions toward Palestine.

“One can simultaneously empathize with the trauma and anger Israelis and the broader Jewish community [have been] feeling since Oct. 7,” they said. “We cannot allow that anger to blind us to justifying the same trauma and violence being inflicted on Palestinians on a massive scale.”

The speaker also said that they do not call for harm on any Israeli citizens or members of the Jewish community.

“We should not be labeled as ‘antisemites’ when we criticize the policies and actions of a government or the government entities and how it has bombed Gaza and how it has handled the occupation for decades,” the speaker said.

Freshman Adam Hammock attended the vigil to support those who are grieving.

“It’s important for me to see that pain. I’m compelled to at least support or stand with people who feel that pain — to be human in that regard,” he said.

The vigil ended with a call to prayer at sundown, at which point many attendees gathered on stage to pray together.

Students voice safety concerns

Promotional materials for the Prayers for Peace vigil stated “no media, videos, photos or recordings allowed.”

Any Israeli citizens or members of the Jewish community.

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For those who support Hamas, in general, refers to being excluded, usually from opportunities such as jobs or graduate schools. Provost Michele Gillespie previously told the Old Gold & Black that the Provost’s Office is “aware that some students, particularly Jewish and Muslim students, are feeling that their psychological safety has been threatened.”

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Daymond John headlines Face to Face event

The entrepreneur and popular figure on ABC’s ‘Shark Tank’ challenged students to take action and be vulnerable

CAROLINE KHALAF
Contributing Writer

Daymond John sat with Wake Forest students on Nov. 1. to share his experience rising up in the entrepreneurial world at the second Face to Face speaker forum of the academic year.

The entrepreneur, “shark” on ABC’s “Shark Tank,” New York Times best-selling author, motivational speaker and founder and CEO of the sportswear company FUBU spoke with moderators Emma Chang ('25) and Delaney Anderson ('24) during the student-led event in Wait Chapel prior to the forum later that night, also held in Wait Chapel.

Daymond John sat with Wake Forest students on Nov. 1. to share his experience rising up in the entrepreneurial world at the second Face to Face speaker forum of the academic year. John spoke extensively about his journey to success as an entrepreneur. He began with $40 and built the $6 million fashion business FUBU at 23 years old. John built FUBU into a successful company after years of perseverance and created a multi-million dollar business that opened up doors to expand his career.

“Bottom line is... in 1989, I was standing on the corner selling a bunch of hats that I made the night before. I sold $800 worth of hats. By 1998, I was doing $350 million of business a year,” John said.

John explained that, growing up, he did not see many Black people in the media that he could look up to.

“We didn’t see anybody that was African American on TV, but it wasn’t that those African Americans didn’t exist, or it wasn’t that those heroes didn’t exist. They were just waking up at 6 a.m., getting their kids ready for school, going to their place of business or they were students. They weren’t in the streets hanging out.”

The student moderators also asked for advice — not just in the business world but for life in general. In response, John shared lessons from his past experiences.

“Anything that I’ve ever done for money — just purely for money — I didn’t make it,” John said. "I grew up with a lot of people who did things purely for money, and they ended up in the wrong place — they’re no longer here. And even when I did things purely for money, and I did make it, I didn’t find any joy."

John continued: “I think another thing that my mother said to me is ‘Anything in this world started with one person that had one idea that had one action.’ And she said, ‘Why couldn’t it be you?’”

He also emphasized that success stems from honesty and vulnerability in business.

“The true entrepreneurs that I find are successful are extremely vulnerable, and they show their vulnerability,” John said. “The more that I became vulnerable in my life, the more that I found help, and I found success.”

John’s advice inspired many listening students. Freshman Bella Cespedes said she benefitted from attending, even though she isn’t planning to become an entrepreneur.

“My intended major is in STEM, so it is not related to money at all, but I believe knowing how money works and knowing the importance of the functioning of capitalism in the present is very important for our everyday lives,” Cespedes said. "I think his insight was very valuable for my future.”

Freshman Efrem Rosenberg, who plans to major in finance, expressed similar sentiments to Cespedes and emphasized that John’s advice and casual demeanor during the event made for an impactful experience.

“I want to major in finance, and he is one of the biggest entrepreneurs in the world,” Rosenberg said. “Getting to hear his advice about how to start a business and how to run it and his various mistakes along the way was super inspirational.”

He continued: "A lot of us grew up watching him on ‘Shark Tank,’ and he is an inspirational figure for us. To get to hear him tell us jokes and be right in front of him was just a really great experience.”

Contact Caroline Khalaf at khalac25@wfu.edu

Daymond John (left) speaks with student moderators Emma Chang ('25) and Delaney Anderson ('24) about his experience in business and gave students advice at the Face to Face event in Wait Chapel on Nov. 1.
Physical reminders of Zoe Clay (’22) are everywhere on Wake Forest’s campus. One of Zoe's Latin projects still sits on the desk of classics Professor Dr. T. H. M. Gellar-Goad's office. A research poster Zoe made regarding iron deficiencies in female distance runners hangs on the wall of the women’s running team’s locker room. In Assistant Cross Country/Track & Field Coach Ashley Bastron’s office, a pair of Zoe’s running shoes — featuring the inscription “imperfect and incomplete” on the soles — sits on a mantle. A tattoo Zoe designed featuring the inscription “imperfect and incomplete” is on Bastron’s arm.

Zoe died in a crash during an Oct. 8 bicycle race, but according to five interviews conducted by the Old Gold & Black, their memory lives on — not only in those physical reminders and in the seven people who received the organs Zoe donated, but in the hearts and minds of everyone who knew them.

“The largest organ that she donated was, during her entire life… her soul,” Zoe’s father, Tom Clay, said. “She keeps a little piece of her heart and her soul [in] everybody that she came in touch with.”

One of those people is Julie Pechanek, academic coordinator for the Classics department. Pechanek, who worked with Zoe when they were a work-study student:

“They…had such a bright future and were just so nice and positive all the time,” Pechanek said.

From the interviews I conducted, it seems to me that it would be impossible to properly write an obituary for Zoe without including three Latin phrases: “per aspera ad astra,” “excelior” and, of course, “pro humanitate.”

In Latin, the phrase “per aspera ad astra” (literally: through hardship to the stars) is taken to mean that the road to success is not always easy. Zoe's road to success in running certainly was not, according to Bastron. Zoe sustained numerous injuries during their career at Wake Forest, and they could not train by running, as most runners do. They found a path to greatness anyway, including using biking and swimming to keep up with conditioning.

“We kind of figured out another path of how [they could] be great…,” Bastron said. “That required a lot of determination and dedication on their own because no one’s in the pool with you, and no one’s on the bike with you.”

According to Bastron, Zoe’s path to greatness resembled their life.

“Zoe's journey looked different, which is cool [because] Zoe lived their life differently than a lot of people,” Bastron said. “Just max enthusiasm, all in, never half-assed anything. It was like full send.”

To Zoe's former roommate and teammate Madeline Rehm — as well as Bastron — one moment in particular best demonstrated Zoe's grit and dedication. Zoe's ultimate goal in college was to race a 10k; however, due to injuries, they did not qualify for the event at the ACC Championships. They decided to do a time trial the week before the championships, instead.

“No one wants to run 25 laps by themselves on the track [when] not in a race setting without competitors, [but] they were so excited to do it,” Bastron said. “And I was like, ‘Are you sure?… 10k is a long way by yourself.’”

Bastron remembered Zoe responding, “I said I was going to run a 10k this season. I haven't done it yet. I can't run it at ACC's next week. I want to run one.” As it turned out, Zoe would not be running alone — or, at least, not completely alone.

“Our whole team lined the track and cheered Zoe on for… probably 37 minutes,” Rehm said, “and that was just incredible. I think it showed how much they were doing [the run] for them, and it showed their resilience.”

That resilience, Rehm said, was an example to others.

“They're someone who always inspires you to be who you are,” Rehm said. “They're gritty. They're tough. They're resilient. They approach obstacles in life with two middle fingers and move on, and I think that is the narrative… they’d want to be remembered by.”

“Excelsior,” or “higher” is a phrase that demands excellence. According to Bastron, it is an excellence Zoe found in their career as an athlete. However, athletics was not the only realm in which Zoe found success, according to Gellar-Goad.

“They were always really sharp with their Latin skills but not sort of bragging about it,” Gellar-Goad said. “They were understated in their expertise, confident but friendly and supportive of other students.”

Gellar-Goad remembered one specific assignment in his Latin prose composition course that Zoe excelled at.

“The assignment involved arguing why some people should study Latin from three different perspectives — fun, profit and virtue. They made a box out of construction paper that had all these various things outside that match the sort of standard old school rhetoric about why people should study Latin,” said Gellar-Goad, who also mentioned the project in an interview for the Old Gold & Black’s 2022 Graduation Tabloid. “Then you opened up the box, and there was a manifesto that was like a post-colonial colonialist critique of the older way of seeing Latin and seeing the ancient world and framing the classics.”

Gellar-Goad was floored.

“I was just blown away and really impressed and really touched by how carefully crafted and how critical and self-reflective that was, and that stuck with me…,” Gellar-Goad said. “I still have that on my shelf in my office today.”

After graduation, Zoe traded their running shoes for the world of biking. There, they met English Professor Dr. Jessica Richard at a Fourth of July bike ride.

Richard was a member of the biking group 0530, in which Zoe also found a vibrant community.

“As I got to know some of the people in that group, I also got to spend more time with Zoe,” Richard said. Richard was also part of a smaller group with three other woman bikers. The women invited Zoe to join them one day, and before long, the “bike mafia” was formed.

“We wanted to reflect that we were a group of non-male people,” Richard said of the group Zoe referred to as “the bike moms,” and that’s what that name meant for us.”

Richard remembers Zoe as a phenomenical biker, a fun-loving person and a strong support.

“We did a really big, three-day ride, the five of us…from Winston-Salem to Asheville, and that was two nights overnight, and it was about 256 miles on bike, and it was hard and fun,” Richard said. “And I was the weakest cyclist of the group, and they had just done another huge ride, like, the week before, on a different path of the Blue Ridge Parkway, and [they were] just so strong and fun. There were a couple of moments where they would put their hand on my back and kind of push me up the hill as I was struggling to keep up with the group.”

See Zoe Clay, Page 7
A deep dive into Wake Forest’s underground world

The lore runs deep

Although frowned upon beforehand,a 1993 study published in the Old Gold & Black found tunneling to be a hazard due to the 120-degree Fahrenheit heat and low oxygen levels. The Dean of Student Services, Harold R. Holmes, advised that roaming around in the tunnels is “not just a rite-of-passage kind of thing,” and that, in light of the new information, those involved in the campus judicial process “will treat it as a more serious violation.”

Going Beneath the Surface

With the advice and experiences of my predecessors to guide me, I met with Assistant Director of Utilities Jimmy Nifong and Manager of Support Services Tim Kerr to tour the tunnels below Hearn Plaza and the tunnel connecting Botwick Residence Hall to Luter Residence Hall. Senior Anna Brooker joined us, as she is doing research on the tunnels for her anthropology major.

As far as the history behind the student lore goes, Kerr and Nifong mentioned that every three months or so, a student may find their way into the tunnels. Although the rate of illegal student-tourists in the tunnel ebbs and flows, student rebels and artists have always been drawn to the forbidden tunnels.

As of now, the two groups that have been identified as repeat offenders are known as Operation Black Mask, which is an underground society at Wake Forest, and the Seductive Elephants, whose origins are less well-known.

The more colorful of the graffiti in the South Campus tunnel that connects the freshmen dorms. Each year, the tunnel is transformed by the Anthony Aston Players into a haunted tunnel each your near Halloween.

Some Things Never Change

Wake Forest has changed with the years. Young romantics no longer crawl to female dorms, security systems have advanced and Old Gold & Black writers have become less rebellious in their reporting. However, the lore surrounding Wake Forest’s dangerous underground world remains eternally magnetic to students, despite the physical and disciplinary threats that await.

“It’s just a general curiosity that humans have about places that are off-limits to them,” Brooker hypothesized. “Hidden or taboo spaces such as the Wake Forest tunnels have the ability to shape a culture and identity.”

Contact Virginia Noone at noone21@wfus.edu

Zoe Clay: Late alum leaves legacy of community care

Continued from page 6

Richard said later of that moment: “It just felt like solidarity, care and attention. They’re so strong and could just kind of ride but also have their hand on my back and push me at the same time that they’re going up the mountain. It’s pretty impressive.”

For the biking community and the Wake Forest women’s cross country team, Zoe’s strength has been an inspiration as they contend with the 23-year-old’s tragic death.

For Bastron, the race was a huge success. In 2018, Victor Hasting explored the tunnels and found warning messages from The American Mole, cautioning him about Smokey the Bear — a nom de guerre for Wake Forest Campus Security. Hasting made his way crawling from the tunnel entrance in Tribble Hall to South Campus and Scales Fine Arts Center. The walls were covered in tunnel maps, newspaper clippings and graffitied wisdom, similarly to how they are now.

“I knew it was illegal to go into the tunnels,” wrote Hastings, who later became an attorney. “I figured I could plead journalistic immunity.”

“Zoe was so interconnected in so many different communities on campus and within Winston-Salem, and so that’s been cool to just hear from so many people whose lives were touched by Zoe,” Rehm said.

Gellar-Goad remembered that Zoe and one of their teammates, Elise Wright, gave him advice on how to sprint without pulling muscles. He also recalled a hike that Zoe, Wright and one other student went on the last day of the Spring 2022 semester.

“Every summer, I have on my syllabi instead of office hours, I say you can text me anytime, we can go to lunch or we can go hiking,” Gellar-Goad said. “And Zoe and Elise made sure that a hike happened for our three-person Latin prose composition class.”

Gellar-Goad remembered: “We went out to Pilot Mountain and did what ended up…being a nine-mile hike going into and past sunset. And it was just a fabulously great day just being with them in nature, chatting with all of them, getting to watch Zoe and Elise climb on the rocks…and seeing them support their non-track-athlete classmate — who…six miles or seven miles in was like, ‘Oh boy, my hamstrings’ — and helping them out [with] making it through the last three miles.”

Pechanek remembered that Zoe’s comforting and kind presence helped set her mind at ease during the recovery process from a hip surgery.

“I just had a conversation with them about my experience with physical therapy and the recovery process, and they just made me feel much more at ease,” Pechanek said.

Even in death, Zoe has given much to their community. In addition to the organs and skin grafts they donated, a GoFundMe organized by Richard for the family’s memorial costs raised $75,736 from 800 individual donations. Many Wake Forest athletes and members of the biking community have donated and left messages. All of these have gone towards the GP Zoe Clay. The race will take place on Oct. 29, 2023 at 1411 Whitaker Ridge Dr., in Winston-Salem. Registration will open. A celebration of life will also take place at the same address at 5 p.m. on Oct. 28.

Contact Aime Pierre at pierav26@wfus.edu
Wake Forest is known for the natural beauty of its campus, but the characteristic landscaping of “The Forest” serves another, bigger purpose: adapting to and combating a rapidly changing climate, including more rain and heavier downpours. The Campus Master Plan, updated in 2019, includes Wake Forest’s goals for the sustainability of its landscaping. These goals aim at preserving woodlands and integrating stormwater management strategies on campus for a dual purpose — benefitting student experience and reducing the university’s environmental footprint.

“We know climate change is happening, so our strategies...are totally different and totally off beat from before,” said Wake Forest Director of Landscaping Paul Sheff. “We get plants that are going to benefit not just aesthetics but are going to be for the climate.”

Sheff and his team work thoughtfully year-round to maintain the land on the Reynolda campus and on several of Wake Forest’s other properties, including the Graylyn Estate, the University Corporate Center and the Reynolda House. Climate change has forced landscaping efforts such as irrigation systems and planting tactics to adapt to issues arising from warmer temperatures and extreme weather.

The human-caused rise in greenhouse gases over the last three decades has caused a global climate crisis. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), temperatures are quickly increasing, which creates an atmosphere with the capacity to hold more moisture, which leads to more damage with frequent and intense precipitation. Wake Forest’s campus is not exempt from the detrimental impacts of more intense weather events, including erosion, flooding and water pollution.

“When we talk about what’s the greatest threat to our campus, it’s stronger storms,” said Brian Cohen, assistant director for sustainability engagement in the Office of Sustainability. Sheff, who has been at Wake Forest for 39 years, has seen the strength of these storms increase substantially.

“We used to have mild rains where it just rained subtly,” Sheff said. “Now we have downpours.”

On Oct. 20 around 5 p.m., an intense storm came to Winston-Salem for about 15 minutes as Homecoming festivities were about to kick off on campus. The unpredicted storm hit the city less than an hour after the Raleigh National Weather Service issued a special weather statement about 30 mph winds and the possibility of hail.

Heavier rains create more stormwater runoff, which erode the land and carry pollutants into water sources, according to the EPA. The landscaping and facilities departments deal with this runoff and prevent it from having negative effects on campus.

“A huge pain point with stormwater infrastructure is there’s not a whole lot you can do with existing development,” said Assistant Professor of Engineering Dr. Courtney Di Vittorio. “Wake Forest is very progressive compared to the rest of Winston-Salem in terms of what they’re doing to reduce runoff during these heavy storms.”

The Campus Master Plan pledges the university’s commitment to providing good stewardship by reducing stormwater runoff, although the city does not formally require it. Part of the strategy is finding solutions to existing infrastructure problems.

Runoff from the rooftop of Winston Hall, for example, previously caused erosion in the hillside behind the building and contained copper particles that killed grass. The addition of rain gardens on campus, like the one behind Winston Hall, slows down and filters stormwater runoff, which prevents erosion and pollution while allowing space for flowers and butterflies bushels.

Director of Facilities Operations Steve Adams said the university is doing well with its stormwater containment measures, which are designed to handle “worst case scenarios” and can adapt to increasing storm intensity.

Automated irrigation systems on campus are connected to a “weather station” which shuts off sprinklers during significant rains, cutting back on excessive water use, according to Sheff.

“The less [water] we can use, the better,” Cohen said.

The landscaping department also makes a concerted effort to incorporate native plants on campus, which promotes the overall health of the campus ecosystem and functions as an integrated pest management strategy. This means plants can thrive with minimal maintenance and limited use of pesticides and other chemicals that are harmful to the environment.

University Arborist Jim Mussetter said strategically planting trees in locations to minimize root damage is especially important with new construction. According to Mussetter, forested areas surrounding campus contribute to the university’s 40% canopy cover, but construction projects like the Porter Byrum Welcome Center and the athletic facilities have caused significant tree loss in recent years.

“Our goal is 1-to-1 replacement,” Mussetter said.

Since 2014, we’ve planted 800 trees.”

Mussetter and his team work hard to care for “The Forest,” and the specific guidelines for maintaining a sustainable and beautiful campus amidst the climate crisis are outlined in the WFU Campus Tree Care Plan. Because of the combined efforts of the landscaping and facilities teams, the university still comes to life during the fall when vibrant foliage creates a colorful canopy across Reynolda campus.

“The rate of change in our lifestyle is going to be amplified by climate changes,” Di Vittorio said. “It’s just going to be a crazy 10 years, I think, of seeing really drastic environmental changes.”

Contact Mollie Maynard at maynmg20@wfuf.edu
UNA WILSON  
Environment Editor

You might be familiar with the odors associated with the indoor pens of barnyard animals. One strong waft of manure is enough to make most people plug their noses and escape to fresh air as quickly as possible.

Imagine, however, that the smell stayed with you. That it followed you home, filled the spaces of your car, the walls of your home, your backyard. It came with you to bed at night and greeted you each morning, clung to your clothes, hung in your hair and caked your lungs.

This is an everyday reality for residents of rural Smithfield, North Carolina, where the stench of 10 billion gallons of waste from the 8.8 million pigs produced each year in industrial feedlots permeates into the local air and waterways.

For the predominantly Black, Latino and Indigenous residents living near the hog mega facilities, the putrid odor is only the most conspicuous negative impact they suffer from. A slew of health issues, including nausea, breathing problems, anemia, kidney disease, septicemia, tuberculosis, infant mortality and low birth weight among newborns also accompany the stench.

The documentary “The Smell of Money,” was screened last Thursday at Wake Forest University in the Annexen Auditorium of Car.ll Hall. The film, written and produced by Jamie Berger, follows the story of Smithfield resident Elise Herring and their community as they take on the multibillion-dollar pork industry through legal action. The event was funded by the Provost’s Fund for Academic Excellence and the Environment and Sustainability Studies Program and as a collaboration between Wake Forest, CleanAirNC and The NC Conservation Network.

Berger reported that, while filming, she was frequently appalled and shaken by the racial discrimination and environmental injustice the residents of Smithfield face. Experiencing the power of white privilege and prejudice that led Black and Brown residents to fear for their health — and, at times, their lives — is part of what motivated her to finish the multi-year-long project.

“One of the most disturbing stories that I’ve heard people talk about is the sensation of actually feeling the spray, the fecal waste, raining down on them,” says Courtney Woods, an associate professor at the University of North Carolina School of Public Health, who has studied these effects, in an article written by Berger for Vox. “They see it on their cars, on their homes … and outside of that, just feel outraged. There are associations with stress and anxiety that we have studies to demonstrate.”

Senior Mia Handler was in attendance at the screening. She said that she wasn’t expecting the film to move her as much as it did, especially in scenes where residents feared for their lives at the hands of hog farmers.

“There was an interviewee — she had been outspoken in the past against industrial hog farming — who showed the measures she took every day to keep safe. She had to put cardboard around her windows so people couldn’t tell where in her house she was and shoot at her,” said Handler. “It was really heartbreaking, and showed the courage all of the participants had in speaking up for environmental justice.”

Berger acknowledged that there were times during the filming process when she and her crew even felt unsafe driving through the rural parts of Smithfield.

“The police pulled us over once to ask what we were doing there, what we were filming about,” said Berger. “At one point a farmer even came to his front yard and cocked a shotgun at us. They really don’t want opposition to the industry they have there, and they are willing to do what it takes to protect that.”

Berger emphasized, however, that the goal of the film was simply to educate the public and empower people to make a change in their actions.

“This is happening over all around the world now. And no matter where it is, it is affecting the most vulnerable people, the people who have the least economic and political power to be able to fight it.” Berger said. “So I think it’s important that we show people that we are all connected by what we choose to eat, and we can all make a difference by the choices we make.”

Contact Una Wilson at wilusi20@wfu.edu

Photo courtesy of Shawn Barnett

Lagoons of waste water collect hog feces and urine and leach into the air and waterways of rural N.C. communities.

ELL AKLEIN  
Environment Editor

Sustainability might not be the first thing that comes to mind when you picture the arts scene in Winston-Salem. Although the city is officially dubbed the “City of Arts and Innovation,” its environmentalist and art activist groups don’t overlap often. However, a group of local sustainably-minded creatives are trying to change that.

The Second Hand Art Collective (Art SHAC) is dedicated to repurposing gently used art supplies that would otherwise be thrown into a landfill. The Art SHAC is a new institution in Winston-Salem, operating for the past year and a half as a pop-up at popular events like Art Crush and the Ardmore Art Walk. The group recently acquired a meeting space in the historic neighborhood of Ardmore, which they hope will increase donations and community engagement.

Working as a non-profit and fully managed by volunteers, this collective of creatives not only sells the donated supplies back to the community at a low cost but also offers instructive classes utilizing the repurposed materials. Anyone is welcome to donate, including manufacturers and community members.

Patty Pape, a local artist and the board chair of the Art SHAC, is proud of the work the collective does to keep supplies out of landfills.

“We weigh everything that comes in, so we can say we kept so many thousands of pounds out of the landfill, which is important,” Pape said.

Their volunteers have recorded over 6,000 pounds of materials being saved from the landfill in the short time the Art SHAC has been operating. Pape hopes that the collective can one day operate on a larger scale to maximize their impact.

“We would like to see this be really big so that we can offer all these products to the public at lower prices and teach a lot of classes where we reuse the products that are donated,” Pape said.

Jessica Teft, another artist who volunteers with the group. She saw other reclaimed art supply stores, like Reconsidered Goods in Greensboro, and realized there was a need that needed to be filled in Winston-Salem.

“I really wanted [Winston-Salem] to have a place that was more accessible and affordable for artists,” Teft said. “I thought [Winston-Salem] should have one since we’re the city of arts and innovation.”

The new space hopes to draw in more artists, creatives and volunteers, intending to ingrain sustainability into the robust Winston-Salem art ecosystem. To get involved with the Art SHAC, head to their grand opening on Nov. 11, in Space 4, 1622 S. Hawthorne Rd, Winston-Salem, 27103.

Contact Ella Klein at kleiak23@wfu.edu

The Art SHAC has operated mainly through pop-ups at local downtown events like the Bookmarks festival in September.
Plant-powered solar cells energize green energy future

Professor Michael Grätzel presented his research on photovoltaic cells to the Wake Forest Department of Chemistry

MEHERET ZELALEM
Contributing Writer

Let’s be honest. How knowledgeable are you on photovoltaic cells and their importance? If your answer is “not very knowledgeable,” don’t worry because world-renowned professor Michael Grätzel held a lecture on Oct. 19 at Wake Forest on how photovoltaic cells help generate electricity through solar light.

Grätzel has dedicated the majority of his academic research career to understanding the use of mesoscopic photosystems for solar light harvesting. In his work, he is searching for a renewable yet efficient alternative to conventional p-n junction photovoltaics that also mimics the light reaction in photosynthesis.

Understanding these big, scientific words can be intimidating at first glance, so breaking them down into simple terms is important.

A “photosystem” is a functional unit used to harvest light and convert energy. In plants, photosystems are made up of a combination of proteins and pigments responsible for collecting electrons from light and transforming them into useful chemical energy. The term “mesoscopic” describes the size of anything measured between nanometers and micrometers. Therefore, a mesoscopic photosystem is a minimal unit that possesses the ability to take light energy and turn it into useful energy.

Mesoscopic photosystems directly relate to the workings of the solar harvesting system, which uses these photosystems to efficiently harvest energy from a light source and mimic the metabolic pathways of plants seen every day.

According to the Energy Information Administration, photovoltaic cells — commonly known as solar cells — are non-mechanical devices that convert sunlight directly into electricity. More practically, they are often installed as solar panels to carry out this conversion.

The majority of photovoltaic cells seen in solar panels today are created using p-n junction technology. A p-n junction device has two types of semiconductor materials that allow electrons to flow in one direction. P-n junction photovoltaic cells use photons to activate the conduction of electrons. This is the technology on which Grätzel is trying to improve with his invention of dye-sensitized solar cells.

Why should you care about photovoltaics in the grand scheme of things?

According to the Energy Information Administration, photovoltaic cells 200 times in the next 50 years to meet the Paris Agreement targets.

“Our planet is on the path of an average temperature increase of 4 degrees Celsius before the end of this century, concerning the average Earth temperature before the industrial age, and the result will be catastrophic,” wrote Verlinden.

“Fossil fuel energy sources largely contribute to the ongoing climate crisis. Solar power helps reduce the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere, ergo mitigating climate change.”

This is where the importance of alternative energy sources like solar cells comes in. Grätzel invented the dye-sensitized solar cell, also known as the “Grätzel cell,” to help avoid the energy crisis by harnessing the power of the sun. This cell uses a combination of titanium dioxide and organic dyes to convert sunlight into electricity, providing a more environmentally friendly alternative. This process closely mimics the naturally occurring mesoscopic photosystems that are seen in plants.

Unlike conventional silicon solar cells, the cost of production for dye-sensitized solar cells is low because the dye used is extracted from the pigment of plant parts.

Following the devastation of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, Grätzel doubled down on his photo voltaic research — motivated to discover a new generation of solar cells to contribute to the development of clean and renewable energy sources to mitigate the effects of climate change.

The goal? To grow the power of photovoltaic cells 200 times in the next 50 years to meet the Paris Climate Agreement. The problem is that, with the rate of disasters increasing and temperatures rising, the target of limiting global warming is incredibly far from being achieved.

In the Journal of Renewable and Sustainable Energy, Pierre Verlinden describes a model to predict what is necessary for the solar industry to meet Paris Agreement targets.

Michael Grätzel holds a model of his dye-synthesized solar cell, named the “Grätzel cell,” which he hopes will soon be widely used in use to offset US carbon emissions.

On April 20, 2010, The Deepwater Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico exploded, killing 11 people and causing an unprecedented ecological disaster by spilling at least one billion liters of oil into the ocean. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) assessed the injuries to natural resources such as fish, nearshore ecosystems and sea turtles and declared it the “largest natural resource damage assessment ever undertaken.”

Following the devastation of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, Grätzel doubled down on his photovoltaic research — motivated to discover a new generation of solar cells to contribute to the development of clean and renewable energy sources to mitigate the effects of climate change.

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“[These cells] have unique practical advantages including their flexibility, aesthetic appeal and transparency,” Grätzel stated during his lecture. “Their practicality has allowed for the commercial application of the prototype.”

Leaders across the globe have been urged to raise carbon-cutting ambition and follow through on implementation. With this implementation, solar cells may provide more than half of the projected increase in global power capacity by 2026. To meet this goal and decrease the rate of disasters, energy consumption must shift to being 100% renewable, using solar and other clean energy sources.

Contact Meheret Zelalem at zelem22@wfu.edu

An acre of electricity producing solar panels saves between 267,526 to 303,513 pounds of carbon dioxide per year. [Source: Columbia Climate School]

Photo courtesy of Millenium Technology Prize

Photo courtesy of Meheret Zelalem
Enough with your eras!

Debunking “girly” rhetoric behind the feminine urge to reinvent yourself

From wearing pink and crying while watching Greta Gerwig’s “Barbie” to combining random ingredients on paper plates to make “girl dinners” to trading friendship bracelets in honor of Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour — it was a “girl summer” for women of all ages.

It was cool to be a girl, but now I can’t help but wonder if it was all just another trend that will inevitably expire. More importantly, I wonder about the underlying implications behind the “girly” rhetoric.

The Trends

First it was the “clean girl aesthetic” that involved elaborate early-morning routines, pilates and no-makeup-makeups. This trend was about self-care and protecting your peace, but it’s been criticized for being classist, ageist, fatphobic and racist as most “clean girls” are white and wealthy. The trend has received criticism for culturally appropriating Black and Latinx women, who are often criticized for wearing the same slicked-back hairstyles, lipgloss and simple hoop earrings for which white women participate in the trend were celebrated.

Then Alix Earle took the internet by storm, and the “messy girl aesthetic” was born. This trend, which included chaotic party-girls and a return of late ’90s and early 2000s styles, was ultimately the antithesis of its predecessor and problematic in its own ways as it promoted binge-drinking and not prioritizing health or safety. “Girl dinner” then took to the scene with videos of girls assembling plates of random, incompatible foods, such as dark chocolate and cottage cheese, and calling it their dinner. This trend was admittedly well-intentioned at the start, as it debunked the idea that women are meant to dedicate hours of their time preparing classic dinners. However, it took an ugly turn when the dinners evolved into women showing off how few calories they were consuming in their nutrient-deficient girl dinners.

Soon after, a TikTok trend called “girl math” appeared. An example of girl math is a girl returning an item to a clothing store and, in her head, thinking she profited from the return. Another example would be using the Starbucks app to pay for her drink and attributing it as a free drink. The trend usually involves a woman explaining her girl math to a man and seeing his reaction to her logical fallacies. This trend leads into the age-old trope that women cannot do math or be trusted with money — hilarious.

The trend that felt the most prominent online was Constant Reinvention. As I scrolled past era after era, I began to feel sick from seeing their nutrient-deficient girl dinners. It is trend that felt the most prominent online was Constant Reinvention. As I scrolled past era after era, I began to feel sick from seeing their nutrient-deficient girl dinners. It was what society values the most in women, whereas only 11% of them mentioned physical attractiveness as a value for men.

In a 2015 study, it was found that women are more likely to use social media platforms such as Pinterest, Instagram and Facebook. Additionally, TikTok was more popular with women than men. These platforms combined with longstanding societal standards of female worth contribute to the extremism and short span of female trends. Right now, it’s cool to lean into stereotypically feminine styles and traits. However, I would recommend that all women lean deeper into their own identities and refrain from minimizing their personalities into one type of “girl” that will slowly fade down their timelines into the abyss of trends long gone and forgotten.

Contact Virginia Noone at noonv21@uwf.edu
Freshman year sucks

Okay, maybe only the first month... but why don't we talk about it?

MATTIE STILLERMAN
Contributing Columnist

Imagine you’re a Wake Forest freshman, and your parents just drove away after they moved you into your tiny Collins Residence Hall dorm. A dorm that has been transformed into a “Freshman kiss of death” by the barstoolcollegefarce Instagram account. While fighting the pressure behind your eyes, you look down at your phone. It’s 8 a.m., and you have 10 minutes before you have to meet with your pre-orientation group.

Never have you ever said your name so many times or done so many different ice breaker activities. Believe it or not, starting the next four years of your life is simultaneously exciting and nerve wracking — but it starts with an overwhelming amount of the latter.

No one talks about how the first month of freshman year is awful. I went into freshman year with great expectations and quickly found out college is very different than what I imagined. For some reason, I thought I would make lifelong friends in the first week, ace all of my classes and think college was the best thing ever. I didn’t.

News flash no. 1: Expectation is a freshman’s greatest enemy

The first month of freshman year was a roller coaster of the highest highs and lowest lows. One moment, I felt on top of the world and was thriving with the new freedom of being a college student. The next moment, I felt alone, hopeless and lost.

Orientation was very uncomfortable. During the “Helpful tips” section — also known as the mob in front of Collins — I met what felt like a thousand new people and engaged in awkward small talk for more than two hours. After I gave my name, residence hall and major, an excruciating hush would fall over the mob. I had never resonated with the Taylor Swift lyric, “I’ve never heard silence quite this loud” more in my life.

As each week passed, certain aspects of my life started to improve. When I adjusted to my class schedule and developed a study routine, my classes started to feel easier. When walking across Hearn Plaza, I waved to friends I made in class and would meet friends in the Pit for lunch. Football games, which used to be a source of social anxiety, became a source of smiles, cheers and screams for a school I was starting to love. Having small talk with other first-years turned into having real and comfortable conversations with friends. My roommate and I began to feel okay sitting with each other in silence.

I started to feel like I was getting a hang of college. I started to feel like I belonged.

The first month of freshman year was confusing and hard. It felt like I was the only one struggling to adjust to college. The truth is everyone struggles with college at one point or another. It can be after the first day, after the first week or even after the first month. It might take you longer to adjust than your friends and peers. No one wants to admit that they are struggling because we have convinced ourselves we are the only ones having a hard time.

We should not expect ourselves to seamlessly transition into living in a new city, creating new social circles and a challenging academic environment. Now that I feel settled into college, it is easy to forget how terrible I felt during that time. However, that feeling is normal.

After speaking with friends about their transition to college, they described the same pit in their stomach that I had. College is hard one way or another for everyone, but it eventually gets easier.

So yes, freshman year sucks… but only at the beginning — don’t give up.

Contact Mattie Stillerman at stllmn23@iwfu.edu

DILLON CLARK
Senior Columnist

The recent Speaker of the House drama can be best summarized as a bunch of headless chickens running around: total chaos. But after numerous late-night sessions, nominees and voting procedures, the GOP has settled on Rep. Mike Johnson (R-LA). Why?

Johnson has long been in the shadows of Congress. The quiet, yet more radical conservative was first elected to Congress in 2016 and served as the vice chairman of the House Republican Conference as well as the GOP deputy whip — an assistant leadership role.

The struggle to find a new Speaker of the House, however, did not stem from a lack of qualified candidates. For public image, the GOP has looked for a candidate who embodied their values and their passionate opposition to President Joe Biden and the Democratic Party. But behind closed doors, was a struggle of getting enough votes and endorsements. And for that reason, Johnson was the guy.

On the Johnson’s voting record is nearly identical to that of Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), a radical conservative who failed to win the speakership due to the opposition of 25 moderate Republicans. Johnson, on a larger scale, embodies a modern movement within the Republican Party — the movement towards the incorporation of Evangelical Christian values within bills and policies. The Trump-endorsed Speaker has been a proponent of anti-abortion policies, specifically opposing a bipartisan bill to federally recognize same-sex marriage.

Furthermore, he was an essential proponent and supporter of Donald Trump’s election denials and went as far as to push a baseless conspiracy theory that “rigged” Dominion voting machines had disenfranchised the late Venezuelan dictator Hugo Chavez.

So how did Johnson win the Speakership while holding nearly the same radical beliefs as Jordan? There are multiple theories. It is possible that there was a compromise within the Republican party or that the time pressure and embarrassment of not electing a Speaker of the House three different times caused moderates to finally cave. One thing, however, is certain: if he wishes to run differently than former Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy, Johnson will have to constantly appease and negotiate with both factions of a party — a task that is undoubtedly daunting.

The pressure is on.

A few weeks ago, I asserted that Democrats took a gamble by ousting McCarthy, assuming a radical conservative would be made Speaker. With Tom Emmers (R-Minn.) withdrawing and the election of Johnson, however, any hope has dissipated and the Democrats’ gamble did not pay off.

This whole “Speaker Shitshow” — as much of a mess it was — provided an opportunity. It was an opportunity to take a step forward: to change the partisan dynamic of Congress and foster compromise and cooperation among parties through modernization of the modern radicalist movement. But time and time again, our government demonstrates its incapability to forge bipartisan alliances and create positive change when needed most.

Contact Dillon Clark at clarfsf@iwfu.edu
Wake's culture of over-committing is leaving us burnt out

You're not alone. Find what helps you get through it

PRARTHNA BATRA
Staff Columnist

It is halfway through the semester here at “Work Forest,” and as the weather outside gets colder and the workload gets harder, I still often think back to summer and how I miss the bliss of no homework or clubs and of simply being less anxious.

At this point in the semester, with an overwhelming amount of midterms and rigorous extracurriculars to keep up with, most students — including myself — have been feeling burnt out both mentally and physically. Burnout isn’t just a made-up idea, but a medically recognized phenomenon. According to the National College Health Assessment, 80% of college students reported feeling overwhelmed, and 40% reported it was difficult to function.

Social psychologist Christina Maslach defines burnout as “emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and diminished personal accomplishment in the work environment.” Maslach created a Burnout Inventory, which bears her name, to conceptualize her definition, which is considered to be the gold standard for measuring burnout.

During these past few weeks of struggling to keep up with the pressure of Wake Forest’s culture of involvement, I’ve wondered if I was wrong for feeling burnt out. It seems like everyone has it all together, leaving me feeling isolated in my thoughts because, honestly, Wake Forest is overwhelming.

At Wake Forest, there is this need to overachieve, ensuing overwhelming anxiety. I’m here to tell you that you’re not alone — it’s normal to feel this way. The reality is that all these factors combined can be pretty debilitating for tired college students who are just trying their best. Sophomore James Garcia — who is currently applying to the business school at this busy time of the semester — is no stranger to this feeling.

“I would say this is my busiest semester to date,” Garcia said. “Taking accounting and preparing my application for the business school, as well as beginning the internship application cycle for sophomore summer internships — I’ve had to prioritize school and professional development over physical and mental health.”

Fall Break just took place, and it felt no different to Garcia.

Wake Forest students had off from classes on a Thursday and Friday in mid-October, giving students a four-day break. Four days of no classes certainly didn’t mean four days of a mental break. Assignments were due, and midterms took place immediately after, leaving students with no time to catch a real break.

“Fall break didn’t really feel like a break, but as a time to catch up on work and get ahead on academics since the semester ahead was going to be strenuous,” Garcia said.

Sophomore Dani Fernandez is the epitome of an overcommitted student. She is double majoring in economics and biology with a minor in bioethics and a concentration in Spanish for Health Professions. On top of that, she plays on the Club Soccer Team and is treasurer of Advocating Reform for Correctional Clients, officer for the on-campus service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega, a research assistant and a student adviser. She also tutors fourth-grade children from Forsyth County and works in the library and as a Spanish interpreter at a community clinic every week.

“I’m very involved in the Wake Forest community, and I love that, but I do feel there is the factor of Wake Forest’s cultural pressure of getting extra involved to the point that it [becomes] a little too much to handle,” Fernandez said. “I feel like I need to pick and choose where I dedicate my time and do sometimes have doubts that I could be doing better in certain areas if I dedicated more time there and took time away from a different activity.”

Fernandez and Garcia echo my thoughts — and what I believe are the thoughts of most of the student body.

The environment at this school is such that everyone is doing so much at any given time that simply taking classes and keeping up with your academics — which is a very big commitment in and of itself — is never enough.

I, too, feel stretched too thin at almost all times. On campus, I am on the executive board for Alpha Kappa Psi and on staff at the Old Gold & Black. I also have a weekly show on Wake Radio and also serve as an editor for the mental health publication IfYou’reReadingThis. But the moment I take time for myself, I instantly feel like I’m not doing enough and falling behind the rest of my peers. That’s when imposter syndrome kicks in.

Because the minute I decide that academics need to be my center of attention for a couple of days, and I want to step back from clubs even a little bit, I feel like I don’t deserve to be at this school and don’t belong here. It can often feel like I’m the only one not being able to keep up with the pace.

Last semester was atrocious for my mental health. Even though I took fewer credits, I was still overwhelmed, but I also emotionally felt like I wasn’t doing enough. When your mental health is suffering that much, it takes away from you, leaving you physically and mentally exhausted, with no energy to partake in any activity that brings you joy.

It’s a vicious cycle and leads to anxiety.

I didn’t want to lighten my schedule, though, because admitting that kind of weakness and admitting the fact that you aren’t doing as well as you expected to be doing is very difficult.

Expectations of the kind of student I was supposed to be at this school left me no time to tend to my mental health, and I was exhausted and unhappy. There is a negative connotation in the environment of this school around taking a break. Conversations with peers often feel like a competition to see who is doing the best, waking up the earliest and having the most productive days.

Admitting that you didn’t wake up at the crack of dawn and have been having a hard week and are maybe behind on some school work feels like a very daunting task. Sometimes, I feel like I am falling behind in this unsung race that every Wake Forest student is running against each other.

Now that I am a sophomore, I am no longer trying to figure my way around the firsts of college and have a stronger sense of what is going on around me. Even though classes and extracurriculars are getting more difficult and time-consuming, I’m reminding myself that I need a break to help me get through them.

While I don’t think there is necessarily a solution to Wake Forest’s culture of over-involvement, I have had to work a lot on the way I think about grades and the fact that a bad grade isn’t the end of the world. At the end of the day, nothing is worth sacrificing your mental health. There are healthy ways to meet your academic goals — you just have to find what works for you.

All this to say, if you are feeling burnout, know you are not alone, and that this unfortunately comes with the territory at this school. Don’t forget to take time for yourself and do things that bring you joy.

Take time for your physical and mental well-being — whatever that means for you.

Contact Prarthna Batra at batrp22@wfu.edu

"Even though classes and extracurriculars are getting more difficult and time-consuming, I’m reminding myself that I need a break to help me get through them."
Men's basketball rises from Phoenix's ashes

Down 21, the Demon Deacons rally to win home opener

AARON NATALENE
Sports Editor

The Demon Deacons (1-0, 0-0) welcomed fans to the regular season home opener on Monday night with a full-season experience in a single game as Wake Forest beat Elon (0-1, 0-0) by 23 after clawing back from a 21-point deficit.

Led by junior guard Cameron Hildreth (33 pts, 6 ast, 5 reb, 2 stl), the 101-78 victory did not look likely after the first half of play. The visiting team shot above 60% from long range, while Elon sharpshooters found too much space to make the Deacons pay.

The Demon Deacons dominated the game of second-chance points, outdone on the glass in the first half, Wake Forest did know who preceded them with 10 points and six rebounds.

Cooper Sullivan sulleg20@wfu.edu

Women's basketball takes season opener

Demon Deacons pull out rollercoaster 75-65 win over Wofford

SEAN KENNEDY
Ass. Sports Editor

Every performance can have peaks and valleys — and Wake Forest women's basketball went through a rollercoaster ride en route to a 75-65 win over the Wofford Terriers.

The first quarter became a show between redshirt sophomore Malaya Cowles and junior guard Elsie Williams. Of the 23 points scored for the Demon Deacons in the quarter, 18 came at the hands of the two players. The former won a perfect 3-for-3 from the field in the first frame, and the latter showed off versatile scoring with a pair of both layups and 3-pointers.

Cowles came into the opening game having not played last year due to injury and not having played in Head Coach Megan Gebbia's system until Monday night.

"She's never started for me and didn't play much last year," Gebbia said of Cowles. "For her to be able to step into a major role without [starter] Demeara [Hinds] was huge for us."

The Demon Deacons extended their lead through a well-executed second quarter. Five consecutive points each from Cowles and first-year guard Madisyn Jordan put Wake Forest on a 10-0 run, pushing the lead to 18.

After going on the run midway through the quarter, the Demon Deacons settled down near the end, allowing a window for the Terriers to scratch back. Wofford would score seven-straight points to close out the first half, including two jump shots from first-year guard Maddie Heiss.

"Sometimes when you're up by that amount, it's hard to keep the intensity up," Gebbia said.

Heiss and fellow first-year player Evangelia Paulk became problems for the Demon Deacons' defense over the course of the game, as each scored double-digit points in her first career collegiate game. Heiss had 17 points with three 3-pointers, and Paulk hit with 10 points and six rebounds.

"They started some players that we didn't know anything about," Gebbia said. "It's sometimes hard for us to go into games like that where you don't get to know much about the other team."

Wake Forest did know who pre- season SoCon Player of the Year Rachel Rose was, however, and the junior guard ended with a game-high 24 points and nine rebounds. After halftime, Rose led a comeback that saw the Terriers' 18-point deficit turn into a four-point lead.

The visitors outscored the Demon Deacons by eight in the third quarter, with eight points from Rose, and Heiss added seven points on a perfect 3-3 from the field.

When Wofford came out and is a team that never quit," Gebbia said. '"To me, it was a test that we needed.'

Wofford did not let up in the start of the fourth quarter, however. Through the first three minutes, the Terriers went on an 8-2 run, led by another five points from Rose. Despite letting up their 18-point lead, the Demon Deacons didn't feel the least bit defeated.

"I think a lot of it is just effort," Forbes said. "For her to be able to step into a major role without [starter]有什么 difference?"

Cooper Sullivan sulleg20@wfu.edu
Aaron Natalie nataae21@wfu.edu
Sean Kennedy kenvil21@wfu.edu

Follow us on X @wfuogbsports
OLD GOLD & BLACK

See WBB, Page 16
Men's soccer falls to UNC in ACC Quarterfinals

Demon Deacons lose 1-0 despite shot advantage

MATT KULYNYCH  Staff Writer

The No. 6-ranked and tournament-seeded No. 2 Wake Forest Demon Deacons men’s soccer team (11-2-5, 4-1-3) suffered a 1-0 defeat at the hands of the No. 13-ranked, and No. 7-seeded North Carolina Tar Heels (9-3-5, 2-3-3) in a Big Four ACC Tournament Quarterfinal match. The defeat eliminates the Demon Deacons from the ACC Tournament and, now, only the NCAA tournament remains for the season.

Spry Stadium was packed to the brim for the sunny, 4 p.m. kickoff on Sunday, and anticipation was in the air for the upcoming Big Four rivalry match. Both the hill and the bleachers were filled with rowdy Wake Forest fans.

The Tar Heels kicked off the game, attacking toward the hill. However, it was the Demon Deacons who controlled the possession early on with a slow tempo. North Carolina responded by packing in the middle, forcing the Demon Deacons to pass the ball around the back and down the wings instead of playing through the Hosei Kijima-headed midfield, which is how the Demon Deacons prefer to play. The first shot came for Wake Forest in the sixth minute by sophomore winger Vlad Valenta, but it was instantly blocked.

Throughout the first 15 minutes, both sides defended well. The Tar Heels did an excellent job isolating the Demon Deacons — Roald Mitchell, Leo GGaini and Julian Kennedy — for the closing minutes of the match, as well as throwing defender Garrison Tubbs up top to try and win headers in the box.

The Demon Deacons were able to create a few more chances, mostly from set pieces. Unfortunately, none of them were able to amount to any clear chances. Wake Forest had one more chance off a corner in the 90th minute, but North Carolina cleared, and eventually the ball landed in their goalkeeper’s hands. He punched the ball away as the final whistle fell, ending the Demon Deacons’ ACC Tournament run early.

Despite outshooting North Carolina 13-5 and 6-1 in the second half, as well as taking eight corners to North Carolina’s one, the Tar Heels came out on top. Wake Forest will now turn their attention to the NCAA Tournament, and will find out their path to the finals as the bracket is released next Monday, Nov. 13.

Contact Matt Kulynych at kulymh21@wfub.edu

Sidney Paris, No. 22, attempts to dribble past a UNC defender.

Al-Qaq. The forward cut onto his right foot at the edge of the box and curled a well-placed shot into the top right corner, giving goalkeeper Trace Alphin no chance at a save. The goal silenced the crowd as the Tar Heels took a 1-0 advantage.

The goal energized the Tar Heels, as they created another couple of chances following the goal. They stepped up the intensity, forcing Wake Forest into multiple sloppy, uncharacteristic turnovers. The first half ended with a tame header from senior winger Chase Olivar that was claimed by Tar Heels goalkeeper Alphin. Wake Forest Head Coach Bobby Muuss responded to this by putting on all three strikers — Roald Mitchell, Leo GGaini and Julian Kennedy — for the closing minutes of the match, as well as throwing defender Garrison Tubbs up top to try and win headers in the box.

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Contact Matt Kulynych at kulymh21@wfub.edu

With Wake Forest’s 1-0 defeat to UNC, the Demon Deacons will have to wait until Monday, Nov. 13 to find out whether they make the 2023 College Cup, what their seeding is and who their opponents will be.

COLUMN

It ain’t 2018 anymore

Bowl berth does not look likely for WFU football

COOPER SULLIVAN  Sports Editor

During his weekly pressers, Wake Forest Football Head Coach Dave Clawson likes to draw parallels between his current team and his 2018 team. Both teams started 2-0 (wins against Tulane and Towson in 2018, wins against Elon and Vanderbilt in 2023), both teams lost to Clemson and FSU (the 2018 combined point differential was 81 as opposed to this season’s modest 30), and both teams were 4-5 headed into their November match-ups against NC State.

Besides Clawson’s consistent coaching staff and similar schedules, similarities between the two teams end there.

The roster has been totally overhauled (only Michael Jurgens, a sixth-year guard, and Spencer Clapp, a seventh-year tackle, remain), offensive efficiency has plummeted (the 2023 team averages 107.2 fewer points per game, 94.6 fewer yards per game and has seen a 17.7% drop in red-zone touchdowns compared to 2018) and the team seems unable to seal the deal in winnable away games (the team is 1-3 on the road, including two one-possession losses to Clemson and Duke). “Obviously, I want to go out and win 11 games,” Jurgens said on Tuesday. “I want to win the division, I want to win the ACC and all of that, and it’s never going to not hurt to do that, but you’re always looking for ways to get better. I feel that this team has really found a way to kind of grow from adversity and come closer together.”

Unless that team bond can translate to wins, adversity will continue.

There is still a chance for the Demon Deacons to extend the ACC’s second-longest bowl appearance streak to eight years, but that would require two wins in the last three weeks. One of those wins will have to be on the road, either against Sam Hartman and No. 22 Notre Dame (7-3) — the Fighting Irish have not lost a home game in November since 2016 — or against Syracuse (4-5, 0-0) in the cavernous Carrier Dome.

The path to bowl eligibility is a rugged trail, but it’s not unmarked.

The 2018 Demon Deacons wound up beating their in-state rival, the then-No. 22 NC State, 27-23 in Raleigh before losing 34-13 to Pittsburgh at home and demolishing Duke on the road in a 59-7 rout to end the season. The 6-6 Wake Forest team was invited to the Birmingham Bowl, where the Demon Deacons defeated Memphis 37-34 and secured a winning record. They’ve done it once before, can they do it again?

It’s no longer 2018, so probably not.

Contact Cooper Sullivan at sulc26@wfub.edu
WBB: Williams leads win in premiere

Continued from Page 14

"I thought we responded well," Gebbia said of the fourth-quarter comeback. "I didn't see any of our players with their heads down or start to blame one another."

From the seven-minute mark of the fourth quarter and on, though, it was all Demon Deacons. Wake Forest went on a 19-0 run after the four-point deficit early in the fourth quarter. The spark occurred in part due to redshirt freshman Kaia Deeble, who hit seven of her 19 points in the final frame.

"We stayed calm and together," Deeble said. "We kept our composure through the pressure, and that helped us a lot." Experience on the court paid off as well. Graduate student Kaia Harrison led the Demon Deacons through the fourth period. Clutch drives to the basket and multiple finishes through contact highlighted her 13-point, four-rebound performance against the Terriers. Harrison also hit a 3-point dagger late to put the Demon Deacons up 13 with 1:54 left.

"It's a sign of a good team when you're able to get smacked in the face and still come out swinging," Gebbia said.

Wake Forest would seal the game in the late stages and hold on to beat the Terriers by 10. "The Demon Deacons travel to the shores of Lake Norman this Saturday to take on in-state opponent Davidson in their first away game of the season. The matchup will tip-off at 1 p.m. and will be broadcast on ESPN+.

Contact Sean Kennedy at kennison21@wfdu.edu

Kate Deeble (No. 12) had 19 points and 2 steals in the contest.

FOOTBALL
AP Poll rankings in parentheses; as of Nov. 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACC</th>
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MEN’S SOCCER
United Soccer Coaches rankings in parentheses; as of Nov. 5

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WOMEN’S SOCCER
United Soccer Coaches rankings in parentheses; as of Nov. 5

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ACC                   W-L (Conf.)   GF   GA
Wake Forest            6-9-3 (1-5-2)    24   33
Louisville             11-4-3 (2-4-2)    38  27
Syracuse               8-3-7 (2-1-5)     31   19
Clemson                9-3-4 (4-2-2)     45   16
UNC                    10-3-4 (5-2-0)    26   16
Duke                   11-3-3 (4-1-3)    49   20
UNC                     6-2-5 (1-2-3)     26   10
Pitt                     6-6-4 (2-3-3)     28   24
Virginia Tech           4-9-4 (2-5-1)     34   10

Clemson (7) 15-3-3 (7-2-1) 49 14
UNC (13)    10-1-8 (5-0-5) 39 14
Pitt (11)   14-5-0 (6-3-1) 51 21
Wake Forest (25) 10-3-5 (4-2-4) 32 15
Virginia    8-3-6 (3-3-4) 36 11
Louisville (11) 8-4-0 (7-8-3) 24 17
Duke        7-6-4 (4-5-1) 18 20
NC State    3-9-6 (2-5-3) 16 33
Miami       3-10-4 (2-7-1) 11 28
Boston College 3-9-6 (0-6-4) 18 32
Syracuse   2-14-2 (0-9-1) 16 48

VOLLEYBALL
AVCA Coaches Poll rankings in parentheses; as of Nov. 7

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DEMISE DEACONS AT HOME
THE NEXT TWO WEEKS

Football vs. N.C. State
Saturday, Nov. 11, 2 p.m.

Women’s basketball vs. NC A&T
Wednesday, Nov. 15, 6 p.m.

Volleyball vs. Boston College
Wednesday, Nov. 22, 4 p.m.

Cameron Hildreth puts up a falling shot while driving to the basket. The junior guard led all scorers with 33 points during Monday’s opener.

Senior Garrison Tubbs lands a header off of a cornerkick in the first half.

Photo Gallery
‘Doing nothing to achieve everything’: Asian philosophical wisdom blossoms in Chinese dance and operas

SHERYL ZHANG
Contributing Writer

Turquoise sleeves and light pink fans danced to the melodic classical Chinese music, as a roll of ink paint unfolded in the Scales Fine Arts Center. At the end of the song, the dancers stopped their movements and bowed elegantly to the audience. The beauty of the dancers and the melody of the song still lingered in the auditorium for a long time. I, as an audience member, felt as if I were in an Eastern wonderland cut off from a Western city.

With support from the Wake Forest Department of East Asian Languages and cultures, professor Melody Li, professor Shu-yu Huang and Yiyi Bai — a freshman dancer — presented an interactive speech to the Wake Forest community on Oct. 26. The event consisted of Chinese dance and opera performances; lectures about the history, props and aesthetics of Chinese dance and opera; as well as the Chinese culture and philosophy behind the choreography.

Li pointed out that China’s vast land with rich history gave birth to many different styles of dance, such as classical dance, martial arts dance, ethnic minority dance and even square dance, which originated as folk stories and the country’s extended cultural history. Li and Bai used a Chinese classical dance performance to show the audience how Chinese culture and dance styles intertwine. Li said that traditional Chinese dance steps include many soothing movements of drawing circular shapes in the air. The ideal of a circle represents tolerance and openness, and the dance movement of “drawing circles” reflects this part of Chinese philosophy. Such movements are closely related to Chinese cultural heritage. Chinese culture emphasizes the use of softness to overcome rigidity — using gentle movements to display inner strength.

Li mentioned that the props for Chinese dance, such as water sleeves and fans, play a very important role in conveying the meaning of dance. Dancers can emote through the flexible use of props and achieve a sense of self-extension. The dancers use props to amplify their movements while remaining elegant and restrained, maintaining the breath of the dance and the balance of “qi” (flow) in Taoism.

Softness preserves great energy in Chinese culture. Simplicity and emptiness can also have multiple layers. The true meaning of conforming to the laws of simple and natural flow — “doing nothing to achieve everything,” as the Taoists say — is vividly displayed in Chinese dance. The presentation of the extension and emptiness also resonated with Huang’s performance.

“If you’ve ever seen Western operas, a lot of the time they can stand still and sing and often come with a variety of gorgeous and complex stage designs and props,” Huang said. “They can then probably start hitting the high notes and ‘show off’ their voice. Chinese opera is not like that.”

According to Huang, Chinese opera stages are minimalist, often consisting only of a table, chair and actor. The storyline relies solely on the actor’s dance moves and vocalizing. Although such a stage looks very empty, this sense of blankness brings richness. It is the simple and constrained setting of the stage that leaves the audience with unlimited imagination.

Because of this, though, the performance of Chinese opera is very difficult. A complete performance requires a skilled actor who can sing through the act while dancing on the big stage. Because of such simple scenes and props, the actors need to stretch more to attract the audience. In addition, the same prop can be compared to many items as the actor sings different passages, so as to achieve a wonderful presentation of the story.

“I think Chinese dance and opera is a good entry point to understand Chinese culture, so I have held such talks on many university campuses,” Li said. “Chinese dance is a language that transcends boundaries of different cultures, and is a great way to make me connect to my own culture.”

Contact Sheryl Zhang at zhams21@wfu.edu
I had the privilege of listening to Director Todd Haynes and writer Samy Burch introduce the film. Nothing could have prepared me for what I was about to see — this was indeed a disquieting rollercoaster ride that I will not forget anytime soon.

As my former remark might suggest, “May December,” is not for the faint of heart. The film follows the sexual and emotional relationship of a housewife (Julianne Moore) and her teenage son’s friend (Charles Melton) 20 years after their tabloid scandal was uncovered. The story thus begins when an actress (Natalie Portman) infiltrates this relationship to carry out an intense character study of the housewife in preparation for a new film about the scandal.

What I most appreciated about this film was its originality; as its thoughtfully disturbing script had my eyes glued to the screen from its mysterious beginning to its disappointing end. Expertly delivering this unique script is Portman’s performance. If a few moments were cut from the larger picture, I believe the intensity of the film would still be intact. However, this miniscule problem that should not dissuade you from seeing this film offers a very rewarding cinematic experience. If you’ve ever been shoot on ‘70s-era film, the reality is not done terribly well. “May December” needed a strong ending that tied its many themes into one complete bow, but it sadly tries to balance too much at once. Although the ending that tied its many themes into one complete bow, it was clear that Payne and scriptwriter David Hemmington had the necessary comedic chemistry to pull off what could have been an overly cheesy, run-of-the-mill Christmas tale. Instead of taking the easy way out, this dynamic duo breaks through these confines to create an unforgettable holiday experience.

The many highs of this film are met with one small issue: its somewhat lengthy runtime of two hours and 13 minutes. If a few moments were cut from the larger picture, I believe the integrity of the film would still be intact. However, this miniscule problem that should not dissuade you from seeing this film at your local cinema. And yes, you should see this one at the theater to get the nostalgic experience; trust me — you won’t regret it. So grab your hot cocoa and tissue box, and make sure to be the first in line to see “The Holdovers” on Oct. 27!

Final Score: 9/10

“Holdovers” directed by Alexander Payne

Andrew Haigh is known as one of the 21st century’s pioneers in queer filmmaking, and his screen talk was inspiring yet grounded — two characteristics I would use to describe his personality as a whole. The interview consisted of analyses of Haigh’s filmography throughout the past 15 years, with conversation and questions following each viewing. Starting with a reflection on the beginnings of his filmmaking journey, Haigh discussed how his first piece, the small 2011 independent film “Weekend,” was inspired by his desire to portray “an honest gay experience.” With a 100,000 pound budget and three people who showed up to the film’s original premiere, Haigh never dreamed of the film’s commercial success.

Following his victorious debut, Haigh took on a big commercial project, HBO’s “Looking,” while simultaneously working on his Oscar-nominated “45 Years.” As someone who greatly values independent filmmaking, I was stunned to learn that these small studios still withhold well-known directors’ creative visions from the final product due to fears of a lack of profit. Such a comment brought me to re-evaluate the filmmaking industry’s focus on money over creativity, something that we see all too often at the movie theater but fail to comprehend.

After Haigh’s reality check, he discussed his newest film “All of Us Strangers,” starring Paul Mescal and Adam Scott, and how, in addition to gay storytelling, his work seeks to confront loneliness and loss. Haigh put into perspective the risks of filmmaking with both big and small studios as well as offered a thoughtful, creative discussion. As such, this was an experience that I will never forget. I would like to extend a thank you to Haigh for not only inspiring but humbling us young creatives at the London International Film Festival.

From seeing three sold-out films at the gigantic Royal Festival Hall to meeting a trailblazing director, my time at the 2023 BFI London Film Festival was an experience that I will never forget. Thank you to all who contributed to this fantastic extravaganza and for supporting artists from around the world. I cannot wait to return to this extraordinary festival.

Contact Ally Wrestler at versaq21@ufl.edu
Henry Winkler becomes himself
The Emmy-award-winning 'Happy Days' star reflects on a career well-spent

JAMES WATSON
Arts & Culture Editor

Emmy award-winning actor Henry Winkler, best known for his role as the iconic, earnest greaser, Fonzie (or, “The Fonz”) in the long-running hit TV show “Happy Days”, paid a visit to Winston-Salem earlier this month to promote his new book, “Winston-Salem’s very own non-profit bookstore, Bookmarks, hosted the visit as part of the book tour for Winkler’s New York Times bestseller, "Being Henry," which featured a mere 15 stops.

The "B"arry star's new book focuses on his tumultuous upbringing, which included navigating dyslexia as a young child. The book contains Prefis Winkler’s industry reputation as the ‘nice guy’ of Hollywood, highlighting how that identity was actually forged through hardship. When he struggled with his (at the time) undiagnosed disability, he said, “I was called stupid, lazy…I was called ‘dumb dog,’ which, if you don’t speak German, means dumb dog.” Winkler said during his talk.

He expressed disappointment in his parents’ ability. “When I found out that I was dyslexic, I was angry.” Winkler said during his talk. “I understand maybe if I didn’t have that struggle with my learning challenge, I would not be here with you tonight,” he added. When Winkler landed the role of The Fonz in 1974, he was still hounded by his childhood struggles. His interactions on-set were often informed with how brilliant you are,” he said. “When you see your child have a problem, even if you don’t know the name of that problem, if you don’t know how to solve the problem, it is our job to make that child a little more comfortable. And not call them dogs,” he said. "I was so beaten in by not letting anything come out of that other than my image of who I shouldn’t be too scared to change.”

The enduring legacy of Fonzie is something Winkler still holds very dear, even as other roles have garnered more critical acclaim. His character's identity was somethingWinkler made attempts to make sure no one experienced the level of abandonment he felt as a child.

"I was being, for a lot of my life, who I thought I should be,” Winkler said. “And I was so beaten in by not letting anything come out of that other than my image of who I shouldn’t be too scared to change.”

The event spanned many subjects, including the origins of the now-ubiquitous idiom “jumping the shark” (which, if you didn’t know, was a Winkler original), the local favorite restaurant Moodles and Winkler’s other work as a children’s author.

But even as Winkler enters the twilight years of his career, he still looks ahead. “My dream is to get back to Broadway. I did one play, it opened and closed in seven days,” Winkler said. “One play ran for nine months. I did another play that opened and closed that same night. So I am looking forward to doing that again.”

The talk concluded with a read-aloud passage from Winkler’s book, summarizing a career — and life — well spent.

So I am looking forward to doing that again.”

Contact James Watson at wattp22@wsfc.edu

The Crossword

EVAN LIPETZ
Contributing Writer

Down
1. Tired, per se
2. A strip of land connecting two land masses
3. Lightning bug
4. Alternative to bottled water
5. North Pole helper
6. Periods longer than eras
7. A hexagon is six-___
8. ___-Royce
9. Friend of Tarzan
10. A holiday's predecessor
11. A hexagon is six-___
12. ___ Miserables
13. Looks for
14. Nail polish remover
15. Quick Learner
16. Relating to the butt
17. Like an old oak tree
18. Cold season
19. Mariah is the queen of this in pop culture
20. ___ favor
21. ___ Miserables
22. Performer
23. Performer
24. Generator output (abbr.)
25. A pig's home (abbr.)
26. Jamaican music genre
27. In the sun
28. Lake Superior port
29. Puppy's bark
30. Cause some winter havoc, maybe
31. “One of ___”
32. Prefix meaning “with/together”
33. The “___” of
34. Lie in the sun
35. Not just some
36. Result of some sexual encounter
37. Lie in the sun
38. Mariah is the queen of this in pop culture
39. Dude
40. Foot prefix (comb. form)
41. Actor McKellen
42. Foot pre
43. Dude
44. Holiday drink
45. Nail polish remover
46. Nail polish remover
47. 1996 Alanis Morissette hit single
48. ___-Royce
49. ___ Miserables
50. Friend of Tarzan
51. To yap aimlessly
52. Someone who adheres things to
53. Holiday drink
54. Take up like a sponge
55. Summoned
56. “Tell me when you'll get here”
57. Word before good, sale, or sure
58. Not just some
59. Chowed down
60. Belly
61. Ending of sudd- or ev-
62. NFL units (abbr.)
63. “Later” in Spanish
64. Relating to the butt
65. Multiple DVDs
66. Passed away
67. Gaff
68. Relating to the butt
69. Multiple DVDs
70. Swift’s fourth studio album
71. Phone, casually

Across
1. Natural Talent
2. Milk
3. Lightning bug
4. A holiday's predecessor
5. A big holiday month, (abbr.)
6. Periods longer than eras
7. A strip of land connecting two land masses
8. A person whose family comes from India, Pakistan, or Bangla-
9. Opposite of He
10. ___ favor
11. A strip of land connecting two land masses
12. A strip of land connecting two land masses
13. Looks for
14. Nail polish remover
15. Quick Learner
16. Relating to the butt
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Contact Evan Lipez at lipetze22@wsfc.edu
ADAM COIL
Arts & Culture Editor

In 1965, Lynda Blackmon Lowery was the youngest person to march 54 miles from Selma to Montgomery in a campaign for African-American voting rights. One day into the trip, on March 22, she turned just 15 years old. Lowery's march is likely what she is most known for, but Wake Forest University Theatre's recent stage adaptation of her memoir, “Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom,” does the important work of highlighting her life and work leading up to that consequential moment.

The musical opens with Lowery, played by freshman Aderinola “Nola” Adepoju, singing “Woke Up This Morning (with My Mind Stayed on Freedom)” before being quickly reinforced by the triumphant voices of the choir. This interaction set the stage for what was to follow, as the choir was a central piece in the show despite rarely crossing over into the story world. Most of the songs in the play are not necessarily tied to 1965 or Lowery's story, so I was surprised at how effectively they worked as a vehicle for immersion. The universality of the music did a fantastic job of simultaneously rooting the story in a deep, rich tradition and reminding the audience of the importance of Lowery's story in our current moment.

After this opening song, we quickly learn that Lowery lost her mother at a young age because of Alabama's racist segregation policies — her mother was unable to receive a blood transfusion in time because she was not allowed access to donor blood reserved for white people. This scene, which was delivered with precise poignancy, perfectly primes the donor blood reserved for white people.

Throughout the show — which displayed real photographs of historical moments and their connection to the story in our current moment. The production succinctly solidifies the timeline of its major events, while the projector displays images of Black Lives Matter protests and George Floyd. The play reminds us that the struggle is ongoing, the work is unfinished and it hopes we can imagine a more equitable future in the same way Lowery did.