Best (K)Night Ever Series, Vol. 1: The Art of Side-Questing

By Camden Pierce

There is a plague of boredom running rampant through Birmingham. Young people are having trouble finding ways to spend their limited free time, unaware of the various options for fun around the city. While lots of activities around town are not available or easily accessible for Altamont students, Birmingham is not a boring city; you just need to know where to look. With input from a poll of students' activity preferences, I've crafted a list that takes your interests and turns them into side-quests. This article holds the keys to your "Best (K)Night Ever."

Active

The first poll category, *Active*, posed the question "How active are you willing to be?" and brought a wide range of responses. Interests from the survey included playing sports and other socially or mentally stimulating activities. If you're looking for something low-effort but still active, **Top Golf Birmingham** is the place for you. Further up the effort scale, you can visit **K1**, an axe-throwing and race track facility in Homewood. For a more tiring workout, play pickleball at **The Pickler** in Vestavia, a less popular gym with frequently vacant courts. Finally, if you want something *mentally* challenging, **breakout rooms** around Birmingham are excellent.



Calm

In the *Calm* category, interests from the poll included shopping, watching movies, and light exercise. One suggested location was **Neighbors** in Leeds, a relatively uncrowded restaurant perfect for a group activity. Here you can enjoy great food, mini golf, and a drive-in movie at the end of the night. However, if you're looking for a good solo adventure and enjoy storytelling, theatre season at **The BJCC** is in full bloom. Of course, there's always Pilates at Essential MVMT in Cahaba Heights if you desire a more serene experience.

Neighbors
BREW & PIES
LEEDS - ALABAMA
LOVE THY NEIGHBORS

Shopping

Most people in the poll preferred stores in a shopping complex or near major urban areas for easy access to neighboring amenities. A popular location, the upper wing of **The Summit,** meets those needs perfectly, with stores like Anthropologie, Aerie, and Urban Outfitters. Additionally, **"basic" boutique** and **ISHI?** on Second Avenue are small, ethically sourced businesses downtown. If you want somewhere with less fanfare, Birmingham thrift stores like **Magic City Merchantile** are full of diamonds in the rough.

basic.

Niche

Input from the *Niche* section was truly diverse. Some people mentioned typical creative activities while others shared their unique secret hobbies. For *Niche* activities, I have three hidden gems for you: If you're a movie lover, **Sidewalk Theatre** on Second Avenue is a great and uncrowded theatre under the Pizits Food Court. For the artists, **Do-It-Yourself Crafts** holds classes for media like pottery, painting, and tie-dye. Plus, **Tragic City Roller Derby** matches are right around the corner if you enjoy interesting and high-energy sports.



Best Guide Ever:

Just in case you still need some guidance or inspiration, here is my carefully crafted side-quest map:

1. Stream F1 (the movie or sport), then race at K1
2. Play Animal Bingo at Birmingham Zoo
3. Double Film Feature at Sidewalk Theatre
4. Birmingham Lyme Scooter/Bike Tour
5. Late Night Breakout Room
6. Age-Appropriate Bakery Bar Crawl 😉
7. Browse Through Niche Birmingham Art Stores
8. Check Out UAB Athletic Events (no matter what sport season it is)
9. Set Up a Pickleball Tourney at The Pickler
10. Go Taste Test All the Recommended Birmingham Restaurants