Lawsuit claims N.C. Senate maps are racially gerrymandered

The storied history of N.C. redistricting battles enters a new phase after two residents filed the latest lawsuit that is unlikely to be the last

JAMES WATSON
Arts & Culture Editor

Two North Carolina residents are suing the Republican-led NC legislature over their recently enacted Senate district maps. The plaintiffs alleged the state’s new Senate district maps passed last month violate the 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA), disproportionately harming Black voters in the northeast part of the state.

They say the new maps, which were just one set of district maps that were created last month by the General Assembly (including the NC House and the U.S. House of Representatives maps), are racially gerrymandered — diluting the vote of Black voters in the state’s historic “Black Belt” by failing to establish sufficient majority-minority districts.

The new congressional maps split the Triad up into four Congressional districts, virtually eliminating Rep. Kathy Moore’s (D) seat. The maps will likely face legal actions, according to analysts. This case is the kick-off for the latest chapter in North Carolina’s long history of redistricting litigation.

The lawsuit faces serious obstacles from the starting line, however.

On Nov. 29, a federal Appeals Court ruled that only federal entities could use Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act to challenge gerrymandered maps. The same VRA provision undergirds the challenge in Mathews and countless other redistricting-based litigation.

By all accounts, the case is likely to be appealed to the Supreme Court, posing the most significant threat to the VRA’s efficacy since Shelby v. Holder removed federal preclearance rules in 2013.

The following week, on Monday, Nov. 27, a US district judge denied a request to fast track the lawsuit, which would have allowed for a hearing before the Dec. 4 candidate filing deadline.

NC’s Redistricting, Past and Present

The new 2023 North Carolina district maps were unveiled and passed within an extraordinary and controversial timeline of just one week, from Oct. 18–25. Redistricting cycles coincide with the once-a-decade U.S. census, but this is the third set of district maps North Carolina has produced since 2020.

The maps the Republican majority drew in 2021 were tossed out by the then-liberal-leaning North Carolina Supreme Court, who concluded the maps violated the state’s constitution in Harper v. Hall and directed the appointment of a special master to redraw the districts maps independently. Those maps were used in the 2022 election.

House Speaker Tim Moore sued to question the high-court’s ruling in 2022 by questioning their authority to appoint a special master. This high-stakes test of federalism culminated in Moore v. Harper this summer. But while Moore wrapped up, they reinitiated Harper v. Hall to the new Republican majority on the North Carolina Supreme Court and found the relief they were seeking. In April 2023, the court tossed out the 2022 maps and the process restarted, meaning new maps needed to be drafted up ahead of the 2024 election.

The latest challenge

Section 2 of the VRA protects voters from discriminatory voting practices on the basis of their skin color. In the redistricting process, states are legally compelled by the VRA to create districts that do not dilute the power of minority voters. Current jurisprudence has practically achieved this by purposefully creating majority-minority districts around demographically cohesive blocks of voters. Similarly, putting a block of voters from racial minorities into a larger, white district — diluting their vote as a result — is illegal under federal law.

The focal point of the recent suit, the Senate map’s District 2, encompasses a part of North Carolina’s historic “Black Belt,” a strip of fertile soil more than 100 miles long that historically housed a significant portion of North Carolina’s cotton industry and plantations. Today, many of the “Black Belt” counties have a Black-voting-age population ranging from 30-50%, well above the state average of 21%, according to the 2020 Census.

In the 2023 maps these counties are divided between Districts 1 and 2 — with the second district stretching from the Virginia border near Interstate 85 to the Outer Banks. Instead of splitting or “cracking” the “Black Belt” between the two districts, the plaintiffs suggest it would be feasible to create a VRA-compliant majority-minority district out of the area with minimal impact on the rest of the map.

See Maps, Page 3

Student Government and the Women’s Center start the Menstrual Access Project

VIRGINIA NOONE
Photography Editor

It can happen anywhere. It can happen at any time. You’re sitting in class and suddenly, you just know. Discreetly, you rise out of your seat and make your way to the door while strategically trying to keep your back to the wall. Then, it’s a game of luck.

You scan the building for a friendly, female face. If you’re fortunate, you can find someone to hand off the necessary item out of the public eye as if it’s a drug deal. If you’re less fortunate or can’t afford it, you’ll find yourself in a cramped bathroom stall shining layers of thin, itchy toilet paper into your pants and praying it goes unnoticed.

Oh, the thrill of being a person with a period in a world in which women’s menstrual needs often go unmet and unspoken. On top of that, high prices and lack of resources create menstrual inequity and stigmatize having periods.

To combat some of this stigma and inequity, Student Government and the Women’s Center have collaborated to start the Menstrual Access Project. Since August, the program has placed 31 free menstrual product kiosks in 16 buildings around campus to help remove the economic pressures and stigma surrounding periods.

These dispensaries can be found by scanning a QR code to view kiosk locations across Wake Forest’s campus, including the ZSR Library, the English Department, the Art Department and the SAFE Office, among 27 other departments.

“It’s just absurd that individuals cannot just have easy access, and it pissed us off,” Student Government Speaker of the House Michael Walsh said. “We’re glad the project is providing both equity for disadvantaged students and also providing easy access for everyone.”

See Menstrual Access, Page 4
I remember the first time I ever walked into the Old Gold & Black office. I was scared as hell.

I had only written a handful of news stories, and I didn’t know anyone on staff. I didn’t even know Benson had a fifth floor. Someone showed me the ropes that night, and it gave me all the confidence I needed to see myself belonging there. My parting advice to my staff was to ‘notice the people around you. Recognize that your skills and experience are a gift to pass on to others. As I often think about such things.’

Someone showed me the ropes that night, and it gave me all the confidence in his trustworthiness. Similarly, the pursuit of honesty and truth inspires my work in journalism. A beloved Bible passage of mine is Philippians 4:8 — ‘...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.’ That’s what this job is about — reporting what’s true in hopes of creating solutions toward a more admirable, excellent world. That world isn’t here yet. In the meantime, we tell the truth.

Several people deserve a thank you for their support during my editorship. In this issue, you’ll read about my grandfather, one of the earliest influences on my love for writing. My last words to him were thank you. I’ll say it again now. Thank you.

To my family, thank you for reading what I write.

To my friends, thank you for bearing with me when the newspaper had to come first sometimes. Thank you for believing in me more than I believed in myself.

To my fellow executive editors, thank you for being brilliant and leading the Old Gold & Black with tenacity.

To the editorial board, thank you for being boundlessly creative and good at what you do. Thank you for making this work fun.

To my adviser, Professor Phoebe Zerwick, thank you for your wisdom, advice and the home-cooked meals.

To my predecessor, Connor McNeely, thank you for trusting me with the paper you brought to new heights.

To my successor, Maddie Stopyra, you got this.

To the readers of the Old Gold & Black, thank you for giving purpose to what we do.

It’s sad to think there will be among the last words I write in the Old Gold & Black.

This paper has given me a place to belong on campus, and it’s given me work that I love to do. It’s been an honor.
Maps: Redistricting process comes under fire

The plaintiffs also asserted the legislature was well aware of their ability to create a majority-minority district in northeastern North Carolina. A letter given to the Republican majority by the Southern Coalition for Racial Justice (SCRJ) made that clear, they say.

The letter enclosed expert analysis finding evidence of racially polarized voting in the Black Belt counties in recent elections, the lawsuit said, and that urged the General Assembly to conduct its own examination of racially polarized voting.

"Nonetheless, the General Assembly either failed to conduct or failed to consider any Voting Rights Act analysis with respect to its 2023 state Senate plan," the lawsuit continued.

The 2023 maps, explained

According to a report from the non-partisan Quantifying Gerrymandering group at Duke University, the new maps drawn by the legislature are, "more gerrymandered and less responsive than maps struck down in 2021."

"Under these votes, both proposed maps (SB756 and SB757) would elect 11 Republicans and three Democrats to the U.S. House of Representatives while the re-meditiated map (2022) map replaces would have elected seven Republicans and seven Democrats," the group said.

The report continued: "The proposed congressional maps are both highly non-responsive to changes in the opinion of the electorate."

The new congressional map spends a number of high-profile congressional seats, including District 14's Rep. Jeff Jackson (D), who has gained popularity for his social media presence. Jackson responded to the elimination of his seat by announcing he was running for North Carolina's attorney general. Current Attorney General Josh Stein, a Democrat, will be running for Governor in 2024.

"Closer to home, Rep. Kathy Manning (D), who represents parts of the Triangle, though not the portion of Forsyth County in which Wake Forest resides, was drawn out of her seat. Manning has served since 2021 but is unlikely to win re-election with the new district makeup. Wake Forest is represented by Rep. Virginia Foxx (R), who has been in Congress for longer than some Wake Forest students have been alive. She is seeking re-election in 2024."

"The 2022 senate maps infamously split Wake Forest's campus in half, giving students different representation depending on which dorm they live in. In 2023, that district, District 32, covers the whole campus. This district is currently represented by Sen. Paul Lowe (D), who has served in the seat for almost a decade. He is up for re-election in 2024."

"Gov. Roy Cooper, who is finishing up the second of his only two possible terms, expressed his outrage with the new districts in a press release following their passage."

"Drawing in the back room and armed with their new law that keeps their plotting secret, they have used race and political parties to create districts that are historically discriminatory and unfair," Cooper said.

"Phil Berger, the Republican Senate Pro Tempore, disagreed, suggesting Democrats just need to compete more in larger, rural districts."

"I think those are fair maps...There's not a defined legal standard of what 'fair' is. And I don't think you can come up with one," Berger said on the "Frying it Together" podcast.

"Cooper's objections are moot under state law, however. In North Carolina, the Governor is unable to veto district maps. Such action wouldn't have been feasible either, given that Rep. Tricia Cotham's party switch earlier this spring gave Republicans a veto-proof supermajority in the General Assembly. Cotham was drawn into a favorable district with an almost seven-point Republican advantage for the 2023 redistricting cycle."

"It is unclear the path this case will take given the federal Appeals Court ruling, but in the short term, the maps are likely to remain. However, further litigation is all but assured.

Next week's candidate filing deadline will likely be the first real glimpse into the full impact of the 2023 district maps — the culmination of N.C. Republicans' nearly decade-long effort.

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SG requests more study space during finals

Resolution lobbies administration for 24/7 access to academic buildings beginning Dec. 3

The Physical Planning Committee conducted a Study Space Survey in October, which found that 89 percent of respondents were unsatisfied with the current study spaces available on the Reynolda campus. Additionally, 40 percent of respondents identified that academic common areas are the most common places they study, and 85 percent study past 11 p.m. during finals and midterm weeks.

Strassman stressed the importance of feedback and mentioned, "The survey helped us confirm what we already thought."

"I love studying in common areas, and according to the survey, plenty of others feel the same way. Nothing is more frustrating than when the library is full, and there is no place else to go besides your room," Zamboldi said when asked about why implementation of this program is essential to him.

Their findings highlight a significant gap in study space availability, especially during late hours. Implementing S.R.4 is expected to bridge this gap, offering students more options and flexibility in their study habits.

"We'd like to spread out demand across campus to benefit all students and increase overall space, so students are able to find places and times to study comfortably," Zamboldi said.

The resolution authors acknowledged the need for flexibility while collaborating with university administrators to address logistical and safety concerns. Buildings usually require staff and security for various reasons, primarily to prevent and respond to emergencies.

Besides that, liability issues could arise if students sustain injuries in the building during hours when staff is limited. To ensure these concerns are thought through, the bill authors have proposed a pilot program to open administrators' suggestions and input. They hope this will help reach as close to ideal conditions as possible for students who are seeking study space.

"S.R.4 is written to address student needs on campus," Strassmann said. "The pilot program is not to affect safety issues adversely; the focus is solely on common space."

Ensuring students are aware of this new provision is paramount to the bill authors, and Student Government plans to publicize the program through their weekly digest and other avenues in coordination with university administrators. Assuming the logistics are sorted, the co-chairs are confident that they can work toward maximum usage.

As students anticipate the roll-out of this program, the bill authors hope that it will not only meet the immediate demand for more study spaces but also lay the groundwork for a more accommodating and student-friendly campus in the future.

"We're optimistic that this program will be implemented and will increase student satisfaction," Cockerham said.

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Menstrual Access: SG and the Women’s Center collaborate to combat menstrual inequity

Continued from Page 1

High prices at Wake Forest and beyond

In North Carolina, menstrual products are taxed at 4.79% with an additional 2-3%, as they are considered luxury goods, not essential. This is part of a phenomenon referred to as the “Pink Tax” or “Tampon Tax” that 30 states enforce. Additionally, the “Pink Tax” is levied on most men’s products, such as razors, deodorant, face wash and toddler’s clothing, which are significantly more expensive than similar men’s products.

“The construct of the Pink Tax definitely adversely affects people who menstruate and need these items,” Assistant Director of the Women’s Center Hannah Rehm said.

At Wake Forest’s P.O.D. on Hearn Plaza, the price of menstrual products is even greater than the already lofty Target prices in Winston-Salem, with a pack of 10 “Always: Ultra-Thin” pads costing $4.99 and a pack of eight “Tampax Pearl: Super” tampons costing $6.29. These identical products are sold at Target in a pack of 44 pads for $6.29 and a pack of 36 tampons for $7.99.

Before the Menstrual Access Project provided free products, many students had to buy pads at Wake Forest prices, which were about 350% more expensive for pads and 360% more expensive for tampons per unit, compared to local Target prices.

The National Organization for Women estimates that the average woman will spend $20 on menstrual products per cycle and will spend an estimated $18,000 on those products by the time they enter menopause. Furthermore, women in 2023 make an average of 82 cents for every dollar a man makes — meaning women must incur these additional expenses with, on average, fewer financial resources.

I love not only providing [menstrual products] for anyone that may need them, but I also feel like we’re promoting that it’s not something to be embarrassed about. — Nora Crouch

Dispensaries and departments

Khelen Kuzmovich is the academic program coordinator of Integrative Student Services at the Wake Forest School of Divinity, where one of the project’s kiosks is located. She says the project has been effective and is a positive addition to the building, as she believes in destigmatizing menstruation.

“At the Divinity School, we’re all about justice, and that includes menstrual equity,” Kuzmovich said. “We wanted to display [the products] right here in our admissions suite — we’re proud of them.”

Divinity School student Nora Crouch agrees with the school’s sentiment and has used them herself.

“I love not only providing [menstrual products] for anyone that may need them, but also I feel like we’re promoting that it’s not something to be embarrassed about,” Crouch said. “It’s just a natural thing that happens to people.”

In Farrell Hall, kiosks are located in the Student Engagement Suite on the main floor and the Employer Relations Section (A05/A54). Service Desk Specialist Chandra Graham remembers the countless times students would come to her desk as a last resort. She said she would discreetly hand those students menstrual products behind the long, glass doors that separate the suite from the busy lobby.

According to Walsh, who began planning this project last year, the dispensaries are not located inside restrooms because they must abide by Wake Forest Facilities’ policy, which, according to Sizemore, places limits on what can be present in bathrooms due to potential accumulation of fecal matter. WFU Facilities did not respond to the Old Gold & Black’s request for an interview about the policy.

Amanda Horton works with Graham as senior associate director for Integrative Student Services at the School of Business. Horton is another advocate of the Menstrual Access Project and says she recognizes the need of students when it comes to menstrual product access.

“The Business School had been purchasing menstrual products on our own and keeping them up-front so [they were available to] students, faculty, staff or guests,” Horton said. “Now, we’re part of a larger university project, and it’s very visible…. We’re already part of the campus-wide system, and students are more aware of it, so they can come in and access it at any point on their own.”

Next steps

Organizers in Student Government and the Women’s Center are enthusiastic about the positive feedback regarding the project. They hope to potentially expand the Menstrual Access Project in the coming years.

“Student Government is a great partner of ours, and we will definitely love to see how the project goes because this is our pilot year,” Rehm said.

Part of these expansions include “Women’s Health 101,” a workshop where women can discuss female health questions to local health care providers in an informal setting.

The Menstrual Access Project is also working to address menstrual poverty in Forsyth County. Organizers will be holding “Period Packing Parties” once a month where students can help address menstrual poverty in Forsyth County by putting together packs of products that are delivered to schools and women’s shelters in the area.

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Dispensaries with an assortment of menstrual products have been placed in various buildings across campus such as the LGBTQ+ Center in Benson University Center (pictured).
Once strict regulations were lifted, their ability to explore college individually while still having each other’s backs became key.

“I think that as things started to go back to normal, our dependency on each other wasn’t as integral,” said Angelina Remnek.

The Remnek twins had distinct interests, and although they didn’t plan on pursuing their college careers jointly, Wake Forest just happened to be the place that appealed to them both in different ways.

“Academically, there’s no overlap whatsoever,” Sophia Remnek (’24) said. “We both major and minor in completely different things.”

Alli & Claire Boehm: On the Same Track

There are identical twins that naturally look the same, and some that even go a step further in trying to be carbon copies of each other. Then, there’s Alli and Claire Boehm.

Being identical twins has always fueled the Boehm twins’ efforts to be different from one another.

Initially, Claire and Alli Boehm had planned to go their separate ways for college. But, when Alli Boehm’s previous recruitment plans fell through, Wake Forest became her new option. This is when all hell broke loose.

“We were both runners and wanted to keep doing it in college, but we did not want to go to college together,” Claire Boehm (’24) said.

On Christmas day, after Claire Boehm had already committed to Wake Forest’s cross-country program, Coach Ashley Bronson gave Alli Boehm a call to ask about her decision.

It looked like the Christmas spirit wasn’t working its magic in lightening the tension. Claire’s sentiments remained strong — she wanted to be her own person.

After extensive pros and cons lists and serious family discussions, the twins reached an agreement.

“The day after Christmas, I committed to Wake Forest,” said Alli Boehm (‘24). “Claire [Boehm] was very mad at me.”

After extensive pros and cons lists and serious family discussions, the twins reached an agreement. “We both were mindful enough to think about how much this would help out, and so we decided to take the offer,” Christian Wing said. “Looking back now, I don’t regret it.”

Christian and Anthony Wing’s dynamic relationship also complemented their college trajectory. They were, in a way, getting the best of both worlds. According to Christian Wing, while he focused on academics, Anthony Wing focused on the social scene. Soon, they were doubling each other’s networks.

“I remember Christian had already sent his initial deposit to [Boston College], so it was a very sporadic change of plans,” Anthony Wing (’23) said.

Anthony Wing had already committed to Wake Forest, Niki McInteer, the admissions officer for Latin America, had remained in close contact with the twins. After receiving only one “yes,” she called to inquire about Christian Wing. Determined to welcome both on campus that upcoming fall semester, Undergraduate Admissions was quick to propose a counteroffer, increasing their scholarship with the condition that the twins commit together.

“Since the deadline for the deposit was that same day, we had to decide immediately,” Anthony Wing (’23) said. “We sat on a call with our parents for hours, and after constant back and forth made our choice.”

Being part of a family of five that means their parents would be paying three college tuitions simultaneously. As the twins described, that’s a lot of money.

“We were both mindful enough to think about how much this would help out, and so we decided to take the offer,” Christian Wing said. “Looking back now, I don’t regret it.”

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“I was very immature my first semester, so the fact that I wasn’t 100% detached from my family kept me more grounded,” Anthony Wing said. “I needed an accountability partner.”

The initial contingent decision to go to Wake Forest together ended up working wonders.

Angelina & Sofia Remnek: The Sisterly Bond

Arriving as a freshman at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic was intimidating, to say the least. Thankfully, for Angelina and Sophia Remnek, coming to Wake Forest together alleviated the disadvantages that came with the highly restricted campus.

“It was definitely helpful to have someone there that wasn’t only family but my best friend,” Angelina Remnek (’24) said. “Thanking going to school together meant that we were able to lean on each other.”
A year ago, my grandfather suffered cardiac arrest after contracting COVID-19. He found himself in the hospital, and I found myself on I-40 East, heading home to see him for the last time.

My grandfather had never been healthy — bound to vices like tobacco in his old age. He was never one for vegetables or exercise, but what he lacked in health, he made up for in resilience. He'd been to the hospital many times before and had always come home.

After getting my visitor name tag from the hospital receptionist, I rode the elevator to the cardiovascular floor. A nurse met me in the hallway and decked me out in PPE — gloves, a gown and an N95 mask.

His body was in the hospital room, but I sensed his spirit was elsewhere. Life on earth had been a passage, and he was nearing home.

I was physically in the room too, but my mind was elsewhere, soaring through the past. I thought of all my memories with him. All the text messages. All the phone calls he'd made. All the phone calls I could have made. All the voicemails he'd left because sometimes I'd be too busy to pick up. I laughed under my N95 mask when I remembered how he'd always sign his text messages with "Papa Mike" as if I didn't know who was texting me. He didn't understand iPhone contacts.

My visit with him was strange. It was not unlike any other conversation I had had with him before, but I could feel this one was different. It had weight.

He was visibly weak and could barely ask me questions. I could hardly answer because I was choking back tears.

What was there to say?

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My grandfather was a storyteller. He always joked with me that I should put his stories in "my paper." What he meant was this newspaper, the Old Gold & Black, of which I was news editor during the last few months he was alive. I know he'd be proud to see my name at the top of the masthead with his story finally in the paper — the last paper I'll ever put out as editor-in-chief.

He was an early influence on my love for writing. While my parents were working full time, he often watched me and my siblings after school and during the summer. He surrounded us with stories.

He had one of those car DVD players that could be strapped to the back of the front seats. He would record Scooby-Doo episodes with his camcorder and burn them on DVDs, so we could watch shows on our drive home. Looking back, I realize how funny this was. The drive was not long, and we weren't rowdy kids. There was no need to keep us entertained like that. I think he liked hearing us laugh at the characters and gasp as the mysteries unfolded, and I think, secretly, he enjoyed them, too.

For an afternoon snack, he'd pop Hot Pockets in the oven, and we'd listen to him tell stories of growing up poor in rural West Virginia.

What do our last words say about a life?

CHRISTA DUTTON
Editor-in-Chief

My grandfather was the ninth of his parent's 10 children. He grew up in Van, which is one of those towns with people that could make it feel larger than it was. In 2020, its population was 138. There are university lecture classes larger than that.
He told stories of playing in the mountains with his brothers. He told stories of his dad working in the coal mines. He told us about moving to North Carolina and meeting Margaret, the woman who’d become his wife and my grandmother. He told scary stories, funny stories and serious ones too. Most of them existed somewhere between fact and fiction, and the fun of it was discerning which was which. His stories commanded our attention, and his imagination never diminished. My grandfather also told stories with his camcorder, which he used to do more than just record television shows. From infancy to high school, he captured his grandkids’ upbringing, so we could watch our memories, as well as his. From infancy to high school, he documented. My siblings and I rode bikes through the woods. We went on golf cart adventures. And my grandfather was there, recording it all. He’d ask us interview questions and make us feel like movie stars.

My grandfather, the one in the hospital that felt so strange, I believe I told him everything I needed to say. He also wanted us to know where he came from — how hard he had worked to raise children smart enough to build successful careers. His daughter, my mother, provided opportunities for his grandchildren — who would go on to be some of the first in our family to earn Bachelor’s degrees.

Today, a box of these videos sits in my parents’ living room. We went fishing. We played basketball and turned our driveway into PNC Arena. We’d go on golf cart adventures. And my grandfather was there, recording it all. He’d ask us interview questions and make us feel like movie stars.

What my grandpa was trying to do, I think, was remember. He passed down his West Virginia stories to preserve them. He wanted us to know where he came from — how hard he had worked to raise children smart enough to build successful careers. His daughter, my mother, provided opportunities for his grandchildren. He wanted us to know where he came from — how hard he had worked to raise children smart enough to build successful careers. His daughter, my mother, provided opportunities for his grandchildren — who would go on to be some of the first in our family to earn Bachelor’s degrees.

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I recently watched a short documentary film by Jay Rosenblatt called “How Do You Measure A Year?” The film is a compilation of video footage that Rosenblatt took of his daughter every year on her birthday from age two to 18. He asks her simple questions like “What are your favorite things in life right now?” as well as more complex questions like “What is power?” Her answers show how her opinions and circumstances shift, documenting how she’s changed over her life.

The documentary’s title is inspired by the song “Seasons of Love” from the musical “Rent.” The lyrics go like this:

Five hundred, twenty-five thousand, six hundred minutes
How do you measure, measure a year?
In daylight, in sunshine
In midnight, in cups of coffee
In inches, in miles
In laughter, in strife

This song strikes me because years are composed of the little things — the sunsets, the cups of coffee, the inches. People tend to forget the little things unless they’re documented. There’s a few home videos that are different for me to watch. My grandpa is recording and trying to ask me questions, and I brush him off. As a child, I was much more interested in watching a television show or playing with my dollhouse than talking with my grandpa. Sometimes, his videos got old, and we all grew a little annoyed. Little did I know, those videos would mean so much to me as an adult. When we miss him, we can play the DVDs and hear his deep laugh once again. The videos give us our memories back.

The videos also help me remember what formed me. I recently watched a short documentary film by Jay Rosenblatt called “How Do You Measure A Year?” The film is a compilation of video footage that Rosenblatt took of his daughter every year on her birthday from age two to 18. He asks her simple questions like “What are your favorite things in life right now?” as well as more complex questions like “What is power?” Her answers show how her opinions and circumstances shift, documenting how she’s changed over her life.

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The videos also help me remember what formed me. The afternoons eating Hot Pockets, watching cartoons and listening to my grandfather’s stories made me who I am, year after year.

Toward the end, the song asks, “How can you measure the life of a woman or a man?” The song’s answer?

In truth that she learned
Or in times that he cried

In bridges he burned
Or the way that she died

***

A few days after that hospital visit, my mom called me. She was in the hospital room with my grandfather as he was slipping away. She put the phone on speaker, put it near his ear and told me to say goodbye. Here had come the moment to say the last thing I’d ever say to a man who had meant so much to me.

“Thank you,” I said. It felt like a shallow response. I had said “thank you” to the barista who made my coffee that morning and to the stranger who held the door open. But what was there to say?

“I love you,” I said. “Hard, but good,” I said. 

Or in times that he cried

Perhaps our gratitude to a person lies not in what we say to them in a moment, for a moment is too fleeting to encompass a lifetime. It’s not what we say, but rather it’s in understanding what they’ve been saying all along. Thinking back to that last conversation I had with my grandfather, the one in the hospital that felt so strange, I believe I told him everything I needed to say.

“How’s school?” he said.

“Hard, but good,” I said.

“You still writing?”

“Yes, papa. Still writing.”

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Wildfires continue to burn in Stokes County
Gov. Cooper declares state of emergency, including Forsyth County

ELLA KLEIN
Environment Editor

A wildfire ignited in nearby Stokes County on Nov. 18 continues to burn.

The fire began in the Sauratown Mountains, a popular place for hiking, swimming and biking in the Piedmont Triad. The range is named after the indigenous Saura tribe that originally resided there and contains both Hanging Rock and Pilot Mountain State Park, which are popular hiking spots for Wake Forest students and the club Outdoor Pursuits.

Before the fire on the Sauratown Mountain chain ignited, a State of Emergency was already in effect for fires in the western part of the state. North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper issued a State of Emergency on Nov. 8.

On Nov. 20, Cooper issued an executive order to include 16 other counties in the Piedmont Triad, including Forsyth County. The emergency area was expanded because the North Carolina Drought Management Advisory Council observed that the drought conditions this month are the most extreme the state has seen since 2017.

"The fires and the continued droughts across the state pose a risk to public health and safety, and we want to ensure that all residents and their property remain safe and protected," Cooper said in a press release about the declaration.

This State of Emergency is in effect for 30 days, ending Dec. 20.

As of Sunday, the wildfire that started in the Sauratown Mountains had spread over 800 acres and was 90% contained. Wildfire containment is defined by how much of the fire has been encapsulated within a containment line that the fire will not cross.

Bradley Watson, a fire investigator at the City of Winston-Salem Fire Department, saw firsthand how hard it was to contain the fires.

"The fire itself is a hard task to control," Watson said. "The easiest thing to do in situations such as this is to allow the fire to burn itself out. This is accomplished with backfires, which are fires set in coordination with crew placement to control burn areas, so the fire has no fuel once it reaches it. Also, cutting in fire lines well in advance of the fire where it's much safer to do so helps to remove the fuel, so the fire will no longer be able to sustain burning."

Further attempts to control the blaze were heavily impacted by the lack of rain and humidity, creating the dry conditions seen across western North Carolina. However, some rainfall that happened early Tuesday, Nov. 20, helped get a large part of the wildfire under control.

"There were no reported injuries due to the fire. At times, more than 100 firefighters were working to control the wildfire, which was hard to combat due to restraints created by the rough terrain. The smaller fire department of Stokes County outsourced to neighboring fire departments, including those in Forsyth County."

"Though we are different, we are the same, and with that, acted in the same fashion to assist in the efforts to control the wildfire in question," Watson said. "Our primary focus was to provide manpower and equipment for structural protection to the properties on and around Sauratown Mountain."

Officials evacuated several private homes along Sauratown Mountain Road, as well as Mountain Youth Top Camp, a local summer camp. Camp Hanes, another popular summer camp for young Winston-Salem residents, was also in danger of evacuation but was deemed safe.

Jackie Sparnicht, a senior at Wake Forest and a Winston-Salem local, is an outdoor enthusiast who is sad to see nearby mountains ablaze, like they have been in the past.

"I remember when Pilot Mountain caught on fire a couple of years ago — that was really devastating for the community, and it's sad to see that type of damage happen again," Sparnicht said. "One of my favorite pastimes is spending time outdoors, and a lot of the time as a Winston-Salem resident you have to outsource to more rural areas like Stokes County."

With incidents like the Weaver Fertilizer Plant fire in 2022 or the smoke that drifted into the east coast from the 2023 Canadian Wildfires, many residents are becoming increasingly concerned with exposure to poor air quality in Forsyth County.

"The largest health impact would be attributed to the smoke," Watson said. "It is known to exacerbate health issues, mostly in regard to the respiratory system. Other community and health issues could be runoff from firefighting operations, the logistics and management of people and equipment and the obvious effects of evacuations on the people and properties involved."

Wildfires not only have serious strains on the local fire departments and personnel but also on the communities around them — especially those that have heavy tourism related to outdoor spaces, like state parks.

"I'm nervous as I feel like there's been an uptick in fires around North Carolina recently — not just on behalf of the state parks but the communities around them," Sparnicht said. "I'll be interesting to see how further burn bans are implemented, and how other measures are put in as they don't know what started the fires yet. Especially if that affects camping and hiking, which are some of the main attractions of the local state parks, and other privately owned businesses that cater towards the outdoors."
Sleigh the holidays, give the gift of sustainability

A gift-giving guide to make this holiday season eco-friendly and bright

UNA WILSON & ELLA KLEIN
Environment Editors

Winter is upon us. Car heaters are turned to their highest blast. Fall cardigans stay hidden beneath winter parkas and gloves. The jing-a-ling of the Salvation Army volunteers standing outside of Trader Joe’s gives a merry backdrop to the hordes of shoppers clambering to get their mittened hands on the sweet seasonal peppermint Joe-Joes. String lights twinkle above the pine-smelling Christmas tree pop-up stands on the side of the road. The aesthetic excitement of the holidays dazzles and brightens Winston-Salem’s bustling streets and storefronts.

An estimated 4.6 million pounds of wrapping paper get produced in the U.S. annually — nearly half of which ends up in landfills.

The stress of holiday gift shopping, however, can make that cheer feel more malicious than merry. The holidays are also notorious for encouraging people to buy and consume more than they normally would throughout the year. On average, Americans produce 25% more waste, or one million tons of extra waste, each week during the holiday season. This holiday season, show your friends and family you care about them (and also the planet).

If you’re feeling worried about over-consumption spoiling your holiday fun, fear not! We have compiled a guide to sustainable gift-giving to ensure your presents warm the hearts of your loved ones and keep the Grinch — also known as climate change — away from your hearth.

1. Regift what you already have

Sometimes, the best place to shop for gifts is in the aisles of your own home! Gifting personal items that you no longer use, such as hand-me-down clothing items or jewelry, not only saves you money but adds a personal touch to your presents.

2. Homemade gifts show them you care

The recent popularity of bunting made of dried oranges and foraged Christmas wreaths have put sustainability-centered holiday decor and gifts on the map. Many DIY projects are easier than one might think — like making homemade vanilla extract or hot-cocoa mix in cute mason jars you can decorate.

3. Make a donation in someone else’s name

Giving money to a foundation or nonprofit that does work for a cause of personal meaning to you or your loved one can be a way to direct your financial resources to places where they are most needed. Most foundations will allow you to make the donation in the name of another person, which allows you to recognize and celebrate your loved one for the holiday season while placing your cash in hands that will use it for change. There are hundreds of nonprofit organizations on the local, statewide and national level accepting donations year-round — only a click away. Local environmental-focused organizations, like Piedmont Environmental Alliance, Second Harvest Food Bank and the Yadkin River Keeper, deserve some holiday generosity.

4. Shop local

Winston-Salem is home to many thriving local businesses, all with stunning holiday gifts to give your loved ones. Shopping locally not only reduces carbon emissions that come from shipping and travel but supports your community and local economy. Local shops like The Green House located on Poplar Street or Remedry Apothecary in Pfafftown make in-house balms, salves, candles and tinctures, all which are perfect for the winter season. Piedmont Environmental Alliance, a local environmental non-profit, even has a useful list of Green Business Members that have a pledge to sustainability, including A/perture Cinema, Camino Bakery and Village Fabric Shop.

5. Wrap your gifts sustainably

An estimated 4.6 million pounds of wrapping paper get produced in the U.S. annually — nearly half of which ends up in landfills. According to a study at Sundale Research. To cut down on waste and retain the fun of unwrapping a surprise gift, opt for used clothes or scarves to wrap your presents instead of paper. Brown paper from old grocery bags can also be used to cover your presents without consuming plastic-coated, store-bought wrapping paper. Brown paper biodegrades quickly and requires fewer resources to produce, as well. You can even use newspapers like this one — after you’ve read it of course. Saving your wrapping paper is also a great way to cut back on paper-related waste. Small changes can add up to make a large impact on the wellbeing of the planet this gift-giving season. We hope this gift guide will help you jingle all the way to sustainable holidays ahead!

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On average, Americans produce 25% more waste, or one million tons of extra waste, each week during the holiday season.
The call left unanswered: A review of President Wente's annual address

DILLON CLARK
Senior Columnist

Over the past few months, our Wake Forest community has faced a mountain of adversity and scrutiny. Students, faculty and the administration alike have been subject to significant pressure as the Israel-Hamas war rages on. The combination of strong emotions of grief, uncertainty and pressure is exhausting and overwhelming for our community. As we navigate that crisis, the community also continues to reckon with its fall from the U.S. News & World Report rankings’ top 30 national universities. In such difficult and stressful times, we seek inspiration from our leaders, specifically from our university president.

On Thursday, Nov. 16, Wake Forest President Dr. Susan Wente had an opportunity to meet this expectation when she stepped up to the podium for her annual presidential address. While the speech had its high points, it still couldn’t help from feeling disappointed as I left. Don’t get me wrong, it was not a bad speech. After all, Wente had the opportunity to celebrate a few well-earned accomplishments. But in the past year, the struggles our community continues to face — between the tension of the Israel-Hamas war and the U.S. News rankings — were not substantially addressed.

For example, Wente did not mention or address Wake Forest’s drop in the U.S. News rankings. To my knowledge, the last time Wente or the administration commented on the matter was in September, in an additional statement to the Old Gold & Black where she said, “We’re going to continue to focus on our values and strategy, and we’re not going to change our mission based on what the U.S. News is doing, or what it’s deciding to measure.” While it is true that such rankings fail to define us as a community and that our school has not declined academically in the past year, many members of our community have felt a sting of disappointment. So maybe we should care a bit. As a multi-variable evaluation of our school, the U.S. News ranking rightly pointed out flaws within our university — such as a lack of economic and social diversity.

During her address, Wente touted present initiatives and developments. For example, Wente highlighted the university’s decision to create a childcare center after decades of advocacy from faculty and staff. The construction of the childcare center is a great investment in the Wake Forest community and serves as a great example of how the good our community can accomplish through advocacy. In addition to the new center, Wente spoke about numerous recent upgrades and investments on campus, including a $1 million investment this summer to renovate classrooms. Wente further elaborated on the university’s plan to invest in residential, retail and community services off-campus in Winston-Salem, including an initiative to redevelop the area surrounding Wake Forest’s athletic stadiums.

These developments and investments are exciting improvements to our university, and I commend Wente and the Wake Forest administration for their hard work and dedication. But at the same time, only celebrating success ignores the bitter realities of the present. Without a doubt, the U.S. News rankings and the Israel-Hamas war put Wente in a tough situation. But the greatest leaders aren’t born in the easiest moments. Rather, they are born in moments of struggle — when they can offer light in a time of darkness.

The way I see it right now, our community is wounded by our struggles. We are tired. We are frustrated. We are anxious. This speech was Wente’s opportunity to nurture and care for these wounds. Yet, it was merely a Band-Aid. It covers the wound but does not heal it.

Wente’s speech mentioned the problems but did not address them. Now — more than ever — healing, care and active leadership are desperately needed. On that front, the speech did not answer the call.

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Multiple times in her speech, Wente addressed the violence — urging the community to come together during this difficult time for communal grieving. She praised how students have modeled the creation of spaces for peaceful reflection, learning and prayer in this adverse time.

While her words are inspiring and urge us to come together in this time of suffering, they also did not sufficiently address certain anguish within the community. For example, the war brings difficulty for our professors within the classroom. Even on such an intense and sensitive issue, professors continue to be left without guidance from the administration about how to foster positive, productive and respectful conversations around the current conflict. Wente’s speech was an opportunity to guide faculty on how to approach this issue and share active steps taken by the administration, yet that call is still unanswered.

Wente’s speech did touch on some great improvements within our community. Wente and Wake Forest are undoubtedly dedicated to a brighter future — both on and off campus. We should be excited for what is to come.

For example, Wente announced a few exciting initiatives and developments. For example, Wente highlighted the university’s decision to create a childcare center after decades of advocacy from faculty and staff. The construction of the childcare center is a great investment in the Wake Forest community and serves as a great example of how the good our community can accomplish through advocacy. In addition to

Wake Forest President Dr. Susan Wente delivers her annual address on Nov. 16 in Bredenle Recital Hall. Senior Columnist Dillon Clark writes that Wente’s speech fell short of his expectations.
What is the best season on campus?

A love letter to spring's vibrant air

LOUREDES LOPEZ

Staff Columnist

Wake Forest University awakens with a vibrant splendor as spring's colors and picturesque scenes begin to embelish the campus. Far from the cold and neglectful ambience that winter embodies, spring creates a warm and welcoming embrace that creates the perfect backdrop for students' academic pursuits and reflections.

As the magnolia blossoms unfurl and dogwoods paint the landscape with delicate petals, the warm breezes tune in rhythm with the awakening world around it. Spring represents more than just a change in the seasons at Wake Forest; it represents the promise of gentle breezes and bright afternoons. It is a time when academic knowledge and natural world come together to create a harmonious whole. As a lover of the outdoors, I find that this time of year always brightens my mood and makes my stressful academic workload not as daunting as it is during other seasons.

Although the vibrant scene and mood that spring creates at Wake Forest are reason enough to name it as the best time of the year, the rebirth of the campus, Far from the cold and neglectful picturesque scenes begin to embellish the expansive perfect environment for increased outdoor shine and warmer temperatures. Friends outside, taking in the rays of sun-winter, I am able to study and talk to my professors throughout the day. Unlike during the fall season, the fall creates at Wake Forest are reason enough to name it as the best time of the year celebrations make the season truly unmatched.

Spring weather is unparalleled. It is the perfect combination between summer and fall as the temperatures are mild, like in the fall, but the skies are clear with bright sunshine. As winter relinquishes its hold, the arrival of spring ushers in more than just a change in temperature — it ushers in a shift in the collective mood and energy of the Wake Forest community. The emergence of vibrant blooms and the subtle warmth in the air create an environment conducive to elevated spirits. During the spring, I feel surges of productivity throughout the day. Unlike during the winter, I am able to study and talk to my friends outside, taking in the rays of sunshine and warmer temperatures.

Moreover, the mild weather provides the perfect environment for increased outdoor activities, contributing to an increase in physical activity and social interactions. You start to see more people throwing frisbees or playing spikeball on Hearn Plaza. One of my favorite spring activities are the picnics my friends and I organize on Hearn Plaza or at Reynolda Village. The expansive lawns and inviting green spaces become communal gathering places, fostering a sense of camaraderie among students. Whether engaging in impromptu study sessions under the shade of blossoming trees or participating in recreational sports on sunlit afternoons,
Higher education must be more cautious when speaking out on public crises

By unnecessarily taking positions on domestic and international affairs, universities complicate their guiding educational mission

JACOB GRAFF
Contributing Columnist

Recently, the question of when, how and whether institutions of higher education (IHEs) should respond to both domestic and international crises — especially those that have little to do with their core education missions — has come to the forefront of national discourse. Today, international conflicts abound, with the most notable being those in Europe and the Middle East. But there are other issue areas like the Armenian-Azerbajiani conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and the Myanmar Civil War, where thousands have been killed in ethnic conflict, that get no attention from university presidents.

Why are some crises deserving of a statement of support and others not?

Wake Forest has a recorded, yet inconsistent history of commenting publicly on domestic and international issues beyond the two most recent crises. Former Wake Forest President Dr. Nathan Hatch openly discussed the Haitian earthquake in 2010 and the Atlanta mass shooting that targeted Asian Americans in a time of rising hate. The latter statement even took a stance on “gender violence.” Yet Hatch did not opine on all such events. For example, Wake Forest released no statement on the San Bernadino shooting in 2015 that killed 16 people. Half of that total were killed in Atlanta.

When it comes to statements, arbitrary decision-making opens the door for confusion on when, how and why schools comment on issues outside of their educational mandate. Clarity and consistency on this topic of public university statements are of paramount importance. Schools must adopt and make known a position of neutrality on political issues.

The decision to release a statement at all seems less than systematic. Wake Forest, along with the vast majority of IHEs, seems to struggle here. If it cannot, or will not, refrain from making statements on issues that may be captured by inclusive mottoes like “For Human- Rights,” but fall outside of its core educational mandate, transparency is the best alternative. The school would do well to establish and publicize criteria for their public pronouncements so students, staff, faculty, administrators and parents can know how Wake Forest sees its role in the rhetorical ecosystem of higher education and public crises.

The decision to make a statement is inherently political. As a result, there will be those who advocate for the university to refrain from commenting on all crises because it is difficult to establish a clear definition of when a statement deserves release. The Kalven Report, drafted at the University of Chicago in 1967, recommends that universities not adopt a “collective position” on “political or social” topics. But that does not mean that universities cannot offer messages of generic support to impacted individuals within the campus community. The University of Chicago itself sent out messages to students in the wake of Hamas’s attacks offering resources and guidance in light of the conflict. The university, therefore, must determine what statement adequately balances student need and institutional neutrality.

Crafting a public statement that satisfies involved parties while maintaining the university’s reputation is critical and difficult. Taking a stand on any isolated issue is inherently risky. Antisemitism and Islamophobia have both risen as the Israel-Hamas war rages on. Statements that mention one without the other have been seen in the past as the university taking sides. The unavoidable reality is that any incomprehensive stance will be incongruent with a faction of the administrative, faculty or student body’s opinions, and effectively censure minority voices. All schools must take immense care in ensuring their speech does not limit that of others.

Wake Forest’s recent statements have been a mixed bag. On Oct. 10, the school released a short statement calling all violent acts “an affront to our shared humanity.” On Oct. 16, Wake Forest expressly condemned all terroristic and violent acts. But as the infamous motto says, “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.” Since Wake Forest has no way to confirm that all members of the campus community feel their expressed view, it should refrain from taking any stance on this releasing others ongoing or in the future. Instead, all statements should center community members’ well-being and offer resources for support, as Wake Forest stated on Oct. 10, and continue to provide long-held tenets of academic freedom and free expression, as Wake Forest stated on Oct. 16.

Stated plainly, my advice to IHEs is this: Commit to institutional neutrality officially and publicly. Do not attempt to appease all viewpoints or with lengthy re-frains on the various forms of hate that exist. It is a thankless, impossible task. It is preferable to avoid such topics altogether. Short-and-sweet boilerplate statements will anger those who believe the university must take a stand on the issue at hand. Yet they are essential to managing public expectations the next time a crisis strikes and the administration debates how to respond.

Any attempt to replicate the previous structure in place for all public statements on public affairs, the task of deciding whether to comment at all becomes simplified. It is still preferable that schools prioritize silence, because the more a school speaks out, the more likely it is that internal debate is stifled and external criticism is raised. But if schools limit their statements to community well-being and refuse to take a stand, they should feel comfortable in making those decisions that impact students, faculty or administrators. Of course, education issues are political issues too, and pose problems regarding the question of public comment. As the above example argues, universities have the right to respond to social issues that “threaten the very mission of the university and its values of free inquiry.” Only within these limited parameters should IHEs take public stances on the social and political problems of the day.

When schools routinely promote value judgements rather than community support, they run the risk of outrage. Georgetown University President John J. DeGioia sent out an email on Oct. 8 — the day after the shooting that targeted Asian Americans in Atlanta — condemning the violence in Israel and offering support to impacted members of the community. In an Oct. 20 editorial, the Georgetown Voice, an independent university news magazine, condemned the first statement for reducing Palestinians to terrorists — which it did not — and for not contextualizing Hamas’s terrorism — which it did not and should not. In this example, a relatively political statement, meaning one in which the deaths of only one side were acknowledged, was criticized for not being expressly political enough, albeit in the other, correct direction. Even neutral statements, such as those made by Stanford University, faced pushback from “dozens of faculty [who] signed a letter demanding ‘unambiguous condemnation’ of the Hamas attacks.”

This advice, therefore, is not a panacea, and following it will not pacify all who have vested interests in making sure the university speaks the way they want it to. But it does provide the best balance between the values of the university, its campus community, and the outside world. Schools are too often paralyzed and confused by community demands on their public responses to crises. But they do not have to be. By committing to a policy of transparency in deciding when the university comments and brief neutrality in deciding how they comment, universities put themselves on a path to long-term public relations success.

These crises revolve around theories that have no clear answers, and graduates must decide uneasily in a world divided, engrossed in black-and-white thinking. Is violence against civilians ever justified? Is Russia exercising legitimate claims to historical lands? Ultimately, IHEs should try to avoid taking a stance on these topics. For the sake of the university, these are questions for professors, not presidents, to answer.
Football season ends on sour note with 35-31 loss to Syracuse

Wake Forest finishes with 4-8 record; streak of seven consecutive bowl games ends

COOPER SULLIVAN
Sports Editor

For a football season full of missteps, shortcomings and glaring question marks, it was fitting that Wake Forest’s season finale, a 35-31 defeat to Syracuse (6-6, 2-6 ACC), included all three.

On Saturday, the Demon Deacons dropped their fifth-straight game, earned the program’s worst record since 2015 and ended their seven-year postsea-son streak.

“It’s a terrible trifecta, paired with the fact that Wake Forest is only two years removed from an ACC Championship ap-pearance, which would lead many fans to believe the 2023 season was a total failure,” Clawson said.

Head Coach Dave Clawson refuses to look at it that way.

“I’m not happy with our record, but these guys showed up every day,” Clawson said. “They prepared hard, they practiced hard, they played hard down to the very, very final play.”

He continued: “We’re not in the “happy-to-be-close” business, and I under-stand that we’re expected to win football games. We accept that expectation, but I am proud of our players. A lot of times you go through years like this, and you seem to give up. That never happened with this group.”

There were plenty of instances of this never-say-die mentality — like corner-back Jamaree Glasker’s goal-line stand after a 15-yard leaping penalty from lineman Jacob Roberts nearly gifted Syracuse another score before halftime, or quarter-back Michael Kern orchestrating four touchdown drives to keep up with the Orange’s offense — but unfortunately, it was not enough.

Down four with 5:44 remaining in the game, Wake Forest forced Syracuse to punt for the first time in only four minutes after a missed field goal attempt by Roberts (7 tackles) and safety Nick Mustapha, who had made some plays, [and on other plays], we didn’t.”

With the win, Syracuse claimed bowl eligibility for the second-straight year. For Wake Forest, the offseason starts ear-lier than years past. Had it won, Wake Forest would have secured the final of 82 bowl spots with only a 5-7 record due to its high Academic Progress Rate (APR).

Clawson said that meetings with the team to determine the course of action for the 2024 season begin next week. Both Kern and Mustapha, who would be using their sixth and fifth years of eligi-bility, respectively, said they need more time as to whether they will return to the program the following year.

Contact Cooper Sullivan at sulc20@wfu.edu

Quarterback Michael Kern posted ever-the offensive production was

from Kern (17-for-24, 261 yds, 3 TD, INT, 9 rush, 30 yd), two runs up the middle from Justice Ellison (11 rush, 38 yds, TD) and a defensive pass interference from a Syracuse defender put the Demon Deacons well in striking distance within the 10-yard line. Because Wake For est failed a two-point conversion on the previous score — a beautiful back-corner catch from Wesley Grimes (2 rec, 17 yds, 2 TD) — Clawson and Co. were in four-down territory.

After taking a third-down sack at the line of scrimmage, there was one play left. Evading pressure, Kern rolled out to his right and sent one last prayer into the endzone, a low throw ball to Morin. Defensive back Jason Simmons Jr. dove in front of Morin, intercepting the pass, extinguishing the visiting team’s hopes of a comeback and ending Wake Forest’s sea-son.

“I could have potentially gotten Taylor Morin on rhythm,” Kern said about the final play. “I’m sure I’m gonna go back and watch that on tape and wish you could correct things, but in the moment, I didn’t. Moved out, tried to get him a low ball and just missed a little bit.”

“[Kern] was really clean," Clawson said. "I mean, we didn't have any turns-overs till the fourth down one, and I can’t fault him for that. On fourth down you got to at least get the ball in the air and give yourself a chance."

Clawson defended the decision to go for two after Grimes by saying he did not want the game to go to overtime.

“At that point, we hadn’t got a stop the whole day,” Clawson said. “And, you know, their kicker is better than our kick-er. I just wanted to try to win the game for Wake Forest. It was a terrible trifecta, paired with the fact that Wake Forest is only two years removed from an ACC Championship appearance, which would lead many fans to believe the 2023 season was a total failure.”

Wake Forest secondary multiple times, including on a 47-yard pass from tight end Dan Villari (2-for-2, 51 yd, 13 rush, 51 yd, 1 rec, 13 yd, 2 tot TD).

“We just didn’t execute on that level. We had to adjust, and on some plays, we made some plays, and on other plays, we didn’t.”

AP Poll rankings in parentheses; records updated through Tuesday, Nov. 28
Transfer portal claims two quarterbacks
Mitch Griffis and Santino Marucci to leave in May

COOPER SULLIVAN
Sports Editor

Mitch Griffis, Wake Forest's starting quarterback for much of the 2023 season, intends to enter the transfer portal. The redshirt sophomore announced his decision on Twitter, on Tuesday morning.

"I am incredibly thankful for my four years at Wake Forest," Griffis wrote. "The friendships and memories I have created will last a lifetime. A special thank you to Coach Clawson and Coach [Ruggerio] for giving me an opportunity to live out my dream. I will always be a Demon Deacon."

Griffis was the Demon Deacons' starting quarterback for nine games but was benched for redshirt junior Kaden Weeks over the course of 9 games. With the Griffis and Marucci's departures, only two scholarship quarterbacks remain in the Wake Forest quarterback room — Kern and freshman Charlie Joffrion. Joffrion, a three-star recruit from Walson High School in Marietta, Ga., will enroll early during the upcoming spring semester.

On Tuesday afternoon, Kern announced that he will be returning for his sixth and final year of college football on Instagram. During a press conference before the Nov. 18 game against Notre Dame, Head Coach Dave Clawson said that next year's starting quarterback will not be named in the spring, like Griffis was.

"It will be an open competition and whoever wins that job, whether they're on the roster now or not on the roster now, will be the best quarterback," Griffis wrote.

Stillerman: I've got the 'Deacon Blues
For some, being a Wake Forest fan this football season is truly heart-breaking

MATTIE STILLERMAN
Staff Writer

As the young daughter of two Wake Forest alumni, I used to wear a cheerleader uniform, put temporary tattoos on my cheeks and wave my black and gold pom poms high up in the air as we traveled across the country for football games. I love the Demon Deacons.

But what happened to them? As you have probably seen, the football team was not very good this season. At this point, after leaving most home games as defeated as those on the field, I need to feel the Old Gold and Black spirit again. Experiencing this season has been like experiencing heartbreak — it's almost like I have gone through the five stages of grief. And I don't know how much more grief my heart can take.

Weeks 1-2 — Denial
At the beginning of every football season, my hopes and dreams were yet to be sacked. I'm an optimist and truly believe every seas-son is our season. This year, I was not just the daughter of a Demon Deacon, but I was a Demon Deacon myself. For my freshman season, my hopes were higher and my dreams were bigger than ever.

The team started out strong with a 37-17 win against Elon at home. The student section was roaring, and the marching band was electric (shout out to my favorite cheer "How 'Bout Them Deacs") because the Demon Deacons were 1-0.

After an ominous thunderstorm at Allegany Stadium the next week, the Demon Deacons brought down the inferior black and gold — the Commodores. How 'bout them Deacs? 2-0!

What could go wrong?

Weeks 3-5 — Anger
Nothing was going right when Wake Forest went to Norfolk, Va. to take on Old Dominion in Week 3. This game was infuriating to say the least. It seemed like the Demon Deacons had forgotten how to play football. Even though the Demon Deacons were favored to win by a significant margin, they were losing 17-0 at halftime. Somehow, the visiting team rallied and pulled out a 27-24 win.

Going into the parents' weekend game against Georgia Tech unbeaten, I was hoping that the Old Dominion game was just a fluke and the Demon Deacons would make my parents proud. Yet, alas, the Demon Deacons went down. Wake Forest had a million chances to win this game, but it came down to the fundamentals. The home team had five turnovers, threw two intercep-tions and had three field goals blocked by Georgia Tech. As the Demon Deacons lost 30-16, my dad and I held our heads in our hands. This is what we needed before taking on the Clemson Tigers. Hopefully, the bye week would help.

Weeks 6-8 — Bargaining
Even though they lost, I was so proud of Wake Forest for how they played in Death Valley. While it was not expected for the Demon Deacons to triumph over the Tigers, some amazing defensive effort held it to a close 17-12 final score — defense that gave me hope for Virginia Tech.

That hope was quickly squashed as the Demon Deacons were defeated 30-13 by the Hokies in Blacksburg, Va. When going through the bargaining stage of grief, people often start to feel guilty about their thoughts and ruminate over what could have been. I very much resonated with this as I saw my friends from Wake Forest went to Norfolk, Va. to take on Old Dominion game was in-teresting. A win was dangled in front of fans and I know that one day I will see Wake Forest dominate the ACC. "How 'Bout them Deacs?!"

Weeks 9-11 — Depression
The days became gloomy once more after the Demon Deacons went up against No. 4 Florida State, then Duke and NC State. The heat was harsh at the Florida State game, and the game was even harsher. For lack of a better phrase, the Seminoles kicked Demon Deacon butt, with a final score of 41-16.

Even though we only lost by three to Duke, this game was even more excruciating. A win was dangled in front of fans as quarterback Mitch Griffis scored some impressive touchdowns; however, the im-pressive plays were overshadowed by more unimpressive play from the Demon Deacons.

While the Demon Deacons had the chance to hold the Blue Devils, all chances of that were destroyed after an interception thrown by Griffis and back-to-back penal-ties on cornerback DaShawn Jones. These penalties put Duke on Wake Forest's 15-yard line and ultimately led to Duke winning with a 26-yard field goal.

Things were depressing.
On senior night, the Demon Deacons were obliterated by the Wolfpack, 26-6. Looking at three-straight former Wake Forest quarterback Sam Hartman with a different shiny gold helmet at Notre Dame. In Clawson's press conference the week afterward, he spoke about Hartman being honored on Notre Dame's senior night with a Whitney Houston scoreboard hom-age, "I'm like, you only datted him for a couple of months," Clawson said. "It can't be love. We are the ones who love him. We had five years with him. You rented him for a sea-son. We bought him and we didn't want him for a year, and now they love him. When that video played, it's just like, 'Holy cow, this is where college football is.'"

The Demon Deacons were annihilated by Hartman and the Fighting Irish, 45-7.

The final week of the season didn't pro-vide a much better feeling. Wake Forest lost to Syracuse, 35-31, securing an overall record of 4-8 and conference record of 1-7, and for the first time in seven years, Wake Forest would not be playing in a bowl game.

Offseason — The Cycle Restarts
I know I just wrote a whole article complaining about the heartbreak through which the school's team has put me, but I will always love the Demon Deacons. No matter what, I will wear black and gold and cheer loudly — next season and every sea-son to come. I will continue to believe that every season will be the season we win it all.

Being a college sports fan is a wonderful roller coaster ride. I wouldn't want to be in any other student section. Clawson has transformed the team over the last decade, and I know he will be able to do it again. I know that one day I will see Wake Forest dominate the ACC.

Here's to next season and here's to the Demon Deacons!

Contact Mattie Stillerman at stillkm23@wfu.edu

During this football season, utter confusion was a common sight from the student section, as was the case against Georgia Tech.
**COOPER SULLIVAN**  
**Sports Editor**

Heavy plates of mashed potatoes and gravy were still sitting in Wake Forest's stadium as they started Friday afternoon’s game against Charleston Southern. Wake Forest was sluggish, lethargic and losing going into the half, but after a quick rest, the Demon Deacons were rejuvenated, beating the Buccaneers, 71-56.

Thanks to an aggressive press defense, Wake Forest (3-3) was able to stuff Charleston Southern (2-4), holding the visiting team to zero points from the field during two five-minute periods. The Demon Deacons outscored the Buccaneers 43-24 in the second half, including 20 points in the final 7½ minutes of the game. Hildreth said. “We’re still working together, it’s still early in the season, we’re going to be fine.”

The home team was still a bit slow coming out of the locker room, until freshman guard Aaron Clark subbed onto the floor for the first minutes of his collegiate career.

On the first defensive possession involving Clark, he noticed one of the Demon Deacons’ nine steals, setting up a Hildreth layup. Two minutes later, Clark recorded one of the Demon Deacons’ three blocks on the day, although it was quickly turned over by Miller and turned into a CSU score.

For photos of Wake Forest's win against Charleston Southern, visit our website, wfuathletics.com/category/sports.

**Contact Cooper Sullivan at ssulliv20@wfu.edu**

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**DeNovio: Field Hockey found a winner**

**CHRISTINA DENOVIO**  
**Senior Writer**


The field hockey team at Wake Forest gets all this and more from its Head Coach Jen Averill. Over 31 years, Averill has crafted a team so consistent and so successful that it’s a shame he has players in two seasons at Bucknell), Averill is the winningest female coach in Wake Forest history. The eight-time ACC Coach of the Year has cemented her legacy of achievement, and it’s one that will be appreciated for years to come both in and out of the athletics department.

What is it that makes her so successful, and why isn’t everybody doing it?

Averill doesn’t take the easy route when it comes to her coaching methods. If anything, she takes on the most challenging she can and adds more each season.

These challenges mainly include finding new methods to show support and care for her players in ways that few coaches do. In fact, field hockey knowledge is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what Averill provides to her players. The gigantic block of ice below the surface is a system of emotional support and character-building that consciously informs the day-to-day decisions Averill makes about her team.

She explained what she sees as the big picture: the real world, jobs and life. She doesn’t just want the young women she coaches to just become better field hockey players; she wants them to become the best humans they can be.

**Sports are a vehicle to develop a person,** Averill said to a Sports Journalism class.

She explained what she sees as the big picture: the real world, jobs and life. She doesn’t just want the young women she coaches to just become better field hockey players; she wants them to become the best humans they can be.

**Averill is using tangible methods to attain these outcomes even during difficult times.** The Demon Deacons finished the 2023 fall season with a record of 8-9 (1-5 ACC) — their worst season in six years. Despite the disappointing numbers, Averill maintains her focus elsewhere. "Everything is being driven by a result," Averill said.

**The decorated coach, however, chooses to go against the grain with her motto “CPR,” which stands for “character, process, results.”**

The order of the letters is the most crucial part of this team slogan. Character comes first and drives the process, which in turn produces results.

To bring this motto to fruition, Averill prioritizes a strong coaching relationship with all of her players. She talks to each one every time they come off the field during a game, and at the end of the game, they must upload a verbal review of themselves, their coaches and their teammates’ performances to the team group chat. Averill calls that the "rule of three.

This constant checking in with players goes beyond what happens on the field. Averill keeps a careful eye on her players experiences on campus, in the locker room and at practice.

"Mental health must be a premium," Averill said emphatically. She encourages her players to use the sports psychologists provided at Wake Forest even if their mental health is in a good place to be "proactive rather than reactive.

"It’s the same thing as physical deficits, where we try to do prehab instead of rehab," she said, further explaining her approach.

As much as Averill is available to support and guide her players, she also emphasized the importance of them developing their own independence, especially as they become upperclassmen.

"When a team is coach-led, there is this separation of players versus coaches," Averill explained, "so we want players to have autonomy and influence on their experience."

Averill values leadership in her players just as much, if not more, than her own leadership as head coach.

"When you’ve constantly giving players the information and the right answers, you’re not helping them solve problems," she said. "They’ve got to learn how to make decisions for themselves.”

This mindset once again traces back to her emphasis on developing the person, not just the player. Averill’s mission to produce future leaders demonstrates a reflection of Wake Forest principles, making it clear why she’s been here over 30 years.

The Wake Forest motto, Pro Humanitate, is meant to transcend the classroom or even the campus. It is an initiative instilled in all students that as they become alumni, they can spread their knowledge and resources across the world.

"Out of humility, I will step [off the] side when someone can do a better job," she said. But for right now, Averill plans to stay put and continue to develop a program to which she has dedicated her career.

**Contact Christina Denovio at denovia20@wfu.edu**
It’s not just a sports team, it’s a culture

From the Potato Famine to the Super Bowl, immigrants use sports fandom to assimilate into American culture

VIRGINIA NOONE
Photography Editor

You can grow up to be anything you want to be,” my father always said to me. “Just never a fucking Yankees fan.”

And so, I was raised to be a Boston sports fan. Despite my disinterest in all things sports-related and growing up primarily in West Virginia, my dog was subsequently named Fenway after Boston’s famous ballpark, my cat was named Papi after David Ortiz and my other dog was named Testie after the Dropkick Murphys’ anthem about the Red Sox.

“At least your brother isn’t named Brady or Pat,” my mother reminded me. “Things could be a lot worse.”

With time, I accepted that my predetermined destiny was to sport Red Sox hats and defend Tom Brady’s “Deflategate” scandal to the other kids at school. But I openly admitted that I only considered myself a “social sports fan,” meaning I would never watch the Boston teams play alone in my room. Watching sports was reserved for group settings only.

Waves of immigration produced die-hard sports fans

Unsurprisingly, cherished Noone family Thanksgiving tradition — one that 44.1 million Americans share — is turning on an NFL game. We gather around to watch the New England Patriots game and have a communal yelling match with the television where everyone seemingly forgets to pronounce the “R” in every other word. Each year, my extremely Irish-American family relishes in this tradition — Boston sports have become our heritage.

My great-grandparents immigrated from Galway to Boston along with two million other Irish people who were desperately trying to escape the Great Famine. By 1850, the Irish made up 26% of Boston’s population, a percentage that doesn’t even account for other large immigrant populations such as Italians or Eastern Europeans that moved to the city.

Cities such as Philadelphia and New York experienced similar immigrant population booms during the Second and Third Waves of Immigration, which lasted from 1820-1920. Immigrants, such as my great-grandparents, began the process of cultural diffusion — much of which revolved around professional sports.

As the new immigrants began the process of assimilating into American culture, a new form of entertainment arose to prominence — professional sports. The National League and American League combined to form Major League Baseball in 1903, the National Football League was formed in 1920 and the National Hockey League was formed in 1917.

Often immigrants could not speak English and worked grueling labor jobs for low wages — typically for wealthy, Anglo-American men — but, on the field, it didn’t matter. When the Red Sox were playing, class divisions dissolved, and the city became united in their newfound support for their team.

Immigrant cities subsequently became the strongest sports cities today

According to Forbes in 2020, Boston was the best sports city in America. Philadelphia was ranked second, and Chicago was ranked fourth. Each of these cities was an immigration hub when their teams were founded, and sports fandom culture was created through collective support and interest in these games.

David Q. Voigt writes in his book “America Through Baseball” that baseball “was a primary vehicle of assimilation for immigrants into American Society and a stepping stone for groups such as Irish Americans.”

In fact, according to Voigt, if it weren’t for the Irish immigrants’ vocal anti-English sentiment, cricket would not have reduced in popularity, and baseball would never have become America’s pastime.

Sports have the ability to bridge the gap between personal differences and foster a connection with other fans, but it’s more complicated than just that...

Sports fandom is deeper than just a game. It has ingrained itself in our culture and heritage, no matter if you are a social fan like myself or if you bleed Celtics green like my father.

Library of Medicine notes that a sense of belonging is “a fundamental human need that predicts numerous mental, physical, social, economic and behavioral outcomes.”

Rooting for their city’s sports teams replaced their loss of heritage and gave immigrant children and grandchildren a cultural identity to connect to as well as a sense of belonging. They began to pass down this identity to their children; thus, the cycle of sports fanaticism continues.

My father is 100% genetically Irish. He doesn’t speak any Gaelic or celebrate Samhain, and he was not married under Lughnasadh. When I think back to my childhood, an image of him wearing his Kelley-green, Red Sox hat with a shamrock crystalizes. I remember throwing toilet paper rolls and tennis balls in the streets of Boston after the Celtics won the NBA Finals in 2008. The mythic gods of my childhood were not Cu Chulainn or Arawn — they were No. 4, Bobby Orr and Ted Williams. My siblings and I danced to Dropkick Murphys and cried together when the Patriots lost the Superbowl.

Sports fandom is deeper than just a game. It has ingrained itself in our culture and heritage, no matter if you are a social fan like myself or if you bleed Celtics green like my father. So when you begin to roll your eyes at the annoying sports fans in your life, remember it is a crucial identity.

Writer’s Note: This doesn’t apply to Philadelphia fans. You guys are the worst, and no child should be subjected to being born an Eagles fan.

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Virginia Noone celebrating St. Patrick’s Day at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.
The Last Recordings’ has me feeling Rocky Mountain High (Again)

John Denver’s posthumous re-recording offers refreshing takes on old classics

AINE PIERRE
Online Managing Editor

Re-recordings and remasters have become something of a cause célèbre in the music industry. Country-turned-pop artist Taylor Swift has taken the world by storm with the re-recording and re-release of her back catalog—something she has smartly labeled “Taylor’s Version.”

The estate of John Denver, who died by plane crash in 1997, released a posthumous re-recording album “The Last Recordings” on Nov. 17 to considerably less fanfare than Swift’s have received. In fact, the one article I could find on the release, written by Steve Knopper for Billboard, is as much about Swift as it is Denver. For sure, there were inevitable comparisons to be drawn between the two. For one, they are the No. 1 and No. 2 artists on my Spotify all-time list. They both had a profound influence on my childhood. And, oh, yeah, right, they’re both prolific and wildly successful songwriters who grew so weary of their record labels and lack of creative choices that they decided to re-record their old classics.

This is my first ever music review, so bear with me. For this reason, I will leave it to my fellow Swifties to write the reviews of the long-awaited, seemingly soon-to-arrive “Reputation (Taylor’s Version).” As the self-proclaimed vanguard of Generation-Z Denver fans, however, I feel compelled to put my thoughts down about this album.

As the Billboard piece mentions — and I agree — a notable difference on this album is the maturity of Denver’s voice. It is deeper, richer and more mellifluous than on his earlier recordings. As someone who has long preferred Denver’s 90’s voice — and who almost exclusively listens to live recordings because of it — these re-recordings are very welcome.

What makes the re-recordings — or, in one notable case, breaks them — however, is the changes made to the music behind the words. For this reason, the album’s chef d’oeuvre clearly is “Rocky Mountain High,” where the addition of mature vocals, a twangy guitar and a whole lot of dimension — all while maintaining certain classic elements — offers a refreshing new take. For context, “Rocky Mountain High” has been one of my favorite songs forever — I literally have a photo of a rock with the lyric carved into it in my childhood bedroom — but I have always hated the two-dimensional, boring original recording. In this version, Denver not only brings the dimension present in his live recordings of “Rocky Mountain High,” but he builds on it. I am electrified.

Some instrumental changes are minor but add to the mood of the song or, in some cases, text paint — matching music to the words being sung. In the opening track “Whispering Jesse,” a song I came to love while nursing a devastatingly intense crush, additions of harmonica and orchestral strings heighten the song’s pining quality. Denver also changes the emotional quality of “Sunshine on My Shoulders” — a song that has great personal meaning to me but never quite struck the right bittersweet note — to create a more uplifting song. However, the slow tempo and pining present in the singing still muddle rather than create an actual experience of emotional conflict.

A trio of re-recordings add bells to a mixed effect. On what is arguably Denver’s most famous track, “Take Me Home, Country Roads,” the slight addition of bells in the bridge is brilliant text painting, evoking a ringing telephone. In “Windsong,” a soaring ode to the breeze, the bells take a major role. It works, though, because it sounds like a wind chime and thus fits the song. It also meshes well with the addition of other nature-inspired sounds like the rustling of trees and the calls of birds. I will say, as an aside, that the flute that underscores much of the original recording is sorely missed here.

In “Leaving on a Jet Plane,” however, the bells detract from the song. The bell sound starts very small, and they seem to represent the tears of a long, tragic goodbye. When the bells get louder and sharper, though, they eventually render the song unlistenable. Granted, citing is not controlled and can ruin songs, so maybe this is intentional. Either way, I’ll stick with the live version medley along with “Goodbye Again,” which is notably absent on this album.

In two cases, the orchestral changes completely change my experience of the songs for the better. “Dreamland Express,” for example, has always crept me out. Perhaps this is because the track is one of Denver’s more overtly sexual (see: “You said,/ ‘Hey there, sweet daddy/ Everything is alright/ For miles, there’s not a telephone line/ There’s not a soul to disturb us/ Don’t be nervous/ Just come and be mine.”) and, well, I was five when I first listened to it. In “Dreamland Express (John’s Version),” the removal of the background singer — who mostly just sings “oooh” — and the addition of a jazzy mix of piano and percussion creates a softer, more Denver-like song.

Similarly, “I’m Sorry” — a song I have always loved despite the fact that it is whiny and self-pitying — gets a maturity boost from an electric guitar, heavy percussion and slightly strained vocals. While the lyrics still come off as a non-apology, it at least sounds more heartfelt, like someone who believes they have tried their best and failed. This is hammered home in the last chorus, where the live-version note change on “More than anything I feel for Me,” “Come and Let Me Look in Your Eyes,” “How Could I Leave You Again,” “Darcy Farrow,” “Wild Montana Skies,” “Starwood in Aspen” and “Callypo” would be here. Other notable absences include “Vows, Prayers, and Promises,” the title song on his LP “Annie’s Song,” arguably the greatest ballad ever written, “Fly Away” (though, like “Perhaps Love,” this song needs Denver’s co-collaborator, Olivia Newton John) or “Thank God I’m A Country Boy,” which the Baltimore Orioles play at every home game. The addition of “Christmas for Cowboys,” “Dreamland Express” and “Whispering Jesse” (as much as I love the lattermost) are puzzling to me with these heavy-hitters left off the track-list. Perhaps Denver was saving these for later volumes of re-records, plans for which would have been cut short due to his death.

For now, I will choose to assess what is here and not what is not. The re-recordings are mostly strong, fresh interpretations of old classics. And honestly, “Rocky Mountain High” was good, and that’s all I needed.

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Coming back to ‘Now and Then’

The last Beatles song, which was five decades in the making, is made possible by artificial intelligence

MATTIE STILLERMAN
Staff Writer

The Beatles is one of the greatest and most influential bands of all time. Made up of Paul McCartney, John Lennon, Ringo Starr and George Harrison, and kickstarted by Lennon and McCartney, the English rock band was formed in Liverpool in 1960.

While The Beatles have been overwhelmingly popular for over six decades, their time together was relatively short. On April 10, 1970, Paul McCartney said in a press release that he was no longer working with The Beatles. The band formally broke up on Dec. 29, 1974.

The assassination of John Lennon on Dec. 8, 1980, assured the four Beatles would never collaborate on a song again. Their last song was believed to be “The End” — both literally and metaphorically — but the group persevered to continue to create songs in Lennon’s honor.

The Beatles Come Back Together

After The Beatles broke up, Lennon continued to write and record music on cassette tapes at home. These demos would later be used by the band to create more Beatles songs. In the mid-1990s, Yoko Ono — Lennon’s widow — gave Lennon’s demo songs to McCartney, Starr and Harrison. The three remaining Beatles decided to take the demos back to the studio to record two more Beatles songs in Lennon’s honor called “Free as a Bird” and “Real Love.” The group worked in the studio together for the first time in over 20 years to release the two songs in November of 1995.

However, the band wished to bring one more of Lennon’s demos to life — “Now and Then.” In the studio, the band struggled to combine their vocals and instruments with Lennon’s voice and piano.

In the Disney documentary, “Now and Then” — The Last Beatles Song,” Starr explained, “When we started ‘Now and Then,’ it was very difficult because [Lennon] was sort of hidden in a way. In Lennon’s demo tape, the piano was a little hard to hear. And in those days, of course, we didn’t have the technology to do the separation. Every time we wanted a little bit more of [Lennon’s] voice, this piano came through and clouded the picture.”

The lack of technology to separate Lennon’s vocals from the piano led the band to put off finishing the recording. After Harrison sadly died of lung cancer on Nov. 29, 2001, it was believed the song would never manifest. Little did they know then that modern AI (artificial intelligence) would create the impossible — the last Beatles’ song.

AI Makes ‘Now and Then’ Possible

This song is five decades in the making. First, Lennon recorded a demo in the late 70s, and in the 90s the remaining members tried to record the song, AI technology in the 2020s has finally made it possible for the song to be made. The Disney documentary released on Nov. 2023, shows the behind-the-scenes of the creation of the song.

“In 2001, we lost George, which kind of took the wind out of our sails. It took almost a quarter of a century for us to wait until the right moment to tackle ‘Now and Then’ again,” said McCartney in the documentary.

Peter Jackson — a New Zealand film director and screenwriter — and his team were able to do what was thought to be impossible in the studio sessions in the ‘90s. During the creation of The Beatles movie “Get Back” on Disney+, Jackson was able to separate certain vocals from their instrumental accompaniments to create a clearer voice.

“During the course of ‘Get Back,’ we were paying a lot of attention to the technical restoration. That ultimately led us to develop a technology which allows us to take any soundtrack and split all the different components into separate tracks based on machine learning,” said Jackson.

Jackson was able to separate certain vocals from their instrumental accompaniments to create a clearer voice.

From the Beatles documentary, “Now and Then” — The Last Beatles Song,” Starr explained, “When we started ‘Now and Then,’ it was very difficult because [Lennon] was sort of hidden in a way. In Lennon’s demo tape, the piano was a little hard to hear. And in those days, of course, we didn’t have the technology to do the separation. Every time we wanted a little bit more of [Lennon’s] voice, this piano came through and clouded the picture.”

The Beatles had with the Beatles apart and McCartney said in a press release that he was no longer working with McCartney. Even though they fought, McCartney said, “My dad would have loved that because he was never shy to experiment with recording technology. I think it’s really beautiful.”

He continued, “It was incredibly touching to hear them working together after all the years that my dad had been gone. It’s the last song my dad and [McCartney] and [Harrison] and [Starr] will get to make together.”

Al made it possible for The Beatles, who broke up on rocky terms, to have the closure they needed. Al allowed them a redo.

“All those memories come vividly to mind, to have those men in my life and to work with those men so intimately and to come up with such a body of music!” McCartney said. “My God. How lucky was I to have those men in my life and to work with those men so intimately and to come up with such a body of music!”

Ego and fame broke The Beatles apart and led them away from what truly mattered to them — music and friendship. The Beatles believed that producing this song was exactly what Lennon would have wanted.

“There was a lot of work that was done in the ‘90s and then in 2023, wow. We’re actually messing around with state-of-the-art technology, which is something The Beatles wouldn’t have been very interested in. McCartney said, “‘Now and Then’ — it’s probably, like, the last Beatles song. And we’ve all played on it, so it is a genuine Beatle recording.”

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The Beatles’ final song arrives more than 50 years after the band broke up with a little help from an unlikely friend.

Tanglewood Park kicks off the holiday season

A journey through twinkling trails, the park’s festive spectacle continues to transform nights into magical memories

LYDIA DERRIS
Staff Writer

Tanglewood Park, nestled in the heart of Forsyth County, is a cherished destination known for its scenic beauty and year-round recreational offerings such as kayaking, horseshoe riding and fishing. The Festival of Lights, which runs through the park’s winding main road, is one of the Village of Clemmons’ signature events, drawing visitors from near and far to celebrate the holiday season in a magical setting.

A beloved tradition in Forsyth County, the Festival of Lights at Tanglewood Park has become a hallmark of the holiday season. With its fixed route through the park, the drive-thru light festival takes participants on a journey that begins in the lower field along the picturesque Yadkin River. The route winds past the historic Manor House, meanders behind the tranquil pond and concludes at the Red Barn Gift Shop adjacent to the charming S’moresville. Here, festival-goers can indulge in hot cocoa while perusing handmade crafts and delectable food stuffs.

Entering Tanglewood Park during the Festival of Lights is akin to stepping into a magical realm. The rainbow-tunnel seems to stretch for miles, enveloping visitors in a kaleidoscope of colors. Families, high school sweethearts on first dates and groups of friends piled up in the back of trucks create a festive atmosphere enhanced by the immersive experience of technicolor lights and the melodic sound of bells playing in the background.

With each passing year, the Festival of Lights at Tanglewood Park continues to evolve and expand, offering a fresh experience for both first-time attendees and loyal visitors.

“We’ve gone from three to almost five miles of lighted displays, increasing the number of displays to 70.” Tanglewood Park Marketing & Events Team said in an interview with Forsyth Family. “To make each year a little different, for those who come every year, we add at least one new display to the festival.”

This year’s additions include a captivating 3D star and an enhanced tunnel of lights, promising an even more enchanting spectacle. Seemingly already larger than life, the Festival continues to expand and develop annually.

The grand finale of the Festival of Lights is the much-anticipated Running of the Lights on Dec. 31. This unique event invites participants to welcome in the new year with a 5K race that kicks off at the stroke of midnight. Runners have the opportunity to embrace an active start to the new year while surrounded by the mesmerizing glow of holiday lights. The event culminates with a celebratory post-race New Year’s Eve hot chocolate toast.

Tanglewood Park’s Festival of Lights has become a cherished tradition, bringing joy and warmth to the hearts of all who experience its magic. A beloved family attraction, Tanglewood Park invites the community to join in the festivities, creating lasting memories with loved ones amid the radiant glow of the season.

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The annual Tanglewood Festival of Lights offers Wake students a festive and stress-free way to celebrate the holiday season ahead of their holiday. The Beatles’ song, which was five decades in the making, is made possible by artificial intelligence.

The Beatles final song arrives more than 50 years after the band broke up with a little help from an unlikely friend.
Henry Winkler becomes himself

The Emmy award-winning ‘Happy Days’ star reflects on a career well spent

JAMES WATSON

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, "Barry". The book contains Winkler’s industry reputation as the “nice guy” of pop culture. His interactions on-set were often informed by the way he was treated as a kid. A big holiday month, {abbr.}”

"I was called stupid, lazy… I was called ‘dumb dog’,” 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.

"I was being, for a lot of my life, who I thought I should be," Winkler said. "And I was so boxed 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 in HBO’s “Barry”, Gene Cousineau, earned him his first Emmy in 2018.

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 Moulles 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 of Winkler’s book, summarizing a career — and life — well spent. "Only now do I understand that things come in their own time," Winkler said. "You couldn’t have known then what you know now, that only the process of living gets you there. You must do work in order to eat the fruit of growing, of being. In my late 70s, I’m trying very hard to live in the moment and enjoy every moment. I am thrilled and elated to be here now."

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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. Milk, for example
6. A strip of land connecting two land masses
7. A strip of land connecting two land masses
8. To marry
9. Lively folk dancing
10. Like some football kicks
11. Joe Jonas to Nick Jonas
12. North Pole helper
13. Looks for
14. A hexagon is six—
15. California time, per se [abbr.]
16. Knows if you are naughty or nice
17. Uncircumcised
18. Desert watering hole
19. Puppy’s bark
20. Belly
21. Swift’s fourth studio album
22. NFL units [abbr.]
23. NFL units [abbr.]
24. NFL units [abbr.]
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44. NFL units [abbr.]
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46. NFL units [abbr.]
47. NFL units [abbr.]
48. NFL units [abbr.]
49. NFL units [abbr.]
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64. NFL units [abbr.]
65. NFL units [abbr.]
66. NFL units [abbr.]
67. NFL units [abbr.]
68. NFL units [abbr.]
69. NFL units [abbr.]
70. NFL units [abbr.]
71. NFL units [abbr.]

Across
1. Natural Talent
2. A big holiday month, [abbr.]
3. A time traveling British Doctor
4. Mongolia and Myanmar's
5. A strip of land connecting two land masses
6. Multiple piles of hay
7. Periods longer than eras
8. A time traveling British Doctor
9. Lively folk dancing
10. Like some football kicks
11. Mongolia and Myanmar's
12. Multiple piles of hay
13. Looks for
14. A strip of land connecting two land masses
15. Barberry
16. Restoration venture for sea turtles [abbr.]
17. Long-barreled firearm
18. A person whose family comes from India, Pakistan, or Bangladesh
19. Feminine subject pronoun
20. ___ favor
21. ___ Miserables
22. ___ to Joy
23. Jamaican music genre
24. Generator output [abbr.]
25. A pig’s home
26. Generator output [abbr.]
27. Generator output [abbr.]
28. Generator output [abbr.]
29. Generator output [abbr.]
30. Generator output [abbr.]
31. Generator output [abbr.]
32. Prefix meaning “with/together”
33. The “’ of”
34. Puppy’s bark
35. Lightning bug
36. Health class topic [abbr.]
37. Less than a sunburn
38. Mariah is the queen of this in pop culture
39. Scar’s sidekicks
40. Nail polish remover
41. Dude
42. Foot pre
43. Racing org. for Dale Earnhardt
44. Nail polish remover
45. Quick Learner
46. To marry a woman
47. 1996 Alanis Morissette hit single
48. ___—Royce
49. Folkloric hero
50. Friend of Tarzan
51. To yap aimlessly
52. Alternative to bottled water
53.Summoned
54. Someone who adheres things
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. NFL units [abbr.]
64. NFL units [abbr.]
65. NFL units [abbr.]
66. NFL units [abbr.]
67. NFL units [abbr.]
68. NFL units [abbr.]
69. NFL units [abbr.]
70. NFL units [abbr.]
71. NFL units [abbr.]

Contact Evan Lipetz at lipetz22@vsfs.edu

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Three poems by Enzo Menghini

ENZO MENGHINI
Contributing Writer

dialogue (for an unmade) godard film

the good ones

don’t die, they just

become gardeners

they go down there, in their

wooden greenhouses and start

picking the seeds they’ll use
to make earth eden again

kurt vonnegut’s assessment (in a liberal talk show)

in our avant-gard society,

we don’t wear shirts.

shirts wear us beware!

we have become the locomotive

mannequins dreamt by Ford

& assembled by Musk

78th dream song

memories are pointy things

mrbones — oh, there you exaggerate

sire!

memories be shapeless, what exist

exists for moment only, sire —

no, no, no, there you are mistaken, mr.bones

there you are mistaken;

memories are pointy things when you’re done

are pointy things playing with them

you they cut

— like a knife, sire?

yes, like a knife: mr. bones

slice