

Free

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Warhawk
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Chronicling the Campus Community and Beyond Since 1971



The Cost of Meat

By Blake Hunter

Photo courtesy of USDA

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Food, water and air. The three essential elements of life, the absence of just one is life-threatening. Efficient use of these resources is crucial to support an ever-growing world population. But there's something that eats away at these resources, something most people use every day without even thinking about: meat. Meat has always been a staple part of most diets, but as the world continues to develop, demand is at an all-time-high, and it is more accessible than ever. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, over 308 million tons of meat were produced in 2013. The U.S. alone consumes nearly 10 percent of that meat, which puts a high strain on those essential elements previously mentioned as they are all necessary to produce meat.

FAO estimates that "26 percent of the planet's ice-free land is used for livestock grazing, and 33 percent of croplands are used for livestock feed production." That is, a third of all cropland is used to feed animals so that in turn, they can be fed upon. Hypothetically, if even half of that feed land was used for production of food directly for human consumption, the benefits would be immense. One can imagine, if the food cost of meat is that high, it also must have an impact on our water and air.

Speaking of the former, according to The Water Footprint Network, an organization aiming to solve the world water crisis, it takes

about 1800 gallons of water to create just one pound of beef. The majority of this water being used for feed production. In general, meat tends to cost more water to make both in pounds of product produced, and per calorie. For example, the WFN states that "the average water footprint per calorie for beef is 20 times larger than for cereals and starchy roots."

Moving onto air, FAO estimates that around 18 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions can be traced back to the livestock industry, which is more greenhouse emissions than all forms of transportation combined. According to the EPA, producing half a pound of beef is the equivalent to driving nearly ten miles in terms of emissions, compared to producing something like half a pound of potatoes which emits gasses equal to driving just one-fifth of a mile.

This is the cost of meat: our planet. While all our food costs the environment something, no other food compares to the price of meat. Luckily the solution to such a problem is simple: lower meat consumption. A meatless world may be a pipe dream, but the positive environmental impact it would have if everyone cut out even a half a pound of meat from their diet a week would be impossible to understate.

Paula Diaz: A Dream Come True

By Megan Endres

"If you have a dream, you have to follow it. You have to work hard for it," says Paula Diaz, senior journalism student from Venezuela with a drive for success. After her high school graduation she had plans to move to Spain to play tennis; however, it was important to her parents that she study English. After her first year in the U.S., her parents were no longer able to pay for professional tournament costs, so Diaz moved to Montgomery to pursue a college degree in order to continue playing the sport she loved. It was not long before Diaz decided to pursue her life-long dream and her focus shifted to being a successful journalist.

As a sophomore, Diaz made the decision to follow a path much different from her family of doctors, and she set a goal for herself of completing an internship at CNN before graduation. She knew this wouldn't be an easy thing to do and her parents would not be able to help her with contacts or experience. "Any dream is possible with a plan, though," she said. Diaz quickly realized that she would have to start small and work hard to reach the top. After applying to a local news station and receiving



Diaz in front of CNN Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Photo Courtesy of Paula Diaz

no response, Diaz's persistence set in. She took her resume to the station and left it for the supervisor of interns. In the end, her diligence was rewarded and Diaz got an internship with WSFA.

This experience showed Diaz that her big dreams were in fact possible and fueled her determination even more. "The opportunity won't ever come to you, you have to go and find it," she said, and that is exactly what she did. On July 5, 2016, Diaz had a day off from her internship at WSFA, so she decided to put her plan into motion. She got in her car and drove to the CNN Center in Atlanta. When she arrived, Diaz was not sure what she was going to do or how she would convince them to allow her to intern, but she knew she had to be persistent, so she went inside anyway. After several hours, Diaz was ready to give in when thanks to her persistence and a bit of luck,

she met the woman who was able to assist her in scheduling a day of shadowing at CNN.

Meanwhile, at WSFA, Diaz began making connections in the journalism community. Diaz met a contact from CNN New York who told her about an upcoming convention of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and the National Association of Black Journalists that was going to be held in Washington D.C. Diaz did not have a ticket, but she knew that she did not want to miss out on this opportunity. Once again, she took a leap of faith when she booked a hotel and a flight to the capitol. When she landed, Diaz was able to find a ticket to the convention where she met the News Director from Univision Miami and made other contacts at CNN.

After the convention, Diaz took a trip to Miami where she did a day of shadowing at Univision. While in Miami, Diaz received a call from CNN which turned out to be an in-depth interview, where she answered questions about herself, her family, tennis and her previous experience which ended with her being told that she would hear from CNN in one month.

Diaz's determination paid off once more when she received a call from Univision, offering an internship in December that would fit her busy school and tennis schedule perfectly. However, three days later Diaz found out that her dream would become a reality and CNN would like to have

her do an internship in December as well. Diaz, being eager to learn as much as possible, was now searching for a way to be able to attend both internships and balance her school and tennis obligations. Being in college leaves Diaz without much time to spend with her family and she soon realized that she now had an additional decision to make: she could live out the opportunity that she had worked so hard for and miss out on spending Christmas with her family for the first time or she could let the opportunity pass her by. In the end, Diaz completed a 10 day internship over Thanksgiving break at Univision and began her month long internship with CNN in December.

Diaz's motivation has always been a prevalent part of who she is and has driven her work ethic even before her start in journalism. "Paula is an encouraging teammate," says fellow tennis player, Iris Verweij. "She does not want to go pro for tennis, but she knows that I do, so she is always there for me when I want to practice a little bit extra or play a few more points. She's a great spirit, and very motivated to do well in life." Diaz gives credit to her team and the sport that she loves for her drive and ambition to work hard for the things she wants to achieve. "My teammates helped me to learn how to keep trying when you don't get what you want," Diaz says.

Diaz is an example to her peers that with hard-work, dedication and persistence any dream is possible if you are willing to work for it.

Where Are They Now: Breanna Relf

By Jackie Woods

Breanna Relf began her academic career at AUM in the fall of 2010 and graduated in the spring of 2015. One of her most memorable moments here was when Bryan Stevenson, the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, spoke at the spring 2012 MLK Reflections Breakfast. Setevenson left a lasting impression on her. Relf, a Communication graduate, remembers being inspired by Stevenson's ability to keep the crowd's attention. He spoke with passion. Relf remembers the audience giving Stevenson a standing ovation. "I can't think of a better person to be inspired by. Listening to him speak ignited a flame in me that'll never burn out," Relf said.

That passion lead Relf to start her own Public Relations and Marketing business, "The Bees Knees Company." Her company is geared towards helping local business owners and entrepreneurs get their ideas, products and/or services out to the public.

Relf works at a local bank and has noticed that local business owners are running and promoting their businesses on their own without knowing if they are doing it efficiently

and correctly. "This can be extremely overwhelming, especially if you are unsure of what PR and Marketing is and how effective it can be if used properly," Relf said. "I provide relief from stress and quality, strategic services that are guaranteed to work. With my help, local businesses can identify and communicate with their target audience, create a platform for their business, and save money." The Bees Knees Company offers website development, social media marketing, strategic planning, focus groups, surveys research, community outreach and event promotion services. Eventually, the company will also provide App Development services. At the moment, Relf is running the company by herself while working another full-time job, but has strong relationships with her former AUM peers. Relf acknowledges that they each help each other and that they are some of her biggest supporters.

Although Relf chose AUM because of financial reasons, she does not regret her decision to become a Warhawk alumna. "I received the opportunity to be taught under some of the best professors and I am very grateful for that," Relf said. "I've never felt more prepared about my career and I owe it all to AUM. The older you get, the more you start to understand the concept of quality over quantity, and that's what you receive as a student at AUM, quality education."

During her time at AUM, Relf was a member of the first Warhawk

Cheer Squad. She also was a member of SGA, a member of the Campus Activities Board, wrote for the AUMnibus and worked as a student assistant for the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs for most of the time while at AUM. Working as a student assistant allowed Relf to turn what she was learning in class into experience. She planned events, monitored AUM social media, created fliers and edited the AUM website. Throughout her time as an undergrad, Relf also worked two jobs.

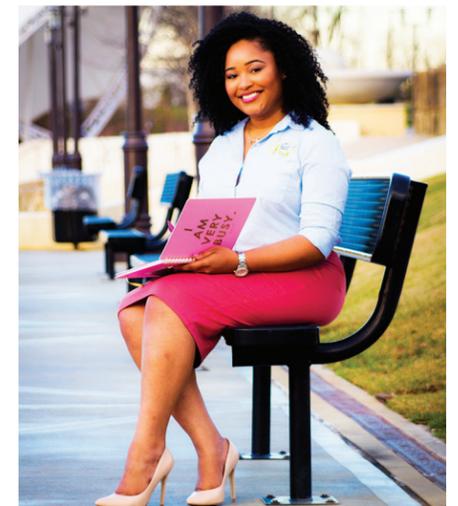
Even though she was active on campus, Relf does regret not sacrificing time to participate in an internship. "I think life for me would have been less difficult post-graduation, and I would have had more people to network with who possibly could have helped me find a better job," Relf said. She admits that she struggled to find a job after graduation due to lack of preparation prior to graduating and the lack of demand for her career field in Montgomery. Relf worked a few sales jobs with substantial pay, but was unhappy with them. "Doing what I love makes me happy. That's why I decided to take a step out on faith and get the ball rolling with The Bees Knees Company," Relf said.

To current and aspiring AUM students Relf advises to go to class and develop relationships with professors. In hindsight, the AUM alumna says that if she had expressed what she was going through she could have had more help. Relf also believes experience is the best teacher. "Don't

be discouraged from making a mistake because the best part about making a mistake is that there is always an opportunity to learn from it," she says.

Relf sees herself being her own boss in four years. She also sees herself traveling and being a motivational speaker for college students. Relf wants to help people as much as possible. "I can't do that working for anyone," she said. "I have to get out there and share my story and inspire others."

To learn more about Relf's business and stay connected, like "The Bees Knees Company" on Facebook.



Photos by April McLemore

Professors Talk Beer

By Rachel Wallace

On a dark, stormy night in March, 20 or so people huddled into a corner at The Tipping Point at Hamstead for hot dogs, drinks and an in-depth discussion on the archeology of beer. Rain was pelting the windows, rowdy soccer fans were watching a game at the bar, while the speaker—AUM anthropology professor Kimberly Pyszka—was trying her best to be heard over both.

“Since its invention 7 thousand years ago,” Pyszka began, “beer has always played a social importance.” She then explained the religious and medical uses of beer throughout history, the modern techniques archeologists are using to study it, and the microbreweries working to recreate ancient recipes. Despite the circumstances, Pyszka was beaming by the end of her lecture. “I had a blast,” she said.

Pyszka’s “Raiders of the Lost Beer” was the ninth installation of Professors in Pubs—a program hosted by the College of Arts and Sciences and organized by English professor Elizabeth Woodworth. Beginning last summer, Professors in Pubs has invited AUM faculty to give casual lectures in Montgomery’s favorite dives. So far, the lectures have been presented at The Tipping

Point in the Hampstead community and at The Irish Bred Pub downtown.

The program affords professors the unique opportunity to share information about their respected disciplines in an informal setting. “I’ve been to several of the Professors in Pubs talks and they’ve all been fun, but also very informative,” Pyszka says. “I love the atmosphere around these lectures.” Dr. Michael Burger, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, says, “All of the Professors in Pubs have been absolutely fabulous!”

Participating professors get to choose what they will lecture on, and many have presented topics that might be considered unconventional or even taboo in a traditional classroom. For example, Woodworth gave a lecture about sex and drugs in the Victorian era which Pyszka and Burger remember fondly. When asked why she chose the topic for her lecture, Pyszka said: “I’m an archeologist who also enjoys drinking craft beers. It seemed like the perfect combination!”

“I look forward to hearing the topics the other professors come up with,” Pyszka says. Woodworth says she is in the process of scheduling biology professor Rosine Hall to lecture about botany and hopes also to schedule a mathematics professor to lecture about numbers. She says Professors in Pubs is also exploring the possibility of expanding to other venues.

The attendees at Pyszka’s “Raiders of the Lost Beer” were mostly other professors, except for a



Kimberly Pyszka, Elizabeth Woodworth and Michael Burger pose at the March Professors in Pubs event. Photo by Rachel Wallace

few graduate students and community members. However, Woodworth says the Professors in Pubs lectures are events anyone would enjoy. “The talks are geared to anyone who might be interested in learning a bit more about a topic,” she says, “and the best part is that these take place in pubs where wonderful food and beverages are available.”

Woodworth says those who have never attended one of the program’s installments are missing out on “fascinating talks by experts, camaraderie with friends, great laughs, and good food.” Anyone who is interested in attending future lectures should follow Professors in Pubs on Facebook, where Woodworth posts updates about the program.

Coach Vargas

By Iris Verweij

Auburn University at Montgomery’s Head Tennis Coach Rolando Vargas has come a long way. Originally from Mexico, Vargas grew up with a loving family that provided for him in every way possible. Vargas’ mother had to fight a lot of adversity in a family of ten, while Vargas’ father came from a small town. Vargas knows what it means to sacrifice. “I never take anything for granted,” Vargas said. “Sometimes I hear people complain about being hungry, but they do not really know what hunger is. They do not really know what it is like to struggle. Sometimes I would not even have lunch and then I had one can of tuna for dinner.”

But the struggle is what motivated Vargas to do well in life. Vargas soon found his passion when he started playing tennis at the age of seven. Vargas liked tennis better than other sports because it was an independent sport and he was the one in control. He looked up to his hard-working parents, but he aspired to become as good as Swedish professional tennis player Stefan Edberg.

In his junior tennis career, Vargas practiced for about three hours from Tuesday to Friday. He would play soccer with his friends to stay fit. He was also a great student, so it was never a struggle for Vargas to play



Photo courtesy of Tim Lutz

and have good grades. At 11, Vargas traveled alone to tournaments and became a top 10 junior tennis player between the age of 12 and 18. His highest ranking was #5 in the nation. He won multiple state, regional, sectional and national cups and a few national tournaments. However, his successful junior career did not come easy for Vargas. “I was very little and skinny when I was a kid,” he recalls. “A lot of times people laughed at me when I told them that I wanted to be one of the best players in the nation. Sometimes even my coaches would tell me mean things that I remember made me cry, but it made me work harder.”

Vargas’ successful results in his junior career gave him the opportunity to work with Rick Macci, a U.S. Professional Tennis Association Master Professional, for a year at his tennis academy. The successful sisters Venus and Serena Williams were there at the time as well. However, Vargas decided to play college tennis in the United States, get his degree and then play professionally afterwards. With his parents’ support, he decided to go to Bethune Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Florida.

After his sophomore year,

Vargas transferred to Troy University. He had a total of four different coaches, and his last was “very intense.” He would always practice hard to prove his coach that he deserved the spot on the team. “I was the fiercest competitor on the team where I was known for diving at least once per match and winning almost every time that point,” Vargas said.

With Vargas being so determined and focused on tennis, little did he know that he would find true love soon. The AUM Head Tennis Coach met his wife, Tiffany, in his junior year. “She waited for me to get my degree and then we moved to Mexico because I told her that my plan was to go pro for a year,” Vargas said. He eventually went on to play professional tennis for three years. However, those three years did not come easy. “It was a battle,” Vargas said. “I was doing everything I could to play every professional tournament there was every week or every two weeks. I had to find a way to make money so I had to sacrifice a lot. I also had a girlfriend/wife waiting for me to come home to provide to the household. It made me work hard and value things more.” Vargas reached a high professional ranking of 839 in the world.

After three years of playing on the professional tour, Vargas came back to the United States in 2007 and accepted the position of Assistant Coach at Troy University. Tiffany was pregnant with their daughter Amaia at the time, so it was in Vargas’

best interest to put his family first. Vargas also went on to get his master’s degree.

In 2010, Vargas accepted the position of Head Tennis Coach at Auburn University at Montgomery. He led the Warhawks women’s tennis team to four National Championship victories in five years. He has earned United States Professional Tennis Association College Coach of the Year honors, four National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics National Coach of the Year awards in women’s tennis, and he has been named the SSAC Men’s and Women’s Coach of the Year in each of his first four years at AUM. Those are a lot of awards, but Vargas thanks it all to his family and his own experience as a former collegiate and professional tennis player.

As for those who did not believe in him, Vargas felt the need to prove them wrong. Vargas thanks tennis for his successful journey in life. “Work the best you possibly can, so once you are done, you will never regret it,” Vargas said. “Never hesitate and be true to your values. It teaches you discipline and it elevates your self-esteem as you gain confidence. There will be times that you need yourself more than anyone and only you know how to work it out.”

Even though Vargas has had ups and downs, the tennis coach always remembers to stay grateful. He believes that “you will make mistakes, but learning from them will make you succeed in life.”

New Club Creates a Greener Campus

By Rachel Wallace



Logo by Brittany Roberson

Student Advocates
for a Greener Environment
Auburn University at Montgomery

A new club on campus is educating AUM students about environmental sustainability, inspiring them to adopt greener lifestyles and advocating for greener practices within the university.

Students Advocating for a Greener Environment, or the S.A.G.E. Club for short, was formed last November by a small group of students and faculty members. Interest in the club increased after an event in February where students were invited to create one-of-a-kind Valentine's Day gifts—handmade flower pots planted with seedlings. The S.A.G.E. Club is planning to host another event this month for Earth Day, and members hope to engage even more students—regardless of major, year, or range of interest.

"The S.A.G.E. Club is unique in that it could be for anyone," says Rachel Son, spokesperson for the club. "It could be for students who are very new to the concepts of sustainability and wish to learn more or it could be for the environmental science majors who are passionate about promoting sustainability because they're aware of how the modern world is affecting the Earth."

The S.A.G.E. Club will replace the AUM Green Alliance, a former campus sustainability organization that petered out in 2012 from a lack of student interest. Son believes establishing the new club is an important, worthwhile endeavor in the campus community. She hopes it will provide a platform for real changes that will have a positive impact on not only the environment, but also the students and the university as a whole.

"Our key goal so far has been to create a recycling program on campus," Son says. The city of Montgomery discontinued its recycling program in 2015 due to misuse of public disposal containers—some of which were located at AUM. Although there are still some independent recycling companies in Montgomery, finding a place to transport recyclable materials has been a challenge for the S.A.G.E. Club. For this reason, progress on the campus recycling program has been slow-moving.

However, the S.A.G.E. Club also plans to become more directly involved in campus gardening. The university currently manages a vegetable garden next to the intramural field. The vegetables harvested there are used by The Roost, AUM's dining hall, which has long been committed to using only local, environmentally friendly produce and seafood. Son says the S.A.G.E. Club would like to see the vegetable garden developed further.

To learn more about the S.A.G.E. Club and the projects members are working on, students can attend its Earth Day event which will be advertised around campus. Students can contact the club by email at sage.aum@aum.edu or connect to them through Facebook and Instagram.

Mental Toughness

By Iris Verweij

Hours of sweat and tears, days of practice, weeks of competition, and months of stress. That is the life of a professional athlete. Professional athletes should focus on both the physical and mental aspects of their sports. It takes hard work, patience, determination, dedication and focus to become a successful athlete. However, even if you have all those qualities, you are not quite there yet. I am seeking to become a professional tennis player myself. Besides pushing myself to my limits physically and mentally, there is a lot of pressure that I have to deal with. I will need sponsors, fitness coaches, tennis coaches, dieticians, psychologists and trainers to help me with my goals. All of this costs money. As you can tell, the level of athletic competition rises, and so does the stress level.

The pressure of getting an unexpected injury can take its toll on the mental health of professional athletes, because injuries can end seasons and sometimes careers. It is very important to be disciplined and have back-up plans. This means that I must take good care of my body and know what to do if I get injured. It is known that during off-season, athletes work on their fitness and mental

toughness a lot more than during their main season. They work with fitness coaches, work on tactics, manage their trips for competitions and even sometimes hire psychologists. No athlete, no matter the gender, likes to sit out a season nor would want to retire unexpectedly. Therefore, all athletes should focus on preventing injuries without the stress level rising.

PLoS ONE published a 2011 study, which used the annual psychological evaluations of more than 2,000 high-performing French athletes. The sample represented 13 percent of France's high-level athletes at the time. Researchers found that 17 percent of the athletes had a recent or current psychopathology at the time of their evaluation, with generalized anxiety disorder being the most prevalent at 6 percent. When looking at the gender differences, they found that women were 33 percent more likely than men to have a current or recent psychopathology, with the prevalence being 20.2 percent for women and 15.1 percent for men. Included in the pathologies were anxiety, depression, eating disorders and sleep problems. They also found that women were 56 percent more likely than men to have suffered from anxiety disorders over their lifetime.

The researchers noted that only 38 percent of the athletes studied were seen by physicians, while 61 percent were seen by psychologists, which could have led in lower rates of psychopathology. The authors

concluded, "It is the presence of very particular stressors, such as problems in the athletes' social, personal and sporting environment that is associated with psychopathology." Knowing that the athletes' social environment plays a big role in stress levels must make it difficult for them to socialize and know whom to trust, whether it is on the professional tour or their surroundings off the court.

Tennis coach Martijn Pijnacker, in Utrecht, the Netherlands, believes that "the stress level depends on the sport. Tennis is an individual sport, so the stress level can be higher. If you are part of a team sport, you can be replaced until you heal from your injury. When you are injured as a tennis player, no teammate can replace you, just your rivals." After having interviewed a mental coach, Bas Coulier, from Amstelpark Tennis Academy in the Netherlands, I found that the percentage of this study could be higher when looking at athletes all over the world. Coulier said, "Athletes do not only have to practice harder, but also work on mental toughness more. The stress that comes with the high intensity level is hard to handle, which leads to retirement of talented athletes at an early age. Also, we live in a generation where social media can make you or break you. Athletes now have to watch what they say and how they act when they are not on the court or field." With that said, it is not surprising that a lot of athletes do not reach their maximum potential. Some athletes get burned out, do

not have the right team, or they get injured. However, the successful ones found a way to reach the top despite all the obstacles.

Millennials Missing Out on the Show

By Rachel Wallace

“We used to throw our knickers at him,” said the white-haired woman sitting next to me, as an Elvis impersonator clad in bedazzled black leather gyrated on the stage before us. The woman’s face shone in anticipation for my response, and I knew she was investigating how my date, Ryan, and I, a pair of clean-cut millennials, had ended up at such a show. She’d been casting suspicious, sideways glances in our direction all night.

It was Valentine’s Day at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, and the theatre was full of happy Montgomery couples celebrating the rock and roll side of romance. Ryan and I weren’t much different than the rest of them, I thought. “When I was 10, I was gonna marry Elvis,” the white-haired woman said. “Me too,” I answered. Glancing at the theatergoers around us, I figured we were about 40 years younger than the next youngest pair.

“Have you ever seen a show here before?” the white-haired woman asked me. I told her gingerly that I’d seen a few. “Well, I’ve been to see nine!” she proposed in response. By the end of the night, she and I were gushing over the impersonator together, vowing we’d be back to see his performance next year and every year thereafter. In that moment, the difference in our ages meant nothing; we were just two people united in an appreciation for the performing arts.

Some might argue that an audience of nostalgic baby boomers is expected for an Elvis impersonation. But according to a recent article published in the Boston Globe, 60-year-olds are dominating the age demographic for all types of theater performances—not just passé musicals. “Next time you’re

in a theatre, take a look around the audience,” says Don Aucoin, theater critic for the Boston Globe. “Chances are you’ll notice something missing: young people.”

“More people our age should come to these shows,” I said to Ryan as we were leaving. “They’re missing out on so much!” Growing up in families who placed an importance on exposure to the performing arts, he and I had the opportunity to attend shows across the southeastern United States. Theater has had a profound influence on us both—especially as writers, imagining and creating convincing human characters.

“Theatre is one grand form of storytelling,” says Kodi Robertson, a junior student majoring in theater. “So long as parents are willing to tell bedtime stories to their children, so should theater be a platform for expressing the truth.” Coincidentally, Robertson played the lead character of Christopher, a struggling writer, in Theater AUM’s recent production of “Coupler.” He says out of 11 shows, “Coupler” was the best one he’s been part of because the story is engaging for all audience members.

“I think more millennials would be attracted to performances if they knew that the stories were inclusive and relatable to people from all sorts of backgrounds,” says Amber Baldwin, a senior theater major who has performed in 15 different shows. She and Robertson agree that theaters must also continue advancing technologically and performing plays with modern subject matter if they want to remain relevant for younger generations of theatergoers.

Robertson cites the wildly successful musical, “Hamilton,” which was written specifically for the entertainment of a millennial audience. Brittany Valley, a junior theater student who has performed in 12 different shows, says that watching theatrical performances is more special than watching film productions. “A live performance is a great opportunity for anyone who wants to see art come to life and take people on an adventure, without the use of special effects,”



Young people are missing from the theatre.

she says.

But theater has much more to offer than just a relatable story and an entertaining show. “It provides the opportunity to detach from the technological world,” Baldwin says. This may seem an impossible feat for millennials, as almost every aspect of our lives are contrived on cell phones and computers. We spend hours every day scrolling through social media newsfeeds, gauging each other through filtered photos and counted characters. Baldwin says that kind of judgment doesn’t exist in the theater, and that’s why it’s considered “one of the oldest safe spaces known to man.”

According to Valley, escaping from a harsh reality to a more unified world is “what makes theater magical.” There’s something about the human qualities of a dramatized character that bring individual audience members together in a deep affinity for the performance. Although theater often reflects real life, we’re unlikely to witness that same collective consciousness in our day-to-day scenes. For this reason, Baldwin says, “Theater is one of the many ways to teach and observe empathy in a world as troubled as the one that millennials occupy today.”

“Millennials who do not attend the theater are missing the chance to use their imaginations with others—perhaps to some cathartic end,” she adds. But maybe you’re not the

romantic, imaginative type, and maybe you don’t enjoy a moving story or work of art. Maybe you’re content passively watching a screen rather than actively watching a stage. In that case, Valley says you’re simply “missing out on a chance to be entertained.”

Robertson, Baldwin and Valley have noticed a lack of young people in Theatre AUM audiences. Most of the students who come to the shows are there only to complete a class requirement. Valley believes “half the time, it is because students have no idea when the dates and times are for the show.” “I hate to say it,” Robertson answers, “but we need more publicity and help from all majors to spread awareness and get students sitting in the seats.”

“If they do not attend, the art form will die out,” Baldwin says. “Millennials are necessary to the continuation of theater.” So next time you’re searching for a special date idea, a fun night out with friends, or just a good reason to get out of the house, try going to a theatre performance. You’re sure to be welcomed by Theatre AUM, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, The Cloverdale Playhouse or any of the other community theaters in Alabama’s River Region.

WARHAWK SQUAWK

Many students will leave campus over the summer semester to visit family or take a vacation. AUM offers many online courses over the summer for those who will be spending their summer away from campus. Do you prefer taking classes online or in class?

By Megan Endres

D'Cara Hood

Senior
Communication

"I like both of them, but online classes allow flexibility in scheduling and they are convenient."



Kalen Huggins

Senior
Communication

"I think online classes are convenient, but they are hard to take over the summer because they are so fast-paced."

Julius McCoy

Senior
Interdisciplinary Studies

"I prefer to take online classes over the summer because it allows me to go home and see my family after not seeing them all year."



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