

College Heights Herald

Jan. 30–March 6, 2023



THE CLIMATE ISSUE

Inside:
'I am a grateful tornado survivor'



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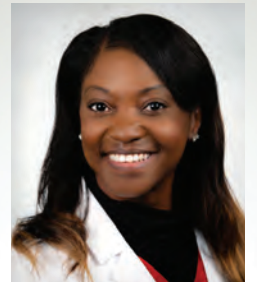
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Print edition published three times each semester by WKU Student Publications at Western Kentucky University.
First copy: free | Additional copies: \$5

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COVER PHOTO BY TUCKER COVEY

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hi everyone!

I'm Debra Murray, editor-in-chief of the College Heights Herald. This is the start of our second semester as a newsmagazine! Last semester, we embarked on a big shift and worked through our learning curve. Megan Fisher, our design editor, has been such a vital part of making this transition happen. Many late nights, P.O.D runs, Pinterest scrolling and a lot of hard work is how this semester's first issue happened. But, the hard work is just beginning because we still have two more print issues and daily digital content coming your way this semester. We have many ideas that we're hoping to pursue this semester - I hope that our readers, you, are willing to continue supporting us as we continue to navigate this (somewhat) new format. I'm thrilled

to see the Herald staff's ideas come to life and be shared with y'all!

This issue focuses heavily on the impacts of climate change and sustainability on a local level. Our issue last January shared the recovery and damage of the tornadoes that hit Bowling Green on Dec. 11, 2021. With the one year anniversary having just passed, it was only fitting that we honor how far Bowling Green and the families who called it home have recovered.

If you're interested in photojournalism, writing, video, opinion, sports or anything else - the Herald has a place for you! Apply at apply.wkuherald.com. If you have any ideas, comments or concerns, reach out to herald.editor@wku.edu.



PHOTO BY CARRIE PRATT

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debra".




PHOTO BY CARRIE PRATT

Editor-in-Chief Debra Murray and Design Editor Megan Fisher discuss page design during production on Sept. 3, 2022.

'NO SINGLE CORRECT ANSWER' CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTS KENTUCKY

By Alexandria Anderson



Raging flash flood waters took 43 lives, countless homes and businesses across eastern Kentucky and central Appalachia last July. A total of \$85.1 million in Federal Emergency Management Agency funding was approved for applicants, as the rural counties of eastern Kentucky suffered catastrophic losses due to the historic event.

The worst flooding event in recent history followed the rare and devastating tornadoes that raked across western Kentucky months before in December 2021, killing 80 people and destroying thousands of homes and businesses.

Nearly all scientists say the Earth's climate is changing, outside of its natural shifts, due to human actions. The United States Environmental Protection Agency states the primary driver of this change is the burning of fossil fuels that leads to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, which trap the sun's heat on the planet, raising temperatures and affecting all global systems.

Experts agree Kentucky is experiencing the possible consequences of climate change, like the rest of the nation. Well known for its natural beauty, situated on a vast cave system and housing hundreds of rural communities, the state is affected differently by changes in the climate.

Jerald Brotzge, Kentucky state climatologist, director of the Kentucky Climate Center, director of the Kentucky Mesonet and WKU professor of meteorology, recognizes the shifts in climate trends - and the difficulty in quantifying them.

The most well-known effect of climate change is global warming, which is an increase in the overall surface temperature of the globe.

In Kentucky, 125 years of climate records indicate various warming and cooling down periods, with the 1930s being the warmest decade, Brotzge said. The state has seen a warm up period since roughly 1980, experiencing three of the top five warmest years within the past decade.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, temperatures in Kentucky have risen by 0.6 degrees since the beginning of the 20th century. In the United States, more extreme temperature events are becoming more common. Unusually hot summer days and nights have become more common in recent decades, while unusually cold winter temperatures have become less common, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Brotzge said not to necessarily expect higher or more extreme temperatures at usually warm times. Rather than higher daytime highs, we will see increased temperatures during usually cool times, such as at night and in the winter. Brotzge said an atmosphere with more moisture “moderates temperatures to some degree.”

When it comes to other severe weather events like natural disasters,

determining whether or not they are being affected by climate change is more difficult.

In December 2021, many areas of western Kentucky were hit by catastrophic tornadoes – including Bowling Green. Some people have raised the question of whether or not this could be attributed to a changing climate.

Unlike some extreme weather events that can be directly correlated to climate change, the connection between tornadoes and climate change is complicated. Brotzge said individual events like tornadoes are hard to place on the larger scale of climate change.

“We’ve not seen a documented increase or decrease in the numbers of tornadoes due to climate change,” Brotzge said.

He said this is due to the current limited perception of detecting specific and individual climate changes,

and it is “almost impossible” to say any certain event is caused by climate change.

WEATHER CHANGES

One clear consequence of climate change is an increase in intense rainfall. As the atmosphere warms, it is able to hold more water – and then able to release more water as rainfall. Per degree Celsius of warming, the air is able to hold approximately 7 percent more moisture.

Brotzge said in the last 30 to 40 years, Kentucky has gotten much wetter, with three of the five wettest years occurring in the last decade – what he calls the “wetting of Kentucky.” Brotzge described these as “broad trends,” with variability coming with each year.

When looking at the climate record, there is a noticeable and gradual increasing wetness across the state. Brotzge said in roughly 1900, the state averaged 45 inches of rainfall



Photo by Arthur H. Trickett-Wile

Western Kentucky University professor Jerald Brotzge, 50 (right), works with sophomore Environmental Science and Geologic Studies major and research assistant Caden Childers, 18 (left), to renovate and reorganize the room housing the Kentucky Climate Center on the third floor of the Environmental Science & Technology Building on Tuesday morning, Jan. 17, in Bowling Green.

per year, and the average now is 55 inches per year.

According to the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, excessive precipitation creates the potential for severe flooding. As the Kentucky climate gets wetter, the frequency of flooding could increase. However, labeling natural disasters like the eastern Kentucky floods as climate change induced is difficult, Brotzge said.

“All that to say, we’re not necessarily seeing more severe weather across the state,” Brotzge said. “The floods are difficult to quantify. Given the broader trends, you could say that increased flooding would maybe be expected in a warmer and wetter climate.”

Brotzge said the main issue with determining the connection between natural disasters and climate change is due to limited climate records.

“We make our best guess based on our current observations, on how frequent or infrequent certain flooding events are,” Brotzge said. “Those are our best estimates. So when we have a 1000-year event that comes along, then we have to ask the question, is this truly a unique event? Is it that rare or is this something that could occur more frequently?”

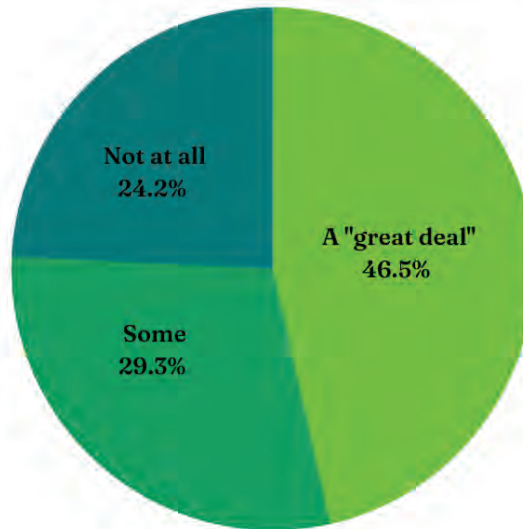
Referencing both the eastern Kentucky flooding and recent Buffalo, New York, snowstorm, Brotzge explained that while current data is unsure, larger dynamics like climate change will impact these events.

“With each of these, it’s a lot of local features that contribute to the event, but there’s always broader scale dynamics, impacting that event as well,” Brotzge said.

Climate change isn’t only researched through trends in weather systems. It is researched throughout various fields, especially in a state like Kentucky, where what is below the ground can provide detailed insight to what is happening above it.

William Haneberg, state geologist, director of the Kentucky Geological Survey and research professor of earth and environmental sciences at the University of Kentucky, explained his approach to understanding climate change.

Does the public think climate change is caused by human activity?



Roughly, a quarter of Americans -- 24% -- say the burning of fossil fuels and other human activity contributes not too much or not at all to climate change, according to a Pew Research Center survey published in 2022.

“Basically, it comes down to energy,” Haneberg said. “That’s what drives a lot of storms, oceans warm and store a lot more energy and create larger damaging storms, when it comes to hurricanes, when it comes to rainfall [...] the very cold period we had right around the holidays.”

Some misconceptions occur when climate change results in events, Haneberg said, like snowstorms, arctic blasts and extreme cold, since many think climate change must equal global warming.

He explained that jet streams, narrow bands of strong winds in the atmosphere, are normally well contained, but warming in the Arctic impacts their function, like letting go of a “hose that’s under high pressure.”

“Even when it’s colder, that can be due to a destabilization of the climate system and things not happening where they’re supposed to happen,” Haneberg said. “At the same time it was incredibly cold here in Kentucky, it was unusually warm across Europe and in parts of the Arctic. So they’re linked together. Basically, it’s energy that drives storms of all kinds and drives winds, and we’re basically accumulating energy in the form of heat, especially in the oceans.”

Haneberg said we are seeing differences in the frequency of flooding, referencing the floods in eastern Kentucky as well as the floods in Beatyville, Kentucky, two years ago.

“We’re starting to see in a lot of places, floods that are much larger and much [more] common,” Haneberg said.

GEOLOGIC PATTERNS

Jason Polk, WKU professor of geoscience and director of the Center for Human GeoEnvironmental Studies, said to expect shifts in weather patterns under climate change.

Like Haneberg, Polk said erratic weather could become more common. As more data is collected about recent climate patterns, this will become more visible.

“Like you see now where you’d have anomalies, where just once in a while you might see a 70 degree day in January, but more consistently, you’ll see those types of changes in patterns where you wouldn’t expect it based on historic weather data,” Polk said. “[...] you build those data sets [and] you’re able to actually see those trends, long term, since climate [is] decades and longer, not just day to day or season to season.”

Polk said current climate reports and research are pointing to shifting weather patterns, but there is no “single correct answer” to predicting catastrophic weather events we’re seeing. Despite this, Polk believes we still need to find ways to alter and deal with climate change, especially on a community level.

“We know that those [climate

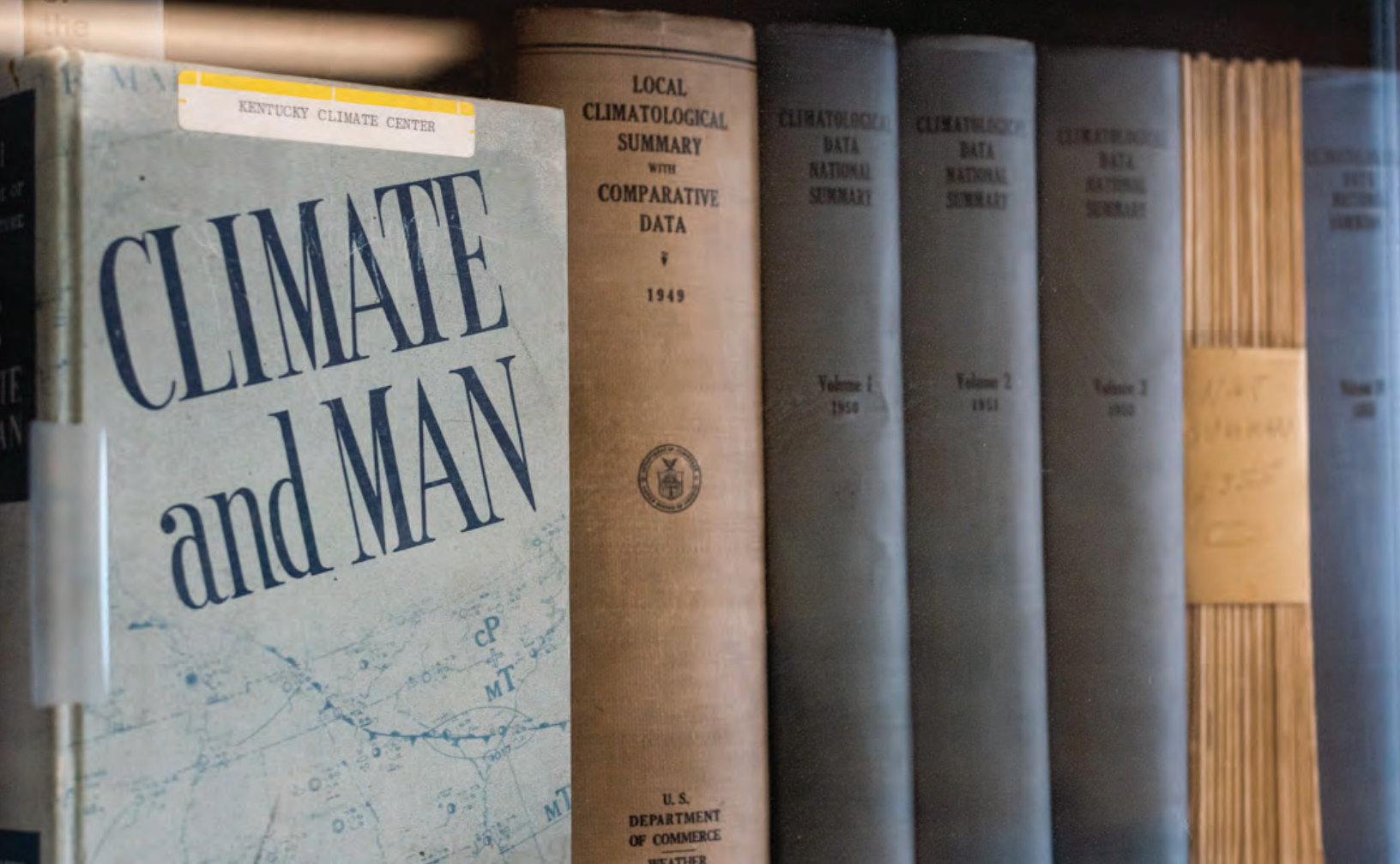


Photo by Arthur H. Trickett-Wile

Books containing climate data are seen on a shelf as Western Kentucky University professor Jerald Brotzge, 50, works to renovate and reorganize the room housing the Kentucky Climate Center on the third floor of the Environmental Science & Technology Building on Tuesday morning, Jan. 17, in Bowling Green.

patterns] are sort of exacerbated and happening a little more quickly, [in] some ways, [to] what we would expect naturally," Polk said. "Therefore, all the science points toward us doing things in whatever way possible we can to help mitigate the effects of climate change."

One unique natural feature about Kentucky is the state's abundance of caves and sinkholes. In these geologic formations, Polk is able to view localized climatic impacts in the form of carbon dioxide cycling.

Dissolving limestone rock can potentially remove carbon from the atmosphere, or act as a carbon sink, Polk said. As the leading greenhouse gas, understanding carbon dioxide cycling is essential to decreasing its effect on the atmosphere.

"We're just trying to quantify another part of that carbon dioxide to the greenhouse gas cycle, which then we can then do in other areas," Polk said. "Then once we have a good

method, we can then expand that out to really look at bigger areas, bigger regions and really start to get a handle of what that process looks like."

Polk said things like building houses and paving roads can disrupt carbon cycling, which can impact its role as a greenhouse gas.

Using various sources, Polk is able to reconstruct decades of climate data. In caves specifically, mineral formations that form from dripping water have layers, similar to tree rings, that can be used to reconstruct rainfall, temperature and vegetation data.

As eastern Kentucky experienced severe flooding and heavy rainstorms, scientists from the Kentucky Geological Survey mapped out over 1,000 new landslides in the area.

"There have always been landslides in the Appalachians and there always will be," Haneberg said. "But when we have these very large, rare, unprecedented storms and they're

becoming more and more common, we'll see more landsliding, we'll see more erosion and sedimentation problems along riverbanks."

Haneberg referenced floods that used to occur within large time frames could occur on much smaller time frames, such as a "500-year flood becoming a 200-year flood."

"It's not that they weren't inevitable before - they would have occurred, but what we find is that events of a certain severity may become more common," Haneberg said.

Recent flooding in Kentucky could be a representation of this. Haneberg assured that more severe events will not be more common, it is just that they will happen more frequently.

"Within the context of human civilization, and the very narrow band of climate conditions that we have developed as human beings, we've become accustomed to certain frequencies of events," Haneberg said. "What other scientists think we're going to start

start seeing is not that we'll see events that were bigger than anything we've seen before, but that they'll occur more frequently."

Alongside frequency increases, climate change could cause weather events to be intensified, Nancy Gift, Berea College Compton chair of sustainability said. "It's always a matter of intensity," Gift said.

"The rain that drops four inches in an hour might have dropped two inches in an hour pre climate change. We expect that basically every weather event is in some way intensified [to] some extent by changing climate."

Gift said conditions classified as extreme some decades ago could be lower than extremes now, such as a 95 degree heat wave 30 years ago being a 105 degree heat wave now.

She said, going forward, climate change will cause us to "expect the unexpected" more often.

These unexpected - and often catastrophic - weather events suggested by climate shifts affect the livelihood of many Kentucky residents. As much as climate and sustainability experts suggest ways to mitigate risk, these methods may not always be feasible, especially for rural communities

"In flood prone areas, people will have to make decisions," Haneberg said. "They'll have to get used to more flooding. They'll have to spend money

to delegate things, and then sometimes you'll hear people say, 'well, the climate is going to change, it's going to be inevitable. We'll just adapt.' And that is one strategy, but it can also be a very expensive strategy."

Rural Kentucky

The divide between climate change preparation in rural and urban communities is clear, Gift said. For example, cities often have more housing regulations, which could include more sustainable heating and cooling systems, as well as insurance covering natural disasters.

In rural locations, this is not always the case. Building codes that determine insulation use in houses and energy use are often considered to be within city planning, Gift said. For residents in mobile homes or those who build their own houses may lack the insurance or decreased energy expenditures seen in larger cities.

Gift also explained a lack of public facilities limits opportunities for shelter from natural disaster, if the need arose.

"I think another thing for people in rural areas is that there aren't often the same number of public buildings or facilities that would enable people to have shelter or backup, in case of a problem," Gift said. "There might not be a community gymnasium where

people could go shower, whereas like Winchester or Lexington would have some sort of Parks and Recreation type thing."

Not only are rural residents' homes less efficient, but their communities lack locations to cope with climate disasters, Gift said.

Gift described the quickest solution to climate change is energy efficiency. Yet from an economic standpoint, taking more sustainable measures against Kentucky climate change could mean altering one of the state's well-known industries - coal mining.

According to the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet, the Kentucky coal industry employed 4,628 residents statewide. Gift recognizes the belief of coal's influence on the state's economy, but explained that the money earned is often not cycling within the community that made it.

"[If] you're looking at coal energy, it typically just comes in, it goes to the owner of the coal company who may not even be local in the first place," Gift said. "That money comes in, it doesn't really cycle and stay as well as renewable energy dollars tend to."

With more sustainable measures, such as investment in renewable energy sources, Gift said money earned will stay in communities longer.

"It's really partly about the recycling of money within communities," Gift said. "So we need to do a lot more to make sure that the dollars spent in Kentucky stay here. Interestingly enough, that economic change will also result in some sustainability changes."

Coal is not the only uniquely Kentuckian industry affected by climate change. Agriculture, which is the livelihood of many residents, is shifting due to the warmer and wetter climate, Hanesberg said.

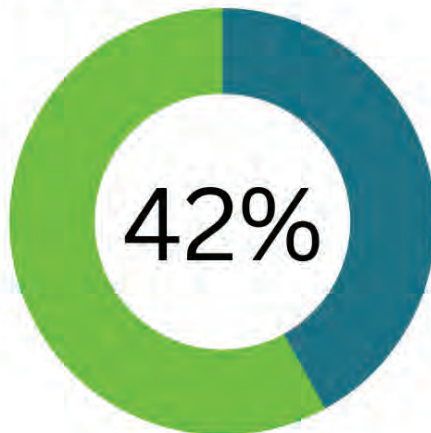
Haneberg stated that alongside much warmer temperatures, agriculture will be changed by rainfall periods that are heavier and come at less ideal times, occurring less evenly throughout the year, according to weather projections.

"We'll actually get more rain in the spring," Haneberg said. "We often



Does the public think climate change should be a priority for legislators?

Roughly four out of 10 Americans think that President Joe Biden and Congress need to make addressing climate change a priority, according to a Pew Research Center survey published in 2022.



don't need it because that's maybe when farmers are out planting fields, and if you're involved in farming the last thing you need is heavy rainfall to plant your crops."

Haneberg said disproportionately hotter and drier temperatures also affect crop growth. Rather than focusing on increases in average temperature or average rainfall, the issue is found in these events occurring when they usually do not.

As climate change projections show influence on rainfall and warm temperatures, other natural features could also be affected.

Kentucky is also known for its bourbon industry, which might be

ognizing climate change patterns that are detrimental is essential not only to the planet but to our economy. By researching climate trends, Kentucky is able to proactively start risk management.

"Then the question is, well, what are the potential costs, or what are the financial damages and what are we willing to risk?" Haneberg said. "Like a scientific equivalent of going to Las Vegas, and you always have to ask yourself, what am I willing to lose if the dice don't roll correctly?"

'THERE'S STILL A LOT WE CAN DO': CLIMATE CHANGE SOLUTIONS

The real influencing power on the climate is on a larger level than our

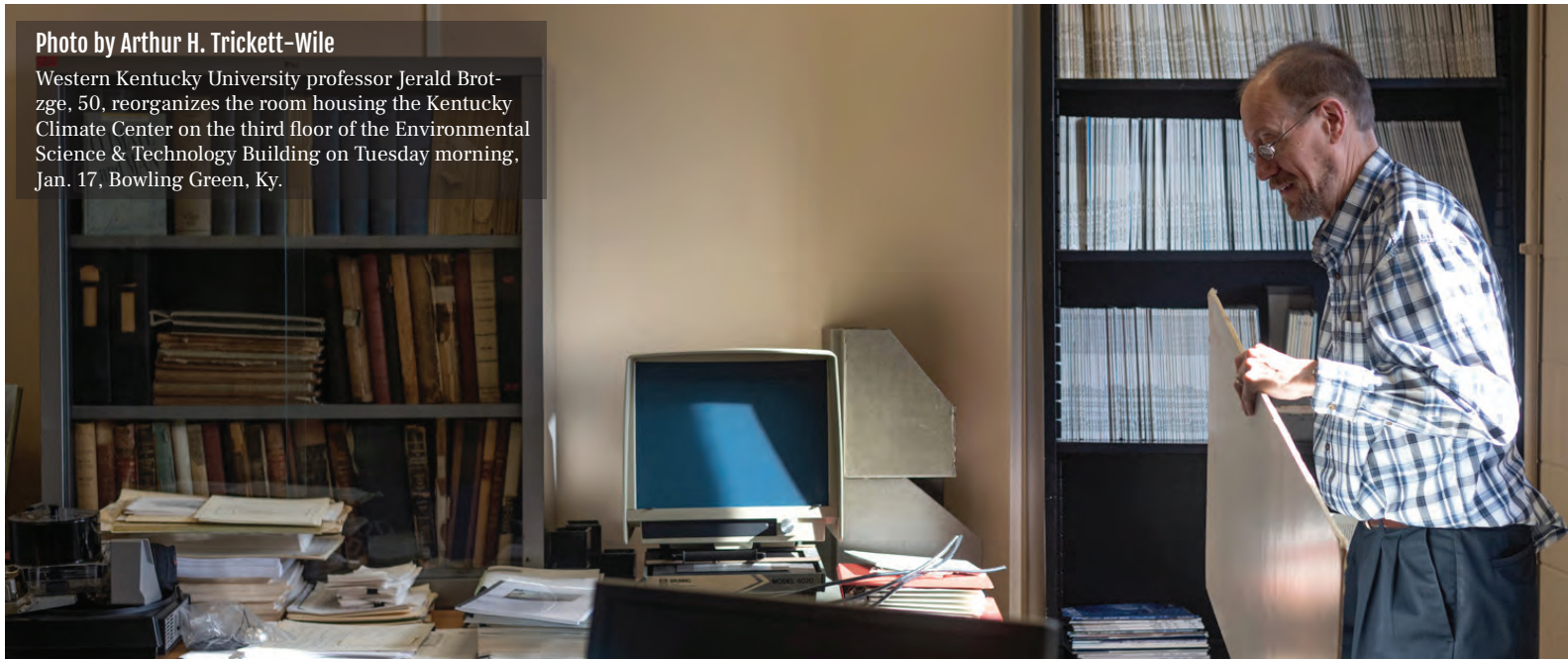
sasters, Brotzge said it comes down to mitigation of risk, which could mean anywhere from stocking food pantries to installing tornado shelters.

"In the case of winter weather here in Kentucky, we don't get that much. We average six inches of snow per year," Brotzge said. "How much should we as a community invest in snow plows? At the same time, when those events happen, they're very high impact. So much is weighing the risk of say, an EF-4, EF-5 tornado hitting the community versus how much do we want to invest in that. There's still a lot we can do."

Through investment and progress made in weather observations and

Photo by Arthur H. Trickett-Wile

Western Kentucky University professor Jerald Brotzge, 50, reorganizes the room housing the Kentucky Climate Center on the third floor of the Environmental Science & Technology Building on Tuesday morning, Jan. 17, Bowling Green, Ky.



affected by forest changes, Haneberg said. As bourbon is aged in white oak barrels, oak forests that are stressed could limit the capability of the industry.

"What happens if the climate changes enough, if these forests are stressed and maybe the oak isn't as good as it was before, or the oak trees are prone to insects or diseases," Haneberg said. "That's being a little bit out there, because there's no proof that this will happen, but [this is] in terms of scientists thinking 'okay, here's what we know. If this trend continues, what are the things that could go wrong?'"

Although this research is new, rec-

individual actions and communities, Gift said. Along with changes on a corporation and company level, plans to slow the effects of climate change sit in Washington - and Frankfort.

"It's really, really important that we think at that larger systems level, because so much of the climate, so much of our energy use is happening by large companies, and we can't alter that easily," Gift said.

Gift also explained that the quickest solution is making the state, nation and globe much more energy efficient, beginning at a federal level and descending to each individual.

When it comes to individual and community preparation for natural di-

meteorology services on a state and national level, the number of fatalities from natural disasters has decreased "by tenfold," Brotzge said.

Brotzge said although there are more steps to making Kentucky safer due to these events, he is proud of the state for its investment in weather observation. It is the data provided by weather radar and the Kentucky Mesonet that leads to a safer community.

"That's really the first step in making our community safer," Brotzge said. "Because those weather observations provide what we call situational awareness, and if the emergency managers in the National Weather Service are blind to what's occurring

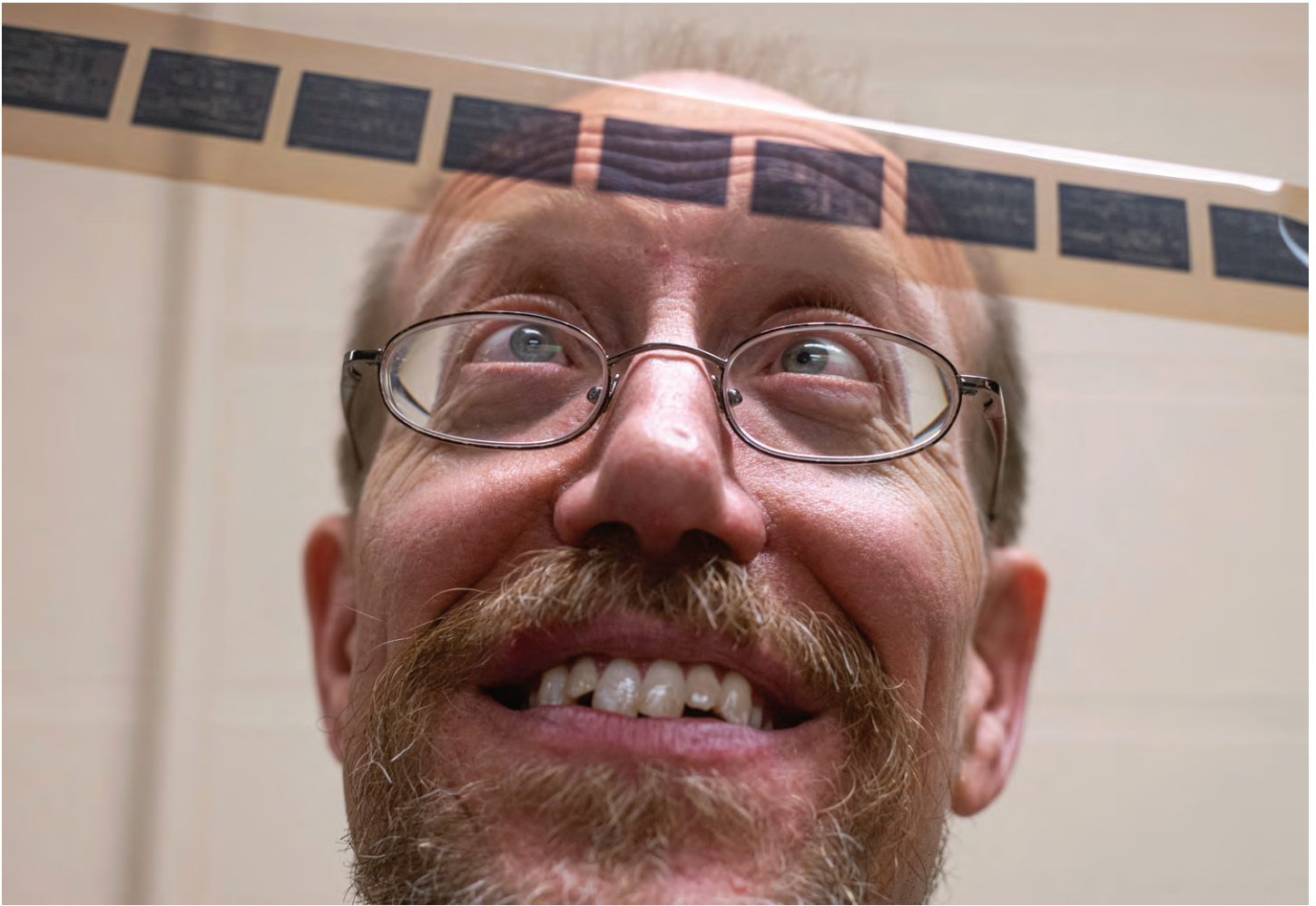


Photo by Arthur H. Trickett-Wile

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in the field, then they're not able to issue those warnings in time."

A flood monitoring network has been developed in Bowling Green, Polk said, which will provide data on flood levels throughout the city. As this project progresses, this data can be used to see flooding trends in certain locations, allowing residents to understand precautions to take against the certain level of threat.

"We can say, 'okay, what can we do now to stay safe and prepare ourselves against whatever happens until we know [what] that looks like and have enough information to maybe do something on a bigger scale to be proactive and make the change,'" Polk said.

After this, climate protection can be integrated into building planning and used to address preparedness level.

The best course of action is looking

at different kinds of severe weather and recognizing how climate change impacts human vulnerabilities - beginning at the local level, Polk said.

"If you can't stop what's happening fast enough, then the thing you need to do really is to try to build resilience, to try to adapt and come prepared," Polk said. "Whatever it might be, whether it's going to be tornadoes or floods or severe cold. You need to do things to prepare people, make them aware, educate them, then be prepared in whatever case, whether it's to do assessments or to do things to help community support and development [...] if we can do that, it will help us survive and weather the storm, no pun intended."

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WORDS TO KNOW:

Greenhouse Gases-

gases that trap heat in atmosphere, most commonly carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide

Carbon Dioxide Cycling-

Earth's system of recycling carbon atoms through the planet and atmosphere.

Tree Rings-

circular rings inside trees that can show a tree's age.

'I AM A GRATEFUL TORNADO SURVIVOR'

Tornado victims reflect on recovery one year later



PHOTO BY TUCKER COVEY

Lilly Riherd stands in the construction of her Bowling Green home that was hit by the tornado in 2021 on Saturday, Jan. 14, 2023.

By B Turner

Over a year after the deadly EF-3 tornado hit Bowling Green, Ky. members of the community are still recovering from and feeling the effects of the damage.

The deadly tornado claimed 17 lives in Warren County. Those who survived the tornado are still facing the effects. Lilly Riherd is one such survivor.

On the night of the tornado, Riherd, her son, her son-in-law and her grandson sheltered in her cellar. While they sheltered in assumed safety, the door to the cellar was sucked open by the tornado, as they could all hear glass shattering in the home above them.

Riherd and her family had moved most of their valuables to the garage already, and were able to sleep in some of the better areas of the house that night. In the morning, "people were just coming over voluntarily with chainsaws, with stuff, just doing anything that they can do," she said.

That Sunday, 40 people were at her house helping her remove the tree that had fallen on it and retrieving salvageable belongings. In the following days, Riherd was able to reach her insurance company and they were able to set her up in a hotel room.

Riherd was denied Federal Emergency Management Agency support due to insurance but had an overall

positive experience with her insurance company. After natural disasters strike an area, FEMA will enter the space and try to provide support.

Individuals qualify for FEMA assistance if they are uninsured or underinsured, or need immediate emergency housing.

"The insurance lady says 'hey, I'm gonna send you X amount of dollars, I know you probably need clothing, you need to do this' for that first month I was out of sorts," Riherd said.

She wanted to repair her "Lillypad" [her home] but during the repair and renovation process, the house continued to take damage until it was unsustainable, and she needed to start from

scratch. People in her life and from around the community have been helping with this process since the very beginning.

“I was just kind of in awe of the response of everyone in the community – and I can guarantee you when I go and say, ‘hey, it’s time to move in,’ I’ll have a multitude of people come and say, ‘let’s do it,’” Riherd said.

Many survivors of the tornado find themselves living in gratitude now. Angie Link is one such survivor.

“You know, you just have to sit back and be thankful,” Link said on being a survivor. “I mean, I was always thankful for the life I was living or the life I thought I was living, but post-tornado

Link said. “Two times we were turned down because someone had fraudulently used our names and address and fraudulently applied for FEMA.”

They were deemed ineligible for FEMA support because they had insurance.

Despite the hardships and complete rebuild of her house have not brought Link completely down.

“I am a grateful tornado survivor,” she said.

Cort Basham and his family were able to move back into their house in December 2022.

In the morning hours of Dec. 11 Basham, his wife, Laura, their two children, Simon and Naomi, and their dog,

The Basham family was assisted by the community and friends in the coming days.

“From the first minute everyone was super helpful,” Basham said.

The morning after the tornado, the Basham family returned to their home to find neighbors and friends helping remove debris from their house and cutting up the trees so they could be removed.

Despite all the help, the road to recovery has not been completely smooth sailing.

“The kids didn’t come [to the house] until April,” Basham said.

Basham and his wife sat the kids down and discussed whether they felt

“I still believe in humans, we can do it.”

– Cort Basham

you really have to be thankful and thank the Lord.”

Link and her husband, Leon, were both home when the tornado struck and sheltered in the hallway bathroom for safety. The tornado tore apart their home, but neither one of them was seriously injured. They were able to get to their neighbor’s house for safety, as did multiple of the other people in their cul-de-sac.

Link, and many others, received help and support from the Bowling Green community.

“The community has been really fantastic,” she said.

Link described the help she received.

“Organizations have been really nice,” Link said. “Emotional support, you know. Yes, it’s been very helpful.”

She may have had the community’s help and assistance from her insurance company, but Link and her husband were denied FEMA support.

“We got turned down three times,”

Teddy, were all at home. The family unit sheltered together in a closet, until a tree came crashing in, ruining their safe shelter location.

Basham and his family knew they couldn’t stay in a home with a hole in the roof safely – so they decided to risk making a run for it. All four of them and the dog were able to make it safely to his brother-in-law’s house up the street from them.

After Basham realized he and his family were stuck in an awful situation, he knew they had decisions they needed to make.

“You have two minutes to make decisions and none of them are good,” he said.

Basham’s son was able to find a way out of the house, which was struck by a total of five trees, and together they crossed over debris and down power lines to get to safety. Their house sustained major damage and has gone through numerous repairs for it to be livable again.

comfortable even moving back into the house. As a family, they decided that moving back to the neighborhood and house they had grown so close to was best.

Throughout the process, Basham has learned even more about how to live through gratitude.

When aspects of the rebuilding and recovery process got hard, he said, “It was just easier to stay in the mindset of, you know, we may not all be here to do it together, so I just didn’t get super frustrated with timelines and that kind of stuff.”

The Bowling Green community rallied together around the survivors of the tornado and provided them with the support and help they needed in a time of strife.

On all of the support and everything he has seen in the world, Basham said, “I still believe in humans, we can do it.”

Content editor B Turner can be reached at abigail.turner870@topper.wku.edu.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL DYLAN PAYNE

Cort and Laurie Basham stand in front of the tree that fell on their home the day before. "The stuff that really affects me is the unbelievable response from our community," Basham said.



PHOTO BY TUCKER COVEY

Cort Basham in front of his reconstructed Bowling Green, Ky. home on Thursday, Jan. 19, 2023. Basham and his wife Laurie nearly lost their entire home to the tornado that tore through Warren County in 2021.

WKU COMMUNITY PRESERVES ENVIRONMENT THROUGH FOOD SUSTAINABILITY

By Madison Carter

Every year, over one-third of all food purchased in America is wasted.

It is estimated that 103 million tons of wasted food were generated in 2018, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Colleges and universities were responsible for 613,106 tons.

Members of the WKU and Bowling Green community are working to not only prevent food waste on campus, but to mitigate the effects wasted food has on the environment.

In doing so, the community has provided food for those in need and created scholarship opportunities.

In an attempt to rescue food from

landfills, the WKU Food Recovery Network chapter collects around 800 hundred pounds of food each semester from campus locations, Gabrielle Hanson, WKU Food Recovery Network president and agriculture major, said.

Students in the chapter pick up excess food from campus dining locations P.O.D. Market, Pit Stop, Einstein Bros. Bagels, Subway and DaVinci's. They redistribute the food to nonprofits in Bowling Green, Hanson said.

The group mostly accepts single packaged foods that have expiration dates and are less likely to be contaminated.

The recovered food goes to non-profits such as First Christian Church, Hope House Ministries, Barren River

Area Safe Space and the WKU Food Pantry.

This semester the food recovery network recovered and donated around 770 pounds of food, Hanson said.

"I feel like food waste is a really weird problem we have," Hanson said. "In my classes, we always talk about how we need to grow more food, but then you turn around and they are wasting hundreds of pounds of food."

Hanson is proud of the work the food recovery network contributes to food recovery and is hoping to recruit more students to the chapter.

Julie Boca, First Christian Church Community Grocery volunteer, works with the FRN to distribute recovered food to the community.



PHOTO BY TUCKER COVEY

A cow at the WKU Agriculture & Research Education Center in Bowling Green, Ky. on Saturday, Jan. 21, 2023.



PHOTO BY SEAN MCINNIS

Annie Whaley, a second year student at WKU who is also a vegetarian, shops at a Kroger on Campbell lane for vegetarian friendly foods on Monday, Jan. 23. Whaley has never tried meat before and has been a vegetarian her whole life.

The First Christian Church Community Grocery allows people who need assistance to come “shop” their abundant supplies of fresh produce, meat, portable foods, prepared food, canned foods, hygiene products and more.

Boca said that while the church does supply some food out of pocket or through grants, at least half of the food is recovered from other places.

Volunteers at the grocery help shoppers find the food they need while allowing them to have autonomy in picking out food.

“We didn't want to just hand them a bag of food,” Boca said. “We wanted to give them choices and provide them with more dignity.”

Boca said she is grateful for the donations that allow the church to help those in need.

The pre-prepared food the FRN donates to the church is extremely helpful because it allows shoppers to have access to meals immediately, Boca said.

“It only takes one catastrophe, job loss or health situation, to suddenly need help getting food,” Boca said. “We try to make it a place where people feel welcome and not looked down upon.”

Another program the church grocery receives food from is Glean Kentucky, an organization founded in 2010 to address the problems of food waste and hunger.

Glean Kentucky donates fresh local produce three times a week to the church grocery.

“Last week we got over 500 pounds of produce,” Boca said. “It comes from Kroger, Sams and Meijer. This is all really new, but I am so glad to see it.”

The church is currently serving an average of 540 people per month, Boca said.

Apart from recovering food, an effective way to eat sustainably is by consuming less meat.

Annie Whaley, a sophomore international affairs and public relations

major, has been a vegetarian her whole life.

Being vegetarian has not only been beneficial concerning health, but it has prevented Whaley from feeling guilty about the actions of the meat industry.

Due to the limitations of cooking in a dorm, Whaley is accustomed to shopping at Pod and Pit Stop for easy to make meals.

“At P.O.D. or at Pit Stop, there are so many frozen food options, but they don't really have any vegetarian frozen food options,” Whaley said. “I also wish they had more fresh fruits and veggies. I understand it can be hard to store those things, but I feel like it would be really good for all the vegetarian and vegan students on campus.”

Being vegetarian allows people to minimize their waste because excess food can be composted Whaley said.

Whaley encourages people to try vegetarianism not just for the health benefits, but for ethical reasons and to



**Each year,
119
billion pounds of
food is wasted in
the United States.**

**Nearly
40%
of all food in America
is wasted**

**Source:
Food and Drug Administration**

limit the impact meat has on climate change.

While not all food can be utilized for consumption, composting is a great way to get rid of wasted food.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, when food goes to landfills, the nutrients never go to the soil. Instead, the food rots and produces methane gas, which contributes to global warming.

Rather than letting food from campus end up in landfills, Joseph Reynolds, agriculture technician, turns food scraps into compost at the WKU farm.

Reynolds said, food waste is collected from campus dining locations such as DSU and the Commons, and it is then delivered to the farm.

The food scraps are first mixed with sawdust and later mixed with leaves to create compost, Reynolds said.

Reynolds said, composting is the best way to get rid of food waste because it prevents the creation of methane and allows people to grow plants more effectively while using less resources.

“Instead of going to a landfill and taking up space there, by putting it into compost you get benefits,” Reynolds said.

One benefit of creating compost is that it allows soil to hold water better, Reynolds said. It also helps loosen up soil so plants can more easily absorb nutrients.

The finished compost is sold to the community, and the proceeds go towards funding scholarships for students in the agriculture department, Reynolds said. 75% of the proceeds go toward scholarships and 25% goes back to the city.

According to the WKU website, composting is one of the ways WKU is building a sustainable community and taking responsibility for the waste it produces.

“It’s a good program, and they have been doing it since the late 1980s,” Reynolds said. “It doesn’t always amount to a lot, but it adds up.”

News reporter Madison Carter can be reached at madison.carter312@topper.wku.edu.

WHERE TO DONATE ON CAMPUS:

Donate to the Food Pantry in the Office of Sustainability

- Toiletries including menstrual products, shampoo, conditioner, disposable razors, etc.
- Boxed goods including tuna, canned fruit, soups, boxed dinners, etc.
- Snacks including PopTarts, chips, crackers, applesauce, trail mix, etc.

Donate or volunteer at the First Christian Church's
Community Grocery Store

- "Shelf stable" options and hygiene products
- Frozen or refrigerated items
- Bags



OPINION:

IS BIG RED STILL GOING GREEN?

By Price Wilborn

At the beginning of this new year, as with the start of any new year, we have been given the perfect time to reflect on the year that was 2022 while looking to see how far we still need to go.

This includes issues like climate change. For decades, experts have been warning about the dangers. 2023 will doubtless be no different.

When I came back to WKU's campus at the beginning of last semester, one thing I noticed early on was the lack of recycling bins around campus. Last year as a freshman, I found it refreshing to see a college campus working to recycle and minimize its impact on climate change, however small it may be.

Now, however, there are fewer of these bins noticeable. When I first noticed this in DSU across from Chick-fil-A and Steak 'n Shake, I began to look elsewhere on campus during my day-to-day trekking up and down the Hill. I was surprised to see that there were fewer recycling bins noticeable on campus.

This is not to say that all of these bins have been done away with. According to Jace Lux, WKU Director of Media Relations, "there has been no change to the number of recycling bins on campus from the fall semester to the current semester." While this may be the case, the opening of new buildings like the Commons requires more recycling bins on campus, not a redistribution of those the university currently has. The lack of visibility of these bins creates the feeling that WKU is not trying as hard to do its part in protecting the planet for future generations.

Now is not the time for WKU to go back on its efforts to promote and increase recycling and other climate-friendly practices.

Every student on WKU's campus is in different phases of change and uncertainty in their lives. Each one is creating habits, discovering things about the world and discovering things about themselves. We take a new interest in the world we live in, many of us hoping to preserve it for as long as we can.

For these reasons, WKU needs to redouble its efforts to recycle and promote green living. Instead, WKU has chosen to seemingly back away from this cause.

Since I first stepped on the Hill in fall 2021, I have heard students around campus wonder what happens to things recycled on campus. I have heard people say that they have seen the recycling and the trash end up in the same vehicle to go to the same place. Whether this is the case or not I do not know, but it is important to make this distinction known.

It is time for the university to openly show the WKU community how the school is committed to doing its part to combat climate change and protect this planet for its students, present and future.

It is important to note, of course, that it is large corporations and big businesses that bear the most responsibility in climate change. If meaningful change is to be made, governments around the globe must put into place laws and regulations to limit the continual release of greenhouse gasses into the air. Big businesses must be made to find renewable energy sources or limit their burning of fossil fuels.

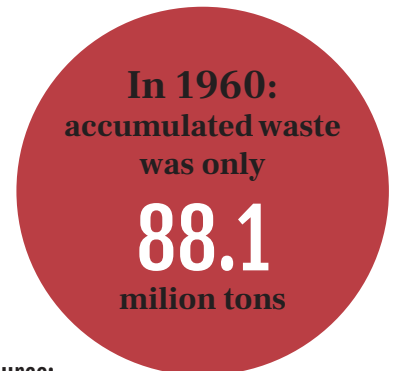
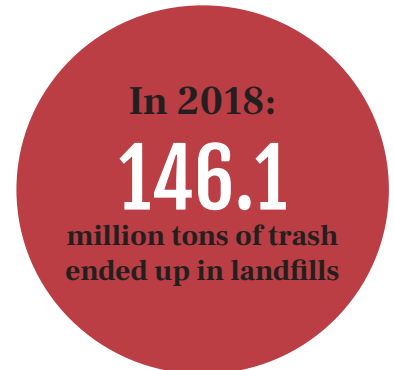
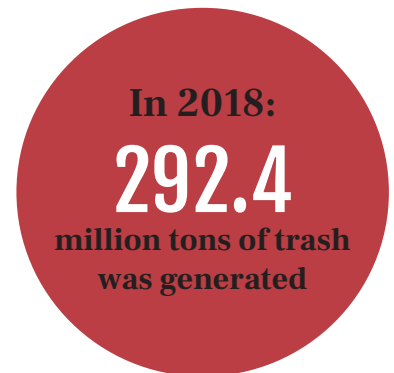
While WKU may not have a large impact on climate change, it can have a large impact on the lives of its students. The university visibly showing its commitment to doing its part will encourage its young, impressionable students to take an interest and begin



to care. Instead of seemingly stepping away from the cause, WKU can become a model in the lives of its students and continue to shape their lives outside of the classroom.

Commentary editor Price Wilborn can be reached at edwin.wilborn835@topper.wku.edu. Follow him on Twitter @[pricewilborn](https://twitter.com/pricewilborn).

IN THE UNITED STATES:



Source:
U.S Environmental Protection Agency



PHOTO BY MEGAN FISHER

WK LIQUORS CELEBRATES REOPENING 13 MONTHS AFTER TORNADO



Manojkumar Patel celebrates with WKU students during the grand reopening of his store, WK Liquors, on Jan. 19. In honor of the reopening, Student Government Association leaders organized a ribbon cutting and created a mock magazine cover which they had framed as a gift for Patel.

WK Liquors was buzzing with excitement and anticipation on Jan. 19. WKU students were filing through the doors, eager to get a new bottle of their favorite liquor and see their favorite owner, Manojkumar Patel. This hadn't been the scene there for more than a year.

The store was destroyed when tornadoes swept through Kentucky in December 2021, and Patel has been on a long road to reopening ever since.

Emily Foster, Patel's insurance broker, got a call from him at 6 a.m. the morning after the storm.

"I knew he would be OK because he had good coverage with me," Foster said. "I mainly worried about him mentally and emotionally because that store and the kids were his life and brought him so much joy."

Chad Goodrich, Patel's marketing representative, had faith that Patel would rebuild.

"If the tornado effects on his business prove anything, it's that Manoj doesn't only have the confidence but also the consistency to make his dreams a reality," Goodrich said.

Patel said he couldn't have reopened without all the help he received from others, including his uncle, Jay Patel, and his accountant, Jo Anne Fowler, who worked with him tirelessly from the day of the loss to the reopening.

Patel said the support he received from WKU students also meant a lot to him, including when he was voted best booze stop in "Best of the Hill" in April.

"Even when I had no store, they voted me the best," Patel said.

The WKU community also supported Patel financially through a GoFundMe created by Natalie Kelley, a fall 2022 WKU graduate and current graduate student.

"When I saw the damage done to WK Liquors, I was devastated for Manoj," Kelley said. "Anyone who knows him can attest that he is truly one of the kindest, most caring people in the world."

What started as a small gesture quickly grew, Kelley said. By the time it closed, less than a month after the tornado, \$15,061 was raised. After GoFundMe fees, Patel received \$14,458.

"It quickly became something so much bigger than I imagined it would be, and I believe that is just a testament to the kind of person that Manoj is," Kelley said.

When it came to rebuilding, Patel was grateful that his landladies allowed him to redesign the store, and he worked with Mike Miller of Miller Contracting to do so.

"I not only enjoyed the job, but I also gained a friend," Miller said.

To show his love for WKU students, Patel bought an LED sign to go outside the store that will not only advertise the store but also promote school and social events. When the store celebrated its grand reopening event, Patel had WKU students cut the ribbon to show his appreciation for the help and love he was given.

"You don't get this kind of support in any business," Patel said. "It is always good to acknowledge the good will instead of ignoring it."

Many students showed up to give their support on opening day.

"I love Manoj," Bowling Green senior Sarah Price said. "He always remembers your order and obviously cares a lot about his customers."

Patel also expressed his thanks to the others who helped him including Heidelberg Distributors, Clark Distribution, E-Town Marketing and Distributing, Purple Toad Winery, Southern Glazer's Wines and Spirits, Smith Brothers, Beer House and Pepsi, all of whom Patel recognized as his "partners in growth." He is also thankful to work with BeatBox Beverages as well as Atomic Brands, which he said has a devotion to perfection.

On the day of the store's reopening, the constant stream of WKU students indicated the community support won't be going away anytime soon.

"I've always loved coming here," Chicago senior Maxie Von Holten said. "It's just a fun environment, and Manoj recognizes everyone."

Patel said he's grateful for the support of not only WKU students but the larger community as well.

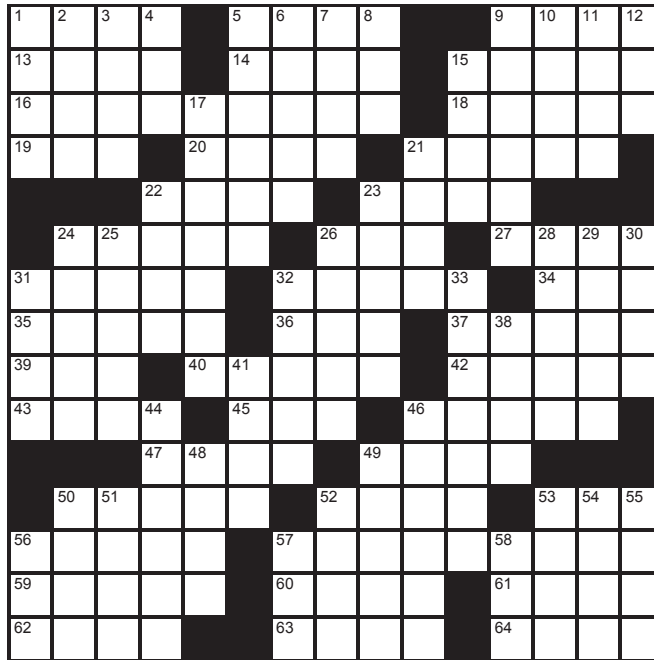
"Thank you to the Bowling Green community for opening their arms to my business and leading by example in support of WK Liquors," he said. "I am very grateful."

Fun Page

Crossword Puzzle

Across

- 1 Gaelic tongue
- 5 Farm unit
- 9 Dip's partner
- 13 Attention-getter
- 14 Nitty-gritty
- 15 Savage
- 16 Unwilling
- 18 Parts for 5 Down
- 19 "My gal" of song
- 20 Percolate slowly
- 21 Fires
- 22 Lopsided
- 23 Stead
- 24 Zingers
- 26 Moray, e.g.
- 27 Lays down the lawn
- 31 Flick
- 32 Golf course leftover
- 34 High school class, for short
- 35 Archetype
- 36 Dutch city
- 37 Upright
- 39 French sea



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Down

- 40 Cruise ship
- 42 Dreams
- 43 Guesses (Abbr.)
- 45 Round Table title
- 46 Risk a ticket
- 47 Serene
- 49 Campus figure
- 50 Vineyard fruit
- 52 Partiality
- 53 Melbourne locale
- 56 Bastilles
- 57 Humorist Clemens
- 59 Ringmaster
- 60 A while back
- 61 Yemeni city
- 62 Shirt types
- 63 Garden intruder
- 64 Trait carrier

- 1 Corn units
- 2 Actress Perlman of *Cheers*
- 3 Order to a broker
- 4 Down Under bird
- 5 Performing artists
- 6 Unbalanced
- 7 Ancient Germanic letter
- 8 Phone number add-on (Abbr.)
- 9 Early spring bloomer
- 10 Bruce Banner's AKA
- 11 Residents (Suffix)

- 12 Latin foot
- 15 Scottish hillside
- 17 Meadow ding dong
- 21 Storage cylinder
- 22 Met solo
- 23 Pry bar
- 24 Indicates
- 25 Ward off
- 26 Sea duck
- 28 Corpulent
- 29 Cut into cubes
- 30 Lushes
- 31 Marcel Marceau, for one
- 32 Tough material
- 33 Violent storm
- 38 Lamented

- 41 Capri or Wight, for examplr
- 44 Post office machines
- 46 All wet
- 48 Cathedral area
- 49 *Odyssey* enchantress
- 50 Word after wild or board
- 51 Food staple
- 52 Curse
- 53 Wither away
- 54 Property claim
- 55 Poet Sexton
- 56 Passenger carrier
- 57 Do yard work
- 58 Joker

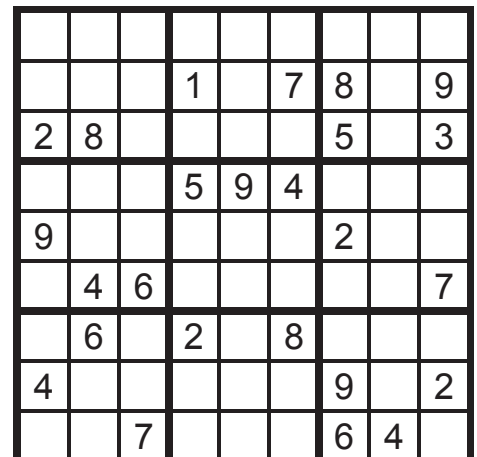
Variety Trivia

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1. What Italian town is known for producing balsamic vinegar?
(a) Modena (b) Portofino (c) Verona
2. What capital is home to the Republic of Kugelmugelis, a micronation?
(a) Prague (b) Vienna (c) Budapest
3. What two states have a smaller population than Washington D.C.?
(a) Wyoming & Vermont (b) Montana & Iowa (c) Rhode Island & Maine
4. What popular toy was invented by a NASA engineer?
(a) Slip and Slide water slide (b) Walkie-Talkies (c) Super-Soaker Water Gun
5. What celebrity is known for having a prominently protruding mentum?
(a) Howard Stern (b) Jay Leno (c) Dolly Parton
6. Why did the inventor of bubble gum make it pink?
(a) It was the only dye available (b) By accident (c) The inventor's daughter chose it
7. What Muppet once testified before Congress?
(a) Kermit (b) Elmo (c) Big Bird
8. Where in Brazil is the famous carnival held?
(a) Sao Paulo (b) La Paz (c) Rio de Janeiro
9. What nation grows 5 centimeters wider each year?
(a) Iceland (b) Australia (c) Poland
10. What country has produced the most coffee beans?
(a) Ethiopia (b) Mexico (c) Brazil

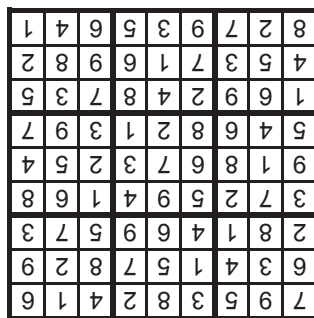
Sudoku

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 1 to 9.



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Solutions



- 1. a
- 2. b
- 3. a
- 4. c
- 5. b
- 6. a
- 7. b
- 8. c
- 9. a
- 10. c

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