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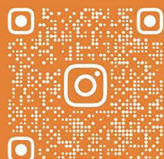
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How to plan the perfect picnic

by Annie Turk
Staff Writer

Spring has sprung at UNC Charlotte. It is the perfect time to grab some friends and enjoy the warm weather with a picnic outside. The most important part of a picnic is inviting people that bring you joy.

Bring a picnic blanket or towel to keep dirt and bugs away from the food. Consider bringing a basket or backpack to carry everything in. Pack something to eat off of, like paper plates, and grab utensils. Napkins may also be helpful for any spills. The food should be stored in reusable containers, but try not to use glass as it may break during transport.

Finger foods, sandwiches, mac 'n cheese, salads and chips are great options, but feel free to invite others to bring contributions. Do not forget the best part: dessert. The best picnic desserts are cookies or cupcakes, which are already in individual portions and do not require a knife to cut. Water or lemonade is a must, but sparkling grape juice is an excellent option for those feeling fancy.

Some other options to pack include a flashlight if the picnic

will be in the evening, bug spray to keep mosquitoes away, a ball or frisbee to throw around and a trash bag to help clean up.

Location is essential when planning a picnic. Try finding an open space under a tree or other source of shade. Charlotte's campus has many ideal places (as long as you can avoid the Prospector geese), like COED Plaza, the Botanical Gardens and Belk Plaza.

Picnics are unique in that they can be casual and light, romantic and heartfelt or festive and celebratory. Music and ambiance can help set the right mood for any occasion. Bring a polaroid for a fun photoshoot. Pack twinkly lights and watch the sunset. Or, grab board games and have a friendly competition.

Picnics are about slowing down and combining nature and food while basking in the happiness of being with people you love. They do not have to be perfect to have a perfect time, so take a break this spring and have a picnic.



Picnic set up | Photo by Bethany Ivan

Where to take graduation photos in Charlotte

by Dezanii Lewis
Community Editor

Finding ways to commemorate graduation can be stressful yet exciting. One way to observe this milestone is by taking graduation photos on or off campus. Here are some places in Charlotte to capture graduation photos.

Romare Bearden Park

Romare Bearden Park in Uptown is a popular destination with lush, scenic gardens. It also features a color-changing waterfall that is often the backdrop for photos ranging from weddings to casual ones. If the photographer's timing is right, fireworks could even appear in the background of the pictures after a Charlotte Knights game. Whether it is a waterfall, garden, fireworks or all of the above, Romare Bearden Park is sure to suit a graduation photo.

UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens

There is no need to wander far to find the perfect place to take photos. UNC Charlotte's campus has plenty of places to choose from, such as the Botanical Gardens. With plenty of ornate foliage, ponds, gravel walkways and other breathtaking spots, the Gardens are a one-stop-shop for graduation photos.

Belk Plaza

Belk Plaza is a great place to take photos from several angles. Whether the fountain, grassy lawn or foliage is used as

the backdrop, graduation photos could become optimal. Some campus buildings in the background could be used as props, while the brick walkways can help provide a clean and classic look.

The Green

The Green is too cute to avoid. It is located right across from the Mint Museum and the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, which also have excellent photo spots. It hosts a lush lawn and a fountain and nods to several literary works. There are sculptures of books and street signs with some world-renowned authors, such as Alice Walker and Edgar Allan Poe. The Green could be the perfect place for English majors or book lovers to bookmark this accomplishment.

Picture Project CLT Selfie Museum

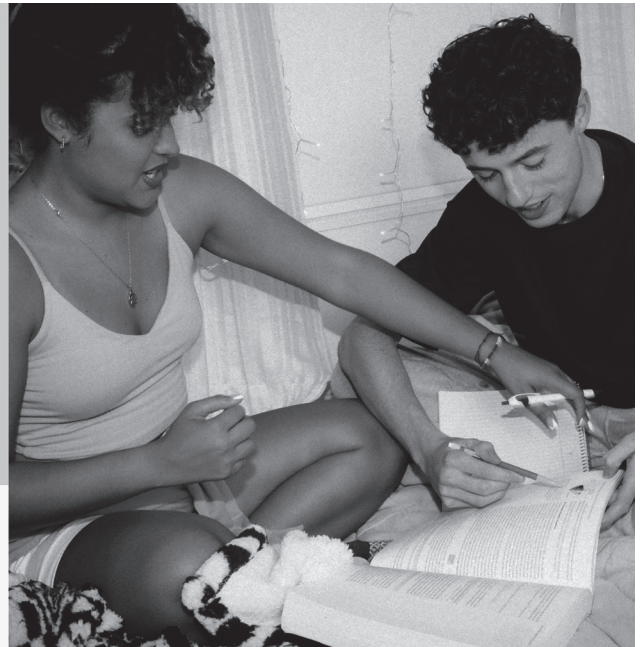
Picture Project CLT Selfie Museum is an interactive museum where visitors can take photos with the installations. The installations may vary, as the museum often changes them, but they have ranged from libraries, ball pits, basketball hoops and even a Stranger Things setting. The selfie museum could be a fun place to take some non-traditional graduation photos and simultaneously make an event out of it.

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Video games to look forward to in spring 2023

by Jess Danesi
Opinion Editor

As the semester's stress heightens and the weather outside becomes warmer, some may embrace the comfort of their gaming setup. Spring is a time for change, and new game releases are a part of this growth.

Since many games were delayed due to COVID-19 and development issues, 2023 is looking to be a year with many game releases. Here are some recommendations that will be released this spring:

'Resident Evil 4'

"Resident Evil 4" is not a new title, as the original game was first released in 2005 for GameCube. However, Capcom is remaking the game with updated graphics, plot and gameplay.

"Resident Evil" is a franchise known for its action-horror gameplay, where protagonists fight bioengineered zombies and monsters. In "Resident Evil 4," players control Leon S. Kennedy, a secret agent searching through an isolated European village to find the United States president's daughter. On his journey, he battles infected cult members.

For fans of gore and chaos, "Resident Evil 4" is a great pick and will be released on March 24 for PC, PS4, PS5 and XSX/S.

'Minecraft Legends'

A new action strategy game comes to Minecraft on April 18. "Minecraft Legends" offers campaign and competitive multiplayer content as players protect the Overworld from Piglin invasions.

Unlike traditional "Minecraft," players can expect to travel through biomes on a mount while fighting mobs with allies, gathering materials and building bases. One of the game's aspects is assembling groups of allies to assist in the journey.

People who love "Minecraft" but wish it had more tactical combat should enjoy this game. "Minecraft Legends" will be available on PC and all consoles.

'Star Wars Jedi: Survivor'

Following the success of "Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order," EA is releasing a sequel on April 28. "Star Wars Jedi: Survivor" brings all of the cinematic action and world-building of the first game but with new improvements to the combat system and player abilities.

This game tells the story of Cal Kestis, a Jedi rebelling against the oppressive nature of the Empire. Players who enjoy exploring diverse environments while fighting foes will like

this game's adventure.

"Star Wars Jedi: Survivor" will arrive on PC, PS5 and XSX/S.

'The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom'

The anticipated sequel to "The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild" comes to the Nintendo Switch on May 12. Since 2017, "The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom" will be the latest development in "The Legend of Zelda" franchise.

This game will contain an open-world setting filled with monsters, puzzles and landmarks. "The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom" expands upon its predecessor through new flying mechanics and story elements. After defeating Calamity Ganon in the previous game, protagonist Link must prepare to



'Minecraft Legends' | Courtesy of Steam



'Star Wars Jedi: Survivor' | Courtesy of Lucasfilm / EA

vanquish evil to save Hyrule yet again.

Players that enjoy puzzles, combat and unique characters will love this addition to Nintendo's "The Legend of Zelda" series.

'The Last of Us Part 1'

"The Last of Us" series has surged in popularity due to the sequel's release in 2020 and a TV show adaptation currently on HBO. Originally a PlayStation exclusive, the first installation in the game series will be ported to PC on March 28.

"The Last of Us Part 1" features a post-apocalyptic world filled with dangerous zombies and conflicts between divided communities. The game's story follows main characters, Joel and Ellie, an unlikely and reluctant duo who bond gradually during their travels.

Those who enjoy narrative-based games accompanied by innovative combat and crafting should keep an eye out for this release.



'Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom' | Courtesy of Steam

What to throw out when moving out of your dorm

by Delaney Nielsen
Staff Writer

For students, spring move-outs mean cleaning out everything from the past year. Though there may be a lot to go through, this task does not have to be daunting. Here are some things to consider throwing out.

Class materials

Old projects, textbooks, notes and anything else from classes can go. Try to transfer notes to a place that can be accessible, such as a laptop, phone or flash drive. Doing so will keep a tidy space after throwing out papers. As for textbooks, try and sell them back to the campus bookstore or any platforms that allow it. The main goal is to eliminate any unnecessary items that will cause moving out to be more overwhelming.

Clothes, shoes and accessories

Consider donating clothes you do not wear anymore if they are in good condition. Many places around Charlotte

accept donations. You can even get paid small amounts depending on where you go.

Trash

Get rid of any flyers or random papers that have been stored away. It can be easy to hold onto unnecessary items we see on campus. If they do not have any sentimental value, then throw them away.

Unnecessary household items

There are other things to consider throwing it out, such as general household accessories: bed sheets, appliances or anything else that will not be used. Throwing away these unnecessary items before it becomes a task is typically a good idea, especially for someone who decides to move into another dorm for the summer.

Big Oh! Balloons: Take flight with this unique spring activity

by Mudit Mehta
Contributor

Spring is just around the corner, and winter activities are about to call their quits. A unique activity to do around near Charlotte takes place in Cleveland, where Big Oh! Balloons offers hot air ballooning trips.

The trips run year-round and are great for any occasion: birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and wedding gifts. Typically, the best time to take one is in the spring. Big Oh! Balloons operate two daily trips: one at dawn and the second at dusk. The evening trip starts about a couple of hours before sunset. The total duration of the trip is around two and a half hours.

A unique part about this experience is that the landing place is never certain. The pilot could unexpectedly land the balloon in someone's front yard, and the landowners are kind

enough to welcome those on the flight. However, mostly the landing location is at a nearby farm field. Upon landing, the pilot and participants wrap up the balloon and drive it back to base camp, Cool Spring Balloonport.

After the flight, there is time to take pictures and an optional champagne toast. However, the trip cost is on the pricier side, with a session costing \$325 per person.

Charles Page and Christie Darling are pilots who own and operate Big Oh! Balloons. Page is a commercial lighter-than-air pilot with over 1500 hours of flying experience, while Darling is a crew chief and has been certified as a private balloon pilot since 1988.

To book the flight, visit <https://www.bigohballoons.com/> for more information.

How to overcome spring allergies

by Bryan Stoenner
Staff Writer

Disclaimer: The Niner Times is not authorized to give medical advice or diagnoses. If you are feeling unwell, please see a doctor or a medical professional.

With the onset of springtime comes spring allergies. Although they can be irritating, medicinal and preventative measures can be taken to alleviate them. Here are some tips on how to reduce allergies.

Limit exposure to pollen

Some preventative measures can also help deal with spring allergies, including wearing a mask and sunglasses when going outside and attempting to not go outside during peak pollen hours, typically in the morning and evening. Additionally, taking frequent showers, washing bed sheets and changing clothes after being outdoors can stop pollen from lingering in the home.

If these methods fail and pollen continues to irritate the senses, some naturally occurring substances might provide some relief.

Try a home remedy

Several foods contain anti-inflammatory and decongestant substances. For example, pineapple and citrus fruits contain Bromelain and Salicylic acid, which both help to decongest. Other foods such as peppers, garlic and ginger are anti-inflammatory. Drinking hot fluids can also help clear the sinuses, as can inhaling steam from a shower or a humidifier.

If all other methods fail, allergy medicine is proven to alleviate allergy symptoms.

Use allergy medicine

While allergy medicines may not target the source of allergy symptoms, they can help to relieve the symptoms of spring allergies. For example, antihistamines help to reduce allergy symptoms, and pseudoephedrine reduces congestion. Nasal sprays are also effective by either blocking mucus production or alleviating congestion.

Although no one method is 100% effective, combining medicinal and preventive measures can help reduce the length and severity of spring allergies.



Spring allergy remedies | Photo by Bethany Ivan

Spring 2023 albums that many people may not know about

by Nick Caceres
Staff Writer

With the warmer weather rolling in comes fresh releases from several artists. These are the top albums to look out for in the spring, which are from both mainstream and lesser-known alike.

Lana Del Rey: 'Did You Know That There's a Tunnel Under Ocean Blvd' (March 24)

Del Rey has put out a decent amount of work in the 2020s and is far from finished. This upcoming release will mark her ninth studio album and be co-produced by frequent collaborator Jack Antonoff. The album will focus on revealing one's inner beauty, and tracks like "A&W" uncover the theme.

Liturgy: '93696' (March 24)

Since their mini-album was released in October, "As the Blood of God Bursts the Veins of Time," the Brooklyn-based experimental black metal quartet will release a full album in March through Thrill Jockey. The album will feature more explosive technical black metal with chamber music and opera.

Conway The Machine: 'Won't He Do It' (March 31)

Buffalo, N.Y.-based collective Griselda Records has been at the forefront of some of the best hardcore hip-hop and boom bap in the last five years. After his successful drop last year, one of the label's founders, Conway The Machine, will release another album with the single "Super Bowl" featuring Juicy J.

Boygenius: 'The Record' (March 31)

The indie rock trio of Julien Baker, Lucy Dacus and Phoebe Bridgers will release their debut full-length studio album since their self-titled EP in 2018. Boygenius is known for its melancholy blends of indie rock and singer-songwriter. What is available from this album is an amazing representation of how far all three artists have come since they last collaborated.

Tim Hecker: 'No Highs' (April 7)

Sound artist and ambient composer Tim Hecker, whose work spans over two decades, will add another album to his rich discography of unforgettable albums. This upcoming drop will feature an edgier sound with sharp dissonance alongside ethereal washes of synth and glitch. The album will be released through Kranky Records, a label that has been responsible for the releases of some of Hecker's most praised work to date, such as "Harmony in Ultraviolet" (2006) and "Virgins" (2013).

Wednesday: 'Rat Saw God' (April 7)

This shoegaze quintet from Asheville will release an album



Boygenius: 'The Record' | Courtesy of Interscope Records

dedicated to the rugged atmosphere of southern and indie culture in North Carolina. The album is based on the founder of the band, Karly Hartzman, and her work after the instant success of the album "Twin Plagues" in 2021. They will perform in Charlotte on their tour of this new release in June.

Baby Rose: 'Through and Through' (April 28)

Jasmine Rose, also known as Baby Rose, is a rising R&B artist who has gained recognition by working with artists like J. Cole, Koreatown Oddity and SZA. She will finally carve a path of her own in this upcoming drop, featuring her signature style of upbeat neo-soul leaning R&B.

Jeromes Dream: 'The Gray In Between' (May 5)

The New England screamo outfit will release their third album since they reformed after a nearly 20-year hiatus in 2018. The album will be released through Iodine Recordings and will include Sean Leary from Loma Prieta, who joined in 2021. The recording, mastering and mixing were done by Jack Shirley, who has worked with bands such as Joyce Manor and Deafheaven. This new release will be a brutal display of unrelenting screamo and post-hardcore.

Overmono: 'Good Lies' (May 12)

Overmono, a sibling duo from Wales, will return with another release in May. Overmono has been praised by outlets like Pitchfork and DJ Mag for their signature mix of UK bass, rave, techno, trance and breakbeat within the club-ready electronic dance sound. This upcoming release will be their most ambitious and anticipated to date.

The college student's guide to spring cleaning

by James Levison
Staff Writer

Winter is coming to a close and spring is coming. Spring symbolizes rebirth, rejuvenation and new beginnings. What practice embodies these qualities more than spring cleaning? Although cleaning sounds like a drag, by breaking the tasks into chunks, spring cleaning can become fun and a nice change of pace.

Decluttering and reorganizing

The first step to proper spring cleaning is to declutter and reorganize. Look through your papers and other documents from last semester. If you have no use for them, recycle them and reorganize the ones you need in a drawer or file cabinet.

Now, look through your clothes. If you have clothes you have not worn in a while and do not see yourself wearing soon, consider donating them to a thrift store such as Goodwill, Plato's Closet or Uptown Cheapskate. If you have clothes that you still love that are a little tattered and worse for wear, consider mending them yourself.

Make sure to look through your drawers, closet and other storage solutions. Consider donating items you have no use for to Goodwill or other thrift stores. Once you get rid of the things you do not need anymore, you can reorganize your belongings with all the new space you have made.

The deep clean

After going through your belongings and reorganizing them all nice and neat, the most tedious step is next: the dreaded deep clean. Even though deep cleaning can take a lot of time and is not the most convenient if you have a packed schedule, there are ways to ensure that your deep cleaning is both fun and rewarding.

Large tasks are usually easier to handle by dividing them into smaller ones. Writing a checklist outlining cleaning tasks or dividing the labor can make the cleaning more manageable. To make it more fun, turn on some music and wear comfy clothes that you do not mind getting dirty during the cleaning process.

By coming up with a more manageable way to deep clean, your space will be less tiresome to maintain, and your mind will be occupied with more important things than ruminating over a messy residence.

Decorating and redecorating

Now that all of the hard work is out of the way, the last and most fun step is the decorating and redecorating stage. Since it

is almost spring, floral and plant decor is in season. If you are not looking to be overzealous with your decorations, be subtle with a faux potted plant or a spring-themed knick-knack from stores such as Walmart, Ross or Marshalls.

Some other ideas include a floral wreath for the door, a floor plant for living rooms and common spaces, floral or plant-printed curtains for bathrooms and bedrooms, spring-themed throw pillows and floral paintings or floral-themed wall decor. Some good stores for these kinds of decorations include Target, World Market, Michaels and Hobby Lobby. Some decoration colors to consider are pastel colors such as pink, yellow, green and blue or light to medium shades of red, yellow and green. Floral decorations can even be themed after your birth flower.

To add some final touches, consider getting floral air fresheners or wall plug-ins.

Spring cleaning can take a lot of work, but it does not have to be overly tedious and boring. By breaking up tasks and looking forward to the more fun portions of cleaning and redecorating, spring cleaning can revitalize the soul as the weather and scenery become more pleasant.



Spring cleaning materials | Illustration by Kim Zan

Places to visit in Charlotte during springtime

by Amna Noyal
Staff Writer

Charlotte has many activities for springtime, with the weather getting warmer and the flowers blooming. Here is a list of places that will make the new season memorable.

Carowinds

Carowinds is no exception when it comes to fun amusement parks. There are a variety of rides and roller coasters for visitors to try, including, but not limited to, Fury 325, the fifth tallest steel roller coaster, and Windseeker, with a view overlooking Uptown Charlotte. Carowinds also features live shows.

Whitewater Center

Whitewater Center is an outdoor park with many activities, such as climbing areas, rafting through the man-made rivers, ziplining through the park and mountain biking. There are also areas reserved for overnight camping on the park grounds. While visiting the park, be sure to keep an eye out for its live-music performances.

Charlotte FC Game

For any soccer fans, The American men's soccer club, Charlotte FC, is a group that participates in Major League Soccer as an Eastern Conference franchise. There are many opportunities to catch a game at Bank of America Stadium. There are even opportunities to buy some merchandise before the games start. Tickets need to be purchased before the games.

Uptown Charlotte

In Uptown Charlotte, take a stroll around Romare Bearden Park, where there is an area to walk dogs, picnic and take pictures at a waterfall. Freedom Park has a route to walk and bike on and a small lake in the middle with areas to have a picnic. Many artists have statues around Uptown, so walking around and looking at all the unique street art is perfect for spring.

NoDa (North Davidson)

NoDa is a well-known neighborhood for artists in Charlotte, where there are many small thrift shops and stalls with jewelry and handmade art. In addition, many art shops can even be found here, as well as popular food spots such as Benny's Pizza and Pop Dessert Bar. NoDa is a great area for supporting small and local businesses.

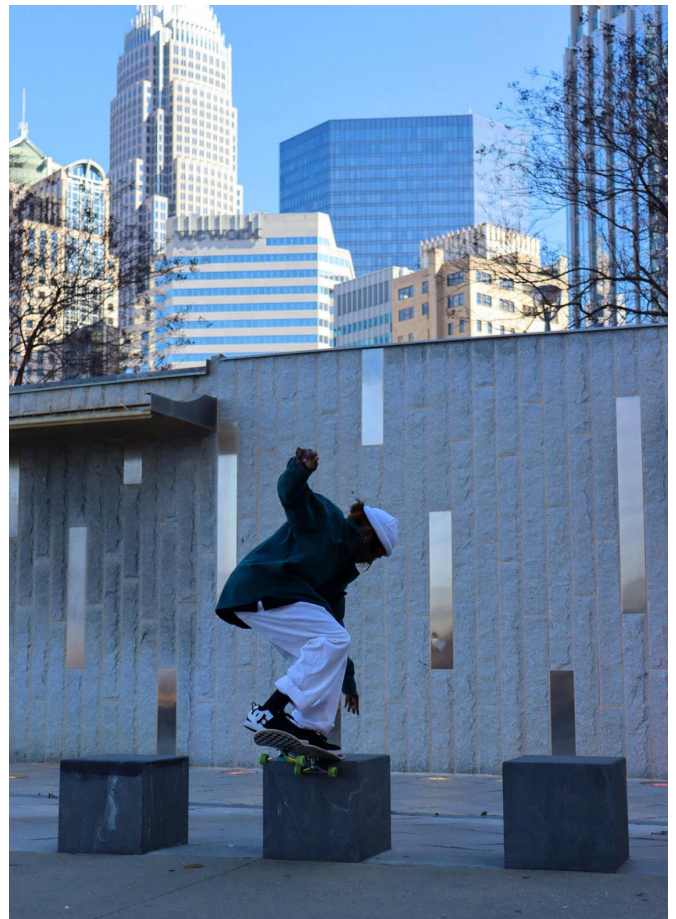
Rooftop Restaurants

Warm weather means going out to eat at restaurants with patios and rooftops, such as Fahrenheit, where you can re-

quest private dining options and overlook the views of Uptown. Another restaurant is Cloud Bar by David Burke and is situated on the rooftop of Le Méridien, surrounded by the lights of Charlotte's skyline. It is also known for its signature cocktails. Finally, the RH Rooftop is also suitable for a scenic brunch, lunch or dinner. Located in Southpark, it is known for its original location in New York. However, it can be on the more pricey side.

UNC Charlotte's Botanical Gardens

For a more accessible option, explore the Botanical Gardens on Charlotte's campus. The gardens are home to various plants, eight on-site greenhouse rooms, six themed collections and 10 acres of outdoor gardens. A personal favorite is the Dinosaur Garden, with a T. rex skeleton and prehistoric vegetation collection.



Romare Bearden Park | Photo by Jacob Scannell



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