

LIFE

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Race Unity Group still talking, 9 months in

BY GENEVIE POSTLETHWAIT

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In a resignation speech that came after weeks of escalating student protests, University of Missouri system president Tom Wolfe gave a deceptively simple reason for why racial tension at the Midwestern university had come to a boil. People had stopped listening to each other, he said. He and other administrators didn't respond or react when students brought their concerns to their attention. "We got frustrated with each other," he said.

"This is not, I repeat not, the way change should come about," Wolfe said Monday. "Change comes from listening, learning, caring and conversation. We have to respect each other enough to stop yelling at each other and start listening ..."

While tension was building on Mizzou's campus — students protesting, one of them hunger-striking, and the football team threatening a boycott — a diverse group of western Kentuckians gathered round a table to do just what Wolfe said Mizzou so desperately needed. People of all colors came together for "listening, learning, caring and conversation" across racial and cultural lines.

Every Thursday night, anywhere from 10 to 20 people of all colors, though mostly black and white, come together at Washington Street Baptist Church with a simple goal: to form lasting friendships across racial and cultural lines, and to keep an honest conversation going about racial tension. They call themselves the Race Unity Group.

For most of them, the conversation started in April when the group brought the documentary "Racial Taboo" to Paducah's Maiden Alley Cinema. By design, the film was followed by an hour of discussion in small groups, but for many of those who came to see "Racial Taboo" that weekend that hour wasn't nearly enough. So the Race Unity Group scheduled six weekly meetings following the film, all open to the public.



Elizabeth Khadem of Paducah (center) shares a moment of laughter with Alvin Moore (left) and Belinda Dalton-Russell of Paducah during the Race Unity meeting at Washington Street Baptist Church on Thursday. JEFF LANGE | The Sun



Floyd Donley (left) of Marshall County enjoys a moment of laughter with Bradley Holland during Thursday evening's Race Unity meeting at Washington Street Baptist Church. JEFF LANGE | The Sun



Robert Hernandez (left), Floyd Donley (center) and Al Crim got together Thursday morning at Etcetera for coffee and conversation. The three retired men are members of Paducah's Race Unity Group, a diverse collection of individuals who get together every Thursday night to talk, get to know one another and increase understanding across racial and cultural divides. Since the group began almost nine months ago, the three men have become close friends and like to get together on their own outside of their Thursday night meetings. GENEVIE POSTLETHWAIT | The Sun

Nine months later, they're still meeting, and still talking.

"I think it's a strength of this group, that we are beginning to hear each other's backstories," Beth Khadem pointed out at Thursday night's meeting. "I've heard it said that kindness gives meaning to words, and I think that's very important. Sometimes it's hard to hear when people are angry, even rightfully so, so this has been a really exceptional experience. I'm not sure why we got so lucky, but people are able to

tell us their painful truths in a way that allows us to internalize it. And I'm grateful for that every single Thursday. Really."

"It makes everything personal," Marie Baggett added. "When you hear Linda's story, Robert's story, Brad's story. And Alvin's very important story about when he was young, and he and Linda were trying to make it. It makes it personal, and the news media doesn't make it personal. It builds up anger, tension and conflict."

"We have a good thing going," Khadem said.

The group is diverse in age, gender, race and religion — everyone brings something different to the table in the little meeting room in Washington Street Baptist. Race and its effect on how indi-

viduals are able to experience and move through life is a huge topic at the Race Unity meetings, but it often boils down to how we relate to one another, human to human.

The idea is that the more people understand one

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Teacher brings history to life as a re-enactor

BY KELSEY GERHARDT

The Daily News

MIDDLESBORO — History comes to life on the weekends for David Fultz, who is a blacksmith and re-enactor at Wilderness Road State Park in Ewing, Virginia.

By day, Fultz is an American and world history teacher at Claiborne County High School. A fellow teacher wore re-enactment clothing to school, and Fultz was intrigued.

"He loaned me some clothes, and I've been going up ever since. That was in 2004, and now I do it every chance I get to help out and be there," Fultz said.

When Fultz started re-enacting, he saw there was a blacksmithing area that was built with all of the tools intact, but there was not a blacksmith

currently working. Fultz asked Chief Ranger Billy Heck about blacksmithing and eventually, Heck taught Fultz everything he needed to know.

"A big part of this was, I grew up reading historical fiction and mountain man books, but this is more. I guess, I found my niche and I absolutely love it," Fultz said. "It's real, and we can document everything we do — the buildings and equipment — and it's accurate."

Fultz originally looked into woodworking during re-enactments, but is given the chance to learn and experiment with different areas of life a few hundred years ago. This is an accurate representation of life in the 18th century, and it keeps Fultz busy and learning.

"It all intertwines and that's something we try to make peo-

ple understand in the fort. It's a community, a family, and we all work together and develop skills for self-sufficiency which was so important then," Fultz said.

Fultz's wife, Ashley, and children, 7-year-old Maddie and 4-year-old Noah, not only support him in his efforts, but Maddie also dresses up and participates with him.

"(Maddie) isn't really into it yet, but she just likes dress-

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Associated Press/Kelsey Gerhardt/The Middlesboro Daily News

David Fultz, a blacksmith and re-enactor, works Oct. 10 at Wilderness Road State Park in Ewing, Va. Fultz's wife, Ashley, and children, Maddie, 7, and Noah, 4, not only support Fultz in his efforts, but Maddie also dresses up and participates with him.



Vietnam vets to deliver gifts to Fort Campbell

Staff report
A convoy of vehicles will leave Paducah for Fort Campbell on Monday morning, Nov. 30, and along the way, others will fall in. Then, Paducah's Vietnam Veterans of America Post 337 will deliver approximately \$9,000 of new

Christmas gifts for Fort Campbell soldiers to put under their Christmas trees. There are U.S. Army soldiers serving at Fort Campbell who are financially unable to provide their children with Christmas gifts. A young soldier's pay is modest to begin with, and their

incomes are lower than while they're serving in a dangerous area, such as Afghanistan. To help those soldiers and their families have the best Christmas they can, Fort Campbell has a free gift store where qualifying soldiers can shop for gifts to give their

kids on Christmas morning. All the gifts are new, just like those they'd find at any department or toy store, but the gifts are free to the qualifying soldiers. Paducah's VVA Chapter 337 helps stock the shelves of the free store with new toys, games

and books through the "Little Soldiers Christmas Tree" program. This is the seventh consecutive year the VVA has raised money, bought gifts and delivered them to the store at Fort Campbell. The store is staffed by volunteers, mostly spouses of active-

duty service members. Last year, the free store provided gifts for more than 2,500 children of Fort Campbell soldiers. Contact Bob Englert at 270-206-0261 or robertenglert@outlook.com for more information or to accompany the Nov. 30 delivery caravan.

WKCTC opens trip to Wales, England, Ireland to public

Staff report
Members of the public may travel to England, Ireland and Wales in May as part of the West Kentucky Community and Technical College Study Abroad Program.

The trip, which is open to WKCTC students, faculty, staff and the community, will provide a combination of culture and history throughout rural Ireland and into the metropolitan areas of Dublin and London.

In Spring 2016, an introductory literature course will focus on providing a sense of place for England, Wales and Ireland. The course will be offered online and can be taken for credit or audited. The course is open to the community and is recommended for those traveling.

"One can only imagine the past world of King Arthur or the time of Shakespeare by stepping back in time to visit the numerous castles, museum and cathedrals, and indulge in the heartbeat of the contemporary city which blends the architectural features of the past with the traditions of the present," said Pat Blaine, trip tour leader and WKCTC English professor. "WKCTC students and community members will learn

about the larger world around them in a richer, more profound way than can ever be learned from just reading about it."

Visit efcollegestudytours.com for trip information and early registration. The tour number is #1697120VE. Interested participants may call 1-877-485-4184. Community members may also purchase poinsettias for the holiday season to help raise funds for WKCTC students who would like to study abroad.

Available colors include red, white, pink, Cortez Burgundy, Christmas Ribbons and glitter. Prices range from \$12 to \$20 and must be ordered by Nov. 24. Orders will be delivered to WKCTC's Haws Gymnasium on Wednesday, Dec. 2. Contact Blaine at pat.blaine@kctcs.edu to place an order. Check should be made out to PJC, Inc., P.O. Box 7380, Paducah, KY 42002-7380. Mail checks to Pat Blaine, 4810 Alben Barkley Drive, Paducah, KY 42001. Visit the WKCTC Study Abroad Program website at westkentucky.kctcs.edu/en/Student_Life/StudyAbroad.aspx or contact Blaine at 270-534-3207 for more information.

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another, the more they care for one another and see beyond each other's stereotypes — young black man, old white woman, foreigner — the easier it is to talk about tough things like race and prevent racial tensions from coming to a boil. There's no room for closed-mindedness, they often say, and there's no room for dancing around the issues.

"If you don't ask the hard questions, it's easy for people to just get by, because you're never exposed," Alvin Moore said. "It's very important to ask the hard questions so that you press people to think about who they are and where they are, without being belligerent about it. If you're not intentional about it, nothing ever changes."

Khadem brought up a statistic she'd seen recently that about 75 percent of white people have no black friends. This raised the question, "Well, what is the definition of 'friend?'" Khadem considered it a moment.

"I'll tell you what it would be for me, because there are different levels of friendship," she said. "For me, it's having people in my home. Having people in places you have to be — at work, at school — that's one level. That's the safe place. But intentional friendship, it'd have to be pretty intentional for us to be in each other's homes."

From there, Brad Holland posed the question to the group, how many other races other than your own have you had inside your home?

Khadem pointed out the natural reac-

tion for some, especially those who might be new to meetings, might be to feel judged by that question, that it might feel like finger pointing.

"What you want is not to condemn and point a finger, but to make them do a self-evaluation and say hey, you know what? I haven't (had someone of a race other than my own in my home)," Holland said. "Why haven't I done that? Am I this way? Am I that way? Well maybe I am a little bit ... racial. OK, that's fine. What am I going to do to correct it? Ask the hard questions to where you cannot deflect the question. Rather than tiptoeing around it, because we've tiptoed around this issue for a long time."

The conversation shifts from breezy to challenging, from rolling laughter to sober nods of agreement.

The word "intention" is used often, and is really the linchpin of their group. Many of their conversations come back to Moore's point, "If you're not inten-

tional about it, nothing changes."

Last Thursday the group got to talking about the proverbial school cafeteria — when does the racial tension start? When do kids of different colors go from sitting together as friends, to separating themselves?

In elementary school, kids of all colors seem to play with one another easily, naturally. But by high school something shifts, they all agreed. You can usually see it in the cafeteria, several pointed out. In elementary, the cafeteria is a healthy mix of colors and genders — it's just a bunch of kids. But by high school you can often see clearly the demarcations of social class and color.

"It's when they lose their innocence when that comes into play. I didn't lose my innocence probably until fifth or sixth grade, but it was introduced to me from adults," Holland said. "I knew there was a difference, but as far as friendship you didn't know that difference. We play the same. We

like Hot Wheels together. We like Legos and all of that. But then an adult came in and said, 'Hey, y'all are not supposed to play together.' Huh? As a kid, you're sitting there asking these questions, why not? ... But then a seed has been planted, not a good seed, but a weed, that never produces any fruit. It just spreads.

"What I try to tell or convey to others, we think the same," Holland said. "It's the same song. It may be in rap music, but then it's the same lyrics in country. We think the same about certain things, but some of us refuse to embrace the truth."

The Race Unity Group meets every Thursday from 6 to 7:30 at Washington Street Baptist Church (though be warned, the conversation often runs until 8). The group will not meet on Thanksgiving. Anyone and everyone is welcome to join in on the conversation.

Contact Genevieve Postlethwait, a Paducah Sun staff writer, at 270-575-8651.

HISTORY

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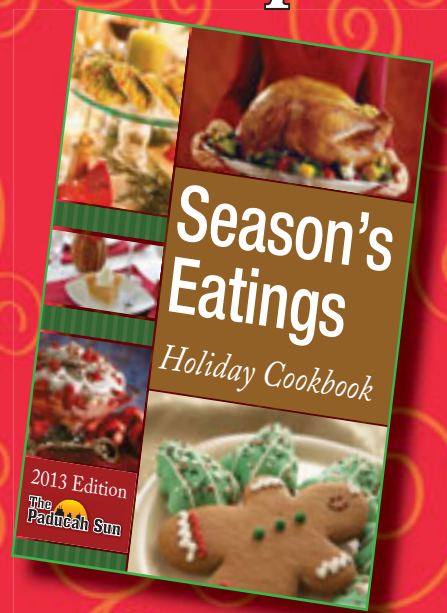
ing up and wearing a costume.

She understands what we're doing, but she doesn't really get the concept of period correct, but it's still a lot of fun for her," Fultz said.

Fultz has been a teacher for 18 years and received his degree from Lincoln Memorial University. He lives in Harrogate, Tennessee, with his family and enjoys spending time with his kids and being outdoors in his free time.

Send us your recipes!

The holiday season is full of joy, full of sharing, and full of good eating. So come along and share your joy of good eating and great food with us and all our readers. Send us your favorite Thanksgiving and Christmas recipes for the upcoming edition of our 5th annual holiday cookbook!



Season's Eatings

The Paducah Sun's Special Holiday Cookbook will publish mid-December.

Deadline to submit recipes is November 16!



Send us your recipes and you could

Win \$100 gift card

Limit of 5 recipes per person

*Employees and immediate family of Paxton Media Group are not eligible to win.

How to submit your recipe(s):

Recipes can be emailed to lcocke@paducahsun.com with the word "Recipe" in the subject line -OR-

Mail your typed recipe on letter size paper to The Paducah Sun Attn: Season's Eatings P.O. Box 2300, Paducah, KY 42002

With your recipe(s), please include your NAME, ADDRESS and PHONE NUMBER where you can easily be contacted. If you have questions, please call Linda Cocke at 270-575-8678.

*We won't be able to print all the recipes but we will print as many as space permits.



Young Leaders of Western Kentucky

Nominate Someone Today!

Help us recognize the area's young leaders!

The Four Rivers Business Journal, in partnership with the Paducah Chamber of Commerce and Entre Paducah, are seeking nominations for our area's best Young Leaders. If you know someone between the ages of 25-40 who is making a difference within their profession and community, nominate them and help us to highlight their accomplishments as well as their role in the future of our community.

All finalists will be featured in the January edition of the Business Journal on December 24, 2015. Of the finalists, a Young Leader of the Year will be selected!

The Young Leader of the Year will receive a \$1,000 scholarship for professional development!

For more information and to download the nomination form please visit www.fourriversbusiness.com or call Amanda Breedlove at 270-575-8764.

Nomination Deadline is November 20th!

