

# Harker: Bad journalism and being a nasty woman

Last year, at about this time, I wrote a welcome column about starting my year as Editor-in-Chief of the Independent Collegian. I wrote about how before I found the IC I was totally lost at school and had no idea what I wanted to do in life.

My work the last three years at this newspaper has sparked my passion. I found my niche, and I finally answered the question, "What do you want to do when you grow up?" The answer: be a journalist.

But today, after a full year in the position of EIC, I can tell you the biggest lesson I learned in that time is that I am not a good journalist.

Crazy, right? How you can love something and still have society telling you you're totally wrong for it?

But not only am I a bad journalist, I am also awful at being other things in my life that I consider essential parts of my personality. I am a bad feminist. I am a bad woman.

Also, by bad at it I don't mean that I lack skill, but simply that if you were to ask anyone what the general depiction of one of these three things, you would find I simply don't fit the bill.

During the year, through my studies for my women and gender studies minor, I read a book called "Bad Feminist" by Roxanne Gay.

The book talks about how Gay has reclaimed the term feminist for herself by labeling herself a bad feminist because, based on a typical definition of feminism, she did not fit at all.

Gay talks about how she isn't white enough, that she's too straight, and that she likes pop culture and rap music way too much to fit the rigid feminist mold. And who cares if she does or doesn't? Gay is totally fine being herself, in her own bad feminist way.

I have been inspired by Gay's book to reclaim for myself the labels that have been forced upon each step that I take into my future and my career.

Since I declared a major in communication, everyone always asks, "What are you going to DO with it?" I'd always answer that I wanted to go into journalism.

That response, for whomever I was talking to at the time, would elicit images of television reporters in front of burning buildings, giving five-minute summaries of major events. That never seemed right to me.

When I think of journalism, I want long nights up late, thousands of phone calls to different people, talking, learning and writing. So much writing. In our age, the face of journalism has shifted, and this is no longer what we think of when we say the word.

I've been told that I am too passionate for this job and too heavily involved in it. I've even been told by one professor that I don't have the right look for broadcast journalism – I'm not blonde and I'm not skinny – and then again that I am bad at my job.

So, I guess you can call me old school, when it comes to journalism at least. I don't go on Twitter, I prefer a pen and a paper to typed-up notes and I love facts, but that's just me, a bad journalist.

That's just on a local level here at the University of Toledo. If you look on a national level, in today's political climate, there is no such thing as a good journalist or a good

feminist.

With a minor in women and gender studies, it's not surprising to people when I say I have been an avid feminist for most of my life. I have been able to explore that side of myself even further with my last three years in school.

Through these studies, I have learned how to integrate intersectional analysis into my daily life and especially in my work as a bad journalist.

But what I have found is another failure on my part. There is no way for me to be a good woman, at least not in today's society.

I am more than happy to accommodate this. Earlier this year, Senator Mitch McConnell infamously said of Senator Elizabeth Warren, "She was warned. She was given an explanation. Nevertheless, she persisted."

Feminists immediately took up the quote as a newfound mantra, one I personally embrace wholeheartedly. I love this new wave of women who are working against the norm of what they are supposed to do to embrace what they want to do. I plan to continue to do the same.

So, in conclusion, be bad. Be a nasty woman. Be charismatic and passionate, outgoing and willful. But, more than anything, be unapologetic. I will continue to be bad at the things I am passionate about, not until I change for them, but until these labels change for me.

*Jessica Harker is a third-year communication student and the IC's managing editor.*

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# Ayoub: A walk through fashion's evolution

Every decade of fashion, there is a distinct name to mark what kind of fashion the era had. The 1920s, for example, otherwise known as the “Roaring Twenties,” had the flapper style. Take “Titanic,” for instance: Rose wore the most exquisite, elegant dresses with her hair all dolled up to have curls frame her face perfectly. At least if Jack didn’t save her from jumping ship, she would have gone down in style. Jack – being the handsome devil he is – didn’t wear a suit but instead wore suspenders and beige work pants. This was simply the norm back in those times.

Nowadays, you’d be lucky to see a girl wearing a dress or a guy wearing a suit. The joggers and obsession with tennis shoes that guys have now is nowhere near as attractive as 1920s Jack.

Enter the 1930s and 1940s: Everyone was so preoccupied with the war. Fashion wasn’t as heavily regarded. The 1950s, aptly named the “Postwar Era,” brought back the importance of fashion.

As shocking as it may seem, no one was sporting skintight leggings, a Victoria’s Secret PINK shirt and brand-name converse. The outlook on fashion was much more modest, with their dresses and skirts reaching mid-calf or ankle length. Their clothing was so tasteful and left things to the imagination.

The 1960s was the called the “flower power” era due to the rise of counterculture movements that took social norms to a whole new level. The youth culture had a lot of spunk to them

and were not as judgmental toward clothing choices as teenagers are now.

The mod fashion contained bright colors and geometric shapes, allowing girls to express themselves with ease. Their dresses were of modest lengths and just as cute as the style in the 1950s. I like to think that they followed the motto, "The crazier the pattern, the more fashionable you are."

Greasers gained large popularity in the 1960s, and for good reason too. The second I hear the word Greasers, I just think of the movie "The Outsiders," with the insanely yummy cast – particularly Rob Lowe and Matt Dillon. They wore tight white V-necks, leather jackets and denim jeans – there's a good reason why girls fawn over these studs to this day.

The 1970s was so "Saturday Night Fever" and eclectic, sometimes natural and easygoing but other times glitzy and vibrant. The bell-bottom jeans were outta sight on men and women alike. Honestly, denim everything is the way to go. If I could, I would wear a denim jumpsuit every day of my life.

But bigger is better, am I right? Madonna and Cyndi Lauper ruled the '80s with big hair, heavy makeup, chunky bangles and big hair. Why straighten your hair and force it to be a certain way when you can have voluminous big curls?

The 1990s was more of the "Anti-Fashion" and more minimalistic. One of my favorite shows, "Friends," had even more famous '90s styles. Rachel's hair and fashion sense was so perfect. Every woman in the '90s went to the hair salon and requested "The Rachel." It's just something people did.

Fashion today isn't even worth talking about – leggings, converse, sweatshirts and tennis shoes. What happened to the modesty and simplistic nature of style?

Let us take a moment of silence for the death of fashion in this decade. I hope there are still people out there who can

appreciate and sport the fashion that was so hip not too long ago.

*Samar Ayoub is a second-year student in pre-med concentration.*

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## Schnipke: Harry Potter's magic lives on

Not a year has passed since I was six in which I haven't read or watched or participated in the fandom of one of the greatest series of all time: Harry Potter.

I'm a Harry Potter nerd and very proud of it.

In 2001, when "Sorcerer's Stone" was released in the U.S., I went to the movies with my two sisters and two of our older cousins. I was only six and my cousins deemed that my younger sister Hana and I were "too young" to watch such a terrifying movie.

But instead, we happily watched Monsters, Inc. and were pretty content when my old sister Amanda regaled us with tales of magic and trolls.

A few months later, though, after much begging on Amanda's part, my mom bought the movie on VHS tape. The three of us snuggled together on the couch like we always did, with our juice and snacks, and watched as Harry made friends for the first time and started off a wild adventure.

After that, we were hooked.

Amanda, at 11 years old, was in her prime time to be a young Harry Potter fan. She instantly picked up the first four books

that had been published and read them feverishly.

Being the oldest sister, she wouldn't share with me. "You're still a baby, Emily. You can't read them."

But I was not a baby, and I protested. I could read perfectly. But it wasn't until a few years later that I actually got the chance to read them.

By the end of second grade, I was tired of missing out. So, I read them, absorbing them faster than any book I've read before. I couldn't stop reading. I read all of ones released at the time and then I read them all again.

Two years later, there was only one book left to be released.

In the meantime, I read all the books at least three times each. I used the points from our reading program to win a challenge in my school and set a record with the highest amount of points for a single person.

Harry Potter gave me the tools I needed – and it helped that I loved what I was reading.

In 2007, the last Harry Potter book was released. We drove an hour to the nearest store that had a midnight release party. We didn't even end up staying, because once I had that book in my hands, I was reading it. I stopped to sleep, but by lunchtime the next day, I had finished.

I cried. I cried when Dobby died in Harry's arms and when the Weasleys all gathered around Fred. But most of all, I was sad because it was over.

The books were amazing and I wanted them to keep going forever. I never wanted the magic to stop.

We continued to watch the movies each year when they were released, often at the midnight release time. We'd stand in line for up to an hour, anxiously waiting.

One year, we even made t-shirts with neon paint – I still have mine.

The last time I would stand in that line was the best time. I had won tickets to see the premiere two days early with three others.

My sisters, a younger cousin and I all dressed up in costume and were there an hour early to stand in line. We were first, and we were on television.

I was interviewed by the news about the end of Harry Potter. I'm sure they weren't expecting much, but I told them that Harry Potter wasn't over. The magic would live on in me and in everyone else.

Now that I'm older and much busier, I still try to take the time and have one movie marathon per year. I reread the books almost every summer.

The magic is still there. I'm there with the trio as they make their way through perilous adventures. My heart breaks when Cedric dies. But it soars again when Harry keeps on going.

I still remember all these random facts and when I see a BuzzFeed quiz to test my knowledge, I just have to take it.

I joined Pottermore when it first came out. The sorting hat deemed me a Ravenclaw, which I was ecstatic about. I bought books other people wrote about the world of Harry Potter.

The magic never stops. People continue to write fanfiction set in the world of Harry Potter because there is so much to explore. They bring out new ideas that fit into canon. There's also some very badly written fanfiction that no one should ever read – I'm looking at you, gin n' tonic fans.

When the series ended, it really didn't end. Here we are, 19 years later, when Albus Severus Potter will be going off to Hogwarts for the first time. We have so much to explore in the



magical world and I don't think the magic will ever truly leave. It will be there, always.

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## Joslin: Photography is a business, a difficult one

Being a photographer has always been a hard gig.

During the film era, it was downright expensive to do, even if you knew your way around the darkroom. During the digital era, the market has become flooded with every Jim, Bob and Shirley who bought a Canon Rebel off Amazon and decided to try his/her hand at portraiture.

Whenever I scroll through Facebook, I physically cringe at senior portraits with heavy vignettes, overly softened skin and an Instagram-esque filter on them. Each time, the same thought crosses my mind: "Someone paid for that?"

Occasionally a post will cross my feed that reads something along the lines of, "Now booking for senior portraits, \$30 for 3 hours, all images on a disk," and it's paired with an album of all those photos that make me cringe.

Almost always, there are several comments about inquiries. Those kinds of posts make me shake my head in disbelief and almost laugh at how ridiculous they are.

Aside from overly processed photos with barrel-scraping low prices, there are a few things that are sure to irritate a photographer. They usually sound something like these:

“That’s a great photo; you must have a really expensive camera!” I wouldn’t go up to a chef and tell him or her that I liked his or her meal and that it was probably because of the expensive pot and pan set.

A good photo is about more than “capturing an image”—it’s about making one. While, yes, having the right equipment does help, the camera does not make an image.

Having the knowledge of how to utilize what equipment I have, how to create a composition, and then executing it is what makes a good image.

“Can you bring your camera?” While we do like to take photos, believe it or not, most photographers like to attend social gatherings as a guest. They like to see these events as separate from work.

There’s this thing called a personal life that we generally like to keep separate from our professional lives. Sometimes I like to bring my camera to events to take photos, just for fun, but that’s for my personal enjoyment.

If you invite me to an event expecting me to bring my camera, get out your wallet.

“I can’t pay you, but my photos would be great exposure for you.” Thank goodness my landlord started accepting exposure for my monthly rent payment... Oh wait, he didn’t.

Turns out, it doesn’t pay for groceries either. I’m sure the hundreds of *potential* Instagram likes I could get from your photos would be great for my self-esteem, but the sad truth is that likes aren’t a form of currency, and photography is still a business. Try walking into your local grocery store and telling the clerk that you’ll be paying for your Nutella with *exposure*.

“Anyone can be a photographer; all you do is press a button.”

To think I've been working on practicing and learning the art of photography when all I should do is press a button... Silly me.

"Just pressing a button" assumes that I shoot on auto, which would mean all the precious *candid* photos that I get constantly asked to take would probably be blurry from movement. So, you better hope I don't shoot on auto.

"Can I have all your RAW photos?" As much as I'm sure you're right when you say that your cousin's wife's brother is great at Photoshop, a photographer with any shred of credibility will never hand you their RAW images.

The images that you will get, however, are the best and are edited to that photographer's style. The images that you won't get weren't up to standards.

Some might have been blurry, out of focus, underexposed, overexposed or just plain bad. You might have blinked or were making a weird face. Maybe there was a tree sticking out of your head in the background.

Photography is an art, and it's a business. So, next time you talk to a photographer, it would help to keep these ideas in mind.

*Savannah Joslin is a fourth-year communication student with a focus on public relations and the IC's Director of Photography.*

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**Clifton: That old car was my**

# Love and independence

At what point can a person say he or she is independent or self-sufficient? Is it when he or she is totally free from the support, influence and control of others?

For many people like myself, a huge step toward a self-sufficient life is the day they can stop asking their parents for rides. We spend a whole childhood dreaming about this day, until one day we find ourselves driving in our own cars.

I had a job within walking distance from my home, and, while my mother insisted that I walked to this job, I thought that I seriously needed my own car.

For me, this job provided a reason to seek independence (even if it's only in driving my own car) from my parents.

After about a month of parading myself up the street every day to where I worked, I found my future car at the neighbor's house. Her name was Lucille and she cost me a whopping \$700!

I know you probably don't think that's befitting of the word "whopping," but remember, I was just 16 and in high school.

I knew that it was a deal that couldn't be passed up. She was a 1995 Honda Civic. I liked everything about this car. It was love at first sight, except for one problem—it was a stick shift.

At 16, I could barely figure out a four-way stop, let alone drive a manual car. But deep in my heart, I knew that this car was my one-way ticket to the freedom that I had dreamt of my entire childhood.

I knew my one choice was to learn to drive this shift stick—and I was determined.

I stalled that car repeatedly while listening to my dad

irritably explaining for the 100th time how to shift into first gear. After a few tears and a couple skid marks, I did it.

I was finally free. No more asking Mom for rides. No more waiting around for forgotten pick-ups.

Sure, Lucille was older than me, and you could only faintly see her blue tint under the rust covering her body, but to me she was beautiful. She got me where I wanted to go, and that's all I could ever ask for.

A few weeks ago, however, Lucille died, and I mean that in the most personified way possible. Although it was just a car, Lucille and I had memories together, and she represented a major part of my life.

On the drive back from a day trip to Ann Arbor, she overheated and began smoking. I don't mean just a little exhaust either. I mean the type of smoking where you debate getting out of the car in hopes that you don't blow up with it.

She didn't go up in flames, but I knew at that moment she was a goner. My \$700 beauty was toast.

I wasn't upset; the car was 22 years old, and I knew this day would come eventually, but the car dying was nothing less of a heartbreak.

I've had breakups, and they hurt less than this expressway explosion. Not only did I not have my car, but I did not have a car, and just like that my independence was gone.

It felt as if I was in high school all over again, asking for rides to and from school. For the first time in what seemed like years, I was bored. I could no longer go where I wanted, when I wanted.

Who knew that a lack of mobility could make you feel so subordinate? Thankfully, I now have a new car, but it will

never be Lucille.

I learned a few lessons through all of this. I learned that you should never turn your cheek to a hooptie, because that rust bucket might be the best car that you ever own.

I also learned that one should never take his or her car for granted. I learned this the hard way this past few weeks. I realized how much I relied on those wheels to do just about everything in my life.

Although the Lucille is gone, she will never be forgotten. Rest in peace Lucille (Lucy). There's nothing like a first car kind of love.

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## **Sennett: "The Internationalist" – a review**

I frequently walked in on Professor Caitlyn Tella conducting rehearsals for "The Internationalist." Other times I have intruded on her instructing a small but eccentric group of theatre students on the subtleties of improvisation. I am usually trying to quietly pass through, so as not to interrupt their strange dances, conversations and screams, to make my way up to the film projection booth, which is located inside their rehearsal space.

As I shut the door behind me to resume my endeavors with celluloid, I always pause and reflect on the absurdities bellow.

Needless to say, when it finally came time for Tella's

directorial debut here at the University of Toledo, my curiosity was in desperate need of quenching. Perhaps it was appropriate for Tella to adapt one of Anne Washburn's plays. Her work is always fresh, contemporary and blurs the conventional borderlines of theatre.

The 2012 satire of modern American culture and communication, "Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play" tackles the simple but frightening concept of what would happen if electricity vanished from America overnight.

Episodes of "The Simpsons" would become objects of folklore and the popular music of Lady Gaga would morph into historical hymns. When it comes to Washburn, audiences rest in an uncomfortable silence during intermissions; they are forced to consider themselves and their habits. Or at least that was my experience with "Mr. Burns" when I saw it in Louisville a few years ago.

An earlier Washburn play, "The Internationalist" (2004) has just been wrapped by the University of Toledo's Department of Theatre and Film.

This work takes place in an unnamed foreign country, where everything is just slightly different from America. A businessman from the U.S. is sent abroad to work in an ambiguous office building for an equally ambiguous reason. If it was to be anything like "Mr. Burns," I knew I would not be in for the typical narrative, not to mention Tella's knack for evoking a haunting atmosphere every time I invade her rehearsal space.

When I sat down to watch the play, I casually noticed the preshow music. It was an instrumental, maybe a cello or a viola, bowing a familiar tune. It sounded classical, but it was Hendrix – "Purple Haze" to be precise. Like with "Burns," the theatre space was already adapting the modern, pop culture into a translated form. This created a subconscious tone that

was disconnected from the familiar.

Stephen Caldwell and Stephen Sakowski should be given partial credit for evoking the eerie tone through their strong sound and lighting design. Tella directed many pregnant pauses within her show which were filled by ambient sounds and a “foreign” lighting pattern, as Tella notes in her director’s statement.

I find it effective when plays and films are bold enough to trust moments of silence. Washburn wrote clever dialogue, delivered sharply by leads Victoria Zajac and Carter Makiewicz. Much of that dialogue is even written in a faux-foreign language, but the cast was able to make it flow naturally.

Tella’s atmospheric direction melded perfectly with Washburn’s familiar yet otherworldly text. She had the insight not to place all her emphasis on the words from the page and instead force her audience to consider blank stares from her actors.

Tella has a way of abandoning me in a sea of raw human instinct. The pauses sent me back to my disorienting, awkward moments of interruption where my words had no power and my body language meant everything.

*Evan Sennett is a second-year studying film and English literature, and he is also an IC cartoonist.*

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## [Abayateye: Good lessons from Phoenicia’s fiasco](#)

Twenty-three years. That’s how long Phoenicia Cuisine’s doors



have been open on the University of Toledo campus. That's also how long the restaurant provided alternative dining that nourished the bellies of different generations of UT's campus community.

Given that I've only patronized the cuisine a few times in my four-odd years on campus, I'm probably the least qualified to write an ode to Phoenicia. Yet, I was worried when Student Government announced that the UT administration was forcing our beloved restaurant to fold up next year. I tried in my mind to figure out what reasons the administration would proffer to justify this decision. At least by this point, I still believed the truism in that story.

For those who didn't know, the story sounded like this: Ed Barakat, Phoenicia's owner, approached Student Government and told them that discussions with UT's administration suggested that he might have to give up his dining space to Aramark. He did not ask them to take any action – only to weigh in on students' interest on the issue. But the student body did more than that. They asked students to show their support for their beloved cuisine by tweeting at the administration. Well, students did. They also showed up in huge numbers to dine, of course at discounted rates, at the restaurant.

Soon, the administration noticed and responded. Basically, they disparaged the story as baseless and ill-informed. Many agreed it was an embarrassing moment for Student Government. I think that sloppiness was inexcusable of a group whose leadership may one day become the leaders of our society.

Beyond this embarrassment, however, I see many positive outcomes from the situation that we must embrace and celebrate.

The first beautiful thing about the situation is that it affirmed our community's commitment to the importance of collective public action. Cast your minds back to the Boston

Tea Party demonstration, the Boston Massacre, the civil rights movements and a host of others. What you realize is that collective action plays a crucial role in reforming society, in transforming it into something more desirable.

Cesar Chavez once said, "We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own."

Without doubt, as students, our first commitment is to our studies. We want to excel in this, but we also want to do good by our community. In the heat of the moment, students showed up in great numbers to support what they thought was an important element of their society. They tweeted, posted on Facebook and had informal discussions in classrooms, the library and just about everywhere else. For me, this was a victory for community action. It provides a reassuring satisfaction of what the future of our societies are going to be. After all, campus is a microcosm of society.

On a different level, the situation reemphasized our administration's commitment to listening to students' opinions and putting that into what they do. President Gaber's reaction is a case in point. She said, "UT has enjoyed a long relationship with Ed and Sam Barakat of Phoenicia. We have no plans for Phoenicia to leave UT or to end our relationship."

As we would eventually find out, the university was considering many options to increase the number of dining spaces on campus, and that included the possibility of taking away Phoenicia's space. Also, we heard the move was a matter of financial expedience. Yet, the President was willing to do what it takes to keep Phoenicia – an important part of our community's history – going. For me, that is a great development from this unfortunate situation.

Finally, the situation provided the community an opportunity to engage ourselves in discussing an issue that has deep roots in our society – the issue of free choice and the value of alternatives to creating competition and food quality on campus. If Aramark ends up becoming a monopoly, it would mean that students' power of free choice would be limited. Well, you could say that Aramark would provide a wide variety of food choices, but the reality would be that Aramark will be the only player in the market.

How does that idea of a food monopoly sync with our democratic ideals? If we're training students to appreciate the values that made our societies great, then an Aramark monopoly wouldn't be sending a good message.

By all means, we should pursue financial prosperity for our university. But, in doing so, we should not sacrifice elements of our society that contribute to UT's unique campus experience. After surviving 23 years on this campus, Phoenicia just happens to position itself as an important part of that experience.

It is not my intention to justify Student Government's sloppiness in handling the issue. I think their rashness is unacceptable and deserving of the criticisms they got. Yet, I believe that sloppiness also provided our campus community an opportunity to be excited about how great we are. It gave us a chance to show our commitment to working together towards improving our shared campus experience.

*Philemon Abayateye is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Geography and Planning and the IC's Opinion Editor.*

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# Rinckey: The heart is where my home is

I used to live in a 30-mile box. I rarely went north of Dundee or south of Maumee, and Sylvania is about as far west as I've driven on my own. Until last September, the world could have dropped off at the edge of Stickney Avenue, and I would never have known. I didn't realize how closed off from the rest of the world I had been until I left.

I went to study abroad in Reading, England last September. It was exciting; it was my first time out of the country and my longest time away from home. I saw things that people spend their whole lives wishing they could see. I drank a pint in Ireland. I learned the definition of frescoes by witnessing the whisper of air between God and Adam's fingers. I made a wish as I tossed a coin over my shoulder into the Trevi Fountain.

But I'm ashamed because I spent a lot of time wishing I was back in Toledo and right back to the 30-mile box I had trapped myself in. I even considered changing my ticket to come home earlier than I first decided.

I was living a dream, so who was I to feel sad? It didn't make any sense to me. I was in the UK where my literary heroes wrote. I was in Bath, where Jane Austen lived and set two of her novels. I saw a plaster cast of Robert Burns' skull. I was living in the town where Oscar Wilde went to prison (which is sad and terrible, but insane at the same time).

I felt ridiculous at the time for wishing to be back in Toledo, but Toledo was where my heart was. My heart was in the Glass City where my friends were continuing our weekly trivia game without me. Where my pregnant sister was and where my niece was eventually born. Where my dad was home alone,

probably eating too much takeout. My heart was in Toledo.

I felt like I was missing out on so much by being away. But I was also missing out on seeing the world by trapping myself in yet another tiny box. I never ate my lunch in the cafeteria; I always brought it back to my room. I spent my evenings watching British Netflix by myself in my tiny dorm room. I made five new friends and called it quits after that. I was having fun, but my heart wasn't in it.

A typical passenger airplane moves about 567 miles per hour, but a heart is much smaller and can't fly, so it takes longer to catch up. It took awhile, but my heart gradually returned to me. Like a bottle tossed into Lake Erie, my heart eventually rode ashore. My friends and family weren't going to move on without me; they would all be there when I got back. There's nothing that should stop me from doing the things I want to do. My heart was back, and I was willing to do new things.

I was running out of time to go places. I took day trips by myself when I wasn't in class to make up for the time I had lost. I flew to Edinburgh on a whim after a class on a Tuesday, and I flew back Wednesday night to be in class on Thursday. I rode a train by myself to Liverpool to stalk the Beatles. I chugged a butterbeer in London at the Harry Potter studio tour. It was amazing.

I've seen parts of the world, and now I want to see more. I need to see more. I'm no longer trapped in a 30-mile box. No, my heart destroyed that box as it made its way back to me. Now, wherever I am, my heart is too.

*Morgan Rinckey is a fourth-year English and communication double major.*

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# Buchler: Guac is life – an expert's guide to guacamole

When, exactly, is the point that a passion can be categorized as a ridiculous obsession? Is it when I make it my home screen on my iPhone? Or is it when I get it emblazoned on a sweatshirt?

Surely that borderline has been crossed when I dedicate my only column of the semester to it.

No, I'm not talking about some magical, life-changing relationship (that I'm not in) or about my undying love for a pet (that I don't own); this is strictly about avocados and guacamole. Remember that avocado-obsessed lady from the Subway commercials a few years back? Yeah, I'm her.

I don't quite recall when this avocado affair began. All I know is that, during high school, there was a period when I would come home in the afternoon, make myself a bowl of guac and watch "Ellen." One night, when I was the only one awake in my house, I found myself in the kitchen at 11 p.m., mashing up chunks of avocado. You know, just teen things.

Suffice to say, I've had a fair amount of practice with guac and have picked up a few techniques along the way.

First, the key to good guac-making is shopping right. When visiting Kroger or Meijer (or Whole Foods if you like your produce with a side of pretentiousness), make sure you go with a complete grocery list. In my guacamole, I usually go for avocados, tomatoes, onion, jalapeño pepper, salt, pepper, cumin and lemon juice.

Be sure to select avocados that are firm but not rock-hard. If you do buy ones that are a little before their prime, ripen them on your counter or in a paper bag. When they're ready to eat, put them in the refrigerator until you're about to use them to keep them from getting overripe.

The quantities are really up to interpretation—if you like breathing fire, go ahead and add a whole jalapeño; I won't judge. You may have to make a few batches before you figure out what you like, but that's OK. There's no such thing as too much guacamole.

Once you get all your ingredients assembled, start with the avocado. Cut it open lengthwise along the pit and twist it to separate the two halves. Next, puncture the pit in the center and rotate around it with a knife to extract it.

Score the flesh of the avocado and scoop it out with a spoon; this will make it easier to mash. Then, use the tines of a fork to make the guacamole as chunky or smooth as you'd like. Add in the rest of your ingredients and you've got magic in a bowl.

Be careful, though: Avocados are pretty finicky. If you can't inhale a bowl of guac like I can, it'll probably start to turn a little brown, so if you're one of those people who likes his/her food to be Instagram-ready, time is of the essence. Your guac doesn't have all day.

No one should need a reason to enjoy a bowl of guacamole, but I understand that some like to reserve making certain foods for special occasions. That said, be sure to mark your calendars for National Guacamole Day, otherwise known to the unenlightened as Sept. 16. Let us all raise a tortilla chip in its honor.

Whether you've never tried guacamole or you're a seasoned veteran, get yourself some avocados as soon as possible and start mashing; you won't regret it. As my favorite sweatshirt

says, "Guac is life."

*Kristen is a first-year English student and the IC's Copy Editor.*

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## Nearhoof: Alcohol makes for "unsteady" lives, families and much more

Do you have a friend who always seems to have a drink in his or her hand? Or a flask in his or her bag? We all know someone who likes to drink, and we all know someone who likes to drink a little bit too much. But do you know how to tell the difference between casual drinking and when it can become a problem?

Alcoholism is a disease that affects 17.6 million people in the United States, according to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence. Alcoholism describes the condition where a person becomes so dependent on alcohol that he thinks he cannot function without it.

In some ways, we can think of alcoholism as a genetic disease. Numerous scientific studies reveal that alcohol-dependence runs in families. Anxiety and stress are common causes of alcoholism. Those who suffer feel as though drinking alcohol helps them live their lives, when, actually, it can only hinder them.

I know exactly how alcohol can hurt families. My father is an alcoholic and has been my entire life. I have known about it ever since I can remember. His drinking wasn't something he



tried to hide from me, my mom or anyone else.

Growing up, I used to go on fun little trips with him every Saturday. We would recycle bottles at the local grocery store, buy several two-liters of Mountain Dew and a fifth of vodka. I would always get a Lunchable and a lime Bug Juice while we were out.

A few years ago, my mom told me a story. When I was about three years old, my mom and I were shopping in Walmart for my dad's birthday. She asked me what I wanted to get him as a gift, and I walked right up to the bottles of vodka and pointed to them. Children are perceptive. I knew even then what my dad's favorite pastime was: drinking.

In 2015, X Ambassadors released their hit song "Unsteady." If you haven't seen the music video, take a break from reading and go watch it. As the song progresses, we see the man's alcoholism grow from it being fun to drink while young to something that is very not funny as responsible adults.

We watch as the parallels in their relationship drastically change. The video shows man and woman on their first date compared to a morning breakfast in their home as husband and wife. The man sneaks alcohol into his coffee while the woman smiles and nods, thinking it's edgy and fun. When he does the same action as the husband, with their young child sitting at the table, his wife no longer smiles and nods.

My mother had the same relationship with my father. When they first started dating, she thought that the alcohol he was consuming was a fun social pastime. As they aged, she stopped drinking as much and he started drinking more heavily. He transitioned from beer to hard liquor a few years after I was born. His parents died, my mom was diagnosed with breast cancer and the drinking progressively worsened. I watched as the drinking tore our family up and thought about how it can affect someone's entire life.

Maybe this is the reason that I don't drink alcohol. I've seen the worst parts of alcohol, and I don't want to be a part of it. Maybe I don't drink because I am a control freak or just because I hate the smell of alcohol. I've become so used to seeing it in a negative way that even drinking casually is something I can't bring myself to do.

Just remember that alcohol can have very serious effects on your health and your life. According to Alcohol Rehab Guide, a website that raises awareness for alcohol abuse and alcoholism, there are often common warning signs you can look for in someone who might be abusing alcohol, including:

- Being unable to control alcohol consumption
- Craving alcohol when you're not drinking
- Putting alcohol above personal responsibilities
- Feeling the need to keep drinking more
- Spending a substantial amount of money on alcohol
- Behaving differently after drinking.

If you or anyone you know is at risk of alcohol addiction, there is help. You are not alone.

The University of Toledo Counseling Center can be a great resource for students struggling with addiction. Stop by their office in Rocket Hall or call to set up an appointment with a counselor. In addition, Alcoholics Anonymous of Northwestern Ohio and Southeastern Michigan has meetings every day of the week in different area locations. Visit its website at <http://www.toledoaa.com/> to find out more.

If you are a child of alcoholism or have a relative struggling with addiction, there are groups you can go to for support. Find out more about their meetings at <http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/>

There is no problem with going out with your friends, drinking and having a good time. You are allowed to be a young adult and to make mistakes. But you need to be aware of the dangerous problems that can come with it. You may not think that you are in trouble until it is too late.

*Rachel Nearhoof is a 5th year Individualized Studies major. She is the IC's associate director of photography, webmaster and social media coordinator.*

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## **Schnipke: Growing impatient in the age of the internet**

It's already happening. I can feel the changes taking place in my brain. I don't want to change, but it's something outside of my control.

I'm becoming impatient. We, as a continuously advancing society, are lazy. In the age of increasingly better and better technology, our attention gap is waning.

I'm at the point where, if the website I'm trying to load takes too long, I close out of it. I forget about it. If the video I'm watching on YouTube is too long, I don't watch it. I'm becoming more and more impatient.

I stopped watching television. Why? The commercial gaps are too long and not worth my time. I pay for a music service subscription. Why? There are too many commercials that I have to wait through. I use the Tapingo app to buy my Starbucks coffee. Why? The line is too long to wait in, even if it is just a ten-minute wait.

I'm so used to Amazon Prime and two-day shipping. I can buy something and have it here two days later. Speed is everything.

But at the same time, I hate it because it makes me dislike myself. Where's the person who used to enjoy waiting? The person who wasn't so impatient with technology? The person who used to enjoy reading actual books?

I haven't read an actual book for fun in a long time. I don't have the time and patience to sit in one place and just read. But I subscribed to a website that sends me a chapter of a book a day. It gives me something to read in bite-sized pieces. It's small and simple.

I think it all started with Facebook. In 2016, Facebook changed its algorithm (yet again) to feature shorter articles and videos with lots of hits. People were more likely to watch a one-minute video than to read a 500-word article with the same exact content. This seemed like a good change, until it exploded.

Now, I can't scroll through my timeline on Facebook without seeing videos about any and everything.

There are videos showing me local heroes, how to frost a fancy cake, people with great singing skills and even easy yoga poses. Some are interesting to watch; others make me wonder why anyone cares about the topic.

Is Facebook suddenly a platform for just video content? I check it to stay up-to-date with my friends and family, not to see "50 ways to update your home without buying anything." If I wanted to view that kind of content, I'd look for it elsewhere.

I dislike the quickness of the internet sometimes. Sure, it does make doing my homework easier or finding out if my dog can eat blueberries, but I like being able to search for

something. I like digging to find what I need.

I want to change back. I want to be the Emily who stared out the window for a long time and forgot about her cup of tea until it became cold. The girl who spent hours sitting and knitting a scarf for a friend without watching a movie, listening to music or even checking her phone for the time. I want to slow down.

Maybe I should quit it. Disconnect myself from social media. I'd have a lot more free time and a heck of lot better attitude because I wouldn't be seeing depressing news all the time. Best of all, I would be back to my old, patient self.

*Emily Schnipke is a third-year communication student with a minor in English. She is also the IC's editor-in-chief.*

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## **Nieszczur: What fills the dash between your birth and death dates?**

Speeches have a way of influencing lives and changing perspectives.

I was in Cindy Puffer's privileged audience when she delivered her "Living Your Dash" speech nearly a year ago. Puffer is a registered nurse, and she was speaking to a group of Rho Chi inductees, their family members, professors and distinguished guests.

By the dash, she was referring to the period in an individual's life between when she was born and when she dies: basically, the dates on her tombstone. That speech struck a

chord because it reminded me of a common statement I have often heard tossed around quite a bit: "Don't get so busy living that you forget to live." Yet, her speech was special in its impact on me, and, I believe, on some of the audience too.

She said that while it is easy for sympathizers to look up and know a person's birthdate and the day she passed, it's harder to know what the deceased has done with all that life in between. She then paused and asked, "What are you doing with that life—the tiny dash between the two dates?" This is an important question that we should all reflect on as we go through our days.

This tiny dash, she said, contains years of experiences, knowledge and the impacts we had on those around us, on our environment. People would easily forget our birth and death dates, but they seldom forget the experiences they had with us—good or bad.

She ended the speech with a challenge to the audience that we all try to fit that dash with the most we can in terms of how we touched other lives. She also encouraged us to find joy and happiness in the process rather than blindly fighting to fit as many milestones as possible into that dash. Milestones are good but they themselves are inadequate. They must lead to something greater.

I thought about my life during that speech and realized how I was on the typical bandwagon to living life the way society expects of me.

For example, the typical trend in an average person's life follows a progression very much like the this. Our parents enroll us in kindergarten, grade school, we go to to middle school and eventually we are in high school. Soon, we get ready for prom and then go off to college, select a major and graduate.

For some people, this is where they meet their significant others and perhaps—and I may be wrong—get engaged and then married. Then they can't wait to have a child, and then another and then another.

Some will find the jobs of their dreams and jump from one promotion to the other. Our children soon become adults and we continue our search for celebrating milestones through their achievements. Some may be lucky enough to see their retirement and play with the grandkids. By all social standards, this is success.

Why are we chasing after all these milestones in the first place? Is this life worth living? Is it really considered living? But what if we're missing the point of life?

For good and for bad, we are a generation that seeks instant gratification.

We're so busy that we don't make time for the things that matter. We'll choose Google to find solution to problems over talking to real people. We want to stay in touch with friends and settle for an impersonal, but instantly gratifying, text message. Community is dead.

We want our devices to work faster, have clearer displays and have more powerful capabilities. Just like that, our wish is their command, with new updates available every few months.

Marketing strategies want us to focus on saving up for the next big thing and rushing into the next life milestone. It seems that the "American dash" is simply full of rushing to get to the next mile marker.

When did we forget how to live?

Like most Americans, I am very guilty of being the American dasher. I crossed off the days on my calendar until the next big event and sought to climb life's ladder as painlessly and

effortlessly as possible.

It was my best friend who pointed out to me how empty living a life like that could be.

For my 20th birthday, she painted me a simple small canvas with the word “serendipity” on it. She told me to look up its meaning and to adopt it as the theme for my 20s.

Serendipity means “finding valuable or agreeable things not sought for.” This is what made Puffer’s message familiar and attractive.

Instead of seeking out the next big event, promotion, graduation or life milestone, I am challenged to “live my dash” and find purpose in every day.

So, I began to make conscious efforts to focus less on running the race, and more on enjoying the ride. I began to find purpose and reflect on the happiness and potential that each day held.

My perspective changed, and, honestly, life became a lot brighter and each day became something to look forward to.

I challenge you to remove yourself from the race and instead, take time to build a meaningful dash between your birth date and your death date.

You should constantly ask yourself if, at the end, people will look back on your dash and see it filled with a purposeful life that was truly lived.

All we may leave behind are two dates and a name on a headstone, but what fills that tiny little dash makes all the difference.

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