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## The many shades of Flagstaff nightlife

Megan Troutman Mar 22, 2018



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I am the lamest 21-year-old I know.

Most 21-year-olds I know are wired with enough energy to take seven shots, stumble downtown, have a few margaritas, dance the night away in heels and overly-tight dresses or nice button downs, and then party hop until dawn.

As for me, more often than not I forget when it's Friday night, and by the time I remember, I'm already in bed with a cup of tea listening to Louis Armstrong and re-reading my favorite book, *Beach Music*.

So yes, I am the lamest 21-year-old I know.

If I were to analyze my life, I think part of why I'm so lame is because I don't understand Flagstaff's nightlife culture as a college student. It's as foreign to me as Louis Armstrong is to most 21-year-olds.

But here's what happened. I turned 21 while I was studying abroad in The Netherlands, and I can confidently say that the Dutch nightlife is something I have somewhat mastered. They would wear casual clothes (jeans, sweaters and boots), and I would often stumble home around 4 or 5 in the morning. Dutch bars did not have a closing time. If people were still buying drinks and dancing, they would stay open for all hours of the night, until the crowds slowed around 4 or 5, depending on the day.

For the first few months in the Netherlands, this was a normal part of my schedule, to go out one to three times a week.

So returning to American life, after being abroad for six months, with reverse-culture shock and a fried liver, I decided the "party life" was not necessarily for me. I was burnt out. But channeling my rambunctious 21-year-old self, I decided to go out again, to live it up for the American 21st birthday I never fully experienced.

That's when I realized that as a college student, I had no idea how Flagstaff nightlife worked.

People started pre-drinking abnormally early, and I wasn't sure what to wear or how to get downtown or what the dancing protocols were. I had only gone bar and club hopping in Europe, never in the United States. I quickly learned it's a whole new, complicated world.

Flagstaff has a handful of bars that cater to college students, each with their own personality. For example, hipsters go to the Lumberyard to drink out of mason jars, but country-jiving, flannel-wearing folks also go there for the country music and line dancing. It's a toss-up.

The Mayor is where some people go for casual drinks, sipping on cocktails by the outdoor fire pits, but mostly the Mayor consists of people playing corn hole and chugging ten beers before staggering across the tracks to continue drinking downtown.

So if that's not confusing enough, get this: The Market, formerly known as Monsoon Chinese Bistro & Sushi, is an American gastropub serving breakfast, lunch and dinner during the day before transitioning over to the hopping club scene known to students as the place to be after 10 p.m.; the Green Room has both live music and your average chilling hobo; and Collins is "not-a-sports-bar" sports bar, with a clubbing scene masqueraded by the contradictory dinner table set-up.

It's complicated.

Depending on the time of day and night in the week, it's hard to peg what kind of crowd you'll be thrown into and how to act or how to drink. It turns into one big headache, trying to figure out what to expect from your night out.

But wait, there's more — as a college student, it becomes almost impossible to balance nightlife with academics. Academics can be so strenuous, that it's hard to chisel in time for drinks with a friend. However, some of my friends can go out every weekend and still pass their classes with flying colors.

They must be robots or aliens; there's no other answer.

If I were to go out every weekend and try to keep up with work and classes, I would not only fail every course, but I would be physically and mentally exhausted for all of eternity. It's too difficult to go out until 2 a.m. and then wake up early the next morning for work or a study session.

So with Flagstaff's confusing nightlife and my incessant need to be a straight-A student, I'm not sure how I'll ever be able to acclimate to the American party scene. I tried, I really gave it my best.

But at the end of the day, I think I'll stick to my chamomile tea.

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*Megan Troutman is the editor-in-chief of The Lumberjack, Northern Arizona University's student newspaper. College Chronicles aims to connect FlagLive! readers to various aspects of campus life.*