



AWARDS GALORE

JETT-WILSON GARNERS
NATIONAL RECOGNITION
AFTER MONSTER WEEK



Vol. 33, Issue 16
Feb. 23, 2021
NINERTIMES.COM

NINERTIMES

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Madison Dobrzanski
editor@ninertimes.com

EDITORIAL

Olivia Lawless MANAGING EDITOR
Tyler Trudeau COMMUNITY EDITOR
Megan Bird NEWS EDITOR
Hiral Patel OPINION EDITOR
Emily Kottak LIFESTYLE EDITOR
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Emma Lineberger LAYOUT

CONTRIBUTING STAFF

Michaela Broom, Isaac Naylor,
Cameron Williams, Arik Miguel,
Lesly Santos, Marina Kilmova

COVER PHOTO

Charlotte Athletics/Sam Roberts

NEWSROOM 705.687.7150
NINERTIMES.COM/STAFF
TWITTER @NINER_TIMES

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

James Bourke
production@uncc.edu

MARKETING STAFF

Ridge Grant



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Laurie Cuddy BUSINESS MANAGER
Joshua Wood GRAPHICS &
PRODUCTION

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POLICE BLOTTER

2/17: Drug Related

Officers responded to South Village Deck in reference to suspicious activity. Eight North Carolina State Citations were issued for possession of drug paraphernalia, and underage possession of alcoholic beverages. Ten referrals to the Dean of Students Office were issued.

2/19: Damage to Property

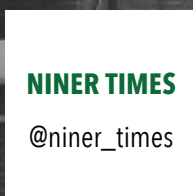
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Photo by Niyathi Sulkunte

49ER CONNECT SUCCESS GUIDES



NEWS

UCAE rolls out new 49er Connect Success Guides Program

by Jessica Ceballos
Asst. News Editor

Image courtesy of
University Center for Academic Excellence

The 49er Connect Success Guides is a new program developed by the University Center for Academic Excellence (UCAE) program in the summer of 2020 by Dean John Smail and a UCAE team consisting of Kimberly Rodgers, Rasheda Sykes and Jordan Bullington. This program supports students in their academic goals, including those who may need assistance adjusting to the new way of college life. It was established to meet student needs in the face of the pandemic.

In an interview with the Niner Times, Academic Support Program Coordinator Sarah Marshall, spoke about why the program came into existence.

“SUCCESS GUIDES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR FINDING STUDENT RESOURCES”

“Students felt like they were unable to connect as much. They weren’t reaching out to resources as frequently and we thought it might be useful to have a peer resource that was able to help, first of all, connect them to the necessary resources, give them guidance on academic help...we also act as someone to contact and connect with on campus.”

Success guides are responsible for finding resources to help students succeed in their classes. These resources can be anything from helping navigate Canvas to Zoom assistance, contacting professors, locating and using office hours, as well as tips to succeed academically, such as time management and goal setting.

The Director of the University Center for Academic Excellence Kimberly Rodgers said, “We met with a group of people who brainstormed who might be a good target population,” she said. “So we looked at some demographics of students. We looked at who would be taking classes over the summer, how many students. We also looked at who we had available on staff since we launched this program very quickly. We used the resources that we had available.”

There is a general four-step process when meeting with the success guides. Students recommended by their college, also known as mandatory students, have to meet a minimum of four times, but all other opt-in students can meet as little or as much as they would like to.

“In terms of troubleshooting with Zoom... It’s very hard to do work and have leisure when you’re trapped in the same room,” said success guide Evan Gray. “The way that I try to separate work from leisure is that I have my ceiling light on. I usually don’t have it on; it’s usually just a low-lighting that I use when hanging around, reading a book or watching Netflix. I flip that switch on whenever I am here to do work. It is enough of a change in the environment that it forces my body to recognize that it is time to work.”

In addition to meeting with the students each week and providing guidance, the success guides have weekly mandatory meetings to discuss new tips to share with the students they meet and new strategies to help their students succeed. The team of success guides all put together a biweekly newsletter and email it to their students. This newsletter includes events that are happening in the week ahead at UNC Charlotte and a study habit tip.

“My favorite part of being a success guide is meeting with my pairs and being able to

communicate and speak with them one-on-one with certain things that I can relate to,” success guide Kiyoshi Roberts says. “A lot of students that I’ve spoken to don’t have a strong support system, so just being able to connect with them and speak with them about certain things and being able to reassure them that it’s going to be okay and making sure that they have the necessary resources.”

Students can be recommended to meet with their college’s success guides or students can opt-in to be a part of the

program. Students can decide how much or little they want to meet with the success guides and the schedule is flexible.

“I think the most rewarding thing is the fact that even though I can’t meet with students face-to-face, I’m still able to help them out online,” success guide Allison Craft says. “Whether it’s with registration or a teacher that they are having a bit of a problem with, I’m still able to help them out and know that they are not going to struggle as much anymore.”



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MITIGATION TESTING BEGINS

UNC Charlotte to begin random Mitigation Testing this Week

by Michaela Broom
Intern

UNC Charlotte's spring 2021 random mitigation testing initiative will begin this week and continue throughout the semester for those living on campus or involved in in-person classes.

According to Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development Dr. Rick Tankersley, roughly 8,000 community members will be returning to campus to resume in-person instruction. Phase 2 of re-entry testing will occur Feb. 17-22. Then, Phase 2 participants will begin mitigation testing this week.

"I think in general, what I would say is we are building upon the successes of last fall and continuing the components of what we were doing then that were highly successful and expanding upon those," Tankersley announced to student government members in a meeting on Feb. 4.

The University will continue similar protocols from the fall, such as testing faculty and students, triweekly wastewater testing and contact tracing. The main difference for COVID-19 testing this spring 2021 semester is the implementation of re-entry testing and an expansion of the mitigation testing to all students and faculty members participating in face-to-

face instruction and living in the residence halls.

Community members qualified for re-entry testing could be randomly selected throughout the semester for testing.

"We have this population of students and faculty who are going to be required to get testing; there will be a subset of that group that will be sampled every week," Tankersley explained to SGA members. "Every week, on Wednesday, there will be an email that goes out to a subset of that group indicating they are the lucky winners of a COVID test."

The email consists of the assigned testing date for the following week and instructions on how and where to get tested. Participants will then be removed from the pool during the week they are getting tested; however, they can be selected the next week again for testing.

Exceptions are granted for participants who can't participate in random mitigation testing due to religious or medical purposes. An exception for a positive COVID-19 test is only valid for 90 days from the date the participant was tested.

"Because we're sampling a portion of the population, all of which have no symptoms,

it also allows us to identify people who are asymptomatic but are still able to transmit the virus and with that we can then do our contact tracing," Tankersley said.

Some faculty and students could potentially be tested multiple times while others might never be selected to get tested. Random mitigation is all based upon probability.

As the members await their test results, social distancing protocols should be followed, and Niner Health Checks should still be completed. One should select "Mitigation or Re-Entry Testing" as the reason one is awaiting a COVID-19 test.

If the test comes back positive, the individual should follow CDC guidelines. For residents, the University has housing available for those who test positive. The University's contact tracing team will work with those who test positive to notify close contacts to begin a quarantine period recommended by the CDC.

Photo by Sophia Fernandez



SEPARATE

AND UNEQUAL



Why you shouldn't stop studying Black History in March

by Isaac Naylor
Staff Writer

There is a particularly awkward feeling that seems to linger around February. As a Black person, I cannot speak for all Black people, but I have always felt dissatisfied with Black History Month. On the surface, the month is a well-intentioned celebration of Black excellence, but I think the problem lies in the official relegation of my history to just 28 days. This is not a takedown of Black history itself but rather the idea that restricts Black history to a single month. However, Black history wasn't always a month.

Black History Month began in 1926 when historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History first dubbed it Negro History Week, coinciding with Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass's birthdays. The week evolved into a month when student groups on college campuses petitioned for an extension during the civil rights movement. Black History Month was necessary when public schools didn't teach Black history at all, but now it's time for Black people to graduate from the shortest month of the year to the entire calendar, just like white people.

When March arrives, there is a scary possibility that students might leave with the conclusion that Black people didn't contribute much to American history. Black history is American history; Black Americans are Americans. This academic apartheid of our history creates a warped view of highly Black-influenced historical events. For instance, if students are taught for 11 months that Thomas Jefferson was a brilliant man, they might neglect to consider his Monticello slave plantation or his mistress, Sally Hemings. Another example is the American Civil War. According to The Pew Research Center,

48% of Americans believe that the war was about states' rights; however, there was only one freedom Southern slaveholders cared about: the right to own Black people. Slavery was undoubtedly the root cause of the Civil War, and to say otherwise would be parroting racist Lost Cause mythology.

Not only does the exclusion of Black history whitewash American history, but it creates a strange atmosphere around February for teachers who must now haphazardly cater to Black students. Teachers talk about the same historical Black faces: Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver. There is scant mention of Fred Hampton, Stokely Carmichael, James Baldwin, Angela Davis, Marcus Garvey, Nat Turner and many other controversial figures with black skin.

Teachers should teach the whole story, not just the good parts.

Even those mentioned, like King, are only discussed in a pacified tone; King was not all Kumbaya. His 1963 "I Have A Dream" speech was noteworthy; however, he was assassinated in 1968, which means that there are five years of his activism omitted from the history books. There is little recognition of King's Poor People's Campaign or the work he did to aid striking Memphis sanitation workers, which was the reason for his murder in Memphis at the Lorraine Motel. King condemned the U.S. bombings in Vietnam and once said, "Call it democracy, or call it democratic socialism, but there must be a better distribution of wealth within this country for all God's children." According to a 1968 Harris Poll, 75% of the country

had an unfavorable opinion about King. Most white people then thought King was a radical communist, which makes his history taught today in schools completely sanitized of the facts.

In corporate America, February is the time to shamelessly pander to Black consumers through the ubiquitous commodification of Black culture. We all remember the infamous Pepsi advertisement when Kendall Jenner handed a police officer a Pepsi can and ended racism. To Jenner's credit, the advertisement aired in April 2017, not February; however, Black History Month's presence elevates the ascendance of "woke" corporate brands. Corporations have continuously proven that they aren't interested in promoting equality, instead offering empty celebratory platitudes designed to co-opt the month to increase profits. It's lip-service when companies claim to be inclusive yet donate large sums of money to the GOP; I'm looking at you McDonalds, Walmart, Wendy's, Coca-Cola and Papa John's.

Segregating Black history inadvertently separates Black people from American history. It implicitly instills in our students that Black people are not legitimate Americans and their history does not deserve to be studied year-round. However, this separation of Black history begins to deconstruct when classrooms encounter inseparable historical figures in U.S. history, like Barack Obama. Will he be confined to February because he is Black? Or will he be taught all year because he was an American president? The latter is the correct choice, but it's only a matter of time until Obama bobbleheads start to appear on Amazon this month.



Illustration by Isaac Naylor



Jett-Wilson Garners National Attention

Jett-Wilson takes home multiple weekly awards after leading the 49ers to victories

by Cameron Williams
Staff Writer

Charlotte basketball's Octavia Jett-Wilson scored a career-high 42 points in a historic stretch and surpassed 1,000 points in a two-overtime win against Old Dominion on Feb. 13.

Jett-Wilson earned Conference USA (C-USA) Co-Player of the week, ESPN's national player of the week, and made the NCAA starting five of the week after her performance.

"I know for me, scoring 1,000 points is one of my bigger accomplishments in college," said Jett-Wilson. "I scored 1,000 points in high school, and I am thankful to get it (1,000 career points) in both."

Being down two starters in Jada McMillian and Mariah Linney, Jett-Wilson knew that she had to step up in a big way by initiating her team's offense. Charlotte only had seven players available in the first game against Old Dominion, and without both McMillian and Linney, Jett-Wilson ran the floor as a point guard.

"Knowing that we were down two players, we knew that everyone had to step up," said Jett-Wilson.

Head Coach Cara Consuegra described the play-calling down the stretch in a postgame interview.

"There are a lot of great players in the nation, no doubt, but for a player to do that under those circumstances, in my mind, there was no question she was the best player in the nation that week," said Consuegra.

Consuegra and her staff's faith in Jett-Wilson down the stretch of a big game showed the high-level Jett-Wilson played all week.

She averaged 38 points and 11 rebounds for the two-game series and shot 43% throughout the series. To add to the offensive performance, she shot nearly 91% from the free-throw line.

With Charlotte being down at halftime in the first game, Consuegra gave her team some



Charlotte's Octavia Jett-Wilson drives to the basket. Photo courtesy of Charlotte Athletics/Sam Roberts.

tough love in the locker room and told her team they were getting outplayed.

When asked about her team out rebounding ODU, Consuegra said, "You want to know the truth? I chewed them out at halftime. We lost the first half because we didn't box out."

Jett-Wilson resembled these remarks as well.

"Coach said that we weren't playing hard enough and that we were getting outplayed," said Jett-Wilson.

Jett-Wilson and the team took this to heart and ended the game with five players with double-digit rebounds. Rebounding is something that Consuegra and company emphasize and expect from their team.

"Our kids knew they could be better and

scorers. They shoot at a high level from the free-throw line and are both shooting guards and natural scorers.

It was announced on Tuesday, Feb. 16, that Jett-Wilson was chosen as the National Player of the week for her performances against ODU. This award was given to her by ESPN, which recognizes the country's most dominant players each week.

The next day it was announced that Jett-Wilson was named to the NCAA starting five for the week. This honor goes to the five best players across the country from the previous week.

"I felt that she was the best player in the nation," coach Consuegra said in her mid-week press conference. The coach also noted that Jett-Wilson played out of position and did so at a high level.

Consuegra said that her team is not going to make excuses. She referenced not having Jada McMillian in the first game and not having Mariah Linney for both games against ODU.

How teams deal with these challenges and tough situations is what builds their character. Jett-Wilson took the adversity she and her team were dealt and turned it into two C-USA wins.

Coach Consuegra said in an interview with ESPN 730 last week that she felt this was Jett-Wilson's team while not discrediting her other seniors and the leadership they have brought to the program this season either.

Charlotte did not travel to UTSA last week for their scheduled series as a Winter Storm tore through the state of Texas.

There are still plenty of unknowns for the rest of the season, but Jett-Wilson and the team look forward to more success with only two more series left this year.

made a choice to focus on getting those box-outs in the second half," Consuegra added.

In what was an unusual turn of events, during the second overtime of Game 1 of the series, Charlotte ended up playing five on four due to two of ODU's players having fouled out of the game. Both Consuegra and Jett-Wilson had similar thoughts on the situation and it was simply that they needed to stick to the gameplan.

Looking at the series as a whole, Jett-Wilson said that "...being in attack mode and finding my teammates is something I focused on during the games."

Jett-Wilson's game has been taken to the next level this season, and she admires the LA Clippers' Paul George's game. Both George and Jett-Wilson are high volume yet efficient

Putting It All Together

Charlotte women's tennis team has found early success with young team

by Bradley Cole
Sports Editor

Charlotte's women's tennis team has started their 2021 season in style.

With no legitimate fall season due to COVID-19, there were plenty of unknowns. The 49ers have turned those unknowns into victories throughout the early portion of the season.

The 49ers are currently 8-3, winning eight out of their last nine, and show promise for the rest of the season. Charlotte picked up two victories against ACC teams.

"It's an awesome and rewarding feeling because it shows you as a coach, but also the team, it shows the players that what we're doing is, is making them walk that path," said Charlotte Head Coach Anthony Davison in a zoom interview last week.

After losing the 2020 season due to the pandemic, the 49ers ended their season with a 11-6 record after posting a 19-7 record in 2019.

The quality start to 2021 is one that has been a few years in the making. Davison became head coach of the team before the 2018 season. He inherited a team that had gone 9-13 during the 2017-18 season.

The very next season, in Davison's first year, the team went on an 11-game win streak to end the year 19-7 and made it to the Conference USA quarterfinals. The team was full of players that had just gone through the 9-13 season a year prior.

"I think that first year (there) was some really good immediate impact. I think we implemented a solid training program that wasn't necessarily in place before," said Davison on the quick turnaround. "And we just saw a big jump in, in their physical fitness and sort of toughness on the court. And I think that translated into a lot of those wins that that were close losses before."

Charlotte flipped a few losses into wins in 2019. The 49ers beat Winthrop and Campbell, two teams they lost to the year before by one point.

The development continued into the 2020 season, but the pandemic had other plans. After being apart throughout most of the spring and early summer, the 49ers were stripped of their fall season. Teams can usually play in tournaments throughout the fall, but that wasn't the case this year.

The fall season, even though there weren't scheduled games, was still crucial. The development of teams were in their own hands. Charlotte chose to make the most of it and found an identity as a team.

"I think this fall was big because we identified it as some teams are gonna prepare well this fall and come out ready in the spring, and some teams are gonna regress," said Davison. "I think we did a very good job because we focused a lot on the physical part of things again, but we did a lot of work on who we want to be as a team."

Everything has come full circle this season. Despite



Charlotte's women's tennis team huddles up on match day. Photo courtesy of Charlotte Athletics/Sam Roberts.

the unorthodox season where COVID-19 guidelines can sometimes complicate things, Charlotte has had one of its best starts under Davison. Two of Charlotte's eight wins have come against ACC opponents in Clemson and Virginia Tech.

The 49ers beat Virginia Tech 5-2 on Jan. 30, then edged out Clemson on Feb. 13 by a 4-3. Charlotte also has shutout Campbell and College of Charleston, winning those matches 7-0.

A fairly young team is producing success. There are five seniors, three seniors and one freshman.

The lone freshman is Emma Wilkins, and she has displayed impressive play in her first season with a 7-4 record thus far. Wilkins has played at the four, five and sixth spots for Charlotte. Wilkins dealt with the stress of being a freshman and the difficulties of playing a sport during a pandemic.

"It's been a different year with COVID. But I think I'm very fortunate with the team that I have, with coaches and, and all my teammates, they've been super supportive," said Wilkins. "I felt accepted right away, and I always knew that I had their support in whether it was school or personal things."

Wilkins' success has come as the season progresses. She opened up the season with two losses at #6 Duke and #16 Wake Forest but has only lost two singles matches since.

One of those losses came at Virginia Tech, where Wilkins felt like she learned the most. Wilkins won four straight after

that loss, including picking up a 6-0, 7-5 at the sixth spot.

"For me, what helped me with my Clemson win was losing at Virginia Tech, when I lost my singles match," said Wilkins. "So even though the team won, it hurt because you always want to do better for the team."

According to her head coach, Wilkins has been a big help to the team in more ways than one.

"She's so professional," said Davison. "She really takes care of the little details, comes to practices early and prepared, her communications are great, she's always looking for ways in which she can progress and get better."

The season is far from over. Charlotte still has an important Conference USA slate that starts at home against Marshall on Mar. 13.

Wilkins hopes her team's season is a long one, as she thinks the 49ers' chances of making a playoff run are high.

"I'm super excited for the whole season. But looking forward to for to the conference championships," said Wilkins. "We're playing such good tennis right now. I think we have a really good shot at winning the conference championships and, and get into the NCAA tournament, so I'm super excited for that."

The next match for the 49ers will be Friday, Feb. 26, at home versus East Tennessee State.



A&E

FILM REVIEW: *I CARE A LOT.*

A mean spirited, but devilishly entertaining look at greed

by Gabe Lapalombella
Staff Writer

Photo courtesy of
Netflix

When Rosamund Pike shocked audiences in “Gone Girl,” we all knew she was someone to watch. The line she rode between someone so charming and wickedly evil is something we hadn’t seen before. Her latest role in Netflix’s “I Care A Lot” truly solidifies her as one of the best actresses working today. Pike stars as Marla Grayson, a legal guardian to the elderly whose only goal is to drain their savings. When she goes after what they call a “cherry” in Jennifer Peterson (Dianne Wiest), she ends up getting more than she bargained for. I’m not going to say any more than that because half the fun comes from the unpredictability.

If you are someone who can’t follow an unlikeable protagonist, Pike’s Marla Grayson isn’t going to turn you. She’s a cold, tough-as-nails and calculating character whose only interest is making a profit for herself and her girlfriend (Eiza González). What makes the performance so revelatory is the web she entraps herself in the further it goes along. Pike sells the menace and survival instinct of someone having to outsmart some pretty terrible people with icy perfection. Talking her way out of any situation allows Pike to take drastic and effective shifts in tone. One minute she can be the kind and caring guardian, then tell you she can ruin your life with a smile.

This skill becomes especially entertaining later in the film with Peter Dinklage’s mysterious gangster. Watching her weasel her way out of situations is so fun because you

never quite know how she’s going to pull it off. It’s in these moments that the music by Marc Canham takes hold. Comprised of both electronic sounds and synthesizers, it adds to the slow boiling tension. It’s in these moments that director J Blakeson threads the needle between true suspense and pitch-black comedy. With how tight the line goes into the crazy hijinks of these characters, it might not be for everyone.

I say this because no one in this film can be clearly labeled as a good person. Everyone is out for their own self-interest and will do whatever it takes to get it. This heinousness can include ruining the lives of the elderly in rather drastic and detrimental ways. If you’re not interested in that “bad vs. bad” dynamic, then the film isn’t going to do anything to convince you otherwise. The despicableness is meant to explain the heinous amounts of greed a specific part of society feels entitled to. Suppose you view it as bad people getting both their physical and metaphorical comeuppances. In that case, there’s a great entertainment value to take from, especially during a time as strange as we’re currently living in. I know for me, it’s exactly what I needed to see when I got it.

For something that’s streaming on Netflix, “I Care A Lot” never lets up on the entertainment factor. You have an exceptional performance from Rosamund Pike that you don’t get very often. Add in a layer of unpredictability in the plot, and you get something that’s truly fun to see. What

I can’t deny is that this is something you haven’t already seen before, but nonetheless exciting. When it premiered back in September in Toronto, this was immediately on my radar. It had the intriguing, twisty thriller pieces that sounded like something right up my alley. Now that it’s on Netflix, my only hope is that more eyes will be able to see that such an excellent performance is delivered. This is why “I Care A Lot” ended as such a pleasant surprise this early in the year.

RATING:
8/10

ALBUM REVIEW:

The Lucky Ones

Pop group 'Pentatonix' starts off the new year with another cheery original album.

by Madison Smith
Intern

Photo courtesy of
RCA Records

It's safe to say there was a rise in appreciation for acapella music in the year 2012. Yes, the year of the famous "Cup-Song" from the movie "Pitch Perfect." That little tune was stuck in everyone's head thanks to Anna Kendrick, and if you didn't know how to make the cup motions, someone was eager to teach you. There was another important thing happening in 2012, however. Five acapella singers out of Arlington, Texas, dropped their first official album as 'Pentatonix' just a year after winning NBC's "The Sing Off" and signing with Sony Music. There are five of them, and they're named after the pentatonic scale—an "x" sounded cooler at the end. Not to be overlooked, the group's sound is incredible. As of 2017, Scott Hoying, Kirsten Maldonado, Matt Sallee, Mitch Grassi, and Kevin Olusola make up Pentatonix. Each singer brings something entirely different to the table, which is why their latest album, "The Lucky Ones" was predictably a great listen.

This album felt like nothing short of a jubilant merry-go-round ride in the middle of the park. Let's say it's a sunny day, too, because the vibe is just that upbeat and positive. The established pop singers zealously inch toward finding their sound as this is only their second original album. Though they are routinely celebrated for their abstract covers of other hits, it's a new year. Who are we to question change?

Lyricaly, what Etta James would call "a Sunday kind of love" is radiant through songs on the project like "Coffee In Bed," "Love Me When I Don't" and "Bored." There's a reinforced and naturally pleasant theme of relying on a significant other for comfort. Musically, all three songs have

little to no instrumental aid, and each beat is created through beatboxing and/or recorded harmonies. Watching the group's music video for "Coffee In Bed" was a quick reminder of how extensive and fascinating acapella can be.

The video starts with showing the five vocalists in different bedrooms, each with a cup of coffee in hand. They sing a beat that favors "Mr. Sandman" by The Chordettes. Listening to Kevin beatbox will make you forget percussion instruments even exist, and Mitch's high-pitched runs never fail to excite listeners. The lyrics: "You spend every Saturday morning / Stuck on replay of last night / I won't take your words as a warning / And I'll pick you up every time" point towards that theme of being there for your significant other. The camera cut from one singer to the next throughout the music video, and suddenly you see all the layers of the song in one listen as if you were right there in the studio when it was recorded. This emphasis set "Coffee In Bed" apart from the rest of the album.

Of course, no matter what day of the week it is, relationships are often complicated and filled with awkward silences and heated arguments—sometimes even a need for space or independence altogether. The sentimental track "It's Different Now" starts with a soft piano playing as Kirsten Maldonado serenades listeners. The lyrics: "I rewind out conversations / Listen between every line / To relieve my superstition / I only reveal, it's only a sign" set the tone for the singer's breakthrough and the rest of



the group comes together for the chorus. Their voices in unison paint the picture of the support they have for each other even through robust lyrics of independence, thus preparing listeners for the last track on the album "The Lucky Ones." This song is all about looking back on the quintet's progress over their last decade together.

As far as the album's re-listenability goes, it's not really timeless. Once again, this is just the beginning of Pentatonix writing and singing their original music. Some of these songs should be played on the radio multiple times, and some are to be enjoyed just once, like a tour of an art museum. Even though the songs are distinct in their production, there wasn't much variety in their overall sound. A track like "Side" with a slower progression felt like a breath of fresh air after a lot of the same buoyant music. This exhale can be seen as a good thing or a bad thing, depending on the listener. This doesn't speak to the songs' quality as much as it does the choice of songs on a project. Nonetheless, it still

deserves the attention it's receiving.

The best way to describe Pentatonix is a five-piece jigsaw puzzle. Each piece is carved in a way that is so unique and special, but when connected with the other four, it just makes more sense. "The Lucky Ones" artistry is truly a blessing to even the earliest Pentatonix fans—a reminder that the group is still committed to their musical journey and their repertoire.

Rating:

8/10



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What is NT listening to?

Hello! My name is Arik Miguel and I am a staff writer for the Arts and Entertainment section. In high school, I started buying records and have since amassed a fairly extensive collection. I've included a playlist of some of my favorite tracks from my record collection. My music taste is a little eclectic, and I have included a wide range of genres on this playlist. There is some classic Motown, 70's Zamrock, Habibi funk, modern electronic, and country moog among others. I've included some classic tracks by artists like Billy Ocean and Roberta Flack, deeper cuts from artists like Pet Shop Boys and Four Tet, and songs from more obscure but equally talented artists. I find records at thrift stores, antique stores and of course record stores, and I am often drawn to eye-catching artwork. I tend to buy records that I have never heard of based solely on the artwork. I discovered some of my favorite songs this way. Hopefully, you'll discover some great and unexpected sounds on this playlist.



PICK ME. CHOOSE ME. LOVE ME.



LIFESTYLE

How to start loving yourself

by Lesly Santos
Intern

One of my favorite shows is Grey's Anatomy, and besides it teaching me about surgical skills I will probably never use, it also taught me a few things about love. Love is a very tricky thing to be in and feel. In a famous scene, Meredith, the main character, tells Derek, her love interest, to choose her instead of his wife. Meredith was so in love with Derek she wanted him to pick her over his wife, to choose to be with her, and to love her the way she loves him. I won't spoil their relationship or the show but the energy that she gave him in this scene made me wonder, why can't I love myself the way Meredith loves Derek?

Pick Me.

Sometimes there will be days where you don't have the energy to go out and socialize with friends—and that is perfectly okay. You shouldn't force yourself to do things you don't want to or have the energy to do. You have to prioritize your needs and your well-being. You are valid, and you should pick yourself and your mental health above social expectations. Your friends will be there at the end of the day, and you can reschedule. You can't reschedule your feelings or mental health.

It's essential to establish boundaries for yourself and to know you can't always be there for people. You will find yourself at an impasse if you don't limit yourself with how much you give to people. Don't bend your boundaries for others because eventually, they'll break. The more you share yourself with others, the more entitled they will feel over you and your time. Pick yourself to be on your team and work to get to the finish line, even if it's just surviving the day.

Choose Me.

Choosing yourself over others is sometimes necessary. You can't always minimize your feelings, your ideas or yourself for the benefit of others. You have to be able to validate yourself, so others don't take advantage of you. You need to know your limitations and how flexible you will be for others without chipping away at yourself. Don't chip away at pieces that make you who you are just to fit any expectations people have for you. You are to meet your expectations for yourself, not for others.

You know yourself better than anyone else, and it wouldn't be fair to you to give up parts of yourself just because someone else doesn't like it. Don't minimize yourself so others feel better about themselves. There will always be times of compromise in any relationship, but what should never be compromised is your well-being. Your feelings are valid and should be communicated. Acknowledge your feelings and respect yourself by not allowing someone else to overpower them.

Love Me.

Love yourself the way you love your favorite person. The same energy you give to excite or praise them, practice that on yourself. Hype yourself up when you feel or do something good. Look at your beautiful physical features as well as your personality. Praise yourself for surviving another day in a pandemic and holding on to your sanity.

To fully love and appreciate others around you, you have to love and enjoy yourself. Begin by falling in love with yourself, be mesmerized with who you are and how you got to where you are today. You are an extraordinary person, don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Look at yourself and say, "I love you, I love me." It may seem silly, but sometimes you need to hear someone tell you they love you out loud, and who better to say it to you than yourself.

FOR THE LOVE OF COFFEE

Charlotte coffee shops you must try

by Marina Klimova
Intern

Charlotte is different from other large cities in that its charm is settled across little neighborhoods sprawling the entire Charlotte area. There are boutiques, parks and unique restaurants in each town ranging from Matthews, South Park, Midwood, South End, etc., and within these neighborhoods lies a gem of an ideal coffee shop. The following list will tell you the three best coffee shops for those who truly love coffee and its atmosphere.

Coffee became one of my many loves a few years ago when I first encountered the joy of a well-made latte at Not Just Coffee. This experience led me to find other coffee shops that are experts at producing a quality latte time and again. In the process, I learned that what I love that each coffee shop is diverse, with stylish people working hard and enjoying together the love of coffee.

I judged each coffee shop on its ability to serve fresh



Photo of Atherton Mill location of Not Just Coffee, by Marina Kilmova

and interesting roasts, natural syrups and creations and a comfortable, aesthetically pleasing atmosphere. The following coffee shops meet all of these criteria and hold characteristics that make them stand out from the rest. Charlotte's coffee scene has changed over the last few years, and I am happy to say that there are great options for the love of coffee in Charlotte.

Not Just Coffee

Not Just Coffee is the coffee OG of Charlotte as they opened their first location in 2011 on 7th Street Market. Since then, they have opened five other locations that serve the same quality coffee and maintain the minimalist look. Their motto of loving people, not just coffee, shows their mission of bringing people together through coffee.

I love all of their locations, so every Not Just Coffee location will always hold a tender place in my heart from when I first became a real coffee connoisseur. The caramel latte is their staple drink that captures the pinnacle of their taste. Made from a light roast of Counter Culture Hologram beans melded with the house-made caramel syrup, each caramel latte at Not Just Coffee is crafted with expert care and usually some nice latte art.

On the subject of latte art, they also routinely hold latte art competitions for baristas and anyone who wants to watch and taste their creations. If you follow them on Instagram, you'll be able to know when you can enter into the coffee experts and watch the art of coffee come alive!

Each Not Just Coffee location has a modern industrial look with plants adorning shelves, open spaces, minimalist seating and wooden interiors. There is plenty of seating for doing some homework, having a coffee date, or taking a coffee to-go. However, don't expect couches or any wacky syrups since they take pride in a stripped-down menu that provides just one or two seasonal drinks. Coming to Not Just Coffee is ensconcing yourself in the true essence of a well-crafted latte.

The location closest to UNC Charlotte is the 7th street location since it's right on the 7th street light rail stop. But, I recommend going the extra ten minutes until the East/West stop to the Atherton Mill location since it has a separate

space, unlike the open food stall design of the 7th Street Market. The Atherton Mill location is quieter and provides more seating.

Brakeman's Coffee

Located in a large remodeled house in downtown Matthews, Brakeman's Coffee creates a culture of slowing down and enjoying coffee with a friend or lounging on a couch with a laptop for some homework. Their name comes from the railroad located a minute's walk from the shop and folds the philosophy of putting the brakes on your life and appreciating the small joys of coffee and tea. Even though they have relaxed vibes, they have fast service and efficient hospitality.

They have a considerable menu with quite a few unique drink options with railroad-related names ranging from coffee, tea, shakes, smoothies and ice cream, along with a varying selection of baked goods. When I go to Brakeman's, my favorite drink is the lavender vanilla latte. Even though they aren't house-made, their syrups are subtle and complement their rotating seasonal roasts sourced from Haerfest Coffee.

The jazzy atmosphere, cozy interior, ample seating inside and outside and consistent taste are what have me coming back to Brakeman's. Being open later than most coffee shops (they close at 7 p.m. every day they're open) also makes this coffee shop more accessible. The 25-minute drive from UNC Charlotte is definitely worth it!

Summit Coffee Co.

Summit Coffee Co. is my second coffee crush after Not Just Coffee, but it's third on this list because my favorite location is in Davidson, and their NoDa location is not as tried and true yet. Summit Coffee Co. provides delicious self-roasted coffee and authentic house-made syrups. Their focus on coffee as a journey reflects their seasonal options, such as the most recent Valentine's day drink, the honeysuckle rose latte. It tasted like flowers, beauty and love-made liquid. I recommend trying it before they remove it from the menu!

The NoDa location is probably the closest coffee shop to UNC Charlotte, right on the 36th street light rail stop. It doesn't have as much seating like the other options, but it has a sweet floral look and wonderful seasonal coffees and baked goods.

I like to follow my favorite coffee shops on Instagram, so I can be the first to know about new coffee concoctions. The NoDa location opened at the end of 2020 and is still trying to gather steam as a coffee shop powerhouse. However, they borrow a lot of its customers from those who love their Davidson location. So give this coffee shop a try to help your local businesses instead of Starbucks again!