Since 1912, Ohio University students have had a student-led newspaper to get their daily news about the happenings of campus and the Athens area. While The Post documents every day at Ohio University, a few days stand out above the rest in history.

When a moment becomes substantial enough to step off College Green and Court Street and into the news of the rest of the country, it puts pressure on the quaint newsroom in Baker Center that is not typical for a college paper.

**BLURRED LINES**

Last school year marked an extraordinary year for Ohio University, putting The Post at the center of attention from media outlets all over the nation.

“Culture writer Dylan Sams was working on a feature covering a week in the life of the 110,” Post editor Ryan Clark said.

The Ohio University Marching Band had planned to perform Robin Thicke’s hit “Blurred Lines” at a football game this season. When members of the new (unaffiliated with OU) student group, Fuck Rape Culture heard this, they went to OU administration with displeasure regarding their interpretation of the lyrics.

“The day before the game, they decided against allowing the song to be played,” said Clark.

Not only did this put the Marching 110 in a difficult position to field a new show at the last minute, but it also opened up a much larger and deeper conversation.

“It was the first time we have ever been told we couldn’t play a song,” Richard Suk, director of the Marching 110, said.
This unprecedented censorship caused waves of emotions, both positive and negative, to spill out on social media, in classrooms and on the opinion page of The Post. Rape culture activists were praising the administration for not allowing this racy song to be performed, while First Amendment advocates claimed the censorship was uncalled for and pointed out that the possible offensive parts of the music were the lyrics, which the band doesn’t even perform, all printed on the same page.

“The opinion page is for the readers,” Clark explained. Associate Editor Brandon Carte received hundreds of letters from disgruntled alumni and students, all wanting to share their opinion, and many got that chance. “Conversation is better than nothing,” Clark said. “In fact, it’s healthy.”

THE SKY HAS FALLEN
The year is 1969. Women’s hours are still in effect for dormitories. Ohio University is under the leadership of a new president, the nation is in the midst of a war, and tensions were beginning to rise across college campuses.

“The most important thing to understand is conscription,” 1969-1970 Post Editor Andy Alexander explained. “College students in good standing got a deferment, but if not, you were eligible for the draft.”

This did not settle well with many people in America, and College Green became a hotbed for demonstrations. Anti-war protests were not the only reason people were on the steps of Templeton-Blackburn Alumni Memorial Auditorium and Cutler Hall, however.

“We should not succumb to violence,” said Alexander, “and I even encouraged teachers who wanted to talk about current affairs to take their classes to meet on College Green and discuss.”

On May 4, while Alexander was out covering the mix of anti-war protestors, pro-war advocates, onlookers and classes in deep intellectual conversation all mixed together at the center of campus, Post staffer Tom Hod-
son came running out of Baker Center toward him with a piece of paper, a wire story, in his hands.

“We're going to have a really hard time keeping this campus non-violent,” Alexander remembers thinking to himself.

The Ohio National Guard had just shot four students at Kent State University during a protest.

During the next 10 days, campus got increasingly violent.

“Bricks were being pried up, they were firebombing the ROTC supply building, the whole town smelled like tear gas,” Alexander described. “Even President Claude Sowle got a brick through the window while conducting an interview.”

The Post staff was even tear-gassed.

“They wanted everyone out of the buildings at night, and one night the doors were kicked in and canisters filled the hallway and newsroom,” Alexander said.

Soon, the Athens Police Department even had the intersection of Court and Union streets obstructed to prevent violent students from taking over the town and prevent local residents from taking on the students.

During the night of May 15, the police wire began to buzz with violence spreading through campus.

“They were coming in every 10 minutes with another report,” Alexander said. Alexander got the call from university officials around 3 a.m. stating school was officially closed.

“The National Guard was lining every street and students were given 24 hours to get out of Athens,” Alexander said, “and that was it; Ohio University was closed.”

HOMECOMING 2013

On Saturday night of Homecoming 2013, a male was captured on video and in photos by many bystanders while performing sexual acts on a female against the window of Chase Bank on Court Street.

At first, these images circulated the Internet with labels crediting the crazy students and the notorious party-school ranking.

The attitude turned, however, when the female reported sexual assault the next day.

“There was not a debate of consent until the report came out,” Clark said.

The report was the decision that this was not rape, but a public sex act, with two consenting partners.

“We wouldn't normally report this much on a public sex act,” explained Clark, “but social media transformed it and became just as much a story as the event itself.”

Opinions of both support and dissent, from people who both saw and didn't see the video evidence, once again flooded the pages of social media as well as the opinion mailbox at The Post.

In fact, the Internet began to become so involved in the incident that others began to take notice.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Covering big campus stories before the Internet was dramatically different. During student demonstrations back in 1970, “John Kifner covered the story for The New York Times by day and slept at a friend's house, who was a student,” Alexander said.

Because of the shootings at Kent State, many reporters flocked to Ohio to cover the ongoing violence at the other schools. While media outlets from all over the country were covering the events in Athens, most of the students found everything out from The Post.

“We didn't have the Internet to get our information from, so students had to rely on local media,” Alexander said.

When social media began to blow up about more recent incidents, major Internet media outlets, such as Buzzfeed and the Huffington Post, began to pick up the story. “It was weird but cool seeing our publication's name as the credited news source the big online news websites were citing,” Clark said with a smile.

While many people praised The Post for its coverage of the controversial issues, there will always be some who disagree.

“I know what you're doing,” recent graduate Daniel Clark wrote in a letter. “You post these letters… in hopes that you will stir up controversy and get people to use your paper for more than just your crossword.”

He went on to urge the editor to “jump in the Hocking” and signed it “sit on a railroad spike.”

The Post published it.

“We published his like everyone else's,” Clark said. “It’s good to know people are reading!”

Many times you will hear that authorities are not speaking or cooperating with journalists, but according to both editors, that was quite the opposite in Athens.

“VP Ryan Lombardi called me up,” Clark said, “and wanted to talk through the situation.”

“I compliment them,” Alexander said in regards to OU officials. “I don't think President Sowle ever steered me wrong.”

The authorities did help by communicating with The Post, but it also makes it easier to do so when you can trust the source. “We had no factual errors,” Clark said of his writers Allan Smith and Josh Jamerson, praising them for maintaining high journalistic standards.

“We were accurate, stayed straight and balanced, and under unbelievable conditions,” Alexander added.

After it was all said and done, editors from both 1970 and 2013 reflected with a smile.

“It wasn't that hard,” Alexander said, “because it was exciting and such an adrenaline rush.”

“It was definitely a learning experience,” Clark said.

While you would think that reporting a monumental event as a college student while the whole world is watching would be nerve-racking, Alexander thinks otherwise:

“React to what's in front of you and just do it.”