

# Opinions

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Editorial

## 'You know it'll be alright:'

### A goodbye to Lou Reed

There's an often-repeated quip about the Velvet Underground: Only about 30,000 people bought the band's debut album, but they all went out and started a band after hearing it.

"No songwriter to emerge after Bob Dylan so radically expanded the territory of rock lyrics. And no band did more than the Velvet Underground to open rock music to experimental theater, art, literature and film, to William Burroughs and Andy Warhol, Reed's early patron," wrote Dave Urbanski for *The Blaze*. "Indie rock essentially begins in the 1960s with Reed and the Velvets; the punk, New Wave and alternative rock movements of the 1970s, '80s and '90s were all indebted to Reed, whose songs were covered by R.E.M., Nirvana, Patti Smith and countless others."

Reed, who died this weekend at the age of 71 — likely from complications due to a liver transplant he underwent in May — is survived by his legacy of superior songwriting.

"An outlaw in his early years, Reed would eventually perform at the White House, have his writing published in *The New Yorker*, be featured by PBS in an 'American Masters' documentary and win a Grammy in 1999 for Best Long Form Music Video," Urbanski wrote. "The Velvet Underground was inducted into the Rock and Roll (Hall) of Fame in 1996 and their landmark debut album, 'The Velvet Underground & Nico,' was added to the Library of Congress' registry in 2006."

The death of older rockers, especially ones as prominent and prolific as Lou Reed, resonates with millennials and Gen Y-ers, who grew up steeped in the music of their aging baby-boomer parents. Our generation has seen a cultural phenomenon unlike generations past: When baby boomers became parents, they eschewed the authoritarian parenting style of their parents and instead opted for a friendlier, more cooperative relationship with their children. Sharing music naturally follows in this new parenting trend.

Given the success of courses at UF such as "History of Rock 'N' Roll," it's clear young adults have taken an interest in the music of artists and bands who are either long-deceased or long-disbanded.

Lou Reed's death, then, is a sad moment for all of us who grew up singing along to "Yellow Submarine" as toddlers, spending afternoons driving around listening to Led Zeppelin as teens and eagerly purchasing the reissued editions of classic albums such as "Pet Sounds" and "Highway 61 Revisited."

In 1996, Reed wrote a guest column for *The New Yorker* titled "The Aches and Pains of Touring." He closed the piece — a tour diary, of sorts — describing the mood before a show in Belgium:

"Some group has threatened to kill the Sex Pistols for cancelling a gig — security is high. What a way to go. Shot by a drunken fan mistaking you for Johnny Rotten. I love rock and roll."

## Reader response

**Today's question:** Did you see Florida-Georgia Line in concert at UF?

**Monday's question:** Is UF making its own record label a good use of student money? **47% YES**  
**52% NO**  
171 TOTAL VOTES

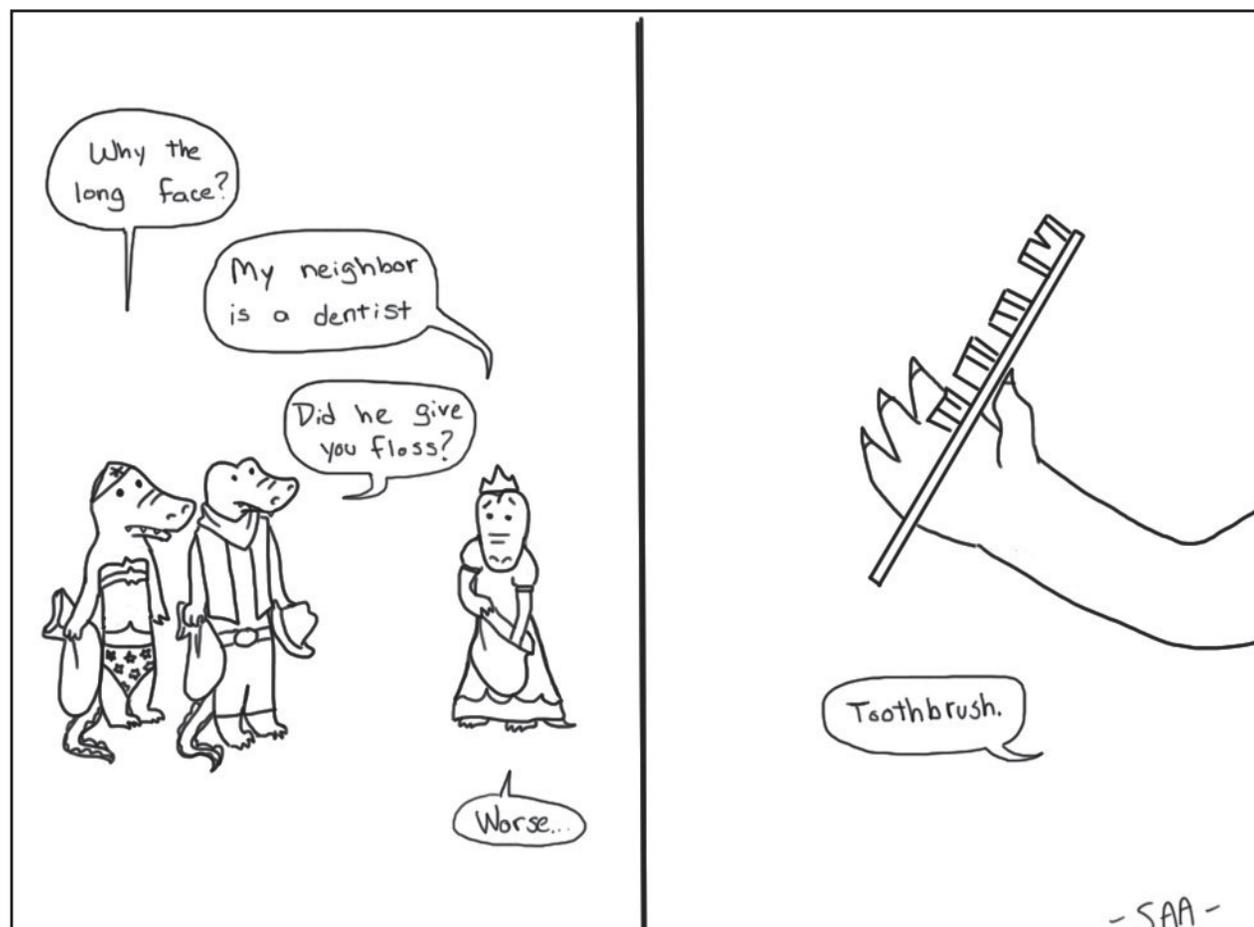
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Column

## Stop and smell the roses, busy Gators

A good friend of mine carries home a new stack of books from the library every week. She reads all the time, maintains good grades and serves as an event director for one of her extracurriculars. One of my favorite things about her is that, no matter when I ask her to do something, she's ready. I've never heard her say, "I can't, I'm busy." She has just as much to do as everyone else but makes time for the things she enjoys, like reading Jacques Lacan and taking photo excursions.

We could all afford to take a page from her book.

At a university such as UF, we're all accustomed to hectic schedules, but we've forgotten that they're not a requirement. Busyness has become a status symbol. The *New York Times* article "The 'Busy' Trap" captures the essence of this epidemic perfectly, explaining how promoting our busyness builds an illusion of importance both to ourselves and those around us.

What are we Gators if not overachievers? We're addicted to full planners and Google calendars brimming with to-do's. We pencil in 45-minute coffee dates with old friends just to lament our chaotic lives. Being too busy — and talking about it — makes us feel important and in demand, as though we didn't sign ourselves up for most of the items on our lists.

These busy-centric conversations consist of questions like "How have you been?" which are invariably answered with phrases like "crazy busy" and "so stressed." Cue the battle of one-upping each other on workloads and number of social engagements until both parties sigh, shrug their shoulders and commence describing their level of fatigue. We want our listeners to pity and respect our busy selves all at once, a combination not seen in any other situation, probably because those emotions are completely contradictory.

If we're so busy — even with schedules packed with trivialities — we must be making progress, right? A list



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full of places to go and people to see makes our progress toward some abstract future just a little more tangible. We can see our success and so can everyone else.

The *Times* piece also highlights the use of busyness "as a kind of existential reassurance, a hedge against emptiness."

If we're constantly in motion, our lives must be brimming with meaning and purpose. Whether or not the activities we participate in fulfill us, they certainly fill out a day planner, leaving no idle time to feel lonely or bored — or to enjoy life's little pleasures. Busyness is our society's newest defense mechanism against emotions that will find us anyway.

We fall victim to the busy trap when we believe we can't progress unless others can see our struggle too. Those of us who pad our daily schedules with fluff activities should reevaluate how to spend our precious time.

Most importantly, we have to stop perpetuating the idea that whoever is the busiest and most stressed will reap the biggest reward.

That couldn't be further from the truth.

None of this busyness — whether real, feigned or exaggerated — signals success.

To put it simply, life is too short to be too busy for the wrong reasons.

We must consider our motivations when signing up for that new club or taking on extra hours at work.

Are our reasons for pleasure or a purpose, or might we realize we're only trying to keep up with the proverbial Joneses?

Katie McPherson is a UF English junior. Her columns run on Tuesdays.

The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the Alligator.