

Fall 2020

THE MARIAN



LARK JONES:  
A Resource for Inclusion:  
The Unity Center

LINDSEY ROUSSEAU:  
Bigger Than Us:  
Marian University's Fight Against  
Covid-19

@themarianphoenix

21ST CENTURY WEDDINGS A THREE-PART SERIES ON WEDDINGS  
CHILDHOOD FEARS — SHORT STORY / THE DPC  
A RESOURCE FOR INCLUSION AND COMMUNICATION / + MORE INSIDE

## MEET THE NEW LOGO DESIGNER

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**Lucy Wahnsiedler is a junior Communication major, with minors in Pastoral Leadership and Graphic Design. She is a Presidential Ambassador, a Speaking Studio Consultant, and a San Damiano Scholar.**

**Lucy is honored to have her design chosen as *The Marian Phoenix's* new logo.**



## ABOUT THE LOGO

As a Chinese American, I meshed Fenghuang, the Chinese Phoenix, with a European Phoenix design. The logo is in the Marian colors, to make it cohesive with social media and the current *Marian Phoenix* website. This phoenix is holding a feather pen, which alludes to the Christian symbol of a dove with an olive branch, as Marian is a Catholic University. Additionally, the feather pen represents the painstaking writing process, as writers use and convey parts of themselves when they put pen to paper.

## Social Justice



By Lark Jones

A couple months ago, players in the NBA chose to boycott their games, grabbing millions of people's attention across the world. Why were they boycotting, you ask? They were fed up and tired. Tired of the same revolving door of social and racial injustice. So, the players in the NBA chose to do something about it, they boycotted playing.

This boycott got me inspired to think about how me being an athlete and African-American has an effect on bringing light to social justice. I wrote an essay on what the conversation of social justice and athletics means. I communicated how all of the fans watching the NBA players boycott are seeing a true example of what it means to fight for what you believe in. I want to continue that conversation.

A couple months after writing my reflective essay I have realized even more things about athletics and social justice. It takes real leadership to step up and take action. Athletes like

Lebron James are not leaders because they are MVP's or because they have the most points on the team. They are leaders because they never shy from continuously projecting their messages out as loud as they can. In my opinion, using your power for the good is what makes a real leader. There are countless athletes who have the influence to raise awareness about an issue, but choose to ignore the opportunity to change what they see is happening. They sit back in their bubble of privilege and choose to let the chance to do something pass over them. To me that is not what makes a leader, and it isn't inspiring. What gives me inspiration is change and dialogue, no matter how small.

My dad was an athlete all his life, basketball was his sport of choice. I often have conversations with him about the social and racial injustice that is hurting this country. He explained by him being an athlete he knows so many people and has received many resources from basketball. Even with his career today, basketball has acted as a partner in his success. There has not been one moment, where my dad has not used the influence that basketball gave him to aid in the conversation of racial injustice. He is always implementing factors into his daily life that are fighting for justice. People are able to listen, and he wouldn't be able to do that in the same way without his relationship with basketball.

I recently had a discussion with him about a criminal justice reform

program that he is leading at his place of work. It was extremely eye-opening to speak with my dad about all of the ways that people of color can be discriminated against in this society. By my father leading this criminal justice reform program, he will show how injustice affects a portion of America's system. He was given this opportunity to lead this movement as a successful black man in America, trying to guide other black kids, for instance, who might not have the resources to be their most successful. I find it inspiring to see my dad continue to be a role model and use the platform that sports have given him to create a dialogue. Basketball has allowed my dad to communicate with so many organizations and communities across the state of Indiana. As the criminal justice reform program continues, there is hope for improvement in our justice systems and the people so bluntly affected by it.

For him and so many other athletes it is about enacting substantial change in the U.S. It is about not just saying we need change, but actually going out and creating change. My hope is that the actions of black athletes continue to disrupt the narrow-minded and dangerous justice system that I see today. I hope that one day athletes like Lebron James will not have to boycott an NBA game, over a life that was so recklessly taken. Sometimes greatness is hard to achieve, but that doesn't mean that the fight to achieve greatness is impossible.

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# Bigger Than Us: Marian University's Fight Against COVID-19

By Linny Rousseau

The leadership at Marian University has put policies in place to protect the student body. Social distancing and face masks are the new normal throughout campus. However, the students themselves must hold each other accountable to be safe. Some students on campus believe we all could be more proactive in the fight against COVID-19.

Student body president Kylie Lehman expressed her thoughts on how the Marian student body could be doing better. She said that she does believe that leadership is looking out for the best interest of the students, explaining that they are giving us the best education possible while staying safe. While getting to be on campus is nice, Lehman stated that it is scary to be with people anywhere.

The president of Marian University's Student Nurses Association, Bami Adeniyi, agrees completely. She believes that the leadership of this university does have good intentions but being on campus has been a struggle for Adeniyi. Quite frankly, being anywhere has been a struggle for the senior nursing student. She stated, "I don't really feel safe anywhere."

Both student leaders know that this pandemic has been unpredictable from the moment campus was vacated last March until now. Both women noted that not many clear answers exist but following CDC guidelines is an important role in keeping this campus healthy.

Lehman stated, "This is bigger than us." She said that every individual on this campus needs to do their part, noting that all people on Marian's campus could be doing a better job at keeping each other safe. To explain how everyone can hold each other accountable, she tells students to not be afraid to set a good example or say something to their peers about risky behaviors.

Adeniyi stated her concern about students underestimating the situation. She has recognized behavior around campus where students are pressing the limits of the COVID-19 restrictions. She wants the student body to know that coronavirus is not a joke. She encourages the campus to watch the "Knight Care" videos that were produced and released to campus through emails between June and August.

Adeniyi wants everyone on campus to hold each other accountable. She stated that speaking up ties directly into Dignity of the Individual. She explained that we must all care about each other's health and safety.

Coronavirus is still very much present on campus and looks to be here for quite some time. We must all be part of the fight to stay healthy.



## Positivity During the Pandemic

By Rayna Onate

With everything happening to our world, thanks to the Coronavirus, it is difficult to look at our world in a positive light. However, it is important to make do with what was dealt, especially since the light at the end of the tunnel is currently not in sight. With that being said, welcome to the four-part series that will highlight the 'brighter side' of Corona.

If anything, the pandemic has helped the world get its priorities straight. For one, it was recognized who were and weren't essential workers – this includes celebrities. In the past, society has almost worshiped or idolized celebrities by following their every move on media and wanting to be just like them, famous and rich. But the pandemic changed this in a way. Constant media coverage that the celebrities couldn't escape... even in a pandemic, showed that even celebrities with their 'status' can get in trouble. For example, Entertainment Tonight said the Kardashians were in the hot seat a few times because they broke quarantine rules, and this includes the time Kim broke the stay at home rule to go get her hair done for an interview on the Today Show.

Overall, the pandemic awakened the world and helped people realize that celebrities were indeed NOT essential workers. The media also showed that while in quarantine, celebrities couldn't relate to us well – despite all

the ads with celebrities saying, 'We're in this together!' No, we're not 'all in the same boat,' you're on a cruise ship and I am barely surviving in my rowboat thank you very much.

Ryan Reynolds, in his hilarious and sarcastic way, said it best while responding on Twitter to a social media campaign by saying, "In times of crisis, ... it's the celebrities that we count on most... right after health-care workers, first responders, people who work in essential services, ping pong players, mannequins, childhood imaginary friends... [and] like 400 other types of people."

But enough about celebrities and why they are irrelevant in our pandemic, and onto the people that really matter – the REAL essential workers. Three essential workers were interviewed, and they spoke on how they've been adapting to a new kind of work life as essential workers.

First, Dennis who is a field service engineer for Ford Motor Company. He fixes cars of course, but he fixes complicated problems that he has specialized in fixing, and he helps dealerships with their mechanical mysteries. He said to him an essential worker is "someone that the world can't function without." He touches on how during the pandemic the world learned about the people that the world didn't really pay attention to much before. He is happy that these individuals that our society depends on are finally getting the recognition they deserve for a job well done.

Next, Sandy who is an accountant for NAPA. She was deemed essential because she works for a company that was deemed essential. The company would not have been able to operate and stay open without the numbers being crunched every day. She said

appreciates that she is able to do her job from home now so she can spend more time with her family and she finds that she is just as productive as she would be at the office. She states, "My job has changed a lot, [but] looking at the bright side, I think the pandemic has positively impacted my job and how I do it."

Finally, from a college perspective, Branden gives his take on essential workers specifically the ones in college. He said that he, along with other college students, are often time looked at like their job is frivolous. And suddenly, for Branden, he became important almost overnight. He finds it ironic that people looked down upon him in the past with his simple 'college job' as a Meijer store stocker, but since the pandemic people are appreciating him and what he does for once. Because of him, food and supplies were able to be bought for people everywhere in Indiana. He said things got intense and almost scary with how people were hoarding supplies and trashing the store, but at the end of the day he went back home and felt happy that he was able to contribute to the COVID relief, even if it was in a 'small' way.

The pandemic has made the world go insane, but it has also made the world appreciate those who we in the past didn't even pay attention to. Next time you encounter a worker who was deemed essential, thank them for their service because they didn't have the option to take a break like many of us did during quarantine. They had to work their normal hours and risk exposure so the rest of the world could stay safe and continue to live life as they wanted.

EVERYDAY

## It is easy to forget what can bring joy when it is taken for granted.

By Jazilyn Richardson

Oftentimes through this pandemic plenty of experiences have been altered in our everyday life but one thing has stayed the same for many Marian students, the ability to find joy on campus. Joy is an extremely ambiguous term. However, many people perceive joy over all in a similar light. It holds an individual meaning from person to person.

Students around Marian University's campus were asked about how they perceive joy. All of their responses were unique. Yet they all had a similar theme, but each definition seemed individualistic. Overall they were all they all had a similar theme but still individualistic.

Brittany Watson, a nutrition major, described joy as an intense feeling that includes happiness and leads to that classic warm and fuzzy feeling everyone knows and loves. Along with her feelings of joy she acknowledges that it revolves around great pleasure. Another student, Calvin Taylor, describes joy as something that makes you want to have fun.

Meanwhile, Julian Johnson, a sophomore studying graphic design, said "I define joy as the absence or at least numbness to pain." Julian was able to further explain that joy is a sense of freedom. No matter how temporary that feeling last, it offers an escape from what you may be stressing about in your life at the

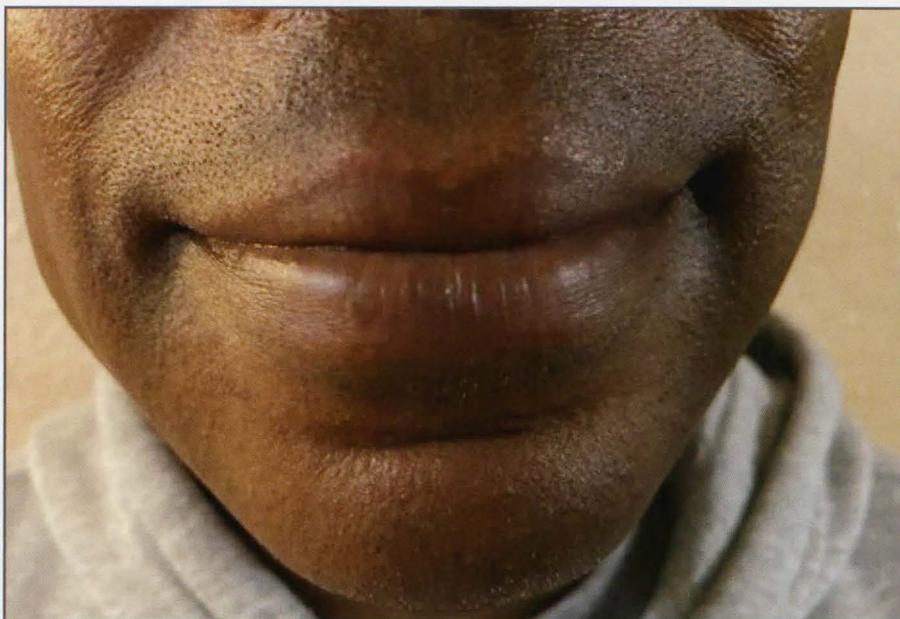
time. Oftentimes college students feel overwhelmed and feel robbed of their joy because of an overload of work to complete, however they still are able to seek it out.

As the Marian community has to continue to adjust and adapt to living through a pandemic, being able to seek out joy has still remained important. As for how students find joy on campus, count on each student having a different response since joy can be described in various ways. The most popular answer from the students interviewed was that they found joy from simply linking up with their friends. This pandemic has given the opportunity for many to find

a greater appreciation for personal contact with beloved friends.

Along with finding joy in being around your own personally selected friends on campus, individuals have also expressed how the EcoLab has given them the ability to experience joy in that moment.

It is easy to forget what can bring joy when it is taken for granted. It is easy to get caught up in the craziness of being a college student. It is important to remember what brings you joy. Take time out of a busy week to be able to get a moment of bliss and partake in whatever brings you joy. Take care of yourself and find your joy.





ART

# ART AND DESIGN

By Micah Schuttler

Looking for some art around campus? Stop by the Marian University Art Gallery, located in the Michael A. Evans Center for Health Science. From August 31st-September 25th, Marian hosted the Art and Design Spring 2020 Graduates' Exhibition. Three artists will be showcasing their work; Allegra Colgrove, Kaitlyn O'Grady, and Maya Quandt.

One of the artists, Allegra Colgrove (@allegrarainsart on Instagram) is a 2020 graduate with a focus on ceramics and minor in graphic design. She worked on her concept for over a year. Her work is a series called Oppositional Relationships. Her favorite piece, entitled Folds, describes human's relationship with nature. She loves the texture of the work. She also described it as having a "dark earthy feel". The 3D objects change with every angle and shadow. Her ceramic sculpture Nails and Thorns is reminiscent of the fabled spindle of a spinning wheel. It is the kind of show that makes one want to get up and move.

Another artist featured is Kaitlyn O'Grady. Her series of mixed media designs bring awareness to mental illness, such as varying forms of depression. Of Course I Struggle captivates the viewer. Bright red contrasts black and white, the portraits jump off the page. The words on the edge of the piece create conversation. Whether struggling with mental illness or not, the series is for everyone.

Last, but certainly not least, the final featured artist is Maya Quandt (@mayaquandtdesign on Instagram). She is a fellow 2020 graduate with a degree in art history and communication. Her favorite medium to work with is graphite and paper, however lately she has been working more with graphic media. Her series is called Unblended. When describing it, Maya said "this series focuses on the beauty of women and how their beauty doesn't change based on makeup, photoshop, filters, etc." Her favorite piece is her "Culture" print making series. Bold color choices and beautiful text tell a lovely tale.

Life may change, but art will always remain. No matter what someone thinks or feels, they can turn it into an incredible work. And that's exactly what all three 2020 Spring graduates have done and will continue to do.

# RUGBY'S BEGINNINGS

By Riley Ferguson

It all started with just a whisper to President Dan Elsener from Marian University graduate Brian Sweany '95. Sweany recommended that since Rugby is growing at such a rapid rate, that Marian look into forming a varsity rugby team. Many conversations transpired into how this would promote Marian along with giving interested student athletes the ability to play a new sport at the school.

Marian University ultimately hired Coach John Harley to lead the path in forming an outstanding varsity rugby team at Marian. Coach Harley comes from Fishers, Indiana where he was a head coach for their youth rugby program. Coach Harley, along with his wife Heather, has spent months figuring out how to successfully implement a new sport at Marian. Their hard work and determination were efficacious in the preparation of the first season of the sport.

Harley said that the team will start at the Division II level. Practice started this semester instead of last semester because of COVID-19 policies, but they believe that this team is destined for championships. He plans to measure the success of the program by "climbing the ladder to a Division I spot and hopefully winning a couple national championships along the way." Harley also pointed out that since Marian is centrally located in the country, it will give them the opportunity to travel and get Marian's name out there. Harley also mentioned rugby offers an advertisement opportunity for Marian because it is televised.

Harley has done an outstanding job at recruiting players around the world. Jacob Carroll from London, England, is a freshman at Marian. Carroll was recruited by Coach Harley and he is so excited about this season. Carroll said that he did not know Marian University existed prior to being reached out to by Coach Harley, but that he is happy to be a part of such an amazing school and rugby program. Carroll said that he knows that Marian's rugby program is going to thrive because of how exceptional practicing is going. Carroll has been playing rugby for 12 years, so he has seen how many programs are run and how they can



excel. Carroll said that he has no doubt in Marian's rugby program and that he is so excited to see how the team will perform.

Over 800 rugby clubs exist in the United States, but only 32 of those are varsity teams that give out athletic scholarships. Marian is one of those 32 varsity teams. Coach Harley said that once he gets everything the way he wants it to be, that he has plans to eventually partner with other collegiate rugby programs. So much hard work and dedication have gone into making sure that the team will prosper. The team brings excitement to this campus in the next era of Marian athletics.

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**He plans to measure the success of the program by "climbing the ladder to a Division I spot and hopefully winning a couple national championships along the way"**



# A CELEBRATION OF DIFFERENCES

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By Linny Rousseau

Hispanic Heritage Month on Marian University's campus has been lively and active despite restrictions from COVID-19 Guidelines. Students on campus have filled the month with food, dance, and celebration of diversity on campus.

From September 15th until October 15th, Marian University's Student Organization of Latinos (SOL) and the Latin@ Leadership Initiative created an encouraging atmosphere for our Latin@ population on campus.

Manuela Higgins, Executive Director of Latin@ Leadership, spoke about the efforts in making this a year to remember regardless of the circumstances.

September 15th kicked off the month with an 'Orange Day' celebration at the Franciscan Heritage Fountain. Attendees all wore orange to promote the kickoff event. Higgins explained this as a "celebration of differences" in which campus could highlight all Hispanic cultures while being united as human beings. That united community atmosphere would continue throughout the month.

A popular hit on campus celebrating Hispanic Heritage was inside the Dining Commons. Every

Friday, the featured meal was a dish that originated at different Hispanic countries such as Cuba, Mexico, and Venezuela. While they may have had to look beyond the plexiglass and limited seating, students could still share a meal with their friends and engage into the Hispanic cultures.

Other events held were The Oranging of the Fountain and Fiesta Latina. Both events were in the middle of Hispanic Heritage Month and highlighted diversity well. Fiesta Latina began with traditional Hispanic party games and ended with some more traditional food. This event allowed campus to celebrate Hispanic cultures in their own traditions.

Secretary of the SOL, Fran Cardenas, spoke about the growth in diversity Marian University has seen in recent years. She said that because of this; she has actually grown in her Hispanic roots. The junior Public Health and Social Work major has family from both Mexico and Honduras. However, she grew up in the United States and did not know much Spanish. Coming to Marian has allowed her to pick that skill up to speak with other students with Hispanic backgrounds on campus.

Higgins and Cardenas both encourage the people on this campus to get involved with Hispanic Heritage Month and beyond. Higgins said she wanted this to "become an institutional celebration." They both want to see students of all backgrounds to attend events and learn about diversity.

To do so, students may take part in several ways. Following SOL on social media is a first step. Individuals can discover what is going on in SOL and other events on campus and off campus to celebrate Hispanic culture.

For those Spanish-speaking members of the community, SOL and Higgins have created a new page called 'MU Latinos' to connect Spanish speakers to the Marian University community. The page is all in Spanish to accommodate for those individuals.

Cardenas also noted that students can get on an email list to stay connected with SOL. To do so, they would need to email her at [fcardenas762@marian.edu](mailto:fcardenas762@marian.edu).

Students can see more on Hispanic Heritage Month and SOL on Connect.

# Hispanic Heritage Month at Marian



**THE EXCHANGE**

# A Top Resource for Student Success

By Lark Jones



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**“OUR WORK IN THE  
EXCHANGE CENTERS ON  
PROMOTING EXPERIENCES  
THAT MATTERS.”**

From the time that people are young, they think about what it is they want to do in life. What career path is right for them? What are the qualities needed to be my most successful? Many college students experience obstacles and uncertainty when it comes to determining the right job for them. At Marian University, there is a resource that guides students with the skills and abilities to be successful. The Exchange is a service that provides a way for students to get connects and learn more about what it takes to have a great career.

Many aspects of the Exchange help students learn to reach their full potential. Jenny Morris, Executive Director for the Exchange at Marian University, explained, “Our work in the Exchange centers on promoting Experience that Matters: connecting students to experiential learning opportunities of all types (on-campus employment, internships, community engagement, special projects) to help them hone their communication, problem solving, teambuilding, and leadership skills.” There are many unknown resources for students available on campus. For instance, students can use the Exchange as a guide if they want to find an internship but are uncertain on where to begin the internship process.

So, what does the typical process at the Exchange look like?

There are multiple ways for students to get in contact with the Exchange. Students can contact the Exchange

via email or by going to their location on the first floor of the Mother Theresa Hacklemeier Memorial Library. Students can also connect with the Exchange by scheduling an appointment on Handshake, Marian’s career services website. Students can request what they want to talk about in meetings specifically when they make the appointment.

The Exchange is catered to whatever need the student want to work on. Jenny Morris explained that, “We’ll base our conversation on their unique needs and appointment goals to empower students along their path of career exploration/development.”

Every resource at Marian University has had to alter itself in some way due to the global pandemic. The Exchange is one of them. There have been many changes set up for social distancing, but they still allow students to utilize the Exchange. All of the meetings and social events have transitioned to be accessed virtually. Kayla Fisher, a senior Communication major at Marian University, explained that the Exchange has looked very different for her this semester.

Although there are changes, the Exchange has still provided Fisher with the help that she needs. She explained, “The quality of service and help is just as good if not better because they can give tips on how to navigate balancing a career with this new virtual life.”

The events conducted by the Exchange have transition to online as well. Events that are happening

within the upcoming 2021 year include Career Fairs and Networking Knights. Events like the Career Fair open up opportunities for potential internships and jobs. This event has already taken place for the fall semester, but it is an event that students can directly speak to a variety of employers. This event can be accessed through the Career Fair Plus App. This app will act as an extremely helpful guide during the Career Fair.

Jenny Morris explained that Networking Knights is a great opportunity to practice interactive professional speaking in an online setting. Students who attend this event will get to talk to Marian University alumni and community partners. This event will be help through WebEx, and it will be a great opportunity for students to communicate with a variety of professional workers.

Like many resources on campus, the Exchange is designed to help students achieve greatness. There are multiple things that someone can learn from their experience at the Exchange. It is essential that students feel like they are getting the most they can out of their college career. Having access to the Exchange will hopefully make students a little bit more prepared for what their career has in store for them. If students have the qualities and guidance from the Exchange, it is setting them up for success.

## SIDE HUSTLES

# FOR STUDENTS

By Julia Akre

As most college students can attest, keeping a good GPA in their studies is of top priority, leaving little room for a full-time job. Some calling being a student is their full-time job. However, this new phase in the world has left many with more time at home and little ways to make money on the side. Some students have now begun the process of forming a side hustle while in school, or as a way to give back to their community in selling things to raise money for local charities.

There are many options open to students to make money in the age of social media and online websites like eBay or Etsy. Some have gone to Instagram to promote their products. Elle Fleenor, a freshman at Butler University's Lacy School of Business majoring in Marketing, started her business, the.golden.cactus, in November 2018 to help local charities. In the beginning, she thrifted the clothes she sold. However, for the past year and a half people have been giving her their unwanted clothes for her to sell. She meticulously goes through the donation and keeps what she thinks will sell. Breaking the profit 60%-40%, the later going to her so she can donate 20% of the month's sells to a selected charity.

By paying attention to trends and what is more likely to sell at the given time, Fleenor started the bidding price and left the rest to potential buyers in the comments. Giving a 24-hour time after the last bid was placed to reveal the winner. Shipping is discussed in private messages. Fleenor recommends for

new sellers looking to start on Instagram to not be afraid to use hashtags.

For some students, selling clothes is not where their interests lay.

Ben Wilson, a junior at Marian University with double majors in Communication and Religious Education, started selling things on eBay in his high school days, giving his store the name savageb54.

"I had a bunch of childhood stuff sitting around... logos, toys, some semi collectible things, whatever, and I was a 16-year-old looking for date money and started selling things on eBay," Wilson said.

According to Wilson, eBay is an intuitive website to use, allowing you to search items that you are looking to sell that have been sold and for what price. He warns sellers, however, to not get "burned on shipping." Know how much shipping will cost you before you list the product. Wilson primarily uses the U.S. Postal Service as they have flat rates for shipping. They provide boxes and a tracking number which eBay requires of their sellers.

For those with a more artistic or textile endeavor in mind, students have gone to Red Bubble or Etsy to sell their products.

Colleen Schena, a senior majoring in Theology, partakes in a number of ways to make money while keeping a 3.98 GPA. From taking freelance jobs to selling art on Red Bubble she is always looking for productive ways to express her creativity.

"In my life, when it comes to doing things well, it's a lot about diligence and problem-

solving abilities and being able to be flexible," Schena said.

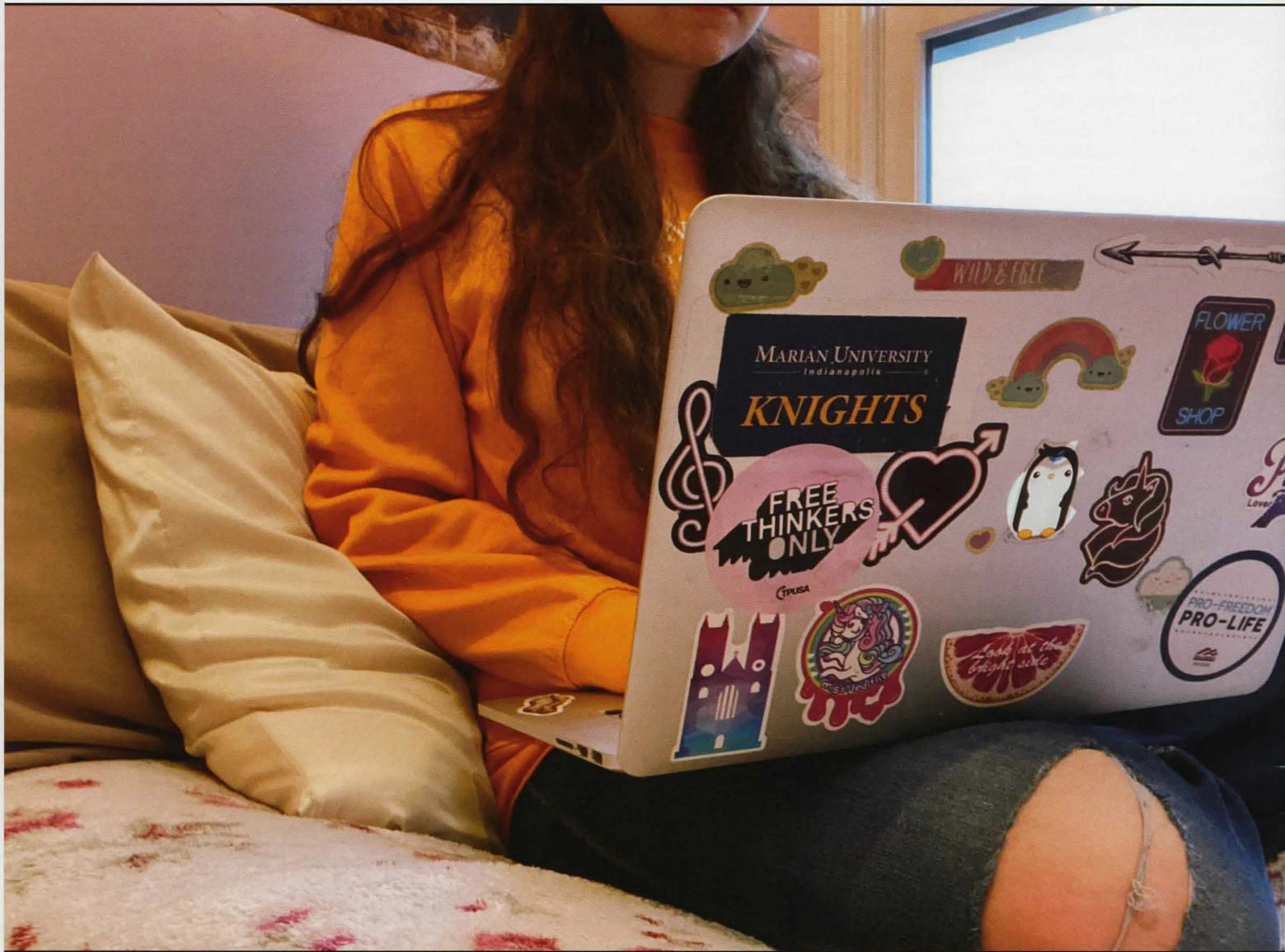
Schena cultivated a widespread fascination for niche fandoms such as Worm by John C. McCrae, a self-published web series that has gained a rather impressive following but has little content in terms of fanart or merch. She decided to help her fellow fans out by making a Red Bubble account under the name bellaluna18 and started creating fun designs for other fans to find. Schena advises others who are looking to sell online to be active with social media.

Charis Lott, a sophomore at Marian University majoring in Psychology, had spent her summer plus a few months in quarantine rediscovering her love for crocheting and needle work. Starting the new semester, she began to realize others wanted to support her and pay for her handy work. This led to her opening up an Etsy shop called LittleMisFortunes to provide a more streamline place for her customers. According to Lott the starting fee for an Etsy shop is 20 cents a month, this will increase the more customers you get.

Not every student can go outside of campus and find a job, some do not live close to campus, making finding a job during school or during breaks difficult. Being able to find work you enjoy and can do from practically anywhere is a good way to spend that free time. With the right determination and patience, making money off your hobbies is a good way to or support charities or afford date night.

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# FOR STUDENTS



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# RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP BOOKSTORE

By Julia Akre

Marian University's bookstore in Alumni Hall houses over 20 different brands of clothing thanks to the clothing distributor, Follett.

The largest brand on campus with over 60 designs available to the student body is Champion. Marian's responsible stewardship core value is exemplified by the practices of Champion.

Since Marian's inception, there has been a great desire to promote certain core values. Chief among them is responsible stewardship. Responsible stewardship is being able to cultivate your gifts to help others and the world.

Krista Chinchilla, Campus Minister, Catholic Social Concerns and Service said, "Taking care of the gifts that we have been given whether that is fanatical, environmental... even internal gifts... like... personality... to be responsible with then is to glorify with them."

According to Marian's Website, responsible stewardship has four central goals. One, enjoy all creation. Two, interact with every person with reverence. Three, use Earth's resources responsibly. And four, share your gifts that were entrusted on to you with those who

need it and the less fortunate without constraints. These values shape Marian University.

According to Jorden Wilson, Marian's bookstore manager, the store is owned by Follett, a distributing partner for educational products, i.e. apparels, souvenirs, with textbooks being their main focus.

On Follett's website, it sinters core values around people and the workplace. It states no commitment about sustainability. The bookstore's key clothing company, Champion, has made sustainably their mission. Located in Champion Blvd, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, according to Champion's website, one of their five-year goals is to "achieve zero waste across [there] operations and support key suppliers to do the same.

According to the Champion website, in 2019 Champion has "saved 1,575 Olympic-sized swimming pools of water" and plan to reduce water usage another 25% by 2030. Champion won the EPA Energy Star Award 11 times.

Do not limit responsible stewardship to big corporations, it starts and ends with individuals. Wilson will

take clothes on the clarence rack that have been there for too long and place them in a box. When Organizations come and ask for things to give out at events, he will take from the box and give the items a new life.

Krista shared how she is a responsible stewarded with clothing. One tip she gave for consumers who want to support these qualities is to look at their official website.

If their primary focus is on making their products ethically, they will be excited to share it with you. If you can't find anything, or if they do not talk it about, according to Krista, it is a telling sign that sustainably is not their focus.

It is rare for her to take part in fast fashion. Normally she will get her clothes from used clothing stores, clothing swops with friends, or clothing brands where ethically and responsibly made clothing is their number one priority.

Other tips that Krista gives for students who want to be a better stewardship are to carry utensil that you can wash in a cloth napkin. With the single use of plastic utensils given out on campus, this is a realistic way for students to limit their plastic usage.

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# BOOKSTOP



## A Resource for Inclusion and Communication

By Lark Jones

Throughout history, people have seen that for a difference to be made, having a healthy dialogue is essential. When it comes to race, this ideology is significant. For many people of color, the feelings of inequality and opposition are regular.

At Marian University, there are many outlets and resources that allow students to express their feelings and concerns regarding race. The Unity Center is an organization on campus that promotes inclusivity and diversity on Marian's campus. Davyd Hall, the director for the Unity Center, explained the center as, "a place where students of color can feel supported and express their thoughts in a safe place." People can comfortably come to the Unity Center to have conversations on how to improve our society.

There are multicultural student groups that are actively involved in the Unity Center and welcome anyone who wants to join. These groups include the Asian Student Association, Marian Alliance, Student Organization of Latinos, and Union For Black Identity. The groups offer the opportunities for learning and experiencing aspects of different cultures. Every group is inclusive to all and provides a positive way to learn about things that might not be familiar to someone.

In the Unity Center, all of the groups can host their programs and events. Gabe Trevino, a junior at Marian University,

explained while things have been a little different this year because of COVID, there are still activities the groups put on to get the full experience of the Unity Center.

He said, "The Unity Center is a place where all of our multicultural groups can host their programs, such as Union for Black Identity's Game Night."

Most of these events are now through virtual meetings like WebEx to be as safe as possible. There are many events that take place throughout the semester that celebrate different cultures and groups in America. There is Multicultural Graduation for students involved with the Unity Center. They are given graduation stoles as a congratulation for their incredible accomplishments. Also, during Black History Month, there are numerous events that take place that remember the history and stories of iconic black people in time. There is also a large poster about Black History Month so people can be informed about the importance of the month.

It is also important to note that the Unity Center is not just for people of color. The center is for anyone who wants to have important conversations about society. Davyd Hall explained that the Unity Center is a safe place for conversations and gives an opportunity for the other side to speak. The Unity Center's stance on everyone expressing

their feelings no matter what they look like is what allows our society to continuously progress. Race conversations can be very difficult and uncomfortable, but they are so very needed.

For instance, there is an event called Talk It Out Tuesday. Talk It Out Tuesday is an event that the Unity Center puts on, where anyone is invited to participate in a dialogue about a current topic. There are rules put into place before the event begins to make sure that the conversation does not turn into a debate. Davyd Hall, will monitor the room to make sure that everyone is comfortable speaking and maintaining a positive exchange.

To learn more about the Unity Center, you can contact the director of the Unity Center, Davyd Hall. Or you can visit the Unity Center's Instagram Page, @mu\_unc. The Unity Center can be found in Clare Hall on Marian University's campus. There's so much to learn about the Unity Center and ways to get involved. It's refreshing to know there are resources like the Unity Center on campus that allow everyone to feel like they can express their thoughts and feelings safely. In this time of uncertainty, having healthy conversations about topics like race are very beneficial. There is so much that people can learn from each other, when we come together and set our differences aside.

THE UNITY  
CENTER

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**“The Unity Center is a place where all of  
our multicultural groups can host their  
programs..”**

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# Happy Holidays

By Jazilyn J. Richardson

My grandmother has recently moved into a new apartment. My grandmother has decided to make the theme of her kitchen roosters. Some may ask, why roosters? The answer is, no one knows, not even my grandmother herself. She just thought it would be nice to have a rooster kitchen. Me being the amazing granddaughter I am, I just went with it and supported her idea. She went to go shopping for her new kitchen look so I tagged along.

She was looking at paintings of roosters that were quite expensive for the quality the artist gave to the painting. So I began thinking it'd be pretty cool to paint her one myself! But I'm pretty shy about sharing my art with others. I kept thinking and leaned more towards the idea rather than away from it. She was considering a piece of art that I knew deep down I didn't want her paying for because I knew I could create something that she would be able to enjoy without having to pay for it.

Finally, I was able to find some courage and speak up. I offered to paint her a picture of a rooster. I was so scared because she has never seen any of my art before so I thought that she would rather buy one. Turns out I was scared for no reason! She loved the idea and agreed to it. Now that I look back who could turn down a customized free painting?

I then had to take it a bit more seriously since it was my granny and I really wanted her to like her painting. I'm not exposed to roosters much in my everyday life so I had to do some research. I knew overall what a rooster looked like, but when it came to the bird's legs, I didn't know how they worked. I looked up videos of roosters running like they tasted freedom and had to go back for desert. The roosters were definitely not graceful but they did look blissful. After watching a bunch of roosters running for about 30 plus seconds, I was able to figure out how their little chicken legs functioned. This helped me achieve a more accurate painting.

This painting took about 3.5 hours to complete. I created this piece using oil paint on a stretched canvas. Today the painting has a happy home in my granny's kitchen right above her sink. She is able to enjoy it every time she looks up... and everywhere else in the kitchen and living room. This was only intended for my granny to enjoy but it's been a long year, so I hope everyone can enjoy this painting of a rooster. As the holidays begin to approach please remember roosters are friends, not food. Go vegan. Spread love. And indulge in peace.

Happy holidays!

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# WEDDING TRADITIONS

By: Rayna Onate

## 1477 - 1ST DIAMOND ENGAGEMENT RING

According to the History Channel website, the first diamond engagement ring was given to Mary of Burgundy by Archduke Maximilian of Austria. It symbolized his new ownership over his soon to be wife, letting all other men know that she was 'off the market.'

AHA: only women wearing engagement rings

## 1400S - RIPPING THE WEDDING DRESS

According to the Bride Box website, single men attending the wedding would follow the newlyweds to a room in the church, where they would consummate the marriage. The men would rip off the bride's dress and if a man left with a piece of the dress, it was said that he would have good luck in finding a wife.

AHA: 'Garter Toss'

## 1700S - ARRANGED MARRIAGE

According to an article from the New York Times, in the 1700s when arranged marriages were the norm, the bride would shield her face from the groom with a veil, and it was only to be lifted after the groom said I do; this prevented him from running away before the two were wed.

AHA: why the BRIDE wears a VEIL.

## 1500S - EUROPE DOWRY FUNDS

According to the History Channel website, people would get together to gift money to families who couldn't afford dowries so their daughters could get married.

AHA: "BRIDAL SHOWERS"

## 1800S - U.S. FOLLOWS EUROPE

According to the History Channel's website, the U.S adapted Europe's dowry party by giving gifts to the bride for her home instead of giving her money for a dowry.

AHA: why WEDDING RINGS 'MUST' HAVE DIAMONDS in them.

## 1930S - "PRECIOUS GEM" ADVERTISING

According to an article from the Atlantic, an advertising company coined the diamond ring a precious gem that symbolized love, making it a trend of the time that would turn into the norm of today.

## 1840 - QUEEN VICTORIA'S DRESS

According to an article from CNN, brides didn't start wearing white wedding dresses until Queen Victoria wore a white dress when she married Prince Albert. She wanted to highlight her royalty by buying an expensive, white dress which was something different than anyone else had worn before on their wedding day.

AHA: Why we Buy EXPENSIVE WHITE DRESSES

SERIES

## 21st Century Weddings

A THREE-PART SERIES ON WEDDINGS

# PART ONE

By Rayna Onate

This is a three-part series that explores 21st-century weddings as they are, where they have come from, and where they are going. Why, should you care? Because even though—according to CNN—the average age for marriage in the US is 28 years old, there are a substantial number of couples getting married while in college, including here at Marian University.

I got engaged this summer as an almost junior, and my fiancé and I are getting married the summer before our senior year. And I am not the only one. There are five other Marian couples that got engaged this summer, and that's only the couples that I know of.

This series explores the traditions that most Marian students, whether getting married now or in the future, will most likely take part in. However, most of us don't know WHY we are taking part in these traditions we just know as the 'norm.' This month we will explore the roots of these wedding traditions.

Our generation is not one to live in the 'norm,' as we know from our constantly changing world, but we are still doing weddings 'how they always have been,' and not necessarily how WE want. It's our wedding, isn't it? It's time we educate ourselves on how the wedding industry takes advantage of us and uses these 'traditions' to take control of our special days.





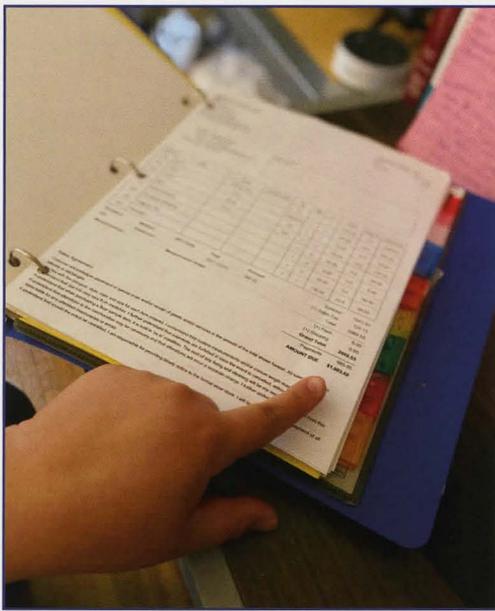
## SERIES

# A Three-Part Series on Weddings

## PART 2

Part one discussed the origins of traditions that have become the norm in our society—and let's be honest, they were wild and cringe worthy. Keep those traditions in mind as I dissect the wedding experiences shared by me and my fiancé, Ben. We have come a long way in deciding to do what we want instead of what society tells us we should want... but that's for our final segment. For now, let's dive into the reality that was the beginning of our wedding planning journey.

I ended up getting my wedding dress at Sophia's Bridal in Fishers. You see, a dress here retailed at over \$2,000. This isn't the one I purchased, but this is the average price of dresses in the store. This didn't include the veil or the accessories they tried to 'salesman' you into. I wanted to think about my options and look at different boutiques, but before I could even think for a second, they asked me if I was going to say yes to the dress. We came to find out quickly, there is a lot of stress involved in this 'magical' time. It turned into less of an enjoyable experience and more of a stressful one. I ended up leaving that day empty-handed only fine that the other Indianapolis boutique were just as expensive, if not worse. The only way I was getting a dress that didn't break my budget was by getting one off the rack, which was not an option because I didn't want a dress that wasn't tailored specifically towards my body, nor did I want one that a city's worth of people have worn.



I ended up going back to Sophia's to try on the dress I originally loved so much. I couldn't get it out of my head, which is why it was so hard walking away from it. I just hated spending so much money on it. Before leaving the store, I ended up buying the dress of my dreams for a pretty penny; but when it was all said and done—there were a million other things that I ended up having to pay for that I was not expecting to. The dress itself was only HALF of the bill. There was a bridal shipping cost, an extra shipping cost for the veil, and my favorite—a layaway fee—so I could keep my dress at the store instead of letting it get musty in my closet. As I left the store, I kept staring at my receipt in dismay: the final cost was over \$2,000. The staff for sure was able to sweet talk me into things I wasn't planning on getting, including a tiara to go with my veil. It felt like they exploited my special day because they made it seem like for my look to be complete; I needed to buy their long list of essentials. It wasn't about me and my budget, which I explained to them firmly at the beginning of the appointment, it was about them making money.

Speaking of dresses, when my fiancé and I went bridesmaid shopping with his sister and my younger cousin, we experienced another hardship. Sophia's gave us a \$20 dollar discount for each bridesmaid dress that we bought through them. We went and were amazed at all the adorable styles they had. The girls thrilled with the dresses they chose; the only problem was the price. It was \$200 for each dress, and that's including the discount, before tax, and not including accessories. Being shocked at the price, we went to David's Bridal only to receive very poor service. We had to pick out dresses ourselves because a walk-in group wanted to see dresses as well, and our consultant spent most of her time with them instead of helping us—even though we had made an appointment. The dresses were another issue. They were honestly cheap looking and, get this, for only a few bucks less. These dresses were \$150 dollars before tax for much less quality. We finally decided to go back to Sophia's because we knew we would at least get quality dresses for our money. But, since all of our bridesmaids are too young to have a job or are in college and struggling to make ends meet as it is. Ben and I decided to allocate some of our wedding money towards helping them purchase their dresses because we wanted them to have a dress they loved and were comfortable in. It was a hard decision, but at the end of the day we thought it was best to fork up some extra money to have everyone look uniform at the altar.





It may seem like a lot of negative has happened as we have gone along our wedding journey, but they have been a few unexpected positives.

For one, my engagement ring. We went to Shane Co. because of their amazing insurance on their rings. They are pricey compared to other ring places, but I will say this is worth the extra buck. Our sale's consultant, Nikki, became concerned with our wellbeing and not just our wallet contents. The difference between Shane Co. and other places is that these reps don't work off commission, so they can focus on the customer and their needs. And this is exactly what happened when we told Nikki what we were looking for. We looked at rings in the engagement box only to find that we saw nothing we liked in our price range. She then went to a box on the other side of the store and came back with my engagement ring saying, "This is actually labeled as fashion jewelry, but I think it's perfect for you." And it was! The traditional engagement ring (as seen above) was more expensive than my engagement ring and it was twice the price (seen above... on my finger). Why?

Because of the label 'engagement ring.' This is yet another example of how the industry manipulates couples. Just because they label something as wedding fashion, doesn't mean you HAVE to buy that one... there are other options out there for less money and just as beautiful, if not more beautiful, than 'wedding' products.

.....  
**"This is actually labeled as fashion jewelry, but I think it's perfect for you!"**





## THE WEDDING VENUE

Venue hunting was the  
**bane of our existence.**

Now let's talk about the venue. Venue hunting was the bane of our existence. We, for funzies, started looking at venues before we got engaged. We were trying to imagine our perfect wedding, and the Dallara came to mind. It is an IndyCar museum/factory in Speedway, Indiana. We had our prom there his senior year of high school and we wanted to have our reception there... at least until we found out how much it was going to cost. To have a reception there for 4 hours, it was going to be \$15,000 which included all the food, service changes, and taxes. At the end of the day, this was WAY too much to spend on the reception alone. So, we did some digging searching for several months.

Finally, in July we found this family owned venue in Greenfield, Adaggios. It was not grand and luxurious, but it was everything we needed—a friendly staff, clean facilities, and at an affordable price, of which was our favorite, because it was HALF the price of the Dallara. We got the same things from Adaggios that we would have gotten from the Dallara AND we had money left over in our budget to get a photo booth and extra reception decorations, things we wouldn't have had money for in Speedway. We almost gave up on finding the perfect venue because it was so infuriating how much everything cost, but thankfully, we found the perfect venue that fits our needs and budget perfectly.

At the beginning of our wedding journey, we got sucked into a lot of things we wish we hadn't, but as our journey has progressed, we have gotten better at spotting the signs of manipulation when it comes to wedding planning. Next time on the Marian Phoenix, I will conclude the series by talking what the two of us along with other couples are doing to reclaim our weddings and changing outdated traditions we know into progressive ones that relate more to love and equality and less about ownership and outdated tradition.

## A THREE-PART SERIES ON WEDDINGS PART THREE

This time, I will talk about what I, along with some other Marian couples, are planning on doing in weddings or have done in weddings to overcome manipulation seen in our wedding industry. My previous pieces explored how traditions used today were set through history and how our current wedding industry exploits these traditions to make couples spend oodles of money and add pressure to the day that is supposed to be magical. Today's article will tie everything together to give tips and share ideas for you on how to navigate our wedding world today.

Another way that Ben and I saved money on our wedding bills was to buy a budget friendly wedding book guide. The one we chose is called "The Budget Savvy Wadding Planner Organizer" by Jessica Bishop. She walks through different areas involved in a wedding in each chapter and outlines what every couple needs to know. The chapters have check lists and tips to help the couple save money and create a day centered

around them. We 10/10 recommend! Traditionally, the photographer is the vendor that couples are wanting to splurge on the most because pictures are memories the couple and their families will cherish forever, and if the pictures turn out bad, then there is no way to make them up. Because of this, photographers gouge the prices and take advantage of the people getting married. That is why Ben and I went with a Marian student. His name is Gabriel Trevino, and he has been doing amateur photography for a couple years now. We loved how the pictures turned out and Gabe not only did our engagement session, but he will also be photographing our wedding day for 8 hours. His photography partner will also be videoing and editing the whole day. Normally, photography services charge in the ballpark of 2,000-2,500 dollars for all of this, and we are paying half of that for a lifetime of memories.

As I talked about in my 1st article, the tradition of the engagement ring





started after a member of royalty in the 1400s gave his soon to be wife a ring that would show all other suiters that she was 'off the market' so to speak. It showed ownership of the woman by the man. Thankfully today, things are different. The engagement ring is a sign of love and commitment, but couples are taking this one step further today by having both members in the party have engagement rings, not just the woman. In my example, Ben was the one to first surprise me with my engagement ring. He took me to our high school, and he asked me to marry him in the same spot he asked me to be his girlfriend 5 years prior. A few weeks later, when he wasn't expecting it, I told Ben I wanted to play a word game. At the end, he found that the phrase we were spelling out was "Will you marry me?" and of course, he said yes!

Family sentimental items are always fun to use in weddings. Not only do they save money for the couple, but they add a personalized touch to the wedding. The picture here shows my future mother in law's crown that she wore to her wedding. She said that I could wear it if I wanted

to, and I was honored that she trusted me enough with her wedding item to let me use it in ours! It created a bonding moment for the two families and it also played into responsible stewardship because we didn't need to buy something extra when we had something that worked right here at home.

Another way we chose to add customization in our wedding was to make our own welcome sign. This helped us save money and add personalized decorations to our venue. Pictured here is our welcome sign that I designed and painted. It took an hour to make (that includes drying time) and I painted with our wedding colors. When I first started looking on Pinterest for wedding signs, they had these elaborate signs that cost anywhere from 100 to 500 dollars, to which I think is ridiculous. Ben and I both agreed that this was nicer to do since it gave me something fun to do during quarantine, but it also helped us save money and make our wedding personalized.

Obviously, these are only a few of the million different ways to save money, create your own traditions, and

customize your wedding to make it your own. In fact, I talked to Michelle, a first semester junior student here on campus that just got engaged. She said that she is going to have her wedding mass in Latin because they believe that while others may view it as outdated, she and her fiancé believe it represents the pure and true beauty of the church. Another couple on campus, this one in particular are both professors that have been married for a few years now, said that a way they took control of their wedding and made it their own was to have it in a public park. This allowed them to bring their own food, dodge the booking fee, and enjoy nature. They only spent \$75 on their reception and they had an amazing day.

So, as you can see, at the end of the day it is important to deliberately choose what you and your fiancé want to incorporate into your wedding. It doesn't matter what you do as long as it means something to you, and you have an amazing day.

The following  
pages focus on  
**poetry and  
fiction**

**MEMORIES--A POEM**

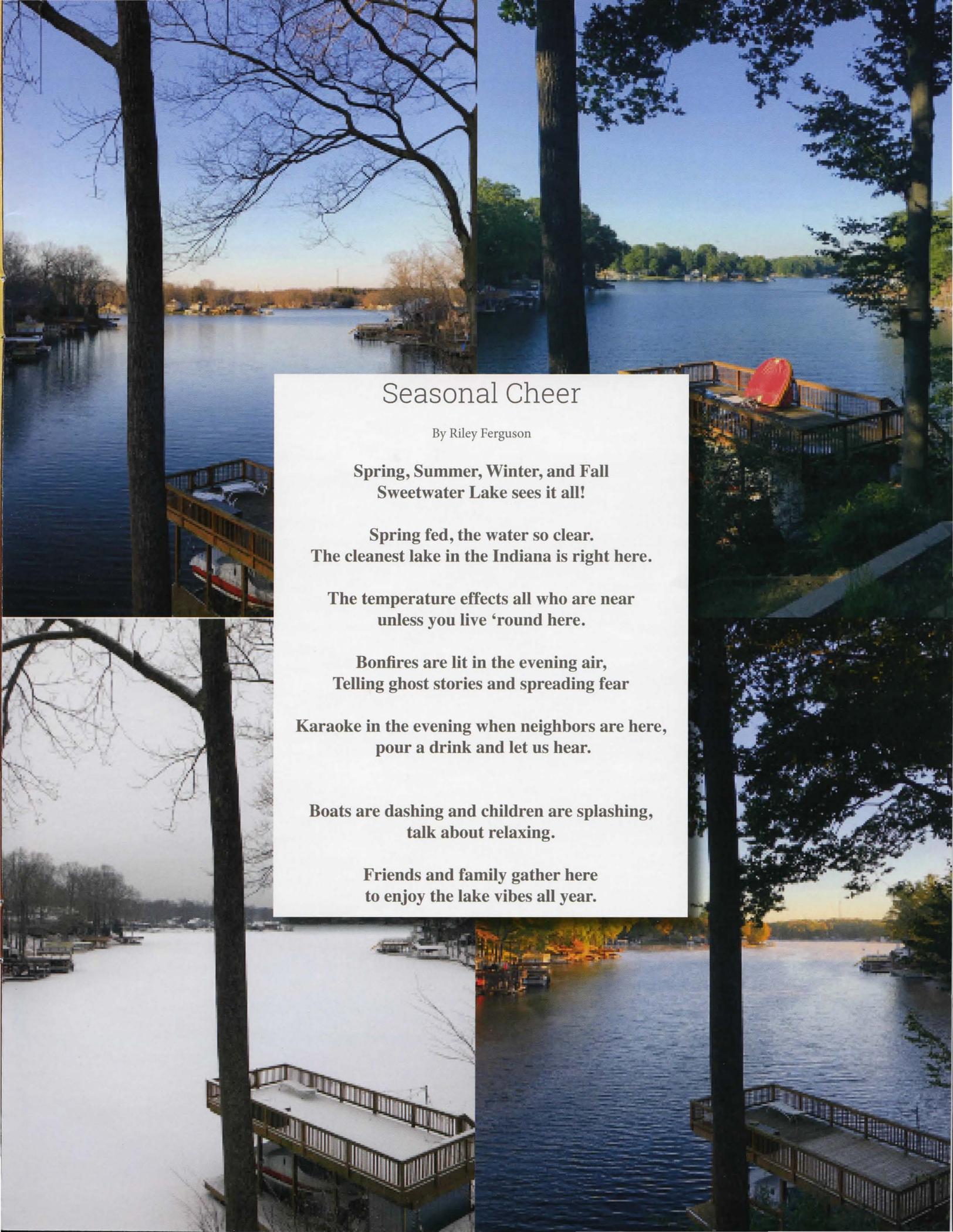
By Yvette L. Clemons  
Contributing Author

here we are, standing at the juxtaposition of  
"to stay or to leave?"  
new memories await us  
but the old ones still linger  
floating through our minds like the leaves in the pond  
the pond at mama's house  
with all the ducks  
and we'd laugh  
as we sat and watched them  
never stopping to think about  
the futile efforts  
to stay in that moment forever  
(those, of course, would come in the future.)

but here we are  
the ducks have all gone away.  
and now we sit at the pond  
waiting for time to slow down  
so we can feel the breeze  
and mama's warm hugs  
and watch the leaves spin around  
and just like that  
it's gone.

not entirely.  
there's a new pond down the road  
with- count 'em- one-two-three ducks  
and plenty of leaves  
there's a breeze  
to tickle our noses and make our hair fly  
mama's not around to point out our newly acquired beehives  
but the memory still lingers.  
and so as we stand at this juxtaposition of  
"to stay or to leave?"  
we choose to do both  
because there's too much good to discover  
and too many ponds to find  
to stay in the past.





## Seasonal Cheer

By Riley Ferguson

**Spring, Summer, Winter, and Fall  
Sweetwater Lake sees it all!**

**Spring fed, the water so clear.  
The cleanest lake in the Indiana is right here.**

**The temperature effects all who are near  
unless you live 'round here.**

**Bonfires are lit in the evening air,  
Telling ghost stories and spreading fear**

**Karaoke in the evening when neighbors are here,  
pour a drink and let us hear.**

**Boats are dashing and children are splashing,  
talk about relaxing.**

**Friends and family gather here  
to enjoy the lake vibes all year.**

# The Raccoon's Lament

By Julia Akre

All that darkness  
The stumbling around.  
Relying on my protector.  
Just to be here  
Alone  
With strange large things  
Staring me down.

Looking at me  
Like I was something out of the ordinary.  
Following me  
Are they predatory?

One comes  
More will follow.  
What must I do to be left alone?  
Are they predators?  
Non have touched me,  
But is this their game?  
I can't let my guard down.

This ground is good  
The food plenty  
little competition.  
Save for the pointed ear  
Fury felines roaming the outskirts.  
I don't want to leave...

But they scare me,  
With their big faces  
Long limbs  
Walking on two haunches.  
Holding rectangles, they insist  
On thrusting in my face.

I don't want to leave  
But they keep coming

I run  
I hide  
In trees  
Behind trees  
In bushes  
In leaves  
But they walk casually behind me.

Mocking me  
They flash their teeth  
Making high pitched sounds  
Is it a threat?  
A call to their pack?  
A call telling the others  
I am here?

Everywhere I go  
There is more long legged things.  
With weird rectangles and  
Flashing teeth.  
I just want to leave  
I run up trees  
But they fallow  
They get closer  
I trap myself in my own get away attempt.

Can't they see I hate this?  
What statistic creatures.  
They do nothing but taunt  
I am constantly frightened  
But they still come

When I am large,  
They will not find me so interesting.  
When I am strong,  
They will know what it's like to be  
Afraid.

# CHILDHOOD FEARS



JULIA F. AKRE

## CHILDHOOD FEARS — SHORT STORY

By Julia Akre

“Can’t I have it just a little longer?” I pleaded with my mom.

“Rebecca, you’re far too old for this,” Mrs. Inkheart said as she yanked out my only hope of a peaceful night’s sleep. My nightlight.

“I told you it’s the only way to keep out the Moving Darkness!”

“Not this again. One more clam of a Moving Darkness and I’ll ground you for acting like a child. You’re fifteen now, Rebecca, when will you drop this childish fantasy?”

“It’s not a fantasy, how many times do I have to tell you? There’s movement in the shadows when it’s dark. It doesn’t matter where I sleep or what time of day it is.” Mrs. Inkheart rolled her eyes and begun walking out my door. “Please, mom!” I got out of bed and ran towards her.

“That is quite enough, Rebecca! I’ve had it with your lies! Bring it up again and I’ll ground you for three months! No phone, no friends, no late nights, you’ll work all your after-school time with me at the office. Have I made myself clear?”

I blinked, taken aback at the threat. “Mom, I’m... just trying to express my fears to you...”

“Fears that should have died out a long time ago. I’ve been too lenient with you. Let you get away with too much. I’ve played into your fantasies for far too long and now look at you. I’m sorry, I’ve failed you, but that ends now.” My stomach fell through the floor as she reached into the room and gripped the door handle. “When

you wake up tomorrow with every hair accounted for, you’ll see there is nothing to fear.” With that, she slammed the door shut.

On the other side, my mother’s master key slipped into the lock of my door and turned it. Each click of the lock pins clanked through my head like a death toll as I struggled to make out the details of my door. I dove for the handle and tried desperately to open it... but it was too late.

It had been so long since I last saw total darkness like this. My eyes couldn’t adjust. Rising panic filled my veins.

I needed to get under my covers. Who knows what will happen if it shows up and I’m just out in the open like this? I wanted to move, to run to my bed and jump in but...

My legs wouldn’t move.

They stayed plastered to the ground. My eyes trying desperately to make out some kind of familiar shape.

I took a deep breath, then another, and another... I could feel my head beginning to tilt.

I was hipper ventilating. My lungs filled with air, but I still couldn’t get enough oxygen to my head.

“Move! You can’t just stand here, Rebecca!” I screamed in my head. It took all I had not to scream as my flesh prickled. Like small bugs running along my neck and down my spine. The spell broke over my stiff limbs and I reached up and frantically scratched at the skin. My flesh burned under my wild nails as they raked

back and forth.

“Mom... mom! Please open up!” I tried the handle again with my free hand.

Nothing.

Not even a wispiest came from the other side. I looked to the floor, hoping to see some semblance of the light in the hallway.

Nothing.

Dark, colorful spots dusted my vision. I stepped back; I ran through everything I had in my room, trying to remember if I stashed something that would chase the darkness away! Anything at all I could use to bring light back into the room or give my eyes something to go off of. My mom had confiscated all my candles and flashlights. Going so far as to unscrew the light bulbs from my ceiling light.

The moon!

As soon as the thought crossed my mind, I turned and dashed for the window. Metal scraped on metal as curtain hooks grated along the bar. White light trickled in as the crescent moon shined in the clear sky. A tear wetted my face as I gazed at my bright saver. Without knowing it, my eyes had begun to water when I faced the door.

A horrible crashing sounded from behind me. I spun on my heels to find my ceramic piggy bank scattered in paces on the floor. Dollar bills, coins, and sharp clay were flung carouse across the floor.

But behind the dresser in the corner where the piggy bank once lived, a small moving mass like the

# The DPC

BY MICAH A. SCHUTTLE



There's vomit on my leg. I chuckle softly. "It's ok." I say. The smell distracts me from the scene a few feet away. I get up to change into something more comfortable. Monsoons of tears stream down my face. Why did it have to be today?

I help clean up. There's black bile running down her face. Her hands are cold as ice. Amid all this, I am thinking of breaking the news. I cannot tell any of my friends yet. I cannot ruin their days. I decide to wait. Besides, the family on is their way. We gather in the bedroom and tell our tales of days past. Leintz brings pizza. Auntie Lynn and Jordan laugh and tell stories. Ethan needs some time alone. I wait until 11:00 on Christmas day to FaceTime my best friend Autumn. I broke the news to her; my mother died of cancer.

*Rest In Peace Lisa Ann Schuttler*

That is the story of how I became a member of the Dead Parent Club (DPC). It is something I made up after my mother passed. My best friend Autumn is, unfortunately, a fellow member. Her father died in April 2013. To be a member of the club is a gift and a curse. No one wants a parent to die. At least if they do, one has a community of support around them.

After my mother died, I went through a rough patch. Quite frankly, I am still there. I see a light at the end of the tunnel, but it is just out of reach. I would describe my life after mother died as this; everything I go through is much harder, because she is not around to help me. I wish desperately that I could give her a hug. I sleep with her pillow every night because I miss her warm embrace. I cannot bare to go to my hometown anymore. I feel as though there is an eternal raincloud over my child home memories. I am always waiting out the storm.

The holidays are a difficult time for my family. Due to COVID 19, the DPC has gained thousands of members. Today, I would like to make an amendment to the club. The Dead Parent Club is now open to those who have lost anyone this holiday season. Whether it's due to COVID-19, distance, death, or anything that keeps you and your loved ones apart. The DPC has always been open to me in my time of need, and we are all here for you. I have created a private Facebook group called The Dead Parent Club. Anyone is welcome to join. We are all here for each other.

More stories coming Spring 2021

For more information or to get involved go to

[www.themarianphoenix.com](http://www.themarianphoenix.com)

Instagram: [themarianphoenix](https://www.instagram.com/themarianphoenix)