

THE CURRENT



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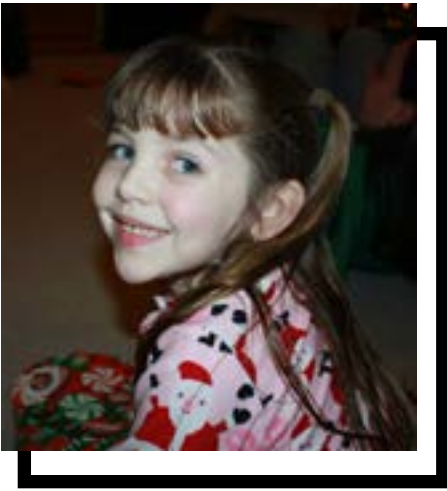
DECEMBER 2025
The NOSTALGIA Issue

PLUS!

CURRENT TRENDS,
ARTS AND CULTURE
AND MORE



EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear cherished reader,

As another semester closes and winter begins, the lit fireplaces and hot chocolates spark a time of nostalgia and knitted sweaters.

In this issue, we unfold a wonderland of memories. From the discourse of farewell tours and wonderings about plants in space, all the way to rebalancing self-care and exploring how social media affects nostalgia, this issue is a snow globe of wellness and reconnection.

Whether you are graduating or overcoming a semester of tedious deadlines, we come together to form a community of reflection and wistful hope for our future.

Each one of us leads the life of a Spartan uniquely. While that uniqueness fosters individuality, independence and self-exploration, it, this leaves room to breed isolation. We aim for this issue to be a revelation of shared experiences, authentic student voices reflecting on both the best and worst times; they all make us the achieving people we are.

As you explore these pages, we hope you can recognize your role in others’ memories. How you are the warmth and happiness for so many people in the world, and that is invaluable next to anything able to be artificially produced.

Sincerely,

Sabrina Girardi &
The Current Magazine Staff

THE CURRENT

MANAGING EDITOR

Kathryn Houghton

CONTRIBUTORS

Seth Christian Byle
Jillian Conrad
Ashley Davis
Sophia Ehlers
Abbi Gabli
Sabrina Girardi
Mia Hendy
Lukas Horak
Olivia McMillan
Makenna Poucket
Ashley Taylor
Alayna VanDoeselaar
Isabelle Warnock

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Jillian Conrad
Abbi Gabli
Olivia McMillan
Makenna Poucket

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY

Jill Ehlers
Michigan State University Archives
and Historical Collections
MSU IPF Information Services
Pascal Ohlmann
Claudio Scott

INFOGRAPHIC DESIGNERS

PROOFREADER

Jillian Conrad

SUBSCRIPTION

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**For the OG
Deadheads, the
nostalgia is real.**
”

In 1977, at the Wembley Empire Pool in London, Elton John announced his resignation from touring in front of a crowd of fans, lamenting his life [on stage](#) thus far. Two years after this on-stage farewell, he returned to touring with new music and a renewed passion for playing live. As of 2023, he claimed to be retired from touring once again, but can still be seen in 2025 joining other performers and hosting pop-up shows.

John’s management team is not the first to use the [rhetoric](#) of a “farewell tour” to re-engage fans and drum up a profit from ticket and merchandise sales. Typically, artists who have been out of the spotlight as they age and crave the revenue from a sold-out show will step back into the limelight. Fans who fall for these farewells should question why the label increases their desire to attend, as well as the price of nosebleed seats.

Hillery Glasby, a Michigan State University professor and “Deadhead” — the title for fans of the Grateful Dead and their revival band Dead & Company — knows the ins and outs of farewell tours for this popular rock band. Her motivation to see this artist despite the ever-rising ticket prices for concerts was fueled by nostalgia. “For the OG Deadheads, the nostalgia is real,” Glasby said.

It’s no secret that concert tickets sell far faster and for much more when they are associated with a last hurrah from an artist or band. “When [Grateful Dead] started re-touring as Dead & Company in 2015–2019 the shows were less crowded,” Glasby said. “By the final tour, venues were packed and sold out.”

At these events, concert merch sells out again and again, bought by an audience that keeps coming back for a potential last listen of their favorite songs. Even if that “last show” ends up being a gateway to another round of touring, the slight chance that it could be the real finale can conjure enough emotion for a fan to empty their wallet.

Although there is reasonable suspicion when it comes to an artist announcing a final farewell, there is also a true possibility that it is their final performance. Ozzy Osbourne’s proposed [final performance](#), “Back to the Beginning,” turned out to be just that, with the rock and roll icon passing away just three weeks after his July concert in Birmingham, England, earlier this year.

In 2025, [The Who, the Eagles and Ozzy Osbourne](#) participated in the phenomenon of the farewell tour, with only one of them, in unfortunate circumstances, keeping the integrity of the term “farewell” so far. Concerningly, for fans of Dead & Company, Glasby thinks they might be next to follow suit. “There’s a lot of rumors and fear these will be the last shows as Bob Weir is almost 80 and Mickey Hart is 80,” she said, highlighting two original members of the Grateful Dead. For audiences, it is unknown when an artist’s career will be cut short; buying the ticket is always better than missing out.

When an artist truly performs for the last time, fans that attend the show remember that performance as a resurrection of their youth, even if the artist can’t quite put on the show they used to. For nostalgia’s sake, they can look past the age or declining health of their idols and appreciate their discography as they did in their younger years.



Makenna Poucket
is a third year student majoring in professional and public writing. In her free time, she loves editing her friends’ papers and being with her roommates.

WHAT IS NOSTALGIA?

Q: What does nostalgia mean to you?

A: “Nostalgia is like a place that reminds you of a good memory from the past. Like a restaurant in my hometown reminds me of a bunch of memories from high school with my mom and my friends after football games — good feelings I suppose.”

A: “A sentimental longing for the past, often triggered by memories, places.”

A: “Nostalgia is summer drives around my hometown. Nostalgia is my grandmother’s soup, a piece of culture that has expanded across generations. Nostalgia is old friends in old places. Nostalgia is looking back and realizing how much I’ve grown up.”

A: “Nostalgia is a mixture of yearning and happiness. It relates to memories and good times, but it can also be sad wishing for those times again.”

A: “Something that brings back memories, like 2010 Christmas when I was opening gifts with family members that are no longer here.”

“
**Simpler times you long for, but
cannot get back.**
”

A: “Propaganda. It’s referring to the ‘good old days’; they didn’t exist.”

A: “A distorted outlook on our memories and experiences. You can feel nostalgic about something because of how great it was when it could have not been as good as it actually was?”

A: “When I think about nostalgia, the first thing that comes to mind is the holidays. I fondly remember the warmth and togetherness the fall and winter months brought when I was a young child. No matter what, my mother and grandmother always made sure those moments were special, even during times of hardship.”

A: “Social media idealizes and romanticizes nostalgia and in turn makes people feel sad about it and maybe even regretful. I know I catch myself comparing my life to easier ‘nostalgic’ times.”

A: “A warm feeling from the past our heart longs to feel again.”



Olivia Mcmillan
is a senior studying professional and public writing and advertising management with a minor in public relations. In her free time she can be found with her family and friends or reading or journaling.



Ashley Davis
is a senior studying English literature with a minor of business who enjoys being with family and friends on the holidays.



THE ART OF LETTER WRITING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

For centuries, the art of letter writing [played an integral role in connecting people](#). However, with the rise of the digital age, everything has changed. With quicker, more efficient ways to communicate, the incentive to send out handwritten messages has faded — along with much of the tradition behind it.

Despite this, there are still those who still engage in this practice because letter writing offers something authentic and irreplaceable. What began as a primary form of communication has transformed into much more: a hobby, a form of self expression, therapy and even an act of self-preservation. In ways, it is something many now view as nostalgic; in today's age, writing a letter is an activity more associated with our past than our present lives.

The physical presence of a letter can convey more to the reader than something created digitally. It may be time consuming, but the time put in is the whole point of the art. As the [Stanford Daily](#) puts it, “Unlike the typed word, a written script deeply exposes our thoughts — our naked, raw selves. The page itself also tells a distinct story: tear marks splatter apologies, erased lines elicit caution, crumpled sides allude to disorder.”

While text messages and emails are more efficient forms of communication, they leave little room for personal expression or individuality. Letters are able to spell out all the intricacies on and in between the written page. The many layers of this format not only provide greater context, but can also be interpreted in ways that are deeper and more personal.

“There’s something so different about having the tactile element of holding an item that seems special,” said Sarah Snyder, a recent alum who rediscovered the practice while working a summer job in Connecticut, where she and a friend exchanged addresses.

“
I don’t think letter writing is dead... it is still there, but we use it in a different way.
”

“It’s about using up all the stickers you never have any use for and giving them to a friend. Normally I’m hesitant to use my things because it seems that physical items are disappearing in today’s world, but with this, that’s not the case,” she said.

While fewer people write letters today, the practice is familiar and recognized by many. What’s often overlooked, though, is that while letter writing is a form of communication, it is also equally [considered a form of art](#).

The purpose of writing a letter has not always been the same as it is today. In the [18th century](#), letter writing was the main and only viable form of communication. Learning how to properly address and write a letter was an essential part of any individual’s education. The ways in which letters were crafted back then — typically more formal and focusing majorly on tone — were written for a variety of purposes, not solely to keep in contact with one another. Today, this formality has



photo by Pascal Ohlmann

been lost in translation as many of our words and phrases have been replaced with emojis, autocorrect and abbreviations.

As advanced pieces of technology emerged and improved our communication methods, letter writing slowly began to fizzle out. Regardless of time and place, people are now able to connect instantly to anyone in the world, which goes to show how [the internet has connected and divided us like nothing before](#). This immediate and instant gratification, though useful in many ways, has ultimately disconnected us from our own thoughts and the patience that once defined letter writing as an art.

For many people, the internet has replaced the practice of putting pen to paper, though those same people have often found it to be isolating. In other words, letter writing was seen as outdated due to the time and effort of the task itself. Over time, many have come back to this practice because they valued the connections it created.

Marohang Yakthung Limbu, an associate professor in the Department of Writing,

[TheCurrentMSU.com](#)

Rhetoric, and Cultures, shared insight from his childhood experiences of learning what makes letter writing so powerful.

“I didn’t know a lot about rhetoric back then, so letter writing was not very easy because I had to cater to a specific audience and denote a specific purpose,” he said. “When my sisters got me to write love letters it had some pattern and especially persuasion that was an important element — and they got me to use all kinds of tools or language within. I don’t think letter writing is dead... it is still there, but we use it in a different way.”

While the formality and frequency of handwritten letters has declined due to this type of communication being seen as obsolete, society can still gain perspective in the value of letter writing as an art. Mostly, writing can connect people in ways technology fails to because of its physical nature. Ultimately, it offers people the opportunity to slow down and take time to think about what words they want to use and all of the ways in which they can share them.



Jillian Conrad
is a third-year student majoring in professional and public writing. In her free time, you can find Jill adventuring, listening to music, watching a movie, or hanging out with friends.



Lukas Horak
is a fourth-year student majoring in professional and public writing. In his free time, Lukas can be found reading, playing a video game or watching a movie.



When I think back to when I was younger, there was a significant glow about the holidays. The smell of fresh baked cookies radiated through the house, mini Santas waved as you walked in the door and snow globes were always [out of reach](#). It was always a family tradition to put up the Christmas tree together, which gave us all a chance to bond and laugh as we opened homemade ornaments. My sister and I each had a box of our own ornament creations — clay red-and-white mittens, hand-painted trinkets, our school picture as gingerbread man and so many more. The tree was always a piece of art from every part of the family, never a perfectly picked color scheme.

Unlike my family traditions, holiday traditions have turned into another mundane task on account of social media, increased stress and the apparent pull of minimalism. As you scroll on social media platforms or visit home while you’re in college you’ll find minimalist Christmas decor trends. Posts displaying living rooms littered in lackluster Christmas decor, beige stockings hung by the fireplace and trees with the absence of colorful expression — left with white lights on them. Everything has to be “Instagram-worthy.”

The [American Psychological Association](#) has found 2 in 5 adults have increased stress during the holidays. They pinpointed 9 in 10 adults stressed about financial concerns. These issues can easily be a reason for the increase in minimalist decor. This increased stress makes it easy for families to take a simple inspiration picture from social media, and only buy a few things. We are witnessing the rise of social media influence and how it can change our sacred Christmas traditions.

The holiday season used to be about getting the family together and bringing magic back inside the home. This shift began to happen during the last Christmas season. When I went home for winter break, my mom had gotten rid of our childhood tree; in its place stood a homemade tree recreated from Pinterest. The ornaments were sky blue, white and silver, and silver garland draped the tree from top to bottom. Yes, it was beautiful and she took her time picking out each piece — but it didn’t say “Christmas” the same way our childhood tree that had my grandma’s knitted snowflakes.

Our house didn’t have any other decor — everything felt bare, like every other day. It makes sense why my mom chose to go for this new approach — to keep the house less cluttered this holiday season. As people go online for inspiration, they’re met with the [Kardashians’](#) Christmas favorites or a specific color palette from Pottery Barn. This has sparked an array of online discourse, with people wondering, [what happened to color?](#)

We are not kids anymore; we are the new adults. When we were kids, our parents would have us make “reindeer food,” shaking our presents to hear what’s inside, and everything just seemed brighter. Now that we have grown up, it’s up to us to decorate our apartments, while our parents are at home by themselves putting up the tree.

When holidays finally do roll around, people are not worried about curating a perfect list of gifts for family members — they’re worried about finding “aesthetic” Christmas decor that will match the beige pillows and throw blankets. There are Pinterest boards of inspiration for decorating that lack warmth

and the special personal touch. People are so worried about what will look good in an Instagram post that this generation has lost the love for the traditional Christmas color palette. The polished [minimalism](#) decorations may look good in the background of social media posts, but the joy felt for holidays is being lost. This shift is snowballing in the wrong direction, leading to the loss of connection to the season that brings people together through colorful decorations that mean the most.

The rise of simplicity has now crept into all facets of life. At first, it was just a template for the day-to-day decor decisions, but it’s now taken over the holiday season. When we were younger, we kept to the Christmas traditions. Parents would dust off the tree buried in the basement, the tablecloth my grandma passed down was laid out, and the creations made in school had a place all over the house. Yes, it wasn’t “Instagram worthy,” but it was special to us. I wish we could bring back the same warmth of the holidays we had as kids, and forget about the sad beige aesthetic — at least once a year.

When we were younger, the spirit of the holidays came naturally. With social media taking over and distorting the views of reality, it is important to remember what this season is all about. Embrace the beauty of the chaos during the season of giving, the warmth amidst the cold, the colorful and white lights in the dark and create connection within the hardships of the real world.

The Christmas season is right around the corner and we can’t force the old magic of the holidays. We can create a new type of magic through resurfacing Christmas traditions and creating new memories. By forgetting about social media trends and the need to demonstrate how aesthetic one can be, the holidays will feel warm again. Plan a weekend to go home to help put up the tree with your parents, bring out the dust covered box of your old school Christmas projects to hang them on the fridge and bake cookies. Embrace the innocent messiness of childhood and bring the holiday magic back to life this season.



Ashley Taylor is a senior studying advertising management. In her free time she is usually taking a nap, reading a book or going on walks with her sister.

THE WEIGHT OF DOING IT ALL

It’s the feeling of relief that comes after finishing a task that gets quickly washed away by the realization that there’s still more to do. For many college students, this cycle of relief to dread is a daily occurrence that slowly pushes them to burn out.

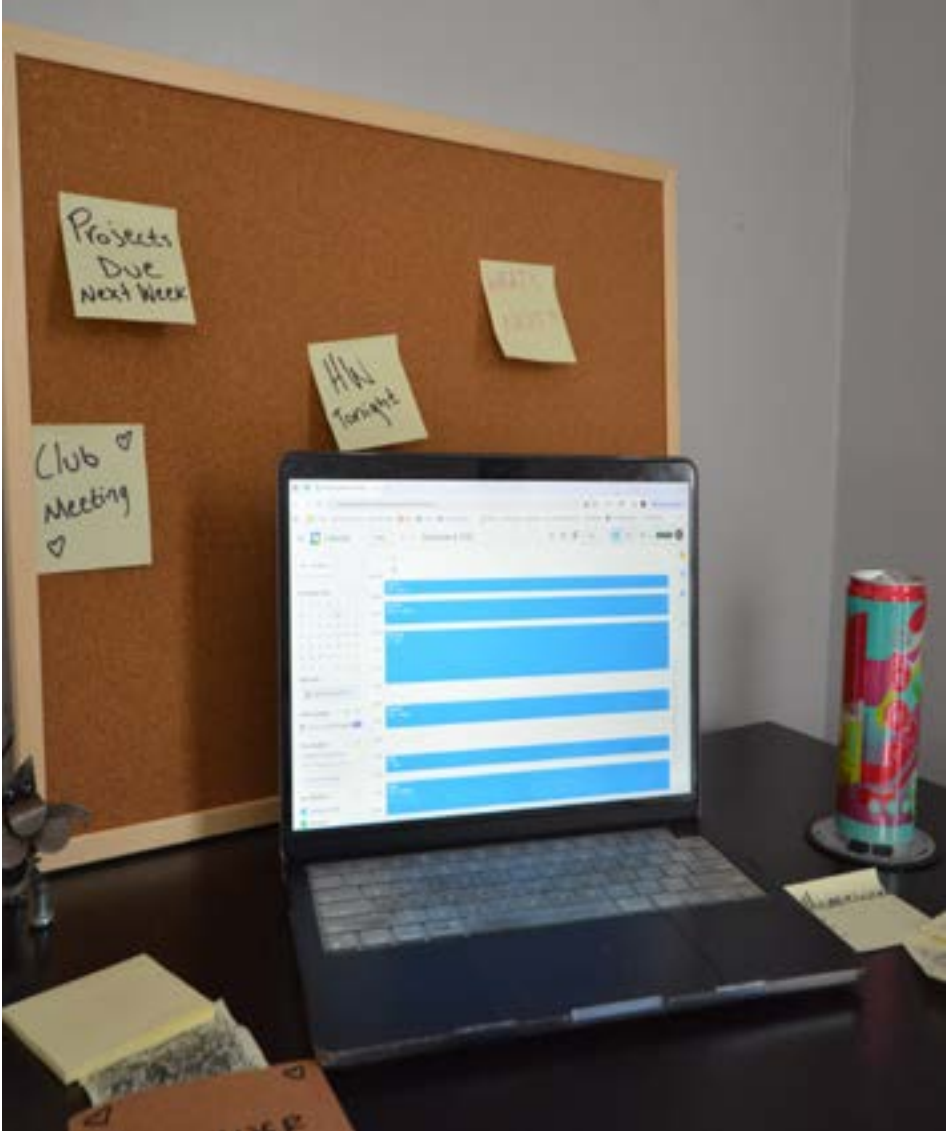
Societal and academic pressures have created a culture where many students feel that constant achievement isn’t just encouraged — it’s expected. From a young age, Gen Z’s success has been measured by output: grades, extracurriculars and leadership roles. It’s practically ingrained into student’s brains that self-worth depends on what we do, not how well we are actually doing mentally.

Mary Witherspoon, director of employee relations and communications for MSU’s Career Services Network, explained that part of the reason many students overextend themselves stems from a sense of uncertainty. Students may feel that doing more now will help them to be more secure in the future — a mindset that blurs the line between experience and burnout.

According to Witherspoon, this mindset tends to rebrand itself every few years. When she was in college in 2009, it was side hustles; later, it was “girl bossing” and [hustle culture](#). Every version, she said, stems from the same place: uncertainty about the future and the constant pressure to stay financially secure.

While the push to stay ahead may start as a practical goal, according to [Psychology Today](#), psychologists say it often turns into a pattern that takes a toll on students’ mental health.

“College students face intense pressure... Social media amplifies this by promoting constant self-improvement and comparison, fueling a “hustle” culture that can harm mental health,”



explained Dr. Zari Carpenter, a psychologist at MSU’s Counseling and Psychiatric Services.

Scrolling through social media, students are bombarded with content like “My 5 to 9 before my 9 to 5” and “My 5 to 9 after my 9 to 5,” perpetuating the idea that downtime makes them lazy or unproductive and that staying busy is the only way to become successful. This idea leads to unwanted burnout.

“Burnout can deeply affect a student’s sense of identity and self-worth,” Dr. Carpenter said. “When students lose sight of their values and focus only on day-to-day tasks, they may start equating their worth as a human being with their performance.”

It’s important for students to remember that rest isn’t something to earn — it’s something to choose. There will always be something else to get done, but constantly chasing the next task only plays into the endless cycle of productivity. Every achievement deserves celebration, no

matter how small, and sometimes the best way to do that is to just slow down.

Witherspoon had some valuable words of advice for students struggling with a toxic productivity mindset. “It’s easy if you have a couple hours here to just keep filling it up... But, you know, you don’t have to. And it’s okay. You’re entitled to rest in relaxation, no matter what’s going on.”



Abbi Gabli is a junior double-majoring in public relations and professional and public writing. Abbi loves exploring new places with friends and can often be found wandering around local thrift stores.



WHERE GREEN AND WHITE ONCE GREW

Compiled by Jillian Conrad, Abbi Gabli, Sabrina Girardi and Alayna VanDoeselaar

Spartan Lanes

Spartan Lanes was a bowling alley located in the basement of the MSU Union and was an [important community space](#) for students to bowl and have fun with friends. There were many concerns about updating the space, which was deemed not possible because of [structural and operational needs](#). The bowling alley was only accessible by stairs and needed new replacement parts that were no longer available. It closed in 2020 after being an inviting and engaging space for 70 years.

IM West Outdoor Pool

Built in 1959, the IM West outdoor pool was a [space for students and community members](#) to hang out and get cool in the summertime. It was used by MSU athletics and clubs and was also a space for camps and events. Although it was closed in 2018 [due to water leakage and deterioration](#), its demolition was completed in 2023. The pool was replaced by none other than a parking lot, and many MSU community members were disappointed by the removal of such an important historic space.

Spartan Village

Spartan Village was originally developed in the [1950s and '60s](#) as [student housing](#) to accommodate the influx of people pursuing a college education after World War II. It became a bustling part of campus that [even housed married students](#) and their children for a time. Although the buildings have had small updates throughout the years, they were not built to last and went half-uninhabited for decades. MSU officials finally determined that Spartan Village could not be updated any further due to too much deterioration, and after demolition, [new apartments will be constructed](#) on the property.

Spartan Lanes



photo from MSU Archives and Historical Collections



Spartan Village



photo from MSU IPF Information Services



IM West Outdoor Pool



photo from MSU Archives and Historical Collections





PIXELATED MEMORIES

Two hours of homework, underage drinking and drug use without repercussions, parties every night and a supply of friends. Is this the true college experience? This brief representation may sound outlandish and is far from realistic to a typical student, yet social media is building a digital capsule of memories with this narrative: short videos and pictures that offer a pixelated glimpse into the curated online personas of an “average college student.”

When written out, it may seem this representation is clearly fictional. But when students not only consume social media content, but also create their own, they develop a falsified relationship between their current experience and their college memories. According to the [National Library of Medicine](#), authentic memories resurface naturally, bringing timely reminders of the past, whether those are good or bad. In the world of social media, there are no stressful exams, career anxiety or feelings of loneliness. Algorithms

feed students content created by their peers spooned with distorted perfectionism.

Henry Bair, a junior at Michigan State University said, “My experience as a student at MSU is pretty standard,” he said. “However, compared to social media, I think it led me to believe that if I wasn’t 100% involved in every organization, or [if I] had a lifestyle different from what I assumed most people had, I wasn’t doing college right. In a way, it sets a finish line to race to before you graduate, trying to

“
In my experience, your brain likes to gloss over the bad things that happened and only focus on the good parts. It’s hard to remember that just because things could’ve been different doesn’t mean that they’d be better.”

”

check every box along the way, but I think that is just unnecessary stress added to an already overwhelming environment.”

Bair’s experience isn’t individual — it reflects how students crave an unattainable life portrayed by trends that set impossible standards. When students graduate or look back on their college experience through social media to reminisce on feelings of nostalgia, the platforms deliberately supply this content in order to continue engagement.

At their heart, social media platforms prioritize keeping people hooked rather than providing an outlet for the struggles someone may be facing. Nostalgia is a large gear keeping that machine running. Through the tough times in college, a dodgy political climate and an overstimulating digital world, many students take those misrepresentations of college life and believe they once lived a life of fantasy and limited responsibility.

Many students don’t associate nostalgia with a positive emotion. “In my experience, your brain likes to gloss over the bad things that happened and only focus on the good parts,” said Carolina Mercado, a junior at MSU. “It’s hard to remember that just because things could’ve been different doesn’t mean that they’d be better.”

But some students may not even realize they are being affected by a falsified feeling of nostalgia while they are currently living in the present.

Mercado discussed local social media pages: “MSU burner accounts, like @msuchicks or @spartan.beers.party... a lot of their content is about partying, vaping, fake-ids, football season, etc. Because they post on a [regular] basis, it paints an image that everyone is constantly partying, which might be true for some people, but that’s definitely not everyone’s experience.”

When going back and looking at memories, these local representations paint a clear picture of how college students are either succeeding or missing the mark at being a college student.

Bair discussed how many of the moments he now cherishes were once tainted by an exterior view. “I only made two friends my first year here, yet I felt like a failure because it felt like I didn’t do college right. I wasn’t hanging out with huge groups of people every weekend, most of the time it was just my roommate and our mutual friend who tagged along, but I still cherish those experiences.”

The pixels we have learned to depend on don’t compare in many ways to living real life. After escaping social media’s influence, Bair has begun to appreciate his experiences. Focusing on the past moments allows students to validate their capability to rally again and achieve. However, on social media, the life students are told to remember has no imperfection. The feelings of overcoming hardships are removed with the risk of those hardships coming across at all.

Aleyah Weaver, an MSU sophomore, said that, in reality “College is depicted as parties every weekend with a huge group of friends and no worries. In actuality, it’s a lot of long hours studying, and making friends that rarely last.”

Social media may have a hold on the falsified memories of students’ experiences, but it cannot obtain the memories students have and experience in real life. Recognizing that social media is using students’ emotional vulnerabilities as a way to boost engagement is a first step to separate the falsified world seen online from the reality it purports to represent.

After becoming reliant on social media’s perspective, Mercado is now looking for ways to connect back to her own experience: “It’s ok to talk about the hardships of college,” she said. “If you don’t live up to the ideal picture of the college experience that doesn’t mean that you did something wrong, it just means that you didn’t get the support you needed, or maybe you don’t want the ‘typical’ college experience.”



Sabrina Girardi

is a senior double majoring in professional and public writing and English. She enjoys writing and reading stories that challenge the bounds of reality.



THE TRANSFORMATION OF TELEVISION

Many remember the days of Saturday morning cartoons and staying up late to watch the new episode of their favorite show. With the release of Netflix in 2007, much of the television industry shifted, and there was a drastic decrease in the popularity of cable.

In contrast to cable’s constant advertisements and scheduled programming, Netflix introduced the idea of on-demand content, and the popularity of Netflix influenced the creation of more streaming services, including Hulu, HBO Max and Peacock. However, with the increase in streaming services in recent years, many viewers have begun to wonder if there is a loss of community that was once found in cable television.

On-demand streaming pushed the idea of the [binge model](#) within television entertainment. Instead of waiting to watch a show weekly, entire seasons of series are now often released all at once. While there are perks within the binge model, like the convenience to watch series whenever and the instant gratification of completing an entire series, there are also some noticeable drawbacks.

Compared to scheduled programming, on-demand models struggle to foster the same [in-depth discussions and anticipation](#). With

a weekly release schedule of television series, many viewers take comfort in the community built from in-person and online discussions of their favorite shows. While the creation of community does not completely vanish in on-demand series, they make it much more difficult to cultivate the same conversations when people are watching at different speeds and times.

Tami Kociuba, a third-year student at MSU, said that having shows to talk about on a weekly basis not only gives her conversations to have with her friends, it also provides her with “a chance to break the ice and create a conversation with new people.”

Thankfully, it seems like streaming services have taken note of the community generated with scheduled releases and are heading back toward this approach for new shows. Series like HBO Max’s “The White Lotus” have garnered increasing viewer engagement with the weekly release of each new episode. Most recently releasing its third season in early 2025, “The White Lotus” season three finale [scored 6.2 million viewers](#), which was up 51% from the season two finale.

“The White Lotus” isn’t the only show releasing weekly episodes that’s receiving

high viewership. Just this summer, season seven of “Love Island USA” reached [all-time high viewership](#) for any series streaming on Peacock. During the week of season seven’s finale, the show received 1.9 billion minutes watched. With the release of each new episode, more and more people engaged in conversation surrounding the show in online spaces like [TikTok](#), Instagram and X.

Shows like “The White Lotus” and “Love Island USA” have benefited from the online discussion that surrounds each new episode. The scheduled programming of each show has only increased audience engagement and strengthened the community built around them due to the anticipation of each new episode.



Mia Hendy is a junior studying professional and public writing with a minor in screenwriting. In her free time, she enjoys watching movies and shows with her friends.



Science Fiction or Not so Distant Reality?

Climate change, sustainability, scarcity and general issues surrounding the environment have become an increasing concern in recent years. A 2025 Yale survey found 63% of adults in the United States are concerned about climate change. The UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs projects the population will rise above ten billion before the turn of the century. Many people are questioning whether Earth can sustain the demands of industry in a world with a growing population. But what if innovation can find another way to sustain our needs while relieving strain on the environment?

With the growing space industry, is it possible we could start fulfilling our needs outside of the planet?

While it might seem like something out of a science fiction novel, space farming could become a reality sooner than some might think. The International Space Station (ISS) has begun growing plants in space, both for food and for aesthetics.

This is an amazing breakthrough, but having gardens on the ISS is one thing — industrial farms that produce enough to feed the masses is another matter entirely.

Conner Steven Larsen, a professional and public writing major with an emphasis on

environmental science, thinks space farms are a viable solution for sustainability problems here on Earth. “Farming in space could alleviate [available] space problems we have on Earth, not only for feeding people, but feeding livestock,” Larsen said.

Larsen believes this is an actual possibility with the expanding space industry. He said that using nutrient-infused water rather than soil will alleviate the weight burden of having to haul both water and soil into space, and that, once used, the water can be recycled and reinfused with nutrients.

When asked when this might become a reality, he said that with the technology we have today, it could happen in the next twenty years, though convincing investors might be a problem. Realistically, he estimated that it would take fifty years to start and should be common practice by 2100.

When asked if it would be best to build farms on the Moon, Mars, or in orbit, he said “Mars farms would be good for a colony on Mars, but it’s too far and too dangerous to realistically bring supplies to and from the Earth regularly. The Moon is better, but our best bet is in orbit.”

Regarding the idea of floating forms in the ocean, he said that the marine environment is too volatile, that salty air could contaminate the

crops, and that it might actually be easier to build farms in orbit.

The final question was in regards to what he thinks will be the biggest struggle to overcome for this new technology. Larsen stated “Many people want a greener America, but people in power with money incentives will likely inhibit progress.” He also added that funding will be an issue and that change will need to happen gradually — but that, unfortunately, most corporations are too focused on short-term gains rather than long term investments and that this will likely require subsidies.

Overall, he is quite optimistic about the potential for farming in space, and believes it will increase food security.

While it’s impossible to know for sure what the future holds, the prospect of farming in space appears to be a viable and a likely key step in the ongoing quest for a healthy, sustainable and prosperous future.



Seth Christian Byle is a senior studying professional and public writing who specializes in grant writing, analytical writing, social commentaries and scientific writing in a forward-thinking manner to benefit the human race.



KEEP YOUR MIND ON YOUR GUT

Most of us believe that the brain is responsible for practically all of our moods and emotions. But here is the surprising twist: nearly 95% of the body’s “feel good” neurotransmitter, serotonin, isn’t produced in the brain — [it’s made in the gut](#). Scientists call this relationship the gut-brain axis and it is quickly becoming one of the hottest topics in mental health research. For college students, this research hits close to home. Between late-night study sessions, unpredictable schedules and a diet that often relies on pizza and instant ramen, the gut-brain connection is especially imperative. This crucial and powerful connection is able to communicate through the [vagus nerve](#), which sends signals between the brain and the gut.

This nerve helps tell gut microbes when, how much and what kinds of neurotransmitters to release into the bloodstream. Your gut contains trillions of microorganisms that collectively possess more than 100 times the number of genes found in the [human genome](#). Having a diverse and stable microbiota is essential for gut health and overall wellbeing. The good news? The health of your microbiota is influenced by the dietary choices you make.

Fermented and fiber-rich foods are some of the most powerful ways to support gut health. Fermented options like yogurt, kefir and kimchi help nourish healthy gut microbes, while fiber-rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains promote diversity in the gut microbes, a key factor in overall gut well-being. But what does a thriving microbiome have to do with your mental health?

Research from the [Fisher Center for Alzheimer’s Research Foundation](#) found that individuals who ate 18-65 grams of fiber per day had a 26% lower risk of developing dementia compared to those who only consumed 2-10 grams daily. Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as fish, flaxseeds and walnuts, have also been shown to enhance memory, mood, attention and cognitive performance, while lowering the risk of depression and regulating stress sensitivity. In other words, the same nutrients that keep your gut happy may also help protect your brain in the long run.

Conversely, the [Western diet](#) — a dietary pattern followed by many Americans and especially college students for its convenience — can be harmful for both the gut microbiome and the brain. This diet is typically high in sugar, saturated fats and sodium. Many foods in the Western diet are ultra-processed. We know them as frozen and microwavable meals that are ready to serve in under five minutes. Regular consumption of these foods can disrupt the balance of gut microbes and brain function, contributing to addictive-like eating behaviors and dysregulation of the [hypothalamus](#), which is considered one of the most important brain regions involved in feeding and energy expenditure. Over time, dysregulation of the hypothalamus can increase risk of chronic stress, anxiety and depression, making it one of the most common yet harmful dietary patterns for students.

Although it is hard to escape the Western diet, there is still hope in following dietary patterns that keep your mind and gut healthy.

The DASH diet and the [Mediterranean diet](#) are excellent dietary patterns to maintain the healthiest possible gut and brain. Consuming more fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, olive oil and fish while consuming less red meat and saturated fats is what defines the Mediterranean diet. A study published in the [Journal of Advances in Nutrition](#) reported that the Mediterranean diet lowers the risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease and depression. The “Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension” (DASH) diet contains the same elements as the Mediterranean diet but places a greater focus on maintaining a low sodium intake in order to control blood pressure. There is evidence that strong adherence to the DASH diet leads to a reduced risk of depression in adults.

The gut and brain are working together, and how effectively they function together depends on the foods you eat on a daily basis. Even minor adjustments may have a huge impact on your gut and brain health, despite the fact that college is often associated with late nights, demanding weeks, and a hectic daily routine that only permits short and easy meals. Consider some fermented and high-fiber snacks like yogurt or apples the next time you reach for a bag of chips. Your mind and body will appreciate it!



Isabelle Warnock is a senior majoring in nutrition science and minoring in health promotion. On campus she is part of the Sigma Kappa Alpha Tau Chapter and Social Media chair for the Nutritional Sciences Student Organization. In her free time, she enjoys watching reality tv and trying new local cuisine.



photo by Claudio Scott

MICRODOSING MICROTRENDS: IS THE 20-YEAR TREND CYCLE DONE FOR?

Fashion has been an interesting phenomena throughout history. There have been styles of fashion that became popular, fell out of favor but then years later came back in a new or reimagined way. Certain fashion styles have mainly become trendy because of the lead of designers and entrepreneurs in the fashion industry. However, there is also a relatively new influx of opinions and sponsorships from celebrities and influencers that teach consumers to buy new and buy more. This

pattern of trends being pushed and accepted is [called the 20-year trend cycle](#), which is defined as “the cyclical concept that every 20 years or so the trends that were once popular will begin to be on the forefront again.” This concept is no secret, and it has been well known and leveraged in the fashion industry.

The trend cycle has no doubt been present [throughout the decades](#), putting old trends on the back burner and bringing them out again

two decades later. Take the ’70s for example: bell bottoms were all the rage, then came back as flare pants in the 2000s and are popular again now. The expressive and daring Y2K aesthetic has come back to young adults. MSU apparel and textile design professor Saetbyul Park said it is “fascinating to see how [younger generations] reinterpret the early 2000s aesthetic with today’s minimalist styling.”

Current fashion trends suggest that the cycle has sped up from what it used to be. What was trendy only 15 or 10 years ago has already returned. Most recently, [microtrends](#) have begun popping up all over the place, with different niche genres that make the possibilities of fashion endless.

Microtrends grow in popularity super quickly, but fall off just as fast.

Katie Holsten, a copy editor for VIM Magazine, explained that social media platforms like TikTok are the reason for these quick trends, because the ongoing discourse is easy to access and be influenced by. “We can access anything we want really,” she said. This influx of opinions at everyone’s fingertips allows many ideas and conversations about fashion to influence what might become the next trend, or what should be ditched from people’s closets.

Park has also witnessed this quick pattern of trends. “Social media drives these short-lived crazes because influencers constantly need something new to post,” she said. “Audiences, in turn, are always craving novelty. The result is a trend life cycle that lasts months, or even weeks.”

If there are multiple niches or microtrends happening at the same time, the fashion industry feels the pressure to respond to

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If consumers only buy styles that are trendy, their wardrobes will be filled with clothes they won’t like in a month. Paying attention to which trends you personally like can help you get a sense of what pieces will last in your closet.

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what their consumers want. This is where fast fashion comes in: it is based on a business model where companies can produce clothes quickly enough to respond to the ever-changing market. Brands like Shein and Temu seem perfect on the surface — their clothes and products are actually affordable, and they come out with new styles faster than the changing of seasons. However, what is usually unseen is [how these brands can manage this in the first place](#).

“Unfortunately, that system depends on low wage labor and poor working conditions in many developing countries,” Park said. “On top of that, the wealth gap and influencer culture create an endless loop of aspiration and consumption.” Fast fashion may serve the quick and harsh demands of microtrend-focused consumers, but that is all it’s for. Brands that utilize this business model don’t seem to care about the [consequences of the cycle](#) that continues to speed up with each passing year.

This era of multiple microtrends that are easily purchasable allows for many things to be popular at once and for trends to turn around that much faster. Holsten explained that this “is our reality, of needing to buy more... It defines where we stand in society... It’s like a competition.” This competitive nature of trends can reinforce consumerist behavior, leading to more people purchasing more, and more new trends becoming popularized. The exponentially quick cycle could cause [numerous problems down the road](#) relating to the health of our planet and the wellbeing of people around the world.

On the other hand, with multiple styles and interpretations of fashion popular at the same time, styles that are different from the “norm” are still widely accepted and praised for being unique or creative. The plethora of fashion trends available offers people the ability to pick and choose what they like. Vanessa Friedman with the New York Times talked about [how to deal with all of this](#): “When there is no way to make sense of trends, the best solution is to give yourself permission to ignore them. Another way of thinking about this is as an opportunity to develop personal style, a concept that has always existed outside of trends.”

As microtrends begin to feel out of control, creating your own personal style can help drown out the noise. If consumers only buy styles that are trendy, their wardrobes will be filled with clothes they won’t like in a month. Paying attention to which trends you

personally like can help you get a sense of what pieces will last in your closet. Not to mention, if consumers stop subscribing to every microtrend, the destructive fast fashion business model won’t be needed anymore, which will reduce waste and keep businesses accountable for their actions.

If more people begin to create their own personal style through ideas they see on social media or from past decades, what will happen to the 20-year trend cycle? Park believes the trend cycle will slow down, emphasizing that she sees “a growing interest in thrifting, upcycling, and handcrafts like knitting and crocheting... That’s exciting because it brings creativity and sustainability back into fashion.” When people begin investing themselves and their time in their clothing, they won’t feel the need to look at trends and purchase the next best thing. “If more people embraced this mindset,” Park said, “fashion would become more personal and less disposable.”

Truly thinking about what we wear not only helps the planet and the fashion industry, but it can also help us discover things about ourselves, such as what we truly like and feel good in. Making your own clothes, whether through crocheting or upcycling, can be incredibly rewarding, not to mention that pieces can be customized to be exactly how you want them. Thrifting is also a great way to look for new (to you) clothing that is unique.

Although these methods of finding new clothing are slower than scrolling through Shein and clicking purchase, it doesn’t hurt to put more of yourself and your heart into your clothes. You will love each clothing piece more because you found it on a random rack at Goodwill, or because you crafted it with your own hands. Now more than ever, fashion needs to continue shifting toward becoming more personal and more sustainable, and the easiest (and most fun) way to do it is by curating your own wardrobe with pieces you truly love.



Alayna VanDoeselaar is a junior studying creative writing as well as professional and public writing. When she is not typing or scribbling words, she loves to go thrifting, always on the lookout for unique clothing that fits her personal style.



HOLIDAY TRADITIONS AND THINGS TO DO IN THE MITTEN STATE

As the air turns cold and the scent of pine and nutmeg fills the air, a specific, irreplaceable kind of magic sweeps over Michigan. While festive decorations may be the first thing one thinks of, the holidays also contain a heady sense of nostalgia. For students and lifelong residents of Michigan alike, winter in the Mitten State offers a chance to engage in unique experiences.

Around the MSU campus, one does not have to venture far to find the holiday spirit. Right on campus, the Wharton Center for Performing Arts hosts classic holiday shows, such as the annual “Holiday Cheer” concert, featuring MSU Symphony Orchestra and Choirs. This is a perfect evening to immerse in seasonal music.

The city of Lansing offers several local traditions fitting for winter break or experience with family and friends. Some such events include Silver Bells in the City, MSU’s Annual Arts and Crafts Show and Holiday Nights of Lights.

The annual Silver Bells in the City event in Downtown Lansing includes an electric light parade, State Tree Lighting, the lighting of

the official Michigan Christmas tree in front of the Capitol and a drone light show with an accompanying firework display. There is also a [5k race](#) that takes place the next day, also in downtown Lansing.

The annual Winter Arts and Crafts show is held at the MSU Union, located on campus right off of Grand River Avenue. The event showcases local artisans and it is a great opportunity to support small and medium sized local businesses. Most years also include featured student artists. This year, the event takes place on December 6 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and December 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Holiday Nights of Lights is a brilliant illuminating light display where one can drive on a route formulated by internal paved roads already existing within the park. Temporary markers directing a route through Lansing’s Frances Park reveal shifting light-up scenes as well as animated displays. With its festive glow, the show is a great way to bring friends and family close together for a shared experience. This winter, the show took place in November. For those traveling outside of Lansing for

the holidays, Michigan offers plenty of other holiday experiences that are rooted in culture. One such example can be seen in the city of Holland with its Kerstmarkt, an outdoor street market modeled after European countries’ spirit of old-world Christmas shops. Most famous are undoubtedly Frankenmuth, the place where Bronner’s Christmas Wonderland resides, the largest Christmas market in the world.

Whether cutting a tree at a local farm, driving through streets covered in snow or shopping local artisans with a hot chocolate in hand, Michigan is the place to create new traditions while still cherishing the familiar comfort of the season.



Sophia Ehlers is a senior double majoring in human resources and English. Her interests include fashion, historical fiction and old Hollywood movies. She can be found hiking or drawing in her free time.

THE CURRENT *Wrap Up*

01. JOLLY PUMPKIN

218 Albert Ave., (517) 858-2100

- Jolly Pumpkin is a bar and brunch restaurant that serves dips, soups, sandwiches, pizza and drinks such as craft beer and cocktails.
- MSU students and staff receive 20% off food and beverage purchases with an MSU ID.
- Appetizers and select drinks are half off during "Late Night Happy Hour" from 8 p.m. to close on Sundays through Thursdays.

02. THE STATE ROOM

219 S. Harrison Rd., (517) 432-5049

- Located inside the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, The State Room is a buffet-style restaurant for breakfast and lunch, with an à la carte dinner menu, offering a variety of cuisines.
- Students with an MSU ID can receive a 20% discount on dinner.

03. CULINARY SERVICES

Dining halls, International Center Food Court, Kellogg Market in the Kellogg Center, Sparty's, The Sandbox in Holden, The Workshop at STEM, MSU Bakers, Strange Matter Coffee, MSU Dairy Store and mobile order locations, (517) 884-0660

- Culinary services is offering a discount at select locations on campus for students.
- At participating "Eat at State" locations on campus, students paying with Spartan Cash get 15% off their purchase.

04. SANSU SUSHI

4750 S. Hagadorn Rd., (517) 333-1933

- Sansu Sushi has a comprehensive menu of drinks, sushi, soups, salads and other side dishes, including a vegetarian menu. Rolls range in price from just under \$10 to a little over \$20.
- Students with an MSU ID can receive a 20% discount on Tuesday evenings from 4:30 to 9:00 p.m.

05. TASTE OF THAI

2838 E. Grand River Ave., #2, (517) 324-0225

- Taste of Thai serves food to local residents through real Thai recipes. Located on Grand River Ave., it is close to campus and affordable.
- The Lunch Special (Monday to Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) comes with a choice of protein, one vegetable spring roll, one tom yum soup and one salad with peanut dressing. Chicken, beef, pork, tofu or mixed vegetables for \$13 and shrimp for \$14.

OUR TOP 10 BUDGET-FRIENDLY MEALS IN EAST LANSING

06. HOPCAT

300 Grove St., (517) 324-0225

- Located on the corner of Grove St. and Albert Ave., HopCat is a Michigan-based chain known for serving comfort food and craft beer.
- Their special "Burger Beer Thursday" allows patrons to order a single patty burger, Cosmik Fries, and any draft beer for \$9 on Thursdays from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

07. CRUNCHY'S

254 W. Grand River Ave., (517) 351-2506

- Known for its burgers, pizza and beer served with karaoke, Crunchy's hosts its popular specials nights, "Locals Night," on Wednesdays.
- On Wednesdays, customers can choose a burger or sandwich paired with fries and pop for \$14.50. Drink specials are also available.

08. FIELDHOUSE

213 Ann St., (517) 332-8300

- Located across from MSU's campus, FieldHouse is known for its comfort food and seasonal rotation of craft beer and cocktails.
- FieldHouse offers a variety of food and drink deals during its 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. happy hour, Tuesday through Saturday, including \$9 wings or popcorn shrimp on Thursday and \$10 burger and fries on Friday.

09. BELL'S GREEK PIZZA

1135 E. Grand River Ave., (517) 332-0858

- Bell's Greek Pizza is known for its pizzas, Greek specialties, oven-baked grinders, wings and other casual fare.
- During "Half-Off slice Wednesdays," patrons pay \$1.75 per pizza slice.

10. BEGGAR'S BANQUET

218 Abbot Rd., (517) 351-4540

- Beggar's Banquet is a local American-style restaurant known for its cocktails and blend of classic and modern decor.
- Half off the drinks and snacks menu Wednesdays from 3:00 p.m. to close.

