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## Transfer Art Student Exhibits Joyful Work

Virginia Rendler  
Staff Writer

If you've been in Winger in the past weeks, you may have noticed a brilliantly-colored and varied display of joyful works. These were the pieces by Leslee Bottorff, transfer art student from the University of Tennessee Bachelor of Fine Arts program in Knoxville.

Bottorff transferred to Manchester in the fall of 2016. "My husband got a call that North Manchester needed a chairman for the pharmacy department, and I was reluctant to move, but it happened," Bottorff said. "So I took a year off from Tennessee to get the farm ready to sell, which was hard at my age, to take a year off."

Bottorff is enjoying her experience in the Manchester community so far. "Manchester has been amazing," she said. "I started in the fall, and I had worked hard at UT and through my other college experience, but they were able to get everything transferred over, and they gave me an enormous amount of space."

"From the very first time I stepped on the campus, they've been accommodating, joyful, bending over backwards," she continued. "It's been a really good spot for me, really nice, especially compared to the enormity of the school of art at the University of Tennessee. So I think I'm supposed to be here."

SEE BOTTORFF, PAGE 2

# Students for Palestine Host Conference on Campus

Maddie Jo Shultz  
Staff Writer

Students for Justice in Palestine at Manchester University hosted a conference on Saturday April 8, 2017. The conference kicked off at 1 p.m. with workshops on the second floor of the Academic Center; attendees could acquire information on the U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights, whose slogan is "Working Together for Freedom, Justice, and Equality." Its website is uscpr.org.

From 3 to 4:30 pm, attendees had the opportunity to watch a 2016 documentary called "Disturbing the Peace," which demonstrated the destruction resulting from the Israeli occupation of Palestinians in the Gaza strip. Sitting alongside the Spartans in Winger Auditorium were a few Purdue Boilermakers, who drove to Manchester's campus especially for the event. "This issue is widespread throughout the Middle East," said Sherin Khawaja, a junior at Purdue, of the bloodshed. "Five or six years ago, it was just an issue for the Palestinians, and now it's become a global issue. You can easily relate it to current events, like what's happening in Syria."

Khawaja and several of her Purdue peers discussed the issue and their feelings surrounding it directly following the documen-



Flag of the State of Palestine

tary. Their opinion regarding the Israeli government changed after the Gaza bombings in 2014, mostly due to how disproportionate they find the violence. "Look at how much destruction they've caused, with zero effect on them," Khawaja said. "If it's just a question of self-defense, why murder innocent people?"

A less serious and more interactive aspect of the conference was the workshop, held at 8 p.m. in Wampler Auditorium, where participants learned a style of Palestinian dance. Ahmed Haman, a guest speaker who travels the country, specifically to colleges and universities to inform students about the issues in Palestine, showed them a native dance known as dabke.

Haman grew up in a small village on the northeast side of the Gaza strip, and both he and his hometown have been affected by the destruction. The Israeli occupiers destroyed the trees in the village—the occupants' primary source of income. Haman says he and his fellow Palestinians became accustomed to the destruction, and they often became suspicious when the bombings temporarily stopped. "It was like the silence before a storm," Haman said. "If nothing happened for a while, we worried." In the midst of this chaos, however, the Palestinians find hope—through dabke. "We never stop dancing; never stop celebrating," Haman said. "If it's a wedding, it's everyone's wedding. Traditions have evolved, but we maintain a sense of being and resistance." Haman and his friend Hamza, who accompanies him to the workshops and seminars, agree: "They can kill us, burn our houses, but they can't

demolish our culture," Haman said.

For the dance, the 21 attendees were split up into seven groups of three. Hamza played a traditional instrument, similar to a flute, while the dancers lined up in a circular formation with their feet aligned to a line on the floor. The dance commenced in sequences such as: heel, stomp, stomp; left heel, left stomp, right stomp-stomp. "We're big on stomping," Haman said, then became serious. "Close your eyes and listen. How loud can we stomp before it blocks out the sound of the bombings?"

The individual groups separated once they learned the dance, and each did a different set. When put all together, it synchronized perfectly. Haman explained that this creates a sense of unity and togetherness; a "collective resistance." Attendees remained at the workshop until 9:30 that evening, or at least until their feet were tired of stomping.



## US Campaign for Palestinian Rights

# Seniors Can Pledge to Honor Environment

Ciara Knisely  
Staff Writer

Seniors can declare their dedication to social and environmental consciousness with the Graduation Pledge.

The Graduation Pledge of Social and Environmental Responsibility, drafted in 1987, reads in full: "I pledge to explore and take into account the social and environmental consequences of any job I consider and will try to improve these aspects of any organizations for which I work."

Manchester, home to the first peace studies program in the United States, began supporting the pledge a year after its drafting at Humboldt State University in California and later became the headquarters for the Graduation Pledge Alliance (GPA) from 1996 until 2007. It is now based at Bentley University in Massachusetts.

Sam Torgerson '16, current Peace Studies Coordinator, encourages students to partake in the pledge. Currently, he says, about 80 percent of graduates sign up. According to the GPA, the Graduation Pledge has spread to over 300 campuses around the world and is still growing.



Manchester University Peace House

The pledge encourages graduates to have concern for the world around them. "It's important that we think about the consequences of our jobs," Torgerson says. "Ideally, the pledge would push people to work in professions that help people, rather than those that profit from others oppression."

Torgerson believes that the best way to embrace the pledge after graduation is to be aware of direct and indirect consequences of any job. "Even if you are not actively hurting or oppressing people, working for an organization which does, even in a role that helps people, is a way of endorsing that oppression," he states.

The pledge is not a strict rule to follow, but rather a personal decision to uphold one's own morals. As the pledge doesn't go into specifics, it is up to everyone's personal interpretation of social and environmental responsibilities.

Torgerson also notes that the pledge is important economically. "It causes people to think about things other than how they might profit from it, like how it might affect other people," he explains. "Personally, this pledge means that we should place our values over profit. I feel that as a society we are much too focused on generating wealth, regardless of what this does to others."

Taking the values of this pledge into account, graduates may be motivated to incite improvements into jobs that may not be socially or environmentally healthy. "This pledge asks us to take a stand and do what is right, rather than what is profitable," Torgerson says.

The pledge also shows a commitment to both personal val-

ues and the values of MU's mission statement. "It's a conviction that I will take my principles seriously when choosing a job," Torgerson says. "It's a commitment to our values."

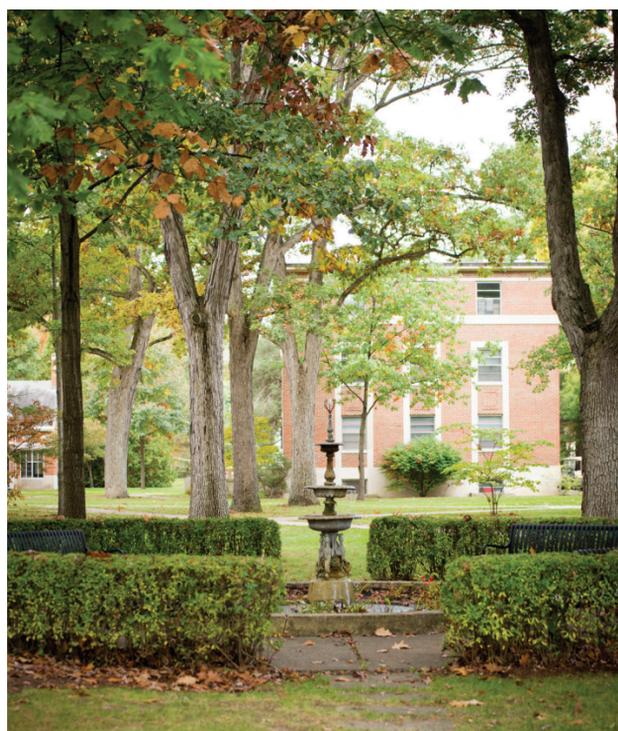
"I think it's relevant because it's important to improve the world we live in," says senior Shay Aator, who plans to sign the pledge. "We learn so much about how to take care of ourselves and the skills we need to be a good person, and I think going that extra step to better the world around us is important."

Senior Emily Wells agrees. "I think it's important to sign the pledge in order to make the world a better place for this generation and the next," she states.

"If even one person chooses to work in a way that protects people or our environment, then I think the pledge will have accomplished its mission," Torgerson says.

The pledge is voluntary, and those who choose to pledge will receive green ribbons to wear on their gowns during commencement.

Graduating seniors may sign up online at <https://www.manchester.edu/academics/graduation/graduation-2017/graduation-pledge>, at gown pickup in the Campus Store or at tables set up in the Academic Center and Science Center in the future.



Manchester University Fountain

## LETTER FROM JAPAN

**Haylee Parrish**  
Guest Writer

It has been two weeks since I left the United States on my first out-of-country experience to study abroad for my spring semester at Hokusei Gakuen University, a sister school of Manchester University's in Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan. Over the course of this time, I have become acquainted with several staff members and students of the university, settled into my classes and daily commuting routine, and had the opportunity to explore a handful of the city's sights. Although I have only been here for a short time, I hope that by sharing my experiences with the MU community, I can raise awareness about Hokusei's study abroad program, the city of Sapporo, and the benefits of studying abroad.

My first week in Sapporo, the other new "ryuugakusei," or international students, and I were given a tour of the campus by the continuing students and Japanese students. This included visits to the building we would attend our classes in, the gym, the library and the international center, the latter of which features the international office, international lounge and my

personal favorite, North Star Café Sarah, an international café where students can order hot food and beverages, including sandwiches, pasta, cocoa, coffee and more. It offers a positive environment for students to relax, eat, socialize and study.

However, what makes the café even more appealing is that it hosts International Times, where student workers host the café in their own native languages and students order using a piece of paper prepared with phrases in that language. It is a fun and creative way to get students exchanging language and learning more about their peers in the process.

Outside of the university, traveling around the city has been a huge learning experience for me, having lived in smaller towns and cities my entire life. Coming from rural Indiana to Sapporo, Japan, what struck me the most was just how alive and fast-paced it is. Trains and buses arrive to the minute. Waiting in the station for a bus to arrive, someone always rushes past who just barely manages to board before the doors snap shut and it departs.

Passing through Odori, the central part of the city where the

Tozai, Namboku, and Toho subway lines intersect and countless shopping centers rise off the map, one can find swarms of people filtering through the streets and standing on corners, waiting for the light to turn green to be able to cross. Visiting a bustling open-air mall, small shops sell foods such as crepes and savory "takoyaki," or octopus dumplings, to those passing through.

In the square in front of the TV tower, the occasional performer will entertain those who happened to drop by, such as when I had the fortune of watching a group of students performing all sorts of incredible jumps and flips to American pop music.

And if Odori is to be considered the heart of Sapporo, then the subway tunnels underneath the city, just as lively as its surface, could be considered the veins through which the people move through the vast city system. Having never particularly relied on public transportation before, I feel a rush of excitement whenever I walk down a set of stairs to get to the station and receive a huge blast of cool air whipping my hair around as I prepare to approach the ticket gate, or when the train takes off, dragging my body to the side, and

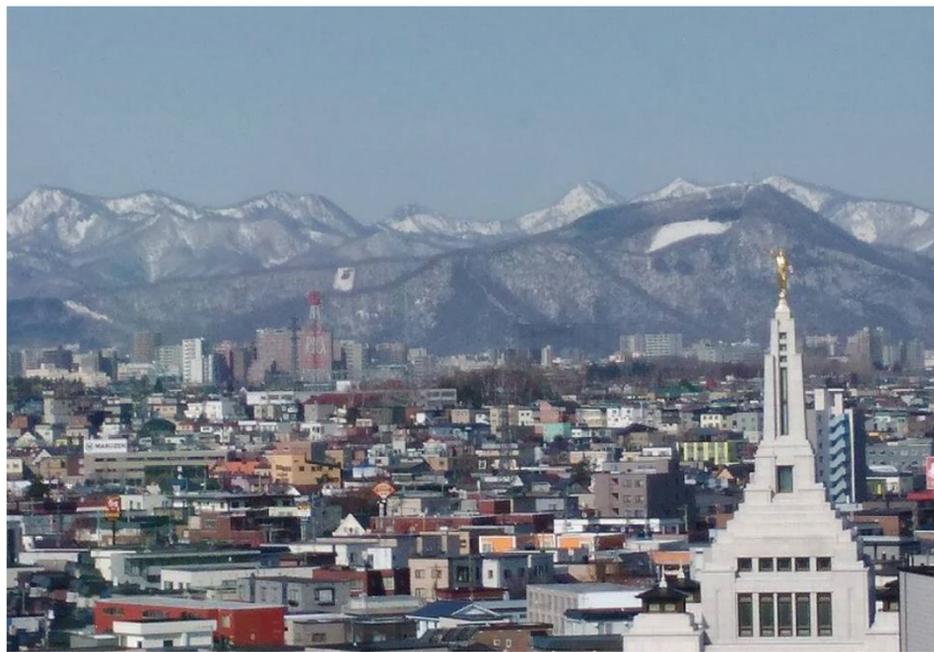


Photos Courtesy of Haylee Parrish

declares the station it is bound for. Sapporo's underground network also offers several shops and kiosks similar to those on the surface, some for convenience shopping, and some for those willing to pay more for fashionable clothing, ac-

cessories, or pop culture merchandise.

Whether at restaurants, hobby shops, or local landmarks, the city is home to many unique places for students to explore. Until next time, "mata ne!"



Oil painting by Leslee Bottorff

### SEE BOTTORFF, PAGE 2

Bottorff is very involved with the art department and is committed to her craft. "My classes I'm taking are arts and crafts with Professor Oke, which is amazing, and then I have figure drawing with Professor Diesburg, and art history with the amazing Dean Rohrer," she said. "Last semester I had a special problems class where I just did oil paintings, which are here in Winger and going in a student show. I had to petition for 21 hours last semester, and I have 19 this semester. I am a hard worker, but I don't have much reason not to be."

Bottorff's pieces were displayed throughout the first floor of the Wine Recital Hall lobby through to the entrance to Winger. The gallery began with a large wooden box that housed a brilliant collage. "This was from University of Tennessee woodworking class," Bottorff said. "Most art schools you do foundation, you do everything

performance, music, et cetera. So for this piece, we got behind in our syllabus and he combined woodworking with collage. So this collage is actually velvet on the outside so you don't see the collage, because I'm actually a very shy person."

The piece on the wall behind it was a huge painted version of the collage. "The collage is biographical, it could be anything I like, anything about me, but it had to all be from cut images," Leslee described. "I love the outside, the mountains, sailing, horses—so this turned into a really big thing. You could either do five small ones or one big one and I thought, 'I'm getting all my stuff out, I'm gonna do a big one.' I had not planned for anyone to see that collage, and now it's out there." In addition to self-portraits and collages, Bottorff displayed a number of nonrepresentational pieces as well.

One nonrepresentational, non-narrative piece won first

place at the student show at the University of Tennessee, an almost 100-year-old art show juried by artists in New York. A few of Bottorff's works were shown at the Eel River art show in the North Manchester community and made it into the Honeywell show, as well.

Though she enjoys her art classes, she is looking forward to the artistic freedom the future will bring. "I am looking forward to a time when I don't have a prompt, and then I can really paint. I prefer oil paint, and I hope to do more big landscapes because they're so buttery and recognizable, yet abstract. I want to do more work with children's art, because it's so free. I was encouraged as a child because my grandfather was an artist, my grandmother was a poet, my uncle was a professor of art, so we were always really encouraged and I love doing that for kids. Honestly, I don't know where I'm gonna end up when I grow up."



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Editors-in-Chief  
Sarah Farnam and Carly Kwiecien

Design Editor  
Jafet Garcia

Chief Photographer  
TBA

Web Editor  
Karen Kanyike

Faculty Advisor  
Dr. Katharine Ings

Staff Writers  
Brittany Dilley, Ciara Knisely,  
Destinee Boutwell, Jensen Lassiter,  
Kelleen Cullison, Maddie Jo Shultz,  
Shelby Harrell, Tanner Edge,  
Virginia Rendler

Delivery Manager  
Claire Mumma

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To contact the editors:  
[oakleaves@manchester.edu](mailto:oakleaves@manchester.edu)

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## REVIEW

**Destinee Boutwell**  
Staff Writer

Manchester University students brought new life to the 1940s British play “Blithe Spirit” on April 7-9. The haunting plot and ghostly cast were set in contrast to witty and humorous banter between the characters that kept the audience engaged and entertained.

The play was directed by Kira Hawkins with assistance from sophomore Hannah Wales. Wales has been a cast member in many plays before this including “Into the Woods” and “The Wizard of Oz,” but this year she decided to try working on a different side of the stage. “I was asked to help direct this play and I thought it would be interesting to get a look at a new side of theater,” she said. “It started off as a casual interest, but I began getting more involved with Kira and the cast and now it is a new passion. I loved being able to watch the production grow and evolve.”

Hawkins and Wales’ collaboration was a success because the play was fantastically casted, beautifully staged and creatively costumed. “The cast had a lot of energy and you could tell that they were passionate and thrilled to be part of the experience,” Wales said. “The hardest part of being assistant director was making sure things got done, but also trusting everyone to pull their weight. Luckily for me, I got to work with an especially talented, hardworking cast and a tireless director. I was very happy with how the play turned out.”

Not only did the cast memorize lines, remember stage positions and try to master costume changes, but they also had an added challenge of developing their British accents. “The cast did not have an accent coach,” Wales said. “The director was familiar with accents, so she gave them most of their direction and supplied the cast with a packet to make it a little easier. However, they did the majority of it themselves.”

The stage and the seating for the audience were intimately placed together on the stage of Cordier Auditorium. As the audience stood in line waiting to be

## ‘Blithe Spirit’ Succeeds with Acting, Costumes



**Kathy Hawkins and junior music major Clayton Marcum perform in “Blithe Spirit.”**

admitted, there was music from the 40s playing that helped to transport them to a time and place where technology and industry were growing and the end of World War II was looming.

The play began with a man named Charles, played by Clayton Marcum, talking to his second wife Ruth, played by Katie Doehrmann, about how his first wife died. This discussion soon turned into a debate about whether Charles loved his first wife more than he loved Ruth. As the play continued, it was revealed that Charles is writing a book that pokes fun at mediums and the dramatic ways by which they communicate with the spiritual realm.

Charles and Ruth invited their friends, Dr. Bradman (Nolan McBride) and his wife Violet (Katie Bowerman) over to participate in a

séance conducted by a quirky old medium, Madame Acarti, played by Kathy Hawkins.

“Blithe Spirit” was rife with striking and memorable appearances of characters. The first was when there was a knock on the door and the servant Edith, played by MacKenzie Weadick, answered it and no one was there. Then across the stage the patio doors crashed open and Madame Acarti stood there in a costume with a strikingly bold print and an aviator helmet concealing her face.

The next startling appearance occurred after the séance, when the ghost of Charles’s first wife, Elvira, arose from under the stage. Following the appearance of Elvira, played by Kenzie Hare, the crowd laughed as Marcum let out a bloodcurdling scream and threw his glass of brandy across the stage.

“My favorite part of the play was when the ghosts came out of the trap door,” said audience member Cally Miller. “This play would get a 10 out of 10 from me. The actors did a great job! It was really funny, and the costumes were really pretty.”

Elvira had a long silver dress with a grey wig. Her skin was painted a gray-white color and it was starkly contrasted by her burgundy lipstick. The costume gave eminence to her ghostly appearance. The rest of the cast had multiple outfits that were fashionable and fun and helped to illustrate the passage of time and formality of different situations.

As the play progressed, Charles and Ruth began to unearth a cruel plot that Elvira had been devising, but it was too late. Elvira wanted to kill Charles so that he

would be stuck with her in the after-life, but the plan goes awry and she kills Ruth instead. “I really liked that the play kept me on my toes the entire time,” said audience member Elizabeth Boettner. “I had no idea that both of his wives were going to die, which made it that much more intense when his second wife popped up as a ghost. The special effects were also really good.”

The presence of a medium and ghostly wives requires some fun and special effects. At the end of the play, Charles experienced the wrath of his wives because he sent them back to the afterlife. Books were falling off the shelves, as if an invisible hand had seized them and threw them across the room. There was a screen on set that also had an image of Elvira and Ruth as Charles yelled at them because they were finally banished.

## OPINION

**Kelleen Cullison**  
Staff Writer

A Conservative, Libertarian and a Liberal reporter sit down in a cafe. People lean in to listen as they catch snippets of conversation. Terminology and discrepancies get thrown around, but never unkindly. They part amiably enough for their first meeting, both visibly relieved to have talked to someone about politics without it turning into a death match. The interview went better than either of them had expected.

The current political climate is making the already touchy subject of politics even harder to bring to the conversation, and that’s for those who dare to have the conversation at all.

Out of the five conservative leaning students I attempted to contact, senior Nick Johnston, the aforementioned Conservative Libertarian, was the only one to follow through with an interview.

“This school’s mentality is very liberal leaning,” Johnston said. “Most conservatives here don’t want to talk about it (the election) out of fear of being ostracized socially. There’s this whole mentality that if you’re a conservative then you’re a racist, bigot, homophobic, sexist, which is not true at all. I don’t support Trump. I support and respect the title and office that he holds.”

Johnston came to the interview prepared, and easily transitioned between difficult topics like political campaign strategy, identity politics and Trump’s shaky political past. While Johnston explained his

## Students Discuss Political Ideologies

optimism about having a “non-political” president, during the campaign, he said he supported the Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson.

He explained the concept of Libertarian as “fiscally conservative but socially liberal,” which originally gave me a sense of common ground between the two of us. However, by the end of the interview, I realized Johnston and I had an entirely different idea of what it means to be socially liberal, although he did say that as a “conservative libertarian” there were some issues that he leaned conservatively on. Over the course of our interview, Johnston expressed his skepticism on issues such as privilege and inequality, as well as his views on some of Trump’s controversial comments in regard to these issues.

“Just because someone says something, that doesn’t mean that they believe it,” he said. “There is a clear difference between someone who says something racist and someone who is a racist. For example, rap songs or people on TV can turn around and say racial slurs. Both sides (of the political spectrum do) and it’s still a racial slur, but it’s not construed as racist. I believe in freedom of speech as long as it doesn’t incite violence. People have the right to have their opinions. Do I have to agree with those opinions? No, absolutely not.”

Racism is a prejudice, discrimination and antagonism toward a people of a different race based on the belief that race is inferior, and while I, nor anyone else, seems to be able to confirm what Donald Trump believes, his comments do incite antagonism toward those of races other than Cauca-

sian.

“My mother, sister and I are females of color, and there has been so much fear of, ‘What’s Trump going to do next? How might his actions affect me?’” said first-year Chelsea Glenn. “I’ve heard people argue for Trump that he isn’t a racist, but just because you hang out with people of color doesn’t mean you aren’t a racist.”

Throughout his campaign, Trump used antagonistic comments to gain traction for his platform, such as generalizing Mexican immigrants as “rapists” who are “bringing crime and drugs” to the United States in his speech justifying his plan for a U.S.-Mexican Border Wall.

“Both of my parents and most of my family are immigrants in the United States,” said senior psychology major Miriam Cruz. “On the night of the election, I called my brother and we both just cried. I felt horrible because he goes to a large conservative school, and he’s an RA there, and many of his residents are Trump supporters. He told me that at school he felt like he had to walk with his head down because he felt like people were judging him.”

Cruz even thinks that her future has shifted since the election. “With Trump’s promotion of how we are viewed, am I even going to be able to find a job?” she asked. “How do I protect my family from here at school? I had wanted to go to grad school right after graduation, but now I’m taking the year off so that I can really work and be at home to help out more.”

Johnston’s reaction to Trump’s election, however, was different. “I’m not a fan of Trump

but I’m not afraid of him either,” he said.

The polarizing reactions generated by Trump, as indicated both on MU’s campus and in society in general seem to depend on whether he is considered a threat: there are those who feel they or their families are personally endangered, and others who have the privilege of feeling largely unaffected by his presidency. Is this feeling of safety experienced by some also a way to shift off responsibility? Does the privilege of race and gender enable white men, for instance, of simplifying the issues that come with Trump because they are unaffected personally by him?

Lyell Asher, assistant English professor at Lewis and Clark College, thinks it is. “Feeling offended implies an offense, and where there is an offense, there must be a culprit guilty of having committed it,” wrote Asher in “Your Students Crave Moral Simplicity. Resist,” which was featured in the Chronicle Review. In it, Asher notes that students today tend to simplify politics and social situations in their already stress-laden lives.

This ability to turn a blind eye works in tandem with echo chambers of news. An idea such as “white conservatives have been targeted” since Trump’s election supports this clamoring denial. A statistic such as “the Southern Poverty Law Center noted 27 incidents directed at Trump supporters,” as reported by CBS News, becomes enough to support a preexisting notion. Never mind that this follows the statement, “The Southern Poverty Law Center notes that in the nearly two weeks since Election Day, there have been more than

700 reports of hate crimes across the country—vandalism, physical and verbal assaults, harassment and destruction of property, directed against Muslims, African Americans, Asians, immigrants, women and gays.”

It could be that young conservatives simply aren’t reading these other headlines. While I found articles reporting evidence of increased hate crimes against minorities in the weeks since the election on CBS, the Chicago Tribune, and Vox websites, when I searched ‘Hate Crimes’ on the Fox News website, headlines such as “Evidence of Rising Anti-Semitism, But Data Mostly Elusive” and “Growing List of Post-Election Hate Crimes Turn Out to be Hoaxes” popped up instead.

In a time that is so politically polarized, many students who are just entering the political sphere are desperate for easy answers. It’s a result of “the phobia of frustration in a capitalist culture; a manic tendency to direct out states of uncertainty—to an immediate source of satisfaction,” Asher wrote.

We as students must do in-depth research before we form our opinions. Those in a position of power must no longer settle for half-truths, or belittle and turn a blind eye to the fears of minorities simply because it makes us uncomfortable. Those who are affected must be willing to have conversations with people who disagree with them, and attempt to understand others’ opinions in order to shed light on their own. Politics are complex. Simplicity has no place in them.



# SPARTAN SPORTS

## Baseball Boys Bond; Look Toward Tournament



Junior Eric Knepper high-fives teammate. The players believe that their team bonding has made them stronger players.

**Tanner Edge**  
Staff Writer

Although Spring Semester is winding down, the Manchester University baseball team is still rounding the bases.

One important aspect of the team's dynamic is the relationship between upper and lower classmen. "The most memorable thing is being a part of the team in general," said first year Nick Rush in an email. "Making new friends

and hearing about where they came from, what they have done in the past, and hearing the older guys' stories from other seasons is something I won't forget. Hanging out with them during downtime created memories that I'll remember over playing in games with them. It has impacted the season because we've gotten closer as a team that I believe that helped us be better on the field."

Team bonding helps strengthen the team and allows them to be cohesive. "Hanging out

with the team on road trips is what [is] most memorable for me," said first year Joe Gallatin in an email. "It helps the team bond and brings us together."

The first year students are still attempting to develop their sense of belonging on the team. "The season started off slower than we expected," Rush said. "We have progressively got-ten better. Our hitting came around, which helped give us more wins."

Another key team activity is goal-building. Most teams lay out

goals and expectations for the season, but allowing personal goals to overlap strengthens the core of the team's values. "I hope for nothing less than a conference championship," Rush said. "For next season, I personally plan to get quicker, faster and stronger. I also want to increase my baseball IQ, so I've been listening to upperclassmen about how they play and adapting it to my style if it helps me."

Gallatin agreed. "One team goal is making the conference tournament and winning it," he

said. "That goes hand-in-hand with my goals. Having fun is always a goal, too, but having fun while winning is much better."

Next year, new players will be added to the roster and team cohesion will play another large part in the team success. "Advice I'd give to incoming freshmen is to just have fun and try as hard as you can," Rush said. "Whether it be on the field or in the classroom, doing everything you can to succeed will always help you, no matter how hard it may be at the time."

## Softball Captain has High Hopes for Team

**Shelby Harrell**  
Staff Writer

Before the final pitch of Thursday evening's game, the Manchester University women's softball team knew that they had secured a win that could signal the end of a long losing streak that has been plaguing them lately.

Regarding their recent losses, team captain and pitcher Mallorie Jennings remarked that the team is currently going through a "rough patch" of sorts. "We are getting hits and even out hitting other teams, but we can't seem to string out hits together to put up runs," Jennings said. "However, we won our last two conference games so that should give us momentum for the upcoming games."

As a junior, Jennings has taken the time necessary to develop into a leadership role within her teammates. "Last season I was an underclassman and still trying to find my role on the team," Jennings said. "This year has been an adjustment because I am now an upperclassman and I have found more of a leadership role on the team."

In addition to providing her with the opportunity to grow as a softball player, Jennings feels that being the team captain has taught her a great deal in the way of encouraging communication and support among teammates. "I think throughout the season our team has grown closer as a unit," Jennings said. "We are very supportive of each other but also hold each other accountable."

Indeed, her desire to lead the team in their season-long quest for victory became apparent during fall 2015 when she took a class on team leadership. However, as is the case

most of the time, the majority of her learning took place outside of the classroom. "Being a captain this year has taught me so much this year," Jennings said, "so far as how to communicate with my teammates and support them while still being the leader they need."

Their perhaps unfortunate beginning of their season is exhibited by the team's currently low rankings among the member schools of the Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference, with their current record being 8-8. "Currently we are ranked toward the bottom of the HCAC due to our rocky start in conference play," Jennings remarked with a twinkle of hope in her eye and a voice filled with resolve. "However, with our bats coming alive, there is no reason why we will not move up in the rankings."

Indeed, things do seem to be looking up for the Spartans softball team. As the tides turn, the team is hopeful that they will continue to add to their set of wins as they travel to Hanover College to play this weekend. "Honestly, all the teams in our conference are very competitive with each other," Jennings said, "but if we play to the level we are capable of, we can compete with any team."

The women on the team are held in high regard, as they endure a detailed amount of physical and mental training each day before a game. From hitting balls that fly at them at extremely high speeds, to making the exchange between bases seem as quick and effortless as possible, to routinely performing a series of warm up drills that will enable them to build speed, strength, and efficiency, the Manchester



Softball team celebrates in a huddle. On Tuesday, the Spartans beat MIAA leaders, Hope College 4-3.

University women's softball team embodies the definition of patience and determination. In addition to a demanding regimen and physical preparation, the coaches also provide the athletes with methods of mentally and strategically preparation. "Our coaches do a great job

of preparing us for our upcoming games," Jennings said. "They provide us with scouting reports and we will do different drills at practice to show us what we will need to be ready for."

As the team captain, Jennings remains hopeful that the

women's season culminates in the winning of the HCAC tournament. "We will continue to work hard at practice to prepare for the games that we have left to play," Jennings said.