

## | NEWS

-A Message From Your Junior Windrose Editor

## | FEATURES

-Staring Down the End  
-Will You Be My Valentine?

## | OPINION

-The Data Dilemma  
-Is "Nice" Overdone? What Makes a Good Professor?

## | LOGOS

-2024's Best Valentine's Day Gift Is a Cross Made of Ashes

## | SPORTS

-Between Alcaraz and Sinner, the Future of Men's Tennis Is the Winner

## | ARTS

-Oscar Nominations: What to Make of Them?  
-Valentine's Day Sucks: A Playlist  
-Valentine's Day Rocks!

## | LIFESTYLE

-Longboarding: The Missing Piece to Your Morning Commute  
-7 Secrets to a Successful Relationship  
-Lonely Hearts of St. Mike's



Photo credit: Emily Tung

## *A Message From Your Junior Windrose Editor*

Why you should check out St. Michael's College's student yearbook

**Rosie McDonald**  
Copy Editor

We, the students of St. Michael's College, are notoriously proud of our college. So it is no surprise that our predecessors have been producing a student yearbook for over 100 years! The college yearbook has gone through many name changes through the generations, starting as simply "The Yearbook," then becoming The Thurible, Keystone, and The Sword. Currently, the St. Mike's yearbook is The Windrose, named after a medieval cartographer's tool designating the source of winds and, symbolically, a guiding star. For many, St. Mike's is a guiding star through an uncertain and ever-changing time in their lives. The Windrose thus is a very fitting title, as after students have found success, they can look back and remember St. Michael's College leading them, being their guiding star: their Windrose.

The Windrose is not just a yearbook, but a time

capsule. It includes not only photos of our beloved staff and student leaders, but also photos of *you*. The Windrose dedicates entire sections to St. Mike's clubs and teams, as well as major events, including orientation and the upcoming SMCSU formal. The years at St. Mike's are memorable ones, and The Windrose encapsulates all those memories in a unique and beautiful keepsake.

To get an idea of what The Windrose has to offer, check out old editions of the yearbook — as The Windrose or under its previous names — at [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org). By simply searching "St. Michael's College" one will find capsules of time gone by; a yearbook that has and will always be by St. Mike's students, for St. Mike's students. Sales for this year's yearbook will begin in March, so be on the lookout to own your piece of your college's history.

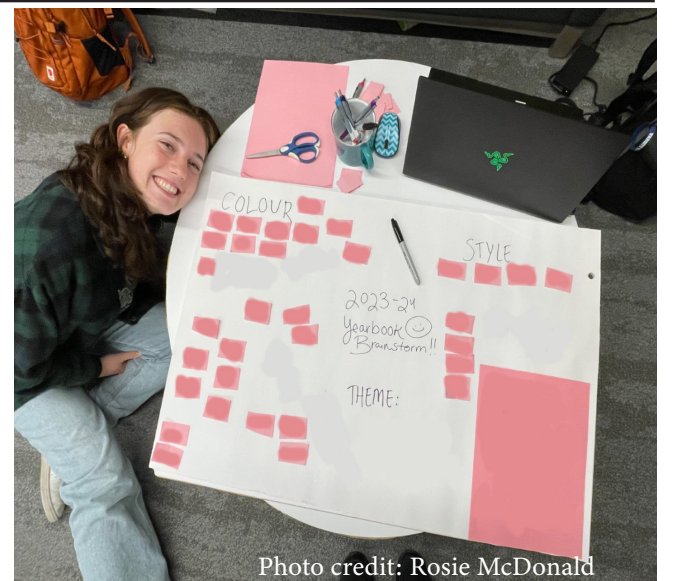



Photo credit: Rosie McDonald

**THE MIKE** 

*Staring Down the End*

A letter to my second-year self about graduating

**Stefanie Menezes**  
Lifestyle Editor

There are less than 100 days left in the semester. For some students, the end of the term means a four-month safe haven from the pressures of academic life. For others, it means the beginning of summer school and learning eight months of material in a quarter of the time. For several thousand of us, summer will bring a bittersweet victory and a lot of mixed feelings. I always thought I would be excited to graduate, but as the day approaches, I find myself feeling less ready to leave. In some ways, I *am* excited — I want to celebrate this win and all the work that I put into it. Thinking of graduation often turns into a stress fest because of the uncertainty of what you're going to do next, when it is actually a really great opportunity to reflect on how far you've come. In these final years of school, I have experienced so many joys that my second-year self, who was facing all kinds of uncertainty in the pandemic, never would have imagined. If I had the chance to talk to her, this is what I would say.

Dear me, 3 years from graduation,

The next two years are going to be crazy, but you're going to go so much further than you think. I know the future looks bleak and you have no idea what you're going to do, but trust me, you'll figure it out. Well, you're still not totally sure what you're going to do, but nobody really is. You're going to come across a lot of people who seem like they have their whole life planned out, but trust me: they are still putting the pieces together. Some of them just have a clearer idea of what they want in life but are figuring out how to make it happen, and some of them are putting on a show to hide the fact that they are just as lost and scared as everyone else.

Approaching graduation, you're pretty scared too. It seems like once you're out of university, everything is unpredictable — but dude, you have no idea how amazing unpredictability can be. Let me tell you about the unimaginable things that have happened in the last two years: you become a section editor for your college newspaper and an executive on another club, started learning 3 new languages (and spoke Italian with locals in Italy), built a dictionary as a research project, started teaching Catechism classes at church; and did something that felt impossible even before the pandemic: you made a lot of really good friends at university. That's not to say it was easy. There was a lot of hard work and stress involved — but when you think about how you never would have imagined these things would happen, doesn't the uncertainty of the future start to look a lot like the endless potential to find and love new things?

Right now, you're coasting in basically all of your classes. You're pretty much coasting through life in general. Second year is known to be the hardest, after the excitement and novelty of university wears off and you start realizing how little you really know. You've really internalized the whole "Cs get degrees" idea, but by the end of university, you're back to being a perfectionist and bothered by Bs. That might not sound like a good thing, but for you, it is. One day, you realize that you enjoy your classes and love learning again, so every day after, you make a conscious effort to be doing your best. Sometimes that looks like eight hours in the library, and sometimes that looks like just getting through the day. Everyone coasts now and then, but you'll find your way out of it time and time again. You'll be shocked to learn


this, but you take a fifth year; and believe it or not, you still want to go back to school after graduation.

You might be wondering what you're going to do after you graduate. That makes two of us. The tough part about finding your passion for learning is that it isn't limited to one topic. So, if you were hoping to hear that you've solved all of your problems and set the course for the rest of your life, then you're reading the wrong letter. What I can tell you, though, is that that is not a bad thing! If the biggest problem you have is how many things you care about, you're probably doing alright. All I know is that you're going to apply to a bunch of graduate programs, maybe get rejected and cry over a few, and then you're going to trust that there is no wrong direction when you trust yourself and God.

Embrace the unpredictability of life and go into the wilderness that awaits with your head held high. Be ready to do the hard work, lose everything that isn't meant for you, and learn that life is nothing like you think it is. One day you feel like nothing will ever be okay again, and a few days later you're getting matching haircuts with your best friend and screaming in the car about boys and celebrating your career wins together. Everything turns out so much better than okay.

Love,  
You, 3 months from graduation

And if you're reading this, about to graduate, terrified or excited or both: I am so proud of you too. Congratulations! You made it through U of Tears. I'll see you at convocation — don't forget to say hello and goodbye.

	<p><b>EDITOR-AT-LARGE</b> Asiya Chohan editoratlarge@readthemike.com</p> <p><b>DESIGN MANAGER</b> Zhiyi Xu</p> <p><b>NEWS EDITOR</b> Ruichen Yan news@readthemike.com</p> <p><b>OPINION EDITOR</b> Josephine Murphy opinion@readthemike.com</p> <p><b>ASSOCIATE OPINION EDITORS</b> Emily Hospedales Catherine Amoguis</p> <p><b>FEATURES EDITOR</b> Jackson W. Ranger features@readthemike.com</p> <p><b>ARTS EDITOR</b> Angelina Fernandez arts@readthemike.com</p> <p><b>ASSOCIATE ARTS EDITOR</b> Caroline Switkowski</p>	<p><b>SPORTS EDITOR</b> Lucas Carpignano sports@readthemike.com</p> <p><b>ASSOCIATE SPORTS EDITOR</b> Grace Bogdani</p> <p><b>LIFESTYLE EDITOR</b> Stefanie Menezes lifestyle@readthemike.com</p> <p><b>ASSOCIATE LIFESTYLE EDITOR</b> Karen Maktabi</p> <p><b>LOGOS EDITOR</b> Para Babuهران logos@readthemike.com</p> <p><b>PHOTO EDITORS</b> Emily Tung Kynzee Sethi</p> <p><b>ILLUSTRATION EDITORS</b> Mattea Shuen Nisa Notta</p> <p><b>SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGERS</b> Amy Simonds Lucia Harley Salina Khan</p>	<p><b>COPY EDITORS</b> Camryn Lim Diana Radenko Elise Cressatti Justine Lam Rosie McDonald Sara Moretto Sophie Rohrer</p> <p><b>SENIOR STAFF WRITERS</b> Ethan Chan Lauren Sarney</p> <p><b>STAFF WRITERS</b> Zoe Zusman Candy Hua</p> <p><b>CONTRIBUTORS</b> Aditya Chugh Vikram Nijhawan</p> <p><b>VACANT ROLES</b> Associate News Editor (2) Associate Features Editor Associate Logos Editor</p>
<p><b>EDITOR-IN-CHIEF</b> Victor Buklis editorinchief@readthemike.com</p> <p><b>MANAGING EDITOR</b> Darian Trabold managingeditor@readthemike.com</p> <p><b>BUSINESS MANAGER</b> Nicolas Martinez-Gonzalez business@readthemike.com</p> <p><b>SENIOR COPY EDITOR</b> Audrey Lepez srcopyeditor@readthemike.com</p>			



## Will You Be My Valentine?

A collection of perspectives on love

Catherine Amoguis  
Associate Opinion Editor

In a world of eight billion individuals, it can be challenging to find meaningful relationships — romantic or platonic. Our hectic job and academic schedules, alongside the prevalence of individuals revealing relationship horror-stories via social media, have led to a culture that is increasingly hyper-independent.

Contra, Valentine's Day is one occasion to show off warmth and devotion. Some may view this day as a time to indulge in consumerist values with a hint of cynicism, while others see it as a way to spend quality time with loved ones.

I belong to the category of people who cherish rom-coms, hearts, and muted red colours, truly basking in the romanticization of love and committed partnerships. I had the privilege of speaking with three U of T students who, in the context of intimacy, friendship, and personal development, have their own distinctive viewpoints on the occasion of Valentine's Day. They reveal that love takes a rich tapestry of forms and is not just a concept limited to one ideal.

### *On the Relevance of Family and Platonic Love*

Nicholas Bussetti is a fourth-year human biology major and is passionate about translating his knowledge of medical principles into his everyday life. On Valentine's Day, he emphasizes the importance of extending love outside of romantic relationships. "Valentine's Day should not be defined by [romantic] relationships," he confidently shares. "I think it is something for everyone to celebrate because love is in everything we interact with."

Although Nicholas does have someone in mind, he has undefined plans at the moment but knows he is going to celebrate with his single friends as well. "Besides that, I'm buying flowers for my mother in dif-

ferent hues of red, pink, and white, which will be on theme for the day!"

He does acknowledge that some people dread the pressure that comes on this holiday — if you even want to call it that. "I view it as a 'micro-holiday,' as it barely has a [solidified] identity compared to Christmas or Halloween," he explains. "And for some people it's more of a burden rather than an enjoyable day."

### *On Balancing the Romantic Aesthetic and Material Affection*

Meanwhile, Sophie Choy is a third-year Ethics, Society, and Law and philosophy major. She will be celebrating this day with her boyfriend. "I am in a relationship, and plan to be for quite some time," she says.

She is aware that the genuine purpose of the day often gets trumped by the impact of materialism and consumerism. Nevertheless, Sophie continues embracing the occasion since she finds it enjoyable and a wonderful opportunity to spend time with her significant other.

"I wish I could claim ambivalence towards the issue of Valentine's Day, but sadly this is not the case and never has been," she states. "I don't know if I love Valentine's Day. [Although], I am a romantic; that is, I am [an] aesthete with a proclivity of delusion and indulgence."

On this particular day, Sophie shows her boyfriend unabashed material affection. She also dresses herself up in a mix of red and pink for a classic Valentine's Day look. "To capitulate to a nearly debasing level of indulgence, feels sweet on that day," she exclaims with a smile.

"It just so happens that the shapes, colours, and tex-

tures of 1950s and 60s Valentines align with my particular aesthetic sensibilities — an added delight," Sophie adds.

There truly are no constraints to the amount of love one can have or the ability to show it fully.

### *On Navigating Queer Relationships*

Athea Consunji is a first-year student in a non-degree program. She will be spending Valentine's Day with her girlfriend. "For me, I like the concept of Valentine's Day. Even though you may or may not have a significant other to spend it with, it's still fun to celebrate," she states.

Valentine's Day is primarily focused on heterosexual couples, especially through its merchandise. This leaves queer relationships feeling less normalized. "I feel a slight stigma around 2SLGBTQ+ couples, [especially] when me and my girlfriend have a small public display of affection, like holding hands," she clarifies. "It's all the same for queer or straight couples on how we celebrate. I'm taking her out for dinner, buying her tiny gifts, and going to a photobooth," she happily adds. "Going back to the topic of Valentine's Day, it shouldn't just be one day of the year to show love like that." A good reminder to celebrate however makes you feel secure.

These stories possess a kind of love that surpasses conventional notions of romance. Whether with your friends or your significant other, every form of love deserves its own type of celebration this day. All three individuals emphasize the value of having self-love while offering yourself small treats every day, not just on February 14th. Always remember that the relationship with yourself is the most essential one.

## OPINION

### The Data Dilemma

Hello Canada! What's up with the outrageous cellphone bills?

Ethan Chan  
Senior Staff Writer

Within the Canadian telecommunications landscape, a persistent concern echoes throughout the nation: the soaring costs of mobile wireless plans alongside limited consumer options. The high cost of connectivity burdens Canadian consumers, prompting a closer examination of the factors contributing to this data dilemma.

There's no question that you are paying a lot for your cellphone bill. Canada's cost-per-gigabyte is among the highest in the world and significantly higher than our American counterparts. On top of already high prices, Rogers Communications announced in late 2023 that it would continue raising cell phone plan prices, attributing the price increase to improvements in service. However, such maneuvers only reinforce the prevailing sentiment among Canadians: Rogers is making a cash grab and asking for more in a time where there is already not much left.

Many individuals believe that we can relieve much of the phone bill financial stress by increasing competition. The reasoning is that more supply will result in a price decrease. However, a Marketplace investigation found that the big three players in Canadian telecommunications — Bell, Rogers, and Telus — extend their reach to their competitors, leading to a lack of diverse

pricing and a continuation of the current system. For example, in 2023, Rogers acquired Shaw Communications and Videotron acquired Freedom Mobile.

Rather than increasing supply to meet demand, consumers in Canada should advocate against telecom companies to establish lower-priced options. Similarly, companies should raise awareness about the importance of retaining one's plan when upgrading phones. This approach enables consumers to maintain the same rate while upgrading their device. For instance, I recently upgraded my phone from an iPhone XR to an iPhone 15 Pro Max after five years. Prior to the upgrade, I was with Telus and paid \$50 per month in 2019. However, because I purchased my phone from Apple, I was able to keep my five-year-old plan. While it may initially seem financially burdensome to pay thousands of dollars for a phone outright, it ultimately results in savings (especially for those intending to keep their phone beyond the two-year plan). Presently, with a \$120 monthly rate, acquiring a new plan with Telus would entail paying nearly \$400 more than my current arrangement. If information like this is disseminated widely, Canadians can make more informed decisions about how to save money.

Overall, consumers should not be paying so much for cell phone service. The call for a more affordable and well-informed cell phone market should be top priority for the big three telecom companies. As Canada navigates the complexities of its telecommunications sector, the onus falls on the consumer to speak out against the data dilemma afflicting the country.



Photo credit: Stephan Vladimirov



## Is “Nice” Overdone? What Makes a Good Professor?

Having a great professor doesn't hurt, but don't forget that a lot of the onus falls on the student.

**Aditya Chugh** *Contributor*

If you wanted to brew a potion that could make anyone a good professor, you probably wouldn't need a lot of ingredients. Add a potent tonic that transforms people into decent orators, some special seeds that make them well-organized and efficient at course coordination, and just a little magic dust that makes them more approachable to students.

Chances are that at least one of your classes at U of T (or any university, for that matter) has helped you realize that such a potion doesn't exist — or you wouldn't be dragging yourself to that “death by PowerPoint” lecture every week. The professor in front of you may be an expert on the subject matter, of course, but that expertise doesn't necessarily translate well to your learning.

Is such a situation, then, the last straw — an average professor equals a lackluster educational experience?

I don't think so. What trips us up the most is the expectation that a majority of our learning takes place in the lecture, and by that principle, the instructor is the primary medium for understanding the course content. In some sense, our educational experiences

aren't entirely dependent on the pedagogical talent of the professor. This talent is supplementary to (and can greatly augment) the learning we do on our own time, and the professor's expertise of the subject is a resource that needs to be actively tapped into. Therefore, you can still gain a lot from a course even when the lectures aren't “life-changing” or “transformative.” And realistically, they won't be for most of your courses.

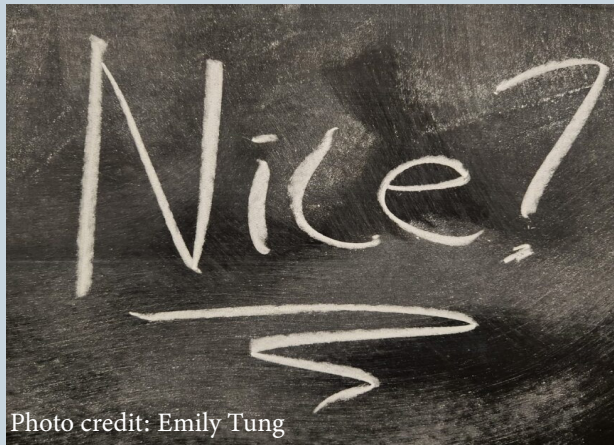


Photo credit: Emily Tung

In this way, you can also dictate what you get out of the course. Finding out what about it will help you with

your broader goals and specifically interests you — a hook, so to speak — will keep you coming back to the content and encourage you to ask questions about it. In the absence of an immediate connection with the professor, this diligent attitude toward the course can foster a productive academic relationship with your professor. Instead of just being a delivery system for new information, he or she is now a resource that can effectively guide your learning process. Think of it this way: for any class, you usually ponder over a plethora of different ideas for hours, as you try to make sense of them in an arguably short period of 4 months. The professor, on the other hand, has probably been doing this for years on end. With a personal stake in the course, you can leverage his or her experience to tailor your educational journey.

I should also say: I don't think students are being spoon-fed or babied. Courses at U of T are quite challenging, and for most of us, they occupy a lion's share of our time in any week. So a bad professor can make for a pretty miserable experience. But for the vast majority of average experiences, taking the first step towards making a connection with the professor might just make it a great one.

## LOGOS

### 2024's Best Valentine's Day Gift Is a Cross Made of Ashes

Why this February 14th will be the most romantic one in almost 60 years

**Stefanie Menezes** *Lifestyle Editor*

This Valentine's Day, Catholics are rejecting typical greetings in favour of another, more solemn address: “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

For the first time since 1945, Ash Wednesday coincides with the feast of St. Valentine, which religious and secular communities alike refer to as “Valentine's Day,” a day to celebrate love and, more specifically, romance. This occasion is often marked by lavish dates and sentimental gifts, with the stereotypical portrayal of chocolate boxes and roses bouquets.

Ash Wednesday, however, marks the beginning of a 40-day penitential period for the body of the Catholic Church. Ironically, chocolate is among the most common fasts during the Lenten season, and churches are forbidden from decorating their altars with flowers during this time. Many coupled-up Catholics may view this clash as a damper on what is seen as the most romantic day of the year. After all, Ash Wednesday not only marks the start of Lent, but is also itself a day of penance. Catholics are allowed one full meal during the day and should also abstain from meat. Some faithful may worry about missing out on the fun of dinner plans with these limitations, and some may decide to skip the fasts altogether.

Before jumping straight to disappointment or disobedience, affected Catholics might do well to consider which two virtues not only underlie their Ash Wednesday penance, but also the greater foundation of the Church. One might guess that the first is love, but the second is romance — and not just any ordinary affection. Both traditions, as well as the foundation of the Church, carry the spirit of an unmeasurably raw and reckless romance, one that renders extravagant modern gestures restrained.

The meaning of romance differs from person to person but is generally recognized as gestures that convey one's passion and devotion to another. The idea that Christ's death was the ultimate act of love is very

important within the Church. The crucifix is hence the visual reminder of agape, the sacrificial nature of love, and the highest virtue within Christianity. The romantic love honoured on Valentine's Day is, for modern Christians, intended to mirror Christ's love for the Church to the extent that humans can imitate the divine.

Romance in modern society is intended to convey or evoke those feelings of connection and excitement. Romance as it lives in Christianity is the giving of the self; to receive this romance is to receive life at the cost of life.

This is the place of penance in romance. Ash Wednesday calls the faithful to commit to a 40-day fast, to sacrifice pieces of one's earthly life in pursuit of a full, eternal life. Ash Wednesday is the Church's human effort to imitate Christ's divine triumph over sin in the original Lent. Upon reflection, Christians should remember that Jesus was both fully God and fully human, meaning that His human body likely suffered the full pain that accompanied 40 days of starvation: this is the raw, exposed nature of divine romance.



Photo credit: ahna ziegler

When Satan later tempted Him to summon food for Himself, He felt the full extent of that temptation and still refused. His devotion to the call of the Holy Spirit was, at its core, a call to approach death in preparation to accept it. Satan's invitation for Jesus to relieve His pain was a foreshadowing of the invitation to come,

one that would appeal to His human urge to survive, most clearly captured in Jesus' prayer in Matthew 26:39: “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” Jesus willingly subjected himself to the uniquely human agony that is the preparation for one's death, as well as the uniquely divine agony of refusing temptation yet being punished in place of every human that succumbed. Following faith into the wilderness, giving of life for the sake of *life* with no consideration for the self or what is fair: this is the reckless, uninhibited nature of divine romance.

One must also remember that Jesus was not alone during his life. Matthew 17:23 describes the disciples' grief in learning Jesus' fate, and still followed Him toward it. In Luke 2:23, Mary was told that as Jesus' mother, “a sword would pierce her soul,” yet in Luke 2:51, after experiencing the fear of losing Jesus at the temple, she “treasured all these things in her heart.” It is often quoted that grief is love with nowhere to go; similarly, Catholics should not limit the sacrifices of love to those who were martyred for it. Throughout the history of the Church, the willingness to suffer has always been an expression of love.

St. Valentine himself was a priest beaten and beheaded for secretly administering the sacrament of Holy Matrimony following the emperor's ban on marriage to encourage young men to enlist. If marriage is the act that translates human love into its capacity as an imitation of divine love, then St. Valentine's death was his gift of life for the sake of helping others follow Christ's example. You would be hard-pressed to find a more priceless gift at the jewellery store or chocolate shop.

In this way, penance is the closest that humans can come to the romance of the cross. If you are Catholic and want to experience romance this Valentine's Day, observe your fast and attend Ash Wednesday Mass. When you approach the flowerless altar, receive your ashes and gratefully remember all that they cost.



# Between Alcaraz and Sinner, the Future of Men's Tennis Is the Winner

It's the new young rivalry the sport needed.

Vikram Nijhawan  
Contributor

Perhaps it was hidden auspiciousness when Andre Agassi, the former tennis great who won four of his eight major titles at the Australian Open, graced Melbourne this year as a spectator, giving Carlos Alcaraz some off-court tennis tips at the start of the tournament.

But it wasn't the 20-year-old Spanish wunderkind — the biggest young talent in the sport, better than Novak Djokovic at Wimbledon last year — who prevailed in the domain by denying him an 11th record-extending title. Instead, it was Jannik Sinner, the 22-year-old Italian who shares Agassi's former coach.

By defeating the defending champion in the semi-final en route to his title run, Sinner ended Djokovic's 2,195-day winning streak in Melbourne, a tournament the Serb hadn't lost since 2018 (barring his inability to compete in 2022 due to his unvaccinated status). In doing so, through bizarre coincidence, he matched an identical feat that Alcaraz accomplished when defeating Djokovic in the historic 2023 Wimbledon final.

The matching stat just illustrates the distance between these two and the rest of their competition. Sinner and Alcaraz remain the only players born in the 2000s to defeat Novak Djokovic at a major event in recent years, with Sinner having just won his debut Grand Slam title in Australia in a dramatic comeback.

The rivalries between all-time great players have long dominated professional tennis: Bjorn Borg and John McEnroe, Pete Sampras and Andre Agassi, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. These clashes between duelling personalities, playing styles, and cultural impacts have stirred the spirits of fans across eras. Their bouts have become engraved in the edifice of tennis history. Cliches abound which distinguish Federer's artistry from Nadal's combative prowess, for instance. It's the differences between rivals that add to the intrigue, and

when it comes to Alcaraz and Sinner, there's no exception.

Alcaraz is fire; Sinner is ice. The Spaniard's explosive style serves as the perfect foil to the Italian's clinical, smooth power. It's perhaps the most effective drop-shot on tour against the player who's proven his ability to return just about any ball on his side of the net. The gaping absence of the beloved Roger Federer still looms over the sport, but in their own ways, these young men carry on some of the Swiss' legacy through their own games. Alcaraz, already well-known for his emulation of the Swiss legend, through his entertaining flair and aggressive point-finishing skills, and Sinner, through his clinical precision and smooth power.



Photo credit: Eurosport

The "Big Three" of men's tennis — Federer, Rafael Nadal, and Novak Djokovic — have dominated the sport for the past two decades. With Federer's retirement in 2022, and Nadal inching toward the same fate, Djokovic has spent the past few years unchallenged by the younger generation on the tour. But that status quo could only last for so long.

Alcaraz initially burst onto the pro tour in 2022, when at nineteen years old, he beat Nadal and Djokovic back-to-back to win the Madrid Open. By the year's end, he sealed his first major title at the U.S. Open,

in the process becoming the youngest World No. 1 in men's tennis history.

Sinner, two years the Spaniard's senior, has evolved far more gradually yet consistently. After spending years as a perennial Grand Slam quarter and semi-finalist, he ended 2023 as a runner-up at the ATP's tour-end championship, notching his first win against Djokovic along the way — a feat he replicated just weeks later when he once again defeated the Serb to lead Italy to its first Davis Cup title in almost fifty years.

Alcaraz and Sinner have already delivered some instant classics in their head-to-head, like their marathon, five-set bout at the 2022 U.S. Open quarterfinal, with momentum shifting both ways in a nail-biter contest before Alcaraz ultimately prevailed. They've both delivered plenty of highlight reel-worthy points in their matches - whether that be Alcaraz's ridiculous behind-the-back retrieval and passing-shot combination at that U.S. Open clash, or Sinner's brilliant passing shot to end a marathon 25-shot rally at last year's Miami Open semi-final.

Both of these feats, executed by each player, conveyed the same message: "I'm not going anywhere." Throughout last year, Alcaraz seemed like the unstoppable future of the sport. By the year's end, following a post-Wimbledon slump, he conceded that his Italian peer could very well become the future world number one.

Thucydides' Trap dictates that a rising power will always challenge a presiding one. Alcaraz's Spartan doggedness has now met its match in Sinner's Athenian dynamism. As even the seemingly invincible Novak Djokovic edges (ungently) toward that awaiting good night, the fading light on the sport's mainstage may provide just enough ambiance for its two prospective new co-rulers.

## ARTS

# Oscar Nominations: What to Make of Them?

From *Barbie* to *May December* to *Maestro*, what will be the biggest surprise?

Zoe Zusman  
Staff Writer

I've said this before, but I am not the biggest fan of the Oscars. In my opinion, they usually don't account for many incredible films that are loved by the public, nor do they cater to films made within smaller Hollywood communities. Still, the Oscars have surprised me once or twice, and last year was an especially great year for historic wins. But how will this year compare?

If you don't know already, there has been a fair bit of discourse surrounding Oscar snubs and nominations this year. So, I thought, why not offer my two cents and unpack what everyone (myself included) is upset about?

The biggest public upset right now is the lack of nominations, respectively, for Greta Gerwig and Margot Robbie for best director and best actress for *Barbie*. With *Barbie* acquiring 8 Oscar nominations, many find it odd that the director and main actress are the ones not to receive nominations, yet Ryan Gosling received a nomination for best supporting actor in the film.

Although I understand the public upset surrounding this, I personally never viewed *Barbie* as an Oscar-worthy film when it comes to acting. Even though the film had strong points in terms of its set design, costume, and makeup — receiving nominations for costume design and production — I personally found that the acting in the film was not as strong as other films this year. As for Gerwig, she received nominations for best screenplay and best picture. Overall, my perception of *Barbie* is that it is a blockbuster film that people are making a lot deeper than it is. It's nothing revolutionary, even though it was done very well.

I do believe, however, that the lack of *May December* nominations is wild. All the main performances by Natalie Portman, Julianne Moore, and Charles Melton were amazing and super important for the film. Yet not even one of them was nominated? Robbery. Although it got a nomination for best screenplay, I think it deserved a few more for direction and acting.

Finally, in my opinion, one film that was nominat-

ed way too much is *Maestro*. And this is my problem when it comes to the Oscars. *Maestro* is the most Oscar-baiting movie I think I have ever seen, and I guess it worked. It received 7 nominations, but I haven't heard that many good things about it. Despite that it seemed pretentious and centered on a topic that not many are interested in, it seems to have achieved its goal.



Photo credit: mirko fabian

It will definitely be an interesting year for the Oscars. Now to see who comes out on top!

## Valentine's Day Sucks: A Playlist

For my beloved single readers of *The Mike*!

Rosie McDonald

Copy Editor

Happy Valentine's Day to those who celebrate, and happy Independence Day (not the fourth of July) to those who don't. For many, February 14th will be spent with family, with friends, or as a party of one as opposed to with a significant other. I've decided to create a soundtrack for the life of a single person on Valentine's Day. To preface, this is not a depressing score to a melancholic movie about loneliness or unrequited love. This is an upbeat, enjoy-your-independence, angry-in-a-good-way, bitter-but-happy playlist that will have you dancing around the city and redefining your relationship with cupid.

We set the tone with Limp Bizkit's "Break Stuff" because February 14th is truly one of those days. Consider setting this one as your alarm. Get it out of your system first thing in the morning.

Next, we switch it up with "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" by Cyndi Lauper, one of my personal favourites from the mix. This one isn't just for the girls, though. We all just want to have some fun, and it's impossible to resist dancing along to this track.

Along the same lines as the last song, "My Life" by Billy Joel embraces being able to do whatever you want, whenever you want, and letting go of the negative opinions others have of how you live your life.

Moving on to "You're So Vain" by Carly Simon — this is another song you can't help but dance to. The lyrics speak to those with self-centered exes (if that's you, you might enjoy this one a little bit more), but the tune is for everyone.

Even though, at first glance, the lyrics of "Somebody to Love" by Queen might seem a bit sad for the theme of this playlist, the song itself is one of the best songs to sing/scream alone in your room while pretending to be part of the band. Give it a shot.

Some may say "Shake It Out" by Florence + The Machine is corny. Those people aren't single. This song will drag you right out of any funk — even a Valentine's Day funk.

"Roses" by OutKast is one of the catchiest and funniest breakup songs of all time. I couldn't help but add it to the mix.

Like the aforementioned Queen song, Mitski's "Nobody" is a song with painfully relatable lyrics but an undeniable funky groove that should help you embrace having nobody (nobody, nobody) to spend the day with.

Track number nine: "I Drink Alone" by George Thorogood & The Destroyers. Need I say more about this one?

Finally, "F\*\*k You" by CeeLo Green goes out to the singles with exes they're thinking of fondly on Valentine's Day. My suggestion for this one is to go find a karaoke place that will let you belt it out.

Embrace the day, single readers of *The Mike*! Put my playlist to use and enjoy your independence and freedom. No tacky dinner dates or ugly heart-shaped jewelry for you: only dance parties. Scan the Spotify code to find the playlist! I'll be adding songs for the rest of February.

Track List:

1. "Break Stuff" — Limp Bizkit
2. "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" — Cyndi Lauper
3. "My Life" — Billy Joel
4. "You're So Vain" — Carly Simon
5. "Somebody to Love" — Queen
6. "Shake It Out" — Florence + The Machine
7. "Roses" — OutKast
8. "Nobody" — Mitski
9. "I Drink Alone" — George Thorogood & The Destroyers
10. "F\*\*k You" — CeeLo Green

## Valentine's Day Rocks!

A playlist to celebrate love of all kinds

Lauren Sarney

Senior Staff Writer

I love Valentine's Day. Aside from the cheery arrays of reds and the gooey chocolates stuffed into heart-shaped boxes, it's a beautiful day to reflect on what brings you joy despite the biting frost of February. We have been made to believe that this is only a holiday for couples, but why? Love is all around, after all. So as you enjoy this day — with a Valentine or by yourself — here are some songs to get you in the festive spirit, all dedicated to things I'm grateful to get to love this Valentine's Day.

"Drive ME crazy!" by Lil Yachty

Deep in the heart of winter, the sun tends not to rise until I've clocked into my barista job. So on my trek to work, I get to experience the dark quiet of the city — the sky a muted purple that's as calming as it is anticipatory. I dedicate this to our beautiful, imperfect city, in the moments before it roars to life.

"Kitchen Song - voice memo" by Tessa Violet

It's a slower one, but this is my baking song. I bake for those I love: I make treats like blueberry scones and lemon loaf. *My pièce de résistance* was a key lime pie, and though I didn't eat it because I don't like pie, making it filled me with warmth all the same.

"For Once In My Life" by Stevie Wonder

Have you done some stupid dancing around your room in the last little while? Didn't think so. Honour my favourite hobby and put this track on, and then go crazy (feather boa and floppy hat optional, but highly recommended).

"Day Without You" by Keep for Cheap

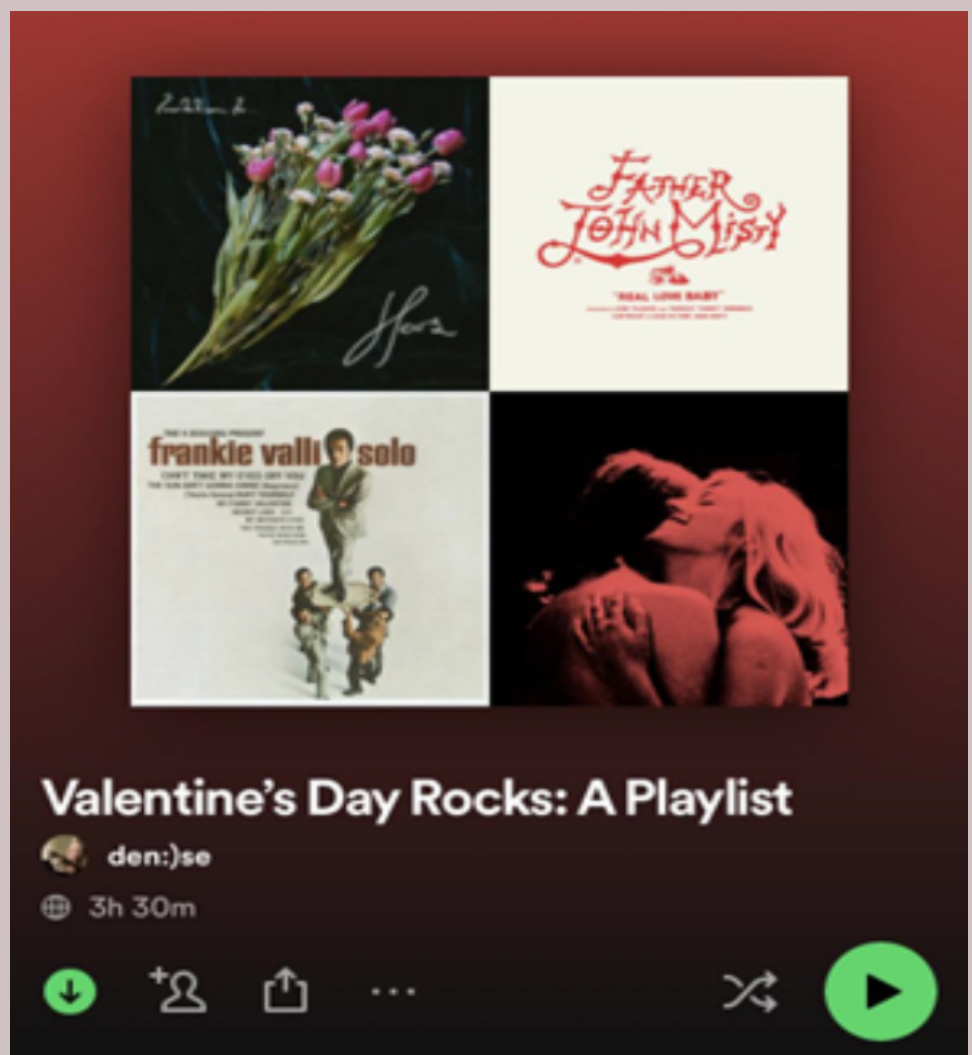
One of the defining aspects of my university experience thus far has been the fantastic friends I've made. I dedicate this love song to the marvelous women I was lucky enough to meet when I lived in Loretto College. I love their strong minds and hearts endlessly. And to the men I've met from my residence placement this year, who have taught me to enjoy good company and stupid jokes. I don't want to think about a day without any of them.

"Wouldn't It Be Nice" by Johnny Rhythm and The Audios

The fantastic keys on this track are the work of my grandfather! This 1961 bop was a big hit in Toronto clubs at the time, and it was at one of these clubs where my pop, Boyd, met his future wife (and my beautiful grandmother), Carol, when she was out dancing. They'll have been married for 60 years this year, and are one of the couples in my life that show me that true love really does exist. Aside from love and kinship, they give me hope.

"F.N.T." by Semisonic

Who doesn't love a romcom? Whenever I get the chance, I like to settle in for a rewatch of *Never Been Kissed* or *13 Going On 30* or some variant. If you know which one this song is from, I will personally give you a valentine. XO.



The playlist cover, featuring "Harvey" by Her's, "Real Love Baby" by Father John Misty, "Can't Take My Eyes off You" by Franki Valli, and "Lovers Rock" by TV Girl.



# Longboarding: The Missing Piece to Your Morning Commute

An interview with the creator of Toronto skate brand Longboard Living

Stefanie Menezes Lifestyle Editor

The end of winter at U of T is marked by many things: the occasional glimpse of sun after a week of rain, a sudden increase in lecture attendance rates, and the sounds of student life returning to the city.

There is one specific brand of sounds heard on campus, however, that denotes the return of spring like no other: the familiar crunch of gravel, the whirring of wheels, and often, the roar of encouragement from a group of skaters in Queen's Park as one of them lands a trick. According to local skate shop owner Ryan Rubin, skateboarding rebels against the notion of the "traditional sport" in many ways, but the most important difference is that competition is secondary to the community. A diverse range of skater communities exists all around Toronto, welcoming riders with different interests and reasons for riding, but Rubin believes that one side of the board is particularly relevant to students in the city: longboarding for the urban commuter.

Both skateboarding and longboarding have evolved from their traditional capacities into a sustainable and convenient mode of travel to school and work while allowing students to enjoy the "oasis of paved roads" within the city, he explains, sharing that his favourite aspect of skating in Toronto is that it combines this access to transportation with real fitness benefits, like improving your balance and strengthening your muscles. On top of that, skating to class is an eco-friendly alternative to driving, not to mention a way to avoid the stress of Toronto's infamous public transit delays. There are also mental benefits to making the switch, such as a boost to your mood and energy level. These factors are among many that led Rubin to create his commuter-focused skate brand, Longboard Living, in 2008.

Karna Goswami, Longboard Living's Community Manager and member of U of T's own Skateboarding Club shares that he first started skateboarding to get to

class on time but discovered that it made the city more accessible to him in other ways. For Goswami, like many skaters who value the community and self-expression found within skate culture, skateboarding in Toronto is a unique way of recontextualizing spaces like office parks and city streets. He says that while he could be miserable on the way to a 9 am class on a Friday, skating has added ease and enjoyment to his early-morning commutes.

Both Rubin and Goswami highlight community as one of the best parts of being a skater. Longboard Living is in the heart of one of Toronto's most vibrant and creative districts, Kensington Market. It has been a pillar of the city's skater communities for over a decade. Rubin, who opened the shop in 2010, has witnessed the growth of skate culture over the years and emphasizes the importance of different subgroups connecting to support new skaters.

Skateboarding, like any new activity, can be daunting for those who do not know where to start. Longboard Living aims to make the process easier for new skaters through their "Longboard Learning" beginner lessons and their weekly "Side Street Surfing" group-ride sessions that help new learners connect with other skaters. For those still unsure when entering the shop, the team at Longboard Living is available for a no-pressure chat about how to get started, from finding the right board and equipment to learning basic techniques.

When it comes to advice about how to begin skating, Rubin suggests learning the muscle groups and the basic motion used to push a board forward when riding, called a "kick-squat." For Goswami, becoming a skater starts with being around the board and keeping it accessible for short trips to the convenience store or around the block – and the first step to that is investing in quality gear that suits both your needs and style.

For beginner or commute-focused skaters, long-

boarding is a favourable choice for its build, which has softer wheels and a wider body and trucks than a skateboard. This makes the average longboard more accessible and safer to learn. However, Longboard Living's custom "drop deck" style takes the experience one step further, offering a board lower to the ground, which increases stability and helps riders conserve energy when pushing it forward. This board shape was at the core of Rubin's initial vision when he collaborated with local builders and artists to develop the first round of custom longboards fifteen years ago.

Despite the shop's expansion of its products and community services over the years, the philosophy of "Longboard Living" remains the same. Rubin sums it up by saying, "If you can leave your house with your board, you're going to go on an epic ride, have lots of fun, and you're going to feel good." Those features, along with added mobility around the city and the opportunity to meet new people, make longboarding an inviting travel method for every eco-conscious and open-minded commuter this spring.



Photo credit: Jona Enriquez

## 7 Secrets to a Successful Relationship

Unveiling the lessons behind a 30-year love story

Josephine Murphy Opinion Editor

In a world where marriage rates are on the decline and divorce rates hover around 50%, it's becoming increasingly rare to find a love that withstands the test of time. For Valentine's Day, I decided to sit down and interview two individuals who truly understand the complexities of love, dating, and relationships: my parents, who are celebrating their 30th wedding anniversary this year.

Rod and Lydia both grew up in East York, just streets away from each other. Although they had different friend groups, they had known each other since childhood, attending the same middle school and high school. Their paths converged unexpectedly one Thursday night in a local bar called O'Toole's during their first year of university. Prompted by what I like to call fate, my dad asked my mom out, to which she replied, "I'll think about it."

Six years later, in 1994, they exchanged vows and were wed. Now, 30 years later, they remain happily married with six children.

I sat down individually with both of them and delved into a series of questions about their love story, dating principles, and the secrets to a lasting relationship. I intentionally spoke to them separately to explore whether their answers would align or differ, and in what ways. To my surprise, their responses were remarkably similar. From our conversations, I've distilled seven dating

principles.

### 1. You need shared values and chemistry

According to my mom, when it comes to dating, shared values and chemistry are paramount. She explained, "First and foremost is shared values. You have to actively listen to what the person is saying but be able to ask the right questions. When you're learning about that person it's important to probe and ask questions that are important to you. That means you have to know what's important to you, what are you looking for in life? And what are they looking for?"

Secondly, how does that person make you feel? Do they make you feel safe, excited? There has to be a particular kind of energy that goes back and forth between a man and a woman. There should be chemistry, but chemistry that's underlined by the shared values."

### 2. Green and red flags are determined by your relationship goals

The criteria my dad considered when dating were based on his relationship goals. "Are they good marriage material? I was more selective in who I dated because of that perspective," he explained. For him this meant looking for someone who was hardworking, attractive, had a good sense of humour, and shared strong family values. Similarly, his red flags were rooted in these considerations, and included "feeling like the relationship isn't

a priority, being unsure of whether the other person is trustworthy or reliable, and someone whose life seems to have a lot of problems." According to him, these green and red flags stem from the idea that you're seeking a life partner. "If you're just looking for casual fun, then the selection process changes."

### 3. Embrace the art of love letters

When I asked my mom to share a memorable moment or story from her early days of dating my dad, she fondly recalled, "The thing that stands out to me is the way he expressed his feelings for me and our relationship through writing me love letters. It was so romantic. There were a lot of them. If he went away on vacation or if I was busy studying and we couldn't see each other, he might leave me a note and drop it off in the mailbox with a treat, a hot chocolate, cheesecake, a muffin. I learned a lot about him through the fact that he was willing to open up and be vulnerable."

### 4. Relationships are like bank accounts (and no, I'm not talking about gold diggers)

One challenge in maintaining a lasting relationship is ensuring that both partners' needs are met. My mom likened relationships to bank accounts, explaining, "You can't keep making withdrawals without depositing. It's this constant give and take. Sometimes you may need to give a little more."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8





CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

It's a compromise. You have to be in tune with the other person. Part of the responsibility of having a lasting relationship is ensuring that the other person's needs are met as well as yours."

**5. Love is a choice, not a feeling**

Both my parents share the belief that love is not merely a feeling but a deliberate choice. My dad said, "You choose to love someone. And then express that love through service. You try to do as much as you can to support that person. You have to start off with being attracted to them but essentially you choose to love them and voluntarily choose not to love other people." My mom echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that the key to sustaining a loving relationship is "choosing to unselfishly love that person every day and honoring the promises that you made

to each other on the day you were married."

**6. The relationship with your partner needs to come first**

In discussing potential obstacles to lasting relationships, my dad emphasized, "I think there's a danger that you lose the perspective that marriage is your most important relationship and all other relationships come second. It's easy to put other things or people first. In our busy fast-paced world, you figure you've got the relationship sorted out, and begin to focus on other things. But really you should keep it in mind that marriage is your number one relationship and a healthy marriage will sort out the other things and keep your life in order."

**7. Love changes**

One lesson my mom wanted to impart is that "Love changes; it almost goes through a metamorphosis. Love in the beginning is based on feelings, connection, and energy – it can sometimes almost be electrifying. But the longer you're together, love becomes deeper. It's no longer just a feeling. That feeling is expressed through your actions. It's about what you do day in and day out for that person. Rod once wrote to me in a letter: 'the loss of that initial chemistry and fire is being replaced with something far deeper.' I think that's true."

These are just 7 of the many principles I've learned from them both. I wish I could share them all, but that would probably take up more space than the entire newspaper. At the very least, I can say that I know the kind of love I'm looking for because of them, and for that, I'm endlessly grateful.

# Lonely Hearts of St. Mike's

## Dating the masthead

**Karen Maktabi** Associate Lifestyle Editor

**Darian Trabold:**

**Position on *The Mike*:** Managing Editor

**Year of Study:** 3

**My love language is...** Quality time

**A song that sums up my love life...** "Delicate" by Taylor Swift

**My most controversial opinion is...** PDA is gross.

**Ethan Chan:**

**Position on *The Mike*:** Senior Staff Writer

**Year of Study:** 3

**My most controversial opinion is...** Short Kings are superior.

**My biggest date fail is...** Being overly nice (I am naturally a kind person so being nice is innate. Some interpret it as too nice).

**Emily Tung:**

**Position on *The Mike*:** Photo Editor

**Year of Study:** 2

**My red flag is...** I'm a wee bit impatient.

**If you (blank), I will fall in love with you...** Have cool socks

**Rosie McDonald:**

**Position on *The Mike*:** Copy Editor

**Year of Study:** 2

**First round is on me if...** You'll sing karaoke with me.

**My most controversial opinion is...**No one under the age of 30 should be on a dating app.

**Karen Maktabi:**

**Position on *The Mike*:** Associate Lifestyle Editor

**Year of Study:** 3

**If you (blank), I will fall in love with you...** Look like Henry Cavill

**A song that sums up my love life...** "Andante, Andante" by ABBA

**The best way to ask me out is...** Good ol' fashioned hearts and flowers. Simple always does it.

**Emily Hospedales:**

**Position on *The Mike*:** Associate Opinion Editor

**Year of Study:** 2

**My green flag is...** I sleep with a duck night light.

**If you (blank), I will fall in love with you...** Like capybaras

**Stefanie Menezes:**

**Position on *The Mike*:** Lifestyle Editor

**Year of Study:** 4

**My beige flag is...** My go-to relaxation music is industrial death metal.

**My love language is...** Proofreading each other's papers

**My type is...** Harvey from *Suits*, House from *House MD*... you get the (unfortunate) picture.

**Jackson W. Ranger:**

**Position on *The Mike*:** Features Editor

**Year of Study:** 4

**My biggest date fail is...** Listening to a detailed thesis on Chinese Big Bird and then never talking to her again.

**My biggest ick is...** Baby talk. I love dogs, but as far as I'm aware I am not one of them.

**A pickup line that would totally work on me is...** "Hey, has anyone ever said that you look a lot like young Stalin?"

**Lucas Carpignano:**

**Position on *The Mike*:** Sports Editor

**Year of Study:** 2

**If you (blank), I will fall in love with you...** Are a Toronto Maple Leafs fan.

**One word that accurately describes my love life is...** Quiet

**Josephine Murphy:**

**Position on *The Mike*:** Opinion Editor

**Year of Study:** 4

**My most controversial opinion is...** If it's a first date, the guy should pay!

**A pickup line that would totally work on me is...** I love *The Mike*.

**The best way to ask me out is...** Just shoot your shot.

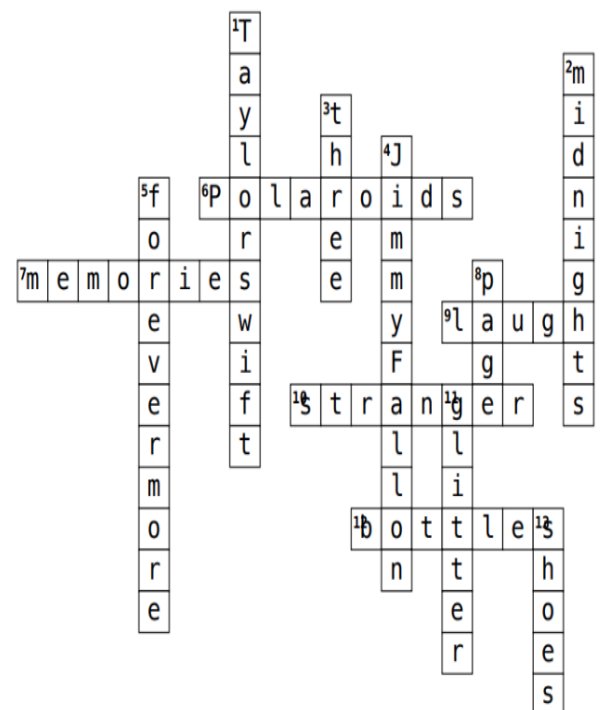


Do You Know That  
 The Mike Executives Are  
 Holding Office Hours Now?  
 Come and Talk to Us!



LAST BUT NOT LEAST,  
 ANSWER TO THE  
 CROSSWORD  
 FROM LAST ISSUE!

"New Year's Day" By Darian Trabold



**Across**

- 6. "Candle wax and \_\_\_ on the hardwood floor"
- 7. "Hold on to \_\_\_ they will hold on to you"
- 9. "Whose \_\_\_ I could recognize anywhere"
- 10. "Please don't ever become a \_\_\_"
- 12. "I'll be cleaning up \_\_\_ on New Year's Day"

**Down**

- 1. written and performed by
- 2. "I want your \_\_\_"
- 3. "You squeeze my hand \_\_\_ times in the back of the taxi!"
- 4. performed on this host's show
- 5. "You and me, \_\_\_"
- 8. "Don't read the last \_\_\_"
- 11. "There's \_\_\_ on the floor after the party"
- 13. "Girls carrying their \_\_\_ down in the lobby"