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Lumberjack grads say goodbye

The graduating seniors of The Lumberjack May 3, 2018

MEGAN TROUTMAN

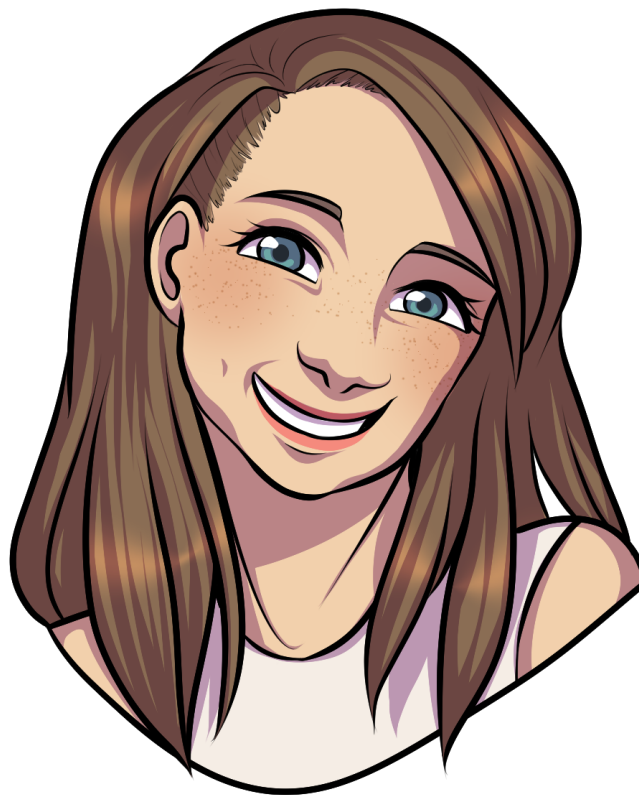
When I was about 8 years old, I rode my first upside-down roller coaster, called California Screamin'. I rode it seven times in a row.

It was one of those rides that made my adrenaline pump and made me feel so alive. The course had an element of predictability, but every time it still flipped my world upside-down. I could feel the wind in my hair and I was invincible.

The second time I hit my head, hard. The guy warned me to keep my head back because the ride went from zero to 55 miles per hour in four seconds, but I was too excited and forgot to put my head back. I learned my lesson.

Now, 14 years later, I am about to walk across a stage to receive my four-year college degree in journalism with minors in international communication and graphic design. I will move to Wisconsin to work as a full-time designer for a company overseeing print design production for over 45 publications across the United States.

These past four years have gone from zero to 55 — I moved from Colorado to Arizona, went on a rafting trip with 20 strangers, worked at The Lumberjack for four years, traveled across Europe, fell in love, met so many incredible people and had my first



Megan Troutman
Katie Dobrydney

(and certainly not last) glass of wine.

NAU flipped my world upside-down.

When I was 8 years old, riding my first huge roller coaster, I had no idea what life was going to bring. I had no idea what stories I would be able to tell or that I would find my life calling as a journalist.

From year 8 to 22, it's been a good ride — but the adventure has just begun.

ELIZABETH WENDLER

For my senior goodbye, I'd like to thank the people who helped me get here. Without all of you, I wouldn't have made it this far.

I dedicate this goodbye to Mrs. Cunningham, who pushed me to write to my best ability with my own previous work as my main competitor.

To Jenny Zhou, who not only gave me a job when I desperately needed one, but who helped me overcome my eating disorder by constantly yelling at me to eat. I was on the fast track to anorexia, so thank you for all the extra crab puffs.

To my first-ever girlfriend, who threw me out of the closet and was the first person to ever break my heart. I didn't even know I had one before then.

To Dolores Lopez, the actual love of my life. I'd have left this world ages ago if it weren't for you and your beautiful heart, memes and never-ending support.

To my mother, whose abuse made me into the empathetic person I probably wouldn't have become if she'd been kind.

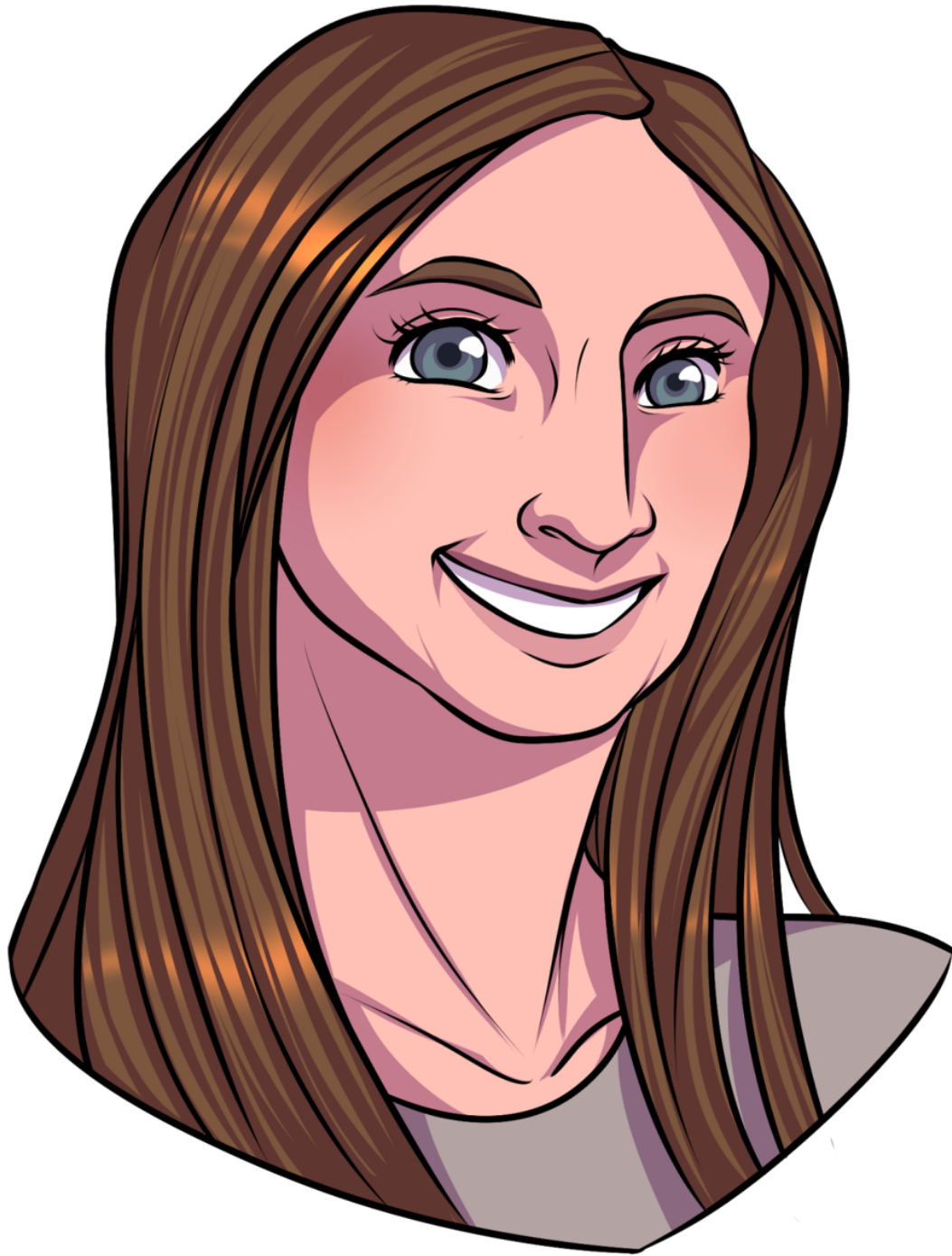


Liz Wendler
Katie Dobrydney

And finally, to my sisters. We may never speak again, but I know that our love for each other will live on, even if only in a small place in our hearts.

To those I've loved and lost. To those who have hurt me and helped me. To those who have made me the complicated, loving mess of person I am today.

Thank you.



Mikayla Shoup
Katie Dobrydney

MIKAYLA SHOUP

I first discovered a passion for journalism when I left The Lumberjack. I worked in the photo section for one semester and the features section for another, and I decided to take a break from journalism and try something else. After about a month of that, the knot in my gut told me I had made a huge mistake. Feeling desperate to write again, I returned to the features section and was hired as the assistant news editor the next semester.

Working with such an ambitious team of student journalists and mentors has been the greatest experience I've had during my time at NAU.

I've been counting down the days until graduation for months. Now that it's here, I wish I could backtrack a little. As students, we complain about the seemingly endless mounds of work, the constant stress and being perpetually broke. We tend to get caught up in everything that's hard about college and can't wait for it to be over.

But these are the good old days.

Every day I walk across campus and become more and more nostalgic as I'm flooded with memories. I loved college. It's where I found perspective. Where I met interesting people and passionate professors. Where I built confidence and pursued my dreams. Where I discovered who I am. But it's time for me to go.

So don't be so anxious to get it over with. You'll miss it when it's gone.



Darrion Edwards

Katie Dobrydney

DARRION EDWARDS

College is brutal. I am a first-generation student who learned this throughout my time at NAU. From the hectic 15-page assignments to the 100-question exams, college is a monster that feeds off of your stress and anxiety. But during my time at NAU, I have grown more than I could have imagined.

I have gained some of my life-long friends and have experienced the world in a way that no one in my family has had a chance to. I was able to spend a semester across the world in Europe. I was able to spend weekends in California with the girls who lived across the hall during my sophomore year. I was able to work with the best people who I can call my friends during my time at The Lumberjack.

Although college has proven to be problematic at times for my friends and me, it has definitely helped me develop some of my best characteristics. And even though NAU has allowed me to enroll in some of the best classes offered, I feel like a lot of life lessons were learned outside of a classroom.

I have learned to be open to new ideas and adventures, and my favorite rule in life, “never say no to free food.” To my little brother who is ending his second year in college, my advice is to simply enjoy the little things, oh, and study.

Thank you to everyone who made this college experience the best four years of my life so far.

KATIE SAWYER

Since my mom taught me the bunny ears, shoe-tying rhyme, I’ve been tying my own shoes. Now, I get up in the morning, tie up my Converse, walk out the door and forget about the simple things I once struggled with.

As 5-year-olds, we tried and failed. We fell off our bikes and got back on. We tangled our laces and probably tripped a lot. But since that first successful bow, we have tied our shoes thousands of times. We practice every day without even realizing it.

Now, worries are bigger than tying shoes or riding a bike. As college students, we push ourselves to thrive



Katie Sawyer

Katie Dobrydney

under the weight of responsibility and anxiety. Putting on shoes for the 1,000 time goes almost unnoticed, but remembering how long it took to accomplish simple tasks is imperative to understanding the struggles you will have as an adult.

Now, just four years into adulthood, people are expected to have life figured out. I'm just now understanding how to be an adult. I have the rest of my life to struggle and to explore the world. If we were supposed to have our future planned out by now, life would be pretty boring.

Just like learning to tie your shoes, you will fail before you succeed, but the things that you struggle with now will one day be effortless.

In other words, we are just getting started.



Chandler Coiner
Katie Dobrydney

CHANDLER COINER

Fall 2016 was my first semester with The Lumberjack as a news writer. For better or for worse, I got to share that time with a certain presidential candidate that made few efforts to dance around his distaste for mainstream media — organizations that I grew up with as my inspiration to pursue this profession. Whether President Donald Trump was right or wrong, he motivated me to push harder for the truth and take

that extra moment to ensure I got the facts right so I don't let myself become the "fake news" that came barreling into our culture two years ago, in whatever form it might have actually existed in. For that, you could say I'm thankful to the president, if you're looking for a positive spin.

But one thing I would like the next line of student journalists to take to heart, is the world is an incredibly interesting place. Even the smallest town can harbor the most amazing secrets and stories — some nefarious, some disdainful and, hopefully, some awe-inspiring. Grab your pen-and-paper pickaxe and start mining for them, because they're right below your fingertips. When you're a journalist, all the questions you've ever asked suddenly feel so much more answerable, and being able to answer those questions not just for yourself, but for the world, is a cathartic feeling.

But also, kids, NiMarco's pizza is better than Fratelli's.

LANCE HARTZLER

Well, after four years and changing my major three times, I am finally graduating. Not going to lie, I am surprised I finished in journalism, but I would do it all over again.

In my two years as a journalism major, I have found what I love. I have discovered what I want to do with my life and being totally OK with not making all that much money. No one goes into this field for money — if I was in it for the money, I would have stuck with science.

I have learned through my time covering sports for The Lumberjack and the Arizona Daily Sun that there is more to sports than just numbers and box scores. I get to write about something that some have dedicated their lives to.



Lance Hartzler

Katie Dobrydney

Something that people care so deeply about, it has been ingrained into their culture, much like those from the Native American reservation and the phenomenon of RezBall.

If it wasn't for my professors who I have learned so much from here at NAU, whether it be about life or journalism, I would not be where I am now.

So, thank you Rory Faust and Mary Tolan. For teaching me how to better myself as a journalist and a person. You helped me prepare for the challenge and journey of doing this for a career.

Speaking of that, where I will be is still uncertain, but I have had options and about three job offers the past two months.

To be honest, I got 99 problems but a job ain't one.

ADRIAN SKABELUND

I changed my major to journalism because journalists were always my favorite characters in movies and books, and after having written approximately 120 Lumberjack stories in five semesters, has all that much changed?

I've certainly written more articles than Tintin who, despite being a reporter, almost never actually seemed to write about his adventures.

Then again, I've gotten in far fewer gunfights than the young Belgian.

When it comes to journalism, the paper has taught me everything. I have learned more about zoning code and sat through more city council meetings than is healthy. I have learned I am more idealistic than I ever thought I was, and I learned that good reporting can produce very real, but often unexpected, consequences.



Adrian Skabelund
Katie Dobrydney

In fact, when it comes to fighting authoritarian institutions, regardless of the outcome, Tintin and I have more in common than one might imagine.

I've had a lot of help along the way. There are so many people I have worked with that I should thank, but I am out of room so I'll only pick two: Jenny Swanson and Mary Tolan, without which I would never have gotten this far.

Ciao ciao, y'all!

Adrian Skabelund is the NAU School of Communication 2018 Outstanding Senior.

QUINN SNYDER

Over the last few weeks while the stress has continued to ramp up, I have managed to find myself feeling the oddest, greatest, most out-of-the-ordinary sense of peace. When I decided at the beginning of my third year of college that I wanted it to be my final year, that sense of peace seemed absolutely unattainable. Throughout the sleepless nights, long days, piles of homework and mental-health maintenance, all I kept telling myself was to continue to search for the light at the end of the tunnel.

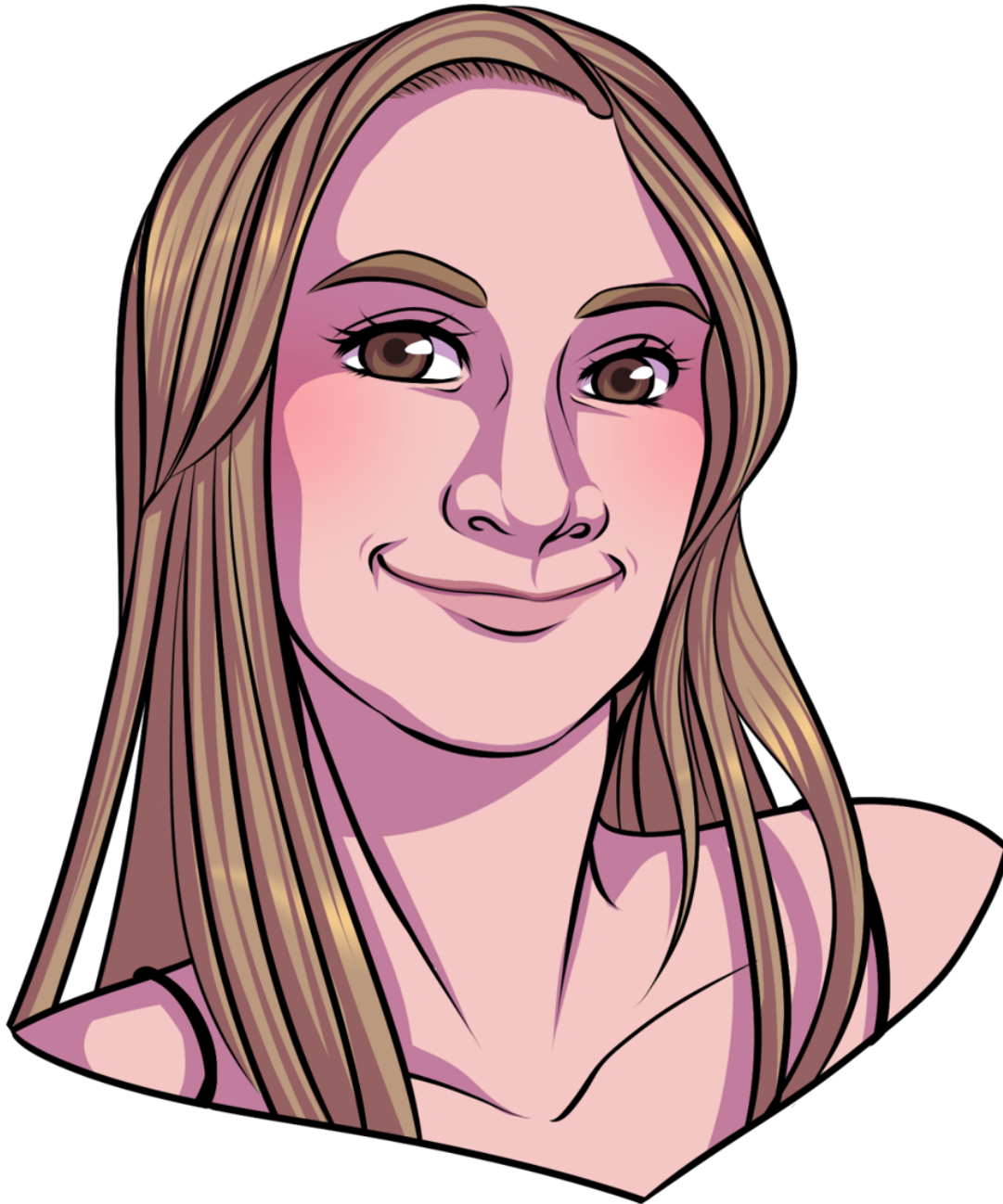


Quinn Snyder
Katie Dobrydney

After 46 credit hours, the light is just a short week away. It feels pretty surreal that my time in Flagstaff has come to an end — my time in Arizona even more so — but the next chapter is about to begin and I am determined to make it the brightest one yet.

I will be moving to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, to work in production for CBS Sports Digital. If this year has taught me anything, it is that there is grace to be found in every situation. Sometimes you just have to look a little harder to find it.

All right, Sunshine State, I'm coming for you.



Emma Helfirch
Katie Dobrydney

EMMA HELFRICH

“The best way to get rid of homework is just to do it.”

A friend once told me that in response to my habitual procrastination, and I think it is a mantra that applies to obstacles even outside of the realm of homework assignments. The only way to check anything off of your evergrowing to-do list is to

just get it done. You are the only one responsible for your successes and failures. Retaining personal accountability can make or break a college experience. Without it, you may find yourself accepting a bachelor's degree for an undergraduate career that you're not proud of.

Put in the work, be passionate and the rest will fall into place.