

★opinion

OUR PURPOSE

To actively influence and impact a better quality of life in Middle Tennessee

LAURA HOLLINGSWORTH, President and Publisher
MICHAEL A. ANASTASI, Vice President/News and Executive Editor
MARIA DE VARENNE, News Director
DAVID PLAZAS, Opinion Engagement Editor
FRANK DANIELS III, Metro Columnist

Triumphs, stumbles featured in Sip It!



opinion editor
David Plazas
 dplazas@tennessean.com

"Dreamers and doers seem to congregate here in Nashville, Tennessee, to coax each other into bringing ideas into action." — From the introduction of "Word of Mouth: Nashville Conversations," by Lily Clayton Hansen.

Three years ago artist, writer and Chicago native Lily Hansen followed her ex-boyfriend to Nashville on a turbulent journey that eventually led to her becoming a published author.

"My beginnings here were pretty brutal," said Hansen, 25. "The relationship I was in fell apart, I didn't have friends. I had no money. I was in a crappy living situation. I quite frankly needed a project to dive into to keep my sanity."

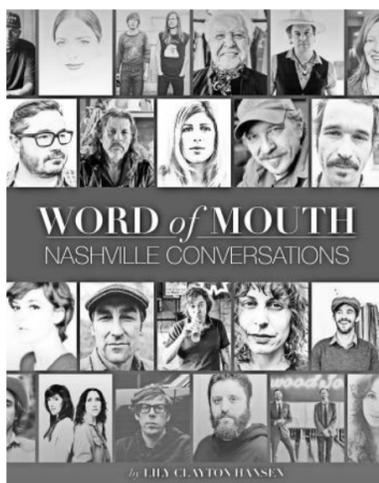
She was inspired by a journalism class assignment when she was a student at University of Illinois-Chicago, requiring her to interview five interesting people.

"I'm going to interview people who seem like they're making a living doing what they love," Hansen had said to herself.

"Thematically, I'm drawn to kind of quirky outlier types. I'm an odd duck," she added.

That project morphed into "Word of Mouth: Nashville Conversations," a collection of interviews with 62 entrepreneurs in a variety of creative industries, including music, fashion, craft beer and food.

All of these are staples of what has



"Word of Mouth: Nashville Conversations" is a collection of interviews.

made Nashville an "it" city, growing in popularity as a destination for transplants and visitors alike.

On Tuesday Hansen will begin moderating a yearlong series of interviews with several subjects featured in her book in the Entrepreneur's monthly Sip It! series.

Sip It! has historically featured entrepreneurs talking about their stories of struggle and success and answering questions from the audience. The Tennessean is the media sponsor.

Hansen said she wants to have "a very real conversation about what it takes to build a brand," and her first



Lily Clayton Hansen moved to Nashville, lived through a rough time and ended up writing a book.

conversation is with John Walker and Todd Mayo, founders of Music City Roots and Bluegrass Underground.

Bluegrass Underground is known for its monthly musical events in the Cumberland Caverns and Music City Roots is the roots and Americana variety show broadcast live weekly. In the book, Walker said about Mayo: "Todd coined a really great phrase, which I use all the time now, which is, 'We're nurturing the emerging musical middle class'."

Mayo and Walker were among the first people Hansen met in Nashville. "They have a kindred spirit connection they're able to translate into a business partnership," she said.

Among the topics she wants to explore with her interview subjects are their failures and how they picked themselves back up when they fell.

"No one wants to talk about how hard it is to build a business," she said.

In addition to a Q&A with each entrepreneur, the book features intimate photographs of them by Danielle Atkins, Andrea Behrends, Brett Warren and Joshua Black Wilkins.

Overall, the feedback for the book, published by locally owned Spring House Press last year, has been positive, though not everyone has been happy.

"I've had some people in town call

me out on not including certain people," Hansen said. "This was not the 'Best of Nashville,' ... these are not the only people you need to know in Nashville. These were the people who would sit down and talk to me when I asked them to."

She would meet them at cafes and bars, and even some in random settings like singer-songwriter Kix Brooks of Brooks & Dunn, whom she met in an airport. He is scheduled to come for a Sip It! interview in February.

The book was a two-and-a-half-year labor of love and it was an emotional roller coaster for Hansen, who occasionally went through moments of self-doubt that made the book seem like a pipe dream at times.

She said her biggest failure was "giving up on myself too quickly." However, her stubbornness and persistence kept her going.

Not to mention her hard work ethic. An entrepreneur herself, Hansen self-financed her book by waiting tables and bartending.

Now, she's looking ahead to the Sip It! series, and she is talking to an agent about the possibility of writing books like "Word of Mouth" in other cities.

"You've got to have a lot of patience if you want someone to support your project," she said.

You can learn more about "Word of Mouth" and Lily Hansen at <http://wordofmouthconversations.com/>.

David Plazas is The Tennessean's opinion engagement editor. Call him at (615) 259-8063, email him at dplazas@tennessean.com or tweet to him at @davidplazas.

TENNESSEE VOICES

Fisk's focus: Cultivate scholars, one by one

BRIANNA HERMAN

Networking has become one of the most important tools for the millennial. It has become less about what you know and more about who you know.

As the world grows closer together on an international basis, it is essential that students become attached to an institution that will aid in this interpersonal bridge.

Fisk University is that aid for many students in this country.

Becoming the president of the Fisk University Student Government Association has allowed me to see, in depth,

how great the Fisk brand works for the whole student body.

The Fisk brand has carried many of its budding scholars abroad to London, Beijing, Johannesburg, Geneva and other destinations.

It has also carried many into various professional fields to which they commit themselves to servant leadership. This, however, is not what distinguishes Fisk University from other American higher learning institutions.

The difference between Fisk and other institutions resides in the type of cultivation that takes place.

"Cultivating Scholars & Leaders One by One" is a mantra that the Fisk University administration and faculty pride themselves into chanting.

There is no doubt that this chant is embedded within the Fisk curriculum. Small classrooms and experimental learning are all mechanisms that are utilized by the university to bring the students closer within the greater community.

This closeness is often met with excellence by the student body because of the brand that has been maintained for many years.

The Fisk brand is what continues to bring the millennial generation to Fisk University semester after semester. This inspires many to aspire to become greater legends.

The word "legend" may seem such a massive label to put on young adults, but the type of care and education that

Fisk University provides its students can only build such persons.

It is my sincere hope that the Fisk brand continues to reach out not only to the Nashville community but continues to extend throughout the nation while providing hope and a promise to resolve the troubles of the nation.

Fisk will continue to send out her best sons and daughters to answer the call of service. This answer will be echoed by many others who will follow, and Fisk University will continue to impact the world in education, the arts and social change for another 150 years.

Brianna M. Herman, Class of 2016, is the president of the Student Government Association at Fisk University.

Letters to the editor

On Christian persecution

Re: "Could it become illegal or immoral to believe in God?" by Pastor Kevin Shrum, Jan. 15.

The short answer to Pastor Shrum's question: No. Not so long as we live in a secular-based society that does not seek to elevate one religion above all other viewpoints.

The framers of our founding documents saw Europe's ground soaked in the blood of heretics and martyrs alike and they wanted no part of that. The only remedy to that problem is a secular state, bound by man's law, by our trust in one another.

I would also like to address Pastor Shrum's implication that equality and even ridicule are persecution.

There are places in this world where persecution of Christians is a very real problem. In North Korea and China, in some Middle Eastern countries, and some African countries, Christians suffer persecution every day.

However, Christians in the United States of America face no such persecution. Yes, ridicule does happen and rightly so.

Is it not ridiculous to believe that this planet is about 6,000 years old?

When scientific evidence shows us that this claim and many others are clearly wrong, it is our right to call out what we see as misinformation and falsehood. This is not persecution. It is a true open forum of ideas.

Sarah Harrison Green, Tennessee Regional Director for American Atheists, Joelton 37080



God versus Allah

Re: "Muslims and Christians worship the same God," by Paul Galloway, Jan. 15.

In the 1980s and '90s, my family and I were involved in a worldwide Christian ministry focused on bringing Muslims to Christ and educating Western Christians to the needs and methods of the evangelization of Muslims.

I was disturbed to read Mr. Galloway's piece on Islam and Christianity having the same God as his supporting statements were untrue and illogical. To tweak one of his statements, the idea that Muslims and Christians worship the same God is not only false, it's dangerous.

Allah is the Arabic word for God. The pronoun doesn't specify which God. The specific God referred to is up to the speaker and the religion represented — just like the use of the word "God" in English, "Dieu" in French, or "Dios" in Spanish.

The characters and intents of either deity are very distinct and different. One requires human sacrifice through jihad, the other requires the Son of God, Jesus, sacrificing himself for us. One intends domination and subjugation through the sword; the other, the redemption of creation. One focuses on judgment and death, the other on grace and love.

Though there may be similar histori-

cal accounts, the characters are not the same. Both Islam and Christianity believe in Creation. But so do the Hindus.

Omar Hamada, Brentwood 37027

Defining The Divine

The god of Mohammad is not the God of the Bible. Aren't they both the same? Judaism, Christianity and Islam are the "three great monotheistic religions."

The Christian God is defined as triune by those who worship Him, three-in-one: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Sources who say that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the same as the god of Muhammad, and thus Islam, are ill-informed or perhaps performing Taqiyya, the "Holy Lying" practiced by adherents of Islam to advance their culture-political-system-religion.

When a person chooses to become an apologist for Islam without converting they have become a dhimmi. When this is done unknowingly, the word "ignorant" is appropriate. The Tennessean is either performing Taqiyya or is ignorant by sharing false information about the Christian God.

The Tennessean doesn't get to define Muhammad's god. It is the task of Islam itself to either share the truth or taqiyya as suits them. Neither The Tennessean nor Islam gets to define the Christian God: Jesus is God, the Father is God and The Holy Spirit is God; Three persons but One God.

Unitarians, Latter Day Saints and other monotheists who deny The Holy Trinity do not get to define the god of Muhammad. Neither are they qualified to define The Holy Trinity.

Jim Gardner, Tyrone, Georgia 30290

Tennessean.com/opinion

Go online to see the week's editorials, Tennessee Voices and letters, and share your view on the issues. Subscribers, please go to www.tennessean.com/activate to access additional digital content.

Questions?

Opinion Engagement Editor David Plazas, 615-259-8063; dplazas@tennessean.com

Metro Columnist Frank Daniels III, 615-881-7039; fdanielsiii@tennessean.com

Write us

Letters: 250 words or fewer. Name, city and ZIP are published. Address and phone number required for verification only.

Tennessee Voices op-eds: 500-600 words or fewer. Include a short biographical sentence and high-resolution JPEG headshot (at least 200 KB).

Email to: letters@tennessean.com

Mail to: Opinions, The Tennessean, 1100 Broadway, Nashville TN 37203

Fax to: 615-259-8093, Attention: Opinions