

4-15-2022

The Bison, April 15, 2022

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Recommended Citation

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HARDING
UNIVERSITY

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Four students host 'Moments,' University's 48th annual Spring Sing show



Photo by MADISON MEYER

Senior Lydia Black, junior Keller Montgomery, junior Asher Patten and senior Camille Overman perform the opening number at Spring Sing dress rehearsal in Benson Auditorium April 12. There will be five performances throughout Spring Sing weekend.

ETHAN CONN
guest writer

Four students are getting their chance to shine on the Benson Auditorium stage this weekend as hosts for the 2022 Spring Sing show, "Moments."

Hostess Lydia Black is a senior acting major from Kilgore, Texas. Black has been in theater all her life, acting in her first show at just four years old. She has been very involved in the Theatre Department, participating in the Homecoming musical — "Big Fish" — her freshman year, as well as many other Theatre Department productions, Campus Players shows and one-act festivals. Despite all the experience, this will be Black's first time on stage for Spring Sing. She said she has enjoyed the process of working with her peers to create this show.

"I loved working with all of the people," Black said. "It's been a lot of fun getting to dance and sing with everybody and getting to be goofy because Spring Sing is really silly, so that's been a lot of fun."

However, not all the hosts come from a large theater background. Hostess Camille Overman is a senior vocal music education major from Carthage, Texas. Overman is a classically trained choral singer and made her theater debut in last fall's Homecoming musical, "Elf: The Musical." Overman said becoming a Spring Sing hostess was a dream come true.

"I knew that I always wanted to be a Spring Sing host, but it didn't really seem attainable until I did 'Elf,'" Overman said. "I feel like I'm living a dream every time I show up to practice. Being picked to lead this group of people and being given the responsibility to be the face of this massive thing is really humbling and really exciting."

Host Asher Patten is a junior acting major from Searcy, Arkansas. Patten played the lead role of Buddy the Elf in last semester's Homecoming musical. He explained the difference between working on a standard theater production and Spring Sing.

"The nature of performance that I'm accustomed to is acting based, so I'm not Asher, I'm a certain character on stage," Patten said. "The nature of Spring Sing is where it is only me up there, and that mask that an actor can hide behind is not there. Part of the challenge has been leaning into adding elements of myself into the show because Spring Sing is our campus's story, so that has been really interesting to navigate."

Patten was supposed to make his Spring Sing debut as a member of the ensemble in 2020, but that show was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Patten returned to the ensemble for the heavily limited 2021 show, and said he is excited

to be host this year with Spring Sing being back to full capacity.

"These issues that we've been dealing with for the past two years aren't as present, and it feels like how Spring Sing should be, so it's been a lot of fun," Patten said. Patten is joined as host by fellow 2021 ensemble member Keller Montgomery. Montgomery is a junior theater major from Nashville, Tennessee. He explained the collaboration between the four hosts.

"We're all distinct, but we also blend together well," Montgomery said. "The four of us are like a team, so that's cool. To get to work together with these three other people who are all amazingly talented and get to work alongside them, that's really great. I love the four of us together."

This year's Spring Sing titled "Moments" will be performed five times throughout the weekend in the Benson Auditorium. The winning club show will be announced after the final show on Saturday night.

Faculty workload reduction plan approved, enacted

EVERETT KIRKMAN
editor-in-chief

President David Burks informed faculty of the approval of a reduced workload policy in an email on March 1. Burks said the policy came to fruition with input from the Faculty Leadership Committee (FLC) and allowed faculty members two contract options to apply for: a three-fourths or a one-half teaching load faculty employment contract. Interested faculty were instructed to request their preferred option in writing to their college's dean by March 18. The deans submitted approved requests as recommendations to the provost for further approval.

The announcement came nearly five weeks after Burks announced a voluntary faculty retirement incentive at the Jan. 24 University faculty meeting.

While the voluntary retirement incentive came from administration, the reduced faculty load policy was a grassroots movement stemming from an idea from a faculty member, and then developed by the FLC.

Amy Cox, chair of the art and design department and president-elect for the 2022-'23 school year of the FLC, said the idea was originally brought up in the fall semester at a faculty forum. Cox said after discussion, faculty suggested that the FLC should propose a policy to administration. An ad hoc committee was created in December, with Cox as chair, with 11 faculty members total from a cross-section of campus. Cox said the goal

of the committee was to put a framework around what half-time or three-fourths time might look like for professors.

"When you start talking about reduced load, you have to start thinking about reduced responsibilities," Cox said. "Most teachers have their teaching responsibilities, but then they also have many other things that are required, like advising, and going to meetings, and committee work."

Cox said the committee quickly realized that a reduced load option would look different for everyone.

"We created just a handful of guidelines of what that could look like, but [faculty] would always need to check with their immediate supervisor," Cox said. "It would really be more of a negotiation."

Cox said that from the committee, the proposal went to the FLC, who presented it to the provost and the president. From there, Cox said human resources and administration took the suggestions, and crafted what became the proposal Burks sent to faculty.

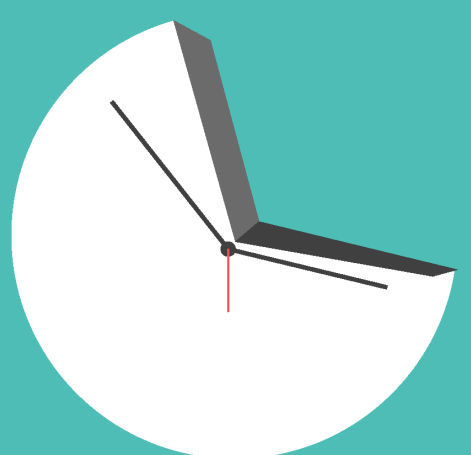
"What was proposed to the faculty was very based in what we suggested," Cox said. "So it was a really good collaboration."

Burks' email outlined that half-time and three-fourths time faculty members will remain eligible for health and dental insurance, retirement plan matching and other voluntary benefits. The tuition discount that full-time faculty members currently receive, however, will differ between the two options.

"Three-fourths teaching load will retain the current tuition discount of 100% for

employee/spouse and 75% for eligible children," Burks' email said. "Half-teaching load will offer a reduced tuition discount of 60% for employee/spouse and 50% for eligible children."

Dr. Kathy Dillion, professor of English and director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, applied and received approval for a three-fourths load option for her contract next year.



After teaching and working in different roles at the University for nearly 30 years, Dillion said while it was a hard decision to make, she has yet to have a regret.

Dillion said she considers herself to be in the second curve of her career. While the first curve is marked by fluid intelligence, the second is defined by crystallized intelligence or wisdom from years of experience.

"As you get near retirement, you think a lot about what you want that last part of your life to look like," Dillion said. "I feel a personal need to do a better job with

fewer things."

Dillion said since officially making her decision, she has felt a weight off her shoulders, and has seen the effects of that in daily interactions, especially with students.

"I made the choice," Dillion said. "I'm more in control of life circumstances. I was intentional about it. I want to show up as that person who is present, who is healthy in mind, body and spirit, and who is engaged with what I'm doing."

Although the number of professors who applied for one of the options has not been publicized, Dillion said she was surprised that more faculty members did not take the opportunity and thought that many who may have been interested could not spare the financial change, or their department could not spare their work loss.

Cox said she knew of several professors who seriously considered the options but ultimately decided not to apply, mainly due to the effects of a reduced salary.

Burks said a major criteria in approval of any application included being able to make a change without having to hire a replacement.

Dillion said she hoped the opportunity would remain available for faculty in years to come.

Both Cox and Dillion said the policy called for reduced-load contracts to be reevaluated on a yearly basis, as all teaching faculty contracts are at the University.

Living World Religions makes its first visit to St. Louis



Photo by SARA MCCLARAN

Students tour the Hindu temple of St. Louis that is currently under renovation. On this April 8 tour, they spoke with Dr. G.V. Naidu, who lectured them on Hindu theology, and they later went to the Islamic Foundation for Greater St. Louis and a Sikh temple.

GABRIEL HUFF
asst. copy editor

Dean of the College of Bible and Ministry Dr. Monte Cox took his Living World Religions class to St. Louis, Missouri, for the first time last week, allowing students to learn from different religions in the city.

The class departed Harding's campus in the afternoon of Thursday, April 7, returning April 10. During that time span, the group visited seven different places of worship hosted by multiple religions. Religions that students encountered included Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, Baha'i and Judaism. Members from Soka Gakkai International — a Buddhist sect — also paid the class a visit at the students' hotel.

Cox said he had originally planned to take his class to St. Louis in spring 2020, having

met the people with whom students would interact in October 2019 in preparation for the trip, but the COVID-19 pandemic canceled those plans and moved the class online. Cox later rescheduled the St. Louis trip for this semester and reintroduced himself to those same people during this past spring break.

Unlike previous Living World Religions trips to Chicago and Dallas, Cox said visited places in St. Louis were closer together, decreasing the time usually spent riding in a bus. Cox also said students did not get the full picture of life in a Hindu place of worship during their visit at the Hindu Temple of St. Louis on Friday because the temple was under renovation.

The group also visited a panel of Harding graduates who are young professionals at the Lafayette Church of Christ.

"They were just talking about life after

Harding," Cox said. "Here, we can take faith for granted. We can take community for granted. There, they can't. They have to pursue community, pursue faith."

Junior Fallon Hale said she enjoyed their visit to the Baha'i Information Center.

"The most welcomed I felt was by the Baha'i people at the Baha'i center," Hale said. "It was a really small building, but all the people were really interested in us coming, and they were super happy that we were there and so happy to talk about what they were doing."

Junior Gilley Stilley, who is a Spring Sing club director, said she had to miss important days of Spring Sing practice to attend the trip, but she does not regret her decision.

"I would say it puts the 'living' in Living World Religions because if you learn about religions of the past that nobody practices

anymore, it's super interesting but it doesn't have a practical application like it does when they're people you're gonna meet that believe that way," Stilley said.

Cox said St. Louis will become the new location for his Living World Religions trips in the spring, while his class will continue to travel to Dallas in the fall.

Cox said the belief of different religions can sound unbelievable to students until they meet practitioners of the faith, witnessing their welcoming and kind demeanor.

"I think the main thing that the experience accomplishes is that it helps to overcome the intimidation factor," Cox said. "I think a lot of us are intimidated by what we don't know."

Ketanji Brown Jackson makes history with confirmation to Supreme Court

BEN LANE
news editor

After three days of contentious hearings, over one month after her nomination and 233 years of Supreme Court history, the U.S. Senate voted 53-47 to confirm Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the U.S. Supreme Court on April 7, making her the first confirmed Black female of the nation's highest court.

"First, as always, I have to give thanks to God for delivering me as promised and for sustaining me throughout this nomination and confirmation process," Jackson said. "As I said at the outset, I have come this far by faith, and I know that I am truly blessed."

A procedural 53-47 vote on April 4 in the Senate brought her confirmation vote directly to the floor to bypass the judiciary committee's 11-11 deadlock along party lines. Three Republican senators, Mitt Romney of Utah, Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, ensured Jackson's confirmation by voting in favor of her, but they likely did not change the outcome of her confirmation as all 50 Democrats backed her, and a tie in the Senate would have led to a tie-breaking vote by Vice President Kamala Harris. A number of Republicans walked out of the Senate floor directly after Harris announced the vote total.

"After reviewing Judge Jackson's record and testimony, I have concluded that she is a well-qualified jurist and a person of honor," Romney said.

When she assumes office after Associate Justice Stephen Breyer retires at the end of the 2021-22 term, Jackson, 51, will diversify and be the second youngest current justice on the court with the potential to serve for decades, CBS reported April 4.

"I am thrilled that Judge Jackson was confirmed to the Supreme Court earlier today," Sen. Dick Durbin (D) Illinois tweeted April 7. "Her record of impartiality, decades of experience and perspective will protect the

rights of all Americans and promote liberty and equality for all."

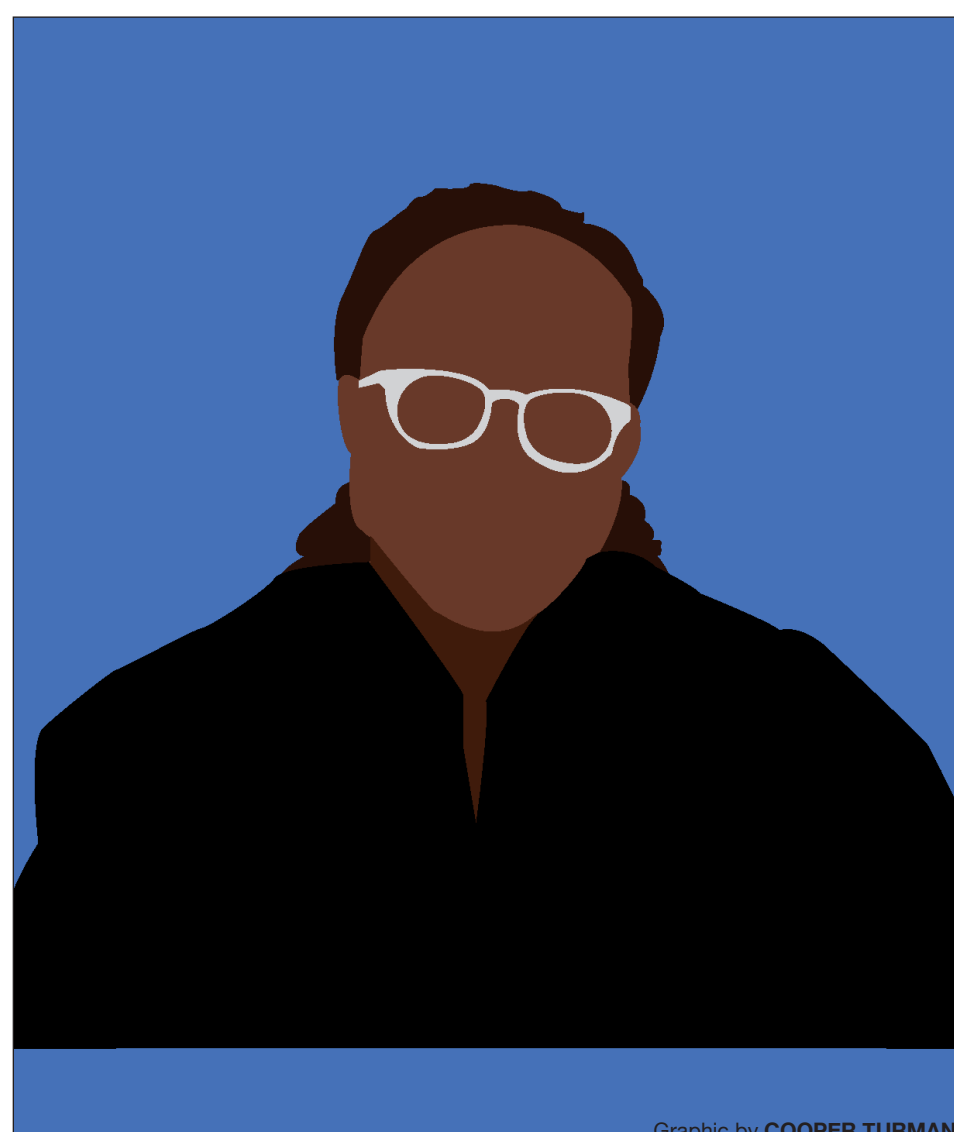
Opposing senators largely cited her sentencing lengths in child pornography cases, her public defense work for Guantanamo detainees and her lack of answer regarding her judicial philosophy as reasons for voting against her confirmation. Democrats and supporters touted her experience as a judge on the D.C. court of appeals, the D.C. district court, vice chair of U.S. sentencing commission, Supreme Court clerk experience under Breyer, academic experience, composure and work as a public defender. Jackson will be the first public defender to serve on the Supreme Court.

"My 'no' vote was based upon Judge Jackson's record of judicial activism, flawed sentencing methodology regarding child pornography cases and a belief that she will not be deterred by the plain meaning of the law when it comes to liberal causes," Sen. Lindsay Graham (R) S.C., tweeted.

Dr. Stephen Breezeel, professor of political science, said the confirmation process was typical of recent years. "Frankly, most of the votes were baked in before we started," Breezeel said.

"Ultimately, judicial confirmation processes involving the Supreme Court for the last 20 years have become this wonderful little game of trying to get the nominee to answer tough questions, and the nominee trying to creatively refuse to reveal themselves because to do so would: one, create a spectacle and, two, for fear stating a very direct opinion on question of law would create a difficulty for future cases."

Breezeel said a "fundamental" transformation of the process occurred because the Supreme Court became a political institution with Republicans and Democrats afraid of how justices will rule on important political issues. Historically, Breezeel said, both political parties accepted the president's judicial



Graphic by COOPER TURMAN

choices, but now parties see the courts as a critical battleground.

"If you can win there, you can solidify your control over the political process and undermine gains picked up by the other political side," Breezeel said.

Janae Brashaw, secretary of the BSA, said Jackson's confirmation inspired her and gave her a sense of familiarity and belonging.

Jackson's confidence and composure against antagonistic questioning particularly inspired her, Bradshaw said, because Black women are stereotyped as impatient and angry.

"She reminded me of my mom," Bradshaw said. "And to see somebody who reminds me of my mother in such a high position, it felt pretty good."



Malachi Brown
Guest Writer

It's the honest ones you've got to watch out for

I also think that hypocrisy, as our working opposite of integrity, can include more than just doing “the wrong thing,” but it can also include doing nothing when you claim to have strong beliefs. One of the main critiques of the anti-abortion movement is that the proposed solution for all the children born is to adopt them, but very few people actually do. Our foster care system and orphanages are overflowing as is, and this solution would only increase the faults of these dismal establishments.

“**The way out of the ‘that would work if everyone did it’ argument is simply practicing what you preach.**”

— *Malachi Brown,*
guest writer

In this respect (and in many others), I hold people like Dr. Devin Swindle in high esteem. He is incredibly passionate about this debate, but his views extend well past his words. He is actively involved in fostering and adopting children, living in a manner that actually makes this solution to the anti-abortion stance feasible. For that reason, I think Swindle possesses a great deal

of integrity. Now, college students who are anti-abortion likely don't have the means and certainly not the time to foster and adopt children, but there would be other ways to be active in the solution. Things as simple as babysitting a few times a year can go a long way for parents who adopt and foster, and I think that's a simple way to practice what's preached.

Having integrity can manifest itself in a great variety of ways. For environmentalists, it can be picking up trash on the ground or recycling cans. For abortion opponents, it might be babysitting and making parenting more doable. For socialists, it might look like realizing you can spare \$5 and buy a meal for someone who can't. The way out of the “that would work if everyone did it” argument is simply practicing what you preach. Start small with yourself, then do it in a small group of like-minded people.

When people see that a solution works on a small scale with people of integrity, there's hope for it becoming larger than that, because silent integrity is more effective than loud stances, and loud stances are proven by integrity.

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A more perfect union
Eric Johnson
Opinions Editor

Seeking common ground

I think that we are hardwired as humans — to interpret the world in binary terms — where things are either black or white. From simple observation, this seems to be a widespread phenomenon, as many people think in this type of way in many areas of life. For the purpose of this article, I will define “interpreting the world in binary terms” as mentally categorizing the stimuli received in life into just two, diametrically opposed categories. The specifics of these categories may change from topic to topic, but the foundational mental framework does not.

It appears that this way of thinking is ingrained during childhood. In stories aimed for children, there is the “good guy” and the “bad guy.” There is little nuance, and the binary juxtaposition is very clear. It is only as we age and mature that shades of gray begin to appear, and the boundaries of our two juxtaposed mental categories begin to grow less clear.

There are times when having this binary, two-category mental framework is not only fine but desirable and necessary. I would guess that this mental framework is so intrinsic in our beings due to the fact that “virtue” exists transcendentally in reality, and the universe is built (to some level of extent) on some type of universal law that differentiates between “right” and “wrong.” Such a model for the universe and reality would lend us to think in these binary terms. Thus, I do not wish to rashly dismiss the idea of binary thinking altogether. However, there are times when this type of thinking can become dangerous.

Our engagement with and thinking about politics is a good example. Due to both this natural inclination and the specific design of our political system here in America, we are trained to think of the world of politics in binary terms to a great extent. The binary way of thinking operates on multiple levels. First, we typically divide people into two camps: Democrats and Republicans. You are either on my side and therefore are with me, or you are on the other side and therefore are my enemy. To quote the immortal words of a philosophical giant: “If you're not with me, then you're my enemy.” While this mindset might be beneficial for political strategists, whose job it is to conduct business based on such labels, this is a harmful way for most of us to see each other. Maybe it would be better to define our relationships by our similarities, as opposed to our differences.

Secondly, we often divide the political proposals for any given issue into binary terms. For any issue, you can get the Republican explanation or the Democratic explanation. For most of us, we take these two explanations and conclude that one of these explanations is true and the other is false. Such a way of thinking can become dangerous if we adopt this approach without nuance. Whether you generally subscribe to a more Democratic or Republican worldview, it is tempting to begin to assume that your approach to a given issue is 100% correct and the alternative perspective is 100% false. If you are prone to such conclusions, as I am, this is something to be aware of. Recognizing that no person or party has a complete monopoly on truth, and that all reasonable perspectives are typically grounded in at least a kernel of truth, would go a long way toward fostering a safer and more productive society.

So in conclusion, we all ought beware of binaries in politics. While we might be hardwired to interpret reality in such terms, the real world is not always so black and white. Instead of oversimplifying a complex world, choosing to look for common ground in all people and in all areas of life might foster friendships out of people who might have otherwise been strangers, or even enemies.

ERIC JOHNSON is the opinions editor for The Bison. He may be contacted at ejohnson7@harding.edu.

FACULTY FINDS

‘The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative’



Amy Qualls
English

A couple of Saturdays ago, I opened my home to several of the women of Delta Nu (and friends). More accurately, I opened the woods that surround my home to them. It turns out they just wanted to play amongst the oaks, dogwoods and pines. And according to Florence Williams in her 2017 book “The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative,” there was perhaps no better way for a group of stressed-out, fatigued college students to pass a few hours.

When Williams and her family moved from a small mountain city in Colorado to the middle of Washington, D.C., she found that as the weeks passed by, she felt “disoriented, overwhelmed, depressed.” She had trouble focusing and making decisions. She began to find it hard to get out of bed even. A journalist, Williams took an assignment in Japan to write about the Japanese practice of forest-bathing, after several weeks in Washington D.C. “It was there,” she reveals, that she “started to learn the science behind what [she] was experiencing at home.” She decided to explore the relationship between nature and well-being, and her research led her to the “human-nature connection on a neural level.” Going outside, it turns out, not only makes us healthier, but also makes us “more creative, more empathetic and more apt to engage with the world and with each other.”

Williams's book takes her readers on a journey through nature — and its healing properties. Need an immunity boost? The sun's rays do a lot of good, and so do tree scents, especially those of evergreens.

Feeling particularly stressed? Take a leisurely walk through some woods. Stuck on a major project or a paper? Take a hike and have a picnic because scientists at the University of Utah's Applied Cognition Lab have found that just a half a day in nature gives us marked improvement in creativity. Can't hear yourself think? It's because you can't — noise pollution is real and in addition to affecting our sleep and making us cranky, too much noise can carry serious health effects — for humans and for wildlife. Those who live near “high volume roads” have higher risks

“**Every breath is like a prayer, a way to honor our bodies and our connection to God's creation.**”

— *Amy Qualls,*
assoc. professor of english

for stroke and cognitive decline in aging — likely from a combination of noise and air pollution, neurobiologists at Virginia Commonwealth University believe. Any future urban planners out there? Leave room for green space: Researchers at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign have found that looking at nature makes us less violent and aggressive, and their analysis of different buildings in the same Chicago neighborhood found that the buildings with the greenest views had 56% fewer violent crimes than the buildings

with the least greenery. “The Nature Fix” is full of these insights.

How many of us have experienced the same symptoms Williams describes yet are unsure what might be wrong or what to do to feel better? Technology has given us much, but it also tends to draw us indoors. Netflix, gaming, aimlessly or purposely perusing websites, trying to stay on top of assignments and email — you name it, the indoors offers it. And it's easy to pass hours staring at these screens. So it's wise to consider that Williams's research shows that “since the dawn of the Internet, we've also grown more irritable, less sociable, more narcissistic, more distracted and less cognitively nimble.” Yet Williams doesn't go on and on about getting rid of Instagram, canceling your Netflix subscription and destroying all the worlds you've created in whatever favorite video game you play. She knows we live in a wired world. She's simply asking us to give up some of the time we spend inside for the outdoors.

Strive for balance, and when you fall out of balance, there's beauty in finding it again. When you feel “off,” go outside. Get some natural vitamin D. Smell the rain. Sit on the lawn and run your fingers through the grass. Take a cue from Emerson and jump around puddles by moonlight. And while you do, breathe fully the air. Every breath is like a prayer, a way to honor our bodies and our connection to God's creation.

AMY QUALLS is a guest writer for The Bison. She may be contacted at aqualls@harding.edu.

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Work in progress

Everett Kirkman
Editor-in-Chief

Death and taxes

Benjamin Franklin (allegedly) said it best, right? “In this world, nothing is certain except death and taxes.” Franklin is attributed to several catchy proverbs, some which have been reattributed to other thinkers, but maybe this one has some merit.

Those who celebrate Easter take this weekend to meditate on death (and resurrection of course). For Americans, this weekend also marks an appointed day to pay taxes — typically April 15, although this year, it’s April 18, due to Emancipation Day on April 15.

If you are someone that celebrates Easter, then you probably believe in Jesus and his resurrection. If you believe that his resurrection, pending your supplication for forgiveness (and subsequent baptism perhaps), guarantees you eternal life, then what is there to worry about death — or taxes for that matter?

I am not, dear reader, suggesting tax evasion. I am, however, suggesting a reconsideration of a view of taxes.

Jesus himself was asked, as recorded in Matthew’s gospel, “Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”

The question at its core was designed as a Catch-22 — if Jesus answered no, he could be charged with treason; if he said yes, he could be accused of disloyalty, and he would lose support of Jewish crowds.

So, when Jesus answered, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s,” he drew a sharp distinction between two kingdoms — that of this world (Caesar’s), and that not of this world (Jesus’s). While Christians exist as part of both kingdoms, at least until death, Christians have obligations. Like taxes.

And yet, the distinction does not make the human obligation an either/or, but a seamless, harmonious both/and. That’s part of the brilliance of his answer. Jesus identifies a distinction that is not impossible to reconcile. Although it takes a lot of wisdom. And patience. And meditation.

But, at the end of the day, that’s my interpretation of that passage. I believe it to be true. But someone else may disagree. When a passage is taken out of its full context, and used to do the heavy work in supporting an argument, it’s often not what its author intended. I can quote Shakespeare, or Aristotle, or even Benjamin Franklin or Jesus to further my point, but it may only be fuel to a fire that’s lighting an echo chamber.

“**I can quote Shakespeare, or Aristotle, or even Benjamin Franklin or Jesus to further my point, but it may only be fuel to a fire that’s lighting an echo chamber.**”

— Everett Kirkman,
editor-in-chief

When one already has a strong opinion on a topic, it’s only natural to have confirmation bias as they seek out sources.

So, I encourage you to review information skeptically. I encourage you to always approach what you are told is fact with a healthy amount of doubt — not out of malice, but with the mind of a lifelong learner and a heart that seeks justice.

We live in the information age. Virtually everyone has access to mass amounts of information in capacities that humanity has never been able to share or communally experience ever before. Feel empowered to learn and utilize that information. Practice discernment; be wary of inherently false information being spread, and know that not everything is clear-cut or black-and-white. Know the foundation that you stand on, and know who in your life to turn to when you need help sorting through it all.

EVERETT KIRKMAN is the editor-in-chief for The Bison. She may be contacted at ekirkman@harding.edu.

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SHENANIGANS OF SPOOKY SUITE - TIMING



BLUE



Hayley Kate Webb
Guest Writer

As a member of the Harding University Honors College, I recently had the opportunity to conduct original research regarding the identity development of student-athletes. My undergraduate thesis titled, “More Than an Athlete: A Qualitative Analysis of How Student-Athletes Develop Self-Authorship Through Their Experiences in Athletics,” examined the relationship between the identity development of student-athletes and their athletic journeys and experiences. With overwhelming agreement, the student-athletes elicited a perception that they are only seen as valuable based upon their performance in their athletic field. I found there is an opportunity to impact the lives of student-athletes by mentally, physically and emotionally investing in their lives outside of athletics.

A student-athlete that I spoke with during the research powerfully summarized this commonly held perception. The student-athlete said, “I want people to know I’m smart. I want you to know that I can articulate my thoughts. I want you to know that I’m just as valuable. I feel like athletes get put in a box sometimes. Sometimes you’re only seen as valuable if you perform well on the court. Once that is taken away, then who am I? Do you still value me?”

One of the student-athletes who participated in the research discussed

the difficulties that come with separating their academic and social identities from their athletic identity. The student-athlete said, “Whenever I’m in a class or trying to make friends with new people I talk about basketball, and because of that they’re like, ‘How’s basketball practice going,’ or ‘Did you run this morning?’ That is really difficult for me. I’m grateful that it’s a gateway to making friends, but sometimes that is the first thing normal students in my class think of when they think of me.”

“**Student-athletes are listeners, learners, children, siblings and friends.**”

— Hayley Kate Webb,
guest writer

From the research, I discerned that student-athletes often strive to establish an identity away from their sports. Another student-athlete who participated in the research said, “The biggest compliment I can get is someone not realizing that I’m on the tennis team. Then, I know I’ve done a good job of not making that my personality but just one aspect of stuff I do.”

Inspired by this data, I pondered the following questions: How can we, as friends,

family members, teachers and peers, affirm the value of the student-athletes we come in contact with in our daily lives? How can we acknowledge and affirm their identities as individuals? How can we assist student-athletes as they work to balance their social, academic and athletic lives?

As both a researcher and a former collegiate student-athlete, I believe that we can provide answers to these questions by acknowledging their worth within many areas of involvement. For example, inquiring about their hobbies, encouraging their external passions, asking about their struggles and getting to know them on a personal level. Most importantly, this is made possible by reminding student-athletes that they have eternal worth as a created image bearer of God, entirely separate from athletic performance.

Student-athletes are listeners, learners, children, siblings and friends. Though their sport has given them a valuable platform, they are equally as valuable as an individual outside of their sport. It is our role, as supplemental characters in their stories, to acknowledge the value of the individual within the student-athlete.

HAYLEY KATE WEBB is a guest writer for The Bison. She may be contacted at hwebb2@harding.edu.

Just the Clax

One moment, please



Michael Claxton
Narrative Columnist

to wander around the pier. Paying careful attention was never my strong suit, and I fell right into the lake. Since I could not swim, my sister dove in and pulled me out. From then on, I had to live with the humiliation of having been rescued by a girl. My street cred was never the same after that.

I was 10 or 11. I was playing at a friend’s house across the street from where I lived. That day we found a 2-by-4 in the front yard, and we propped it up against a waist-high brick wall and pretended we were pirates walking the plank. I quickly grew bored with that game, so I wondered what else I could do on the 2-by-4. “I know,” I said. “This will make a cool slide.”

When I got to the hospital, I had an 8.5 inch splinter in the fundament. The nurses could barely suppress their laughter, and the doctors had to call in a specialist from out of town. To this day, when I sit down, I lean a bit to the right.

I was 12. My brother was introducing his girlfriend to the family, and we all went to eat seafood. I somehow had made it through life that far without ordering fried shrimp at a restaurant. After I finished my meal, I quickly grew bored, until the girlfriend said, “Michael, where are your shrimp tails?” I thought the

shrimp had seemed a bit crunchy. Now that she is my sister-in-law, she reminds me of this often.

I was about 36. After having 24 relatively good years, I got bored again. My colleagues and I had just finished lunch at Mi Ranchito and were headed to the car. I was tired of the same old routine of leaving the restaurant and getting into the sedan. So, I saw a fence in front of the building and was pretty sure I could vault over it. Only I didn’t stick the landing. My friends were too busy laughing to help me up.

I was 42. It was after Christmas. My nephew had gotten a new freestanding basketball goal and, since we had Christmas at his grandmother’s house, we needed to transport the goal to his home about 15 minutes away. We had a truck, but no bungee cords or ropes. I had grown bored after we opened presents, so I volunteered to come along. “I’ll sit in the back and hold it down,” I said. I did not anticipate the power that gale-force winds have to move a basketball goal, and it took every ounce of my strength to A: hang on, and B: hold down the goal. At one point, I was nearly on my back, stretched out across the truck bed, the goal underneath me. To the cars behind us, it must have looked like I was having contractions.

May your days be filled with better moments than these. If not, at least you won’t be bored.

MICHAEL CLAXTON is a narrative columnist for The Bison. He can be contacted at mclaxto1@harding.edu.

Players Only

Jada Trice
distance runner

"Players Only" is a special column written by Harding athletes. In this week's issue: Lady Bisons track and cross-country runner discusses the importance of being a good team player no matter the circumstance.

"Why be on the sidelines when you can be a part of the action?"

This question has been on my mind a lot this past week as I have found myself once again "on the sidelines." I initially heard this question in a conversation about the value of cheerleading, and though that isn't my sport, I began to make a personal connection. It was asked because this person did not understand why some athletes choose to cheer rather than be the one out competing. Although I have always admired the work and technique put into the routines, sideline cheers and maintaining the hype of the crowd, I have had a hard time answering the "why" as well. Never actually being a competitive cheerleader, I did not quite see the significance of having designated encouragers on the sidelines. It was not until these past few years of being on Harding's cross-country and track teams that I started to understand the value of being on the sideline and the power of encouragement it yields.

Training at Harding has been one of the greatest blessings I've received while in school, but I have experienced a number of athletic injuries where I have had to stop running and competing for sometimes weeks at a time. During these weeks, I have found myself disheartened to be on the sidelines. I struggled to understand my role on the team and sometimes even in school because the joy I usually found in training was lost to my injury. Any athlete who truly loves their sport and has gone through this knows the frustration of wanting to get back on the field, just to realize that all you can do is wait for your body to heal. We wait to heal but what else can we do? What is a teammate good for when competing isn't an option? Lately, while on the sideline, I have found that an injured teammate has so much influence because of how much power encouragement has in sports. Sadly, it sometimes takes being off the field to realize the capabilities we have outside of our physical sport, as it did for me. Although it is still important to put in the work it takes to get back, being a good teammate is so much more than producing the results to win the competition. Encouraging others has never been particularly hard for me in the past, but we all know it is so much easier to encourage others when everything is going well with you.

In these recent few weeks of being injured, I have been challenged with doing all that I can to encourage my teammates from the sidelines since I know it is what I am fully capable of doing well. So, I ask myself: What does a good teammate look like? What kind of sideliners do you want to be? A good teammate is someone who understands the lasting effects that true encouragement has on an individual as well as the whole team. They are there for the team even when it is not convenient or beneficial for themselves. They are there because they want to be. To me, the beautiful thing about the whole gig is that the encourager or sideliner knows how it feels to be in the workout, on the field or in the race. They know the pain, effort and mental toughness it takes to perform well, so they are some of the best motivators for the ones in the action. And they understand that what you say matters. You know the importance of that one voice you hear in your competition and you have the opportunity to be that. I also love how the sideline may be the actual side of the field, track or court, but it can also be wherever you make it. The weight room, a team meeting or the bus the morning before the team departs for a meet, a good teammate is ready to encourage wherever needed.

There's going to be times in everyone's lives where they find themselves on the sidelines and out of the action whether it's by choice or by circumstance. Maybe you're cheering on your child at their game. Maybe you're the coach looking to motivate your athletes. It is also likely that you will find yourself completely out of the action when you've worked so hard to be seen for your skills. It takes a unique type of effort to appreciate the accomplishments of others and to become a true teammate, but as I try my best to get to that point, I hope that you will too.

Athletes interested in writing a Players Only column are encouraged to contact The Bison's sports editor TIANE DAVIS at cdavis27@harding.edu

Fishing team approaches end of season



Photo provided by DAVID COLLINS

Tyler Williams stands at the award ceremony after competing in Major League Fishing's Abu Garcia College Fishing national championship on Fort Gibson Lake in Wagoner, Oklahoma on April 9. Williams is only the third Harding fisherman to qualify for and advance to the national championship.

JAKE MOONEY
guest writer

The Harding fishing team is coming to the end of a tough season, but they are looking forward to getting their boats back in the water.

During fishing tournaments, the fishing team attempts to catch a certain number of bass that are over a certain length. Then, the bass are taken to weigh-ins to see who caught the largest average weight of bass. The person or team with the largest score wins the tournament.

Team sponsor Dr. David Collins said the team competes in two-person teams against different colleges from all across Arkansas and the surrounding states. All of the teams are a part of the Major League Fishing Abu Garcia College Fishing Tournament.

"Teams compete in three regular-season qualifying tournaments in one of five conferences covering the entire U.S.," Collins said. "We compete in the Southern Conference, which includes Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas and Oklahoma."

A lot of preparation goes into winning these tournaments, where more than 200 boats compete at a time.

"The team will head out usually two to three days before the day of the tournament and practice," sophomore Braden Smith said. "We try to locate bass and see as much of whatever lake we are fishing at the time as possible."

Junior Tyler Williams said they spend a day fishing the lake before the tournament looking for fish beds and schools of fish, and it helps them to have an idea where the fish will be the next couple days during the tournament.

After the team checks out the lake, they spend a couple of hours setting up their fishing rigs, Smith said.

Though the team prepares so much for the tournaments, they still have other things to account for to have a good day of fishing.

"We fished a tournament on Sam Rayburn [Lake], and it was the most waves and wind I have ever fished in," Williams said. "We caught a lot of fish, just no big ones, and on the way in [we] almost sank the boat at the ramp."

There are a lot of variables that can be accounted for having a good or bad day on the boat.

"I have caught some fish, I just haven't been able to find the right ones yet," Smith said. "I have had a tough year this school year, but hopefully things are looking up for me in the future."

Men's, women's golf teams compete in GAC championship

SARA BEEKSMA
guest writer

TIANE DAVIS
sports editor

The Harding men's and women's golf teams placed third and fourth respectively in the Great American Conference (GAC) Championship in Hot Springs, Arkansas, earlier this week.

Both teams participated in a nine-team tournament from April 10-12. The women's team completed the tournament at 75-over 939 while the men had a 24-over 888.

Sophomore Brenda Sanchez, who placed fifth individually, said she had high hopes going into the tournament.

"If I can imagine myself being where I want, I'm already halfway to succeeding," Sanchez said.

Both teams now wait to see whether they qualified for the NCAA Tournament. Head golf coach Dustin Howell said he and the teams are looking forward to the possibility of an NCAA postseason.

"Our hopes are high for an invitation to the NCAA postseason, and we need to continue enjoying playing the sport that we love and great golf will follow," Howell said.

Howell said the women's team is having its best season yet, and in order to have

better chances of qualifying for the NCAA tournament, they would have had to win the conference championship.

Howell said sophomore Sam Tandy is also experiencing a record-breaking season with two individual tournament wins. Last week, the GAC named him co-men's Golfer of the Week.

Sanchez and her teammates shared excitement looking forward to the conference, as well as a zeal for getting back to play in less restricted times. After the tournament ended Tuesday, sophomore Jojo Perry said she knows there is always the thought at the end of a tournament that she could have done better.

"There's always a nagging in your head about all the shots that could have been better, no matter how good you are," Perry said. "I think that's what is so fun about golf is that there is always room for improvement. All you can do at the end of every golf tournament is analyze and prepare for the next one." Perry said the women's golf team has changed a lot since last year and that Howell has helped prepare them for tournaments like the GAC tournament.

"From last year, the team has completely grown and changed," Perry said. "There's an old saying that goes 'Your team is only as good as your worst player,' and that's so true in golf, which is why we use each other to improve and grow. Our coach helps us prepare for these tournaments by making us qualify."

"The Harding women's team this year is statistically the best team in program history, but we are faced with the need to win our conference championship in order to advance to the postseason," Howell said.

Graphic by COOPER TURMAN

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New Student Association executives elected



Photo by BALAZS BALASSA

Juniors Laney Bell and Megan Sledge and sophomore Britney Njeri sit in the Student Association office on April 11, shortly after winning the election as SA executives for the 2022 - 23 academic year. Grant Moore, not pictured, is currently studying abroad in Greece.

SARA MCCLARAN
features editor

EVERETT KIRKMAN
editor-in-chief

The Harding student body elected junior interdisciplinary studies major Megan Sledge and junior management major Laney Bell as next year's Student Association (SA) president and vice president, as announced on April 8, along with sophomore medical humanities major Britney Njeri as secretary and junior accounting major Grant Moore as treasurer.

There have only been five female SA presidents in University history. The first was Susan Brady in 1977; the second was Susan Vaughn-Hassmann in 1990. In the past five years however, three have joined the list: Hallie Hite in 2018; Morgan Proffitt-Davis in 2020; and now, incoming president Sledge.

Sledge and Bell will also be the second-

ever female president and vice president pair, the first being Hite and her vice president, Nora Johnson.

Sledge played a significant part of the current SA as the junior female representative, most recently succeeding in getting the Harding community garden approved by administration.

"I feel like the experience that I have on the SA and my leadership qualities gave me confidence to step up to the plate for this position," Sledge said. "I went into this campaign with an open mind, knowing that God would put the right person in the position according to his plan. I had no idea what the outcome would be."

Sledge said she is honored to be president and has learned a lot from working with current SA president Ethan Brazell. With this role, she will get to work with incoming University President Mike Williams.

"There are going to be lots of exciting changes in this upcoming year," Sledge said. "Dr. Williams is going to bring a

new energy to campus that I am thrilled to work alongside. My biggest dream for next year is that we focus on telling the story of Jesus and of our lives. I find so much power in our personal testimonies and from sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. My prayer is that we embrace this challenge and find ways to share these stories with the Harding community, the city of Searcy and anywhere else we may go."

Brazell said the advice he received when he became president was to make the role his own, and he hopes Sledge can take that advice as well and lean into her strengths and her personality. Brazell said he got to see her tackle a lot of huge projects like the community garden throughout the school year, and he thinks she is going to do a great job as president. Bell, he said, is going to bring a lot to the SA because she has experience planning events and is very organized.

Bell was a part of the First Year Experience committee and was a summer orientation

co-director for 2021. Bell said she chose to run for vice president because she loved planning events and knew the vice president oversees various SA committees.

"I really loved seeing how involved the SA was in the community," Bell said. "I loved that they were always doing service projects. My hope for it is that we continue being as involved in the community as we have been."

Njeri said she decided to run for SA because of how much she has loved her two years at Harding.

"I believe that Harding can continue to be a more loving and welcoming place for all students, faculty, and staff to continue to draw closer to the Lord while they also become better versions of themselves and it would be such an honor to help in that," Njeri said. "By bringing an international perspective, I believe I will help to continue to unite the student body and the administration in the different ways that I believe need improvement."

Chorus director to conduct final concert at Harding next week



Photo by JEFF MONTGOMERY

Kelly Neill directs the chorus in the Reynolds Communication and Music Recital hall on April 3. Neill will be retiring from Harding to begin a career in full time ministry at the Bentonville Church of Christ.

SOPHIE ROSSITTO
community editor

One Harding music professor has a way of transforming musical moments through small gestures. With one subtle movement of his fingers while conducting, chorus director Kelly Neill can lead students to sing a musical phrase in a beautiful and unexpected way, assistant professor of music Susan Shirel said.

"It's been really neat to watch him as such a graceful and expressive, but minimally expressive, conductor in the ways that he's able to pull out these magical sounds from ensembles," Shirel said.

Neill will direct the Harding chorus next Thursday, April 21, in his final concert at the University before beginning a career in full-time ministry this summer.

Music department chair Jay Walls said Bentonville Church of Christ has hired Neill to become their lead minister. Neill publicly announced his decision to leave the University last fall.

Neill said reflecting on the upcoming chorus concert feels bittersweet because he has loved his job of working with college students and teaching music over the past 18 years.

"Working at Harding has just been a dream come true," Neill said.

Senior Erin Fouss, who has sung in choral ensembles under Neill for the past four years, said she will miss seeing her director and his positive smile each day. Fouss said she appreciates Neill's fun-loving approach to music and the way he connects with students outside of their roles as musicians.

"He just genuinely cares about everyone and always wants to make sure your well-being is good," Fouss said.

Neill, who came to Harding in 2004, served as concert choir director before becoming chorus director in 2020. Neill has directed the chamber singers ensemble for 12 years.

Neill began preaching at the Olyphant Church of Christ — which is about 30 miles outside of Searcy — five years ago, and said he has loved learning more about ministry and helping people with their faith. Through this experience and other developments in his life, Neill said he felt as though God was leading him in a new direction.

"I have always had some kind of a leaning into ministry, some kind of a call or a draw," Neill said.

Shirel said Neill has become part of a history of strong choral music at Harding, joining a list of previous directors including "Uncle Bud," also known as Kenneth Davis, Jr., and Cliff Ganus III. Shirel said the Music Department plans to continue this tradition of high-quality vocal music next semester so that choral singing will remain an important part of Harding's identity.

Walls said the Music Department is working on a plan to adjust to Neill's absence in organizing the choral ensembles for next semester, but the group has not finalized their decisions. He said Neill is a man of outstanding Christian character who will be missed once he leaves campus.

"If I were to make a short list of the finest people I have ever known, Kelly Neill would easily make the list," Walls said.

Computer science, English department introduce video game production class

KAYLEIGH TRITSCHLER
guest writer

Harding has introduced an experimental course following the development process of video game creation for the 2022 fall semester, which will provide students the opportunity to create their own video game. The course is marketed for computer science and English students, and will be taught by associate professor of computer science Dr. Frank McCown and associate professor of English Dr. Russel Keck

"Dr. Keck and I are still working out some of the details, but our two classes will be meeting together once a week and separately once a week," McCown said. "When together, our students will learn how to design and prototype games. We'll do group exercises, learning how to develop

ideas and evaluate game prototypes. When separated, my students will be learning the C# programming language and Unity, a tool for building video games. Meanwhile, Dr. Keck's students will be learning how to create characters and write intriguing game narrative."

For a number of years, Keck has been a guest lecturer in McCown's game development class. The interest of students after this specific lecture showed that there was an interest and need of a collaborative course like this, Keck said.

"Students would get very excited about that lecture and often follow me out of the classroom and continue to talk to me about these things," Keck said. "So we realized there was very much a student interest, but also a huge billion dollar industry that is growing

out of video games. It is no longer a fringe interest, but a mainstream thing, and there are students that are wanting to pursue careers or spend their time making video games."

A collaborative class like this one gives students the chance to work in a team with people they may have never been able to work with before. It will also give them experience of what working in a real world industry could look like.

"This course is a joint effort to create a course that utilizes students' different talents from multiple perspectives like the computer science software development side and the story narrative creative, character creation side of things," Keck said. "Both of which are necessary to produce video games."

Keck said the course is for anyone who has a passion for storytelling, character

development, video games and the process of putting all of those together.

"I am most looking forward to learning how to write characters for a video game," sophomore Jack Johnson said. "I love creating characters for short stories or novels, but creating a game character is much different because you must take into consideration that not only are you writing a part of that character, but the player also gets to write a part of that character depending on how they play the game. I am a computer science major and an English minor, so while I wish I could take both sides of this class I also understand that if I was taking both sides it would limit my ability to be both a good writer and a good programmer."

Graphic by COOPER TURMAN

Rivers West opens for The Brook & The Bluff



Photo by JULIANNE BAKER

Junior Joe Oliver and junior Addison Carney of River's West opened for The Brook & The Bluff in the Administration Auditorium on April 2. They played 10 original songs at the concert.

ADDI PROVINCE
guest writer

The Harding University Campus Activities Board hosted Rivers West and The Brook & The Bluff in the Anthony Wright Administration Building auditorium on Saturday, April 2. Rivers West is made up of juniors Addison Carney and Joe Oliver. Director of Campus Life Abby Stinnett approached Rivers West about the concert opportunity last semester.

"I was at Midnight Oil and ran into Abby," Carney said. "She asked if we would be interested in opening for a band for the spring concert. We agreed, and she kept us updated throughout the semester, and over Christmas break she DMed us and said, 'The Brook & The Bluff. April 2. Y'all down?' And we said, 'Are you kidding me?'"

Seniors Jair Lopez and Eric Johnson joined Rivers West to open for The Brook & The Bluff. Johnson is a member of the band Sparky & the Hills and played drums for Rivers West on Saturday.

"Eric and I were actually [resident assistants] together sophomore year," Oliver said. "He would be writing music and show me some of what he'd been writing around the time Addison started writing music, as well. We knew we wanted to have someone to [play] bass and drums with us to get more of that folk sound."

"We both really like them as people," Carney said. "Eric and Jair are super easy to play with, and they pick up on songs really fast."

Lopez, a member of Belles and Beaux, played bass with Rivers West.

"Getting to perform with them and getting to see the stuff that they'd made that hasn't even been released was pretty cool," Lopez said. "It was a privilege for me and Eric to see that and to have the freedom to make suggestions for how the show could be. It was neat that they trusted us to participate in that too."

The quartet played 10 original songs, one of them being their newly released single, "Into Autumn." The set list also included "Haunted Man," set to be released on April 22 and included on their first album.

"It probably wasn't until the end of last semester that we realized the idea of releasing an album and started putting plans in motion," Oliver said. "We knew nothing going into this process. We have probably changed the lineup of what we thought was going to be coming out a countless number of times. It requires a ton of thinking. We have six of the 10 songs recorded, with a single coming out on the 22, another in May, and our album coming out in June."

For more information and album updates from Rivers West, follow their Instagram @rivers_west.

Downtown to host midnight Easter service

HANNAH HACKWORTH
guest writer

After a brief intermission due to COVID-19, Downtown Church of Christ will be hosting a midnight service leading into Easter Sunday this weekend. Starting tomorrow at 11:30 p.m., the college ministry team at Downtown will host this service for the community.

"What we've been describing it as is a hybrid between what you find normally at a Sunday morning service at Downtown and what you find on Sunday night," senior Levi Huddleston, university intern at Downtown Church of Christ, said. "So, Monte Cox will be delivering a short sermonette, we'll have several periods of singing, there will be a couple different scripture recitations throughout the service just kind of telling the story of the crucifixion, and, of course, we will take communion after midnight —

so on Easter day. Together, with everyone."

After a weekend full of Spring Sing excitement, the leadership team is hopeful a newfound energy will surface.

"I think it's special just because there's going to be so much energy and momentum coming off of Spring Sing, so being able to carry that over like an hour later and just having a worship service, I think everyone is going to be ecstatic and into the service and that'll be really good," Huddleston said.

The staff is hopeful the service will help focus attendees' minds after a long weekend.

"I definitely think it's out of people's comfort zones and it's after Spring Sing, we're all going to be tired, but I think there's going to be a breath of fresh air and recognition of all that Christ has done for us, especially coming together and doing that [communion] at that specific time at midnight," senior Mak Oviedo-Rodriguez, university intern, said. "I think everybody will spiritually benefit very

greatly. I think that this is making a big deal out of Easter in a time where we're making a big deal out of a very fun time, but also a very marketed time at Harding."

Cox will be delivering his last sermon as preaching minister at Downtown that evening.

"I think this will be a special time, not only because we get to worship together into Easter Day, but also because this is Dr. Cox's last weekend to be preaching at Downtown," Alontis Andress, volunteer team leader at Sunday evening services, said. "I know that I am excited to hear him speak, and I hope that others are as well."

All are invited to worship at Downtown tomorrow night and partake in this special service together.

"I think it's going to help bring people together and remind us of all that Christ has done for us and who he is and what he means to us," Oviedo-Rodriguez said. "Better than

any Spring Sing show will ever be was the performance that Christ put on for us that would lead to our entire lives and salvation. That is the grand finale, but also the beginning of a whole other story, so I think it'll be very exciting and great to really focus together."



Graphic by COOPER TURMAN



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WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH YOUR FAMILY DURING SPRING SING WEEKEND???

- ★
The Book Nest
 The Book Nest is a used bookstore in downtown Searcy. They sell books and records, with proceeds going toward foster care in Arkansas. They are open Thursday from noon to 6 p.m., Friday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- ★
The Spring Market
 The Spring Market is a showcase of student and alumni small businesses that will be held Saturday on the front lawn from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- ★
Natural State Throwers
 Natural State Throwers is a local ax throwing venue with hours from 4-10 p.m. Thursday and Friday and noon to 11 p.m. Saturday.
- ★
Hourglass Escape Rooms
 Hourglass Escape Rooms has multiple scenarios to escape from and is open Thursday from 5-8 p.m., from 2-10 p.m. Friday and from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday.
- ★
Sonic
 Experience a Searcy classic and head to the nearest Sonic with your parents.

