

THE YEAR OF BEAUTY

A scenic landscape featuring a range of mountains in the background under a clear blue sky. Three hot air balloons are visible: one with vertical stripes of red, yellow, and blue, another with a colorful, abstract pattern, and a third smaller one in the distance.

Its all around us. From my backyard to a foreign country thousands of miles away, beauty is there if you take the time to look for it. When 2016 began, I made a resolution to start looking for it - and it paid off. I was lucky enough to be able to travel all over the United States and the Caribbean this past year, and I documented it all with photos and videos. Here are some of my personal favorites, so grab a cup of coffee and enjoy.



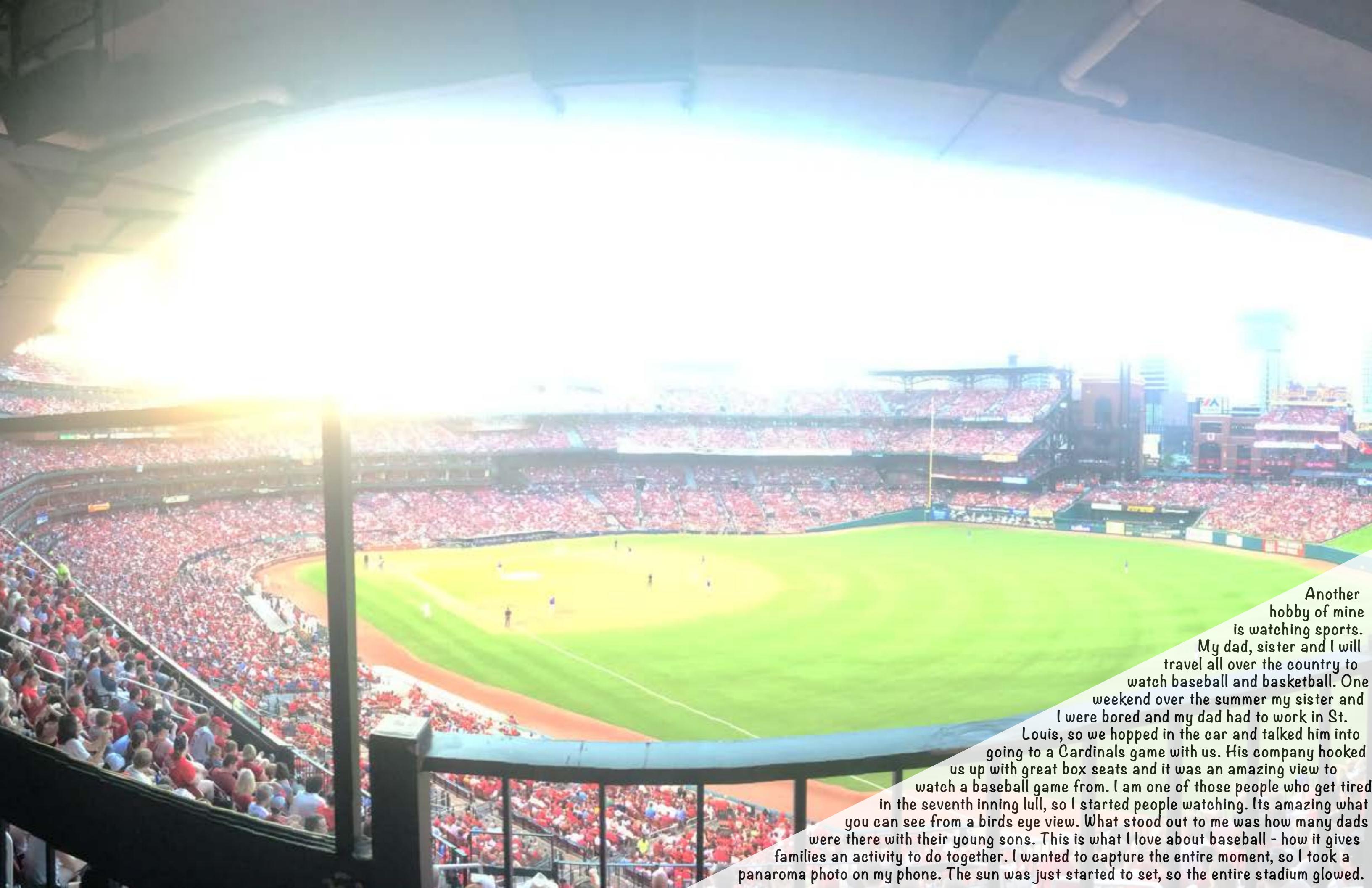
One of my favorite places in the world is our cabin in Nederland, Colorado. We try to get out there multiple times a year to go skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling and hiking. On the way to our cabin, we have a choice of going up "Summer Road," which is the steepest, windiest road that is meant just for snowless-days, or drive an extra twenty minutes on the highway. One day we chose the riskier path, and I got the opportunity to capture this phenomenal photo. The picture really does not do it justice, but the fresh snow on the dark green trees with the gray, cloudy background is such a rare photo-op that I had to take advantage. To get the photo, I had to get out of the truck and lean over the edge of the side of the road.

The ocean has always been so intriguing to me. Once I got old enough, I jumped on the opportunity to learn how to snorkel and scuba dive. My family always travels, so one summer when we visited St. Croix, we all learned how to scuba dive. This started my obsession with the ocean and now everytime we go to a beach I make sure that we spend one day in the ocean. This summer we visited Jamaica and one day we went snorkeling and scuba diving in the open ocean. I brought along my GoPro and captured this picture of myself swimming with a school of fish. The vibrant color of the fish complimented the color of the ocean so well that it looks fake. Although the coral at the bottom of the ocean was not as bright as normal, the greenish tint still complimented the rest of the photo.





One of my main hobbies is running. In highschool I ran cross country and track. My little brother is following in my footsteps and surpassing me in every way. He made it to the state cross country meet last year, which is at Rim Rock, the University of Kansas's cross country course. If you have ever been to a cross country meet you will know that to watch it, you have to run. Spectators may even run more than the athletes. It sounds bad, but it is worth it because the views are spectacular, with lakes, bridges and hills throughout. This photo was taken along the race course. The fall foliage was in that picture-perfect stage.



Another hobby of mine is watching sports. My dad, sister and I will travel all over the country to watch baseball and basketball. One weekend over the summer my sister and I were bored and my dad had to work in St. Louis, so we hopped in the car and talked him into going to a Cardinals game with us. His company hooked us up with great box seats and it was an amazing view to watch a baseball game from. I am one of those people who get tired in the seventh inning lull, so I started people watching. Its amazing what you can see from a birds eye view. What stood out to me was how many dads were there with their young sons. This is what I love about baseball - how it gives families an activity to do together. I wanted to capture the entire moment, so I took a panorama photo on my phone. The sun was just started to set, so the entire stadium glowed.



One stereotype that is true about Kansas is how great our sunsets are. It is one of my favorite parts about living in the sunflower state. They give me something to look forward to each night. This picture was taken during a thunderstorm warning, and it is clear why there was a warning. The cloud looked as tall as a fifty story building. I love the way that the sun rays still find a way through all the mess - which is what I think we all should do in life.