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Garnet & Black Winter 2015

University of South Carolina, Office of Student Media

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**THE UGLY
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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ERIKA RYAN

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

LINA LeGARE

MANAGING EDITOR

KENDRA LITTLE

ARTICLES EDITOR

JAKE MARGLE

ASSISTANT ARTICLES EDITOR

KASEY MEREDITH

COPY CHIEF

MADELEINE VATH

ASSOCIATE COPY EDITOR

RICHARD LIPKIN

STAFF WRITER

HANNAH JEFFREY

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

MIKAELLA ANTONIO

K. LEE GRAHAM

KIRBY KNOWLTON

ROBIN HENDRICKS

HOLLY HEATON

TAYLOR HALLE

KELLY YOON

OLIVIA WALKER

KATHLEEN MILEWSKY

HALEY SCHMITT

LOGAN YUCHA

CATHERINE SULLIVAN

ART DIRECTOR

JUSTIN CARRIER

ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR

KODY KRATZER

STAFF DESIGNERS

KELLEN LaGROON

STEPHANIE ORR

BRITTANY WILT

CONTRIBUTING DESIGNERS

HALEY CLOYD

JENSEN GRIM

WESLEY JEFFERIES

SYDNEY PITVOREC

PHOTO EDITOR

HANNAH CLEVELAND

ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

JOSH THOMPSON

SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

BRENNAN BOOKER

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

MELANEY MOTTSEY

KAMILA MELKO

SEAN SHOPPELL

MIKAELLA ANTONIO

OLIVIA WALKER

COLE MALTOM

CHRISTIAN TOLBERT

VIDEOGRAPHER

JAY LUEBKE

WEB EDITORS

KATHERINE FINNEY

TAYLOR HALLE

PUBLIC RELATIONS & EVENTS DIRECTOR

ALYSON RUSSO

PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSISTANT

KRISTIE WAKEFIELD

ALEXANDRA MELTNER

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ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES

JOSH DAVISON

COLE HALTOM

LOWMAN HARLEY

MARYAN TEHRANIE

AMANDA GRANT

Advertising: (803) 777-3018

To contact G&B, email sagandbe@mailbox.sc.edu or visit www.gandbmagazine.com

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Contributors



HALEY CLOYD

Haley Cloyd is a fourth-year visual communications student who loves design and photography. In addition to her freelance design business, she works as an intern at a local 3-D printing company, ZVerse, Inc., where she hopes to accept a full-time position. She spends most of her time creating design work or playing with her lab mix, Luna. Make sure to take a look at her design for our quiz on page 45.



KELLY YOON

Kelly Yoon is a first-year international business student interested in style, management and brand expansion. However, she loves to write on the side, and thus was drawn to Garnet & Black as an opportunity to put her editorial and creative skills to use. After college, she hopes to secure a marketing management job in a big city. Check out the story she wrote about dancer Vidal James on page 36.



KRISTIE WAKEFIELD

Kristie Wakefield is a fourth-year public relations student with a hospitality minor. She loves writing, dancing and spending time with her family and friends. She hopes to do public relations and event planning for a theme park in Orlando, Florida, when she graduates. Wakefield has been a part of the Garnet & Black public relations team for two years now.



CHRISTIAN TOLBERT

Christian Tolbert is a first-year criminal justice student who loves photography and exploring. He is a freelance photographer and loves to find old, abandon places to take photos of. He aspires to hopefully become a lawyer in future and still pursue photography as a side hobby. Don't miss his photos of stand-up comedian Phil Carter on page 9.

Events

DEC. 4, 4-8 P.M., FREE A STARRY NIGHT

Five Points will begin to celebrate the holidays on Friday, December 4, from 4 to 8 p.m. during their free event, A Starry Night. Free hot chocolate, complimentary horse carriage rides, a pop-up Christmas tree farm and visit from Santa are just some of the features open for family and friends to enjoy.

DEC. 13, 3:30 P.M., \$29 HARBISON THEATER PRESENTS "HOLIDAY POPS"

The fourth annual "Holiday Pops" concert with the S.C. Philharmonic will take place on Sunday, December 13 at 3:30 p.m. Tickets are \$29 and can be purchased through Harbison Theatre.

DEC. 31, 7 P.M., FREE FAMOUSLY HOT NEW YEAR

The largest, free New Year's Eve celebration in South Carolina will take place on Main Street December 31. Free concerts starting at 7 p.m. include headliner Ms. Lauryn Hill and Charleston-based SUSTO. FHNY also displays the largest fireworks show in the two Carolinas.

JAN. 21-24 RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY'S CIRCUS XTREME

Let your imagination run loose from January 21-24 as the Colonial Life Arena hosts Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's Circus XTREME. Traditional elements of the circus paired with fast-paced performances, exotic animals, and astonishing performers make for a fun-filled experience.



Letter from the Editor

I've always admired roller girls. To me, roller derby always seemed like one of those sports I could never become a part of for two reasons: my lack of coordination and the exclusiveness of the community. After talking to members of the Columbia QuadSquad Roller girls, I realized I was wrong all along.

My favorite part of writing this issue's feature on roller derby was not only learning about the sport itself, but getting to know a little bit about this bada-- , tattooed tight knit circle of ladies. According to the QuadSquad, it doesn't matter how much experience you have, or who you are, they're willing to teach you, support you and take you in as one of their own.

This reminded me of how it works at G&B. During these last two issues, G&B has become a cohesive squad of its own. In the first issue, we spent our time taking our first steps, but with this issue I think we've hit our stride. During the production week for this issue, I spent about 17 hours on campus per day, so as you can imagine, I ate a lot of ramen. I wish I had taken advantage of the guide our Articles editors wrote on how to pump up your ramen. Don't keep eating plain chicken ramen like me – spice up your cheap, late night noodles with the recipes on page 16.

After flipping through old issues, it occurred to us: G&B has never done a style shoot exclusively dedicated to men's fashion. We agreed it was time, and we also agreed men's fashion had to be in the winter. Who doesn't love a good blazer? So that's what you'll find on page 28: a guide to men's fashion, four different looks on four different men.

Our staff writer Hannah Jeffrey's piece on page 18 about social media and anxiety really resonated with me – I think we can all relate to only wanting to portray our best selves on Facebook or Instagram.

So whether you're planning on spending your break decorating or hibernating – like me – happy holidays!

Erika Ryan | Editor-in-Chief



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Gabriela Herstik

BY KIRBY KNOWLTON // PHOTOS BY JOSH THOMPSON // DESIGN BY KELLEN LaGROON

On a campus of oversized T-shirts and Nike shorts, Gabriela Herstik stands out. The self-proclaimed “death queen” has half her head shaved, frequently wears all black and carries around a purse decorated with three pentagrams and the word “witch.” To her, an outfit isn’t what you throw on 10 minutes before your 8:30 class, but a material representation of who you are. Fashion isn’t a hobby — but what she breathes.

The fourth-year fashion merchandising student started her blog, www.breathingfashion.net, when she was in 10th grade. Though her blog was originally a place for her to write about designer collections and avant-garde trends, it’s evolved into something more personal today.

Herstik grew interested in the occult around the same time she started writing her blog.

Her exploration of fashion and spirituality occurred in tandem, but it took awhile before she understood how they worked together. In describing herself, Herstik speaks of her soul style. “Fashion is the last layer in completing who I am,” she says. “It’s a physical manifestation of what my soul would look like.” This comes out in an editorial way on her blog where she has a series of outfits inspired by tarot cards.

In everyday life, it means owning her witchiness through wearing mostly black, high heels and her signature red lipstick — Lady Danger by MAC.

She has some real experience under her probably vintage belt: a semester at the London College of Fashion and an internship with designer Rick Owens. Her blog is a medium for her to express her ideology of

being a death queen.

Herstik defines this as “A woman who owns transformation.” Herstik’s favorite Tarot card, the death card, represents transformation. “Change is an inevitable part of life,” she says. Through embracing the death card, she embraces change, a necessary skill in a field as fast-moving as fashion.

Some of Herstik’s favorite designers include Valentino, Simone Rocha, Alexander McQueen and Ann Demeulemeester. She admires Vivienne Westwood, the punk movement and how they used fashion to portray their ideals.

“Fashion’s always been a revolutionary part of how we show ourselves to the world,” she says.



Phil Carter

BY MIKAELLA ANTONIO // PHOTOS BY CHRISTIAN TOLBERT

When Phil Carter opened for Iliza Shlesinger in September, his “Pics or it didn’t happen!” punchline was met with laughs, but a collective groan filled the Russell House Ballroom. Apparently dead baby jokes are tough to sell.

“I was going for a dark joke,” Carter says. “If that whole crowd just laughed ... I would’ve felt sort of uncomfortable.” The same goes for a Jewish fraternity anecdote, the likes of which he says is “ignorant to be insulted by.” For Carter, it’s simple – when he’s telling a joke, he’s not being serious. “It’s literally a joke,” he says.

Not a stranger to the stage, Carter took second place at last year’s Student Comedy Competition and frequently performs at local venues. He describes himself best as “a loner with some funny thoughts.” He favors the atmosphere of gigs at small bars and

comedy clubs, saying that he feels like “a nobody with a microphone – that’s real comedy.”

The third-year marketing and management student has come a long way from publicly plotting a senior prank on Twitter – his principal found out and spoiled his plans. “I’m actually glad she figured out about it because it forced me to be more creative and not do a typical senior prank,” Carter says.

Carter hones his craft with writing sessions at Cool Beans and the Horseshoe. The nonsensical 4 a.m. scribbles that he has to “try to decipher when [he’s] up and fully functioning” also breed the substance of his sets.

Carter is not a sad clown, but, like any artist, his inspiration doesn’t always come from sunshine and good vibes. Death turns

his smile upside down.

“I like to think of life as a comedy. Deep down I know my life is a tragedy though, because I do stand-up,” he says.

Carter says he does it for those who share his insecurities and that he wants “to hit home for some lonely and paranoid people.” He plans to pursue a career in comedy and said that “if worst comes to worst, [he’ll] be a Carnival cruise ship comic talking s--- about Royal Caribbean.”



The NEW BROOKLAND

BY HANNAH JEFFREY // PHOTOS BY HANNAH CLEVELAND // DESIGN BY JUSTIN CARRIER

I did not leave my first punk show a happy camper. That is because someone elbowed me in the face. And that is because I ended up in the middle of a mosh pit no one warned me about. And that is because punk shows are terrifying.

There was a guy in a ski mask, two people wearing butterfly wings, a girl in cat ears and, somehow, I was the one who looked out of place. I don't know if I was over-dressed or under-dressed, but I was definitely dressed wrong. I showed up to New Brookland Tavern on a Tuesday night – a school night, I might add – in jeggings, white flats, a black blouse and a burgundy sweater.

"Maybe they'll think I'm wearing this ironically," I thought to myself hopefully. "Maybe they'll think I'm mocking people who dress like me."

Nope. Pretty sure they just thought I was lost.

It was 8:46 p.m., I had heard zero bands play yet and I already had a headache. So, things were going great. I was perched on a stool that looked like it had been to hell and

back, at a tiny table facing the stage. My notepad was blank and my pens were full of ink.

That's when The Sick started to play. The singer's hair was so long it covered his face, so I couldn't see his mouth moving, and it looked like nobody was singing – er, screaming – the lyrics that included the phrases "hide in the shadows" and "burns my skin."

And this is when I realized just how out of place I was. It was bad enough that I was wearing the wrong clothes and staring around like a flabbergasted Muppet, but it hit me that I had no idea what to do with myself. People were dancing. I couldn't think of one good move to accompany what sounded to me like a STOMP rehearsal gone horribly, horribly wrong.

I relocated to the bar, where I found myself a cushy – albeit, shredded – chair and parked it crisscross applesauce. It was 9:15 p.m., I had heard one band play and I wanted to go to bed. The bartenders were being extra nice to me, probably because of the whole flabbergasted Muppet thing.



TAVERN

I had never heard of the shoegaze genre until that Tuesday, and it was described to me as “well, it’s supposed to sound intentionally low-quality.”

“Crappy on purpose,” I thought to myself, hardly believing this night could get any better. “Who wouldn’t love that?”

Lightness is a shoegaze band. The drums sounded like gunshots. I don’t remember much from their set because I kind of huddled inside my cardigan. I’m a baby, I know.

I was ready to leave, but the next band was called Glittoris. So, I stayed. Because, let me say this one more time: the next band was called Glittoris.

That tattered stool at the bar had become my home over the last hour, but I knew I wasn’t getting the full punk show experience there. I threw caution to the wind and bade my new bartender friends goodbye. They looked at me the way a mama bird watches her baby try to fly out of the nest, but then the baby realizes its wings aren’t strong enough and it plummets to its death. I ventured up to the stage. It was time.

The front row wasn’t so bad at first. The music was alarming and I couldn’t understand anything the butterfly-winged singer was screeching, but it wasn’t too bad. I even tolerated some dude knocking into me, even though there was plenty of room for him to stand somewhere else. I was understanding when he knocked into me a second time because, I don’t know, maybe he just really wanted to stand where I was standing.

I lost it when he hit me in the face.

That’s right, folks, the mosh pit had begun. And I was the epicenter. I ran away, retreating to what I thought was a safe distance from the pit of terror. How very wrong I was. The pit of terror grew and got closer to me, and that, dear readers, is when I decided that I would be far safer in bed and ran to my car.

So, if you’re going to NBT on a Tuesday night in the near future, please do not call me. Let this flabbergasted Muppet watch “Jeopardy!” or play Bananagrams with her roommates and go to bed before 10 p.m.

I’ll be safer there.



Smell

RH = RESIDENCE HALL FRIENDLY

BY TAYLOR HALLE // PHOTOS BY OLIVIA WALLER
// DESIGN BY BRITTANY WILT

Living on your own is one of the most exciting things about being a college student. It's fun to have people over and use your space, until it starts to leave your room with unwanted smells. We all know how it is to wake up the next morning to the odor of beer and half-eaten pizza – or wine, if that's your thing. Regardless, our rooms can get smelly very easily, but there are simple and cheap fixes. Not only will these items make your room smell better, but many different scents have also been proven to improve sleep, memory and even alleviate stress.

Fresh Flowers or Plants **RH**

Many people seem to forget about or underestimate the power of keeping fresh flowers or plants in the house. If you pick the right ones, they can have a strong, lasting scent. Lavender is known to help with sleep, while fresh mint is said to be food for memory and focus.

The Classic Candle

It's possible to find an affordable candle in almost any smell you could dream of. Candles add scent, but also a touch of warmth when lit. Some great places for candle selections include Bath & Body Works, Hobby Lobby and Target. What's better is these stores are always having sales, so you can usually end up buying a candle for only a few bucks. Some of my favorites are pumpkin cupcake and eucalyptus spearmint, both of which are from Bath & Body Works. The eucalyptus spearmint is a stress-relieving candle.

Incense

Incense usually has a wide selection of smells to choose from that vary depending on where you buy. Incense is a little more aesthetically pleasing than just a bulky candle, so it can double as decoration. You can find tiny vases and incense holders that come in a variety of unique shapes and designs. Loose Lucy's in Five Points has a wide selection of incense and holders.

Homemade Room Scent

Believe it or not, it's simple and quick to make your own natural scents right at home. You can create endless combinations from whatever your favorite smells are. All you need is a pot of water and a bunch of your favorite flowers, fruit, spices, etc. Once everything is added in, all you need to do is boil the water. The heat brings out the smell and it'll float throughout the whole house.

Coffee Beans **RH**

For all the avid coffee drinkers, your coffee beans come in handy in more ways than just your morning brew. Fill a small bowl with beans and stick a tea light inside. Once lit, the smell of your favorite roast will fill your room, keeping you feeling energized and alert.

Aerial Silks

BY K. LEE GRAHAM // PHOTOS BY JOSH THOMPSON
// DESIGN BY SYDNEY PITVOREC

When I was told that I would be going to an aerial silks class for this column, I had to do a little research. I've tried a lot of boutique-fit-ness, trendy workouts, but never something like this. The best way that I can describe this class is "acrobatics in the air." You're suspended by two pieces or a single loop of wide fabric hanging from a gym ceiling, and use the fabric to climb, flip and twist for an hour. To me it sounded mildly terrifying, but Rachel Hipszer, who has been doing aerial gymnastics for eight years and teaches the ariel silks class at All Star Gymnastics, assured me I would be fine. So, I decided to give it a fair shot.

I walked into the gym thinking that the class could go one of two ways: I would either fall tragically from the ceiling or I would be ready for Cirque du Soleil in an hour. When I told Hipszer my ideas she replied, "We'll shoot for something in the middle." That was a reasonable suggestion, but I still secretly hoped that I would be able to join a circus by the end of the class.

We started with some stretching and some exercises utilizing the fabrics to engage the muscles needed to complete the class, mainly the shoulders and abs. Then we moved to the fabrics. Hipszer demonstrated different poses and how to transition from each one and then I tried them myself.

Almost immediately I was on the silks, flipping and twisting, but mostly tangling myself up midair. It looked so easy and effortless when Hipszer was moving through each pose that for a while I almost tricked myself into believing I possessed that same grace. But then I glanced at the mirrored wall to my left and promptly quit lying to myself.

At the beginning of class I couldn't stop thinking to myself, "I am suspended upside down in some crazy position in the air, and I'm held here by just a couple pieces of fabric wrapped around my body. How am I still alive?" But about 10 minutes into the class, I forgot all about this terrifying tidbit of information and stopped worrying.

From that point on, I had the best experience. And even if I didn't look like figure skater Gracie Gold, I felt like a goddess. Definitely not a bad way to spend a Saturday morning.

This is a great workout. I felt like it mainly targeted my upper body, but because you're engaging so many muscles to flow through each pose I would consider it a total body workout. It's not a sweaty cardio session, but I left with a definite shine on my forehead. If you like barre, yoga or dance classes, then you will love taking your workout to new heights in an aerial fabrics class.

On A Roll

BY HOLLY HEATON // PHOTOS BY KAMILA MELKO
// DESIGN BY LINA LeGARE

To some, sushi is like that strangely hot person who you originally thought wasn't your type but fell for instantly. To others, it's like that weirdo who won't stop texting you. In other words, you either are completely obsessed with sushi or not. For those of you that do love it, keep reading. I went on a quest to see what Columbia had to offer in the sushi department, despite the fact that some connoisseurs claim you can't find fresh sushi on the East Coast. As for the haters out there, keep reading. Who knows? Maybe by the end of this I'll convert you to the dark side.

SUSHI YOSHI

The first stop on my sushi excursion was quite literally a hole in the wall – well, actually, a hole in Five Points– Sushi Yoshi. While Sushi Yoshi might not be the most upscale of the restaurants I visited, it's cheap, absolutely adorable and the staff was super nice. Though Sushi Yoshi does have some specialty rolls that are amazing, specifically the Spicy Yoshi roll, I suggest going with the Spicy Tuna roll or the Super Crunch roll. Sushi Yoshi seems to place their focus on serving a lot of people quickly and efficiently, rather than crafting unique rolls for the menu. That being said, they really know how to amp up the classics. P.S. The sushi comes on these really cute wooden boards, so that's a plus.

Spicy Yoshi from Sushi Yoshi



TAKOSUSHI

The next stop on my sushi journey was the Mexican-Japanese fusion restaurant TakoSushi. There is a place where your friends who hate sushi can get cheese dip and tacos? An absolutely genius business plan if nothing else. I'd been here a few times before and ordered the Stoney's Roll (a basic spicy tuna roll topped with crab, avocado, soy vinaigrette and scallions) and the Dynamite Roll (similar to the previous roll except flash fried and topped with asparagus and tilapia). Both options are simple, yet elegant. This go around I wanted to try something a little more unique. First I ordered the Cary's Roll, a roll with salmon, tuna and the unique fish escolar. Cary's Roll also had cream cheese, was flash-fried and topped with the restaurant's signature Tako Sushi sauce. Next on the menu was the Firecracker Roll, a fried tilapia-based roll with "Bada Bing – Bada Bang" sauce. Compiled of TakoSushi sauce, sweet chili sauce and Sriracha, it made my taste buds explode. Everyone knows Sriracha is the s---, so this roll is sure to be a fan favorite.

TSUNAMI

Tsunami was next on the list, and let me just say: Go during happy hour. The numerous specials offered from 4 - 7 p.m. include sake, which is kind of awful, but the type of awful you keep running back to – like tequila shots or an ex. The sushi is clearly what this place does best, with more than 20 different rolls on the menu. I ordered the Heartbreaker roll first. This game changer is a spicy tuna and cucumber roll topped with albacore tuna, avocado and scallions drizzled with a sweet and spicy ponzu sauce. Next, I ordered the Gamecock roll and it was one of the best rolls I've had in Columbia so far. With perfectly crisp tempura shrimp and a sauce that made me want to slap my mama, it was just the right combination of unique and simple. Also, please order sea-biscuits as an appetizer – and don't share with your friends because, trust me, you won't want to.

SAKITUMI

Last on my list was SakiTumi, a more upscale sushi restaurant located down an ally off Gervais Street. This place is the crème de la crème of sushi in the capital city, and I figured that out before I even finished my appetizer. SakiTumi flies in fresh tuna daily from Hawaii, and it is the only restaurant in Columbia who does so. For starters I had the sashimi sampler, which is what those sushi connoisseurs I mentioned early consider real sushi. It is simply thinly sliced fish, served best with a light dip of soy sauce. This is the best test of a sushi restaurant's quality, because in order for it to be any good it has to be insanely fresh. All in all, everything I ordered was absolutely delicious, especially the King Kong roll. This giant roll is made with crab salad, cucumber and green onion, drizzled with Japanese mayo. The best thing about this roll? The diced jalapeno. It completely transformed the roll, and made it one I will definitely order again. Saki Tumi insider tip: order the mochi ice cream for dessert – you won't be sorry.



Cary's Roll from TakoSushi



Heartbreaker from Tsunami



King Kong Roll from SakiTumi



PUMP UP YOUR RAMEN

BY JAKE MARGLE AND KASEY MEREDITH // PHOTOS BY KAMILA MELKO // DESIGN BY LINA LeGARE

Spicy Ramen

Even when you're in a rush, there's no reason to eat bland, boring ramen. With a few simple ingredients it's easy to turn up the thermostat with this spicy rendition of ramen. We're enhancing the broth using traditional Vietnamese hot sauce, Sriracha and adding some much needed substance with either a soft-boiled or fried egg.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Pkg. beef ramen
- 1 egg soft boiled
- 1 T sriracha hot sauce
- 1 splash soy sauce
- 2 scallions, chopped
- 1 tsp garlic, chopped

Surprise Ramen

Peanut butter in ramen might sound bizarre, but it's a missed connection. The addition of peanut butter adds a lot of body to the ramen, and we're adding lime juice and cilantro to give it that Thai flair.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Pkg. chicken ramen
- 2 T creamy peanut butter
- 1 T lime juice
- 1 sprig cilantro
- 1 tsp garlic, chopped
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 splash soy sauce
- 1 tsp powdered ginger optional

Savory Ramen

Our take on the traditional Vietnamese soup, Pho. Pho generally takes hours to make as the broth is very labor intensive, but within the comfort of your suite, you can make a delicious dupe in a fraction of that time. You'll want to save the flavor packet on this one to intensify the broth.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Pkg. beef ramen
- 1/2 ramen flavor packet
- 1 handful bean sprouts
- 2 tsp fresh ginger, grated
- 1 sprig basil
- 1/2 lime, squeezed
- 1 T hoisin sauce
- cinnamon for taste
- 1 pinch chili pepper flakes
- 1/4 white onion, thinly sliced



SMALL GIFTS

Stocking stuffers are the leftovers, right? They're what you get if you don't think the main present is enough. But stocking stuffers don't have to be so overlooked. Instead of leftovers, they can be the dessert, you just have to know what to look for.

BY **ROBIN HENDRICKS** // PHOTOS BY **HANNAH CLEAVELAND** // DESIGN BY **BRITTANY WILT**

Candle

Something Special Florist on Main Street is a haven for flower and home decor lovers. The picturesque shop has all kinds of little knick-knacks and decorations to personalize a room, including individually packaged \$2.50 Tyler Candle Company perfumed candles. Scent is the sense most closely related to memory, and what better time to remind someone you care for them than during the holidays? These small candles are the perfect gift for anyone: your friend who's searching for a way to make their new apartment feel more like a home, or your sister back home who refuses to admit she misses you.

Key fob wristlet

Uptown on Main Street has everything from jam native to South Carolina to benne wafers to a wide selection of sorority-gear items. Among the items are sorority vinyl stickers, charmed key chains and Occasionally Made key fob wristlets. These wristlets come in a variety of colors with sororities' symbols printed across the fabric. These \$8.50 wristlets would make a perfect, meaningful stocking stuffer for any little from their big. These key fob wristlets are both practical and personal for any sorority girl on the go.

Handmade journal

Finleaf Gallery on Devine Street is a one-stop shop for everything artistic and decorative. Among its collection of unique items are handmade journals, including the cutest pocket sized, solid color journals with stitched binding. These journals are \$3 and a perfect stocking stuffer for that one friend who is always writing, but can never fill a whole notebook before they start a new one. Whether they are the casual note-taker or a modern Shakespeare, this journal is sure to please. Now, if only they could find a pen.

Teas

Finleaf Gallery also features loose-leaf teas available in small tins for \$5. These are perfect for calming any friend who is stressing about the upcoming semester. Finleaf offers a variety of flavors such as chai and jasmine. A small tin can of White Christmas tea would make a thoughtful gift during the holidays and provide the recipient with some time of relaxation during break. Nothing is better than a good cup of hot tea and knowing there is a person out there who has your back.

Pecans

Lincoln Street is home to The Peanut Man, a quaint candy shop where there is everything from small hard candies to s'mores and pecans. These pecans come covered in butterscotch, or pretty much any chocolate flavor you can imagine: white, dark, milk, Grand Marnier, toffee or amaretto. Each bag comes with 8 ounces of these flavored pecans and costs \$7.99. This will surely be a sweet surprise for any chocolate lover when they see it. Just make sure the recipient of this delicious treat does not have a nut allergy before you put it in their stocking.



FEATURE

Roller Girls

COLUMBIA QUAD SQUAD



BY ERIKA RYAN // PHOTOS BY HANNAH CLEAVELAND, JOSH THOMPSON
// DESIGN BY JUSTIN CARRIER

Roller derby changed the way USC professor Leah Miller thinks about pain. "It's remarkable how much we don't feel it. The adrenaline, the excitement — You don't have time to think about how much that fall hurt," she said.

She may go home sweaty and covered in bruises, but she is the most comfortable when she's laced up in her skates.

As USC alumnus Traci Norwood, or "Bellatrixter," described it, roller derby is "football on wheels with less padding." Each team's jammer scores points during a bout — or a match — by circling the court without being knocked down by the opposing team's blockers. Although roller derby dates back to the '30s, its revival in 2001 created the sport we have today.

There are 329 full-member leagues in the world certified by the Women's Flat Track Derby Association — or WFTDA — and hundreds of teams internationally that have yet to become official members. As of Oct. 4, 2015, the Columbia QuadSquad Rollergirls are No. 38 in the world, and they worked hard to get there.

Since the team started in 2009, it has grown from a tight knit group of women, to an elaborate organization consisting of more than 40 active skaters, coaches, one dedicated ref and a junior team for skaters ages nine to 17 years old. Columbia is also the home to two other roller derby teams: the Richland County Regulators and the men's league, the Carolina Wrecking Balls.

CQS has skaters from all walks of life — nurses, mothers, lawyers, scientists, students and even professors hit the court during bouts. Miller, or "Dani Dynamite," is a Spanish professor at USC, as well as a proud, dedicated rollergirl.

According to her, it's not weird going from the classroom to the track, because she's "a boss lady even there." In the past, she's been the head of public relations, executive director, training coordinator and head of bout production. Now she's the league's WFTDA representative.

"I'm not very good at saying no to leadership positions, so really, there's nothing that changes about me in either situation," she said. "I just speak less Spanish there."

Any seasoned rollergirl will have injury stories — getting beat up on the track is part of the sport.

In the midst of squealing whistles and shouting across the rink, there's more damage inflicted than a bruise here or there. It's not uncommon to see broken ankles, noses and collarbones, along with a laundry list of knee injuries that can happen on the track. Norwood broke her nose this year, yet you won't see her skating with a facemask.

That may seem intimidating, but to most active skaters, roller derby is cathartic. Fourth-year mass communications student and captain of the CQS B-Team April Sundell, or "Betty Ford Cynic," roller derby is a release from her busy days as a student and a working mother.

"I always say this is cheaper than therapy," she said. "Roller derby changed my life — I've lost weight, and gotten more confident just in life in general."

Miller and the rest of CQS share a love for derby for countless reasons, one being the community that comes with joining a league. According to her, every practice ends with everyone's hands in the middle of a huddle, and they shout something — normally it's "family."

"I've seen so many women come insecure, in shambles in their lives, and this community just rallies," Miller said. "When your world falls apart, you've always got a community of strong women who can take care of business there to hold you up."

One of the reasons roller derby has grown in popularity is its overarching idea of acceptance of not only individual leagues, but the sport as a whole. WFTDA has a strict inclusive policy, accepting and encouraging skaters of any size, race, occupation, religion, gender or anything else. CQS, like all roller derby leagues, welcomes transwomen to their team with open arms. As Miller said, "If you identify as a woman, you are a woman and you play roller derby with us."

As women join the league, CQS puts an exerted effort on making new skaters — or "fresh meat" — feel supported and welcomed. There's no hazing here, and the league won't turn anyone away regardless of prior experience. Sundell and Norwood were both new

to roller skating when they joined the team years ago.

"We want newbies to understand how amazing this sport is," Norwood said. "We're not going to tell them they're not cut out for it – we're going to build them up and take as long as they need."

Roller derby is one of the only sports where women paved the way, which created their grassroots, "do-it-yourself" mentality. Rather than basketball and women's basketball, it's roller derby and men's roller derby. Because the sport is still in its infancy, the WFTDA and women within roller derby are setting stricter regulations, changing rules and evolving it to make it a cleaner, well-structured sport. After all this hard work, roller derby players want to remain in control of what they've created.

"We don't want sponsors to tell us who we are and what we look like," Miller said. "We want this to be for women, by women."

And they do more than just skate. The Columbia QuadSquad is complete with a board of directors, and they are also a certified 501(c)(4) charity. Every business aspect of the team is handled by skaters within the league, and they do everything they can to meet their mission statement: "to serve women and children in the midlands."

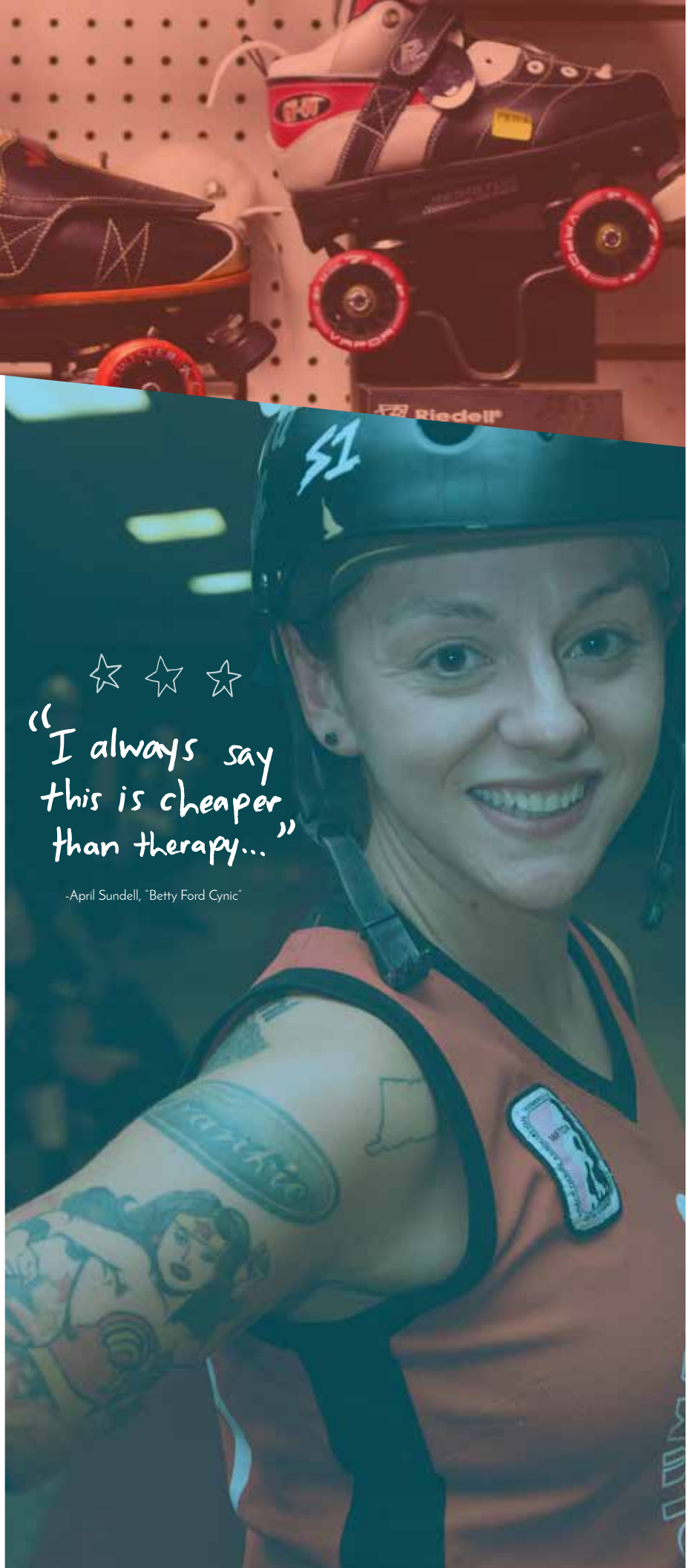
"It's fun to skate, and it's fun to play, and we do it really well," Miller said. "But we know that it's also important to make an impact and to be part of our community."

Once a rollergirl, always a rollergirl. Most skaters don't compete past their 40s, but that doesn't mean their love for roller derby is going anywhere.

"I feel like I've lived the whole roller derby experience to the extreme, for sure," Miller said. "I will be a fan until my dying breath, because the only way a spectator sport works is if there are spectators."

To onlookers, roller derby is an obscure hobby, a social outlet or maybe a way to stay in shape, but for this diverse crowd of women, it's a part of who they are.

"It changed my life," Norwood said. "I didn't find out who I was until I was 26 and started derby."



☆☆☆
 "I always say
 this is cheaper
 than therapy..."

-April Sundell, "Betty Ford Cynic"

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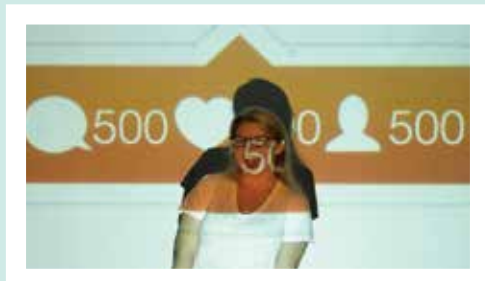
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THE GIRL *on my* INSTAGRAM

BY HANNAH JEFFREY // PHOTOS BY BRENNAN BOOKER
// DESIGN BY KODY KRATZER



The girl on my Instagram never has a bad day. She smiles with all her teeth and laughs with her mouth wide open. She never gets annoyed or frustrated because she has so much going for her. Her friends make her laugh. Her boyfriend makes her laugh. Her family makes her laugh.

The girl on my Instagram looks like me. Her blonde hair can't decide if it's wavy or straight and neither can mine. Her glasses are pretty big on her face and so are mine. She has a little mole on her right cheek, just like mine. The girl on my Instagram is accomplished and quirky and looks like a good time, all of which are validated by the comments from her followers.

There's no reason for her to be anything but elated. The girl on my Instagram is me, but she doesn't tell the whole story. It's me in those pictures, smiling with all my teeth and laughing with my mouth wide open. But those are pictures from my highest days when I laugh the most and smile the widest. You won't find pictures from my lows.

The girl on my Instagram never stays in bed all day because she feels like she can't get up. She doesn't cancel plans because she feels too low. She never cries for no reason. But I do.

The girl on my Instagram and I have a lot in common, but she's the one who gets the likes. My followers are double-tapping the idea that I'm always beaming and funny. It's not me they're liking – it's what I'm showing them.

Why have I created this profile of a person who is only part of me? When did I make the conscious decision to hide the rest of myself from everyone else? Why do I scrutinize over pictures of myself and mess with filters and try out three or four captions before I hit that publish button, only to show people pictures that only tell half my story?

I do it because no one's going to like a picture of my puffy, tear-streaked face crying into my pillow with a caption that reads, "Things will never get better." No one's going to like how I'm really feeling because they want to see the happy girl they're used to seeing smiling and laughing. I want everyone else to see how much fun I'm having. Or, at least, how much fun it looks like I'm having. I want people to think I'm happy, even if I'm not.

Generation Y is the first to deal with this social media anxiety phenomenon to this extent. We grew up with AIM. We were some of the youngest users on MySpace and Facebook. We were among the first to get Twitter and Instagram accounts. College students today have more exposure to social media than ever before.

Dr. Rhea Merck teaches psychology at USC, and she battles smartphones every day in the classroom. While she's at the front of the room talking about the brain, her students have theirs focused on their phones. "There is so much more information that we have coming at us now, and our sympathetic nervous system tends to be more overwhelmed on a day-to-day basis," Merck says. "And so, when

we're over-stimulated like that, it increases the likelihood that we could have anxiety as a reaction to it." That makes sense, given that today's students have the highest rates of anxiety in college kids to date.

Earlier this year, the New York Times reported that anxiety is the No. 1 mental health diagnosis on college campuses. The Center for Collegiate Mental Health's 2014 report put anxiety as the most reported reason for students seeking counseling. Out of 25,475 students from 140 collegiate counseling centers, 55.1 percent said anxiety was a concern in one poll, and 19.6 percent said anxiety was what concerned them more than anything else.

So, it's not surprising that Toby Lovell, assistant director of community-based services for USC's Counseling and Psychiatry center, says student anxiety is the No. 1 thing counselors at USC handle, too.

Anxiety stems from any number of sources: finishing homework; planning for the future; overthinking plans. Not to mention comparison – the idea that you aren't doing as well as everyone else can make you feel doomed. "I think there's a false perception of 'I am not as good as this other person who seems to have so much going for them in their life based on their Facebook posts,'" Lovell says. "We don't actually know what's going on personally in someone's life. Just because someone's posting positively on Facebook doesn't mean they don't have problems or concerns."

But from freshmen in their first semester to seniors in their last, that's hard to swallow. We spend so much time creating, tending to and checking our profiles, and even more time looking at everyone else's. We try to make ourselves look like we're doing so much, but it's those who log off who are actually doing more.

The Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA's "The American Freshman" report last year found that college students' social priorities are changing — 30 years ago, students put emphasis on face-to-face time with friends. But now: "At the same time that students report spending less time socializing with friends and partying, they are increasing interactions through online social networks."

These days we see our friends on Instagram more than we see them on Friday nights. We're spending more time crafting captions and tweets than we are out in the world with people because that's what our friends are doing. "And now [followers] have certain expectations for you, so there's more pressure to live up to some social expectation," Merck says. "So, what if you go off the radar and you become overwhelmed with anxiety and obligations and you don't tweet for a while. Then what

happens?" That's true. I have far more people checking in on my Facebook than I do checking in on me.

Social media is our generation's crutch. We whip out our phones when we're in the elevator with other people or in line at the store. We busy ourselves with old tweets and photos and statuses, so we don't have to interact with people. We provide our own distractions. "But how can you get to know yourself if you're always distracting yourself from yourself?" Merck says.

And that freaks me out. Because the answer is, I don't know myself. I have two people to keep track of — me and the me I've created. I distract myself from my daily anxieties with this alter ego. I make the me I've created look desirable and popular and like someone everyone would want to befriend instead of going out and trying to be that person.

It's a big cycle. We use social media to distract us from the anxiety we create on social media. We check Twitter instead of listening to lectures and then stress about poor grades. We feel a moment of satisfaction when scores of people like our pictures on Instagram but feel snubbed when no one asks us to hang out.

Coping mechanisms can help with anxiety and Lovell says the counseling center is happy to teach them. Merck wonders if it's going to take a cultural or social crisis to break us of these habits. Hundreds of studies show us that anxiety rises year after year, and college students are already vulnerable.

Sometimes I think about how with one click, I could delete each façade I've created on Instagram and Twitter and Facebook. I could force people to know me, to know the whole story. I think about how much time I'd have if I stopped putting so much effort into concealing myself. It would be so easy. But I won't do it.

I won't do it because I like getting likes. I want that little orange bubble to pop up when I open Instagram and the little blue one on Twitter and the little red one on Facebook. I want people to like what I'm doing and saying and posting because for a brief moment I feel better. For a brief moment, I feel like I really am the girl on my Instagram.



“I have two people to keep track of — me and the me I’ve created”

-Hannah Jeffrey

TOURIST IN YOUR OWN CITY

BY JAKE MARGLE // PHOTOS BY JOSH THOMPSON // DESIGN BY KODY KRATZER

NICKELODEON

FEATURE

Columbia is not what you would call huge.

Yes, with a total land area of 132 square miles it eclipses that little strip of urban chaos known as Manhattan by more than 100 square miles, but with a population of just over 130,000, Columbia is very much an intimate city. The tight-knit nature and concise city center aid in the visibility of Columbia's restaurants and attractions, but that tight-knit nature also breeds a type of underground scene. There are shops, eateries and other establishments that might escape your sight without a little exploration, so this list will serve as a kickstarter to helping you find Columbia's less explored places.

RISE GOURMET GOODS AND BAKESHOP

The newest addition to the Five Points array of purveyors is Rise Bakeshop. The newly opened, self-proclaimed Southern boulangerie has much to offer within its tiny space. From freshly baked breads and sweets to generously sized sandwiches and salads, the endearing bakery — located on Harden Street across from Food Lion — is sure to be a hit once word spreads.

EL BURRITO

I've lived in Columbia for 20 years and I'm still amazed at the amount of people who haven't heard of El Burrito. Standing next to the aforementioned Rise Bakeshop on Harden Street, the baby blue building is home to some of the freshest, tastiest Mexican fare in the city. The menu isn't an arduous affair. Burritos, tacos and salads along with your typical chips and dips are available, all in various guises. Inside it's a bit cramped but thankfully there's an outdoor patio if things get too tight. Make sure to visit on a Tuesday or Wednesday when they feature half-priced side salads and free chips and salsa.

THE WHIG

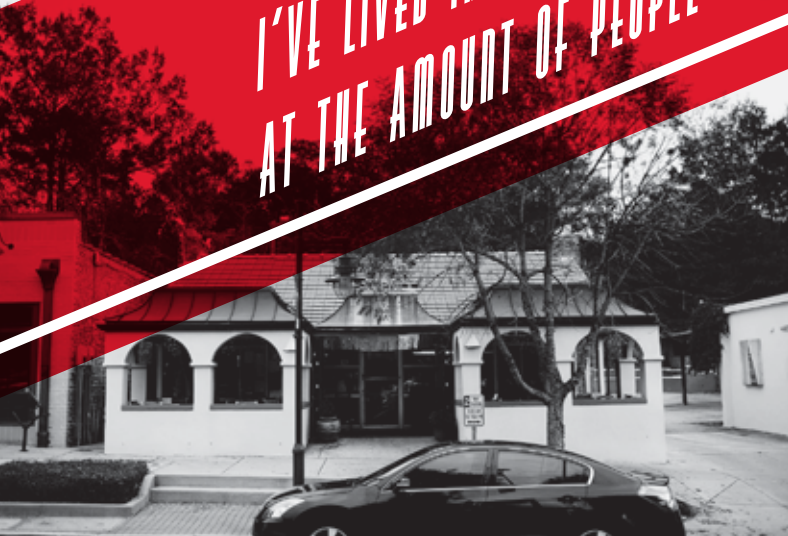
Despite its prime location on Gervais and Main, The Whig has always been a bit of a covert gem. The staircase to the underground bar is situated directly beside the WIS studio on Gervais, and if it weren't for the black-and-white sign, the place might go completely undiscovered. The descent into the long entryway lets you know you're somewhere only the locals go. The vibe inside is warm and intimate, as everything is cast in a soft, yellow glow. The

bartenders are easy-going enough, just make sure you know your way around a drink menu beforehand. The Whig isn't for novices. Ask any patron and they will tell you Tuesday is the night to go. Taco Tuesdays at The Whig are a low-key Columbia staple. Good, affordable food and well-crafted drinks: What could be better?

THE NICK

With a prime location right on Main St., it never ceases to amaze me how many people are unaware of the Nickelodeon Theatre. Founded in 1979 by two USC students, The Nickelodeon has always been about showcasing the latest and/or greatest in independent film. Explosive action plots and endearing rom-coms don't grace the screen frequently. The Nick is about bringing together lovers of cinema, and they do it all in a cozy, two-screen theater. You'll find more than popcorn and candy on the menu: coffee, wine or beer are offered to make your experience just a bit more special. What's even more special, the price: shows range from \$8 to \$10 a ticket, so you won't have to declare bankruptcy after the showing.

I'VE LIVED IN COLUMBIA FOR 20 YEARS AND I'M STILL AMAZED AT THE AMOUNT OF PEOPLE WHO HAVEN'T HEARD OF EL BURRITO





SOUTHERN SQUEEZED

The cold press juice movement has inspired a nationwide health-kick, one that has finally reached the Capital City. Southern Squeezed opened this past summer – silently we might add – on Lady Street, just a few yards down from Cantina 76. Trees that almost shroud the glass doors and the lack of a prominent sign make it easy for the juice bar to slip out of sight, which is a shame considering the quality of the operation going on within. The interior is decorated in a contemporary-meets-rustic style, with a live wall made of succulents adjacent to the counter. Three refrigerators house freshly pressed juices and nut-milks. The menu ranges from their “Classic Greens” juice with kale, spinach, romaine, celery, cucumber, apple, parsley and lemon, to their simple “Citrus Mint,” with grapefruit and mint. If you’re not keen on the veggies, they offer a variety of fresh-pressed almond milks.

ART BAR

The Art Bar is another instance of a Columbia highlight hiding in plain sight. Situated right off Gervais on Park Street in the Vista, you would be forgiven for being distracted by the smattering of bars that make its presence more obvious. Once you’re on Park Street, though, it’s hard to miss, with an abundance of lights and neon covering the facade and arcing over the outdoor seating. The addition of pink lawn flamingos and neon signs has upped the curb appeal. With more than 50 beers on tap and a variety of drink specials offered daily, there are more than enough libations to appeal to the lot.

CITY ROOTS

Columbia is made up of an interesting mix of landscapes. Travel down Main Street toward Shop Road and you’ll find yourself moving from concrete and glass leviathans to sprawling suburbs and industrial parks. Rosewood, one of Columbia’s most popular neighborhoods is a great example of this varied scenery. Less than 10 minutes from

the heart of the city, it’s a tight-knit community, and one that shrouds the unexpected City Roots farm. Tucked away near Owens Field airport it is Columbia’s only sustainable farm. They grow a wide array of greens that are used by more than 20 restaurants in the downtown area. Stop by for a tour, or if your green thumb is absolutely killing you, sign up to volunteer.

THE CAYCE RIVERWALK

The Garnet Riverwalk is perhaps the most well-known, off-campus recreation area, and rightfully so. Located just off the Gervais Street bridge, it offers picturesque views, but there is one pathway along the Congaree River that doesn’t get the notoriety it deserves. Just over the Blossom Street bridge, the Cayce Riverwalk offers a more secluded walk along the banks of the river. Park in the lot located near the Cayce Cove apartment complex and pick your path. There’s less foot traffic and road noise than the Garnet Riverwalk, and the abundance of trees and snaking footpaths make for a more secluded walk, run or bike ride.

STYLE

MEN'S STYLE GUIDE



STYLE BY LINDSAY RIGGINS // PHOTOS BY BRENNAN BOOKER, HANNAH CLEVELAND, JOSH THOMPSON // STYLE ASSISTANT DOMINIC BELLOTTI // MODELS (LEFT TO RIGHT) ZANTRELL HARRISON, ANDREAS PEREZ, McBRYDE CAMPBELL, BRANDON SHULL // HAIR AND MAKEUP BY ANGELA GRECO

Menswear is often perceived as much simpler and stagnant compared to the many styles, trends and pieces that make up womenswear. However, what most people don't see here in the traditional South is diversity of style options menswear really has to offer. In this issue there are four different collegiate men who each embody their own unique style in the hopes of inspiring others to push the boundaries in their own wardrobes.

Sporty Sophisticate

Keep it simple and sleek with coordinating navy and black pieces. Here you can see how nicely a patterned blue shirt looks with black jeans and a wool black blazer.

As the weather cools down, a knit scarf is going to be an ideal addition to this look. This is a very up-to-date sophisticated look, but takes a sporty turn when you throw on a pair of high top sneakers. Shoes are the perfect place in your wardrobe to splurge and rightly so because a nice pair really makes a statement as you can see here.





Redefined Rugged

A work coat layered with a puffer vest is the perfect rugged combination for winter. And, a simple sweater as the base layer sets the tone for this classic look.

By keeping the color scheme neutral up top, you can afford to be bold with a colored pant. This washed chino adds dimension to the ensemble in its cranberry hue.

Finally, a classic leather lace-up boot is a staple any man should add to his wardrobe arsenal.



Grungy Minimalist

The minimalist style is still very prevalent in today's fashion trends, but this season why not add a fun twist to your unassuming style? A warm flannel will add a pop of '90s grunge while also giving you an extra layer of warmth.

Other than the flannel, keep your colors neutral like this gray crew neck and black bomber jacket.

Keep the accessories simple as well with just a few silver pieces. A nice pair of pure white leather sneakers is the perfect touch to round out this outfit.



English Prep

Nothing screams school-boy prep like a plaid blazer paired with camel colored khaki pants. Layered with a button down and sweater, this look can easily be taken from day to night with an addition of a silk tie. The seasons may be turning, but that doesn't mean we still don't get those bright sunny South Carolina days. A nice pair of club master sunglasses will help this account.

Also, make sure the leather in your watch matches the leather in your shoes. A cool chocolate brown is perfect for winter.




SHOE GUIDE

STYLE BY **LINDSAY RIGGINS** // PHOTOS BY **HANNAH CLEVELAND**
// STYLE ASSISTANT **DOMINIC BELLOTTI** // DESIGN BY **LINA LeGARE**

If there is one part of your wardrobe that you should not feel guilty about splurging on, it should be your footwear. A great pair of shoes says a lot about a person and can be the easiest way to make a statement. So men, to make it easier on you, we went ahead and curated Columbia's shoe market for you. In this guide, you will find the perfect shoe for any occasion no matter what your personal style might be. From casual to formal and edgy to refined, we have covered it all.

Campus Casual



1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 
11. 

- 1. **Salty's** Deck Hand
2, Reef, \$55
- 2. **Salty's** Zapato Del
Barco, Vans, \$60
- 3. **Salty's** Madero,
Vans, \$60
- 4. **Salty's** Skyline,
Sanuk, \$90
- 5. **Salty's** Bannock
Vibram, Element,
\$140
- 6. **Brittons** Slip on
Gortex boot, Dubarry
of Ireland, \$399
- 10. **Brittons** Chuka
Boot, Rodd and
Gunn, \$175
- 11. **Brittons** Slip
on boot, Sandro
Moscoloni, \$145
- 9. **Brittons** New
buck slip on, Allan
James, \$155
- 8. **Brittons**
Deerskin slip on,
Allan Payne, \$245
- 7. **Brittons** Wim-
berly split toe slip on,
Allan Payne, \$245

Cocktail Ready

VIDAL JAMES

BY KELLY YOON // PHOTOS BY BRENNAN BOOKER // DESIGN BY WESLEY JEFFERIES



Vidal James is what many would call a natural-born performer. He is a triple threat – a classically trained singer, initially self-taught dancer and choreographer.

Although he has seven years of classical voice lessons under his belt, James' journey into the world of dance is a different story – he began by being entirely self-taught. How did James teach himself how to dance?

The answer is straightforward: by watching TV.

"I love 'So You Think You Can Dance,' and ever since I started watching, I thought, 'I want to dance like those people,'" he says. "So, I taught myself choreography from watching certain

episodes and would practice around the house. College was when I started taking dance more seriously."

James is currently a third-year dance student at USC set to graduate in winter of 2016. After a year at Benedict College studying music, he transferred to USC in order to pursue theater. James' passion for dance ultimately led him to audition for the dance program, despite his lack of formal training.

"I was the only guy in the studio, sweating and shaking, and I didn't know what I was doing. I thought to myself, 'I'm not going to get into this program.'" However, his natural talent and self-practice ended up earning

him an acceptance letter.

In the tough world of show business, talent alone is not enough. All successful performers possess a drive to work incredibly hard to differentiate themselves from a competitive pool – James is no exception. He was and is always striving to improve at what he does. In high school, when asked to choreograph for his school's show choir, James gladly accepted the opportunity. "I just took it as a good chance to better myself," he says. Now, as a member of the USC Dance Company, James' work will be featured in the December Student Choreography Showcase.

James has already mapped out his ambitious post-grad-

uation career. He plans on moving to New York to audition for prominent dancer Ellenore Scott's company, ELSCO Dance. After gaining professional experience, he wants to venture off into Broadway, and gain recognition by securing a lead role in "The Lion King," "Wicked" or "Les Misérables." After Broadway, he aspires to find an agent, sign a record label and attain stardom through success as a solo vocal and performance artist.

James has thrived under professional guidance at USC, and his dance repertoire has become incredibly varied. "I concentrate on contemporary, but I now do different styles: ballet, jazz, hip-



hop and even African, if it comes up," he says. Improving as a dancer was just the next step in James' dream to become a prominent performer.

"I love what I do," he says, and he takes his craft seriously. As a true performance-minded artist, James focuses on enhancing his interactions with his fellow artists during shows, saying he has a duty to "keep the story on the stage."

James also possesses a true sense of self confidence that is borne by his talent and ongoing hard work. He says, "I tell people, 'The world is my stage. Just look out – you'll see my name in lights one day: 'Vidal X James.'"



with

Bob Brinkmeyer

BY KATHERINE FINNEY // PHOTOS BY MIKAELLA ANTONIO // DESIGN BY KODY KRATZER

Professor Bob Brinkmeyer teaches in the English department and is the director of the Institute for Southern Studies, but every Tuesday evening you can find him in the WUSC-FM studio as host of "The Source," a radio show devoted to a variety of African music.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN AFRICAN MUSIC?

In the '80s I had a friend who went into the Peace Corps in Africa, she came back and gave me a bunch of cassettes that she had recorded and I just fell in love with it. And then in the '90s, I spent a year in Finland teaching on a Fulbright and there was this great world music store right down the street from where we were living in Helsinki. One of the owners kind of adopted me, they had all these listening stations in the store, and he would tell me "You've gotta listen to this, you've gotta listen to that," and so he kind of tutored me in what he thought was great African music.

DO YOU TELL YOUR STUDENTS ABOUT YOUR SHOW?

Yeah, you know, I don't – I don't want to make students feel like they have to listen to it. Some students ask me, because they'll hear me and be like "Oh, is that you on the radio?"

AFRICA IS SO ENORMOUS AND DIVERSE. IS THERE ANY REGION THAT YOU FOCUS ON IN PARTICULAR?

I probably play West African music more than anything else because it's the music that I like most, but I try and show, not to just play my favorite music. I want to have a diversity.

WHO DO YOU THINK WOULD BE ABLE TO GET INTO AFRICAN MUSIC?

Anybody. I just tell people when I first start the show, "Give me 30 minutes and you'll probably like it." I see it kind of as a public service, to introduce some diversity into people's listening. I get calls from people occasionally, people from the African American community in town, who are really thankful to have this kind of show.

TOP FIVE SONGS:

"Youssou N'Dour" // Birima
"Sam Fan Thomas" // Si Tcha
"Orchestra Baobab" // Sibou Odia
"Fela Kuti" // Zombie
"Franco et le TP OK Jazz" // Aida

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THE UGLY CHORDS

BY KASEY MEREDITH
// PHOTOS BY HANNAH
CLEAVELAND // DESIGN
BY KELLEN LaGROON



CHORD STRUCTURE

The Ugly Chords is noise, but not cacophony. They can largely be described as noise music, but that would be a cop out. Drawing influences from local acts like Seizen Tode, as well as well-known groups like Ween and Mr. Bungle, their sound is all over the place.

Ugly Chords member Max Puckett describes the noise that is the Ugly Chords as "atonal, heavy-ish pop, polyrhythmic, punky, hippy dippy music."

The Ugly Chords is a smorgasbord of sound. Variety not only exists within their eclectic sound, but also in the construction of the band itself. Andrew Desilet, Max Puckett, Thomas Ray and Dustin Lammeris are all band mates, but with no specific role.

The most peculiar and distinct quality of The Ugly Chords is that they switch off instruments in between songs, a feat that seems tedious and difficult, but mostly annoying. That's the price you pay for explosive, high-brow excitement.

"It's really un-fun sometimes," Ray says.

"The fact that we change instruments up so often is more conducive to sounding different

because everyone sounds different on every instrument they play. It's gonna sound different," Puckett says.

Ray, Puckett and Desilet all agree that there are strengths and weaknesses to this format. Ray says his drumming abilities fluctuate "depending on how [he's] feeling."

Desilet, however, is frank with his abilities. "I'm by far the worst drummer in the band." But that's OK because the band deems him the John Mayer of The Ugly Chords.

Their sound is constantly changing. "That's been the idea from the beginning, like 'okay, we're gonna do this now,'" Ray says.

Recently, they've added a fourth member to their lineup, Lammeris, who is predominantly a bassist. "We'd always wanted a little bit of a more layered sound than we could accomplish as a three-piece and we had a rotating fourth member for the first year and a half," Puckett says.

Paralleling their bizarre conventions of a band are their unique song names. One 20-minute song, which Puckett says they will be playing in the future, is called "Applebee's in the Sky." They give credit for their clever song titles to shampooing with "tons of Herbal Essences."

AN UGLY PAST

Ray is the only formally trained member, starting guitar lessons at an early age. "I quit because my older brother started playing and was immediately better than me," Ray says. He later rekindled the flame between him and his guitar.

Desilet and Puckett attribute their starts to a "Fender strat pack" and "playing snare drum in a Revolutionary War reenactment," respectively.

Just like the beginnings of each of their personal musical endeavors, The Ugly Chords had an enigmatic start. "I met Andrew in high school. I think we hated each other, but when we got closer to our 20s we were like 'Hey, we should hang out,'" Puckett says.

Puckett later met the suave Ray at a house, known to be a party house. Six months later, Ray was introduced to Desilet and the band was formed. "Disney stuff," Desilet says. According to Ray, it's strictly professional — "We're contractually obliged to enjoy each others' company. We made a blood oath."

"Me and Andrew drank probably about three Olde English 800s each and, uh,



went into a kind of stupid, dumb, sad, free jam of acoustic guitar and I was playing an unplugged electric bass—. It was out of tune," Puckett says.

Desilet's guitar was also out of tune and missing a string.

Paying homage to their humble beginnings,



the Ugly Chords' namesake comes from a brand of malt liquor, Olde English 800.

"It sort of started as a joke: 'Oh, Ugly Chords practice today?' Which meant that we were gonna get wasted," Puckett says. "[There was] a lot of time spent yelling into a drunken void and playing horrible, horrible music."

There was a definitive moment when they switched to being something more serious. Ray recalls an instance where he was working on a solo project and was asked to play a show, but wasn't ready. Instead of declining, he asked Desilet and Puckett to join him.

"[Puckett] showed me some of the recordings and it was some of the worst noise I had ever heard and I knew I had to play with them," Ray says.

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

Their unofficial motto is "fake it till you make it." Ray says, "90 percent of how the Ugly Chords work is that we pretend that we're good."

"Pretty sure at our first couple of shows people straight up told us that we sucked,"

Desilet says.

The members remember one man who drunkenly told them that they sucked and couldn't just throw together an album. However, Puckett has a different perspective on their rather short, first full-length LP, titled "Harbinger": "We labor of loved the s--- out of that album."

That was almost exactly two years ago. A house show here, a show at New Brookland Tavern there, and with a couple of gigs at Foxfield Neighborhood Bar and Grille, they've made a name for themselves in Columbia's music scene. "We're consummate professionals," Puckett says.

So far, it's been quite the ride. The Ugly Chords say that it's difficult to quantify their best show yet. Listeners can expect almost anything from the Ugly Chords. From start to finish, it's all noise. But it's not chaotic and unmethodical; there are layers of dedication, enjoyment and pure bliss. Their sound, shows and success, prove that, as Ray puts it, "There's no limit."



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TRASH TALK

PHOTOS BY BRENNAN BOOKER //
DESIGN BY JENSEN GRIM



OH, THE HUMANITIES

BY OLIVIA WALLER

The Humanities stairs are straight from hell. Maybe hell gave them an extra inch that causes our calves to burn with fire because we aren't exactly athletic. Maybe hell decided to punish us for taking the elevator one too many times by shutting down the elevators and forcing us to climb to the fourth (aka the fifth) floor. Maybe hell decided to send nasty "spirits" after us in the form of people who walk on our heels, forcing us to keep up a fast pace. Whatever it is ... they're hell.

CRY-FI

BY KATHLEEN MILEWSKI

Let's talk about USC Wi-Fi. If you've spent more than half an hour on campus, you already know where this is going. You know the frustration of staring blankly at the loading spinner. You know the outrage of receiving the data overage texts a solid week before your next data allowance. You know the anxiety of not knowing if your connection will last long enough to finish an online assignment or test. The question isn't if the Wi-Fi will go down, but when it will go down and what it will take with it. For some, it may be as simple as a Snapchat story that never loads. For others, it may be a once-thriving GPA killed by those incomplete online assignments. To the latter, all I can say is R.I.P.

STAY IN YOUR LANE

BY HALEY SCHMITT

You would think that walking on the sidewalk keeps you safe from being run over, but that's not the case. Between the cyclists thinking they are competing in the Tour de France, or the skateboarders who like to think they are the next Tony Hawk, just simply walking on the sidewalk can be a dangerous endeavor. Seriously, these things should have a speed limit. It's annoying to have to keep looking behind me while having headphones on to make sure a cyclist or skater boy isn't coming to turn me into road kill. So, to all you cyclists and skateboarders, I get that you are in a rush, but if you could slow it down that would be great.

Which Classic Holiday Character Are You?

BY **LOGAN YUCHA** // DESIGN BY **HALEY CLOYD**

What is your preferred holiday activity?

- A.** Collecting chewing gum stuck to various city structures.
- B.** Pulling a large, bearded man across the globe.
- C.** Revisiting the demons of your past and peeping into the future.
- D.** Singing and causing commotion with children across town.
- E.** Stealing and looting from your enemies during their slumber.

How would you answer a phone call during break?

- A.** "Buddy the Elf, what's your favorite color?"
- B.** Emit a silent, colored beam of light from your nose
- C.** "Bah humbug!"
- D.** "Happy Birthday!"
- E.** "It's because I'm green, isn't it?"

Where would you prefer to celebrate the holidays?

- A.** Learning the ins and outs of New York City.
- B.** Traveling the world.
- C.** The spirit world.
- D.** The North Pole.
- E.** In your mountain, where you reside.

What would be your biggest Christmas wish?

- A.** Finding your biological family.
- B.** Gaining acceptance and support from your peers.
- C.** Becoming the richest person around.
- D.** Finding a permanent residence.
- E.** Destroying the Christmas spirit of others.

What would you say to Santa while you sit on his lap?

- A.** "You sit on a throne of lies."
- B.** Ask him to guide his sleigh.
- C.** Claim he is a gimmick, along with the rest of Christmas.
- D.** Ask to hitch a ride up north.
- E.** Nothing. You'd steal his attire and pretend to be Santa.

Which of these items would you never forget at home?

- A.** Skin-hugging, yellow tights.
- B.** A light to guide your path.
- C.** Your money clip.
- D.** A black, magical top hat.
- E.** A dog that you occasionally dress up as a wild animal.

**Mostly A's:
Elf (Buddy)**

You are oblivious, very gullible and fun-loving. You have a big heart. You're the type of person who will sit on Santa's lap until you have kids. Once you have kids, you will force them to get a picture with Santa until they leave your realm. The Christmas spirit is strong with this one.

**Mostly B's:
Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer (Rudolph)**

Formerly a sad, disgruntled outcast, you now are the heart of the party. You're the reason why your favorite holiday is a blast for everyone. You are a hard worker who never complains about their job; you take pride in your duty. Joyous vibes all around.

**Mostly C's:
A Christmas Carol (Scrooge)**

You are the lonely type. You spend all of your time in your joyless head. Your bank account is the only motivating factor in your life, due to your past that is full of regret. You have some skeletons in your closet.

**Mostly D's:
Frosty the Snowman (Frosty)**

Slightly clueless, you often confuse the days of the week. You never know exactly where you are or how you got there. At a Christmas party, you are the one running around from person to person, singing and dancing with all your might. Soon, you will pass out and have to have your friends recount the previous night in the morning.

**Mostly E's:
How the Grinch Stole Christmas (Grinch)**

You never had self-esteem issues as a child, even though you have been tucked away from society. You have a Trump-like ego. You are confident in your wit and humor, coupled with mischievous intentions. However, buried deep in your soul, you have a desire to bring joy to others and yourself. This is your true happiness.

OVERHEARD AT....

The South Carolina State Fair

BY CATHERINE SULLIVAN // PHOTOS BY JOSH THOMPSON // DESIGN BY STEPHANIE ORR

Ranked in the top 50 fairs in the United States, the South Carolina State Fair is the largest event in the state, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. If you made it to the spectacle this year, here are some things you may have heard on the fairgrounds once the sun went down.

"I wish they had diet funnel cake." "They do. It's called a pretzel."

"Babe, it's literally impossible for me to win that teddy bear. Can I just give you \$10?"

"I just saw my life flash before my eyes."

"Ferris wheels are not scary. Ryan Gosling climbed one in 'The Notebook.' Man up."

"Hey, you! I'll give you four coupons for a bite of funnel cake."

"How sick would it be if the fair was inside Williams-Brice Stadium?"

"Someone just threw up on that ride and all they did was spray it with water and open it again five minutes later."

"I'm alive. I'm going to go throw up, but I'm alive."

"They just sat me right next to a seat that said 'Danger: Do Not Sit.'"

"What happens if I fall out of the ride and I end up on the news?" "I'll speak at your funeral."

"Are you sure this thing is secure? You know we just experienced an unprecedented natural disaster, right?"

"Do you think Uber would pick us up here?"

"I don't even mind being a third wheel as long as one of you sits next to me on the rides."

"Did I die? Am I in hell?"

"The fair is my favorite time of the year. I feel like it's Christmas morning except that it smells like a petting zoo."

"I should have brought hand sanitizer."

"Why is everything sticky?"

"I'm gonna go challenge that little kid to basketball. I want his Minion stuffed animal."

"This is the only time of year I can eat fried Oreos, so yeah, I've eaten 11 so far."

"I'm going on the drop tower. Tell my mom I love her."

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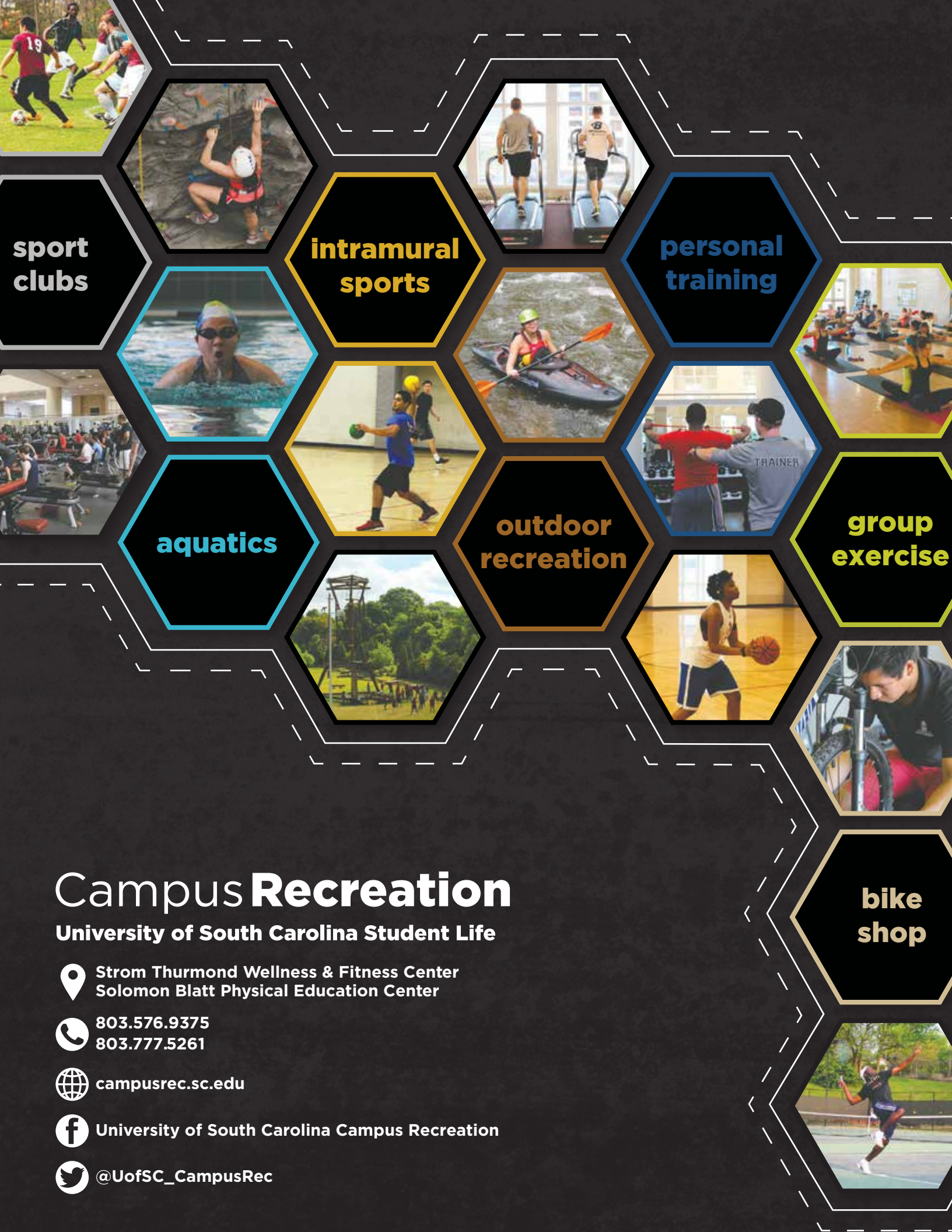


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