

ISSUE III

# THE ROAR

EVOLUTION EDITION

letter from the

# EDITOR

Wow, I can't believe this semester is already coming to a close. Everyone's back at school from stuffing themselves with Thanksgiving dinner and ready to grind their way through these last few weeks till winter break. A break I'm sure we all need from the wild ride of this fall at the Hill.

To kick off the year, fall athletics for Mars Hill University had a strong season making the MHU name a threat in the South Atlantic Conference (SAC). Men's soccer had a great season which placed them a spot in the quarterfinals of the SAC in which they fell to Wingate University. Not only did men's soccer qualify for the SAC playoff, but MHU football also made a name for themselves in the SAC conference. Football continually won every round of the playoffs which earned them a spot in the championship game. Although they lost to Newberry in the final game, the MHU football program left both athletes and students with a new sense of Lion pride. Staff writer, Jamie Garcia, highlights women's volleyball who had a legendary season this year. The atmosphere of Chambers Gym on volleyball night possesses an energy never seen before. Stands exploded with students, community members, and faculty to support the Lions in their fight this season. For the first time in history, the Mars Hill

University program hosted the SAC Quarterfinals for volleyball.

With the progression seen at the Hill, I thought the perfect theme for this issue is evolution. Society has shown a substantial amount of growth, especially within technology. The cover article done by Elida Taylor dives into the concept of technological evolution. She explores the idea of genetically modified human DNA, the threat of artificial intelligence (AI) for future job opportunities, etc. In addition to the cover, Leah Goodman writes about AI websites used to aid students in their school work. The new technology has made it nearly impossible for professors to discern student's work from AI generators.

Clearly, the world is ever evolving whether that be for the better or the worse of human nature. Will we eventually become like the movie Idiocracy? Will our reliance on technology become so heavy that our brains merely passively function? It definitely will be interesting to see what the future has in store for us; however, I believe that it's important not to lose sight of our own capability. Remember to not let technology feed off our lazy habits and make something of ourselves within the changes of the world.

Hannah Rose Frazer

*editor-in-chief*



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# Herbicide Spray On Campus

KAYLA RICE, staff writer

As you have walked around campus in the recent months you have seen the signs that direct students to “Keep Off Grass,” or you have been awoken by the emails sent to Outlook stating information about the herbicide being sprayed on the greenery of campus. Although it’s annoying when we receive these emails or see the abundant amount of signs decorating the campus, it is the job that has to be done by Mars Hill University.

The herbicide that is being used to deplete weeds throughout campus is 2,4-D. The active ingredient is 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic, which can be spread as liquids, dusts, or granules around weed-infested areas on campus. Due to the toxic ingredient found in the herbicide, in high doses it can pose a danger to both human health and the environment. The International Agency for Research on Cancer declared 2,4-D a possible human carcinogen, and according to the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, some studies of animals given 2,4-D during pregnancy found low body weights and some changes in behavior in the offspring. That being said, it is a dan-

gerous substance that can damage human health if one is exposed to abnormally high doses for too long.

Laura Boggess, a professor of environmental science and mentor for the Environmental Action Club at Mars Hill University, as well as Tyler Pesce, the president of the environmental action club addressed this controversial subject. I asked them questions regarding the herbicide and their stance on this topic. During our interviews, after being asked what they knew about the herbicide, Professor Boggess stated, “It is detrimental to student health, for everyone on campus, myself included. We’ve gotten eight reports so far of students who had respiratory issues, rashes, especially around the ankles. They [] notified students after they had already started spraying, so some students had already walked across the grass. A lot of them started getting rashes on their skin, we had a lot of headaches and people getting skin sensitivity. My cheeks actually were burning that day, so those are some of the effects of acute exposure.”





When asked what the purpose of the herbicide is and what their opinions are, Professor Boggess responded by saying, “Tim Allen, the director of facilities, said that it was to keep weeds out of the grass. His background is in turf grass, like for golf courses, and our quads don’t look like golf courses. They are not just grass, they also have clover and violets and other broadleaf plants, and we like that. It is good for pollinators, the bees love the flowers, and it’s good for soil health. So ecologically, it is not best to kill the different species that grow in the lawn.” Tyler made similar statements to Professor Boggess. When I prompted Tyler with the question, she told me that, “Herbicide is almost always used for aesthetic purposes and rarely for the benefit of an ecosystem, such as removing invasive species. A large portion of the plants that we consider weeds are good for pollinators and naturally fertilize the soil.”

At the end of our interview, I had asked both Professor Boggess and Tyler if having nice lawns was worth putting the people on campus’ health at risk and if there were any solutions: “Absolutely not, no!” both responded. I asked Tyler if there were any solutions to this issue at hand and she stated, “I think stopping the use of herbicides is a good place to start. The lawns here are mowed frequently, which has previously kept weeds from completely overtaking the grass. If you absolutely desire to

use herbicides, then spot-spraying or using a pellet form can reduce student health risks.”

Director of Facilities, Tim Allen, said in response: “Our overall goal is to provide the students, faculty, and staff of Mars Hill University with a safe and aesthetically pleasing campus. In the area of ground maintenance, for this to be achieved, it does require the use of chemical aid. In the future our plan will be to use a selective, pre-emergent herbicide in the spring along with a slow release fertilizer. Past that, our only use of chemicals will be to spot spray weeds with a selective, post-emergent herbicide. All of our herbicides are labeled and approved for campus use by EPA. Our staff is trained on the correct application methods to perform applications in a safe manner. To prevent exposure to anyone other than the applicator we will post signs to prevent entry into treated areas well past the EPA recommended reentry time. We will always follow the manufacturer’s label to prevent any environmental risk.” In summamry, the university is adhering to the proper herbicide regulations and usage guidelines.

There are clearly two sides to this argument, and Mars Hill University has to decide where their priorities lay. The Environmental Action Club has set up a meeting with the President to try to put a halt to the spray of the herbicide.



# AI ACADEMIC CHEATING

LEAH GOODMAN, staff writer

It doesn't take a scholar to know that cheating is unacceptable in any setting. However, in moments of desperation, such as impending deadlines, students can sometimes lose sight of a crucial aspect of their education: integrity. Deciding to cheat is no doubt an internal conundrum within whoever is taking that detrimental step. Students who contemplate cheating most likely consider two factors: if anyone will catch them and what will happen if they do. Unfortunately, in today's world, student's panic less and less with the penalties of being caught cheating on assignments due to rapid advances in Artificial Intelligence.

In the past, if a student would go online and copy and paste someone else's work in an attempt to plagiarize and save their grade, the teacher could easily do their own research and uncover the truth before grading the student's work. But it isn't so easy anymore.

For instance, in a recent article from September of this year, author Ciaran Daly reports on a man by the name of Jason Allen, who has "art fans fuming" and accusing him of cheating. Evidently, Allen managed to win first place in the

"Colorado State Fair arts contest" by submitting a piece entirely composed by the magic of an AI art generator. In addition, Daly provides a screen-shot of a tweet which states that in observing Allen's win, "we're watching the death of artistry unfold right before our eyes." Does this mean that we're approaching the death of academic integrity as well?

According to a 2019 article entitled "Artificial Intelligence Is a Tool for Cheating Academic Integrity" by El-Sayed Abd-Elaal, Sithara H.P.W. Gamage, and Julie E. Mills, there are an array of "Automatic Article Generators (AAGs) that can generate essays, articles, research papers, books and theses," thus spitting out assignments on a silver platter for students who feel that they need a short-cut.

The authors note that not only do these generators effortlessly crank out assignments for students to turn in, but they "[create an] extra burden on teachers," making it all the more difficult for them to enforce academic integrity because "the resultant writing will not be a direct copy from published work and therefore plagiarism detection tools cannot detect this fabrica-

tion." Moving forward, teachers are forced to evaluate their students beyond just their skill and capacity for understanding material; they now have to double check submissions for plagiarism without any concrete guarantee that there has been no cheating involved.

Moreover, while technology seems to be evolving in a way that enables students to cut corners every once in a while, there are ways that students can receive help with their work that will keep the extra strain off of teachers and prevent them from putting their academic integrity in jeopardy. Not only are teachers available for one-on-one help during their office hours, but the Mars Hill University Writing Center is also always willing to help whenever you need help with a writing assignment.

Everyone around you throughout your academic journey only wants to see you succeed. Cheating may seem "easier" as technology continues to develop, but once you have submitted that plagiarized paper, you cannot take it back. No hit to your grade is worth sacrificing your integrity. So, never be afraid to ask for help.



# OUR NEW STUDENT CENTER

Mars Hill University recently passed the \$17 million mark fundraising for the new student center, which will completely transform and reform Blackwell Hall into an environment where we as students can have a place to connect with one another.

“It is an investment in our students. We see this campus center as a catalyst to build an incredibly strong and vibrant student life experience for our students,” President Floyd noted at a campaign fundraiser for the event.

This statement caused outrage among some students who feel as if this new building is completely disregarding the current students. Cassie Berry, sophomore, held a peaceful protest in regard to this new building.

“We, about fifteen or so students, all who heard about the protest by word of mouth, met at the fountain in the upper quad. Some of us had signs about the building saying things like, ‘STUDENTS LIVE HERE, ASK THEM HOW THEY FEEL ABOUT A NEW BUILDING’ and ‘FIX OUR DORMS FIRST’.

“The fountain is such a symbolic figure for our school that will be taken away with this new student union. But we talked about why we were upset about this new building. Most resident halls don’t have AC – which is cruel considering we are paying to go to this institution and for the conditions that they are in, it’s unreasonable. Money is being put into a new building when

dorms like Gibson have sinks that are falling off the wall.

“Then we hung up our signs throughout campus, some at Wren, some in Day Hall,” she said. Cassie also feels backlash from holding this peaceful protest from some faculty members. After some thorough investigation, these signs are not there anymore – not that I could find, anyway.

On YikYak, an anonymous social media app for users in a five-mile radius, users have had some complaints about the new student center. Here’s what they had to say:

“I feel like they should put the money towards fixing up the dorms and making this place more disability accessible, most of it is hills.”

“I think it’s a waste of money when we need new dorms. I know for a fact there is mold on this campus.”

Here’s what Master of Management student, Jimmy Urzua, has to say: “I like the idea of a new student union because I think it gives the university more of a college atmosphere. The annoying part is that of course the trustees want their money to go to something big and a main attraction, but the overall idea of creating such an amazing sight is to attract students to attend the school as well as stay engaged. A large problem our school has is the lack of renovation when it comes to the residence halls. I believe it would be more ideal for student engagement on campus if students felt more comfortable in

their own residence halls and if a few trustees were to put their donations toward residence halls, the university would become a greater place to attend and socialize with more school pride.”

Here is what we know...

1. Blackwell Hall will be completely gutted and will double in size, reaching the part of the lower quad.
2. The new facility will be home to an admissions welcome center, the Cothran Center for Career Readiness, Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Office of Student Life, Office of Residence Life, Center for Community Engagement, Student Government Association, new dining, recreational and social gathering areas, a new fitness center, and a multi-purpose large meeting space.
3. It will cost more than twenty million dollars.

The decision on where the money goes isn’t up to the faculty or our very own Tony Floyd, the president, but up to the donors, the Board of Trustees, who are giving the money. After meeting with President Floyd, I had the personal experience and saw first-hand how much he and our Board of Trustees care so much for our school. This building gives the students a chance to connect and be able to hang out instead of at Day Hall. This will give us all a place where we can hang out. Where OUR offices will be. Everything in one place. Unity for the students.



ASK THE STUDENTS  
WHAT WE WANT!

LEANN CROTTS staff writer



# NCAA SUBSTANCE BAN

ZACK DOBSON, staff writer

Celsius energy drinks have become extremely popular for many college students over the past couple of years. With the help of securing a deal with Pepsi, you can see these energy drinks all over college campuses across the country. This would be a wonderful thing for most college students when you need an energy kick for long days or a late-night study session, but if you are a student athlete you might want to watch how much of these drinks you consume due to the NCAA regulations regarding caffeine consumption.

As in previous seasons, the NCAA continues to regulate the amount of caffeine consumed by all athletes in the 2022-2023 athletic seasons, with the prohibition of caffeine (guarana) included on the list of banned substances in the NCAA. The prohibition of about 500 milligrams of caffeine 2-3 hours before an event (according to the United States Olympic Committee Sport Nutrition Team) for athletes around the world should raise questions for the coaches and student athletes at Mars Hill University as to why Celsius and other energy drinks are so widely available. It is available in many vending machines on campus for students to continually purchase multiple times a day. In fact, not only is Celsius available in every vending machine, the vending machine in

Chambers Gym, where most student athletes spend a good part of their day, is more than half full of Celsius. With Celsius being available in the majority of vending machines at the school, the university needs to implement a rule for students' bonus bucks. Mars Hill University should implement a regulation for bonus bucks with only one purchase of an energy drink or caffeinated substance a day. Therefore, athletes don't have to worry about the potential risk of breaking NCAA guidelines.

Ilija Martinovic, an athlete for the Mars Hill Men's Tennis Team, shares his daily caffeine intake, "I usually drink four shots of espresso on a regular day and before tennis matches it is six espresso shots," Martinovic claimed. Clearly, students at Mars Hill University love their caffeine – causing the spread of awareness about this NCAA rule to be vital to student athletes.

Furthermore, a lot of rumors have been circulating on campus about the ban of Celsius. The energy drink itself is not banned; however, it is important for students to monitor their consumption rate in order to follow NCAA directions. Don't be afraid to spend your bonus bucks on that cold peach Celsius sitting by itself in the Hilltop refrigerator; just make sure you go about it wisely.



# VOLLEYBALL

## Legacy

JAMIE GARCIA, staff writer

On Tuesday, November 1, volleyball played Newberry College of South Carolina. Friends and family joined in on giving cheers and claps to our team. “Ole, ole, ole, ole!” the rest of the team chanted as the ball whizzed over the net. Our team put up a strong fight with a great lead by Jada Cannon in her 12 kills. Jordan Schmucker had 25 assists and 24 digs, 22 more digs were added by Laela Jimenez, and a shout out to Jana Cuk for building a new career-high score of 11 blocks! Lots of highs and lows filled the hours that passed, each point being followed by a quick circle up of teammates, whether it was a moment of praise or consolation. The match lasted for five sets until Newberry closed it out with a 5-2 run. Although the game didn’t end how students wanted it to, spirits still ran high with explosive energy ready for the ending games of the season.

On November 4, Mars Hill Volleyball went up against Limestone University. And, as no surprise, Mars Hill Volleyball demolished Limestone in four sets! The Lions started off the first set with 19 kills, and by the third, they were up with a 2-0 lead. “Mars Hill trailed late in the fourth, facing match point. They rallied to force extra play in the frame, however, the Saints fended off three match points to extend the contest. Back-to-back kills from Lilly and Goddard sealed the Lion’s 18th win of the season,” responded MHU to the Lions’ win. And with that, volleyball’s regular season turned historical. With an anticipated return of the

12-1 record in 1998, the Mars Hill Volleyball Team has fought long and hard to reach their current position. By November 5, volleyball had rewarded Mars Hill University with an at-home record of 11-2 for the 2022 season. Though it’s only been a year, Coach Michael Smith has led these girls through months of consistent hard work and practice. “He just lives and breathes volleyball and he just wants the best for us...he has 18 kids added to his family,” Susan Reinders comments. “We know we will work, just the atmosphere, as a team, on the court we will fight for each other,” she adds.

Following the last match of Volleyball’s outstanding season on November 7, graduate students Sarah Goddard and Jana Cuk comment on their volleyball career ending season. “This season was definitely one for the record books for the team and program as a whole. I think what made it so special was the school and community support we got throughout the season. I got chills before playing that final match against Anderson when I saw the stands completely packed and how much energy everyone brought,” claims Goddard. Cuk adds, “Knowing that this was my last volleyball season, it was special since the beginning. I played every game as if it was my last one. I’m glad that I had the opportunity to play my last year with people that are like family. I focused on making memories that will last forever and that will be something carried throughout my entire life.”





# FIFA WORLD CUP

KIANA TUCKETT, managing editor

FIFA, the governing body for soccer, with over 200 member nations around the globe, has faced steady scrutiny since awarding the bid for the 2022 World Cup to Qatar back in 2010. The World Cup is the most-viewed single sporting event in the world, held in the summer every four years, since 1930. Well, until this year.

For the first time in World Cup history, the tournament will be held in the winter, November 20 through December 18, disrupting the European soccer season. With summer days in Qatar reaching temperatures up to 118 degrees Fahrenheit (2022), Qatar originally proposed constructing air-conditioned stadiums for the tournament. In 2015, the dates of the tournament were shifted back almost six months in concern for the safety of international athletes regarding the extreme climate.

This notion, however, was not applied to the workforce constructing the stadiums and event spaces. Over the past decade, more than two million people have migrated to Qatar, from surrounding countries, for employment in preparation for the World Cup (Business and Human Resource Center 2017). Yet, reports of harsh working conditions including 18-hour days, excruciating heat, and lack of adequate training are only some of the contributing factors in making the environment “hell on earth” as reported by migrant worker, Krishna Timislina, in an interview with French journalists Sébastien Castelier and Quentin Muller for their publication, *Les Esclaves de l'Homme Pétrole* (The Oil Man's Slaves)(2022).

For this punishing labor, the minimum monthly wage for these employees equates to only about 280 euros. Considering Qatar is ranked the fifth richest country in the world and planning to spend over \$200

million on the tournament altogether, this abhorrent treatment of foreign labor is gravely inexcusable. To make matters incredibly worse, over 6,500 deaths of migrant workers from South Asia have been reported between 2010 and 2020; grievously, this number does not account for any deaths of workers outside of this region, such as those from African nations, meaning this statistic is likely much lower than reality (The Guardian 2021).

Likely causes of these deaths include inadequate living conditions, heat exhaustion, overconsumption of energy drinks to endure long shifts, and accidents due to untrained operation of heavy machinery. The Qatari government continues to reject the validity of these deaths, claiming they have “done more than any other country in the region to improve conditions for migrant workers,” according to news outlet France 24.

The controversy caused by the decision for Qatar to host the 22nd World Cup has not been overshadowed by the anger that has spread across several nations and individuals alike.

Thomas Bertilson, an international student from Denmark and member of the men's soccer team, asserts, “First and foremost, such a major event shall never be held where the host country has domestic and foreign policy problems to be fought with. It's very clear to see how the host country is trying to appear attractive to the outside world through culture, political ideas, and values. It's significant evidence of some kind of hard power, economic and military power, which has nothing to do with the love of the actual sport.”

As the first Arab country to host the World Cup, Qatar understands it has high expectations to uphold. Aside from questionable politics and human





rights standards, there is increasing skepticism as to the manner in which Qatar won the World Cup bid in the first place. FIFA is no stranger to allegations of countries bribing the organization for the hosting spots, as was suspected in South Africa 2010, Russia 2018, and now Qatar 2022. While Qatar has never actually qualified to compete in the World Cup, it sponsors several teams abroad, making it very apparent that Qatar is looking to put on a show to brighten its image in the eyes of the rest of the world.

In response to criticisms of laws and social standards against same-sex couples, a Qatari government official told NBC News, “As in many other countries in our region, overt public displays of affection, including for heterosexuals, are not part of the culture. That said, as a society we value privacy and respect, and these values are extended to everyone.” Just like the suspected bribes to win bids to host the World Cup, this statement will likely appear to many as a thinly veiled attempt of saving face under the careful watch it now faces.

Celine Hartung, an international student from Germany and member of the women’s soccer team, expresses, “For me, the World Cup in Qatar is a shame for international football. A tournament that had to be moved to winter, in a country where human rights respect is far below, and that was only made possible due to corruption in FIFA. We can only hope that this was a wakeup call and that it will lead to the restructuring of the responsible organizations.”

While 1.2 million fans will still flock to Qatar over the course of World Cup play—totaling over one-third of the nation’s population—several teams are “waking up” and choosing to wear specialized gear in a manner of peaceful protest against the conditions of the tournament. In the World Cup qualifying rounds, CNN reports Germany and Denmark wearing shirts displayed with “HUMAN RIGHTS” on them. According to Le Monde, FIFA recently banned Denmark’s bid to wear these same shirts in training, as the World Cup approaches (2022).

England was seen wearing rainbow armbands, and a total of eight European teams have made declarations to wear similar armbands displaying a rainbow heart and “1 Love.” There is a campaign marked by #PayUpFIFA, in a call to action for FIFA and Qatar to award \$440 million to the families of victims who died in the work leading up to the World Cup, equal to the prize that will be distributed to the teams playing in the tournament.

All in all, Qatar’s decades-long attempt at putting on a good show for the world has not been well absorbed by many nations. Yet, while Qatar’s social and legal practices have been clearly noted for quite some time, it seems that FIFA has been getting away with arising allegations for far too long. Qatar may be disregarding human rights and safety standards in pursuit of hosting the World Cup, but FIFA is the one who let them host it. Where should we really be placing the blame?





# ***EVOLUTION EDITION***

12 THE ROAR



## ELIDA TAYLOR, staff writer

Where does your mind take you when you think about the word “evolution?” Evolution means change, although there are many forms of change. The weather, the temperature, and the seasons change. We change our appearance and fashion sense throughout our lives. Still, when we talk about evolution, we are talking about the change that happens from generation to generation. Over time, this change has created the slow progression of diversity in life, language, and culture that we find on earth. Therefore, evolution becomes central to our understanding of life. Without evolution, there is no growth, learning, or continuous development. We are now making conscious decisions for the future generations on how to preserve the Earth and its resources as they are. Because evolution will always serve as critical in life and scientific development, students must understand the implications and fundamentals surrounding evolution. Especially in this particular generation, where technology is rapidly growing, we tend to overlook the consequences/outcomes. Some people may not be aware of the phenomenon of GMO babies – genetically modified babies that have spread ethical debates around the world. Or more pressing, as AI is a possible, increasing threat to the workforce. Not only does technology like this affect adults, but screen time among the youth seems somewhat concerning. It even starts at the early ages, where the term “iPad Kid” has become a social media pleasantry, but what is the psychology behind this phenomenon? And what positives and negatives come of this technologically advanced generation?



Technology has allowed Mars Hill University to thrive through digital communication. Many of the events on campus are consistently uploaded on social media or emailed individually to students to make them aware of what's happening. However, as the generation progresses and more breakthroughs occur, screen time and the number of time people spend on technology continues to hinder how successful we can be. Screen time that is not educational or work related should be limited to 2-4 hours daily. However, the average screen time calculated for the year of 2022 is between 4-6 hours daily. Lowering your screen time is seen as meditative and overall healthy for you, and although these claims are not false, as a society, we need technology. Technology keeps us up to date on the latest news. It is a means of how we function through everyday life. Although this may seem like the sole reason we should stay away from screens, we have come to realize that our phones, computers, and other electronic devices can be very educational and influential tools as it's something we use in the classrooms at Mars Hill University every day. Technology is one of the most prominent aspects of life that we have visually

watched evolve and will continue to develop. You may even be familiar with fairly new forms of digital payment. If you've ever walked into Camdens, the coffee shop located on Main Street, and bought a coffee, you'd know that their payment system is entirely digitized to where you can easily tap your credit card from your phone to their system. It's easy, fast, and makes life a whole lot easier. That is the essence of what technology does for us. Technology keeps us connected, it helps drive innovation, shortens the economic gaps, and allows information and creativity to travel faster than ever before. It has become essential to our survival.

At what age were you first exposed to the world of screens? Unfortunately, even though the use of technology as a whole has integrated into almost all aspects of our lives, children are still criticized for the amount of screen time they encounter. Take the popular term "iPad kid" for example, referring to children raised with iPads and other technology. Many blame this on the fact that screen time was much less enjoyed when they were kids. However, times have evolved, and just like children, we are now more aware of social media and the internet than ever. Because we are so



technologically driven, it may prove harder to steer future generations of children away from what we know and commonly use. The impact of prolonged screen time can include impacted learning ability, enhanced aggression, slow reflexes, and social anxiety. Junior student, and Biology major, Dareck Luebbert, commented, "Because of the use of technology, specifically phones, and laptops being used more, it influences a second nature of social anxiety." The effects of early childhood technology usage continue to stem into adulthood unconsciously.

With new technologies, though, we have been able to construct and modify GMOs for several uses. GMO stands for genetically modified organisms in which the genetic material has been altered to fit a specific criteria. Humans have genetically modified crops, medicines, vaccines, and other microorganisms. This all comes from wanting to advance human health and resources for the better. Although GMOs have been around for a while, few studies show how safe altering the genes in one's DNA is. Crops continue to be the most commonly produced of GMOs. Herbicide tolerance and disease resistance have allowed for fewer

food shortages and loss of crops in recent years. An increase in agricultural productivity is enhanced, and biodiversity can continue to prosper. However, there are also several downsides to how GMOs in crops will affect us in the future. GMOs limit genetic diversity and can create mutations. Furthermore, they are not a complete resolution to food security. Some people are even against GMOs in food because of the possible unidentified long-term effects they may or may not have on humans. Even though we commonly modify the food we intake, technology and IVF lab advances have shown us that we may also be able to modify babies genetically. Whether this is a matter of ethics has been a controversial topic as recently as 2017 when studies started to suggest that it may be possible to modify a child's intelligence, health, and appearance by altering the genes in their DNA. Could this be an evolutionary breakthrough for humans? Dareck Luebbert comments, "I think it would help society if we use a lot of time and resources helping people with hereditary diseases, but if we were able to modify those genes out of DNA and produce genetically healthy babies, then the medical time and resources could go towards more



research.” However, this is all in theory, as modifying human genes is still a risk we are unwilling to take.

A risk that we are willing to indulge in, however, is artificial intelligence (AI). AI machines are increasing their significance in the world in traffic, the world's factories, and a myriad of other places. Since the turn of the millennium, developments have been extremely rapid. It doesn't even take a scientist to predict a near future where our cars fully drive themselves. Thank you, Tesla and robots that can fight our wars. Although, how long will it take before we have machines far more intelligent than ourselves – a scenario with incalculable and potentially unpleasant consequences for humanity? However, the biological brain is far more complex than a computer could ever be. Although, AI is still a long way from being similar to human intelligence. The fundamental difference between AI and humans is our consciousness and ability to think abstractly. It is still debated whether a so-called “strong artificial intelligence,” with the intelligence of the exact nature and depth as humans, is even possible. On the other hand, much progress has been made in developing “weak artificial intelligence,” which can perform

clearly defined tasks better than humans. Today, there are self-driven cars, planes that can fly themselves, computers with speech ability, and much more.

AI will permeate students' education systems and rethink the way they learn in the future. It will not only make education cheaper but perhaps better as well. We are entering a future where the economic costs of reading, writing, and arithmetic are significantly reduced because of AI being more sustainable and accessible. For example, software robots will take over many of the activities typically performed by teachers, professors, and administrators in educational institutions. Nevertheless, we will still need these professions for a long time into the future, but AI can be a potential tool beneficial for both the student and the provider. AI can provide more individual and personalized teaching. We all already have some experience with voice assistance like Google Assistant, Siri, and Alexa from our smartphones. They are all examples of assistance that make use of AI, and these are just the beginning. In the future, assistance will open doors to more personalized and flexible teaching tailored to each student's needs and desires. One tool that can make learning and



education more engaging and entertaining in relation to AI is virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR). For instance, in hopes of incorporating VR and AR into the classrooms, history courses can showcase historical events which can be relieved as if they were real. In chemistry, advanced molecular structures can be visualized in entirely new ways before the eye of the individual student. Furthermore, machines and AI have been the target of many argumentative debates on if the human workforce is in danger. Instead of machines and AI taking over the human workforce, they can, in part, aid in making the workforce more efficient. Economic productivity is a significant factor in advancing technology like these in the workforce. There has been a demand shift in the skills needed for certain jobs. As a result, fresh college graduates are forced to adapt to new skills not previously needed. Technology, demographics, and economic change lead organizations to be forced to adapt to rapid change and demands of the future. Those who do not meet this standard are left behind. Jobs that we see now are likely to shrink as an occupation in ten or more years. Job structure and skill will continue to shift with the times. However, as change can be unpredictable so is the future of jobs in America and what they will require. Nonetheless, students and professors alike are aware of this change.

Because of evolution, we can experience these tremendous amounts of economic, cultural, educational, and technological change. Evolution will continue to happen, and we must evolve to grow as a society and as individuals.



# Christmas Jam

**In** the '80s, musician Warren Haynes founded The Christmas Jam. It originally started out as a local show that allowed Warren's musician friends a chance to jam and to do something good for the community. The shows started small, with the performances taking place at a small bar, the 45 Cherry. Over the years, the event grew until it moved to a larger venue, the U.S. Cellular Center in Asheville NC. Now, it's an international event, drawing stars from all over.

**'Tis** the season to be jolly and generous for the participants of The Christmas Jam. This musical celebration is not only entertaining but charitable. These days, the proceeds from the concert go to the Habitat for Humanity of Asheville, N.C. In the early days of the Jam, different charities were on the receiving end of its benefits. However, in the '90s, Warren Haynes decided that the local Habitat for Humanity should be the charity that would get the proceeds from the concert. Warren chose Habitat for Humanity because he liked the idea of providing homes for people who couldn't afford to get one on their own. Choosing this charitable organization allowed him to see the benefit of what he was doing directly. The proceeds from the concert provide up to 40 homes a year.





# **DAYS OF CHRISTMAS**

1. Home Alone
2. The Santa Clause
3. Frosty the Snowman
4. Love Actually
5. The Polar Express
6. Daddy's Home
7. Four Christmases
8. Deck the Halls
9. Arthur Christmas
10. A Charlie Brown Christmas
11. The Nightmare Before Christmas
12. Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer
13. National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation
14. A Christmas Carol
15. It's a Wonderful Life
16. Home Alone 2
17. Ernest Saves Christmas
18. Elf
19. The Holiday
20. Jingle All the Way
21. The Grinch
22. Edward Scissorhands
23. Jack Frost
24. Jingle All the Way
25. Gremlins



# Chat with AI Santa



KAYLA RICE, staff writer

Christmas time's coming and you better get ready! I had the opportunity to be able to chat with an AI Santa and ask him a few questions about Christmas and himself. Turns out, he is a very unique man and... well, I'll just let you see for yourself.

K: Hey Santa! I was wondering... Can I ask some questions?

S: Of course you can ask questions.

K: Okay, my first question is... How are you doing?

S: I am doing very well. I'm as happy as a partridge in a pear tree now that I'm chatting with you! Thank you for asking!

K: You're welcome! Who is your favorite reindeer?

S: Which reindeer do I like best? Call me the King of Jing-a-Ling! That is a tough question. There are so many reindeer here and they are all very special to me. Everyone really loves Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer of course. But I guess I just love all the reindeer the same... which is a LOT!

K: What is your favorite kind of cookie to eat?

S: My fav type of Christmas cookies?! Cookies that are left out for me to eat! Ho! Ho! Ho! (Well, maybe not these cookies that Clumsy the Elf made!)

Okay... enough with the boring questions.

K: Tell me your thoughts on climate change.

S: I can tell you what Frosty and Olaf think about climate change. Well, I could except that they melted again before I had a chance to ask. Luckily, they'll be back again someday.

K: What's your opinion on Donald Trump?

S: One of the elves likes to joke that Donald Trump isn't ON the Naughty List...

he IS the Naughty List!

K: Did you really let your reindeer run over grandma like that? (A reference to the Elmo & Patsy song "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer")

S: Grandma did not get run over by a reindeer. I

promise you it is true! She bent over to tie her shoe. And over her head we flew. But she stood up to fast. What could I do? We flew right past. And blew her wig right off with a blast! HHHOL!

K: Well, with that being said, have you ever been put in jail?

S: I'll never forget the Christmas I went to jail... Good thing I had the get out of jail free card!

K: Wow that's interesting, thank you for being honest! Now I have a favor to ask. Would you possibly bring me a boyfriend for Christmas?

S: That would be some present if I brought you a boyfriend! I don't think he'll fit in the toy sack though.

K: Yeah, I figured as much. If I'm unable to get a boyfriend for Christmas, can I meet you under the mistletoe?

S: I'll have to check with Mrs. Claus (but I think she'd be rather cross with me!). I can blow you a kiss

K: That'll suffice I guess. Okay, I have one more question and our interview will be over.

S: Okay!

K: Which aspect of Christmas is your favorite?

S: I love Christmas, the whole Christmas season.

You can ask why, cuz I do know the reason... There's something about Christmas that makes me wish it was Christmas every day.

K: Thank you for answering my questions Santa, you are quite the guy. Have a nice day!

S: Thank you for chatting with me. I chatting with you! It always makes my day and you have a nice day too. And at night I hope you have sweet dreams with sugarplums dancing in your head.

You guys have seen it here for yourself, Santa is a really nice guy that has quite a bit of spunk in him. Make sure to stay on the nice list!

## *Last Minute Holiday Gifts as a Broke College Student*

In our last Roar edition, I wrote about how I am a very last-minute kind of girl. So, this is a chance for all of the people like me, the ones who wait until the last minute to do their Christmas shopping. However, as much as I wish I was a millionaire, I am not. So, I will be doing a budget-friendly alternative.

A Jar of Nothing – for all the people who answer, “I don’t want anything” to the common question “what do you want for Christmas?”. It’s literally just a mason jar with a label of “NOTHING” on it. Simple. (I can’t take the credit for this one, I saw it on Pinterest, or Instagram I think.)

Money. I know it’s not personalized, but gas and everything is insane right now so anybody and everybody would appreciate a little green in their stocking. I’ll go ahead and include gift cards in this mix too – any college student would enjoy a break from the café.

A nice watch. I’m always running late, so this time I would be aware of it. At least, it has the chance of helping.

A phone charger. I always lose mine so putting one in my stocking would be the equivalent of gold.

A blanket. In my opinion, I hate being that person who gets fifteen blankets just to lay around in the apartment, but you can never have too many blankets, I’ve been told.

A Yeti Cup. Again, I definitely have too many, but it gives some variety to put my water in for football games.

T-Shirts/Sweatpants. Comfortable clothes.

That’s all I got. I hope it sparks some inspiration before it’s actually too late. Make something personal. A letter if you’re good at writing. A drawing, if you’re good at that. Or a case of beer. Simple and effective.

LEANN CROTTS,  
staff writer





# Our Future With Social Media

HANNAH ROSE FRAZER, editor-in-chief



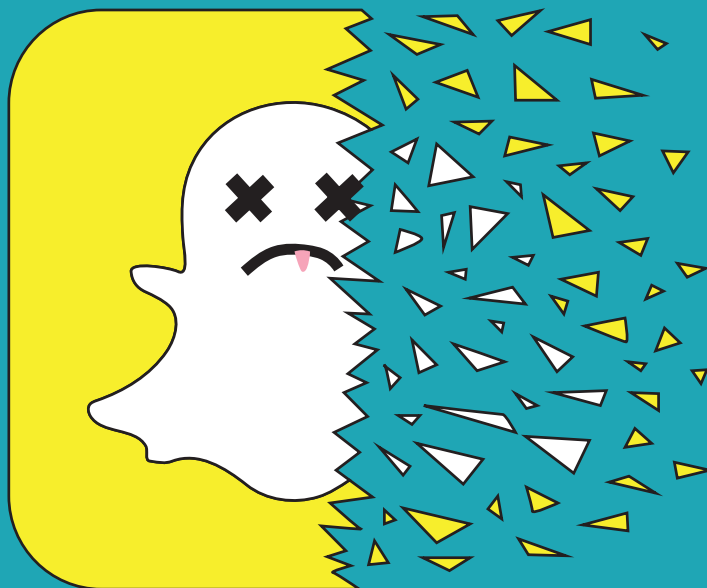
Oh my gosh. I got left on open. How offensive! That might be most of our Snapchat mindsets now, but is that really what our generation will be thinking 30 years down the road? Will we still be fighting to keep our 2,000-day Snapchat streak alive?

The app, Snapchat, is a foundational ground for teenager communication. The point of Snapchat is to be able to send pictures between a specific individual and/or group as well as post a picture for all followers to see only for 24 hours. Snapchat literally serves no purpose; however, it's highly valued among our generation. To be left on open/read (not responded to) is the ultimate crime and ending of a friendship, but as our generation grows older it becomes harder to keep up with sending pointless pictures everyday. Addison Easter, a sophomore on the Mars Hill University volleyball team, shares her personal connection with snapchat.

"Snapchat is a place for me to connect with my

friends and their lives through pictures. When a friend leaves me on read, it makes me question if I did something wrong to upset them," Addison states. Clearly, Snapchat is a foundational source for friendships and will be difficult for teenagers to stop using. If our generation continues to use social media apps such as Snapchat and TikTok as a middle aged adult, what will society think? Whereas now when I scroll through my TikTok "For You" page and see older adults making content, I think to myself "Ew, what are they doing?" However, as I get older the roles will be reversed. What is to become of young adults who make a living off of being a social media influencer and/or TikToker? I think one answer to this question is that they will try to revamp their platform and fame. A perfect example of this is Addison Rae's parents Monte and Sheri.

Addison Rae is a teenager who is famous on TikTok. Her mother, Sheri, got her fame when Addison posted





videos with her that went viral. With this new following, Sheri was forced to post content that would keep her TikTok page alive. One such video was Sheri, who is 43 years old, participating in the TikTok WAP dance challenge. This challenge consists of a provocative dance to Cardi B's song WAP. The dance helped her stay relevant, but was later deleted. I'm unsure why it was deleted or even posted in the first place, but my guess was that it had embarrassed both herself and her family. More recently, Sheri and her ex-husband Monte have caused an absurd amount of TikTok drama just to keep their name current. After committing adultery within the relationship, the two took their messy drama onto social media. Sheri reacted by flirting publicly with Yung Gravy, a 26-year-old rapper, and also went as his date to MTV Video Music Awards while Monte made diss tracks and TikToks against Yung Gravy. Although it's easy to roast them, our generation could easily become just like them years down the road. Our teenage society is so built solely on social media that anything may get posted just to remain popular.

In addition, apps are always evolving. BeReal has become the new social media app even though nobody is actually "being real" on there. Just saying, it's easy to tell when you wait to post something actually happening in your life, otherwise it would just be a scroll of pictures in bed. BeReal is the new app where a notification is sent to your phone at any given time, and you have to post a picture of what you are doing. It's a way of seeing what everyone is doing at the exact same time. This app definitely showcases the possible turning point for the future. Whereas in the past, our generation always downloaded and participated in every new social media app, currently most people are divided on the use of BeReal. Half of our generations likes the concept of the app, and other other half refuses to download it reasoning that it's stupid. Leo Bernardes, a senior at Mars Hill University, shares his thoughts on the app, BeReal.

"I refuse to download BeReal on my phone. There is essentially no point. I have Snapchat and when I Snapchat a person, I automatically know what they are doing when I open the picture. So why do I need BeReal as an extra reminder of what a person is doing. It's a waste of data on my phone," Bernardes remarks. Essentially, there is no telling where our generation will end up years down the road with social media. Will our former friends turn into fame addicted "influencers?" Will our wrinkly hands still be taking Snapchats of our heart monitor when we are pretty much dying in the hospital bed?



# FACE OFF

**PROFESSOR / STUDENT:**  
**In Person vs. Internet Education**



## PROFESSOR

People may not remember what you said, but they will remember how you made them feel. – Maya Angelou

In both online and in-person courses at MHU, I have been able to have great – but different – experiences. I prefer in-person, for the following reasons: Good Messiness – Because it is easy to check-out while online, the give-and-take messiness of classroom discussions cannot be duplicated online, and are often the launch pads for those amazing questions that stick in your mind and make you go, Wow! long after class is over.

Real-time questions cannot be answered if your course is non-synchronous. What if you want to engage the professor on a pressing assignment or question? Being in the same room with the professor cannot be duplicated.

Body language – Online, neither you nor your professor can read body-language, which remains between 55-93% of communication. Reading a room is a marketable skill, but one that lies dormant in most online experiences.

Rigor – While online can be rigorous,

## Professor MARC MULLINAX

some stigma still remains among some employers if you present a full house of online courses as education when applying for a job. The rigor you want comes from real-time, real-person interactions with other students and professor. Can you imagine telling an employer, I played college football online?!?

Dialogue – Genuine life-changing experiences do not come from a screen. They come from diligent and deep back-and-forth dialogue with others. Can an online class duplicate what an in-person conversations can do?

Social interaction is part of a total education package. On-Campus interactions, with peers, professors, and even with your school's president and other leaders, remain by far the most life-changing educational encounters. Collaborative skills – One cannot collaborate easily with other students in online courses.

Time – Online courses often take MORE time to complete.

Tailor-made education – The four kinds of learners – kinetic, reading/

writing, visual, and auditory – will find more difficulty with one-size-fits all online courses. However, in in-person courses, professors can easily adjust work loads to fit whatever strengths or weaknesses in learning anyone may have. If you are a hands-on learner, can online courses advance your education?

Big Questions – Education is not amassing answers. #That'sSoHigh-School. Instead, education is the ever-reframing of ever-larger, life-long questions that send you on a lifetime quest for meaning. In-person education gives one the most chances to be engaged with the Big Questions that will accompany you into your first, second, third, and all subsequent careers. The Big Questions are best-discovered in in-person education settings.

Conclusion: For the strongest academic experiences, most students are better-served by in-person courses. Computers are good at making copies. People-centered learning is un-duplicate-able.

## STUDENT EDGAR MIRANDA, staff writer

Despite the global pandemic and its intrusion into our everyday lives, we still live in a world where students value their futures. Their hopes and dreams rest on the lists and pages of scholarships that flood their screens. There is still a mystery to the perfect essay or application which students send with crossed fingers and a small prayer riding underneath their breath. There are anxious moments with every mail check, but even though an acceptance letter brings some sense of relief, there is still the subject of money to address. That same subject that might be further stressed when the long list of scholarships fail to reach you.

So, what is it about the college experience students crave so much? The answers range based on the individual, but one thing for certain is that it carries a sense of prestige. There aren't many students heard boasting about

their online degree from some college we probably never heard of. So, let's take prestige out the picture and focus on the other aspects of college.

What does an online school offer other than prestige? It offers the benefit of convenience, the ability to maintain a full-time job outside of school, flexible hours, and a unique learning environment. It allows students with families, responsibilities, and financial difficulties to pursue a career, better said a passion. What is college if not a passion for learning, making something of yourself, and giving you a strong push in life? Isn't it then smarter to put that passion and energy into a program that is more affordable and gives you benefits that you wouldn't find at a physical college?

The cost of tuition and fees will continue to grow every year, and with the course of time, that number will

get higher. For example, according to college tuition inflation data from the Manhattan Institute, published tuition and fees for public two-year in-district, public four year in-state, and private nonprofit four-year colleges increased by at least 20% in the past 10 years. If these numbers are considered high for a student considered in-state, then you can imagine the larger sum for those considered out of state students. So, the argument here is not then which one is better (well it is...), but what is convenient and how it relates to the circumstances in which you find yourself. What is manageable and takes you to the place you want to be at without the worries of flexibility and maintaining a job. Perhaps if I had realized it, my story would be different, and it may be why I believe that online education is beneficial to society.





# RIO'S REVIEW



BRAXTON ROBINSON, staff writer

Main Street's newest restaurant has become a fan favorite to the Mars Hill community. Rio's Mexican Kitchen has made a name for itself in the growing Madison County. The Tex-Mex styled restaurant brings a unique blend of Mexican cuisine to Mars Hill's Main Street and fits perfectly into the college scene. Following the permanent closing of Baad Sheep Burrito, Rio's Mexican Kitchen purchased the former location and planned for a summer opening. Through an interior restructuring and remodel, Rio's officially opened for business this past summer. Rio's is located at 14 South Main Street, is open daily until 9 p.m., and both dine-in and takeout options are available. After sitting down and enjoying a meal at Rio's, we were ready to come back for another round.

The friendly staff greeted us as we sat at the closest available table, and we were immediately given a bowl of chips along with a couple different sauces and salsas. The chips were sprinkled with just the right amount of salt and were

complimented by the variety of dipping options. While our drink orders were taken, we were given the menus to look over. What seemed like a small menu, was actually filled with options for everyone. The menu consisted of everything from tacos, to nachos, fajitas and burritos. Additionally, the menu consisted of 10 vegetarian dishes, a delicate kids menu, and a great number of sides and add-ons. After browsing the menu, I decided on something simple but filling: three carne street tacos with a side of rice.

The aroma of different spices and fresh meat being cooked filled the quaint restaurant and created a warm inviting atmosphere. In a respectable amount of time, the food was served in all of its glory. The flour tortillas of the street tacos were complimented by the glistening seasoned meat that lay atop of it. The carne consisted of the perfect fat-to-meat ratio. The tacos were accented with freshly cut cilantro and onions. The only thing that could take the plating to the next tier would be a slice of lime

to round it all up. A hefty portion of rice was served alongside the tacos, which helped to complete the meal. The tacos were seasoned and juicy with each bite, while the rice was fluffy and balanced out the flavors. A perfect serving size of a food, for a very fair price. Overall, the meal was very filling and cost efficient for a standard college student. The staff was very friendly and the food came out at an orderly rate.

Although new to Mars Hill, Rio's is continuously making a name for itself and sharing flavorful meals to the people in this community. Rio's is the perfect spot for a post-game meal, a casual night out with family, or even a romantic date. Be sure to support this local business, along with the others in Mars Hill. It's worth the visit and I highly encourage anyone and everyone who enjoys Mexican cuisine to go down to Main Street and give Rio's a try! Oh, and don't forget to tip the people serving you!



# CONSPIRACY OF ALEXA

OWEN BLAKE, staff writer

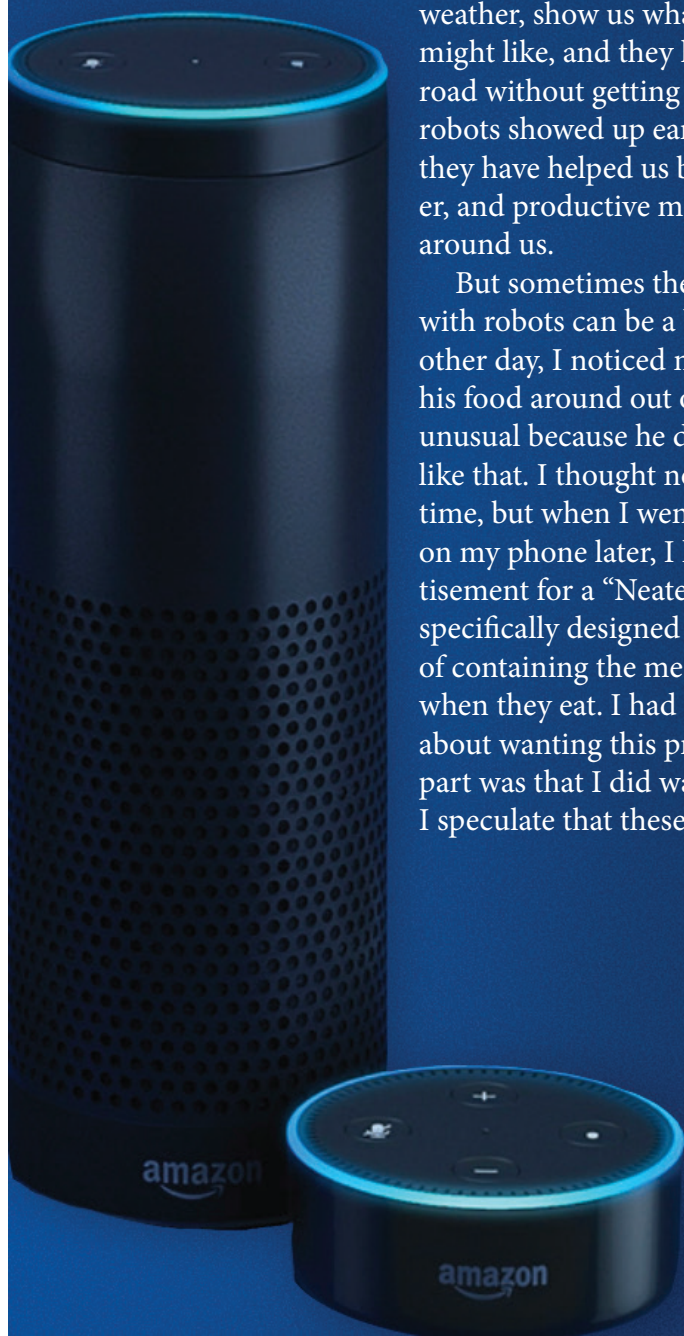
Doodum Doodum. I hear the alarm of my mother's Amazon Echo blaring from across the house. To make the thing shut up, I find myself walking across the house, half asleep, asking it politely to be quiet. This is how I start every morning—a polite conversation with a “robot.” These robots have become infested in our everyday lives. Sometimes, they are pleasant to deal with, like an acquaintance at work or school. They tell us the weather, show us what shows/music we might like, and they help us navigate the road without getting lost. Certainly, these robots showed up early in our lives, and they have helped us be more efficient, safer, and productive members of the world around us.

But sometimes these relationships with robots can be a bit more sinister. The other day, I noticed my dog was throwing his food around out of his bowl. It was unusual because he does not usually act like that. I thought nothing of it at the time, but when I went to scrolling away on my phone later, I had gotten an advertisement for a “Neater Feeder,” a product specifically designed for the purpose of containing the messes made by dogs when they eat. I had not even said a word about wanting this product, but the scary part was that I did want this product. I speculate that these tech companies’

algorithms have gotten so efficient that they know what products we want to buy before we do. They have so much information on us that we have become the products.

This one example is not the only evidence we have either. In the past several years alone, Google, Apple, Amazon, Twitter, Facebook, and even the FCC itself have been hit with lawsuit after lawsuit in this never-ending battle between the rights of people and the interests of tech companies. Mark Zuckerberg's infamous trial in front of Congress over his handling of user data still sticks out in my mind. I feel like I can still taste the sweat leaving his body through my screen as he evaded question after question with millions watching from the sidelines.

All this to say, we are living in dystopian times, and I encourage us all to think critically about how we approach technology, whether it be Snapchat, Instagram, Amazon, Google, or Smart Fridge. What we give our attention to becomes the very thing that controls us. The second we take our eyes off the ball, somebody will be coming after our free wills, privacies, and access to information. In fact, I would wager that somebody is watching you right now.







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