

*The Independent Voice of  
the University of  
Tennessee at Martin*

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Commencement is on  
Saturday, Dec. 14 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.  
at the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center

Finals week is next week!  
(Dec. 9-13)

Course evaluations are due on  
Friday, Dec. 6.

Student Recreation Center  
Hours of Operation

Sunday, Dec. 8 (1 p.m. - 5 p.m.)  
Monday, Dec. 9 - Friday, Dec. 13 (8 a.m. - 8 p.m.)  
Saturday, Dec. 14 (Closed)

The FAFSA for the 2025-2026  
school year is now open!

*Pacer graphic / Mekenzie Coleman*

## Senior farewell – Mekenzie Coleman

Before I transferred to UT Martin, I had no idea that this would be where I find my passion and blossom into the woman I am today. I had always been a shy kid who did her work and stayed to herself. And even though I had been working hard academically, I wasn't completely aware of what I was working towards.

One year, I wanted to be an interior designer and the next, a biomedical engineer. I thought I got somewhere with software engineering but ultimately decided against majoring in computer science altogether. The cycle repeated, and I carried this sense of uncertainty with me until I got here. When I got here, suddenly everything became clear.

Words cannot describe how grateful I am to all of my Mass Media and Strategic Communication professors for not only teaching me everything I know, but for also helping me carry out my newfound purpose. I couldn't have chosen a better program or people to surround myself with. Shout out to my group of girlfriends and my very own William Dent!

My first experience feeling genuinely close to my major was the moment I sat down at the big conference table in the Reading Room with Ms. Tomi and the rest of *The Pacer* staff. I didn't know most of the people in the room at the time, but the vibrant energy and warmth I felt from them is what eventually made them family to me. Thanks to the Organization Fair, I found a home among some of the



Photo credit / Rodney Freed

smartest, most passionate individuals.

*The Pacer* has instilled in me a multitude of rules that I will hold myself to for the rest of my life. When given the opportunity to do something new, I found that it is more beneficial to search for value rather than focusing on how daunting the task ahead would be. I've learned to stop underestimating myself and decided to step out of my own way.

My two experiences at the Southeast Journalism Conference have restored my confidence in my design work and what I know about media tremendously, and I appreciate Ms. Tomi and my

friend Sarah Cornwell for pushing me. On top of this, I feel blessed to have had the chance to be *The Pacer's* executive editor this semester, and I'd like to thank many members of the staff for their support as I wrap up my time here. I couldn't have done any of this without my team.

I'd also like to extend a special thanks to Dr. Tracy Rutledge, my professor and advisor, who's been an enormous help in getting me to this point. She's made the planning process of entering a new major to graduating this fall fairly simple. I've learned so much in her media design courses, and I can't wait to utilize the tools that she and my other professors have given me over the past two years.

I like to believe that my inner child is smiling at me. I can't say that my younger self saw any of this coming, but I think she'd be proud of how I navigated my time here. I chose a path that satisfies her thirst for creativity. Oddly enough, it took me years to realize that all of the fun things I did as a child were actually mini-media design projects. I'm relieved that I can finally put a name to it.

As this era comes to an end, I can't help but reflect on all of the memories I've made here at UT Martin. College has been such an enlightening experience, and I'd say every peak and valley was worth it. Parting is bittersweet, but I'm optimistic about God's plan for my future. Thank you all. Until we meet again.



### Editorial Staff Fall 2024

**Executive Editor**  
Mekenzie Coleman

**Operations Manager**  
Sarah Tyler

**Design Editor**

**& Assistant Operations Manager**

Clarissa Spitzley

**Web Editor**

Jeff Ledington

**Co-News & Features Editors**

Kate Pilcher & Marques Rice

**Arts & Entertainment Editor**

J.J. Somerville

**Co-Sports Editors**

Connor Butts & Nate Szarzynski

**Assistant Sports Editor**

Chyler Lee

**Co-Viewpoints Editors**

Trenton Michon & Bethany Collins

**Chief Photographer**

Erika O'Brien

**Videographer &**

**Social Media Manager**

Aubrey Abbott

**Photographers**

Adrianná Carter & Miranda Conrad

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Tamera Harden, Kristin Henning,

Chloe Kent, Peyton McDaniel,

Darby Self, Ashlyn Sims, William

Stevens, Ethan Tanner, Ryleigh

Ulen, Catie Whitson, Keenan Wilson

**Student Publications Supervisor**

Tomi McCutchen

**Staff Assistant**

Sarah Cornwell

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# Senior farewell – Sarah Tyler

Finally getting to a point in my collegiate career where I am able to write this is strange and sad, to say the least. The 2021 version of myself would have never imagined the amount of growth that has transformed the once shy and anxious girl in the past three and a half years at college. I'm sad that it's almost over, but so happy that I have had this opportunity to be a part of *The Pacer* for the past two years.

My start with *The Pacer* was nothing short of interesting. I remember Jordan Stringfield, one of my lifelong friends who has been with me every step of the way, asking me if I wanted to fill the position of Sports Editor in early December 2022 (thank you for doing this, Jo).

I thought to myself that I had no business being in this position, as I had not much prior experience in journalism. I mean, my major is Agricultural Business after all. Sure, I'm an avid lover of sports but I didn't think that qualified me for the position. Nevertheless, I sent an email to Ms. Tomi, who was naturally warm, welcoming and enthusiastic toward my passion for the job. She encouraged me to come to a meeting, and I've immersed myself wholly ever since.

Ms. Tomi never doubted me.

After a few months in the Sports Editor position, I was able to become the Operations Manager under Sarah Cornwell's guidance and the now executive editor, Mekenzie Coleman. I am grateful to have gotten to work with both of these brilliant and talented minds. This position has been nothing short of wonderful, and I feel blessed to have it. I have learned so much invaluable information from my short tenure at *The Pacer*. I know that wherever my career takes me in the near future, the skills that I have gained the past two years will help me tremendously.

I want to say a special thank you to the previous executive editor when I was hired, Kaylee Michon, for taking a chance on me and allowing me the opportunity to work on the team. Thank you for extending patience as I grew within *The Pacer*. The same is also to be said for Ms. Tomi. I had not a clue what I was doing at first, so thank you for letting me figure out some of my talents and showcasing them.

Of course, I have to dedicate a section to Ms. Tomi McCutchen. This woman is a superstar, a jack of all trades. To know her is to love her. She



has taught me most of what I know about journalism and editing simply because I didn't have any of those classes in college. Thank you, Ms. Tomi, for everything that you have done and continue to do for me. I am indebted to you. You are a true inspiration and I am going to miss seeing your smiling face around campus.

Lastly, I want to thank all of the current staff for such a wonderful last

semester! You all have worked so hard, and I commend you for that. Keep being great and shine bright.

I feel like it wouldn't be my own true farewell without putting some type of Taylor Swift lyric/song in here, whether it be cryptic or in plain sight. So: "There were pages turned with the bridges burned / Everything you lose is a step you take / So make the friendship bracelets, take the moment and taste it / You've got no reason to be afraid / You're on your own, kid / Yeah, you can face this / You're on your own, kid / You always have been."

For my ending, I want to leave you with a quote that has stuck with me in my head through trials and tribulations since my sophomore year of high school: "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." – Theodore Roosevelt.

It reminds me to live in the moment; I don't always have to be looking for the better option. I hope it helps you, reader, to remember to cherish the things around you because after all, that's what really matters in life.

The scary news is, you're on your own now. But the cool news is, you're on your own now.

**Looking for some holiday fun?**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>2024 Holiday Art Bazaar</b></p> <p><b>December 5th-7th</b></p> <p>Thursday, Dec. 5th, 5- 8p.m.<br/>Friday, Dec. 6th, 11a.m.- 7p.m.<br/>Saturday, Dec. 7th, 10a.m.- 4p.m.</p> <p>UT Martin Fine Arts<br/>Building Gallery</p> | <p><b>40th Annual Santa's Village</b></p> <p><b>December 12th-15th</b></p> <p>Thursday, Dec. 12th, 6-9p.m.<br/>Friday, Dec. 13th, 6-9p.m.<br/>Saturday, Dec. 14th, 11a.m.-9p.m.<br/>Sunday, Dec. 15, 1-5p.m.</p> <p>UT Martin's Ned Mcwherter<br/>Ag Pavilion</p> |
|--|---|

Pacer Graphic/ Aubrey Abbott

**PAUL MEEK LIBRARY  
BOOK TREE DECORATING  
CONTEST  
DECEMBER 5, 2024  
2 - 5 P.M.**

Pacer graphic / Chloe Kent

# Senior farewell – Erika O'Brien

To say that I am nowhere near where I started my freshman year feels like an understatement. I started during COVID; it was crazy because I had never been away from home and it was insane and lonely. I was in contact with the girl that was supposed to be my roommate, then next thing I know she moved out right as college started.

I was alone, it was crazy and I didn't know how to go about it. I came here with the idea of becoming a veterinarian, but with everything going on I got very lonely and unmotivated. It felt like a struggle to do anything, that's when I realized that being a vet wasn't for me.

So, there I was, I didn't know what I wanted to do or where to go. I played around with a bunch of different ideas, looked into nursing then changed my major to special education. I changed again after talking to someone in that department and finding out that wasn't going to fit me too well either. It became harder when I had double knee surgery the summer between my freshman and sophomore year.

Sophomore year was very difficult. I struggled to walk around campus so much after my surgery. Towards the end of the fall semester that year I decided to try something new that always interested me. I changed my major to Civil Engineering. This was probably the hardest thing I ever did and it ended up not lasting very long because trigonometry was not something I could do. During the spring semester of my sophomore year, I took on way too much by changing my major, getting my first on-campus job in Human Resources, and even joining the ROTC program on campus.



Photo credit / Nathan Morgan

This semester was the only one that all of this lasted for. I realized I am not very good with numbers, my knees would never recover enough to be able to join the military and an everyday desk job would drive me crazy. So I sat there, not sure what to do or where to go ... again. Thankfully I had two months to think about it. I talked to my family and my dad said to get a business degree, it was simple and would be good for many different things. So that's what I did, however I still remained stressed all the time.

When I realized I needed something to help with the stress, I picked up photography after my sister reminded me that not only was I good at it but I also received great joy when I could capture sweet moments. About two weeks before the fall semester of what was supposed to start my junior year, I had changed my major

to Business Management, which put me behind a semester, and I started taking photography classes which helped me find a new student position at the athletic department as the student photographer. After this, I was recruited into *The Pacer* where I met so many amazing people that made me feel so comfortable in my own skin.

This was somewhere I finally felt like I belonged. It felt like I had another family and they supported me in my passion, which I didn't know I had. When Ms. Tomi recruited me from the athletic department, it became one of the best choices I have ever made.

Now, here I am, in my senior year, and I am the chief photographer, which is crazy! This job helped me find my career and passion, which led me to join University Relations as a student photographer under one of my biggest role models, Nathan Morgan.

This helped me find my dream of starting my own photography business which is something I am going to focus more on after I graduate. Now, I am photographing my last couple of games and watching all my friends do their own things, becoming bigger and better people. The years of struggling finally paid off.

I have a lot of people to thank but I want to start with Nathan Morgan. He's the reason I am where I am with photography and why I get to do what I love all the time. In a very short time he became a huge part of my life, becoming my mentor and helping me learn so many things with photography and even showing me how to become more patient.

Jenny Killebrew over in business, she's been like my rock. Anytime I had

an issue or was sad about something, she'd let me just sit and talk and cry in her office until I felt a little bit better. During some of the hardest times I had throughout college, she sat there and listened and gave me advice and helped find answers to questions I didn't know I had.

I want to thank Andy Kissar, my good friend, for getting me a summer job at the recycling center going into my last semester and being a huge emotional support. Andy has shown me how strong willed I am and how it can be truly beneficial. He has also helped me realize how greatly appreciated I am in ways I never thought possible which helped grow my confidence.

I also want to thank Ms. Tomi for believing in me and always pushing me and even reminding me to slow down every now and then so that I can make a bigger impact in the long run. I have so many other people to thank, but I want to make sure to thank Bethany for helping me write this, getting my thoughts down when I can't and for being such a good friend.

Finally, I want to thank Mrs. Rafielle Freeman. She became a huge supporter of mine after the very first time I met her and continued to rave about me. The more I got to know her the more amazing she became! Having such a kind person in my corner is something I couldn't be more thankful for.

I had a long and difficult journey but such an amazing journey and everyone deserves to find their home like I did with *The Pacer*. I wouldn't change a thing that's happened to me because if I did then I wouldn't have made all of the friends and connections that I have these past few years.

**Final exam  
cookie cram!**

Pacer graphic / Trenton Michon

**Dec. 11, 5-7 p.m.**

**UC 2nd floor**

## Senior farewell – Jordan Stringfield

I have spent almost three years of my life on *The Pacer* staff, and I would not change a single second. This newspaper organization has given me a family, healed my heart and taught me more about journalism than I ever imagined.

To be completely honest, I started at UT Martin with an entirely different major than I have now. It took a year of college to find that I wanted to study Agriculture Business-Communications. When I realized this was the path for the rest of my life, I stopped at nothing to learn all I could about the communications industry. That point of my life, still a little scared and confused but ready to take on the challenges I would face, is where *The Pacer* comes in.

I remember sitting in one of my classes, looking through the newspaper website, trying to build up the courage to email Ms. Tomi about any open staff positions within *The Pacer*. To my surprise, she emailed back almost immediately, and the rest is history.

What I failed to realize at that point was that my life was about to change for the better. Over the next three years with this staff, I gained a community and a family. My debts to them and the support they provide could never be fully repaid.

Seeing that this is technically a “farewell,” it is only fitting that I extend a few thanks to those who have given me the support of a lifetime. First, and most importantly, I want to thank Ms. Tomi McCutchen. She put all her faith in me from day one and never doubted me for a second. As an adviser, lecturer, mentor and friend, she truly changed my life. She never fails to put her students’ needs above her own and I will always admire her for all she does. Ms. Tomi, thank you for quite literally all you have done for me. I hope one day I can be half the woman that you are. If I am, I know that I will have done something right. You have been such an inspiration and light in my life.

Secondly, I want to extend a special “thank you” to Sarah Cornwell, my girl, my go-to and someone who will always tell me how it is. Our friendship came from our time spent on this staff and I will forever cherish that. From our time stressing in the one-too-many marketing classes we decided to squeeze in a semester to our late-night talks about life (where too much delusion entered the conversation), I appreciate you from the bottom of my heart. You have become a sister more than a friend.



Lastly, I want to thank all the people that I have served with on this staff. Each person brings a different story and perspective to the table, and I have never felt more at home than I have with this staff. I have encountered so many laughs, tears and beautiful moments that kept me going at times I felt so down. This was an unexpected, yet life-changing family I gained. I could never fully express my gratitude

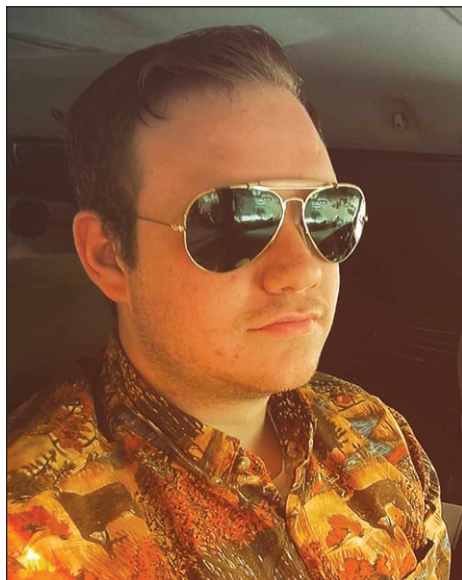
for all the people on this staff that helped make me who I am.

Just to mention a few — Sarah T., thank you for being by my side since Pre-K. I have loved growing up and figuring out life alongside you. You have known me in all the pivotal and monumental phases of life. I could not have made it through so many trials of life without you. I love you so dearly!

J.J., you never fail to light up a room. Thank you for being the laugh and support I need on a tough day. Our friendship has been so fulfilling to me and I will always be right by you with all the support in the world.

Meke, I am just so proud to know you. We started this journey the same year and I have loved watching you blossom into not only our Executive Editor, but a creative and unique professional that I know will move mountains in this industry.

As much as I thought undergrad felt like a lifetime, it was over in the blink of an eye. As I reflect on this precious time of my life, I am filled with a sense of belonging and nostalgia. These four years at UT Martin and three with *The Pacer* have taught me how to truly be myself. Thank you for such a beautiful time and wild ride, UT Martin.



## Senior farewell – Jeffery Ledington

I was nervous when I joined *The Pacer*. I was going back to school after several years to finally finish undergrad. I thought joining would help me stay connected with the school and give me a reason to go to campus even though my classes were all online. Would it be weird that this guy with greying hair was working with a bunch of kids a decade or more his junior?

I’m happy to say I enjoyed my work here. In fact, I regret I wasn’t always able to be more active in the paper; often having to deal with my day job, classes, leaky roofs and unexpected

travel first. I didn’t expect to be asked to take on the role of website editor, a position I was able to handle well from my home and one I was well equipped for from my career.

I’m very proud of the work the staff produced during my time here. I was often inspired by the zeal displayed in staff meetings, both concerning major issues and personal passions. It’s heartening to be around young people who give a damn. Good journalism isn’t easy, but under the steadfast guidance of the *The Pacer’s* wonderful adviser, Tomi McCutchen, the staff has

put together quality issues and online stories they should be most proud of. I’m confident *The Pacer* will continue to be excellent. I have no doubt the many talented people I’ve gotten to know here will go on to greater heights.

I would like to thank UT Martin for making finishing school far more painless than I’d have imagined and Ms. Tomi, my advisor Melanie Morris and Dr. Angie Glunz for their assistance with grad school applications. I’d also like to thank the staff for keeping me young just a bit longer.

# The timeless magic of Christmas songs

Bethany Collins /  
Co-Viewpoints Editor

To some people, it's the bane of their existence and, to others, it's the best thing ever.

The history of Christmas songs goes back over 100 years, with songs such as *Silent Night*, *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*, *Jingle Bells* and *Joy To The World*. These classic songs were the beginning of what would soon become a major point in the history of Christmas.

You cannot go anywhere without hearing the jolly tunes of Christmas songs, and personally, I love it. It shows that we have made it through another year and reminds me of the fun memories that have come over the years from spending the holiday with my family and the festivities that come with it.

You have songs like *Jingle Bell Rock*, *Last Christmas*, *Sleigh Ride* and my personal favorite, *It's The Most Wonderful Time of Year*.

These are songs that are passed on from generation to generation and cover a million different artists.

I think that people connect so much with the Christmas songs and just the holiday in general because it brings us all back to a simpler time. We all remember being young with no cares and enjoying the cold weather, the smell of cookies and colorful movies being played.

But, if you put nostalgia aside, festive music plays a major role in our culture. It's fascinating how these songs, many of which were written decades, or even centuries ago, still resonate with us today. They've become cultural touchstones, connecting us across time and the globe.

Whether you're in a small town in the Midwest, a bustling city in Europe or a



Pacer Graphic / Bethany Collins

tropical beach in Australia, Christmas songs are a universal language that brings people together, no matter their background or traditions.

The Christmas season, filled with timeless songs, creates a shared experience that crosses geographical and cultural boundaries. A prime example is how Christmas music is done in different countries. The specifics of the song may change but the overall spirit is the same.

In the U.K., people might sing *Do They Know It's Christmas?* or *Fairytale of New York*, while in Germany, you'll hear *O Tannenbaum* and *Stille Nacht*.

It seems that no matter the language or style, there is a commonality of warmth and joy that brings all these songs together. It shows that the power of music can really bring people together and bridge divides.

These songs have such power, that even in places where Christmas isn't widely celebrated, you'll find it still plays a role.

In parts of the world where Christianity isn't very predominant, even though there are many people now who celebrate Christmas for the memories instead of because of Christ,

Christmas music is still a part of the celebration for the winter season. This has been adopted as a way of sharing in the global festivities because who doesn't love a catchy tune with bells and sentimental lyrics?

This widespread influence speaks to the universal appeal of the season's songs — songs that surpass the boundaries of religion, culture and even geography. They evoke feelings of peace, goodwill and togetherness, values that resonate with people everywhere.

At the heart of it all is a sense of tradition. Many families have their own playlists or records that have been passed down through generations and reflect the unique experiences and memories that are at the core of the human spirit. Usually, these include songs that may not have been a big radio hit but hold sentimental value from years before.

I know that for many people, Christmas music is woven into the fabric of their holiday rituals. My mom and I always listen to the *Alvin and the Chipmunks Christmas album* while decorating our house because that's what she would listen to while decorating with my memaw and uncles when she was younger.

These songs become part of the rhythm of our celebrations — echoing in the background as we bake cookies, decorate the tree or enjoy a meal with loved ones.

For me, Christmas music brings back fun memories that I have with my family. From the gag gifts that my mom plays on my cousins to the video I have of "Santa" dancing in my house when I was five and me refusing to get up and see him, family means everything to me. It's one of the few times now that I get to see most of my family. It also has a special meaning to me as a Christian

because it represents the birth of Jesus. So the more traditional songs also have a deep impact on me.

There has to be something about how year after year, we can still find comfort in these familiar songs. As much as the world around us changes, economies fluctuate, cultures evolve and technology advances, the Christmas songs we love remind us that some things remain constant.

The joy of the season, the comfort of tradition and the love of family and friends stay the same, year after year. In a world that often feels unpredictable, Christmas music offers a kind of stability, a sense of continuity that helps us feel grounded.

For those who dread the coming of Christmas songs, I can understand. Not everyone had a good experience with Christmas while growing up or something has happened to make them resent the holiday. I do feel as though they should try to find something with the holiday that brings them joy. Make your own memories and see why people truly love this time of year.

Christmas music is a reflection of the season in of itself. It's a time of giving, celebration and hope. From sacred hymns that remind us of the true meaning of Christmas or the high notes from Mariah Carey, the music of this wonderful time serves as a reminder of our shared experiences. It's a reminder that no matter our differences, the human race can come together to celebrate this time of year. As long as the songs continue to be played, they will continue to remind us of the love, joy and wonder that fills the cold air of this magical season.

From my family to yours, I hope every Skyhawk has the best and most blessed season. You did it, so be sure to rest and get ready for spring.

The Pacer wishes everyone a joyous holiday season!

# Senior spotlight: Alex Nelson

Marques Rice / Co-News and Features Editor

Alex Nelson is a senior Political Science major with a minor in Criminal Justice from Memphis, Tennessee.

He has aspirations of sitting in the Senate for the state of Tennessee, along with being the speaker of the house at some point during his professional career. He is also active on campus in organizations such as Alpha Kappa Psi Professional Business Fraternity, Inc. (AKPsi), Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. (PBS) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Throughout Nelson's UT Martin career, he found himself receiving many opportunities to travel to different conferences and leadership meetings.

Nelson said, "I've had the privilege of attending both the 54th and 55th Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature conventions. Additionally, I was fortunate enough to be flown to Washington, D.C., to attend the Congressional Black Caucus as part of a fraternity event."

Nelson reflected on these experiences speaking to the different people who he has had the privilege of speaking to along with being able to build connections outside UT Martin.

"My favorite memory from attending



the Tennessee collegiate legislator program was the opportunity to meet like-minded students from across the state of Tennessee," Nelson said.

"We explored our shared passion for the lawmaking process. Attending the Congressional Black Caucus forum in Washington, D.C., allowed me the opportunity to meet congresswomen, Jasmine Crockett and Rashida Talib.

"It also allowed me to network with other members of Phi Beta Sigma

Fraternity Inc," he added.

During his undergraduate journey, Nelson joined many different organizations to better familiarize himself with different aspects of life, along with building communities with people he may have never spoken to outside of it.

Nelson said, "Alpha Kappa Psi has equipped me for my professional life beyond college by imparting essential interview etiquette and resumé writing skills. Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. has molded me into a compassionate individual who not only gives back to my community but also aspires to be a leader within it."

Nelson also built many connections with fellow UT Martin students who helped him deal with the everyday struggles that come with college. He discussed the stress that he sometimes experiences when he has overextended himself, and described the inspirations he has found on campus that help him strive to do better in different areas of his life.

"My biggest inspirations have been my fraternity brothers of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., and our sisters of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. These individuals have helped me find a sense of belonging here at UT Martin, and have supported me through hard times. I would like to give a special shoutout to

Jaden Jones and Regina Johnson. Both of these individuals have motivated me to keep going even when times have gotten hard," Nelson said.

Nelson also talked about the UT Martin faculty who have helped him throughout his UT Martin journey.

"My academic advisor, Dr. Christopher Baxter, has continuously supported me throughout my academic career here at UT Martin by providing the best advice on how to approach certain classes and has always pushed me to excel in the field of political science," Nelson said.

As Nelson begins preparations for his final semester, he has begun to start listing his post-graduation plans.

"Once I graduate in the spring, I hope to attend graduate school to continue my education in the field of political science, to obtain my master's in Public Administration. ...

"So far, I have put in applications for two graduate schools, the University of South Carolina and the University of Texas A&M, and in doing so I hope that I can continue my education and learn about what makes a great public administrator," Nelson said.

Finally, Nelson left students with a few words of advice: "Be yourself and enjoy the moment."

## Honors Programs commemorate two pioneering directors

University Relations

Dr. Ernie Blythe Jr. and Dr. Bill Zachry are remembered for their long association with UT Martin's Honors Programs. The related programs have provided life-changing academic experiences for generations of UT Martin students.

Blythe and Zachry worked together for years to lead and shape the academic experiences that bring high-achieving students to the university and prepare

them for life beyond college. They are now memorialized after plaques for each man were unveiled Nov. 13 in the Holland McCombs Center, home to the university's Honors Programs.

The unveiling event and reception were attended by friends, family members, university faculty members and officials, and past and present Honors Programs students.

Blythe was a UT Martin geology faculty member from 1969 until his retirement in 1997. In addition to his

work with Honors Programs, he was active in other aspects of university life, including service as a faculty athletic representative and as chair of the UT Martin Athletics Board. Blythe died in February 2005 in Martin.

Zachry was a UT Martin psychology faculty member from 1972 until 2005 when he left UTM to join the University of Memphis faculty, where he was director of online psychology courses from 2005 until 2021. He was announced as the Honors Programs

director in August 1997 following Blythe's retirement and served in that role until he left UT Martin. He was a licensed psychologist, once served as the UT Martin webmaster, and played piano and organ for several churches. Zachry died in June 2023 in Memphis.

"The work they began with the Honors Program has touched the lives of many hundreds of students who participated in the Honors Seminar Program," UT Martin Chancellor Yancy Freeman said.

## The Guild of Studio 317 strives to make a difference

J.J. Somerville / Arts & Entertainment Editor

UT Martin has more than 150 student organizations that you can get involved in.

The Guild of Studio 317 is among those organizations; however, it is quite a hidden gem on campus. The organization is seeking to increase membership because the interest in fiber art is rising among young adults with the help of social media platforms.

TikTok is one of the social media platforms that is responsible for the re-emergence of crocheting, quilting and various other fiber arts. Users can create or watch tutorials to learn the fundamentals of fiber arts.

Now that fiber arts are becoming popular again, Guild of Studio 317 is an accessible outlet on campus for students who are looking for a new hobby to enjoy.

The Guild of Studio 317 was founded in 2010 and advised by David McBeth, a professor of arts at UT Martin. It was known for events such as Cups for the Cure in which the organization handmade cups for people to receive and donate as the proceeds went towards breast cancer awareness.

However, the organization became inactive for some time until 2022. The current president of Guild of Studio 317, Quinn Gilmer, who is a senior Graphic Design major from Bartlett, Tennessee, reestablished it.

"I heard about it from McBeth. I liked the idea of the club, and I just shaped it a little bit because it was purely ceramics-based before. I shaped it to be all arts," he said.

When Gilmer came to UT Martin as a freshman, he wanted to create an organization based on community



Empty Bowls project | Photo Credit / University Relations

service because he believed that people connect by helping others. Gilmer fulfilled that goal when he joined Guild of Studio 317, and it has remained true to its origins since its revival. Members are actively reaching the Martin community and nearby cities such as Memphis through their creations.

"In the fall, there's always Empty Bowls. It is an event where we hand make ceramic bowls for \$15, people

can come and get a bowl. The money goes directly to We Care Ministries, which is the food bank and generally helps people that are falling on hard times," Gilmer said.

They also partnered with Sidney Church from Residence Life who creates care kits for charity. The Guild of Studio 317 has made hats for the homeless and this year they are making stuffed animals to give away. Members

have also made baby blankets for the midwifery at Choices Memphis and donated them at Thanksgiving. All in all, the organization thrives off creating art that can make a difference in someone's life; however strength in numbers amongst the membership depends on whether things can get accomplished.

With Gilmer graduating in May, he hopes to see a rise in membership before his departure. "I would like to get membership up before I leave so that I can leave it to the new vice president. I want to leave her with something tangible that she can work with because running a club is not easy. It's up to you to decide who's doing what, how it's being done, who you're going to do it," he said.

For students who have an interest in fiber arts such as crocheting or creating ceramic works, Guild of Studio 317 is an organization that can help teach these arts. It can also be a rewarding experience for students because they can give back to their communities.

The advice Gilmer would give anyone who wants to join the Guild of Studio 317 is, "If you are looking for a community and like giving back to people, the Guild is a great way to do that. If you just show up for one meeting and make something, you're helping out so much just by being there. Knowing that people do enjoy this idea of a club that gives back, they get something out of it, too. They get a new skill."

The Guild of Studio 317 meets on Mondays from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the Center for Women and Gender Equality, which is upstairs in the library.

For more information on the organization, check them out on Instagram: @tgos317.

**The Department of  
Visual and Theatre Arts  
presents:**



**Auditions: Jan. 13 & 14 6pm to 8pm**

**Harriet Fulton Theatre**

**Fine Arts Building**

**Please prepare a vocal selection**



## Your Christmas Favorites

- |                                     |                                  |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS YOU  | ~ | MARIAH CAREY                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | HIS FAVORITE CHRISTMAS STORY     | ~ | CAPITAL LIGHTS                                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | THIS CHRISTMAS                   | ~ | CHRIS BROWN                                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | CHRISTMAS TREE FARM              | ~ | TAYLOR SWIFT                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | SILENT NIGHT                     | ~ | THE TEMPTATIONS                                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | LONELY CHRISTMAS                 | ~ | JUSTIN BIEBER,<br>BRYSON TILLER AND<br>POO BEAR |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | JINGLE BELL ROCK                 | ~ | BOBBY HELMS                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | LAST CHRISTMAS                   | ~ | WHAM!   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | O COME O COME, EMMANUEL          | ~ | 9TH CENTURY LATIN<br>HYMN                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | ROCKIN AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE | ~ | BRENDA LEE                                      |

## Holiday Films to get you in the Christmas spirit

1.

*Feast of the Seven Fishes* - Tony (Skyler Gisondo) is an aspiring artist who is destined to work in his dad's fish shop. He had these plans until a girl by the name of Beth (Madison Iseman) shows up. Tony invites Beth to his family's traditional feast of seven fishes meal. This is where their friendship and relationship gets put to the test. This is a movie about being open to learn from one another and sharing Christmas tradition with one another.

2.

*This Christmas* - The holiday is a special time for the family matriarch, Ma'Dere Whitfield (Loretta Devine) as she longs to reunite her family back together for the first time in four years. However secrets come to light amongst her sons, Marine Claude (Columbus Short), Quentin (Idris Elba), and Baby (Chris Brown) as they deal with debts, true military status, and plans to become a singer.

3.

*Home Alone* - Mischievous eight-year-old Kevin McCallister (Macaulay Culkin) gets left behind before a family trip to Paris after his mother (Catherine O'Hara) makes him sleep in the attic and forgets that he is there. Kevin awakens to an empty house and is excited to cause mayhem, but his excitement dies down when two cons (Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern) plan to rob the residence and Kevin must save it alone.

4.

*National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* - This movie is comical and makes you realize how important family is even if you have differences. Clark Griswold (Chevy Chase) is a true family man and wants nothing but his family to have a great Christmas! He does everything in his power to bring his family together. This movie gives the warm and cozy feeling.

5.

*Love Actually* - This movie tells nine different stories, but all are focused on love. The stories are set around Christmas time and some are related to the holiday. All of the tales are chaotic, messy and imperfect, which elevates the realism of the movie because love is nearly never perfect. Because of the Christmas themes within the film, it emphasizes that the holidays are better when you're surrounded by those you love, making it the perfect heartwarming movie to find comfort in the cold.

6.

*The Polar Express* - This is more than just a movie that evokes childhood nostalgia. This movie is about believing, hope and friendship. A boy sees a bus stop outside of his house on Christmas Eve and hesitantly gets on. He embarks on the ride of his life, restores his belief in Santa and learns the true whimsical spirit of Christmas. *The Polar Express* brings out the inner child.

Pacer Graphic | Chloe Kent, JJ Somerville, Peyton McDaniel, and Emma Pensford



Kinkead Dent throws the ball downfield under pressure in 41-10 victory over No. 16 New Hampshire. | Photo Credit / University Relations

## UT Martin expects toughest challenge yet

Chyler Lee / Assistant Sports Editor

The Skyhawks will travel to Bozeman, Montana to face the No. 1 Montana State Bobcats on Saturday at 2 p.m.

The Bobcats, which is the strongest team the Skyhawks will face this year, use a variety of run-pass-option (RPO) plays to make the most of the talent on their roster, especially on the ground. The Bobcats boast the best rushing attack in the nation, averaging 317.9 yards per game (ypg) for the season.

This run game makes use of the rare athleticism QB Tommy Mellott possesses at the position.

Mellott averages 8.9 yards per carry (ypc) for the Bobcats with speed and vision in the designed run game while also being a dangerous scrambler when extending plays.

The Bobcats' worst offensive production of the season came against UC Davis, in which Mellott posted his worst rushing performance of the

season, only rushing for four yards. Containing Mellott is the biggest factor for the Skyhawks' defensive success this Saturday.

This extension of plays from Mellott also proves dangerous in the Bobcats' passing game. Mellott buys time for his receivers to get lost in coverages and finds holes in the defense for big plays.

A part of Mellott's game that might go unnoticed but is highly important for this Skyhawk defense to focus on is that he rarely turns the ball over. Mellott threw a singular interception during the season, which took place in week four of the regular season.

This Skyhawk team has prided itself on the ability to take the ball away (12th nationally in takeaways) from opposing offenses and even put points on the board. Being able to get their hands on the ball even once could be game-changing for the Skyhawks.

Aside from Mellott, Montana State has several good running back options that can keep defenses on their toes

no matter who comes in. Running backs Scottre Humphrey, Adam Jones, Colson Coon, Jared White and Julius Davis all average over five ypg on more than 40 carries this season and offer different wrinkles to an already very diverse Bobcat offense.

No matter what, the Skyhawks' fifth-ranked (nationally) rushing defense is going to receive its biggest test of the fall 2024 season.

Through the air, Mellott's favorite target has been TE Rohan Jones. Jones has caught eight touchdowns for the Bobcats and leads the team with 451 yards on the season.

Jones will be matched up against some of the best pass-defending linebackers in the FCS with Tevin Shipp and Chris Hunter. Both have three or more interceptions during the season and are part of an overall amazing linebacking core for the Skyhawks.

Defensively, the Bobcats are very sound tacklers and swarm to the football. They've shown a good ability

to get to the quarterback, especially on blitzes from their linebackers, which will test Skyhawks QB Kinkead Dent's ability to move and make plays outside of the pocket.

This game seems to be the biggest for both teams' trenches. The Skyhawks field one of the most experienced offensive line units in the nation, while the Bobcats' line has paved the way for the nation's top rushing attack.

This game will be determined by who can set the physical tone at the start and really get some knockback at the line of scrimmage.

If the Skyhawks do that, fans could be in for a tight game. If the Bobcats do that, this game could get ugly.

UT Martin and Montana State have met just once before in their respective histories.

In 2021, the Bobcats defeated the Skyhawks 26-7 in the playoffs. The Skyhawks will look to even the series this Saturday, Dec. 7, at 2 p.m.



# Hawk Spot!

December 4, 2024  
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## Pacer recap crossword puzzle

All answers come from previous editions of *The Pacer* that were printed this semester.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | 2 |   | 5 | 9 | 8 |   |
| 1 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 2 |   |
| 4 | 9 |   | 3 |   | 6 |   |
|   | 3 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 8 |   |
|   | 7 |   |   | 2 |   |   |
|   | 9 |   | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 3 |   | 2 |   | 8 | 1 |   |
|   | 7 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| 9 | 2 |   | 4 |   | 7 |   |



Across

Down

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>3. Country Pete traveled to for kiwis</p> <p>4. Civil rights icon who came to speak at UTM (last name)</p> <p>8. Title of <i>The Bear's</i> sixth episode of the 2nd season</p> <p>10. Fraternity who won the IFC division lip sync competition</p> <p>11. Weakley County mayor elected in August</p> <p>12. City in Kenya where Dr. Statler taught middle and high school for 7 Years.</p> | <p>1. The current director for the center of women and gender equality</p> <p>2. Mascot of the team UTM faced for the Homecoming game</p> <p>5. Word meaning reserved, modest or shy</p> <p>6. Headliner act for the soybean festival</p> <p>7. AMB stands for _____ Marching Band</p> <p>9. Japanese company who holds the rights to "Hello Kitty"</p> |
|--|---|

