SWEET CAROLINA
Gamecocks reach Sweet 16 for first time in program history

“Especially to beat a team like Duke... that’s a great win.”
— John Wilcox, first-year business student

“I think we’re gonna get a lot of good recruits next year... P.J. and Kotsar are still in, so I think we’re gonna be pretty good next year.”
— Nathan Gates, first-year civil engineering student

“It means we’re gonna beat Baylor next week, and South Carolina is a basketball school, officially.”
— Ian Stuebe, third-year sport and entertainment management student

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If you are someone who lives in constant fear of the impending robot uprising then this edition of Weird Stories might make you uneasy. If you fit the above description and you also hate bees, you should be twice as concerned (or maybe happy if you really hate bees).

In recent years, the bee population has taken a massive hit, with the U.S. losing 44 percent of its honey bee colonies between April 2015 and April 2016 according to BeeInformed.org. This, coupled with the fact that many other species of bees are already nearing extinction, means the future isn’t looking bright for bees.

Now, this might not be something that you are losing sleep over, seeing as it’s likely that the most experience you have with bees is getting stung on the playground as a kid or frantically running from room to room of your house when you accidentally let one in. However, bees are actually extremely important to our ability to survive, as they are one of the leaders in pollinating crops, and without them researchers say we could lose a large portion of our food supply and in turn also take massive financial damages.

So it seems that the natural solution would be to get over our hatred of/indifference toward bees and try to save them, if for nothing else than our selfish desire to ensure our own well-being. Well, scientists in Japan have found an even more selfish (and ridiculous) solution: replace bees with robots.

These robo bees — designed by Eijiro Miyako, who does research at the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology in Japan — fly around and use horse hair coated with a special gel that allows them to pick up and carry pollen from plant to plant. Also, in order to test the gel, Miyako’s team coated insects with it and studied whether or not insects with the gel could pick up pollen from flowers.

So, let’s recap. Bee populations are dying and these scientists plan to create robots to replace them, and to test their plan they took sticky gel and coated other animals with it to see if it was right for the robot replacement. This would be like if your boss fired you, then forced you to get your replacement his coffee and help him set up his workspace.

Those who are worried about living a real-life Black Mirror episode can rest easy for the moment because Miyako’s current robot bees are not ready for the market and aren’t even autonomous yet. If we wanted to use them as pollinators right now, some poor intern would have to walk around and manually steer the drone from plant to plant. Though

Disney movies are sorely lacking. For starters, Emma Watson’s Belle is more ostracized by her provincial town. She goes so far as to be an inventor and teach another girl to read, a heinous act in her bucolic community. Her loneliness and isolation, however, help Belle and the Beast connect on a deeper level than the original pair — their labels as outcasts bring them common ground.

While Belle and the Beast find a connection being “freaks,” that’s where their onscreen chemistry ends. Emma Watson exudes the strength and intelligence needed for her character, but she falls short in her romantic relationship with the Beast, played by Dan Stevens. Stevens, whose Beast was given a more nuanced character development and glimpse into his spoiled past, makes a
charming and convincing Beast, but his conversations with servants Lumiere and Cogsworth were more interesting than his ones with Belle. One of the three new songs, “Evermore,” is a solo for Stevens, which adds humanity not yet seen in a character regarded as savage or spoiled rotten.

Where the movie really finds its groove is in the supporting characters. Luke Evans perfectly embodies Gaston and even gives his self-obsessed war hero a more malicious streak that satisfies his villain status. His violence against Kevin Kline’s Maurice is increased tenfold, while his narcissism increases exponentially. Gaston’s henchman, LeFou, is the real scene-stealer of the remake. Josh Gid, who stole the show in “Frozen” as Olaf, encapsulates a loyal yet confused right hand man to Gaston. Gad portrays LeFou’s struggle and confusion with his feelings toward Gaston with a humor and depth that left me wishing we could skip the ballroom scene and see LeFou sing Gaston’s praises again — “Gaston” was the standout number from the musical.

Lumiere, Cogsworth, Mrs. Potts and the rest of the antique servants were charming and distinct, each actor adds a personality that makes one like and care for each cursed house worker. Two new characters, played by Audra McDonald and Stanley Tucci, played two separated lovers that offered a nice romantic parallel to Belle and the Prince. The musical numbers are dizzying in their visuals. “Be Our Guest” is a spectacle that showcases Ewan McGregor’s gravitas and skill as a performer — even if it’s only through voice-acting. The opening number is an entertaining prologue that expertly introduces Belle as the feminine, intelligent outcast that she is. Her morning walk through her small village sees her attracting strange looks, visiting the bookstore and rejecting Gaston’s advances much more forcibly than the original cartoon version.

While the chemistry between Belle and her Beast is a little stale, the extravagant musical numbers and charming supporting cast are enough to make this worth the watch. For super-fans of the original, a few small changes are made to keep it interesting and entertaining.
This weekend a release date for the film “3 Generations,” formerly “About Ray,” was announced. It’s a film ostensibly about a trans character, but who otherwise would be invisible, but it falls victim to almost every single pitfall Hollywood attempts to represent trans people suffer from. So let’s talk about representation, who’s needed and why the media is doing it badly.

The most obvious and public shortcoming of “3 Generations” is that it has a trans man played by a cisgender woman. This reinforces the idea that trans men are really just “girls presenting as men,” not helped by the film’s depiction of trans characters.

We focus a lot on transition stories as a culture. Almost every major trans-centric story Hollywood or the television industry produces involves the social, behavioral and physical transition in a trans character, but almost never to the world. It essentially reduces trans characters down to the thing that makes them most “different” from the rest of the population, in this case sex. This is done as a huge disproportionate amount of Oscar-nominated films with a black lead focus on civil rights or slavery, rather than just black characters interacting with society.

It’s part of a general assumption that unless race, sex, sexuality or gender identity is essential to a story or character, everyone is a white male by default. But that is beyond the scope of this column.

Even if we must make stories that try to play up the “otherness” of trans characters and don’t have the space to do them in a way that doesn’t define their character, we can at least have trans actors in them. Just have a trans woman play a pre-transition trans man, or vice-versa. They have some idea what the emotions involved in dysphoria and harassment are like, and need exposure.

Another problem with “3 Generations” and many media’s depiction of trans stories is that it ultimately loses an Oscar nod to the cisgender-led mess that was “The Danish Girl.” Because, for some reason, critics, audiences and the Academy doesn’t think trans characters and don’t primarily focus on transitions. The independent film “Tangerine” was also praised for its handling of trans characters and its story. The Academy, however, didn’t even recognize it.

There are some stories that deserves commendation for good portrayals. The Netflix shows “Sense8” and “Orange is the New Black,” while problematic in their own ways, do paint trans people as more complex than their gender and don’t primarily focus on transitions. The independent film “Tangerine” was also praised for its handling of trans characters and its story. The Academy, however, didn’t even recognize it.

Southerners are unprepared for snow

Hayden Blakeney (Second-year History student)

Last week’s descent of snow on Columbia happened to revive an old controversy: The inability of Southern cities to deal with snowfall. Although this incident of precipitation mercifully did not render the entire state immobile for several days, snow that falls on the South generally has major consequences.

Students from the North get apprehensive on the prospect of winter weather in state government. To clear the snow from streets, the city of East St. Louis, Illinois, but my 12 years of living in South Carolina have faded my Yankee tendencies. The South’s collective fear of the white stuff is simply a lack of preparedness. Many living in the lower states have little to no experience driving in snow, and would laugh at the prospect of inventing snow-cover gear for cars. Since the city of Columbia is around one each of snow, as opposed to the 36 inches of snow the average city in the United States gets, the South Carolina government has little incentive to create an anti-snow budget. Combined with the poor quality of roads in the state, it creates a perfect storm of ignorance and lack of infrastructure.

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Aries
You’re coming into your own, with the Sun in your sign. Achieve personal objectives. You’re in your element this month. Professional opportunities arise today and tomorrow.

Taurus
Peaceful meditation and introspection provide great ideas and clarity of purpose this month. Nurture your curiosity and find your energy. Someone you love. Aries. Collaborate with the Sun in Aries. Provide great ideas and upgrades in beauty and functionality.

Gemini
Manage shared finances today and tomorrow. Get into a four-week social phase, with the Sun in Aries. Get your message out today and tomorrow. Focus on your work and exercise this month. Make plans over the next month, with the Sun in Aries. Provide great ideas and opportunities arise today and tomorrow. Get your message out today and tomorrow.

Cancer
Your physical health improves over the next two days. Your physical health and vitality grows under the Aries Sun. Energize your body and avoid accidents today and tomorrow.

Leo
Begin a travel and expansion phase. Indulge your curiosity this month, with the Sun in Aries. Nurture your health today and tomorrow. Indulge your curiosity and avoid accidents.

Virgo
Partnership grows with the Sun in Aries. It’s a good month for financial planning. Invest for long-term growth. Collaboration can get especially beautiful and romantic today and tomorrow.

Libra
Home and family take priority today and tomorrow. Partnerships grow stronger this month, with the Sun in Aries. Collaborate with someone you love.

Scorpio
Get your message out today and tomorrow. You’re coming into your own, with the Sun in your sign. Achieve personal objectives. Get your message out over the next two days. Your physical health and vitality grows under the Aries Sun. Energize your body and avoid accidents today and tomorrow.

Sagittarius
Today and tomorrow get profitable. You’re lucky in love and play this month, with the Sun in Aries. Someone finds your energy attractive. Deepen a romance.

Capricorn
Follow a personal dream today and tomorrow. Focus on home improvement this month, with the Sun in Aries. Provide great ideas and opportunities arise today and tomorrow. Get your message out today and tomorrow.

Aquarius
Concentrate on your studies and travels over the next month, with the Sun in Aries. Explore your curiosity. Make plans over the next two days.

Pisces
It’s easier to make money, with the Sun in Aries. Make hay while the sun shines. Teamwork gets the job done today and tomorrow.

For solutions to today’s puzzle, go to dailygamecock.com or download our app!
With their season hanging in the balance, the Gamecocks’ first-half shooting drought approached apocalyptic proportions. With Gallman, a shot would have been — should have been — on the backboard, or in the hands of a teammate.

After a jumper from freshman guard Rakym Felder, the Gamecocks would miss their next 11 shots. They would not score again for more than six minutes. 

Duke’s defensive interior play made it nearly impossible for the Gamecocks to find uncontested looks in the paint. Senior forward Amile Jefferson recorded five blocks in just the first half. The Gamecocks instead looked to score from the perimeter, but went 1 of 6 from behind the arc.

Against one of the most talented programs in the country — Duke boast six former five-star recruits across their roster — the Gamecocks’ shooting woes should have been on their roster — the Gamecocks’ defense was in the paint. Senior forward Amile Jefferson recorded five blocks in just the first half. The Gamecocks instead looked to score from the perimeter, but went 1 of 6 from behind the arc.

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