

inTHE **NEWS**

Chinese Spring Festival

The International House will celbrate the Chines Spring Festival on Feb. 9 from 1:30-4:30 p.m. **JSU Chinese** students will have a variety of performances and activities such as singing, poetry, dancing, presentation, games and dumplings. Admission is free to all.

Mardi Gras Parade

The sisters of Alpha Omicron Pi are sponsoring a Jacksonville Mardi Gras parade on Saturday, Feb. 10 at 3 p.m. on Trustee Circle.

Second Saturdav Space Safari

From BFFs to Mr. and Mrs. Active Minds hosts relationship workshop

Nick Adrian Staff Writer

This Tuesday, JSU's branch of the organization Active Minds held a Relationship Talk with husband and wife Fred and Rochelle Smith titled: "From BFF to Mr. and Mrs." The couple, who were once JSU students themselves, gave the story of how they met and offered advice on how not only to lead a good relationship, but a good marriage, as well.

While Rochelle Smith is the Director of the Office of Residence Life at JSU and Fred Smith is the director of the Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama, they are also both pastors at the Bridge Christian Center in Alexandria, Ala. They first met while attending school

at JSU in gospel choir practice, but did not begin dating until Rochelle was in graduate school and Fred was out of school. They have now been married for fourteen years and came to give advice to students as they "transition from to one day Mr. and Mrs."

Fred Smith made the point that relationships are one of the few important things in life that we are not tested on.

"You actually are tested to get a driver's license, but you're not tested before you get married," he said. "How do you prepare yourself for something that you're not tested on?" He went on to explain that this "test" does not come along until you are already married.

Mr. Smith gave two



Nick Adrian/The Chanticleer

Rochelle Smith and her husband, Fred, speak at Active Minds' relationship workshop.

ways for students (or young people, in general) to look at themselves and ask where they are in the process of choosing someone to spend the rest of their life with. The first was

to take a closer look at other relationships that we may model our own relationships after whether they be the romantic relationships of like the model," he our parents and

pus, or platonic relationships we share with our friends.

"Whether you like the model, or you don't

couples on cam- See MR. AND MRS., page 2

America's war on the Kissing Bug

Jennie Erin Smith The New Yorker

If Thomas Cropper, a public-health veterinarian at Lackland Air Force Base, in San Antonio, Texas, thought about Chagas disease at all, he thought about it as a Central and South American problem. Named after the Brazilian physician who described it, in 1909, Chagas is a classic-one might say egregious-example of a neglected tropical disease. It is caused by the protozoan parasite Trypanosoma cruzi, which is delivered to its host by kissing bugs, known formally as triatomines. The bugs are bloodsuckerstheir nickname comes from their penchant for biting near the eyes or mouth-and they can swell to the size of grapes as they feed, causing them to defecate and leave the parasite behind to make

its way into the host's he learned that a mili-

bloodstream. A gross and tary working dog had denot particularly efficient veloped heart problems mode of transmission, it's while deployed in Kuwait. still good enough to have The dog was returned to Lackland, the home of

the Department of De-

Popping the question in the season of love

Katie Cline

This month's planetarium show on the third floor of Martin Hall follows the adventures of a curious cat who stows away on a trip to the moon. Recommended for children in kindergarten -3rd grade and cat lovers of all ages. First show at 4 p.m. Second show at 5 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children.

Foothills Piano **Festival**

The Foothills **Piano Festival** presents Dr. Margery Whatley in recital at 3 p.m. on Feb. 11 in the Mason Hall Performance Center.

kept Chagas going since pre-Columbian times.

According to the World Health Organization's shifting estimates, between six and seven million people in Latin America are currently infected. If you're infected but don't have symptoms, you're likely to find out only after donating blood. If you do have symptoms, you're probably in trouble. About a third of Chagas patients develop a chronic form that leads to heart damage and failure.

Cropper specializes mainly in zoonoses-diseases transmissible from animals to humans-and in keeping service members away from them. Force and National Guard Not long after he arrived recruits are trained every at Lackland, in 2008,

fense's canine school, and confirmed positive for Chagas. A study of all the working dogs on base, in fact, found that about eight per cent had antibodies against T. cruzi. Many never developed symptoms at all, but young pups would sometimes drop dead without warning. Cropper began asking about Chagas and what the risks might be for humans. "What else are these stupid bugs feeding on?" he wondered. This turned out to be a somewhat urgent question, because Lackland is where about thirty-five thousand Air

See KISSING BUG, page 2



Photograph via the Natural History Museum / Alamy

Triatomines, also known as kissing bugs, are responsible for transmitting the parasite that causes Chagas disease.

Editor-in-Chief

With Valentine's Day right around the corner, boxes of chocolate and giant teddy bears are sure to be some of the most popular gifts, but a few lucky lovers may end up with something extra special: an engagement ring.

Holiday proposals in general are popular. Between November and February, the time of year known as "engagement season," there are several major holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and Valentine's Day.

JSU alumna Ashlee Jones has firsthand experience with the joys of engagement season. Her boyfriend, Jesse Hall, proposed on Christmas Day 2017 with a Russian doll-style proposal. He gave Jones a large box that held progressively smaller boxes.

"A ring box was at the bottom with my engagement ring inside, and he asked me to marry him, and I told him, 'Well, duh!" Jones said.

Jones and Hall met at JSU when they both had shifts at the radio station. This Valentine's Day will mark their seventh anniversary together.

"I do think that holiday engagements are cheesy," Jones admitted, "but I think it's different if the holiday has a certain significance for your relationship. Technically, Valentine's Day would have made more sense for us since it's our anniversary, but Christmas is my next favorite holiday, and he knew that, and since my family was there with us, it made the proposal even better."

When the couple gets married on

See ENGAGEMENTS, page 2



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BUG from page 1

every year, often outdoors. The base encompasses a vast, cactus-strewn wilderness with populations of wood rats, armadillos, skunks, opossums, and other easy targets for a kissing bug.

Cropper called in an entomologist, Walter Roachell, and a microbiologist, Candelaria Daniels, from the Army Public Health Command at Joint Base San Antonio. Roachell found five species of kissing bug at Lackland, some in the nests dug by wood rats in the bottoms of cacti. A training instructor who accompanied Roachell claimed that he'd never before seen one of the bugs, even though certain species are distinctive-pretty, even-with their folded wings encircled by what could be described as a striped skirt.

"I looked down and pointed out one crawling between his feet," Roachell told me.

Daniels, meanwhile, sought to determine the bugs' infection rates. More than half of them, her analysis revealed, carried T. cruzi. They were eating a lot of things-wood rats, armadillos, even rattlesnakes. And, more alarmingly, nearly thirty per cent tested positive for human blood.

"They were indeed feeding on people," she said.

Cropper had vegetation cut back, insecticide sprayed, and treated bed nets installed where trainees slept, and similar measures were taken around the kennels. At one point, a routine blood donation by an airman, who had neither a history of travel to Latin America nor a mother likely to have transmitted the disease to him in utero, turned up positive. He remembered suffering a swelling around his eye-one early sign of a Chagas infection-which he blamed on dirt. It "may have been feces from the kissing bug," Cropper said, but no one was really sure.

Even among vector-borne tropical diseases, Chagas remains a redheaded stepchild. It's slower to kill than dengue or malaria, and therefore easier to ignore. Chagas scientists are used to incremental progress, low recognition, and poor funding; they sometimes must scream for attention. (In 2012, one group raised eyebrows after calling Chagas "the new H.I.V.") Benznidazole, the principal drug that is used to treat the disease, was developed more than forty years ago, and another, nifurtimox, is even older. Both kill the parasite, although a large clinical trial, published last month in the New England Journal of Medicine, found that benznidazole could not halt heart deterioration already in progress.

Military science has tightly defined parameters; when it comes to parasitology, only research with practical applications gets funded. In San Antonio, the spectre of risk to personnel-and expensively trained working dogs-meant that a lot of money and attention could be directed toward Chagas. When I visited the lab at Public Health Command Central, Roachell and a microbiologist were designing a pesticide-impregnated mammal food, not unlike the anti-tick treatments that are given orally to dogs, to kill the feeding kissing bugs and interrupt the transmission cycle. In addition, Daniels is working with Cropper and a physician at Lackland on what, to the military, may be the most important of the Chagas studies under way: screening in recent trainees. Three thousand service members are being asked to volunteer blood samples. The researchers have no baseline infection rates to refer to within that group, but so far, with a little more than a tenth of the samples in, no one has tested positive, a sign that the preventive measures have helped. In dogs, only two per cent now have antibodies.

In the past few years, state health officials, entomologists, and academic veterinarians have all launched local studies. This has created the popular impression of Chagas as a new threat, with some articles in the press linking it to climate change or illegal immigration. But what is striking to researchers is how everyone missed Chagas for so long, when the literature shows that Texas-along with much of the rest of the Southwest-has been an endemic Chagas region since people began looking. Local transmission has been documented since 1955 in people, and since 1972 in dogs. Roachell even learned that an exhaustive study on kissing bugs and T. cruzi had been conducted at Lackland and published in 1970. That study reported that the bugs hung out in wood-rat nests and were heavily infected with the parasite-not so different from what he and Daniels found.

Still, the idea of Chagas as a foreign illness persisted for half a century. When blood banks nationwide started screening for the disease, in 2007, it was generally assumed that immigrants and their children were the only people at risk. Our native kissing bugs weren't as effective as vectors as the species in Latin America, it was believed; housing was better here and could not harbor the bugs in the way that mud walls and thatched roofs were known to; the strain of parasite in local bugs caused a milder form of the disease, one that didn't involve the heart. All myths, it turns out. [In 2013], Sarah Hamer, a veterinarian and assistant professor at Texas A&M University, began asking Texans to scoop up kissing bugs in plastic baggies and mail them to her lab. People sent more than twentyfive hundred samples, often from immediately around their homes. More than half were carriers of T. cruzi. Blood meals from human and canine hosts were not uncommon. A couple of bugs, collected at a zoo, had been feeding on tigers.

That same year, 2013, Chagas was added to the list of infectious diseases that had to be reported to the Texas Department of State Health Services. This allowed for closer scrutiny of human cases. Thirty-nine were picked up through last year, half of them locally acquired. "That's one out of every sixty-five hundred blood donors screened," Melissa Garcia, a research associate at Baylor College of Medicine, in Houston, told me. "Pretty high for a rare disease." In a followup study, Garcia found that forty-one per cent of blood donors in southeastern Texas who had acquired Chagas had cardiac abnormalities consistent with the disease, suggesting that local parasite strains are no more benign than tropical ones. "A lot of theories that have sounded comforting to us in the past will not bear out," she predicted.

[In 2015], Cropper prodded Paula Stigler Granados, a public-health specialist with the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, to apply for a grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to keep all the researchers talking to one another, and to get the word out about Chagas. Stigler Granados, who used to live in Chile and is no stranger to the illness, now has five years and a little more than half a million dollars with which to canvass Texas's military



Ashlee Jones/Instagram



Mariana Alvarez/Facebook

ABOVE: Jesse Hall and Ashlee Jones show off Jones' engagement ring after Hall popped the question on Christmas Day. **BELOW:** Andy Abercrombie gets down on one knee and proposes to Mariana Alvarez.

October 13, it will have been a long time coming.

"I knew I was ready to get married because Jesse is my own personal cheerleader, and he always knows exactly what I need to cheer me up," Jones said. "A lot of guys these days aren't so quick to support their partners fully and honestly, but I'm truly blessed to have found a man that encourages me to pursue my goals and treats me as an equal, and I give him the exact same."

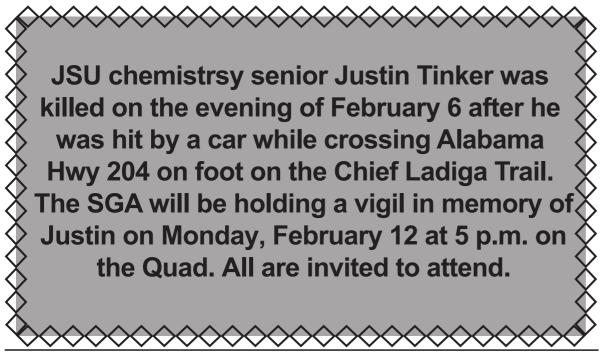
Mariana Alvarez, a freshman biology major, got engaged to her high school sweetheart at the start of the new year. She and her fiancé, Andy Abercrombie, met at Southside High School in Southside, Ala. and have been dating for three years. Abercrombie

Military scientists aren't the only ones working with Chagas in Texas, even if they may be the best funded.

hospitals, cardiologists, obstetricians, primary-care clinics, hunters, campers, and veterinarians. Healthcare providers are her main concern, for now.

"Chagas has a different face than we originally thought it did," she said. "What we're finding is, a person goes and gives blood, gets a positive result for Chagas, and the doc tells them, 'It's usually a false positive. We don't have Chagas here.'"

Jennie Erin Smith is the author of "Stolen World."



MR. AND MRS. from page 1

explained, "that model that you see influences how you perceive relationships."

The second way Mr. Smith discussed was allowing yourself to have good judgment, or signs of unhealthy relationships. "measure" when evaluating someone. He recommended to know how to measure yourself in three areas: measuring your relationship with the model you have chosen, measuring your relationship with your partner, and measuring your relationship with yourself.

He then added one more tip, "I couldn't leave for success with any relationship: measure your relationship with God."

"Good relationships are not accidental. Healthy relationships take work," Mr. Smith warned.

Rochelle Smith also took the floor, warning about

"Secrecy, dishonesty, lack of respect...make sure you look out for those signs," she advised.

The couple also wanted to emphasize that it is important not to rush into relationships, even if it seems like it is what everyone else is doing.

"Continue to develop yourself," Mr. Smith said.

"You're able, as a single person, to love yourself, this out because I figured that this is the real reason show yourself respect..." Mrs. Smith added. "Just treat yourself really, really good. So, that way, you know how you want to be treated."

proposed after a scavenger hunt around town.

"I did not see the proposal coming at all!" Alvarez said. "He said it was a surprise date, and I totally bought it."

While some may worry that they are too young to get married, all Alvarez is worried about is forgetting to invite someone to the wedding.

"We have been through a lot of big changes together," Alvarez said. "He graduated high school and went to college while I still had two years of high school left, and we made it work, and that's something that I know I can count on him for. We're going to make things work even when they aren't easy or convenient, and that was a big part of knowing that we are ready."

Alvarez and Abercrombie don't plan to get married until after Alvarez graduates, but part of what she is looking forward to is having someone to grow with through all of life's circumstances.

"Marriage is a huge commitment," Alvarez said, "and I have someone who liked me when I was a weird sophomore in high school and loves the person that I am becoming, and while I'm unsure of so many things in my life, I'm 100 per cent sure about him."

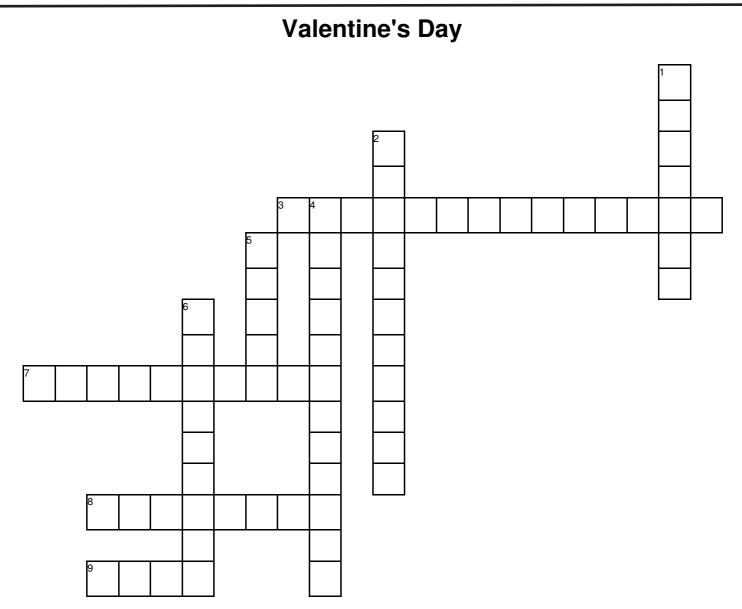
It really is the season of love, but before you run out and buy a ring for your significant other, Jones has a word of advice: communicate.

"If you can't tell your partner everything and be able to discuss things you may have issues with and be able to compromise, you're not ready for a mature relationship," Jones said. "Your future spouse should be your best friend and never a source of stress and anxiety in your life, so make sure the person you marry has always got your back and relaxes you on the worst days and that you're there for them just as much."





Campus Crossword! Valentine's Day Edition



Across

3. This guy began selling mass-produced valentines in America in the 1840s

7. This state has the top two "best" cities to celebrate the holiday

8. This Pope declared February 14th as Valentine's Day

9. Besides the United States, how many countries celebrate Valentine's Day

Down

1. The all-time highest grossing romantic movie

2. A writer hired by King Henry V to compose a valentine note to Catherine of Valois

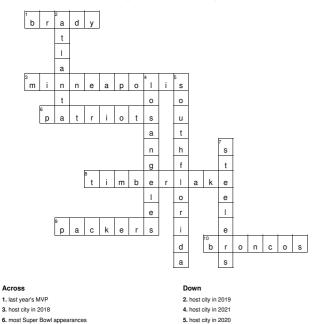
4. This is the "best" city to celebrate Valentine's Day

5. This gender purchases nearly 85 percent of all valentines

6. 94 percent of Americans want this as a gift



Editor's Hint: Google is still your friend, everyone!



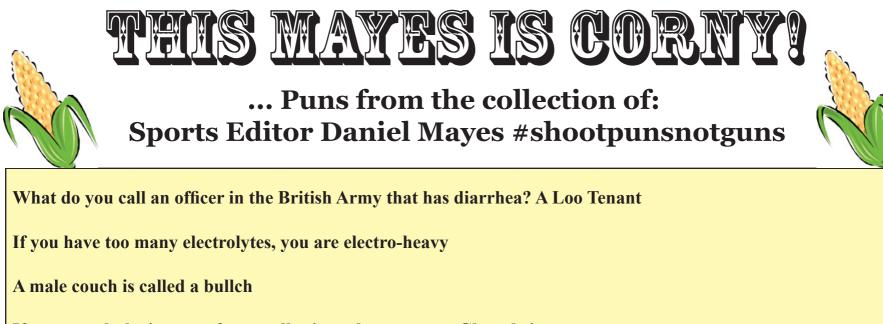
Chris' Random Fact: Alaska is the largest U.S. state. The Last Frontier is over twice as big as Texas.



7. most Super Bowl wins

8. halftime performe

9. won the first Super Bowl 10. most Super Bowl losse



If you search the internet for an adhesive substance, you Glue-gle it

If you leave your Valentine's chocolate sitting for too long, the nougat becomes old-gat



True friendship and love knows no boundaries not even those genetically coded into the animal kingdom. These adorable inter and cross-species pairings will melt any heart!

Bubbles & Bella



Bubbles the elephant was rescued from ivory poachers and brought This fox and dog duo met in the forests of Norway. Tinni, out for a to a sanctuary in the U.S. Bella's former owner was contracted to

Tinni & Sniffer



walk with his owner one day, came upon a wild fox in the woods.



All Ball & Koko

This tale involves Koko, the gorilla famous for her wide vocab-





Noah's Ark Animal Sanctuar Lions and tigers and bears oh my! This BLT (that's, uh, bear, lion

build Bubbles a swimming pool, and when he was done, he sadly left Bella behind. Luckily, B & B found each other out and have been inseparable ever since. Bella especially loves using her large friend's head as a diving board.

Despite years of genetic differences and social training, these two recognized some common bond and forged a unique and instant friendship. Tinni's owner documents their frolics and works to ban fox hunting and the fox-fur trade in Norway since meeting Sniffer.

ulary of hand signs and her desire to have a cat of her own. She asked for a Christmas kitten and was given a plush toy, which she was unhappy with. After persisting, she picked out her real cat. She chose and named All Ball and cared for him as if her were her own. She was gentle and loving, and was heartbroken when he passed. She has since adopted more cats to foster.

and tiger) bonded at Noah's Ark Animal Sanctuary in Georgia over 13 years ago after being rescued from a local drug dealer. Healing together in their first months at the sanctuary established an unbreakable bond and the three even share one enclosure together.



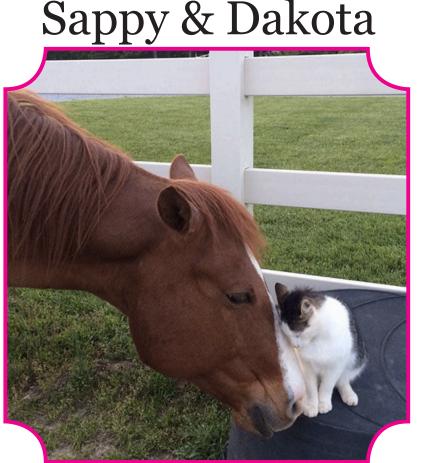
This purrfect friendship comes courtesy of The Glasgow Zoo pairing up Koneko, an Akita pup, with Sam, a lion cub, in an experiment to monitor animal friendships across species. It turned out amazingly well, as these two became best buds and bonded for life.

*This content was originally a part of a blog post made by FriendshipCollar.com/blog.

Tabitha & Lusie



At just hours old, poor Tabitha the piglet was abandoned by the side of the road. Luckily, she was found and taken in by an animal sanctuary where the owner's 5-year-old boxer, Susie, immediately felt right in love and put her paw on her. Years later, they are still the best of friends and play together daily.



The Dodo

Billy & Lilly



With names like that, these two were destined to become close! Lilly, the goat, was born a runt and the owner at Pennywell Farm Wildlife Center had to intervene and bottle-feed the baby. When Billy, the boxer, saw this tiny kid, his nurturing side took over and he began cleaning her and watching out for her. The two are now inseparable and even cuddle together at night.

Horses and cats are commonly friends. Considering the sheer amount of barn cats on hand at each farm, it's no surprise that the occasional warm-hearted horse and cuddly cat will pair up. Sappy the cat, upon coming to Dakota's barn, developed an instant attraction and would take to lying by his towering friend as Dakota would graze. Dakota, in turn, has taken to this pint-sized pal and not only pets him with his nose, but waits for him at feeding time.

OPINION & EDITORAL lici Let's taco 'bout us, baby **-8**-

Daniel Mayes Sports Editor

What is love? Baby don't hurt me. Don't hurt me. No more. (Just Kidding).

What is love?

Love is... an open dooooooooor. (Just kidding again).

But what is love?

I suppose it has different meanings for everyone. And even in every individual person, there is different meanings for the word as well. So to answer describe what love means to me, here are some things I love:

I love my family. I love my girlfriend. I love my pets. I love basketball. I love Star Wars. I love chicken wings. I love...

Boring? Boring.

So, how else can I talk about love? I know! I'll choose one random as heck thing and talk about why and how much I love it.

I LOVE PUNS!

As you may or may not be aware, there is a section of puns on page three of the Chanticleer. Yeah,

that's me. Hold your applause till the end. Those who know me well know of my love of puns, including editor-in-chief Katie Cline, which was why I was offered the chance to have my puns appear in the newspaper in the first place (ever thankful). But why do I love puns?

Well, there are several reasons. I love the intellect and cleverness that goes behind the best ones. Nothing is more satisfying for me than hearing a well-crafted, thought out pun that makes some obscure connection between words that I've never thought of before. And I'm not saying that my puns are like that. Oh no, most of the time they are quite the opposite.

See, another reason I love puns is the looks of mixed exasperation and horror and disgust and cringe that I get when I unleash an especially gnarly pun for my friends. Sure, I love to get laughs too, but nothing beats the looks on their faces when I tell them that I went to the clearance section of a store but only found opaque ants. That look, it's like fuel for me. That and the audible groaning, the "You aren't allowed to ever speak again," and the "Daniel, you make my ears bleed." That's good stuff.

I love when I think of one of those grotesquely hilarious puns and some random point throughout the day, and then I crack myself up to the point that I uncontrollably spasm with laughter for hours on end until I can find someone to release my creation upon. Sometimes people ask me why I'm laughing so much. Most of the time they regret it by the time I get finished telling them about experts on largemouth bass being called an o-fish-ionado.

So there you have it. Possibly the most profound explanation of love ever. With me raving about puns.

Sometimes I a-Mayes even myself.

(I am grinning with delight as I imagine the pained cringe-faces on everyone who reads this).

Chris Allen Brown Associate Editor

Sorry Daniel, I didn't mean to steal your pununder with my headline ... or did I?

Anyways, if you know me at all, especially my best friend's wife Leslie, you know I'm all about tacos. (You thought I was going to say sports, didn't you? It's OK, I don't blame you, but I write about that enough, so I figured I'd write about my favorite food since I'm always eating.)

There is no wrong soft taco: shredded chicken, beef, steak, etc. It all sounds and tastes amazing. In fact, I know I'm not the only person who loves tacos. I mean, there is even an entire day decidated to tacos.

Quick story time: growing up, I would go to Taco Bell and order tacos just to see how many I could eat at one sitting. As years passed, every time I'm really hungry, I still figure out how many I can eat. In fact, there have been many a Saturday nights that one of my best friends, Matt, and I just sit at his house playing Mario Kart 64 and eat tacos. It's a lovely way to pass the time without getting into trouble.

I will say, though, that when I eat at Mexican restaurants, I decide to order chimichangas rather than tacos.

But back to the topic at hand ...

there is just some-

thing magicial about tacos. Maybe it's the way they're made or the taco sauce I pour on them, but they're amazing. Thankfully, though, Taco Bell doesn't have a buy one, get one free promotion or else I would weight more than 250 pounds ... maybe that would get me a tryout on the football team.

But really, it's OK to love eating a certain food, especially if it's tacos. You may think you're a terrible person by eating food to cover up your feelings of being alone this Valentine's Day, but, if you do, just think about how I'm writing about tacos rather than a girlfriend.

Did that help?

4 for 4

Chanticleer editors show 'feelings' this Valentine's Day

Life and Liberty

Alissa Camplin Arts & Entertainment Editor

To the most wonderful little girl I've ever loved, change my life the first posed to keep you safe. time I saw you. It was a hot and muggy 4th of July and you walked up to me in the middle of my shift without a care in the world, despite your bleeding paw and the fact you were soaking wet. I was so smitten by your sweet and understanding eyes and the most gentle disposition I had ever seen in a dog. I remember asking Facebook to help find your parents, only to have people respond that you had been wandering around JSU for over a year. I was heartbroken.

down I went digging. I found I knew you would the owners that were sup-I found the people that were responsible for you roaming the streets. And I decided that you would never, EVER have to do that again. I changed your name to Liberty in honor of 4th of July and promised you would eventually like scheduled feedings and pet insurance more than the "freedom" you were finding in chaos. Sometimes I feel like we're still working on it, but it's getting better every day. I don't know exactly the moment I decided that you were coming home with me, but I know that by the end of my shift, I was calling you mine. I was telling random people in my checkout line that a pup had adopted me that day and how

excited I was to get you home and in my arms.

Not all of it was roses and daisies. I had some things to work through. I wasn't in a pet friendly apartment and I had no knowledge of the Pyrenees breed. Both of these issues ended up being resolved with Google searches as I found a place that we could both call home and did so much research on your breed for hours on hours.

Katie Cline Editor-in-Chief

Love is the cat's meow. Yes, I mean that love is great. But I also mean that, literally, love is a cat's meow. Specifically, my cats' meows. I have four cats: Tom-Tom, Albus, Nugget and Minnie. They're all former strays, and they're the biggest goofballs you've ever seen. TomTom is your typical "cat." He cares more about food than he does about youunless he's sleeping on you, in which case you better not move. Sometimes he brings dead things into the house and drops them on you. But he's also funny and sassy and doesn't let any cat, dog or human boss him around. Albus is our fat, sweet boy. He would rather sit in the sun and nap than get in a scuffle over food bowls. You can usually find him lazily chewing on someone's finger or playing with our kitten, Minnie. In "Harry Potter" terms, he's a Hufflepuff to the bone. Nugget, however, is 100 per cent Slytherin. But, since TomTom doesn't take any of his bullying, he's resigned himself to harassing Albus about 35 per cent of the time. When the mood strikes him, though, he can turn into 20 pounds of purrs and cuddles. He also has disproportionately a high-pitched meow. And then there's

Minnie, our newest addition. I found her in the Merrill Hall parking lot while doing a paper route, and the end of her tail was broken off. She's a feisty little thing to be loved by a cat, who loves her "Uncle Albus," sleeping on my dad's chest and copying everything TomTom does. (Minnie is a Gryffindor, and TomTom is probably a Ravenclaw, for the record.) Despite what people say, I think cats show a more accurate impression of love than, say, dogs do. Dogs love you no matter what. Every day, they run to the front door and lick your face and sleep in bed with you and act like you're the greatest thing to walk the planet. (I would know. We have two dogs, too.) Cats are different. A relationship with a cat requires work. They're not going to worship the ground you walk on. (Frankly, they expect the opposite.) If you go days without

Love is the Cat's Meow

visiting, they will shun you. If you accidentally shut their tail in a door, they won't forget-for a few days.

But when you come you'll know it. You'll become a "purr"sonal pillow, but you'll gain a foot warmer, a comfort blanket, a furry baby doll and a best friend. They'll meet your car in the driveway and follow you out to the mailbox. They'll curl up in your lap as you read before bed, and they'll head-butt your chin if they see you crying. So, yes, a relationship with cat requires work, but isn't that how human relationships are, too? Don't we hold grudges and don't want to be touched and get moody at times? Can't we be a little selfish and apathetic?

How could anyone not want you? You were kind and considerate. Especially now, I just had to accept the fact that I will NEVER understand how anyone could turn you

After that, you quickly became my favorite part of the day.

Thank you for being my go-to date to Lowes whenever I don't want to go alone. Thank you for cuddling my when you can sense my stress level is high. Thank you for being my most understanding and most loyal companion. Thank you for letting me dress you up and take pictures of you to post on your Instagram. Also, thank you for never ever having an accident in the house. You're the best, Lib.

My sweet Liberty has changed my entire life for the better. Every second since you picked me has been full of love and tenderness that I'm convinced only you could bring.

Happy Valentine's Day, Lib. I love you more than life itself.

Furever, Mom

Does that make us any less lovable?

So, go put on your cat sweater and hug your favorite feline today. I already have mine on.



SPORTS

Gamecocks finish 1-1 on Illinois road trip

JSU Sports Upcoming Events

2/8

Women's Basketball vs. Tennessee Tech* 11:30 a.m. Pete Mathews Coliseum

Men's Basketball vs. Tennessee Tech* 8:00 p.m. Pete Mathews Coliseum

Track and Field Dunamis Super Meet Emerson, GA

2/9

Softball River City Leadoff vs Army, at Jacksonville 12:00 p.m. , 5:00 p.m. Jacksonville, Fla.

2/10

Women's Basketball vs. Tennessee State* 4:30 p.m. Pete Mathews Coliseum

Men's Basketball vs. Tennessee State* 7:00 p.m. Pete Mathews Coliseum

Softball River City Leadoff vs UCONN, Army 9:30 a.m., 12:00 p.m. Jacksonville, Fla.

Bold = Home contest

* = OVC contest

OVC Men's Baskethal

Daniel Mayes Sports Editor

In a two game road-trip in Illinois, the Gamecocks basketball squad managed to take one game to remain competitive in the OVC standings.

Jacksonville State (17-8, 8-4 OVC) came back to take down Eastern Illinois 75-56 Feb. 1 before coming up short on another comeback attempt Saturday, Feb. 3 against Southern Illinois-Edwardsville, 75-67.

In both road contests in The Prairie State, the Gamecocks fell behind by double digits in the first half, facing deficits of 10 and 17 against EIU and SIUE respectively.

Against EIU, the deficit didn't last long.

After a 12-0 run by the Panthers made the score 18-8 halfway through the first, the Gamecocks outscored EIU 21-11 for the remainder of the half to take the lead 31-29 at the break.

Jax State took control immediately in the second half, scoring the first



Matt Reynolds/JSU

Jason Burnell averaged 14.5 points and 9.5 rebounds in the Gamecocks' two-game Illinois road trip.

11 points of the period and cruising to a 19-point win.

Christian Cunningham put up 12 points and 10 rebounds to tally his second straight double-double, and Jason Burnell led the Gamecocks with 17 points against EIU.

Saturday against SIUE, Jacksonville State came out flat again.

The Cougars scored the first six points of the game, then quickly built up a double-digit lead.

Jacksonville State trailed 33-16 at the 5:37

mark, before the offense finally came alive to get the Gamecocks back into the game. JSU outscored the Cougars 14-6 the rest of the half, cutting the deficit to eight at the break and making the score 38-30.

Contributing to the Gamecocks' struggles in the first was the quiet play of senior guard Mal-colm Drumwright.

Drumwright scored just two points in the opening period, making just one of his three shot attempts. Jamall Gregory and Cam Martin led JSU with seven in the first half, and four straight points from Martin helped to key the Gamecock turnaround.

Jax State cut the SIUE lead to as little as three in the second half, but the Cougars were able to stretch the lead back out and keep the Gamecocks at arm's length the rest of the way, taking the game 75-67.

Gregory led JSU scorers with 14, and Norbertas Giga and Jason Burnell both chipped in with 12. Burnell also added 10 rebounds to tally his first double-double in a Gamecock uniform.

Jacksonville State now returns to Pete Mathews Coliseum for a two-game home stand.

The Gamecocks take on Tennessee Tech Thursday, Feb. 8 for an 8 p.m. tipoff that is set to air on national TV on ESPNU.

Then, JSU hosts Tennessee State on Feb. 10 for their penultimate home game of the season.

The Gamecocks' final home contest will be Thursday, Feb. 22 against OVC leader Belmont.

Football takes home 'solid' recruiting class

Daniel Mayes Sports Editor

The first Wednesday of February marks national signing day, when high school football recruits are able to officially sign with universities to continue their academic and athletic careers. Although an early signing period was Decemadded for ber this season, the Gamecocks did their recruiting damage on Wednesday.

118 passes as a senior last season. McKinney, who joins Edwards out wide, hails from Carver High School in Birmingham.

Hill, a new addition to the Gamecock "WarPig" offensive line that loses decorated seniors Dylan Cline and Justin Lea, played at Robert E. Lee High School in Montgomery. To go with Campbell in the defensive backfield, JSU added safeties Ja'Cobie Lofton, Marshall Clark and Myles Brown, who was a teammate of Edwards at Thompson. Also announcing their signing Wednesday were cornerbacks George

sible" for an alleged sexual assault incident in April 2016 and left the program.

Cooper, a quarterback from Jonesboro, Georgia, spent two years at Clemson as a backup.

He joins a quarterback competition with upcoming redshirt freshman Zion Webb and incumbent Bryant Horn, who is recovering from shoulder surgery.

OVC Men's Basketball			
School	OVC	O/R	
Belmont	11-1	19-6	
Murray State	10-2	18-5	
Austin Peay	9-3	14-10	
Jacksonville State	8-4	17-8	
Tennessee Tech	8-4	16-9	
Tennessee State	7-5	12-11	
Southeast Missouri	4-8	10-15	
Eastern Illinois	4-8	8-15	
SIUE	4-8	8-15	
UT Martin	3-9	8-17	
Eastern Kentucky	2-10	8-17	
Morehead State	2-10	6-17	

OVC Women's Basketball

School	OVC	O/R
Belmont	12-0	22-3
SIUE	10-2	13-10
Morehead State	8-4	17-8
Jacksonville State	8-4	14-9
UT Martin	8-4	12-12
Austin Peay	6-6	13-10
Southeast Missouri	6-6	11-13
Murray State	4-8	8-15
Eastern Kentucky	4-8	7-14
Tennessee State	3-9	5-16
Tennessee Tech	2-10	5-18
Eastern Illinois	1-11	2-21

Standings and Polls do not reflect changes made on or after Wednesday

"We feel really, really good about this class," JSU Head Coach John Grass said Wednesday.

"I think it's a really solid class when you look at it from top to bottom. Every one of them will be given a chance to come in and compete"

The gems of Jacksonville State's freshman recruiting class may be the four three-star additions in Cagan Campbell, Ahmad Edwards, Cam McKinney, and Cameron Hill.

Campbell, a cornerback that hails from Hillcrest High School in Tuscaloosa, fielded a handful of FBS offers, including South Alabama, but chose the Gamecocks.

Edwards played wide receiver at Thompson High School in Alabaster, Alabama, where he caught a state-record Also on offense, JSU signed lineman Deandre Butler from Opelika and a pair of running backs:

Austin Kinsey, a 5'11", 200 pound back from Clarke County High School, and Uriah West, an All-State performer from Douglasville, Georgia.

The Gamecocks made most of their noise on signing day on the defensive side of the ball. Steele and Jamias Presley, who was the first Gamecock to sign his National Letter of Intent Wednesday.

The Gamecocks add the signing class to their January early enrollees, a trio of transfers in Landon Rice, Zerrick Cooper, and Tre' Threat.

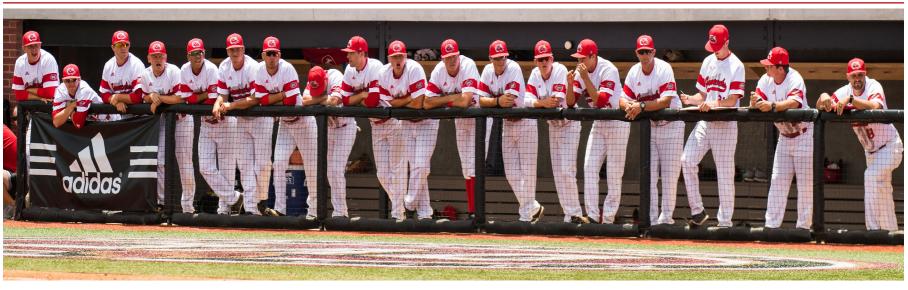
Rice arrived on JSU's campus with controversy after spending a year at Mississippi Gulf Coast

Community College. Rice originally signed to play at Auburn, but was found "respon"We've got some competition at quarterback," Coach Grass said. "[Cooper's] got a great skill

set. He's going to make the position definitely better"

Threat was a fourstar recruit and Under Armour All-American at linebacker in 2016 who played sparingly at Auburn for the last two seasons.





Matt Reynolds/JSU

JSU Baseball is gearing up for the start of the 2018 season.

Gamecocks (finally) return home in 2018

Grant Benefield Staff Sports Writer

With the first official practice already in the books, hype for Jack-sonville State baseball's 2018 campaign is in full swing.

After playing their entire home schedule at Choccolocco Park in Oxford, AL, last season, the Gamecocks will be more than eager to return to campus. And the wait for the much-anticipated new stadium project is nearly complete, with Rudy Abbott Field set to open on April 3rd when the Gamecocks host the University of Alabama.

JSU defeated the Crimson Tide not once, but twice last season by scores of 2-1 and 11-8.

Speaking of last season, the Gamecocks finished 30-26 (17-13 OVC) and continued their OVC tournament attendance streak, making it for the



JSU Sportswire

Artist rendering of the new renovations to Rudy Abbott Field, which are scheduled to be completed before the stadium's reopening on April 3.

14th consecutive year since the team's move to the Ohio Valley Conference.

The team's tournament appearance left last season on a sour note, however, as the Gamecocks were eliminated in their first two games, marking the first time JSU failed to win a game in the OVC tournament since the 2013 season.

The Gamecocks lose seven lettermen from last season, including infielder Josh Bobo, who played in 52 games last season and averaged .249 with 22 RBIs and 27 runs scored. JSU also loses two key pitchers in Joe McGuire and Justin Hoyt. McGuire earned 2017 OVC Pitcher of the Year honors, posting an 8-1 record in 12 starts and a 3.20 ERA with an opponent batting average of .209. Hoyt was stellar in the closer role last season, posting a .282 ERA with 9 saves in 25 appearances.

The Gamecocks will sport 18 returning lettermen and 15 newcomers in 2018, including senior infielder Clayton Daniel. Daniel earned his thirdconsecutive All-OVC honors and was the only Gamecock to start all 56 games last season.

Also returning is junior LHP Derrick Adams, who posted the largest workload of JSU pitchers last season with 85.2 innings pitched. Adams earned All-OVC honors, claiming a 7-3 record in 15 starts.

The Gamecocks will kick off their 2018 campaign on February 16th at Choccolocco Park with a 3-game series against Southern Illinois. The Gamecocks' first 17 home games will be hosted at Choccolocco Park, until the inaugural game against Alabama on April 3rd.



JSU takes down EIU, falls to SIUE

Hannah Grant Staff Sports Writer



JSU Sportswire

Rifle finishes third at OVC Championships

MURRAY, Ky. – The Jacksonville State rifle team finished third in the overall standings at the 2018 Ohio Valley Conference Rifle Championships after posting an air rifle mark of 2327 on Sunday.

The Gamecocks, who stood in second place on the team leaderboard after Saturday's smallbore competition slipped to third after Morehead State posted a 2341 in air rifle to finish 11 points better than JSU in the final aggregate scoring. After registering a 2297 in smallbore and Sunday's air rifle results, Jax State finished with an aggregate score of 4626. It marks the first time since JSU joined the OVC that it has not won the league title or finished second.

A trio of Gamecocks posted top-10 finishes, led by junior Trace Haynes. Haynes from Hazelhurst, Georgia, equaled his smallbore mark of 579 along with junior Mekenna Richardson in air rifle. The duo posted scores of 579. Haynes finished eighth overall with an 1158, while Richardson claimed ninth. Junior David Sink rounded out the top-10 individual standings with an 1153. Sink paced the Gamecocks in Air Rifle with a 585.

Haynes and Sink were honored by the league with post-championship selections. Haynes was named to the Smallbore All-OVC Second Team, while Sink was tabbed to the Air Rifle All-OVC Second Team.

Freshman Sam Payne joined Haynes on the Smallbore All-OVC Second Team while also earning a spot on the Smallbore All-Newcomer Team.

The Gamecocks will travel to Oxford, Mississippi on Feb. 11 to face the Rebels on Ole Miss before returning to UM the following weekend for the NCAA Sectionals. JSU Sportswire The Gamecocks took home 1-1 record and a setback to third place in the Ohio Valley Conference standings from their trip to Illinois. The women's team (14-9, 8-4 OVC) are staying afloat in the league race during their best start to a season since joining the league in 2004.

The Illinois series began on Thursday evening in Charleston, Illinois to face off Eastern Illinois. The Gamecocks snapped a road losing streak against the Panthers with their 59-50 win, the first in 11 years inside EIU's Lantz Arena.

JSU started the game with a 16-2 lead and led for the first 18 minutes of action. The Panthers stormed back into the game however, using an 11-0 run in the final three minutes of the second quarter to erase the Gamecock lead and take a three-point advantage of their own, 28-25 at the halftime break.

Senior Rayven Pearson, who finished the game as a leading scorer with 13 points, helped the Gamecocks bounce back after the half, and JSU outscored the Panthers 13-7 in the third to regain the advantage.

Jax State outpaced EIU again in the fourth and left

Matt Reynolds/JSU

Rayven Pearson's 13 points helped JSU earn its first road win at EIU in 11 years

Lantz Arena with a 59-50 win.

The victory marks win number 70 for Rick Pietri as Head Coach at JSU, making him just the third coach in school history to reach that total.

On Saturday evening, JSU took a trip to fight for the right to second place in OVC play against Southern Illinois-Edwardsville.

The Gamecocks found trouble in Edwardsville as they fell to the Cougars 41-65.

SIUE showed dominance in both offense and defense right from the tip, and the Cougars maintained a lead each in quarter. The Cougars held a huge lead over JSU to 29-9 three minutes into the second quarter and 32-17 at the half.

JSU inched their way back into the game, and a 10-0 run in the third quarter left the Gamecocks only trailing 41-38. SIUE took advantage of the home court, however, outscoring JSU 24-3 in the final minutes to run away with the game. JSU made just 15-55 shots overall and 5-24 from beyond the arc.

Freshman Taylor Hawks added another consecutive double-digit scoring night with the team high 12 points, being the only JSU player to reach doubledigits. Since entering OVC play, the Georgia native has averaged 9.6 points per game which is right under senior Tyler Phelion's 10 points per game average. Kiana Johnson contributed 6 points and 6 rebounds.

JSU returns to their home court on Feb. 8 against Tennessee Tech at 11:30 a.m. for the annual Education Day game for local city school students.