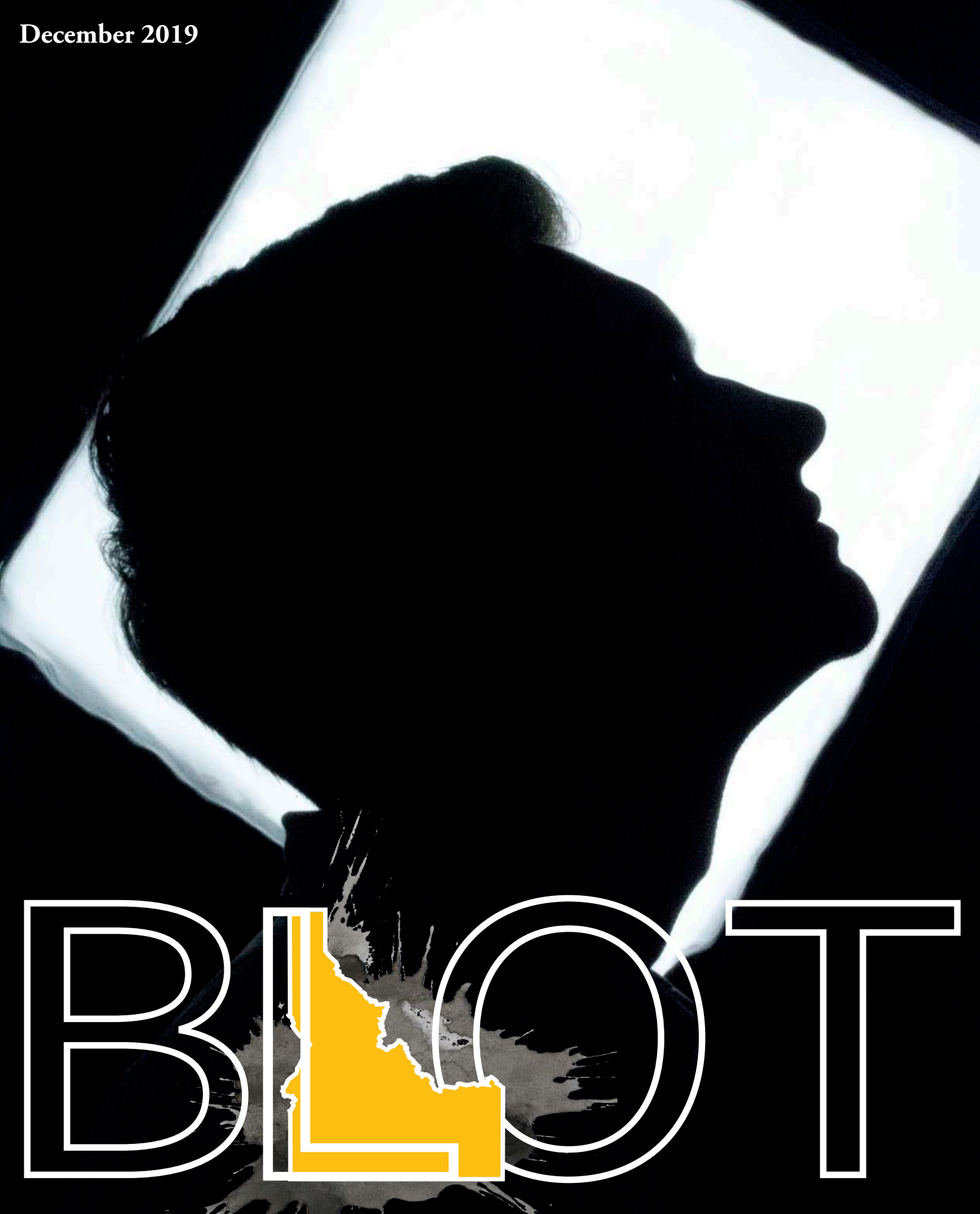


December 2019



BLOTT

Editor's Note

Readers,

In this issue of Blot our staff wanted to continue to show off the unique parts of the Moscow community and campus. We are expanding our creative writing section to not only encompass a short story, but also poetry.

But, as you might be able to tell from the cover, some stories are heavier than others.

One of our reporters investigated a topic that fogs over like a mist on college campuses around the United States — mental health. Nowadays students are expected to juggle schoolwork, their social life, family life and even extracurricular activities.

And this struggle is proven through statistics. 80% of college students feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities and 50% have struggled greatly from anxiety because of school, according to CollegeStats.org.

How does mental health impact our own students here at UI?

Over the years the Counseling and Testing Center on the University of Idaho campus has been packed with appointments from students. UI offers the CTC as a safe space for students, yet word around campus has spread that it has been difficult to schedule an appointment. Schedules range from being weekly to even monthly. Students just fit in where they can in a counselor's schedule. The CTC has been working hard to accommodate students' needs but the high demand and limited number of counselors is an obstacle. The CTC has even added in a new method to reach students in a more regular manner — group counseling. But is it enough?

When the topic of mental health is addressed, we need to remember to take care of students first — no matter the obstacle. Their voices matter.



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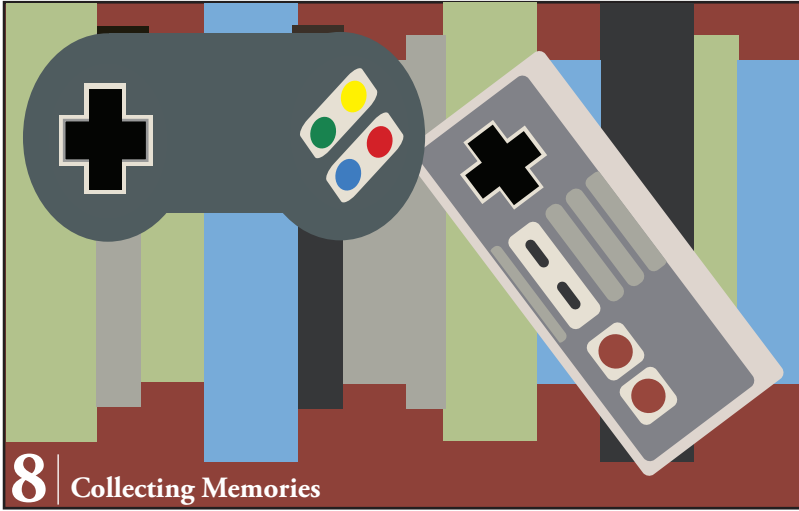
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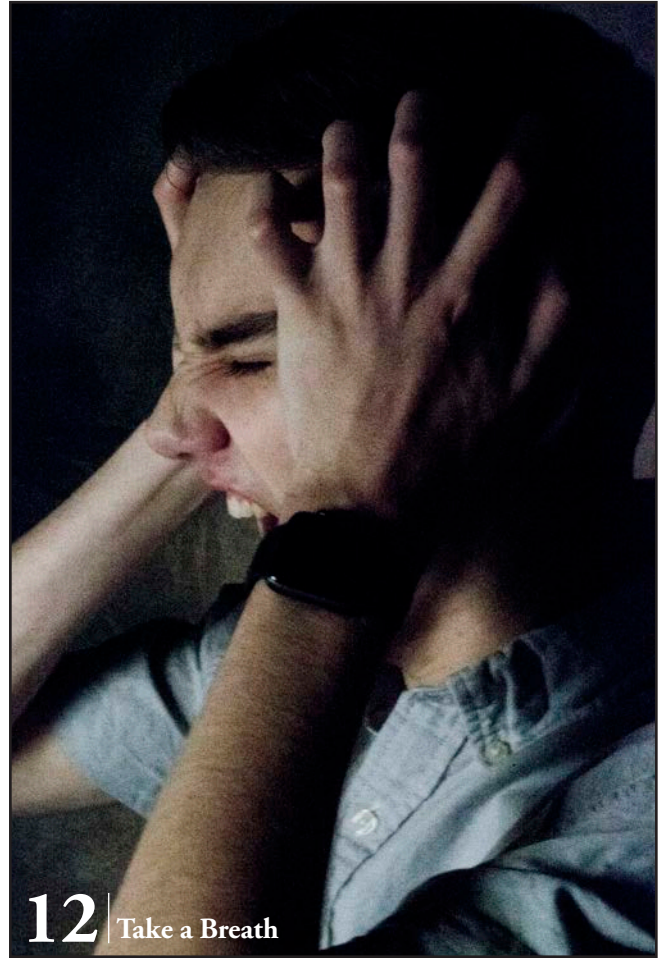
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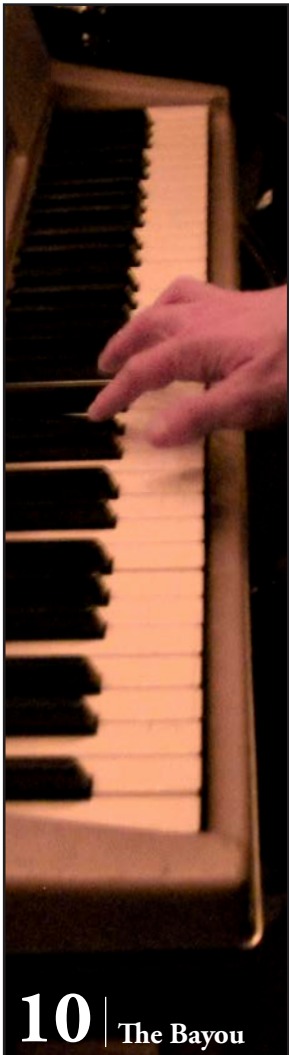
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MORE THAN JUST A JOKE

How an internet meme group changes the way we see reality

STORY BY

Riley Haun

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

Trent Anderson

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Trent Anderson

Before there was the internet, there was Kilroy. He sped around the world at a breakneck pace without the benefit of Facebook or Twitter, just chalk or spray paint and the unmitigated boredom of young American soldiers. On the underside of ship bunks, on bunker walls and on the Berlin Wall, he was always there — a symbol of the comedy found in dark spaces.

He could be drawn with five lines, maybe six if hair was added to his balding head. Clinging to a wall, nose dangling over the side, he simplistically summed up the resilience of the human spirit in the face of brutality. Or maybe he meant nothing at all.

No one seems to know or agree where Kilroy came from, and it's rare to see him nowadays where the paint is fresh or the etching not weathered away. But nonetheless — he was there.

Before there were memes, there was Kilroy — an early meme in himself.

And before there was Kilroy, there was a millennia of people painting pictures to convey something deeper than words.

Today, instead of gathering around a fire and joking about a mammoth hunt gone wrong, we share a blurred screengrab of a Spongebob episode — and somehow, it taps into the same instincts. Memes play a unique role in youth culture, offering insight into the smallest everyday challenges or the nebulous suffering of student loans and paying rent.

What's in a meme?

If one tries to explain Twitter to their grandmother, they would learn memes are easier done than said.

Andrew Peck, a professor of strategic communications at Miami University of Ohio, has spent years researching and analyzing the culture and process of internet memes. He even has trouble defining it. When Richard Dawkins coined the term “meme” in 1976, he meant a “unit of imitation” — like a mind virus, something passed along without thinking.

Peck said memes as we know them today aren't so mindless. They are recurrent and repetitive, but there is personalization and variation. They tap into what the general

population is thinking about.

“Memes are absolutely folklore,” Peck said. “It's a return to an oral culture, with a lack of central ownership. It's a chance to tell your story within a tradition while still being the center of attention for a second.”

Older generations would have just called memes “inside jokes.” Memes aren't new, but the culture around them is. Never in history has it been so easy to see a joke, reproduce it and make it your own within seconds. From thousands of isolated bits of culture, meme culture pieces together all the things we have in common and makes an inside joke for the whole world to share.

A meme of their own

Idaho Memes for Scott's Tots — formerly known as Idaho Memes for Spuddy Teens — is an inside joke for the whole University of Idaho campus to share on Facebook.

In 2016, a group of friends at UI, inspired by a meme group at UC Berkeley, decided to make their own group. Russell Romney, one of the founding moderators of the group, said their goal was always to create “saucy, zesty, local original content.” They wanted memes that would be exclusive only to Moscow — practically unintelligible to an outsider, while bonding all Vandals past, present and future in the unique struggles of UI life.

At the start, Romney said the group was just the founders and about 50 of their friends



watched as they mined the depths of campus for obscure yet relatable content. It wasn't until real drama picked up that the group began to spread through the wider campus community.

"I made a post right before the 2018 ASUI elections comparing the candidate pairs — one was white bread and the other was garlic bread," Romney said. "And the comment section really devolved into a huge drama. That's around the time we hit 1,000 members."

Romney said he thinks this pivotal moment came from the need to outlet rage, not just at the pettiness of student elections but all aspects of student life. After that, the admins saw a massive influx of student-submitted memes poking fun at everything from the preacher outside the library to Chuck Staben's pained facial expressions.

Annika Esau, a third-year UI student, said she had never made memes before joining Scott's Tots a couple of years ago. Now, she's one of the top contributors to the page. She's seen a

consistent pattern in the memes that get the most play — the difficulties and suffering of being a college student.

"We like to see that everyone's going through the same thing we are," Esau said. "Misery loves company."

Esau said she thinks people are more open about the darkness in their lives on the meme page because it's easier to say sincere things to the screen in front of you than to someone who will react in real time. That's where the absurdist, nihilistic, suicidal twist pervasive throughout meme culture comes from, she thinks — being

sad, but poking fun at it and letting others admit they feel what you feel.

Dawson Hill, one of the current admins of Scott's Tots, said the group strives to maintain a free marketplace of expression without getting outwardly nasty or rude.

While the group was not intended to be a battlefield, he thinks debate can be a positive side effect.

"We just want to see the conversation for the hell of it, really," Hill said. "It promotes this culture of encountering different ideas, which I think is really important for today. We all take a step back and laugh at our shared experience and the dumb parts of it."

Poisoning the well

Romney said he sometimes questions whether the meme group he helped bring into this world is doing more harm than good.

"We've been pretty successful relative to our mission of drinking Natty Light and making local memes in MS Paint," Romney said. "But I wonder if we've kind of poisoned the well of civic conversation on campus."

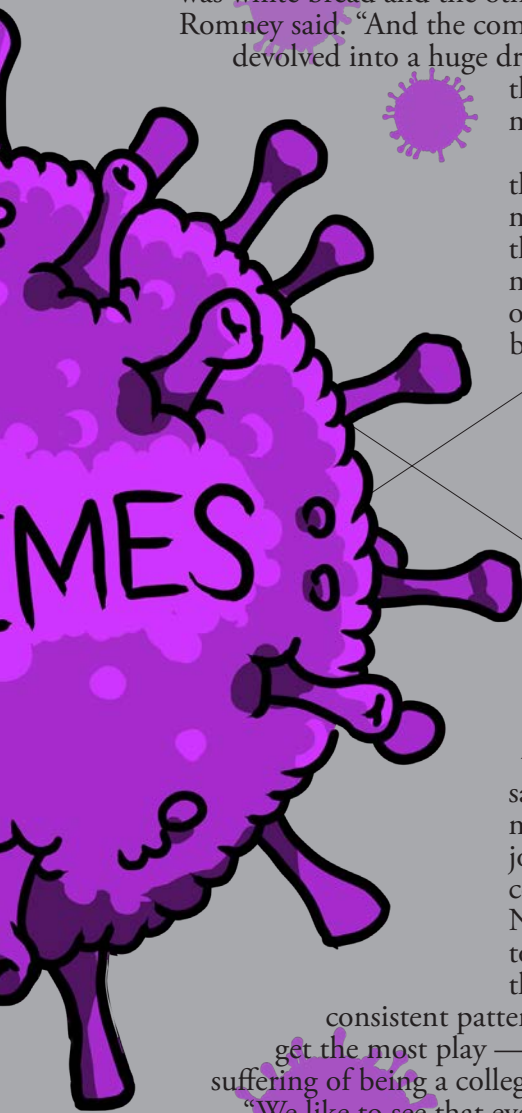
Romney points to a recent example to highlight the negativity that can stem from the group — a joke about Chick-Fil-A's anti-gay ties where the comments turned into a firestorm. The entire spectrum of opinion was represented, Romney said, but the level of analysis was shallow. People weren't forming nuanced opinions on the issue, but purely reacting to each other.

"At the end of the day, it's so easy to dismiss (other perspectives) by saying 'f*** off, it's just a meme,'" Romney said.

Esau doesn't like it when the comment section gets combative either, but she feels Scott's Tots — and memes in general — can be a way to stay up to date on cultural happenings. She didn't know about Chick-Fil-A's shady dealings until the meme debacle, and it inspired her to dig deeper into the matter and find out more.

"I don't know if (Scott's Tots) really affects individual beliefs that much, because I think people are usually pretty set in their ways," Esau said. "But it's a fun and easy way to hear about news and opinions that's way less depressing than the news."

Read the full story at blotmagazine.com



8,000 MILES AWAY FROM HOME...

Students transition to Idaho, bringing their traditions with them

STORY BY

Allison Spain

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

Kristen Lowe

DESIGN BY

Hagen Hunsaker

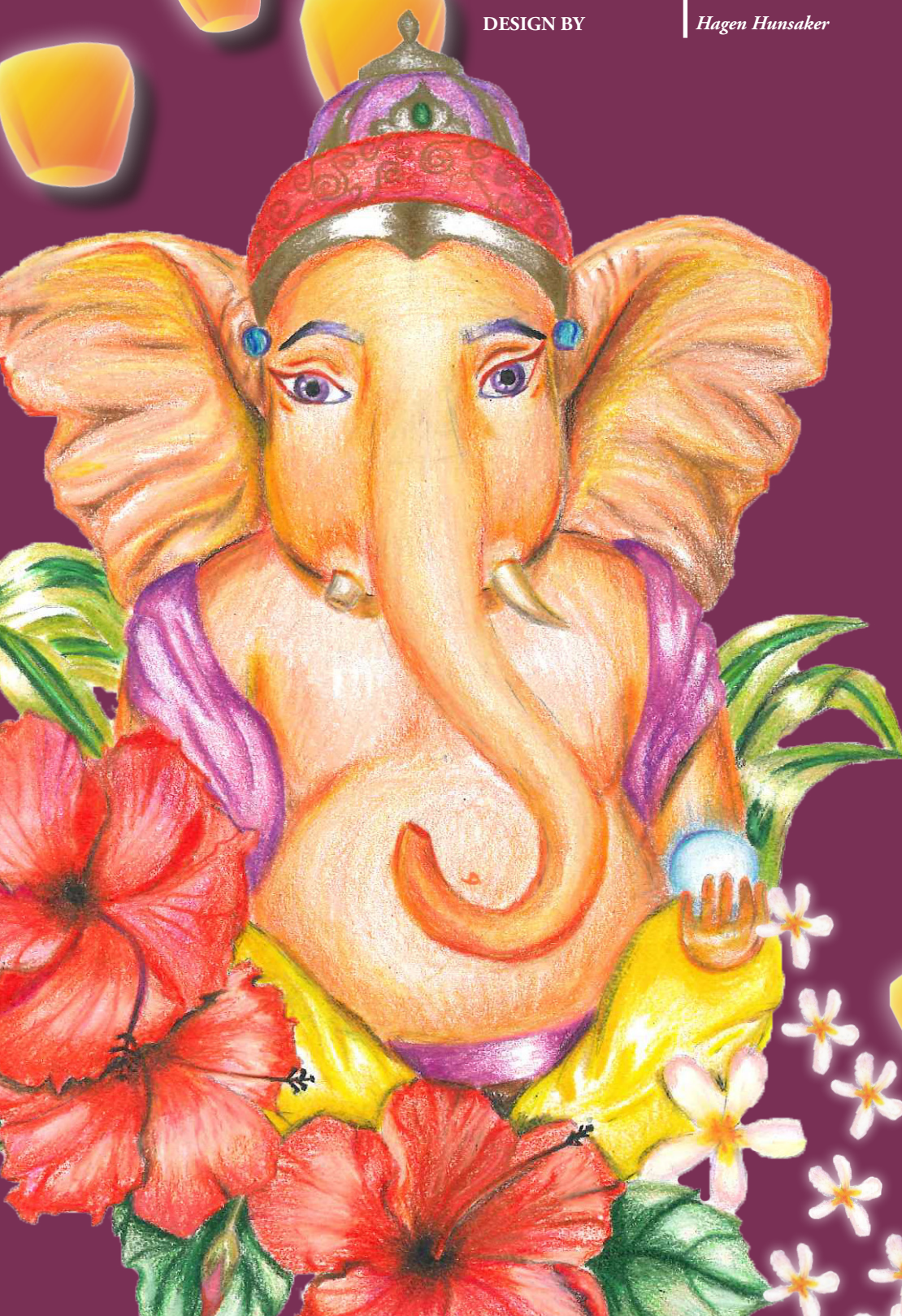
RANJITHA RAVISHANKAR

Ranjitha Ravishankar never expected to live in Idaho, nonetheless Moscow. She made the 20-hour trek from southern India to the United States two years ago, interested in studying electrical engineering and conducting research at the University of Idaho.

Coming from an extremely populated country of 1.3 billion people, she said the biggest culture shock was the miniature size of Moscow. She said the transition has brought forth friendlier and more welcoming people than those she grew up with — but there are still times when homesickness runs its course.

“I really missed my home country last winter break, so I traveled home for Christmas to visit my family and friends who invited me to celebrate with them,” Ravishankar said. “Although, there is a decent size community here (in Moscow) — roughly 50 people — who celebrate a variety of Hindu and Muslim festivals year-round.”

Her community is mostly made up of the Indian Students Association and the International Students Association. Some of the festivals and events celebrated include India Night, Diwali, Ganesh Chaturthi and Dussehra. She said these festivals encompass decorations and firecrackers, traditional dress, singing, dancing and generally having fun. Potlucks contribute to the community aspect even more.



“It gives a chance for my American friends to explore my culture and for anyone to just follow and celebrate what they believe in,” Ravishankar said. “The festival holiday of Ganesh Chaturthi is a main event that no one would ever want to miss. Everyone celebrates it.”

Ravishankar attended Christian schools growing up and celebrates Christmas with a traditional Christmas tree and cookie decorating. She said she will not be traveling home this year but there are many friends and outings to keep her busy during winter break, including events with the UI Global Student Success Program.

In the past, she has traveled throughout the U.S. during school breaks, including Portland, Oregon and closer trips like Spokane, Washington. She has also visited her brother in Connecticut and explored the surrounding area with him, including New York City.

“Many international students haven’t seen the U.S. and have a desire to travel and explore as much as we can,” Ravishankar said. “Learning about other cultures and celebrating their traditions is very fun and makes your life more colorful to learn and explore.”

HERVE MASHINDORA

Recent UI graduate Herve Mashindora said moving to Boise from the Democratic Republic of the Congo at a young age was a culture shock, and they are still adapting to American ways while keeping traditions from home alive.

“Traditions are who you really are, and if you lose those traditions — you lose who you are with them,” Mashindora said. “As you adapt to a new culture, you can’t lose your own culture, you can’t lose your tradition, you can’t lose your ways.”

He said every time he talks with his family on the phone or visits them, he makes sure to continue speaking his languages, including Swahili, French and Kituba, to maintain a part of his culture.

Idaho has a completely different vibe from home where children run in the streets, where everyone is raised by everyone else, Mashindora said. Not only that, but the climate is much colder in Idaho than in Central Africa. He said he usually stays in Moscow for Thanksgiving break, but tries to drive home to Boise every year for Christmas break as he becomes more comfortable driving in unfamiliar snowy conditions.

Growing up in a Christian family, he said the main holidays he celebrates are Christmas and Easter, while smaller holidays like Valentine’s Day and Halloween do not exist in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

“I had never heard of Thanksgiving before coming to the states, but I do celebrate Christmas,” Mashindora said. “The only difference is that Christmas is simply a time for family to come together and enjoy time with each other, rather than focusing on the American ‘requirement’ of buying a bunch of gifts.” A few gifts are exchanged among him and his 11 siblings, but enjoying good food and being with each other is more important, Mashindora said. He said one of his go-to dishes enjoyed year-round is fufu — a dish made of cassava, a nutty-flavored, starchy root vegetable — which goes best with soup, vegetables and meat.

“Traditions are what you know very well. I have adapted to a lot of American culture, but I have to keep my traditions to still know who I am and where I’m from and what I represent,” Mashindora said.

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Cailin Bary, the student experience specialist for the GSSP, is the first face students are greeted with upon their arrival at the Pullman airport through the program, which Ravishankar utilized. Bary said most students are filled with excitement, but there is some anxiety mixed in as they begin a brand-new chapter of their life — often an overwhelming experience.

Read the full story at blotmagazine.com

COLLECTING MEMORIES

STORY BY

Stevie Carr

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

Rachel Wiedenmann

DESIGN BY

Rachel Wiedenmann

Playing video games with his father since he was a child, Kegan Georgeson has loved them ever since. He began collecting various video games once he discovered his passion.

“When I was a kid — I was probably like four — I used to play Nintendo games with my dad (like Tecmo Bowl, which was a football game, and Super Mario Bros.,” Georgeson, a University of Idaho senior majoring in geology, said. “I used to play it all the time and ever since then I’ve always liked games.”

In high school, he went online to eBay to rediscover the games he played as a child. But the best games he finds now are from friends and people reaching out to him.

Alison Wolfe, another UI senior majoring in pre-veterinary animal science, collects books, dragon figurines and stuffed animals. Like Georgeson, her obsession dates back to her childhood.

“My mom blames herself for the book one,” Wolfe said. “I was having a really (bad) day in elementary school and my mom had a book fair going on in her office. She took me in with her and didn’t know what to do with me, so she took me to this book fair and told me that I could get one. I read this book and decided I needed all of them.”

Wolfe doesn’t like borrowing books or going to the library, she likes to own them. As a child, she bought them with her own allowance every Tuesday — the day new releases come out — until her collection finally took off.

As her personal library expanded, Wolfe found other collections to devote herself to. She already had a love for stuffed animals, which she began to channel into a stockpile of dragon figurines.

“I was like ‘oh my God, I love ‘How To Train Your Dragon’ — this is so adorable and Toothless is like the cutest thing ever,” Wolfe said, referring to the main dragon character in the film series.

“So I started buying all those stuffed animals and the official merch and I thought, ‘oh wait, this is actually really cool.’”

With both of these collections, costs are a factor at hand. Georgeson suggests his method of perusing yard sales and thrift stores for finding vintage games for cheap, because sellers often don’t realize the value of what they have.

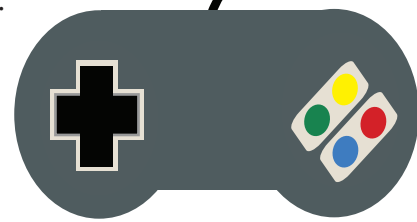
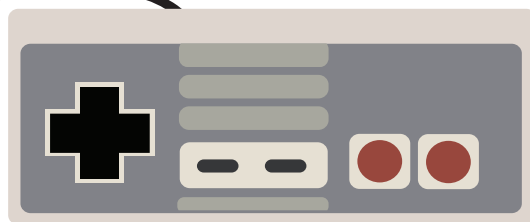
“Otherwise, I start off by buying them online, but now I came to realize that you’re going to pay a lot of money for it because usually, people who sell them online know what they’re worth,” Georgeson said.

As a collector, Georgeson has learned hobbies can take up not only a lot of time, but a lot of money as well — a habit he’s trying to reform. With over 100 games in his collection, the numbers add up quickly.

“When I first started, I was buying a lot of stuff that I didn’t really need. But I’ve toned it down a bit,” Georgeson said. “I’m still collecting, but it’s taught me to be smarter about buying things.”

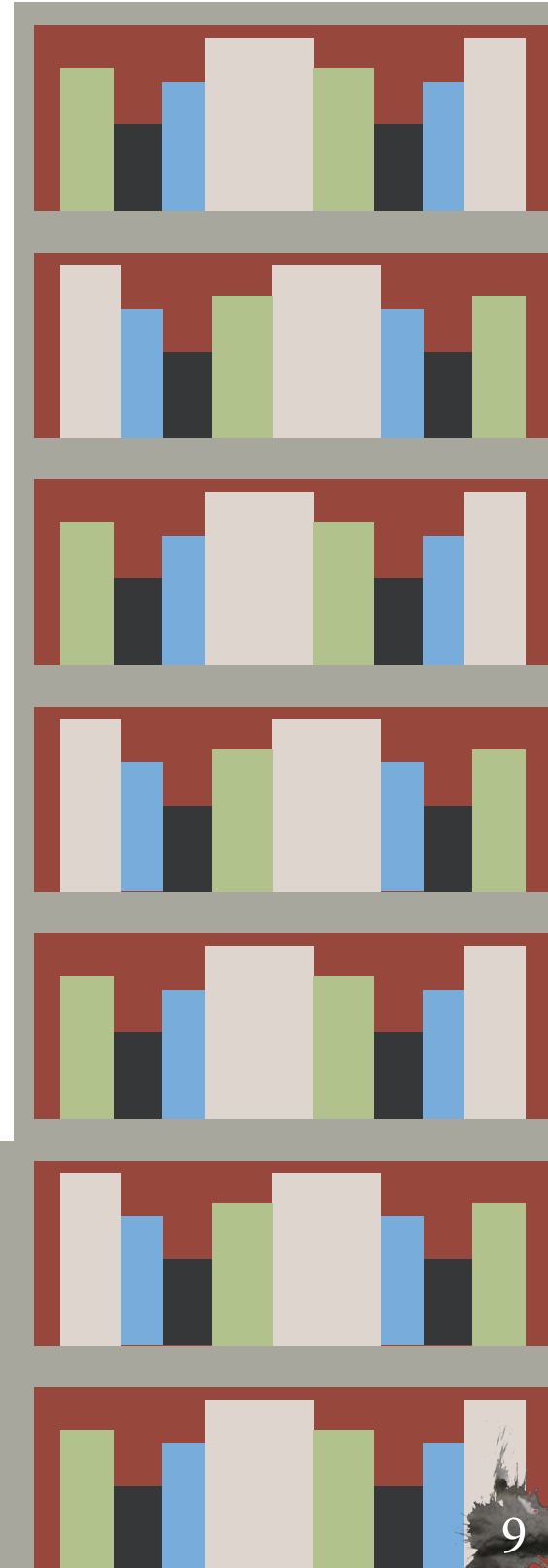
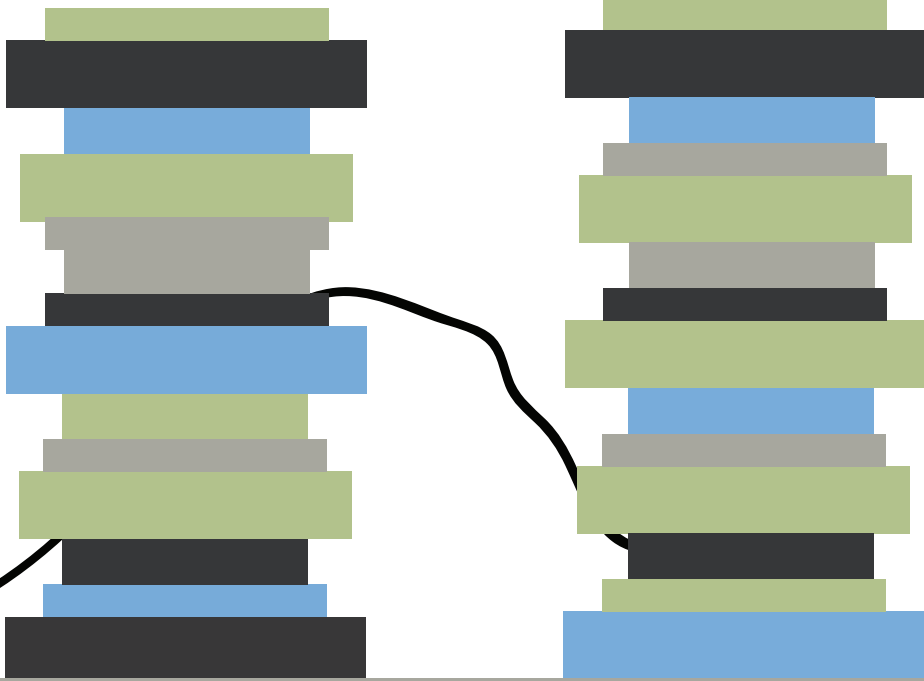
Wolfe keeps a list on her phone, updated weekly, of new books she wants to buy and keeps up with the constant flow of new dragon merch through Amazon. She also sets aside some of her paychecks for collection additions. She calls herself crazy, but feels her hobby is worth the time and expense.

“It’s something you have to genuinely enjoy doing and something you like to look at,” Wolfe said. “Although it does stack up and the costs of books are rising, and I have 2,000 books — that’s \$20,000 on books alone. I could round up, that’s just counting books I’ve read. I buy books that I haven’t read so technically that would be upwards of \$40,000.”



Items are more than just a price tag

Done with balance and constraint, collecting can be unwinding, gratifying, and perhaps even an educational pastime considering both time and expenses involved. They offer a change from daily routine and develop a meaningful connection influenced by certain objects that are collected. For some it's an adolescent obsession, but for Georgeson and Wolfe, it's a deep-rooted accomplishment brought into adulthood.



STORY BY | *Kali Nelson*
PHOTOS BY | *Kali Nelson*
DESIGN BY | *Emma French*

THE BAYOU:

Heading out of town along the Troy highway sits an off-white, dingy house with peeling paint.

Here is the home of The Bayou, a place for people to gather and listen to bands passing through town on their way to bigger cities like Seattle or Boise.

The house has three rules: “No drugs, no underage drinking and no jerks.”

Outside in the yard, people gather around the fire pit. The fire takes a small group to start, coming to life and consuming the branches and cardboard quickly. When a voice from the porch is heard, people file inside down a narrow set of stairs to the basement.

The basement is where the magic happens, in a space maybe six feet tall where people gather around and enjoy music for the night. The space comes alive with the sounds of chatter, while the smell of cheap beer and old cigarettes hang in the air. Once the band begins playing, the side conversations suppress and the music washes over the audience.

University of Idaho student Sashi White often visits The Bayou.

“What brings me back time after time is the people,” White said. “The Bayou, unlike any other music venue in Moscow, is a living, growing community.”

The bands and artists The Bayou brings in is a drawing point. He said the music playing inside is just as important as the conversations being had outside.

“The Bayou draws a wide range of musicians and music lovers. Although every show has the same high energy, the performances are from across the board: soft folk to hard rock, artists from near or far, contemplative to combative,” White said.

Besides playing music in their basement, The Bayou also gets involved in the community.

This year, for the second year in a row, the owners held the aftershow for the Modest Music Festival, featuring a few of the bands who came to town for the festival.

Throughout the rest of the year, the atmosphere is more relaxed with band practice instead of more formal



IMAGES ABOVE

Artists perform at the local music venue The Bayou.

A COMMUNITY VENUE

events. But occasionally they will hold a fundraiser, including recently raising money for candidate Anne Zabala's city council re-election campaign.

"Most of the time, you know, we don't take any money...I mean, we take money at the bar, but that goes directly to the bands—and more specifically, the touring bands. We give them a place to crash as well," current Bayou owner Gabriel Smith said.

Running The Bayou wasn't always part of Smith's plan, but when his sister moved to Moscow, he found himself wanting to move out of Colorado. The lease for the house has been passed down since the '90s.

"Historically, (The Bayou) has done shows. My band was on tour about six years ago and has actually played here at The Bayou. When at that time, Moscow was just a town," Smith said.

The Bayou is different than some of the music venues in Moscow because of the DIY nature of the space. Smith said he has been involved with a lot of DIY spaces like The Bayou and art galleries — spaces where music can

happen but isn't normally done.

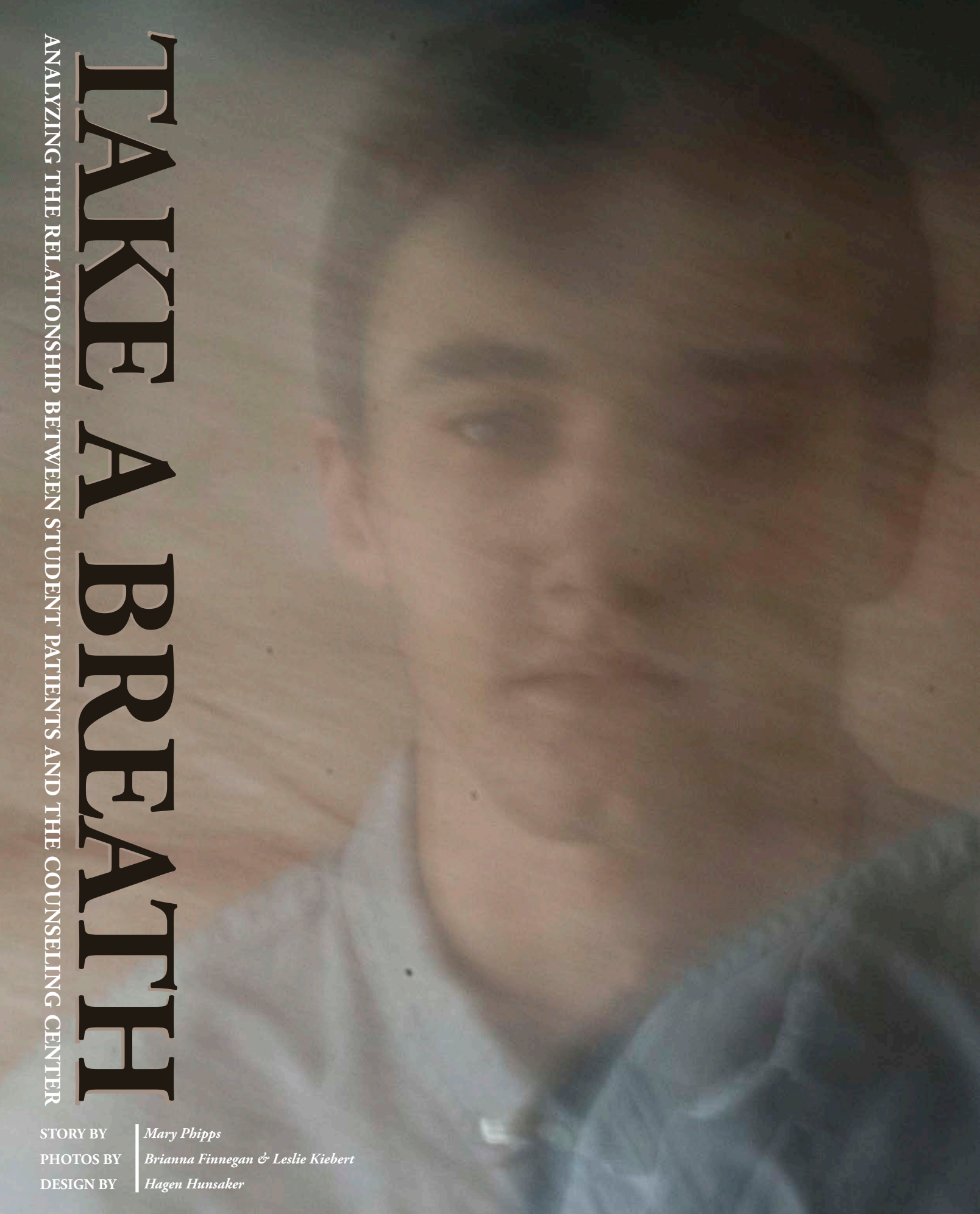
"A lot of times I like underground music, independent bands that you wouldn't necessarily see at a bar," Smith said. "It's not as I say that's not bad music, but it's not mainstream."

The Bayou has a specialty in the bands they bring, while the DIY scene in Moscow is growing with events such as the Modest Music Festival where local businesses turn into music venues.

Smith said DIY spaces aren't necessarily official spaces, but the location of the house assists with catching bands that are traveling from bigger cities, or bands that just went up the coast. They are usually looking for a turnaround show before they arrive in Seattle or Boise. Smith said he's been part of the DIY music scene in Boise and Colorado, but the Moscow scene is different.

"It's a lot of fun, and a lot of the times you know the people that are touring through," Smith said. "They are old friends of ours, so we get to see them in the community. Everybody is really respectful."





TAKE A BREATH

ANALYZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENT PATIENTS AND THE COUNSELING CENTER

STORY BY

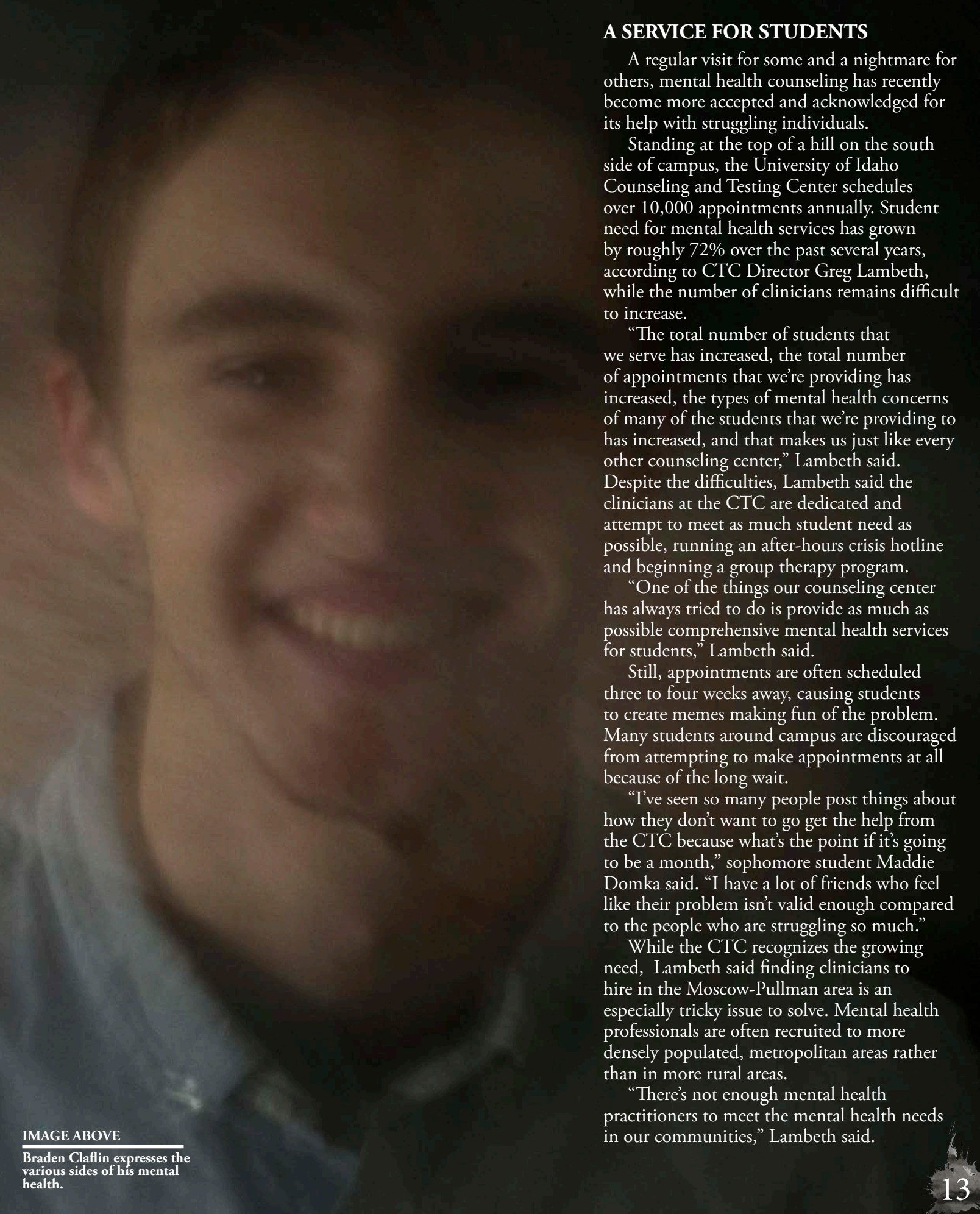
Mary Phipps

PHOTOS BY

Brianna Finnegan & Leslie Kiebert

DESIGN BY

Hagen Hunsaker



A SERVICE FOR STUDENTS

A regular visit for some and a nightmare for others, mental health counseling has recently become more accepted and acknowledged for its help with struggling individuals.

Standing at the top of a hill on the south side of campus, the University of Idaho Counseling and Testing Center schedules over 10,000 appointments annually. Student need for mental health services has grown by roughly 72% over the past several years, according to CTC Director Greg Lambeth, while the number of clinicians remains difficult to increase.

“The total number of students that we serve has increased, the total number of appointments that we’re providing has increased, the types of mental health concerns of many of the students that we’re providing to has increased, and that makes us just like every other counseling center,” Lambeth said. Despite the difficulties, Lambeth said the clinicians at the CTC are dedicated and attempt to meet as much student need as possible, running an after-hours crisis hotline and beginning a group therapy program.

“One of the things our counseling center has always tried to do is provide as much as possible comprehensive mental health services for students,” Lambeth said.

Still, appointments are often scheduled three to four weeks away, causing students to create memes making fun of the problem. Many students around campus are discouraged from attempting to make appointments at all because of the long wait.

“I’ve seen so many people post things about how they don’t want to go get the help from the CTC because what’s the point if it’s going to be a month,” sophomore student Maddie Domka said. “I have a lot of friends who feel like their problem isn’t valid enough compared to the people who are struggling so much.”

While the CTC recognizes the growing need, Lambeth said finding clinicians to hire in the Moscow-Pullman area is an especially tricky issue to solve. Mental health professionals are often recruited to more densely populated, metropolitan areas rather than in more rural areas.

“There’s not enough mental health practitioners to meet the mental health needs in our communities,” Lambeth said.

IMAGE ABOVE

Braden Clafin expresses the various sides of his mental health.



A GROWING NEED

For many college students, their time at school is their first time away from home and their first time having to make their own appointments.

Domka said she would not have scheduled an appointment had she not been taken to the center by her Student Support Services-TRIO counselor.

“I wasn’t going to do it until someone literally made me go do it,” Domka said. Like many other students, she had anxiety surrounding the call to make an appointment, preventing her from scheduling one.

“There wasn’t an option for an online form,” Domka said, “You’re (the CTC) helping students who are struggling with anxiety or depression and you’re making them come in person or be on the phone — which is a common stress factor in what I’ve found in a lot of my peers.”

After scheduling and attending that first appointment, she said the process was less intimidating.

Even for students that had been seen earlier in the school year, scheduling appointments later in the semester has proved difficult. Students like sophomore Braden Claflin, have had to move their appointment frequency to only being seen once a month. Claflin, a regular CTC visitor since August, decided to visit the CTC because of recently developed anxiety and depression issues. After participating in a mental health seminar before the semester began, he realized the possibility that he could need counseling in his own life.

“I was nervous about calling, because I’ve always had that mentality that if you need a therapist or a counselor, there’s something wrong,” Claflin said. “I don’t have that mentality anymore.”

Despite the raised awareness of mental health, a stigma surrounding therapy and treatment still exists. Claflin said he lost a close friend after revealing he was visiting a counselor. Others simply choose not to go.

Sophomore Izze Booth chooses not to utilize the CTC because of her own stigma and experience towards counseling.

“I feel like I just don’t put myself out there to maybe get help I need because I feel like nobody will understand,” Booth said. “I know how I feel, and I know how I feel about it, so why do I need somebody else to ask me how I feel that way?”

IMAGE ABOVE

Braden Claflin expresses the stress he experiences as a student at UI.



MEETING THE NEED

The steady rise of students seeking mental health treatment presents a challenge not only for the University of Idaho's CTC, but for centers across the country, according to Lambeth.

"All counseling centers have seen huge increases in the number of students that they're providing services to," Lambeth said. "It does challenge the types of services you're able to provide, the scope of services that you're able to provide."

Although there is a high request of services, the clinicians at the CTC all have schedules filled with as many student appointments as possible, said Karla Blanco.

Blanco, a clinician and Interim Director for Outreach for the CTC, gestured to her color-coded schedule completely full of appointments to demonstrate the effort put forward to see as many students as possible.

"It's not like we're not seeing anybody," Blanco said. "It's not like we're not putting in the work on this side."

Even with the increase of mental health services needed, the CTC is in a hiring freeze. This is due to psychologist licensing taking a considerable amount of time, hireable clinicians not necessarily seeking smaller communities, and budget issues with the university.

"Moscow is a really hard area to hire into," Blanco said.

Having more clinicians would not necessarily solve the problem, Blanco said. Scheduling an appointment with a private practitioner would likely present the same scheduling difficulty, planning an appointment three to four weeks from the date.

"Private practitioners can just say 'I'm full,'" Lambeth said. "One of the things that happens is we continue to see students for first time appointments even though our schedules are incredibly full."

To meet the growing needs of student mental health services, Lambeth and the team at the CTC have adjusted their schedules, shortening sessions and seeing students less frequently in order to fit in more appointments. In the process of adjusting routine, Lambeth said that the staff at the CTC is attempting to think about their responsibility to be accessible to all students.

IMAGE ABOVE

Model Madi Thurston demonstrates the stress and frustration many students experience on a daily basis.



A SUPPORT FOR ADVOCACY

Other administrative entities around UI have also noticed the significant rise in student mental health need. Terrance Grieb, a professor of finance and the Chair of Faculty Senate, said that the members of Faculty Senate noted mental health for both faculty and students as one of the first concerns for the following semester. Grieb said he has noticed the additional level of stress that students are now taking on.

“Students have always struggled with the stress of a college degree,” Grieb said. “What’s different is the nature of how students interact with the college environment.”

Grieb said the Faculty Senate is attempting to explore mental health from an advocacy role. From a professor’s standpoint, being an informal support for students is an advocacy role he can adapt into.

“Sometimes you need to sit down with somebody clinically, and sometimes you just need to have a cup of coffee. Sometimes just sharing your troubles and being heard is enough of a release to get you back on track,” Grieb said.

To help teach and promote those advocacy roles, Vandal Health Education is focused on enhancing mental wellbeing as a whole, Amanda Ferstead said. Ferstead, VHE’s mental health program director, said she has noticed that students are more willing to speak up about their stressors, making it more necessary than ever to encourage people to learn a mental wellbeing routine.

“We have a stress management workshop,” she said. “We talk about a couple of different stress management resources, like breathing, gratitude, progressive muscle relaxation.”

By coordinating and facilitating workshops like these, Ferstead said, she works to make sure the programs meet the needs of students. Offering workshops and programs, she said, offers a space to learn and talk about mental health and stressors, supporting an advocacy role for nonprofessionals that wish to help.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

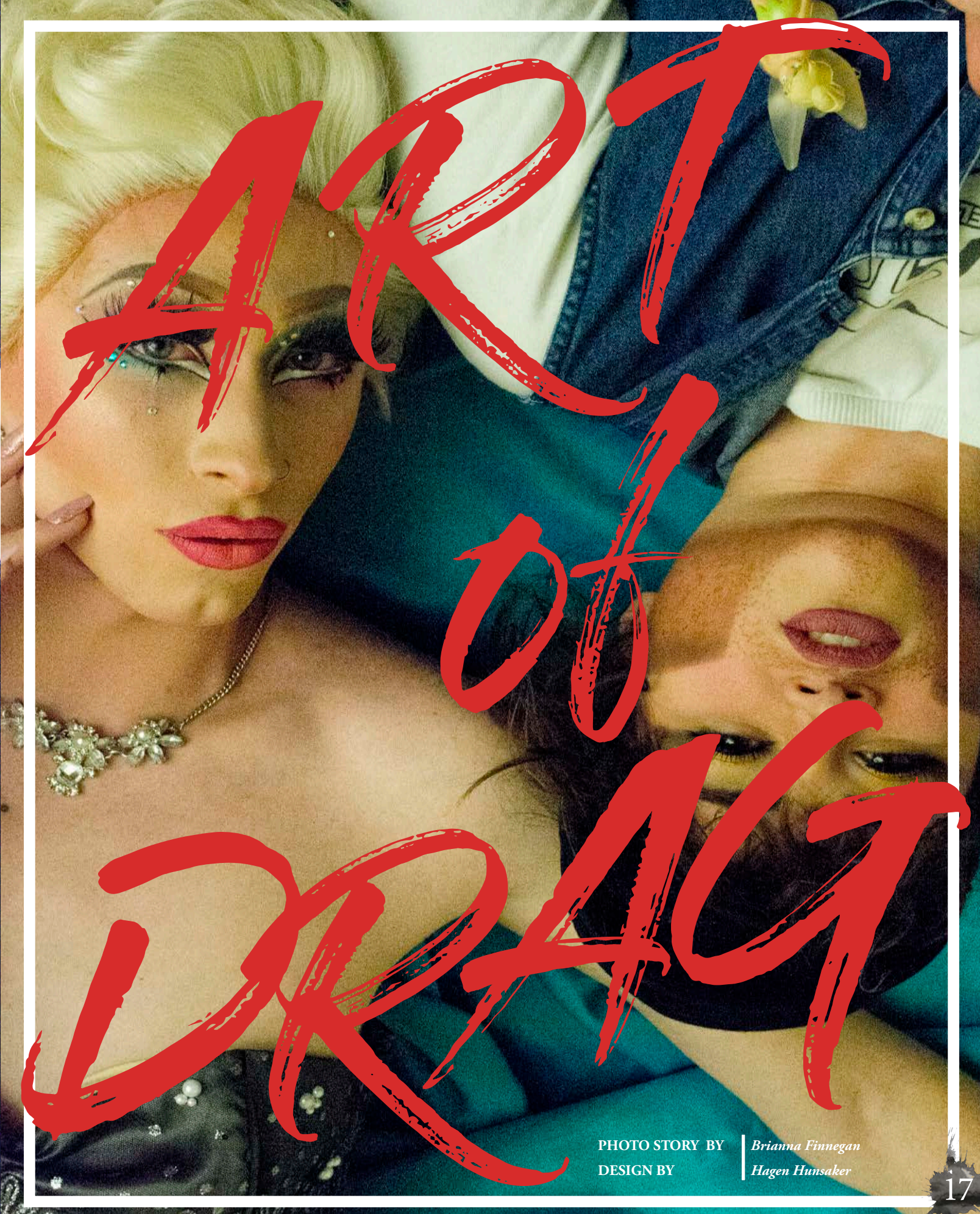
With conversations about mental health becoming more common, more and more students are seeking treatment. While the increase in the openness of mental health has the potential to decrease stigma surrounding the topic, the increase of student need has caused elongated scheduling of CTC appointments.

Many students have tried to find coping mechanisms that help when the CTC cannot, with Booth writing out her troubles and Domka utilizing an app that provides breathing meditations between counseling appointments.

“It’s up to students to find out what works,” Ferstead said.

IMAGE ABOVE

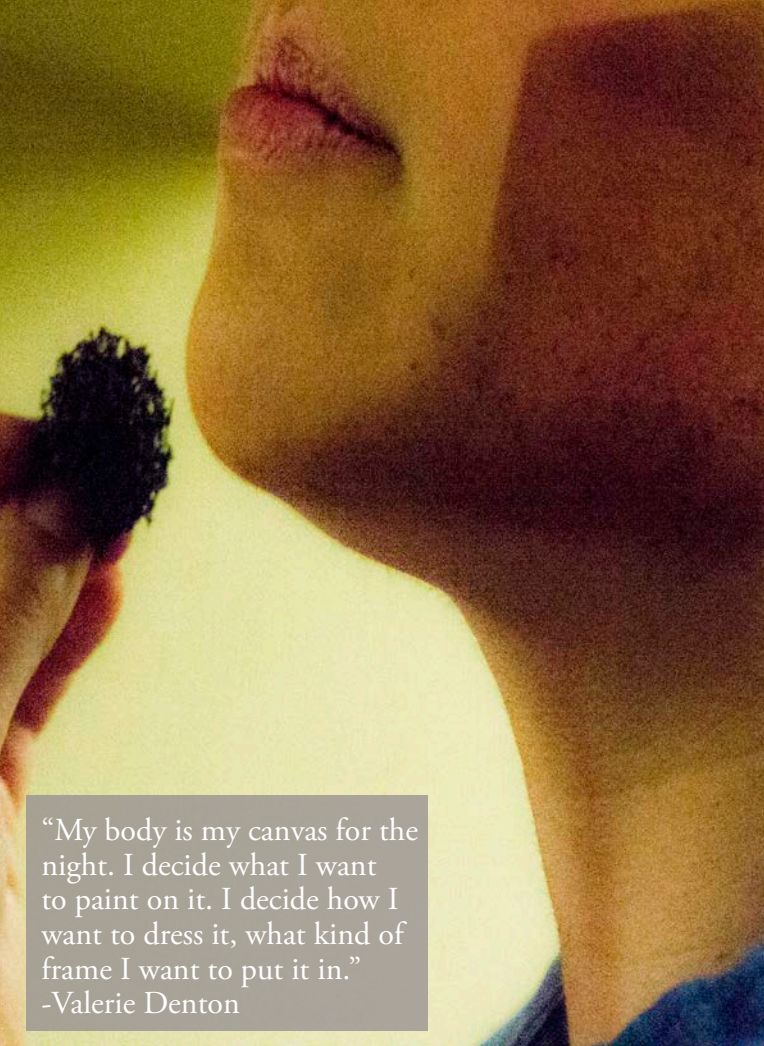
Braden Claffin reflects on his experiences with mental health and his mentality surrounding it.



ART OF DRAGA

PHOTO STORY BY
DESIGN BY

Brianna Finnegan
Hagen Hunsaker



“My body is my canvas for the night. I decide what I want to paint on it. I decide how I want to dress it, what kind of frame I want to put it in.”
-Valerie Denton



Before a performance, Denton spends time contouring her face strategically to create the illusion of male facial features despite her female bone structure.



“Something I really enjoy about theater and performances in general, is it’s almost like sidewalk chalk. You go outside and you draw it, and you have a great time, people see it all day long. They get to enjoy it. But by the afternoon it’s raining and its washed away.”
-Valerie Denton

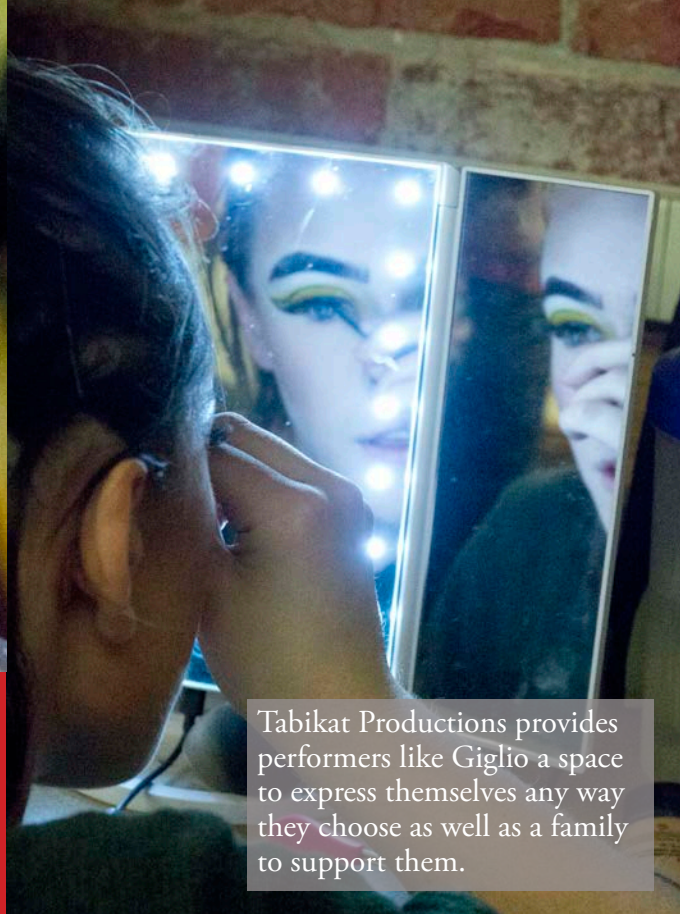


An inside look at the lives of drag performers

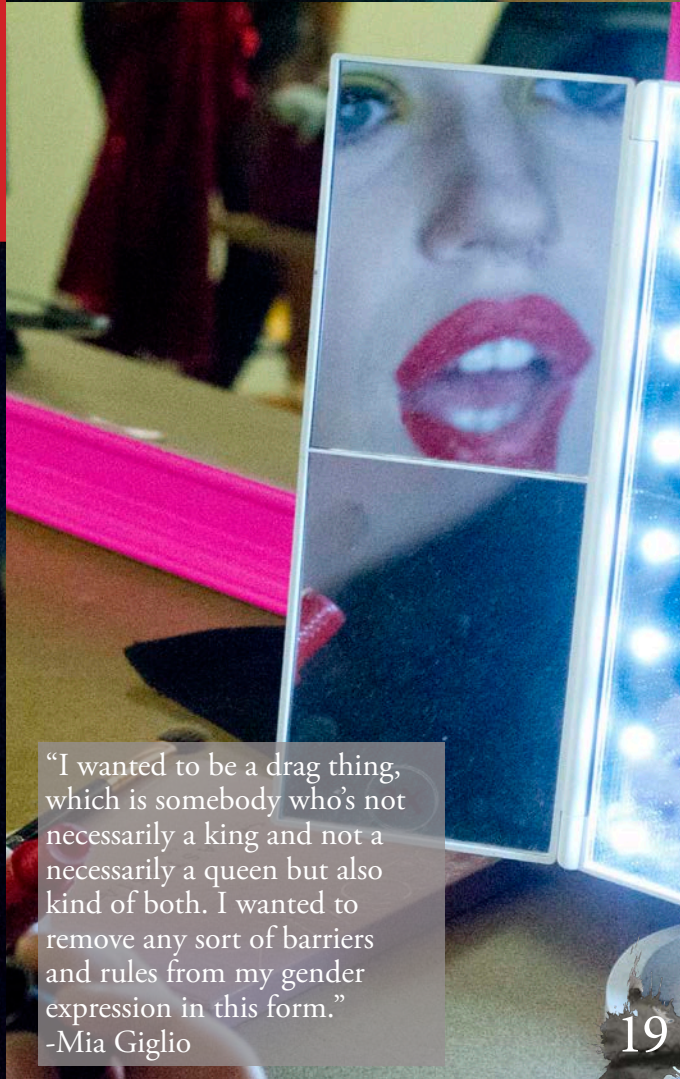
A bright spotlight shines across the dark room, illuminating their beautiful androgynous figure as they walk down the steps to a crowd of people. While drag queens are known across the world with the rise of popular reality show “RuPaul’s Drag Race,” the drag community has far more diversity. Mia Giglio and Valerie Denton are University of Idaho students who perform in drag for local Tabikat Productions. Giglio and Denton demonstrate a spectrum of gender expression through their performances with some sets following the masculine drag king persona, others expressing a more feminine persona as femme queens and a whole range in between.



Performing drag has not only improved Giglio’s confidence but created a new career path for them to explore their art.



Tabikat Productions provides performers like Giglio a space to express themselves any way they choose as well as a family to support them.

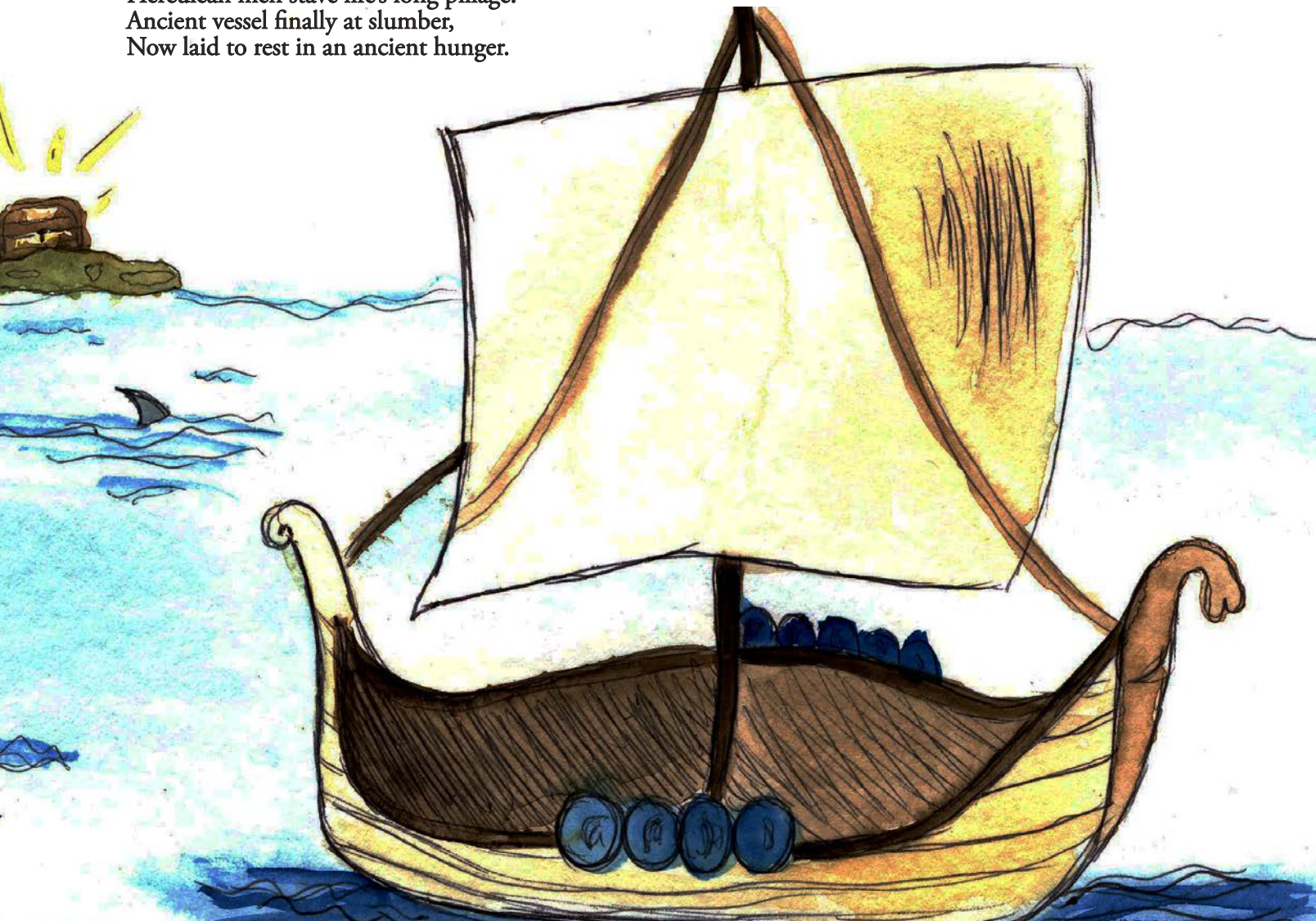


“I wanted to be a drag thing, which is somebody who’s not necessarily a king and not a necessarily a queen but also kind of both. I wanted to remove any sort of barriers and rules from my gender expression in this form.”
-Mia Giglio

VIKING SONNET SONG

POETRY BY *Austin Emler*
ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Lindsay Trombly*
DESIGN BY *Lindsay Trombly*

Wrathful waves clashing against ashen slabs,
Raking masts upon the auburn heavens.
A whipped-worn sail where at which the winds stabs,
For its aged soul, friable shores beckons.
Cutthroat drums mold the flutter of its hearts,
Pillaged spirits saunter across its hull.
A long-lost country from where she departs,
For many men doth Valhall's bell toll.
Treasures stowed from a country once standing,
Returned once more to a hidden village.
Shall the mighty ship find final landing,
Herculean men stave life's long pillage.
Ancient vessel finally at slumber,
Now laid to rest in an ancient hunger.



THE SHOT

FLASH FICTION BY
ILLUSTRATIONS BY
DESIGN BY

Dylan Siegel
Lindsay Trombly
Lindsay Trombly

We had just hiked from your family's cabin, to the usual spot at Yellowdog Creek. Our stand was up an old pine tree, where we could look over the somber land. I remember the fog had cascaded from the clouds to the base of the timbers. While we waited, we talked about what we wanted to do after graduation that year. That's when you told me you wanted to leave this little town. I was shocked, but I understood because I felt the same. This town was too small for you. I didn't want to stay in Salmon either, but I had no idea how to get out of this place. I wanted to leave with you, but I don't have an uncle down in San Francisco holding a job for me like you do. I knew I wanted to do something impactful. I knew I liked helping people and writing, but I wasn't a writer then. You always pushed me to write more, and that's what I loved most about you. We were in the middle of our conversation when you spotted a four-point buck. I loaded a .308 round into my rifle's chamber, but before I could get a clean shot, it disappeared behind the tree line. We scrambled down the stand to tail it.

We didn't talk much as we followed it, but my eyes never left your back. I was entranced by your movement and was willing to follow you anywhere. I could hear the water flowing over the rocks in the creek, but your body blocked my view of it. I didn't see that stiff root, and when I tripped over it, I snapped out of my trance. It was too late, though. My gun had gone off, and the bullet flew from the chamber into your chest. You dropped as soon as I got up, and your body splashed in the creek. There was so much blood, but you made no noise. You just went quietly into the dark as I hovered over your body.

I did end up leaving Salmon after graduation. I did it for you, and I'm glad I did because now that I am older, and can reflect on my life, I know it was the best decision I ever made. It's a shame it came from such terrible circumstances, though, because then both of us could be enjoying this California sun together. At my age, I've lost many friends, but no loss was as powerful as losing you. I still visit Salmon and visit your grave here and there. I haven't gone hunting since our last trip together, no matter how many times I've been asked.

Humans of Moscow

STORY BY

Brianna Finnegan

PHOTOS BY

Brianna Finnegan

DESIGN BY

Taylor Lund

Xavier Murdoch is a University of Idaho pre-med student and emergency medical technician with the Moscow Volunteer Fire Department. He was born in Canada but has lived in Moscow for 12 years now since his parents have been professors at the university.

Q: How did you know you wanted to get into medicine?

A: “I kind of have always been really interested in it (working in the medical field). I was an athlete — I always injured myself. I was also a very injury prone kid. My third word was sphygmomanometer, which is a blood pressure cuff. (My parents) taught me that as a kid, so that I could go in and they could ask me what it was and surprise all the doctors. I always liked learning about it.”



Q: How do you cope with those difficult cases?

A: “Those types of things are — they happen. Sometimes there’s nothing you can do about it, and so there’s no use. You’re going to think ‘well, maybe I could have done something different, maybe this could happen.’ But the fact of the matter is, you did everything you’re supposed to do — there were lots of people there to help them. Sometimes there’s just nothing you can do. To accept that, that’s really a coping method. You just got to make sure that you’re able to, because it can be difficult sometimes.”

Q: How has your family impacted your career in medicine?

A: “My parents are very encouraging, very supportive of anything I wanted to do. They didn’t care what it was as long as it was going to make me happy. But that being said, they’re always pushing me — whatever I wanted to do — to do it to the best of my abilities. One thing my dad said about it is, ‘this is something that you can study, just enough to pass. Or you can study enough to be a great EMT, and really make a difference in somebody’s day, in somebody’s life. Who would you rather have working on you or your family, somebody that just got through it, or somebody that was committed to learning everything they could to best help people?’”

Read the full Q&A at
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