

What's Your Opinion?

We asked students what they were looking forward to most over winter break. Here are the responses we received:

- Sleeping
- Spending time with family
 - Playing video games
 - Working
 - Seeing a play
 - Reading
- Celebrating the holidays



See y'all next year!

Thank you for participating. Please look forward to more polls starting next semester.

Students can answer the poll on The Herald's Instagram page, @astateherald. Instagram polls are posted on Mondays. Previous poll results can be found on the-herald.home.blog/category/opinion/poll/. Have an idea for a poll? Send your ideas to heraldopinion1921@gmail.com.

These and future articles can be found on the Opinion section of The Herald's website. All comics and memes can be found in the Comics section.

Why Is So Much of BuzzFeed's Content Just Stolen Reddit Posts?

LILY CABIBI-WILKIN

OPINION EDITOR



Lily Cabibi-Wilkin is a senior music composition major from Hot Springs.

Buzzfeed has never really been a widely accepted professional site. Aside from BuzzFeed News, their content is mostly fun fluffy articles about celebrities, lists of random Amazon products or silly polls or quizzes. But lately, their content has included another pillar: stolen Reddit posts.

To explain Reddit for the unaware: Reddit is a social news website where posts are split into communities called "subreddits." Subreddits can cover a variety of topics or include a variety of groups. For example, the subreddit r/TalesFromTheFrontDesk is a community for people who work in the hotel

industry. The subreddit r/MonaMains is a community for people who enjoy playing as the character Mona in Genshin Impact. The subreddit r/SoftwareGore is a community for sharing pictures of technology breaking in horrifying ways. There are currently more than 2.8 million subreddits in existence.

Buzzfeed will often make listicle posts (portmanteau of "article" and "list") that are just long compilations of Reddit posts. There's no way to tell that the posts use Reddit until you open a post titled "32 Ridiculously Entitled Parents That'll Make Your Blood Boil" and realize all the posts are embedded from r/ChoosingBeggars.

Most of the posts BuzzFeed shares in their listicle posts come directly from r/AskReddit, where users ask open-ended questions and users respond to them. There are 34.2 million members of r/AskReddit, with several posts (called "threads") a day. Questions range from "Which movie have you seen more than 7 times?" to "How do you feel about free healthcare? Should everyone have it?" to "If you were an NPC or an enemy in a video game, what loot would you drop if you were defeated?"

Buzzfeed will take these threads and post them as a listicle, basically listing

a bunch of responses with some stock images scattered in between. As of writing their most recent stolen Reddit post, which asks about things that are illegal but aren't wrong ethically, has 395,878 views. On Reddit, that post has over 18,000 comments and over 38,900 upvotes (similar to likes).

Some of my favorite subreddits: r/AnimalCrossing, r/worldnews, r/AnimeFigures, r/tuckedinkitties

Buzzfeed and several other websites (including, bizarrely, the ICanHasCheezburger Facebook page) have also recently begun sharing posts from r/AmITheA****e. AITA is a subreddit where users post about situations where they may have been a jerk, and the community votes to judge them. The idea is that presenting your situation to unbiased strangers will yield an objective answer. (The results are debatable, but that's not the point of this article.)

To be clear: it's not like BuzzFeed and other sites are actually doing anything with these posts. They're not using them as quotes to paint some bigger

picture. They're basically just typing up a summary of the posts and letting their own followers comment on it. Their comments don't contribute to the original AITA post, and the original poster will likely never see them. It's entirely content/views for BuzzFeed.

It's not like Reddit has never been a source of content and views. Several YouTube channels are dedicated to reading off Reddit threads, either with a human narrator or text-to-speech. But they're specifically dedicated to that sort of content - in other words, they're not a massive media source like BuzzFeed.

So what gives? Is there a writer shortage at the BuzzFeed offices? Can they just not be bothered to write their own stuff anymore? Or is it genuinely more profitable to steal Reddit posts these days? Maybe it's all of the above. But at least we've moved past stealing Tumblr posts for content.

Maybe they'll just start stealing Duolingo screenshots next. "Build Your Dream Home And We'll Guess Which League You're In." "This Boy Found Something Strange in His Dad's Closet And We Can't Get Over It." "Wake Up, Besties! New Bea Hairstyle Just Dropped!" Truly, the possibilities are endless.

Why This Semester Sucks So Much And What You Can Do About It

LILY CABIBI-WILKIN

OPINION EDITOR

My semester has not been great.

Every time I turn around there's a new thing due, a new test I forgot to study for or a new responsibility placed on my shoulders. Heck, just this week I've had two concerts, a presentation I misunderstood the date of and had to do on the fly, a listening quiz I stayed up late the night before to study for and a work night where I didn't figure out what I was going to write about until I went and had a silent moment of reflection in the hallway. When I leave the office tonight I'm going to have to study for another test, prepare for another presentation, do a few more homework assignments for a class and cram to get my composition project complete. Oh, and return some library books.

The sheer amount of stuff on my plate has taken its toll. I've been more anxious this semester than I've been my entire school career. There have been several days where I've run home in the middle of the day or ducked into a practice room just to have a moment to lie on the floor and catch my breath. Every time someone asks me how my semester's going, I laugh nervously. To be fair, I've always struggled with my mental health, but this semester it just feels different.

But I'm not alone. Everyone I talk to seems just as unhappy with their semester as I am. Even some of the faculty have

been going through it. While it's validating to know I'm not alone, it begs the question: why does this semester suck so much, and what do we do about it?

Primarily, I blame the fact that this is our most "normal" semester since COVID-19 hit. We went from normal classes to quarantine and now we're trying to get back to regular classes. Everyone wants to be as confident and educated and productive as we were before the pandemic. But we're not.

Maybe we just didn't learn the same over the last few semesters. Maybe some of us spent their Zoom-mesters slacking off and now have to re-learn how to... well, learn. Maybe some of us learned better online and are now suffering in-person like they were before. Maybe some of us were in high school when COVID-19 hit and never learned how to properly be in college. Or maybe we're all just burnt out from everything the last few years have thrown at us.

So what do we do? Surely I'm not going to write 500-700 words about how much this semester sucks and then just leave it?

If there's one thing that's gotten me through the semester, it's my friends. Someone to watch me be manic in The Herald office as the night goes on, perhaps to laugh hysterically with me. Someone to sit in the car with at 3 a.m. and traumadump. Someone to share a glance with in class, silently saying "are you seeing this?" Someone to send

Tumblr memes to. Like I said earlier, we're all going through it, and having people around who care about you who you can commiserate with makes it better.

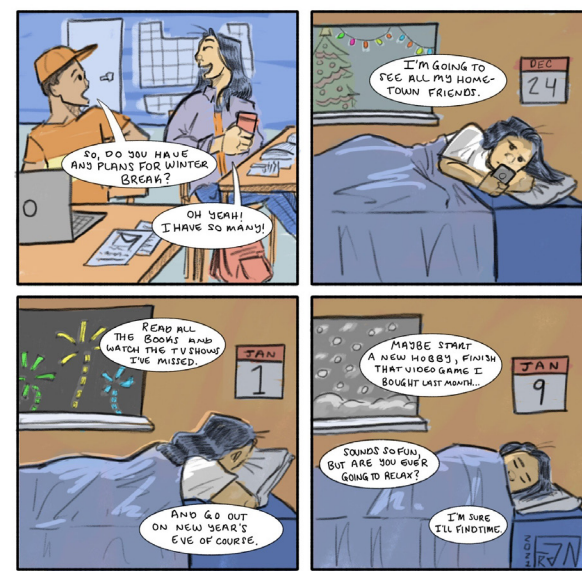
Finding small joys has also helped keep my sanity intact. I've barely had the time or energy to play my favorite video games or do any crafts, but I've managed to read some good fanfics in bits and pieces, and I've been writing some of my own. The escapism and venting I can do while writing has always been so comforting to me. Maybe I haven't been able to sit down and binge my favorite shows or movies, but the laughs I've had while watching hours of TikTok compilations have been worth it.

Finally, mentally restructuring myself has helped. Accepting the things I cannot change, and reflecting on what I can do to make my circumstances better. I've stopped looking at my performances with "Oh God, is it gonna go well?" and started thinking "Well, it's gonna happen either way. Good or bad, this concert is going to happen, and what happens happens." Things are still stressful, but they are going to keep happening to me, so I might as well just let them happen.

If you've spent this

semester holding on for dear life and waiting for the world to stop spinning, or if you've realized this semester that you're not doing okay, and maybe you never were, and maybe you never will be, then this is your sign that things will get better. We're all in this together, we're all having a hard time, and things will get better for all of us at some point.

Even if it doesn't feel like it, you have a future. You can do this. You can make it through one more week of finals. Pass or fail, ready or not, finals will happen. And then they'll be over. And no matter what your grades look like coming out of it, at least you'll never have to take Fall 2021 finals ever again.



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