

Gateway

2017

Ink of Murray

Modern tattooing meets small town
vibes
p. 17

Brost.

Student. Musician. Dreamer.
p. 24

Through His Eyes

An international Racer shares his
globe-spanning story
p. 36





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From the **Editor**

In the making of Gateway 2017, I've hung out with the Plain White T's on a trip to Nashville and ventured into the darkest recesses of Land Between the Lakes with a skeleton crew of fellow reporters, all while working with some of the most memorable friends and staff in the world. This page is for their stories, or at least the little bit of their stories I have been fortunate enough for them to share with me.

Gisselle Hernandez is from Belize, a small country in Central America. She hates it when people are surprised when she speaks English well, since English is actually Belize's national language. She writes some of the most profound columns once every two weeks, all well worth the read.

Austin Gordon is a whiz kid with design, web coding, you name it. Without him, *The Murray State News* would be a much different organization, as would this year's Gateway. Raised in Benton, Kentucky, he knows hard work and always has a new story about working in his dad's body shop as a kid.

Journalists have stories of their own. Designers have stories, organizations have stories and even Gateway 2017 has a story that I am proud to be a part of.

Throughout the rest of this magazine are the stories that make up the Murray State experience – even if it is in just 60 short pages.

Connor Jaschen

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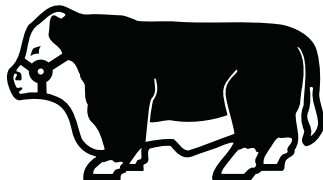
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Story by Brianna Willis

Nothing like watching the best music videos of 2016 or remembering those lost over the year as you wait for the ball to drop on New Year's Eve.

This year, we've gathered up some of the biggest moments of 2016 for you to look back on fondly – or perhaps not so fondly.

CELEBRITY DEATHS

In 2016, we lost a lot of music icons and acting giants. The year had a tragic start with the death of David Bowie, music legend and pioneer, on Jan. 10. The world mourned as the loss of everyone's favorite genderfluid British pop/rock star shook everyone from fellow celebrities to common citizens. Twitter exploded, and Facebook wept.

Four days later, the acting world lost Alan Rickman. Harry Potter fans put their wands in the air, sending sad tweets and quoting their favorite “bad boy” of the wizarding world. However, he was known for more than just his mysterious monotone portrayal of Professor Snape in the

Harry Potter series. He was a thespian, as well as a cheating but loving husband (“Love Actually”), a fiery Ronald Reagan (“The Butler”) and much more.

Things did not get better as the year went on. The loss of Prince, another unconventional pop music legend who shaped the genre and gave sexy a voice for generations and generations. Pop music suffered heavily, but people took solace in thinking Prince and Bowie were wherever you believe people go after they die still making music for weird kids mainstream and cool.

June 3 came, and we lost Muhammad Ali. Thanks, 2016. A civil rights activist and heavyweight champion, his death was a low blow of the year, especially so close to Ali's hometown of Louisville, Kentucky.

Other notable deaths:

Gene Wilder: Aug. 28
Alexis Arquette: Sept. 11
Carrie Fisher: Dec. 27

LET'S GET POLITICAL

2016 ramped up the political talk as people geared up for the presidential election. Votes started pouring in for the primaries, and, one by one, candidates dropped out of the race. Here is a list of all the presidential hopefuls entering 2016, and when they dropped out of the race.

Republicans:

- Mike Huckabee: Feb. 1
- Rand Paul: Feb. 3
- Rick Santorum: Feb. 3
- Carly Fiorina: Feb. 10
- Chris Christie: Feb. 10
- Jim Gilmore: Feb. 12
- Jeb Bush: Feb. 20
- Ben Carson: March 4
- Paul Ryan: April 12
- Marco Rubio: April 13
- Ted Cruz: May 3
- John Kasich: May 4

Democrats:

Martin O'Malley: Feb. 1

Bernie Sanders: Endorsed Hillary Clinton on July 12 but officially ended his campaign at the Democratic National Convention, two weeks later when Clinton was named the presidential candidate for the party.

Whew, what a lot to keep up with. That wasn't even the end of political season. Once Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton were named the two major party candidates for president at their respective conventions (RNC and DNC) the ads increased, the campaign trail was set ablaze and the candidates kept finding their names in the news over scandals or comments made. Then the debates happened, spawning several memes and Snapchat-filtered candidate videos. And then Election Day came. The winner: Donald Trump. Can't wait to see what 2017 holds for the new president and policies.

POPCORN, CANDY AND A GOOD MOVIE

The 88th Academy Awards were held on Feb. 28, and this year was one of the most highly-contested yet highly-celebrated Oscars in recent memory. With zero actors and actresses of color nominated (again), Twitter took to its hashtag trend with #OscarsSoWhite. People nationwide said they would engage in a protest of the 2016

Oscars, as they felt many actors and actresses, as well as films made by or about people of color, were snubbed for race-related reasons. Celebrities weighed in, showing support or disdain of the hashtag and ideology behind it.

Either way, the Oscars came, and Leonardo DiCaprio finally won an Academy Award. His nomination for Best Actor in a Leading Role in "The Revenant" finally secured him an Oscar, and his fans celebrated the win.

Now that 2016 has come to a close, here's a look back on some of the biggest films of 2016 that may be up for nominations at this year's Oscars:

- "Don't Breathe"
- "Finding Dory"
- "Kubo and the Two Strings"
- "Moana"

THE YEAR LOVE DIED

In 2016, we had many things to grieve, including the dissolution of some of our favorite Hollywood couples.

Johnny Depp and Amber Heard: Heard filed for divorce on May 23.

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie: TMZ found out Jolie filed for divorce on Sept. 20.

Khloé Kardashian and Lamar Odom: Initially Khloé filed for divorce in 2013. However, after some reconciliation and ultimately ending, she filed again on May 26.

Mary J. Blige and Kendu Isaacs: July 28.



Photos courtesy of rhythms.com and pinterest.com.



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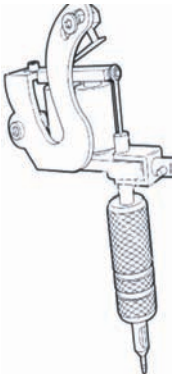
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Sole-mate Stories

Racers' love stories after finding the right fit

Story by **Abby Siegel**
Photo by **Nicole Ely**

It's not uncommon to attend Murray State in pursuit of a degree and leave with a spouse. It has occurred often enough that the university has devoted a tree (err, stump) to the soulmates who meet as Racers and leave as 'til-death-do-us-part' lovers. Based on tradition, the lucky ones who the university brings together, after marrying, nail a pair of shoes to the designated tree rooted in the Quad neighboring the Rainey T. Wells statue.

Although no one is quite sure when the practice began or who its founder is, the tradition dates back as far as the 1960s and really took off during the 2000s. There have been multiple Shoe Trees since many have been struck by lightning. Although the exact number of Shoe Trees is unknown, each tree was planted in the early 1930s shortly after the university's founding.

At first, the tree only housed a few random shoes – so few that some even say it was a prank that triggered the tradition. Needless to say, today the Shoe Tree is full of evidence of the sole-mates Murray State has brought together.

SAWYER & MANDY LAWSON

Murray State has been the theme of Sawyer and Mandy Lawson's relationship. They met in a business statistics class and were in the same study group, but they rarely talked until the end of finals week. That following summer, Mandy stayed in Murray to complete an internship, and that is when her relationship with Sawyer bloomed. Together, they walked around campus, rode in his Jeep, went to The Arboretum and had ice cream dates at Dairy Queen.

Sawyer's family has deep roots in Murray – he even learned to ride his bike on Murray State's campus. This made having his wedding reception in the Curris Center Ballroom a natural fit, and they attached their shoes to the Shoe Tree on their wedding day. They have no plans to leave Murray anytime soon, as they purchased a house in Murray. Sawyer still has season tickets for the Racer basketball games (he counts down to basketball season all year), and Mandy is working on completing her master's degree.

"Married life is full of happiness," Sawyer said. "Hopefully we will have a future Sig Ep or future Alpha Gam soon."

One of Mandy's favorite things about Sawyer is that he is a very patient person, which is something she says she isn't good at. Sawyer's favorite thing about Mandy is that she always has a game plan so he never has to worry about a thing.

BRIAN & MELISSA COLLIER

Brian and Melissa Collier met at Murray State when Brian, a student ambassador at the time, was Melissa's tour guide on her campus visit. Later, he taught her freshman orientation class as an ambassador for the College of Education and Human Services, and she jokes she was stalking him as she continually, randomly, appeared in the groups

he was leading as an ambassador. They dated for about 10 months before he proposed, when Brian graduated and Melissa finished her final two years as an undergraduate student. They made many memories at Murray State, and the first time Brian told Melissa he loved her was on the roof of Hester Residential College, where they spent many evenings watching the sunset.

"He has a very strong work ethic, he is easy to respect," Melissa said. "He is a good man. He is very kind."

Brian and Melissa continually laugh together and are a clear match.

"Our opposites complement each other," Brian said. "There is nobody else I'd rather be with."

"My first go-to person is him," Melissa said. "He's the one I want to hang out with. He's the one I want to fall asleep on the couch with. He is the one I enjoy doing life with."

They added their shoes to the Shoe Tree at Homecoming in 2014. They added four shoes: two for themselves and one for each of their little girls – Anna, age 7, and Addy, age 5.

A theme of Brian and Melissa's relationship is service. Even while they were dating, they focused on serving others, both within their church and outside of it. Melissa said it is a factor in what has made their relationship continue to grow stronger over the years, as serving others was one of the first things they did together. With 10 years of faithful marriage under their belt, Brian and Melissa have great advice on marriage, all rooted in being a team and acting as unit.

"Choose each other," Brian said.

"Be best friends, hold hands and sit close," Melissa said. "Be willing to figure it out when things get hard, work together to figure it out."

PAUL & BECKY LILE

Becky has never been Paul's girlfriend, only his fiancée and wife. Becky had been crushing on Paul from the moment she met him during her freshman year at their campus ministry, Chi Alpha. It was a pretty instant crush, but she didn't think Paul had the same feelings she had. During their college years, both Paul and Becky decided to give up dating altogether to grow in their Christian faith, but Becky's crush on Paul never left.

"I was able to move from infatuation to really knowing him," Becky said.

On May 4, 1997, Paul asked Becky to be his wife in front of their church at a special Sunday called "College Day," where the focus is on "popping the question" of where you think you will spend eternity. Little did Becky know Paul was going to pop a different question on stage in an impromptu skit that would shape the rest of their lives. Of course, she said yes, and they have lived happily in Murray ever since.

"It was interesting because when we weren't dating, I was able to look at her a little more objectively, rather than putting my best foot forward," Paul said. "I fell in love with the real person over a longer period of time."

They saved their first kiss for the moment the officiate, their campus minister Mark Randall, said, "You may kiss the bride."

"The way that we conducted ourselves paved the way for a very strong marriage," Paul said. "We did a lot of patient waiting and I think that drops a lot of baggage that is carried."

Becky's advice for a strong marriage: patience and grace – and more patience and grace.

"Love keeps no records of wrongs," Becky said.



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Greek life

a Murray State tradition

Story by Alicia Steele
 Graphics by Connor Jaschen

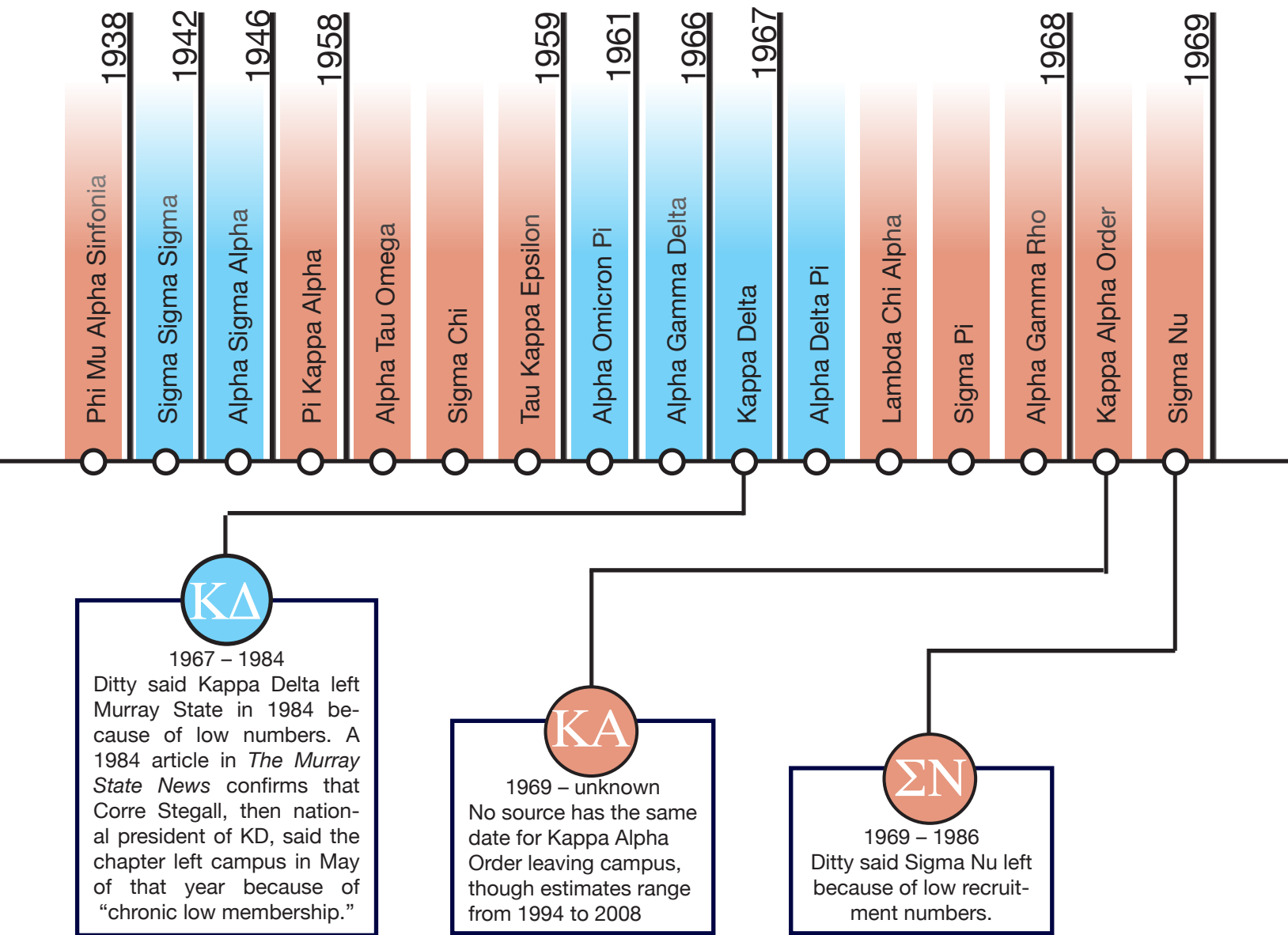
As of the most recent numbers, 19 percent of Murray State’s undergraduate population is involved in some sort of Greek organization.

Dating from the first Greek organization, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, in 1938, Murray State has welcomed 31 Greek organizations to campus, though only 22 remain.

Evan Ditty, former Greek life coordinator, said all but one of the Greek organizations to leave campus have left because of recruitment numbers that fell below the requirements of that organization’s national office.

The outlier, Delta Sigma Phi, left campus in 1991 because it failed to pay a risk management fee to its national office, which Ditty said was required to cover incidents such as injury on the property.

- Fraternity
- Sorority
- NPHC Organizations



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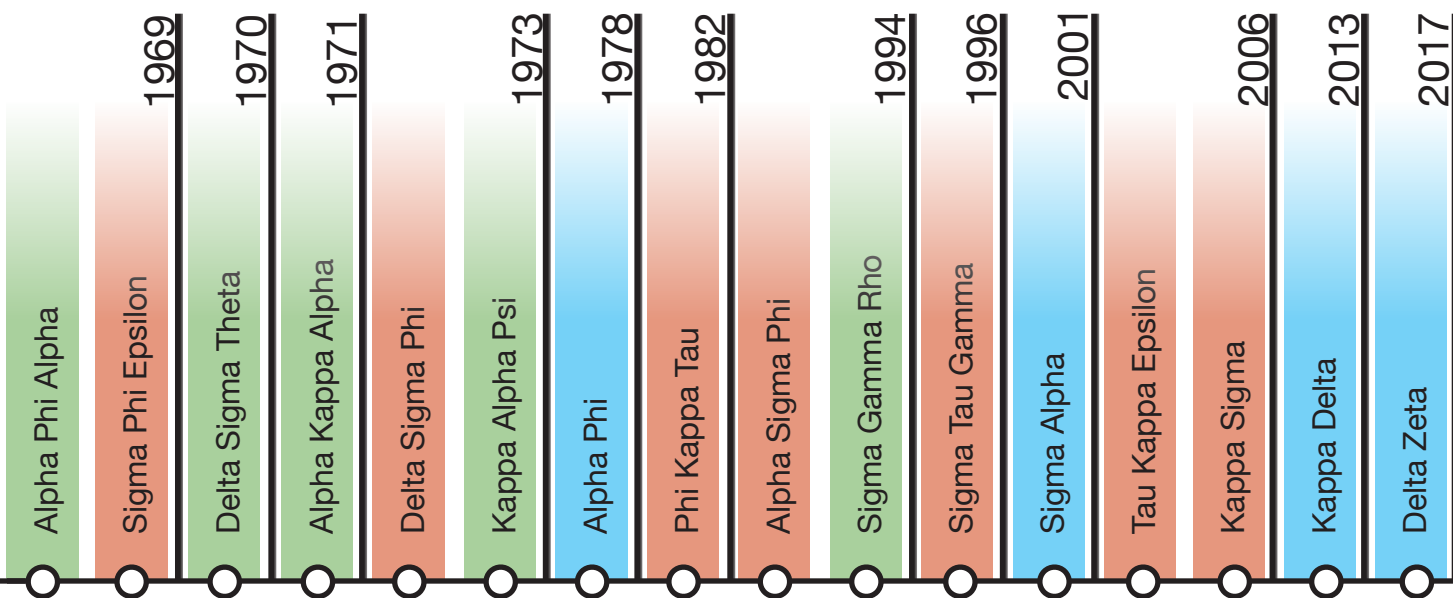
left 1999



left 2010



left 2014



1973-1991

Ditty said Delta Sigma Phi left campus in 1991 because the chapter failed to pay a risk management fee to its national office.



2006-2012

In 2006, a student-led effort restored the original attempt to charter a chapter of Tau Kappa Epsilon at Murray State.



2013-present

Kappa Delta was welcomed back to campus in 2013, following a 29-year absence caused by low recruitment numbers.



Delta Zeta is currently in the process of chartering on Murray State's campus.

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INK OF MURRAY

STORY BY GISSELLE HERNANDEZ

PHOTOS BY CHALICE KEITH

When the term addiction comes to mind, it is usually paired with scenes of drug and alcohol abuse. But at My Reality Tattoos & Piercings, addiction will almost always refer to the euphoric adrenaline rush from ink decorating skin permanently as a reminder of that quote, grandma or band that means so much to you.

THE ADDICTION

Stash, owner of My Reality in Murray, said he wholeheartedly believes that tattoos are an addiction. He said tattoos are more addictive than cocaine and heroin combined, citing an unnamed university study source. His wife, Danielle Hicks, agrees with this study, saying people always come back for more. My Reality has been in Murray for 16 years, and Stash said even though someone might say they only want one when they come in for their first tattoo, they always come back looking for more.

THE SHOP EXPERIENCE

Stash has owned tattoo shops all over the world, with his first two located in Las Vegas and Los Angeles, but now he only owns the Murray shop and one in Germany. He said he misses working in big cities because of the different atmosphere.

"Working [in cities] was fun. More people can take jokes and have fun," he said. "They're not all so uptight and serious. City people are more kicked-back, relaxed and enjoying life, where people in the country here are always stressed out, overworked and under-

paid and I feel for them."

He said city people are also easier to work with because they trust the artist more. Stash said in Murray, certain tattoo shops give the artists a bad name because they only take on jobs for money, even if they do not have the expertise to complete a tattoo.

"I turn away probably about 30 percent of tattoos because people want them a certain way and they're going to look bad," he said. "It's not me judging what they're getting, but it would not come out right."

Especially because wording is the trend now, Stash said people want quotes or small Bible verse tattoos that would bleed together and become indecipherable.

"And when you do them that way it makes your work look bad and it makes you look bad," Stash said.

The entire My Reality staff has multiple tattoos but not entire sleeves as some people might assume. Hicks said this is how you can differentiate between a busy tattoo shop and a dead one: if the workers don't have tons of tattoos it means they're always busy, but if they have a bunch of tattoos it means they have a lot of time to tattoo each other.

Stash said My Reality rarely gets any slow days, whether people are frequently coming in for tattoos and piercings or college kids visiting to just hang out in the parlor. It doesn't matter where the tattoo shop is - be it in New York or rural Murray - students come in to do their homework and just "chill."

As for the people who seek to get tattoos, Stash's favorites to do are feathers and "In Memory" ones. The wall behind the counter at My Reality is evidence of this, as it displays an array of cards, from Thank You's and graduation announcements to remembrance tokens of regulars who have died.

The demographic for the tattoo shop has been expanding, because of the popularity of daith piercings - cartilage ear piercings believed to treat migraines. Hicks, an expert on body piercings, said more and more people have been coming in seeking to cure their migraines. Stash said people who would never have set foot in a tattoo parlor, including men looking for relief, are coming in to do their daith piercings.

"After being myself diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, it's so cool to be able to help people with something as simple as a headache," Hicks said. "You would think it's a basic thing a doctor should be able to fix and figure out and the fact that I'm able to help people with migraines and being able to make someone's pain stop is the coolest thing."

RACER INK

Although addiction to the adrenaline rush is always a pretty good motive for getting a tattoo, there are other reasons as well. *The Murray State News* decided to explore a few of these reasons by asking students, faculty and staff what inspired the art that stays with them forever.



Sarah Hopley
Special collections and
exhibit librarian



Chris Mieles
Junior from Dover, Tennessee
*"All my tattoos represent my morals,
values and ethics, based on my code of
honor."*



Diane Nititham
Assistant professor of
sociology



Stash
Owner of My Reality
Tattoo & Piercings



Sarah Clark
Senior from Louisville,
Kentucky



Carrie Jerrell
Associate professor of English
*"A pegasus because it symbolizes
mythology."*



Stella Childress
Junior from Florence, Ken-
tucky
*"It's a symbol of my devotion
to God."*



Danielle Hicks
Piercing artist at My Reality
Tattoo & Piercings



Merissa Doore
Freshman from the District of
Columbia



Melissa Doore
Freshman from the District of Columbia
"Symbol of the path to enlightenment."



John Morris
Senior from Nashville, Tennessee



Joel Stegner
Sophomore from Florence, Kentucky



John Morris
Senior from Nashville, Tennessee
"My grandma, who's passed on, always used to say I'd be a king."



Charley Allen
Web manager at the office of Branding, Marketing and Communications
"The phoenix was a symbol for new beginnings."



Brandon Speed
Senior from Mayfield, Kentucky



Cody Malvitz
Senior from Scottsville, Kentucky

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Leading **the herd**

Story by Abby Siegel

Photos by Kelli O'Toole and McKenna Dosier

Since Bob Davies became Murray State's 13th president in July 2014, we have seen him everywhere – on campus, at community events, in our inboxes and all over our newsfeeds. His commitment to the university and his affinity for college campuses goes beyond the president's office, as he struts around in his trademark blue and gold, gleaming with Racer pride. Davies shares his advice for college students, how he manages his presidency and the strong love he has for his wife Cindy, daughter Katie and Shih Tzu Minna.

Q What advice would you give to graduating seniors?

Continue to learn and make that a habit. Remain curious. Always be learning, always be pressing the issues and always be asking, "What's next?" And always remember that Murray State is the finest place you know, and when you make it big if you would like to name a building after yourself, we will accept donations.

Q If there was a movie of your life, who would play you?

A knee-jerk reaction would be Michael J. Fox. I just like his acting style and his personality and sense of humor. He also is vertically challenged. [In *Family Ties*], he was a young Republican, always wore a tie to school, business entrepreneurial, reminded me very much of myself when I was in high school and undergraduate.

Q What is your favorite way to spend time with family?

Cindy and I walk the campus frequently, and I really enjoy that. We walk up to the Wellness Center and back. We usually take our little puppy with us. Watching Katie ride her horses and play soccer is something that is very special. The one thing we do is every summer, we take two weeks off and literally get out of the country. We find some place where it is just us.

How do you make tough decisions?



Listen first. Listen second. Listen third. I try to frame the difficult decisions on what will be the best for the long run for the university. I try very, very hard to do my homework, to do the research, to fully understand the issue at hand and all pathways forward. We are in the relationship business, and I see everything based upon those relationships. I rely heavily on the vice presidents, the deans but also faculty and students. Sometimes I seek advice from outside the institution to provide balance.

How do you handle stress?



First and foremost, I don't take myself serious. I take the job and the office of the utmost seriousness. I realize very much that I am one person at the university, and the university is a lot bigger and a lot more important than me. We are creating the future of our world. It is a stressful job, but it is also one that I love, and it is one that has more joy than not. Also watching my daughter ride her horses and watching her play soccer, that puts a lot of things into perspective.

Does your daughter still plan to attend Murray State?



Absolutely. She is a sophomore in high school. I am proud of her. She is doing so well. She is playing a lot of soccer, riding her horses still and working hard. She plans on being a Murray State student in two years. That is the game plan and we are not shying away from it. She is writing a little rulebook about what President Dad can do and what President Dad cannot do. So we will cross that bridge and I know we will be fine. My wife, Cindy, also loves being on campus and being part of Murray State 24/7.

Your dream dinner party: who is invited?



I would have to start off with my grandfather. He has passed away, but he was an individual that shaped my life in more ways than one. I would love to have a last dinner with him. I would be fascinated to have a dinner with Ben Franklin, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. Particularly with Thomas Jefferson for his overt commitment to creating the American university.

What would you eat at this dinner party?



Everything but vegetables. I love barbecue. I love ribs. I love true pork butt barbecue. I'd probably make it.





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Brost.

Story by Connor Jaschen

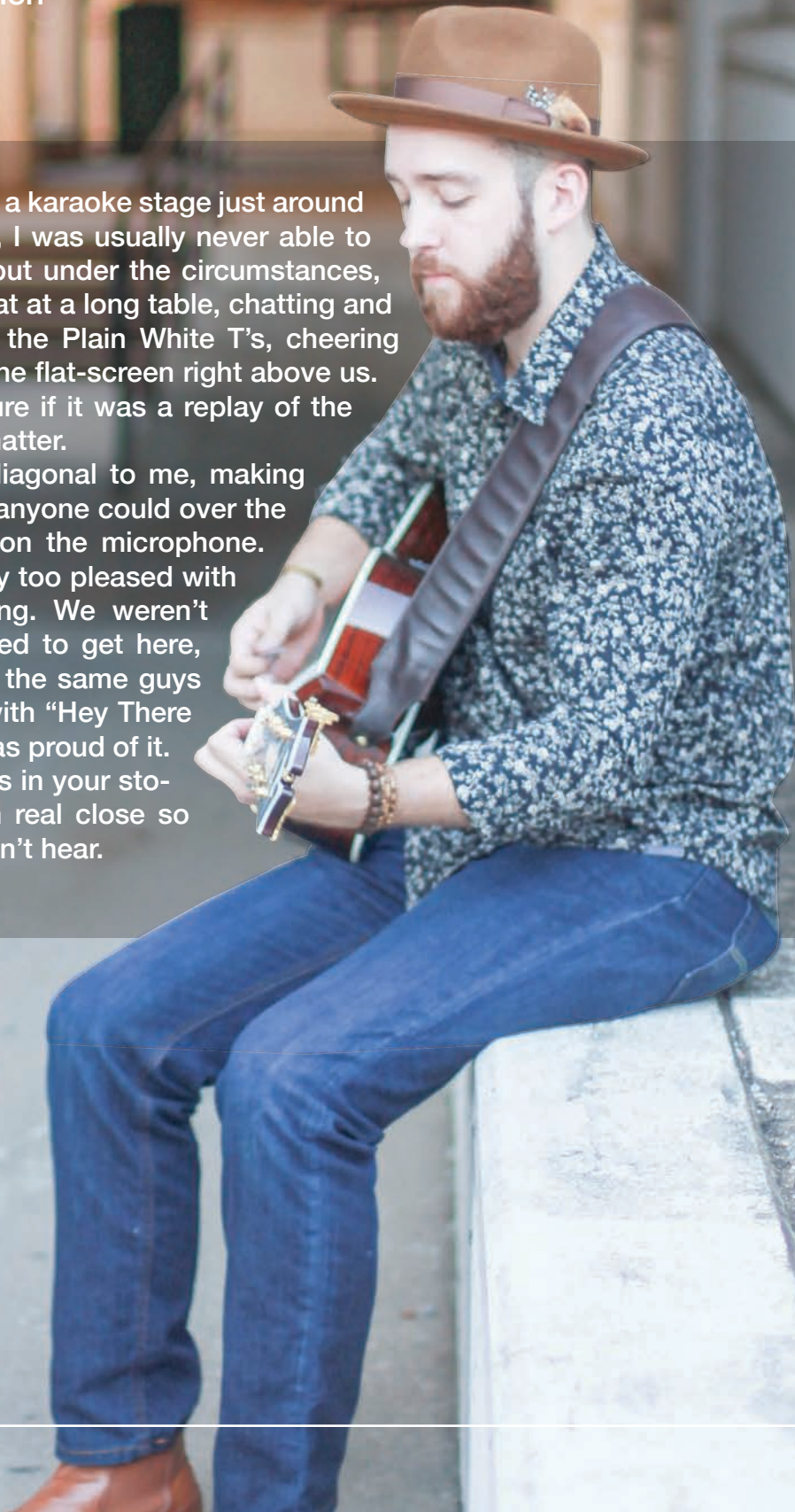
Photos by Jenny Rohl

It was a low-lit bar with a karaoke stage just around a corner. Being underage, I was usually never able to get into places like this, but under the circumstances, no one stopped me. We sat at a long table, chatting and eating and laughing with the Plain White T's, cheering on the Chicago Cubs on the flat-screen right above us. It was late, so I wasn't sure if it was a replay of the game, but to us it didn't matter.

Kevin Ray Brost sat diagonal to me, making as much conversation as anyone could over the sounds of drunk cooing on the microphone. He looked over at me, way too pleased with himself, ear-to-ear grinning. We weren't sure how we had managed to get here, scoring a few drinks with the same guys who soothed the nation with "Hey There Delilah," but Brost sure was proud of it.

"Make sure you get this in your story," Brost said, leaning in real close so the band around us wouldn't hear.

Well, here it is Kevin.



Brost and I met at his workplace in downtown Nashville, a tall, skinny building with a big glass window showing the Nashville skyline. It was nestled right off Broadway, with a clear view of the heart of town, minus a few construction zones that blocked the way.

Brost had been there early that morning, doing the grunt work, taking messages and packages left at the front desk. I sat on a long couch next to the receptionist area, asking Brost questions between a phone call from the manager of the Alabama Shakes and receiving a package for Martina McBride.

This Kevin Brost wasn't the Kevin Brost of his music videos or on his Instagram account. Gone was the fedora

and the button-up and braided bracelets on his arms; instead he looked like a Murray State student late for an 8 a.m., complete with a baseball hat and T-shirt. Behind the desk, he worked on classwork. The small glimpse I did get of his computer screen was a myGate account, pulled up to show Brost's RACR Degree Audit. He had an assignment due during the week and he was going to be sure to get it done.

Every morning he rose with the sun, rushed from Murray to Nashville to sit at this desk and try to do homework while juggling the memorabilia and meetings for country music's biggest stars.

"I don't give myself slack," Brost said, eyes still glued



to the computer screen. "I chose to intern here, I knew what the struggles were."

Brost explained the ins and outs of what he had figured out about the music industry thus far: how it was all a competition, even between managers of the same company. He described a Hunger Games scenario, where having an artist is having gold and you may get stepped on if you aren't aggressive about what you want.

Nashville and Murray are a different culture, though, and Brost had to force himself to make that change every morning he came here, scheduling his days down to the minute so he can keep everything in order. He schedules in time to talk to his mom, at risk of not having time to talk to her for the rest of the week.

Eventually, another intern came in to take over and

we were off, with only 15 minutes allotted for Brost to find his car and drive to Music Row, a neighborhood of houses adapted into recording studios, record labels and management agencies.

When we got there, he told me he had to change for his interview. So, standing in the middle of a parking lot, he took his shirt off, replacing it with the black and grey button up he wore in his 'Stay' music video. He put in contacts, replaced his ball cap with a fedora and wrapped braided bracelets around his arms: the look anyone who followed him on social media would recognize.

The outfit he carried with him anywhere was a conscious choice, apparently decided on by his manager and himself, a way to show off the 'Roots Americana' sound while staying true to himself. He stuffed his work clothes



in a bag, and we went searching.

The building we found was a two-story Tudor home, with an old-style piano in the waiting room and a back hallway lined with office spaces for management and public relations firms. One of the office workers came out and asked if he had a manager, handed him a card and a sales pitch. Brost smiled and nodded, pocketed the card and moved on. He said he couldn't give them a call, out of respect for his own management.

"A relationship between an artist and a manager is like a marriage," Brost said. "It never stops."

He rolled up his sleeves and started to improv on the piano while we waited, beginning with a lively jam and then moving on to something more mellow.

This moment seemed to be the realest moment of the day, despite being dressed in his 'artist outfit' and our visit mostly being for Brost to network and get screen time. When Brost played, the world collapsed around him. The music in the air was palpable, you could feel it; for the first time in the day, he smiled out of genuine happiness rather than to be

polite to someone he had to impress.

The music session, however, was quickly cut short, as the pair from Nashville Entertainment Weekly came through the door, cameras and sound equipment in tow. They set a fast pace, getting the room set up and everything in order in less than a minute.

Next thing I knew, Brost was in front of the camera talking about his hometown, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, his favorite music and what he wanted to accomplish with his career. The entire interview was off the cuff, beginning and ending in less than three minutes.

The hosts, Jill Santibanez and TJ Cates motioned to me and mentioned the magazine article I was writing, gave a little shoutout and continued on with the interview. I took it in stride. They ended the interview and took pictures with Brost – as well as myself, to my surprise. Later, they found me on Facebook and tagged me in the big post about their interview, complete with our picture together.

While a Facebook post is usually insignificant, this was something different entirely. Their faces lit up

when they found out I was writing a story, wanted to get a cover of the magazine, handed me a card and tried to connect. It was then when I realized that this pair whom Brost was trying to impress was hustling for their own survival just like Brost.

We left then and went to get food at a place Brost ensured was a true taste of Nashville, Hattie B's.

During our wait in line, Brost talked about balancing school and music and how, more than anything, he felt college held him back to some extent. Oftentimes, Brost's local fame pushed people away, as Brost said some members of his fraternity have even shown him contempt.

Music has always been a part of his life, Brost explained, though never to this extent, where he has been forced to sacrifice almost everything he enjoyed about college life.

"Sometimes I think it's unfair to [friends and family]," Brost said.

Brost said living in the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity house isn't the same as it was when he first moved in. Now, a lock stays on his door, and it's a surprise when his roommates get the chance to see him.

In fact, Brost said most people he connects with in Nashville don't know anything about him being in a fraternity, either because it doesn't come up or through a conscious effort to maintain an identity true to his music and brand.

Many of these lost personal relationships are made up for in Brost's interactions with managers and agents, he said. A team that put together his identity as an artist; the reason he had changed out in the parking lot earlier.

He talked about how artists are, to some extent, brands – each with a unique look to best match their music.

Brost's brand?

"Authenticity," he said.

Authenticity? But how can an identity you have to physically change into be authentic? Entire aspects of his life – like his fraternity – were at first glance brushed off to the side, all but vacant in the throws of the music industry.

The rest of the day, I found myself trying to discern Kevin Ray Brost the musician and Kevin Ray Brost, the Murray State student afraid to stay in Murray the rest of his life.

After waiting in line, we finally got in, but our meal was short-lived – we ended up waiting in line longer than we sat down to eat. Brost checked emails and messages on his phone, answering questions between mouthfuls. He only had 20 minutes at this point to eat, find his car and head back to the office to work. The day had picked up and he was going to be late if we didn't inhale everything in front of us.

We finished up our plates, thanked the guy working the counter and headed out again, near-jogging to find his car and get back quickly.

"I'm not worried about [failing]," Brost said, barely looking before crossing the street to the parking garage. "I'm going to hit the artist thing as hard as I can."

Brost went back to work to help out his intern team and I traveled around Nashville for the next hour and a half. After Brost's work, we met

back up at his hotel, changed quickly and geared up for the main event, the real reason I came this day specifically: the International Entertainment Buyer's Association Annual Conference, set in the Country Music Hall of Fame in the heart of the Music City.

Before we left, he handed me a press pass he had snagged earlier in the day, with the name of some agent who was supposed to show up: code-name Joe Smith.

Brost stopped me in the lobby and pulled me off to the side. He told me to wait there, and he would go steal me another, in case Joe Smith did show up. His parting words made me nervous:

"Just look like you belong," he said. "But try and stand out of the way, too. And cover your name tag. You don't really look like an agent."

A sheepish smile and he disappeared. Then, he was off – around the corner and up a flight of escalators.

He came back and we stepped off to the side to switch off name tags and continue on.

Brost explained this type of showcase was for the music elite. The performers on stage were artists looking to get signed. The audience was made up of agents and managers looking to sign on whoever they think they could sell. There were no casual fans, nor people screaming and fighting for a chance at a front row seat.

Throughout the night, bands ranged from Grammy award winners like LeAnn Rimes to up and coming artists like Jordan Fisher.

I tried to follow Brost around for a majority of the night, though he had a knack for disappearing. At one point, he went back downstairs to get one of his intern friends.

Another time, he was schmoozing it up with one of the managers in the audience, shaking hands and taking cards.

We bounced between the performance hall and the balcony overlooking the city for the rest of the night, until Brost disappeared once more, having nabbed another badge that just said "Talent." He was backstage, schmoozing and taking pictures with as many musicians as he could, being sure to drop his own name.

We made our way back in when The Plain White T's came on stage. The band began their original ballad of 'Hey There Delilah.' Brost grabbed me and another one of the interns by the shoulder, dragging us through the crowd.

"Come on."

We went stage-side and sang along with the dozens of young people who seemed to have made their way out of the woodworks. There were at least 30 bodies pressed against the stage – the most alive the crowd had been all night.

Afterwards, as the crowd dispersed, Brost all but forgot I was with him, having broken away from the pack of fans who had gathered for the band's performance and donned his "Talent" badge. As the Plain White T's went backstage, Brost walked right in behind them, almost leaving me and his intern friend in the process.

Brost gave the Plain White T's enough time to sit and grab a drink before making a beeline to their dressing room.



After a few minutes of congratulations and small talk, Brost asked the drummer if he wanted to hang out later. Somehow, Brost convinced him, exchanged numbers and made plans for later that night.

As the conference closed down, we left the venue and met up with the Plain White T's at a bar, holed up for the night. We talked and laughed and watched the Chicago Cubs play on a flat-screen just above our table. The band was from Chicago and hated the White Sox from what I could tell. I wish I could've seen their reaction when only a month and a half later, the Cubs won the World Series for the first time in 108 years.

The night came to a close and Brost and I went our separate ways. It wasn't until two weeks later, when we met back up one afternoon at Mr. J's Grill and Pub back in Murray – Brost returning to regular student attire with his fraternity brothers a table away, laughing and chatting the whole time – that he actually addressed the distinction that had driven me through most of the night at the music showcase.

Who was Brost really? I had spent the whole night with him and wasn't sure what his branded 'authenticity' meant to him. Was authenticity changing into pre-approved clothes in a parking lot so no one would see him as anything but an artist? Was authenticity sneaking backstage, or snagging talent passes or a night in Nashville? So, I asked.

"It's not like an act I'm trying to play," Brost said. "I feel like I live in regret every day and I want to do everything I can to stay out of that."

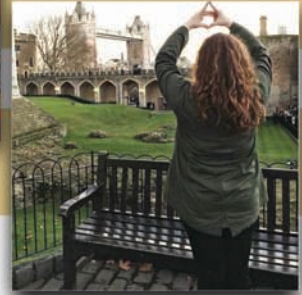
For the rest of the meal, there in Mr. J's, he opened up more than he ever did in Nashville. He told me about his old bands and the music he used to play with them and how at the end of the day, he wants a band to experience the ups and downs of the music experience. He spoke of regret and who he wanted to be and his girlfriend and family and playing on his scooter as a kid, listening to "Hey There Delilah" on repeat and how he was just a fanboy when he was able to meet the Plain White T's. We talked about us meeting the band and Brost seemed just as confused as I was at how we had managed it.

That is when I figured out who and what Brost was. Kevin Ray Brost was just a kid from Cape, not a clue in the world about what comes next. At some point, he was a kid walking across the Quad for the first time, trying to figure out what college really was. At another point, he was rushing a fraternity, nervous as every young man is during rush. Another, he was just some kid in Waterfield Library, studying for an 8 a.m. final he was underprepared for.

Now, though, Brost was just someone who tried a bit harder than most, with a guitar, a whole lot of luck and a whole lot of hustle. Brost is as much the kid playing piano in the lobby as he was the artist in the interview.

And maybe one day, he'll be even more.

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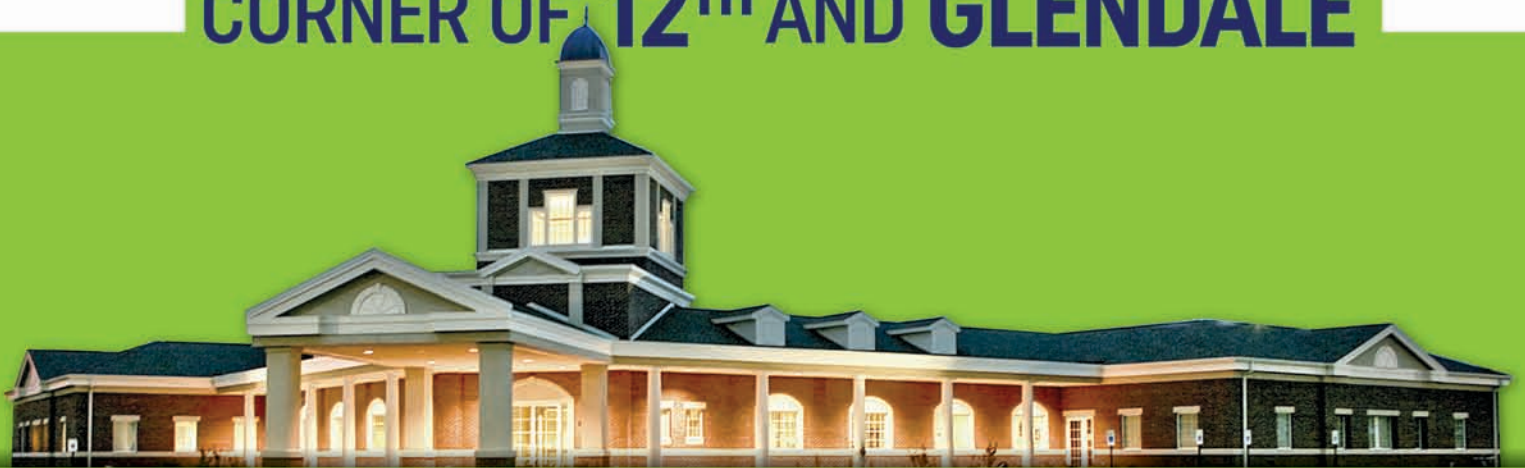
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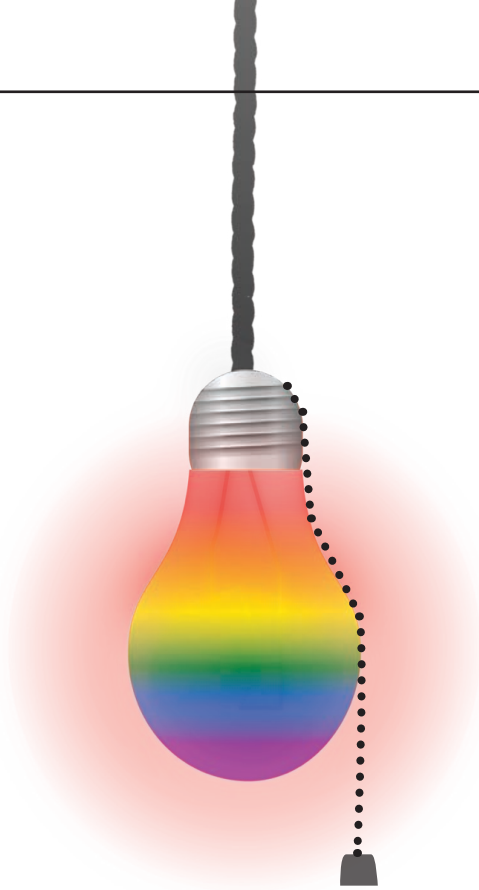
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AND THEN THERE WAS LIGHT

Story by Abby Siegel

For many of those who identify as LGBT, coming out is a delicate process with possibly detrimental consequences in personal relationships. A matter of physical and emotional attraction coincides with the opinions of others – some of faithful loved ones, others of passing strangers. Familiar and safe places of family and church are shaped into abodes of questioned acceptance. These stories share how two students came out to their families and how their lives continued on. Their stories are different, but also the same, as students Devan Reed and Kelsey Crawford find acceptance within themselves by coming out of the dark and into the light.

DEVAN REED

Devan, senior from Mayfield, Kentucky, realized he was attracted to men when he was 11 or 12 years old. At that time, he was very involved at his church and was on the worship team.

"I remember just sitting in my room for hours asking God to fix me, asking God to make me normal," he said. "It was really hard to accept that there was something different about me, and for a long time I stopped believing that there was a God. If I was praying that hard and was asking that much and it wasn't happening, then no one was listening."

Devan began dating men, and when he was 16, his parents discovered a conversation he was having with his boyfriend on Facebook. The conversation that followed the discovery between Devan and his parents didn't go well.

"I passed it off as a phase, kind of swept it under the rug and moved on because it terrified me," Devan said.

Once Devan began college he knew he needed to fully come out to his mom and accept himself. They met at Burrito Shack during Homecoming weekend of his freshman year when Devan was ready to address his secret that was partially revealed years ago. He intentionally scheduled their meeting in a public place and ensured he

had the security of living on campus to know he would be OK, no matter his mom's response.

"I was still afraid," he said. "There have been a lot of bad situations that I have witnessed, and I didn't want that to happen to me. I wanted to be ready for that."

His mom beat him to the reveal, saying she knew he was going to tell her he was gay. She told Devan she had known for a long time about his sexual orientation.

"I just started crying," he said. "I broke down."

Today, Devan said his family accepts he is gay, but they do not embrace it.

"Embracing is when you truly let somebody be themselves," he said. "You validate everything about them and let them express themselves, where nobody is trying to hide in some version of a closet."

Even though his family doesn't fully embrace his sexuality, Devan has come to embrace who he is, fully accepting all parts of himself.

"I realized that it wasn't so much that no one [God] was listening, but that there really wasn't anything to fix," he said. "I hope what I've accomplished is to let people know it is OK to be who you are and face the world, that nobody cares as much as you really think they do – and if they do, then they are really not worth your time."

KELSEY CRAWFORD

In first grade, Kelsey, junior from Lick Creek, Illinois, realized she was gay. She didn't have the terminology to express what she was feeling, but she said she wondered why in all the sing-along movies she watched in her music class all the princesses had princes rather than other princesses to fall in love with. As a child, Kelsey said she pictured herself being the prince to a princess.

In fourth grade, she discovered the concept of being gay as a sin since she grew up in a Christian family. The topic of discussion at church during a Mass was homosexuality, and she understood what was being discussed applied to her. She flipped to the dictionary in the back of her Bible and realized how she felt toward other women was not good in the context of Christianity.

Kelsey kept to herself and avoided her parents' probing conversations about her dating life. She said she would tell her parents she was interested in one of her guy friends but was "friend zoned" to avoid furthering the conversation.

During high school, after an online dating relationship ended terribly, Kelsey turned to drugs to fill the void she was feeling. After overdosing in January 2012, she knew she needed to find a healthy way to let out her feel-

ings. She turned to art and music, using creative outlets as therapy.

"After the overdose, I kind of realized I have to choose to live for myself," she said. "I decided that I would try to be me as much as I could be. I want to be authentically me."

Kelsey got accepted to Northern Illinois University, located just outside of Chicago. She moved from a town so small it didn't have a zip code to a booming city. In 2016, she transferred to Murray State, but Chicago is where she mustered up the courage to write her mom a letter explaining her sexuality. Surprisingly, the letter was intercepted by her sister (who already knew Kelsey's sexuality), so her mother's response was delayed.

"I was prepared to lose my family," Kelsey said.

When Kelsey and her mom had the discussion about the letter, her mom asked if this was how she has always felt. Kelsey's response: "I have always felt this way."

Today, Kelsey and her mom are very close and have moved past their rough patch. She said many of her mother's concerns related to the adversity that she will have to face as a biracial lesbian woman.

"Ironically, the person I was most scared to tell is now my biggest advocate," Kelsey said.

After the overdose, I kind of realized I have to choose to live for myself.



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HIDDEN GEMS OF MURRAY

Story by Sarah Combs
Photos by Chalice Keith, Kelli O'Toole & Jenny Rohl



MURRAY-CALLOWAY COUNTY DOG PARK

For the dog parents in the Murray area, the Murray-Calloway County Dog Park is located in Central Park. The park winds around two acres of galavanting opportunities for fur babies. The park has two separate fenced-in areas: one for smaller dogs and another for larger dogs. Rocks and hoops are dispersed throughout the bigger enclosure for the agile and overall parkour enthusiasts.



H.R.H DUMPLIN'S

Dumplings is the perfect brunch spot for catching up with old friends or just swinging by for a quick look at their delicious selection of baked goods for the day. The bakery-dessert shop is located on South 12th Street, and the menu includes sandwiches and salads as well as the daily specials. If sandwiches and salads don't please your taste buds, the restaurant is known for their pull-apart warm dinner rolls that come out fresh before the main course.



VICTOR'S SANDWICHES

Victor's Sandwiches is located on Main Street and offers a dine-in experience but is also one of the few sub shops in Murray that delivers. The sub shop has been open for 30 years and also has other options for the less than enthusiastic sandwich-eater. Their menu is available online and includes burgers, homemade salads and other daily specials.



TERRAPIN STATION

The record and book store offers customers an impressive array of music for all generations. Located off South 12th Street, the store sits in the Bel-Air Shopping Center, making it a hidden gem of Murray. Offering a variety of media, Terrapin Station nourishes the musical enthusiasts while providing a laid-back atmosphere.



RENFROE'S HIH BURGER INN

Renfro's HIH Burger Inn is nestled on South 4th Street just outside of the Court Square. The old-timey mom-and-pop place provides customers with a small-town country experience. Only accepting cash, the former inn has established their old-school stance in the community. They greet their regulars by their first names and welcome newcomers with a warm "Hey y'all, grab a seat." Sitting down in a booth, you immediately sink into the worn-in leather while grabbing a menu that offers breakfast, lunch and dinner options.

Through His Eyes

Greeted as a foreigner, welcomed as a Racer.

Story by **Gisselle Hernandez**

Photos by **Jenny Rohl**

I waited at one of the tables in the reference section behind some bookshelves, making sure I had my phone recording app ready to go and my pen poised over my notebook. Wael Nassar walked over to the table and I stood to shake his hand. I wish I could remember what our initial greetings were that morning, but all I could think of, embarrassingly, was how different he looked without his *thobe*, the traditional dress Muslim men wear. When I first met him at the Saudi National Day event his organization hosted a few weeks before, he had donned his traditional Muslim clothing, fully-clad with thobe and ghutra. After I interviewed him at that event, I realized he was the one I was looking for, the one I needed to write about. We agreed to meet in the Waterfield Library weeks later, and there he began to tell me about his strong-willed wife, his sick mother and the traumatic experiences that led him to where he is today.

CHILDHOOD

Before Nassar came to Murray State in 2014 for graduate school in occupational safety and health, he was a child in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. As a child, he liked to listen to foreign music, where his interest in the English language actually began. Back then, he said they didn't have access to the lyrics of the music they were listening to, so when the surge of new technology came over his country, he was quick to take advantage.

"I had to know what they were saying. What if they were talking bad about me?" he said, laughing.

As we delved deeper into his childhood, I prompted him to tell me what he considers the happiest day of his younger years.

He

paused and I asked him if he remembers, to which he said, "Oh, I remember all right."

He held up two fingers. "I have two happiest days of my life and I will tell you the first one that I will never forget."

This is when Nassar told me he came close to death at the tender age of 12. He fell on his head while playing and somehow felt something was not right. For six months after that, his parents took him from doctor to doctor to see what was wrong, but all the doctors said the same thing: "You're fine."

Nassar finally found a doctor who discovered the source of his discomfort: internal bleeding in the skull, endangering his life every minute he waited. He immediately underwent a very dangerous, potentially-fatal surgery.

"I remembered I said goodbye to my parents and I was crying a lot," he said, taking a deep breath. "My dad, he gave me a paper where he wrote a few sentences of prayer. The nurse, she hugged me a lot and her son went to school with me - it was a coincidence - and she told me 'You're going to be fine. Don't worry, you'll be asleep.'"

When he came to, he was surrounded by expectant doctors and family, but something was missing. "Where's my hair?"

Nassar let out a rumbling laugh and explained, as a child, he was known for his hair.

"I had really big hair and before I went under I begged him to not cut it and the doctor said 'OK.'"

But the doctor did cut his hair, and, to Nassar, did so terribly. Nassar complained how the doctor didn't even cut it evenly. They shaved half of his hair, and cut the other side, leaving the middle part untouched.

He stuck his hand through his hair on the right side of his head and exclaimed, "This side is heavier now! I hate it. I'm kidding, I don't hate it. He saved my life."

It was not a good day, but he thanked God he's alive now. As I sat there, I'm waiting for him to get to the part of this being the happiest day of his life;

I cannot fathom how coming near death can be euphoric for anyone, and he then told me about his grandfather coming up to him after the surgery and handed him a bunch of money.



It's not that great when you see someone die right in front of you.

"It was a lot." He cupped his hands together for emphasis. His grandfather had commanded him to place the money on his right eye, and then his left eye and then his pocket.

"It was like 1,000 dollars," Nassar said. "And don't ask me what I spent it on, but I'm sure all of it went on toys. It was the happiest day of my life."

ADULTHOOD

The second happiest day of his life was when he graduated with his mechanical engineering degree.

His father did not want him to graduate from the university he was attending, but instead insisted on sending him off to Cairo, to study at a better school, offering to pay for everything.

"Our university was very bad, especially the teachers," he said. "Some teachers were really bad and it was hard to pass their class."

He said his father tried to coax him, told him not to waste his time or youth.

"I will pay for anything you want to study, just go to Cairo."

A shadow crossed his face as Nassar told me about his father comparing him to his successful friends.

"I knew he was trying to encourage me, but I didn't like the way he did it."

He said he was scared to move

to a foreign country, especially because he was single.

"It's difficult to be in a country all alone."

His father was unaware on the day he graduated, so Nassar decided to tuck that certificate away, literally, as he went to surprise his father the day after his graduation.

"I went to him and I told him they dropped me and they kicked me out. He was shocked and he started telling me bad words and I told him, 'I want you to say it.'"

Nassar's father had looked at him in confusion, "Say what?"

"Say that I'm an engineer."

When his father finally complied, Nassar pulled out his mechanical engineering degree – demonstrating to me as he brought his hand from his behind his back to face me – and hugged his father.

"He was very happy."

As he recounted his triumph of gaining his degree, he caught me off-guard, blurting out how much he hates mechanical engineering.

"Sometimes I think I should've gone to Cairo to take architecture because I like to draw."

When I asked him how he thinks his life would've turned out if he had gone to Cairo, his immediate response is that he probably wouldn't have met his wife. He shifted to the subject of his father again, a point he seemed to keep coming back to. He told me how he respects his father so much be-

cause the man would do anything so his children can have an education.

"My father's not that rich – he's a normal guy," Nassar said. "But he would do anything to pay for something good in our lives, like education. He offered to go with me to the U.S. so I can study English and that he would pay for everything."

He said he was happy, but also scared.

"So I spent one year to think about it. And I applied to get a job and I got safety engineer and I liked it so much that I decided to major in it for my master's degree when I came here. And now here I am, about to graduate in December."

INTO THE REAL WORLD

Nassar's job before Murray State involved building what is now known as the biggest clock in the world, the Abraj Al Bait Towers, also known as the Makkah Royal Hotel Clock Tower. His experience while this tower was being built also pushed him to pursue his OSH degree.

"Every day, I saw one or two people die in the field when building the clock.

"There is safety, but the people who work there don't have any education or knowledge about the hazards," Nassar continued. "They don't want to wear any safety and

it was very bad.”

Nassar told me how when he goes back to Saudi Arabia, he'll make all the employees safe because it's not easy to see people die.

Tears filled his eyes, but his voice was steady, “It's not that great when you see someone die right in front of you, plunging to their death from a 100 floors up.”

THE MARRIED LIFE

Nassar has been married to Mrwah Yanksar for three and a half years now, after meeting her only three days before they tied the knot and moved to the United States. The marital tradition in Saudi Arabia is a lengthy process: firstly, the mother visits her potential daughter-in-law and gets to know her family. Then, her son meets his potential bride.

Once the son and daughter meet and talk for 15 minutes or so, and if the daughter likes him, she will unofficially accept him and pray about it, asking God to show her if this man would be right for her. After both families agree, there is a contract for the engagement and marriage.

Nassar said some families don't allow them to even meet their daughter until they are married. He said when he first married his wife, it was a challenge because he did not know much about her, and she did not know about him.

“But thank God I married this woman. She's powerful and she helped me a lot,” he said, the corners of his lips turning up as he spoke of his wife. “I'm an emotional person, and she's more realistic and she's so strong. She steadies me.”

THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

The first time Nassar visited the U.S. was in 2000. He said

what shocked him the most was the John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York. He said it was the biggest airport he had ever seen and made him realize how bad the airport was back home. The second thing that fascinated him were the activities America has to offer.

“They have a lot of activities for kids like we were, like Disneyland and Universal Studios,” he said. “We didn't have that back then.”

He also said in the U.S., the malls were open for everyone, meaning both married couples and single people. Back home in past years, those without significant others could not enjoy the same amenities as married couples could.

He told me about a specific encounter his family had with an immigration officer at the border of Buffalo, New York, and Canada when they went to see Niagara Falls.

“I will never forget this man,” Nassar said. “He asked my father how us children came to be, how we came to life.”

Nassar said his father proceeded to explain to this man how copulation and reproduction works, although with much less polite wording.

“It was a stupid question, he just wanted to see what my father would do, if he would yell or do something,” Nassar said. “But he didn't. My father was smiling the entire time.”

When Nassar and his wife came back years later to the U.S. to study in Seattle at University of Washington, he said

the immigration was much better. The immigration officers were actually well-versed in Arabic culture, much to Nassar's surprise.

BECOMING A RACER

Nassar studied for two years at the University of Washington before coming to Murray State. When he first applied to Murray State, he said he had trouble being admitted because of his English language scores. Eventually, he was accepted and was able to move to Murray with his wife.

After two years at Murray State, Nassar became president of the Saudi Student Organization whose main goal is showing pride for their country.

Once President Bob Davies heard Nassar was president, he immediately extended an invitation to Nassar to meet. Nassar said this came as a shock to him but also an honor.

“I was scared; I thought I had done something wrong,” Nassar said. “But I was happy I met him. Really nice guy.”

Nassar graduated last December and moved back to his country, something he knew was inevitable, but he did not take it in a negative light. He said it is hard for international students to get jobs in the U.S., but he hopes one day to visit Murray, which served as his home for three years.



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Hotel California

Where history and legend collide

Right next door, in the Land Between the Lakes Recreation Area, there sits a reminder of a moment of darkness in the history of Murray. For those who know how to find it, the skeletal structure of concrete and creeping vines hold a story of a troubled childhood and, ultimately, murder – that is, if you believe the stories.

A long drive through the backcountry, a 10-minute walk through the woods and beyond a few trenches, the front of the decrepit building is covered in paint and leaves. The building is a target for vandals and it shows in the graffiti. Dripping, spray-painted pentagrams are displayed beside more harmless tags, where kids put the years they graduated or the name of their high school sweethearts.

Story by Connor Jaschen | Photos by Austin Gordon



Two words are scrawled across the front of the building: “Hotel California,” an unofficial title plastered over years and years of other graffiti. No one has tried to spray paint over this one, as if it’s an accepted part of the scenery.

Vines have made their way up and down the support pillars, reminding the wary observer of how long this place has been left to the elements. An old, thrown together fire pit sits in the middle of the farthest room on the concrete floor.

But where did this place come from?

Rumors surrounding the building don’t address its origin, but instead revolve around a group of Murray teens in the 1990s who dubbed themselves “The Vampire Cult,” a group who performed occult rituals and, eventually, had several members serve time for a murder in Eustis, Florida.

Many believe The Vampire Cult, led by Rod Ferrell, a Murray native, frequented the building, supposedly utilizing it for animal sacrifices and

anything you can imagine a vampire cult to take part in. However, this is by no means accurate.

Chris Thornock, archaeologist with the U.S. Forest Service, said he does not believe Hotel California has any connection to The Vampire Cult of Murray, though the rumor may have begun circulating from another one of LBL’s Heritage sites: “The Vampire Hotel.”

While the Vampire Hotel does have a reputation as a hangout for the occult group, there have been no documented accounts linking the structure to The Vampire Cult or of anything occult ever having happened at the location.

Both buildings are two of the very few concrete structures built in the residential period of the Land Between the Lakes Area, Thornock said.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) bought Land Between the Lakes in 1963, and the process for moving the residents of the area out was long and arduous, often settled with court-ordered evictions.

The true origins of Hotel Cali-

fornia are based on similar circumstances. Built by Grover Marlor, a local ferryman, the structure was a family home for many years. When the TVA bought the land, Marlor refused to move.

“The Marlor’s did not want to leave the area so while they were told that all the land was being bought in at least 1965, they happened to stay at the location,” Thornock said. “And we have documentation that they were at least there through 1969 when the U.S. government had gotten a court order to have them leave.”

While most residents with homes in the area manually disassembled all but the foundations of their homes, both Hotel California and The Vampire Hotel’s concrete structures made them a staple of LBL’s landscape.

The area has been visibly overrun by partiers and vandals looking for a spooky place to hang out, Thornock said. Much of this, he said, was because of the relative benefit of camping in the area, with a roof to protect visitors from the elements



and precleared spots for campfires. Camping without permits is illegal, though, and violators can be fined.

This attraction as a campsite poses a problem for the Land Between the Lakes staff, who have neither the manpower nor the resources to police and preserve every heritage site in the Land Between the Lakes' more than 170,000 acres of forest. Naturally, Thornock said the site has seen its fair share of misuse.

"People go out there and 'have a good time,'" Thornock said. "But we don't want them to do that because it does destroy the heritage of the area. And they tend to trash the landscape as well."

Aside from the masses of graffiti and beer cans, Hotel California

has caused serious safety concerns for the park. In 2015, a large fire occurred in the area, which Thornock believes was accidentally started at or around the Hotel California structure.

"It was probably from - I'm assuming - from these campers that go out and hangout by this structure," he said.

Despite the heritage site not actually being connected to The Vampire Cult, Thornock said the structure is interesting for campers and visitors to see.

"It's just a really neat place, it looks really cool," Thornock said. "You come upon it in the woods and all of a sudden this giant concrete building is there. And so I think peo-

ple enjoy it, I just wish they would not trash it as much."

Land Between the Lakes is an area built on legends and mystery, spanning across the manmade peninsula. For those who wish to visit these heritage sites and immerse themselves in the rich history of the region, they are encouraged to visit respectfully, clean up after themselves and camp within the confines of the law and camping safety regulations.

For those local adventurers, Hotel California is still ripe for exploration, though they may need to reconsider any hopes of finding ghosts.

But who knows? Be sure to take a flashlight and a camera if you really do want to see what goes bump in the night.



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RADIANT RACERETTES

Story by **Hallie Beard**
Photos by **Jenny Rohl**

When the Radiant Racernettes first took their place performing at Roy Stewart Stadium last fall in their matching jerseys and boots, it was clear each woman had a passion and love for dance.

The Racernettes – a team that has doubled in size since its creation last year – provide more than just an opportunity for students to showcase their high-energy and dazzling movements in the stands. Through the office of Multicultural Affairs, the Racernettes use their love for majorette-style dancing as a way to increase student retention and graduation rates at Murray State.

Anita Chitule, student services specialist for the office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), advises the Racernettes team along with S.G. Carthell and Alicia Carthell. Because the majorette team is a special club under the OMA, each member is required to become a member of the Emerging Scholars Institute in order to participate.

Once a member of the mentoring program, each student is required to complete weekly study hours, do community service, participate in

retention workshops and maintain a 2.5 GPA.

When three students in the OMA proposed the idea of a majorette team last year after much research on the style, Chitule knew connecting the team with an academic initiative was the perfect way to accomplish what each side wanted.

“We wanted to combine their idea and love of dance with our mission,” Chitule said. Through establishing the Racernettes, the office “reached a new group of students that weren’t part of the program initially.”

Now, after only a year of activity, the team has grown to 19 members, three of whom – Jada Hubert, Jaela Rudele and Imani Oliver – often create and teach the team’s choreographed routines and “stands,” which are eight to 16-count combinations performed in a specific formation in the stands for football and basketball games.

While the three members do much of the choreography, they are not the only Racernettes who offer ideas and talents.

“Any team member who has something they want to teach the team can do that,” Chitule said.

Unlike other dance groups, there is no captain or president for the dance team – something unique to all OMA special clubs, Chitule said.

“It’s one big sisterhood of dancers,” Hubert said. “Communication with us is really good and we all get along.”

Ife Akindele said one of her favorite parts of being on the team is getting to know new people and bonding with them.

“Everyone on the team is very passionate about what we do,” she said.

This year, the Racernettes performed at Racer Mania and are looking forward to having more performance opportunities during basketball season.

The team held fall auditions in September and will have another round in the spring, where they hope more students will become involved in the group and keep it active for many years to come.

“Our main goal is to increase retention and graduation rates,” Chitule said.

The sequin-clad Racernettes are motivated by a passion for movement, but when they perform, it’s not only a testament to the diverse opportunities Murray State offers for physical fitness and artistic self-expression. The women are also a testament to the university’s commitment to academic excellence in all aspects of student life.

Auditions for The Racernettes are open to all students who are interested.



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CAMPUS

Story by Hallie Beard

Photos courtesy of Pogue Library

Our university is one of tradition – from the Shoe Tree to All Campus Sing to the historical stature of Pogue Library or Wrather West Kentucky Museum, there are stories sealed by each building's mortar, legacies that come alive through stage-bound voices.

Campus Lights, the annual musical production sponsored by Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia and Sigma Alpha Iota, is one of our oldest traditions, one beloved by students, alumni and community members alike. The show began in 1938 after running in 1937 as "Rhythm Talks." Through many changes, it became the production we know today. In fact, one of the show's brightest moments – and part of what makes this tradition's enduring legacy so important – occurred during a time of national gloom.

When the production began, it was solely produced by the brothers of Phi Mu in what was called the Men's Music Club. It was in 1938 that the men established their chapter, Gamma Delta, at Murray State; at that time, they decided to officially title the show Campus Lights and begin what is now an almost 80-year tradition. But for two productions in 1944, the sisters of Sigma Alpha Iota produced and participated in the show

while the men of Phi Mu were away at war.

Like a musically-inclined Rosie the Riveter, each sister assumed the responsibilities of the brothers in manning the production, which was then a variety show of skits, songs and dances. During this time, out of reverence for the men who pioneered the show, they called the production "Campus Dimout." In the program for the first dimout, which ran March 10 – 11, 1944, there was a special dedication: "We dedicate this show to the members of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia national music fraternity, wherever they may be." The next year, the sisters printed the dedication again, addressing it to the members "here and everywhere."

It wasn't only the sisters of SAI, though, who recognized the absence of those men during a production meant to highlight and celebrate the joy of musical expression. Corn-Austin Co., who held a full-page ad each year in the programs, also published a special message during a time when the lights perhaps didn't seem quite as bright: "That the Campus Lights of America may not be extinguished by the cruel forces of dictators; that little boys and girls of America and the whole world may forever have the right to play and sing – in defense of these two ideas...We Dedicate This Space."



LIGHTS

Savanna Hayes, current president of SAI, said she couldn't imagine what it must have been like for the sisters at that time.

"I'm sure a lot of the sisters had friends or loved ones in Phi Mu Alpha," she said.

After the men of the fraternity returned, they decided to join their efforts indefinitely with the women who had successfully run the show in their absence. Now, the men and women of the fraternity and sorority continue to work together to produce the musical. Probationary members of Phi Mu and every member of SAI are required to participate in the production each year, whether that means building sets, being a cast member or being part of the technical crew.

"It's a completely student-run production in all operations," said Madison Jarrett, Phi Mu president. "And that's part of the charm. The show isn't immaculate, but that gives it character."

In addition to being student-run, the show also benefits Racers who aren't involved; profits from ticket sales go toward student scholarships in the Music Department.

Because the show is put together in a short amount of time, each year is a new experience with its own challenges and risks.

"I love the idiosyncrasies and nuances of the show," Jarrett said. "Every year it always seems like we're coming

down to the wire, but at the very last second it all comes together very well."

Hayes, who noted the show is a great opportunity to showcase student diversity, also said the show's quick conception is an annual event.

"It's kind of amazing how everyone comes together so fast," she said.

Through working late nights and early mornings on the production, both presidents recognized the show's ability to bring people together.

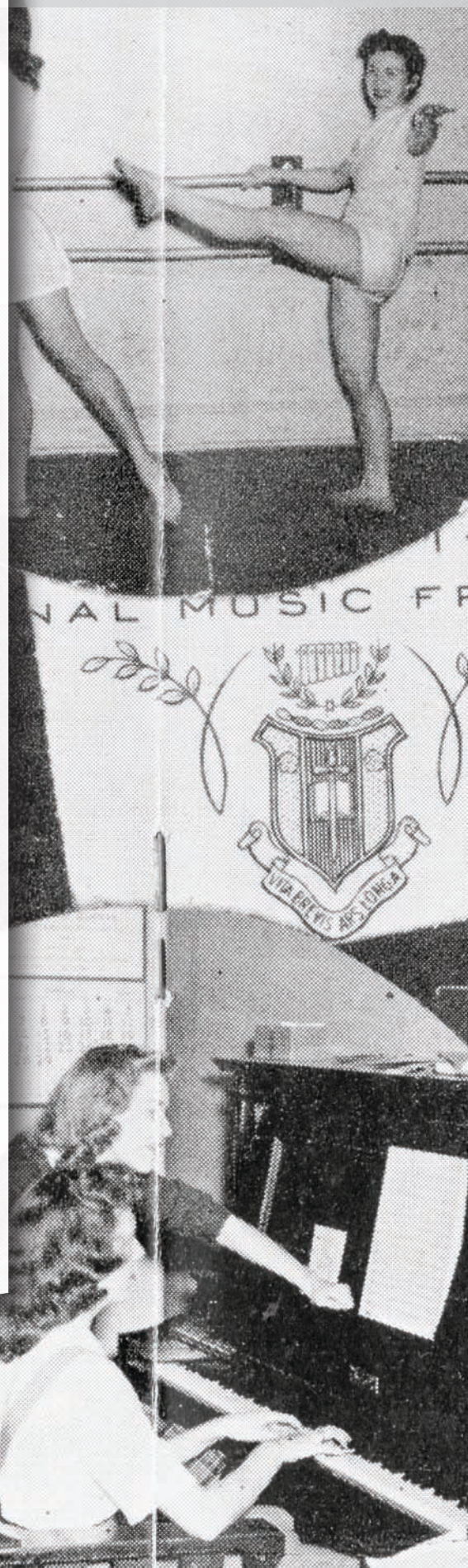
Hayes said during those labor-intensive nights, "I got to know people I didn't know before."

Jarrett called the production a "melting pot" of people from all parts of campus.

"Campus Lights is the quintessential story of people from all different backgrounds coming together and doing something good for the community," Jarrett said.

With such a long-standing history already, both Jarrett and Hayes predict the show will continue to be successful for many more generations - especially because, as Hayes noted, music is something everyone can relate to.

Even in times when the lights are dimmed, this is one tradition sure to illuminate a path for many talented Racers to come.



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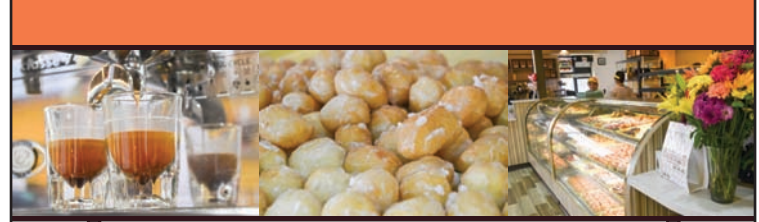


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The Advertising Sales Media class, taught by Robert Valentine, sells advertisements for Gateway magazine each year. *The Murray State News* would like to thank these students for making this year's publication possible.

A TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO LAND BETWEEN THE LAKES

Story and Photos by Austin Gordon



If you've been around Murray long enough, you're probably familiar with some of the sounds of the city. Echoes of the Racer Band practicing in the football stadium, the church bell ringing out every hour and sirens roaring by when you least expect them. Occasionally, getting away from all the noise can reduce stress – and by getting away I don't mean stepping into your backyard.

Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area offers year-round events and activities along with access to more than 170,000 acres of forests and open lands. While experiencing all of the trails, wildlife and beautiful views, it's easy to be overwhelmed by everything LBL has to offer. So to make sure your experience is as seamless as possible, here is your traveler's guide to LBL.



ELK AND BISON PRAIRIE

The Elk and Bison Prairie is, you guessed it, a prairie where elk and bison roam free. While elk and bison are the main attraction, many other animals call this area home. This enclosure contains 700-acres of land and a 3.5-mile paved loop where visitors can drive through and observe the wildlife. For \$5, you and your friends can squeeze into a car and figure out what your spirit animal is.

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Homeplace brings history to life, offering visitors the opportunity to experience what it was like on the farm before the Civil War. The farm includes many historic buildings and areas where you can watch and interact with cooks, farmers, blacksmiths, quilters and other workers. There are also many seasonal events, including the Quilting Bee, Battle of Fort Henry Presentation and Music Festival. Don't forget to invite the folks!

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The Planetarium is a 40-foot dome theater with surround sound located in the Visitor Center. Using advanced equipment, it can display the sky from any location around the globe. Shows are typically around 40 minutes and offer a spectacular display of astronomical events. The Observatory is separate from the Planetarium and allows visitors to look through a Meade 16-inch Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope. Sounds neat, right? Weather permitting, you can explore the universe, in real-time, without using Google.

WOODLANDS NATURE STATION

The Woodlands Nature Station is split into two sections – the Learning Center and the Backyard. The Learning Center is inside the Nature Station and acts as a home to many reptiles and amphibians. Events are hosted throughout the year for those who are interested in learning more about nature.

The Backyard is located literally in the ‘backyard’ of the nature station and can almost be compared to a zoo. It is home to bald eagles, bats, birds, coyotes, deer, groundhogs, hawks, kestrels, opossums, owls, turtles, vultures, turkeys, wolves and many more animals. A \$5 entry fee is required, but it’s worth coming to the animals rather than waiting for the animals to come to you.

TRAILS

LBL has more than 500 miles of trails and 200 miles of scenic roads overlooking a variety of wildlife, plants and other incredible sights. Trails can vary greatly in length – the Long Creek Trail is .26 miles while the North/South Trail is 59 miles and requires two pamphlets to sum it up. There are a variety of ways to explore these trails, so go take a stroll or hike a marathon, you decide.

TRAILS

CANAL LOOP

1.5-11 miles | 3 connector trails | time varies

CENTER FURNACE

.3 mile | 30 minutes

CENTRAL HARDWOODS

11 miles | 7 trailheads | time varies

FORT HENRY SYSTEM

26 miles | 9 trails | time varies

HEMATITE LAKE

2.2 miles | 1 hour 30 minutes

HONKER LAKE

4.5 miles | 3 hours

LONG CREEK

.26 miles | 20 minutes

WOODLAND WALK

.9 miles | 1 hour

LEARN MORE

There are many other activities that were not touched on in this guide, such as hunting, fishing, horseback riding, camping and off-road vehicle trails. To learn more about these other activities, and to find attraction prices, hours and rules, visit landbetweenthelakes.us.





murraystateBCM.com

JOIN US FOR OUR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Freshmen Family Groups and
Upperclassmen Community Groups

Thursdays
• Dinner - 1st and 3rd Thursdays @ 6:15 for \$1
• 7:07 - Worship Service @ 7:07PM

Spring Break and Summer Mission Opportunities

Opportunities to get Plugged-in with Local Churches



The BCM exists at Murray State to Reach the campus with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to Connect students to local churches, and to Strengthen students' relationship with the Lord.

Murray State BCM

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- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Sociology
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**MURRAY STATE
UNIVERSITY**

College of Humanities and Fine Arts

Quiz: History of Murray

Quiz by *Gisselle Hernandez*
Photo by *McKenna Dosier*

1. What year did Murray State officially embrace desegregation?
 - a. 1967
 - b. 1955
 - c. 1975
2. In what building was Murray State's first basketball court (hint: this building now hosts classes)?
 - a. Wilson Hall
 - b. Curris Center
 - c. Lovett Auditorium
3. Who was the first African American woman to win Miss MSU?
 - a. Geneva Arnold
 - b. Tanelle Smith
 - c. Jerry Sue Thornton
4. Who was the first Murray State president to live in the president's house on Oakhurst Lawn?
 - a. Rainey T. Wells
 - b. James H. Richmond
 - c. John W. Carr
5. What residential college on Murray State's campus is the oldest?
 - a. Hart Residential College
 - b. Richmond Residential College
 - c. Springer/Franklin Residential College

Answers | 1. B 2. A 3. C 4. B 5. B





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