TACKLING TRADITION
KSU looks to break its failing football cycle

Speed dating
Good (or bad) dates don't have to last all night

FUN THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT SEX

ADDERALL: The study drug sweeping campus
The College of Communication and Information (CCI) is composed of four Schools: Communication Studies, Journalism and Mass Communication, Library and Information Science, and Visual Communication Design. It also includes an interdisciplinary program in Information Architecture and Knowledge Management. Within these disciplines, students are served by course offerings and other instructional and scholarly opportunities that provide broad educational perspectives and intensive training in professional areas.

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Communication Studies prepares students for careers as communication specialists in non-profit organizations, small businesses and government offices. Students in this concentration take courses across the undergraduate offerings of the entire College of Communication and Information, including courses in organizational communication, high-impact public speaking, website development, writing, public relations, photography, videography and visual design.

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JMC prepares students to hit the ground running on air, on paper and online. The fully accredited program serves about 1,200 undergraduate majors and pre-majors in nine major programs of study and 40 professional master’s students. Award-winning independent student media and required internships build on a curriculum geared towards today’s multi-media work environments.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Diversity has always been a goal for The Burr, but it's my personal goal to bring a new type of diversity to "my" issue. This semester we've introduced shorter department-style pieces in addition to the in-depth feature stories you've come to expect in The Burr. This issue is meant to entertain you, make you laugh, and, most important, make you think.

So whatever your mood and whatever you're looking for, I'm sure there's something in this issue for you.

If you just want a quick read on the way to class, check out Abbey Stigwalt's story on speed dating or Andrew Gun's sartorial look at muscle stereotypes. For something a little deeper, Elise Franos's story discusses the growing attention on Adderall and Jackie Maney reveals the ever-changing controversy surrounding beauty pageants.

It's also my hope that the voices of those who are often unrepresented can shine through in this issue. From the international students adjusting to life at Kent State to the voice of Robbie Kirkland, whose tragic death has had an impact on so many for more than a decade.

Many hands and minds have gone into the production of this semester's magazine, and it couldn't have been done without each and every person. So thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue and to the amazing staff of editors who kept me sane.

Enjoy!

Jessica Lentine

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PATRONS
Alisha Cybulski
Grace Dobush
Kimberly Flash
Joan Friedman
Keri Grubbs-Hoff
The Locascio family
Nicholas Pappada
Cari and Ann Schierhorn
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The Burr, formerly the Chestnut Burr, is produced by students at Kent State University twice per academic year. No part of The Burr may be reprinted without permission. Readers are encouraged to send comments, suggestions and feature articles to:

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by Stephanie Blackstone

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Cover photo of Greg Keys by Stephanie Blackstone
Hangover helpers

A throbbing head. A feeling of nausea. A dry mouth. These are just a few results of a night on the town. However, drinkers don’t always have to deal with the repercussions. Follow these tips and enjoy a hangover-free morning after.

Symptoms and their causes:

**Headaches:** They come from the body’s adjustment to a rapidly dropping blood alcohol concentration and dehydration. Alcohol dilates the blood vessels that surround the brain, which can cause headaches.

**Vomiting:** The body’s way of getting rid of toxins. Vomiting can also cause dehydration.

**Dehydration:** Signs of dehydration are dizziness, lightheadedness, thirst and weakness. It is partially to blame for headaches and nausea.

**Fatigue:** Alcohol disrupts sleep. It can work as a sedative and help aid sleep, but it affects the quality of sleep. Alcohol consumption causes a shorter REM (rapid eye movement) cycle, which is the dream phase of sleep. Elimination of this stage results in incomplete sleep. Even after eight or 10 hours, an individual can be fatigued and groggy.

Prevention:

**Eat before drinking.** Alcohol is absorbed more slowly when there is food in the stomach.

**Have a nonalcoholic drink between each alcoholic drink.** It will keep the body hydrated and help maintain a low blood alcohol concentration.

**Pace yourself.** The body can metabolize alcohol at the rate of approximately one drink per hour. Staying within this range will assist in maintaining a low blood alcohol concentration.

**Before going to bed, drink water or another nonalcoholic drink, but avoid caffeine,** which can also contribute to hangover symptoms.

**Take two aspirin before going to bed** and two more after waking if a headache is still present.

*Source: Ray Leone, chief university physician at DeWeese Health Center, WebMD.com*
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*Source: Ray Lema, chief university physician at DeWoude Health Center, WebMD.com*

---

“I just try to drink a lot of water and eat bread.”

Nicole Wonderchek
Senior molecular biology major

“I always try to eat fruit ... I think it helps.”

James Fournier
Junior integrated science major

“I stay away from wines because wine gives me a hangover, (and I take) two Aleve.”

Vanessa Kelly
Junior childhood education major

---

“Allison Bray
Spring 2007

Photo illustration by Elizabeth Myers

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“...”

Adonia Steele
Sophomore childhood education major

“I just don’t eat until it wears off.”

---

Spring 2007 THE BURR

BURLKENT.EDU SPRING 2007 5
Dear Students,

It has been an action- and achievement-packed spring semester, filled with reasons to be proud of your membership in Kent State’s student body. Here are just a few recent examples of student excellence in action:

- Visual journalism major David Foster was named Student Photographer of the Year by the Ohio News Photographers Association.
- Jill Kowalski earned two Mid-American Conference Gymnast of the Week awards and went undefeated in MAC all-around competition.
- The pass rate for recent Kent State graduates who took the professional licensure exam for architects ranked among the top 15 nationwide and was on par with graduates of Harvard and MIT.
- Kristin Tassone, a theatre major who is the first woman to complete a minor in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Studies, received the 2007 Akron Women’s History Project’s “Woman to Watch” award.
- Textile arts students helped create the beautiful shawl worn by Frances Strickland at her husband’s inauguration as Ohio governor.
- And dozens of Kent State students devoted their winter and spring breaks to rebuilding homes ravaged by Hurricane Katrina.

I applaud these outstanding Kent State ambassadors, and all of you who are working diligently to complete the semester to the best of your abilities. You can be confident that your Kent State diploma will be a passport to exciting opportunities. I hope you will stay connected to your alma mater through our great Alumni Association, and through the unforgettable faculty and staff members who have been in your corner.

Whether you continue your studies, take a job or internship, or enjoy some R&R, have a great summer.

Lester A. Lefton
President
 Trouble with plastic

It's just a little piece of plastic, but if misused, it can cause broke college students a lot of trouble.

Senior advertising major Jason Craig is dealing with the trouble credit cards can cause. He got his first card three years ago and is now working to pay off his debt.

"I had one card, and I recently got (two more) because the other one was maxed out," Craig says.

When he received his first card, Craig says he didn't have any problems, but he soon became caught up in its allure.

"At first it was no big deal," he says. "But when you don't know how to use a credit card, you get sucked in."

While credit cards can help build a financial reputation and are useful to have during emergencies, the number of college students with credit cards has increased—and so has their debt.

Todd Romer, executive director of Young Money, and Scott Bilker, creator of DebtSmart.com, offer their advice for preventing and managing credit card debt.

Before swiping your card, remember:

• It is important to pay off your balance each month. Always keep track of your account totals, especially before making major purchases.

• Don't rely on your credit card for every $2 or $3 purchase. Those small purchases are easy to forget about and quickly add up.

• When you're broke, don't buy anything. Treat your credit card like it's cash because for you, it is.

In debt: Now what?

• If in debt, first call your credit card company and ask if you can change your terms. If that doesn't work, try to find a credit counselor to help educate you on the fine points of managing your money.

• Get financially organized with old statements, receipts and balances. Negotiate with your bank to try to get lower rates.

• You always have leverage when you have debt because the bank is making money off your financial penalties, Bilker says. Threaten to transfer your balance, and they will try to keep you.

Credit usage among college students

As students progress through school, credit card usage swells. In 2004, 91 percent of final-year students had a credit card, compared to 42 percent of freshmen. Fifty-six percent of final-year students carried four or more cards.

Final-year students carried an average balance of $2,864, while freshmen carried an average balance of $1,585.

Source: Nellie Mae, student loan company

VISA

Photo illustration by STEPHANIE BLACKSTONE

— BRITTANY MOSELEY
Want some Adderall? Chances are, all you have to do is ask the person sitting behind you in class.

Illegal substances such as marijuana, cocaine, and crystal methamphetamine aren't the only drugs commonly abused by college students. Adderall, a legally prescribed medication, has become popular for academic performance and recreational use among students without a prescription.

Adderall is a drug used to treat people who suffer from attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The pill stimulates the brain and allows the person to settle and focus.

"It gets their neurons to fire more together, so to speak," says Dr. Raymond Leone, chief university physician at DeWeese Health Center. "A true ADD person will have a desk full of things to do but does everything except for those tasks. Once they're put on the meds, they're able to prioritize." 

Jenna, a Kent State senior, suffers from ADD, and without her medication she can't concentrate on even the simplest task. Jenna's name has been changed, as well as the names of the other student sources in this story.

"I never realized how much it helped me until after I took it. The day I got it, I took it and went to class," Jenna says. "It didn't realize until after the class was over that I paid attention the entire time." 

"I used to doodle on my paper, and now I don't even do that anymore. It made a significant difference for me." 

For users who don't suffer from ADD or ADHD, the effects of the drug are significantly different.

Brian, a Kent State junior, says he first took Adderall during his freshman year of college.

"I had my first big history essay exam, and I wanted to try it and see if it made me focus," he says. "It definitely worked, too. I studied for hours in the library, and I got something like a 97 on the exam." 

Carrie, a former Kent State student, says she has used the drug recreationally as well.

"I took it for the first time in 2004, during my first semester at the main branch," she says. "I was told it would help me study, get better grades, stay awake and help me focus — and it did." 

Leone says misuse of stimulant drugs, especially amphetamines, is not a new development and has been happening since the 1960s.

"For a while, we didn't hear about it much. Drug use was more mainstream in the '60s and '70s, and in the '80s it started fading," he says.

"Now it's back in full swing, although it seems to be more underground than before." 

Adderall wasn't introduced to the market until 1996. Leone says, but another ADD medication, Ritalin, works in the same way.

"In med school, people would always be asking around for Ritalin," he says. "It was like the Adderall of my day." 

Without giving it a second thought, students who need to pull an all-nighter may pop an Adderall with their Starbuck's coffee and prepare themselves for hours of knowledge retention, but many of them may not know that taking Adderall is risky, as with any drug.

Some of the more common risks and side effects include loss of appetite, increased heart rate and blood pressure, insomnia, nausea and nervousness, Leone says.

In addition, rage and nervous tics may develop over time because the brain is so over-stimulated.

Carrie says she experienced many of those side effects after using the drug.

"When you're on it, you get really fidgety and talk a lot," she says. "The other day, when your high is going down, you feel depressed and lose your appetite."

Carrie also described feeling depressed after using it over a longer period of time, and says
A rising number of students are taking advantage of the effects and availability of the "new Ritalin."
several times she had "crazy thoughts about things I wouldn't normally think about." She says because she is no longer in school, she uses Adderall less often than before. But because she works the midnight shift at her job, every once in a while she'll take one to stay awake.

Brian is less wary of using the drug. He says he has never experienced any negative side effects or dependency, and he only takes it when he's put off studying so long that he needs to stay up all night.

"Every time I have taken it, it has helped me, and that is why I still use it when I have something I think I might have trouble focusing on," he says. "I can get things done..."

Leone says people who don't have ADD or ADHD and take Adderall may also develop symptoms of the disorders.

"If you take the drug and you don't have ADD, you'll be able to focus really well, but you'll also tend to refocus very easily," he says. "To a degree you can be excessively productive or excessively counterproductive."

Carrie remembers this happening to her on more than one occasion.

"I would take it to study, and if I got distracted, I would be doing whatever it is that distracted me for, like, five hours," she says. "If someone came over, I'd be on the phone and not even realize how long I'd been talking to them until after the conversation was over."

Carrie, Jenna and Brian all agree Adderall is a cheap and fairly easy drug to come across, especially on a college campus.

"Probably in a large class you'll find maybe one out of five people who use it, so it's relatively easy to get," Carrie says. "You usually need to know someone, though, because I don't know many people who want to around asking random people for it."

She says when she buys Adderall, she usually pays $4 to $5 per pill, which is about average. Brian says he pays less because he has "connections."

"Normally my friend would just give it to me, but if I wanted five or ten at a time to hold me over, he might charge me $20 to $25. If I just wanted one, he'd charge $2 to $3 a pill," he says. "He said he got it for free, and he was making a 200 percent profit so he was able to charge less for it."

Jenna says she tries not to advertise that she has a prescription for the pills but that she will give them to her friends once in a while. Leone says it's common for people with Adderall prescriptions to distribute pills to others, but medically, it's not a good idea.

ADD and ADHD sufferers require their medication to function properly, he says, and for Adderall to do its job effectively, it must be taken every day. Giving away pills disrupts the way the drugs work.

And even though they readily use the drug, students know it's being used more and more for the wrong reasons.

"I definitely think it's misused," Jenna says. "People misuse every drug, but this one is easier to get, and people, especially college students, take advantage of that."

Leone says he doesn't condone the recreational use of Adderall, but he doesn't condemn it, either.

"It is sort of like having a glass of wine to relax after a long day," he says. "One glass of wine doesn't make you an alcoholic. Using Adderall to help you focus, you know, once in a while in a white doesn't make you an addict."

But because of the high potential for abuse, Adderall is grouped with drugs such as cocaine, oxycodone, opium and morphine in groupings set up by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

Under this system, all substances regulated under existing federal law must be placed into schedules ranked one through five, ranging from most potential for abuse to least. These drugs have been placed in Schedule II.

Because it's such a dangerous substance, Leone says the health center does not write or fill Adderall prescriptions. The only way for a
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Fair Housing — This is where it starts!
It makes you feel strong and a little bit invincible, and young people tend to feel that way anyway.

Student to obtain the drug is to present a written note from his or her regular physician saying the medication is needed. "I only do this on rare occasions," Leone says. "We'll bridge the medication for someone who lives far away and doesn't get home often to get the prescription filled."

Leone disapproves of using Adderall as a means of intoxication, however. He says some people will use it while they party, but when mixed with alcohol or other drugs, the effects of Adderall are intensified. "It makes you feel strong and a little bit invincible, and young people tend to feel that way anyway," he says. Jenna says although she's never done it, she knows a lot of people who have taken the drug while partying. "I guess it makes you more messed up when you take Adderall and drink at the same time," she says. Leone says this type of behavior is dangerous for several reasons. It may cause a person to engage in risky behavior, such as driving at unsafe speeds. It may also impair judgment or trick a person into thinking his or her reflexes are better than they actually are. "The escape from reality, party-until-I-drop part isn't good," Leone says. "The drugs are so powerful, yet subtle, that it can make you drop permanently."

According to the official Adderall Web site, 50 million prescriptions for the medicine have been written since 1996. Unfortunately, it's impossible to track how many people have used the drug for recreational purposes. "I'm afraid for people who abuse," Leone says. "We have to hope people don't get hurt while finding themselves. I just want people to use their heads.

Elise Franco is a senior magazine journalism major. This is her first story for The Burr. Contact her at efranco@kent.edu.
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"It makes you feel strong and a little bit invincible, and young people tend to feel that way anyway."
It's slightly past 7 p.m. on a snowy Friday night in February. In the Rathskeller, rock music plays from a speaker in the corner of the bar where a lone student bartender leans casually against the counter and watches a basketball game on the television on a nearby wall.

A group of fraternity guys in jeans and white T-shirts practices on the stage for an upcoming lipsynching competition. Under the spotlight they attempt the song, fail, retry, get a bit further and take a break for food. Then they get back to work.

Meanwhile, seated alone in a straight-backed chair and looking a bit on edge, a student fidgets aimlessly with a pen he is holding.

His sandy blond hair has been gelled and artfully messed up — a classic haphazard look that has likely taken at least 10 minutes to perfect. And that's not counting last-minute glances into the mirror on the way out.

Stuck to his tan corduroy blazer atop a red-and-blue polo shirt is a paper nametag — the “Hello, my name is” kind.

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From Hollywood to home

Speed dating. The concept has been popularized by Hollywood, debuting most recently on the silver screen in Hitch and 40-year-old Virgin. Speed dating allows numerous singles to meet by arranging timed "dates." Participants have a set amount of time — in this case, one minute — to chat with one another before moving to the next person.

Kent Student Center Programming began sponsoring speed dating events last year. The idea behind it was simply to encourage students to get to know one another, says coordinator Katie Wallace, a senior theater major.

"We had 60 people last year, but I'll be happy if we get 20 (this year)," she said. "We got a lot more guys last time than girls, which really surprised me."

Wallace said she had been pleasantly surprised by the turnout at the first speed dating event — she hadn't expected nearly that many. Though she wasn't hoping for such a high attendance the second time around, she credited the lower turnout to a couple factors.

"We had fewer people, but I think that was because it was on a Friday, and a lot of students go home on weekends. The first one was on a Wednesday, and it was great," she said.

Wallace and other members of the KSC Programming, looking considerably more at ease than the crowd of speed daters occupying tables around the room, take advantage of the complimentary spread that has been arranged at a nearby table by the Kent State catering service. Swedish meatballs, skwedder tortellini, nacho chips with cheese and an array of vegetables with dip are on tonight's menu.

On more than one occasion, a group of two or three onlookers drifts through the door, unsure whether to stay or go.

That's when Amy Westler, also a member of KSC Programming, offers some encouragement: "Speed dating, guys! Come on and join!" the junior exercise specialist major yells across the room.

Some drift toward the sign-up tables, others drift away.

The ones who remain receive two items. The first is a blue raffle ticket for a "romantic gift set" to be given away at the end of the evening. The gift set includes various types of heart-shaped candy, Date Movie, a book titled "The Art of the First Date" and a game called The Love Lottery. The second item is a sheet of white paper designed to help participants organize their dates.

"Check 'yes' by the people you are interested in and 'no' by the ones you are not interested in," it states. "Feel free to jot down notes in the space provided. At the end, we will collect the sheets and if you and someone else like each other, we'll let you up!"

The setup

Zack Cline, a freshman integrated language arts major, occasionally glances shyly and furtively across the room at the other blue-and-white checkered tables and their occupants. Next to him, a man in a navy blue T-shirt signs a drink from the bar in a clear plastic cup, occasionally pushing the ice cubes from side to side with his straw. His nametag reads "Jeff." He is number eight.

Most of the tables are empty, containing only a folded pink or red paper that has been placed upright in the center. The red and pink cards offer emergency conversation starters for those who may need it: "Where do you see yourself in five years' time?"

"What is your favorite word and why?"

"If you won the lottery, how would you spend your millions?"

A group of girls chatters and giggles a few tables away. Excited energy seems to be emanating from their table — they're speed dating for fun, they say.

"I saw it in the paper, and I was like, 'Let's do it,'" says Ashley Dailey, a junior integrated math major. "It would be nice if I got something out of it, but I don't expect to."

Freshman theater major Corrie Hindenberg agreed.

"I think it'll be funny," she says. "40-Year-Old Virgin keeps running through my head."

In the film, Andy, played by Steve Carell — the token 40-year-old virgin — is tricked by his co-workers into attending a speed dating session. The session turns out to be a failure when Andy has dates with a few less-than-reputable characters, and he and his friends duck out early.

Though tonight's date is not nearly as large-scale as the 40-Year-Old Virgin setup, the participants all, unlike Andy, seem at least somewhat pleased to be here.

The date

About 7:30 p.m., Wallace kicks the event off with a friendly and active command: "OK, girls, grab a table!"

The four girls head to booths on the far side of the room. Two of them decide to share a booth — a built-in "double date" for each gentleman.

To balance things out, Wallace, Wrestler and a couple other members of KSC Programming sit at tables as well.

And then the games begin. Wallace announces that each person will have one minute to socialize with the other "dates." Unsure of where to start, most of the men try to look as nonchalant as possible and settle down at the closest booth.

The "scoping out" ritual can be felt, if not actually seen, throughout the 15 to 20 minutes of dating. Eyes dart quickly across the room from this booth to that table to that chair. Nervous fingers play with pens and fold the corners of the checklists.

Dubious about how to get started, several of the couples resort to the conversation starter cards.

"Do, where do you see yourself in five years?"

"I see myself in prison," someone jokes.

Some of the participants are simply looking for something to do on a Friday night, not actually expecting to meet Romeo or Juliet. But it seems as if most come with a glimmer of hope.

Cline, whose interests include writing and reading ("Hamlet," especially), says he came only partially out of curiosity. "I have nothing else to do on a Friday night," he says, and then pauses. "Plus, I'm kinda loney, too."

And then there's senior chemistry major Jovan Thompson.

"I was hungry," he says with a smile. "I work over in the post office, and I thought I'd come check this out."

The wrap-up

As the event progresses, participants seem to become more at ease with one another. One couple can be heard from the various tables as daters read through the questions on the cards and then begin their own conversations.

By the time the last pairing has finished its allotted minute, the tension that seemed to dominate the atmosphere at the event's beginning has almost completely dissipated. Wallace announces the winning number for the romantic raffles, and Hindenberg responds with a grateful shout, jumping out of her seat to claim her prize.

Overall, she says, it was an enjoyable evening — especially with her winnings.

"It was pretty funny because it was rather awkward," she says, still surveying the contents of the gift bag.

One by one, participants grab their coats and wander out the door. The bartender still stands behind the bar, watching the television. An occasional freeloader snatches a plate of meatballs from the picked-over food table. The group of guys on stage seems to have perfected the lightning routine, and several have begun eyeing the food table as well.

Even though the turnout was lower than last year's event and it doesn't seem that anyone was paired up, participants have — if nothing else — gained the experience of getting out of their comfort zones.

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**From Hollywood to home**

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During its debut last year, speed dating was a hit.

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Top: Zack Cline, a freshman integrated language arts major, takes a minute to figure out one answer to one of the questions posed on the red conversation starter cards. Above: Ashley Dailey, a junior integrated mathematics major, fills out her speed dating rating sheet at the end of a date. Daters rank each other and have the opportunity to contact other daters at the end of the event.

**Abbey Stingl is a senior newspaper journalism major. This is her first story for The Burr. Contact her at astingl@kent.edu.**
When a 14-year-old boy commits suicide, his family and friends transform their pain into a mission to help others.

Robbie Kirkland's bedroom has barely changed in the 10 years since he last slept there. The twin bunk beds are still made, the mattresses draped with sky blue comforters and piled high with stuffed animals. Hanging above the top bunk, a St. Ignatius High School poster covers the feminine wallpaper — Robbie didn't mind the hearts left behind when he inherited his sister's room. The bookshelves at the foot of the beds are crammed with Dean Koontz and Christopher Pike novels, the kind of suspense stories that entertain teenage boys.

If Robbie Kirkland walked into his room after the 10 years he has been gone, he would find his books, toys and even his clothes in the same place he left them. But his room feels empty, like a museum display, because Robbie Kirkland — who would have recently turned 15, perhaps recently graduating from college to become a writer — won't be coming home.

Ten years ago, on Jan. 1, 1997, Robbie left his stepfather and mother's house in Strongsville, a Cleveland suburb, to spend the night at his father's nearby Lakewood house. The next morning, 14-year-old Robbie took his father's FBI service gun from the locked, old-fashioned breadbox where he stored it. He climbed the stairs to the attic, lay down on a mattress and pointed the gun to his head.

No one heard that gunshot. Not his father, John, who was showering downstairs. Not his sleeping sister Danielle. In fact, no one knew what Robbie had done until two hours later, when Danielle went to look for him. By that time, Robbie was dead.

No one heard that morning gunshot, but to Robbie's family and friends, to the thousands of people who would learn his story, that lone gunshot and the tragedy and his short life would ring out, sending echoes that transformed the lives of those who could not forget the handsome, promising young man who was in such pain he took his own life.

**Storyteller**

Leslie Sadasivan's welcoming face and hospitality disarm listeners as she tells the story of her son's life and death.

She smiles often, speaking with genuine love for her children and absentmindedly sighing with affection when describing her husband, Peter. But as friendly and upbeat as she appears, she admits to a low-level depression that has shadowed her life since Robbie committed suicide.

**Right** Although it has remained mostly unchanged in the 10 years since his death, there have been a few careful additions to Robbie's bedroom. While marching in the Cleveland Gay Pride Parade in 1997, an organizer handed this sign to Leslie and said, "You should have this one."
Robbie’s LEGACY

When a 14-year-old boy commits suicide, his family and friends transform their pain into a mission to help others

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Robbie had only a few friends at the all-boys St. Ignatius High School and experienced constant bullying and teasing. Matt, one of the few friends he had, says, "I know that geometry class was pretty difficult for him ... 'Faggot' would come out. It was pretty common there."

In the moment, when she tells his story, she's fine. But in the days after an interview or a speech, the grief returns. Still, she accepts as many opportunities as possible to talk about Robbie. "I think he was trying to feel us out to see how we would react," she says, "and we blatantly failed the test."

Leslie tried to provide Robbie with support. She got literature from Kushing and offered to take him to a gay youth group. "He just wasn't ready to go," she says.

Now that his secret was out and he was in counseling, the immediate crisis seemed over. But high school was approaching, and Robbie was determined to go to a good school. He had ambitions of becoming a writer and decided St. Ignatius High School, an all-boys Catholic school on the west side of Cleveland, was the right choice.

St. Ignatius, Leslie says, offered Robbie a fresh start after the torment of his grade school. "He thought that because it was so large, he could go unnoticed," she says.

But his sisters were concerned. "We went to an all-girls high school, and we knew kids at Ignatius," Claudia says. "There were a small percentage of kids at that school who were open-minded. The rest, she says, had a 'heightened sense of masculinity.'"

Spiraling down

That fall, St. Ignatius turned out to be a poor choice for Robbie Kirkland — the teasing continued.

"He definitely changed physically," Claudia says. "He lost so much weight, his skin looked horrible. He was stressed out all the time."

Becky, his friend from camp, stayed in touch through letters and phone calls. "He didn't really say much about his school life," she says. "I know that he didn't have a lot of good, close friends, and I know he had a hard time."

One of Robbie's friends from St. Ignatius, Matt, who asked that his last name not be
The next day, Chicago police called, saying Robbie had turned himself in.

But Maria, the family's housekeeper, found the clue that something much worse was going on. While searching Robbie's room, she discovered the earlier suicide note in which he again denied being gay. Armed with the information, Leslie and John took Robbie to a therapist the morning John brought him back from Chicago.

"I told him that if my son is gay, I wanted him to know that I didn't want him to change my son," she says. "If he couldn't support him, I would find a different counselor."

In Robbie's young life, he had met gay and lesbian people before, including Leslie's friend David Kushing. But it was clear that being gay wasn't OK to Robbie—it seemed to shatter his dreams of being a father and having a family.

His friend Becky Sardo remembers a day at summer camp, the year before he began high school, when Robbie told offensive gay jokes to a group of campers.

"I think he was trying to feel us out to see how we would react," she says, "and we blatantly failed the test."

Leslie tried to provide Robbie with support. She got literature from Kushing and offered to take him to a gay youth group.

"He just wasn't ready to go," she says.

Now that his secret was out and he was in counseling, the immediate crisis seemed over. But high school was approaching, and Robbie was determined to go to a good school. He had ambitions of becoming a writer and decided St. Ignatius High School, an all-boys Catholic school on the west side of Cleveland, was the right choice.

St. Ignatius, Leslie says, offered Robbie a fresh start after the torment of his grade school.

"He thought that because it was so large, he could go unnoticed," she says.

But his sisters were concerned.

"We went to an all-girls high school, and we knew guys at Ignatius," Claudia says. "There were a small percentage of guys at that school who were open-minded.

The rest, she says, had a heightened sense of masculinity."

Spiraling down

That fall, St. Ignatius turned out to be a poor choice for Robbie Kirkland—the teasing continued.

"He definitely changed physically," Claudia says. "He lost so much weight, his skin looked horrible. He was stressed out all the time."

Becky, his friend from camp, stayed in touch through letters and phone calls.

"He didn't really say much about his school life," she says. "I know that he didn't have a lot of good, close friends, and I know he had a hard time."

One of Robbie's friends from St. Ignatius, Matt, who asked that his last name not be
Robbie Kirkland's death could have been one family's quiet tragedy if not for the grief that threatened to swallow Leslie. Robbie admitted he didn't have the same happiness she had before Robbie's death. His friends and family still express regret and sorrow they didn't see the signs, and some chose to leave the Catholic Church. But for those touched by Robbie's short life, his death has had a pronounced good, too. Matt, who had never met a gay person before, says, "I'm really thankful for that because he opened my eyes that the homosexual wasn't as different as they thought."

"I didn't want to see him dead," she says. "I really got it: OK, I love you, and I can't understand your pain because I'm not you and I'm not gay."

**'Remember me'**

The piece of paper that would have revealed the depth of Robbie's angst was there in retrospect. The earlier suicide attempt was one sign. Leslie admitted he doesn't know how he'd feel about it now. Leslie was 15, and he saw a layered, emotionally complicated young man. "I think that because of the resistance I got, I just wanted to be out there and be heard." Robbie's sister Claudia became a child therapist and speaks to students about suicide. Becky Sardo has helped Leslie put together RobbieKirkland.com, a Web site that celebrates Robbie's life and offers young people resources. The local chapter of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, of which Robbie was a member, in June 1997. The Administration declined.

**Going public**

Robbie Kirkland's death could have been one family's quiet tragedy if not for the grief that threatened to swallow Leslie. Robbie asked the priest to mention during the funeral that Robbie had been gay, but he refused. Robbie's family and friends still express regret and sorrow they didn't see the signs, and some chose to leave the Catholic Church. But for those touched by Robbie's short life, his death has had a pronounced good, too. Matt, who had never met a gay person before, says, "I'm really thankful for that because he opened my eyes that the homosexual wasn't as different as they thought."

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**Left:** Because of Robbie's ambitions to become a writer, he was determined to go to a good high school. He decided St. Ignatius High School, an all-boys Catholic school on the west side of Cleveland, was the right choice; however the reading didn't stop.

The basic good — the really basic, basic good, if you ask him — says, "To fight for him, to fight for myself and to fight for others who will fight for me."

"I don't think we can ever stop doing that," she says. "We can't let Robbie's death be in vain." Leslie began finding an audience. "Going public, I had to make a decision of how much to share about his story, because he's dead, but I knew that he would not want everyone to know, especially about the things he did, like going against our will," Leslie says. "And the other concern for me was that they might not get the right perception of him. He's a gentle soul and he was a great kid."

"At any rate, you've got the better good that it could bring by telling his story, so I did."

The first time Leslie stood before an audience to tell Robbie's story was at the Cleveland Gay Pride Parade in June 1997, just five months after his death.

"I was a wreck, my hands were shaking," she says. "It was hard."

Leslie says she believes the all-boy environment and Catholic school education weighed on Robbie. "It teaches that gays are sinful. I think that because of the resistance I got, I just wanted to be out there and be heard." Robbie also included the people who had tormented him. "Fuck you," he wrote to another. He included instructions of where to scatter his ashes. "Remember me. Robbie Kirkland."

The note remained hidden in his mother's house, police swarmed the residence to ensure Robbie hadn't been murdered, and he was accompanied by a policeman. Leslie remembers the rest as a haze. At John's house, police broke down on the way. Leslie found her son in his room. "I told Robbie, I think that he internalized that."

"I didn't want to see him dead," she says. "I really got it: OK, I love you, and I can't understand your pain because I'm not you and I'm not gay."

"I just felt he knew that somehow we connected, and he knew that I really got it: OK, I love you, and I can't understand your pain because I'm not you and I'm not gay."

"'Lie'"
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The first time Leslie stood before an audience was at a Gay Pride Parade in June 1997, just five months after his death. "I was shaking," she says. "It was awful. It was H-E-double-L." She looked out into the crowd and saw John, Danielle, and Claudia, all of whom were crying. "I just tried to feel Robbie," she says. "And of course the emotion of seeing all that, and that poor Robbie wasn't there, and that he didn't get the chance to be out as this gay person, that he couldn't see this future that all these people were living by being out — it was overwhelming."

That year's Pride Parade was dedicated to Robbie Kirkland. The only person whose pain ends with a suicide is the victim. Family and friends are left to deal with the repercussions. Leslie admits she does not have the same family and friends still express regret and sorrow they didn't see the signs, and some chose to leave the Catholic Church. But for those touched by Robbie's short life, his death has had a pronounced good, too.
Supernatural sanctuary

Unconventional believers find a home in Kent's First Spiritualist Church, lending themselves as mediums to spirits and revisiting past lives.

On Sundays at 1 p.m., cars park in the backyard of the First Spiritualist Church of Kent. The structure fades into the corner of Oak Street—half forgotten, half hidden. The white, wooden clapboards are weathered. Falling leaves from surrounding trees are colored red and yellow.

As the congregation enters, the stairs to the front porch creak like a haunted house, but on the inside, nothing is spooky. On the contrary, all is light.

About 25 people, most more than 30 years old, sit on white plastic lawn chairs set up in front of an altar strong with silk sunflowers and white Christmas lights. The word ‘peace’ is poignantly in the center. Portraits of angels hang in gilt frames on either side of the chairs, and ethereal meditative music sounds from an unknown source.

The congregation is called to stand and sing the hymn ‘Higher Ground’ as cymbals, clacking as they try and fail to reach the high Cs and E flats.

“We’re getting there,” says the Rev. Kachiard Kyanko as everyone sits back down, still laughing.

To an outsider, the First Spiritualist Church seems eccentric but still similar to other Protestant churches. These differences emerge. Although the members believe in the Bible and God, they don’t believe in heaven and hell. Jesus is only a teacher, not a savior.

Spiritualists say they use the powers of their minds to commune with spirits and create their own destinies.
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Several members of the church say they are mediums — they can use telepathic powers to see more about a person. Some say they are psychic and can predict the future; others say they can help channel past lives.

They believe in palmistry, astrology and tarot. They believe physical lives end, but the spirit never dies, and, therefore, they can communicate with loved ones even after death.

This is how they express their beliefs in worship and in conversation:

At the service, young Sunday school students, the Rev. Edna Heacock takes the pulpit and begins to speak about dying, which she says there is no reason to fear:

"I cannot separate my soul from God," she says. "I cannot separate my soul from God." Heacock needs the congregation to repeat after her:

I am a part of God and he approves of all I do — spiritually.

I am a part of God and he approves of all I do — mentally.

I am a part of God and he approves of all I do — physically.

You are God," she says. "You are your own creation. You are fulfilled with the light of that creation."

The concept of never dying is an idea Spirituality reinforces, and one that is meaningful to Kyanko, who was raised a Catholic and spent four years in seminary studying to be a priest.

But something was missing.

"I've just noticed I've been a bit psychic all my life," he says.

And when he was introduced to a Spiritualist in 1976, he began to understand why. He attended a home psychic circle every week where a Spiritualist minister in Cleveland taught him how to channel the spirits.

"I sat every Saturday night with this lady for over a decade," Kyanko says. "I had the experience of seeing people. I've had the experience of talking to my body." By this, Kyanko means he would see visions of other people coming to him. While meditating, his spirit has left his body, and he has been able to view it from afar.

Our spirits leave our bodies frequently, Kyanko says, especially while sleeping.

"We just leave our bodies and go into the spirit world somewhere," he says.

Ten years ago Kyanko was ordained as a minister. It takes several years of studying the religion to be ordained, and while Kyanko says he has never met a minister who wasn't also a medium, he doesn't believe it's a qualification. Kyanko says he knows how to be aware of what he is saying when interpreting messages from the spirits for other people, but it doesn't always happen.

"People tell me later how beautiful it was," he says.

Kyanko says he has had many past lives, and in some of them he wasn't a very good soldier, and they didn't appreciate the way he treated them.

"As a consequence, they took me in a dark alley and stabbed me one night."

Ramona Carroll is another member of the church who has strong ties with spirits and is studying to become a Spiritualist minister. She says she has had the gift to see spirits since she was a child. While growing up, her imaginary friend was a man who died during the Civil War, and she says she could see the tears in his uniform.

When Carroll was 6 years old, she lived with her mother in a top-floor apartment. As she lay in bed at night, she could hear a tricycle riding back and forth above her head from the attic and someday calling her name.

One night Carroll grew so curious she crept to the attic to see what the noise was.

"I peered over the landing, and I distinctly saw a woman standing on a tricycle," Carroll says.

She was 5 feet 6 inches tall. One hundred eighty pounds. Blue eyes. Hair in a bun. She wore a short-sleeved, blue, button-up dress, White flats.

The woman hung from the rafters with a rope around her neck.

"I saw the tricycle coming right at me," Carroll says.

Her Carroll told what she saw, her mother panicked and told the landlord. Sure enough, he had been unable to rent the apartment because a woman had hanged herself in the attic. Carroll and her mother were new to town and didn't know what had happened, so the landlord thought he could rent the apartment to them.

They never went back.

When Carroll realized how strange her mother's reaction was, she stopped sharing stories of what she saw and tried to block out the experience of seeing people. I've had the experience of seeing my own life," she says.

Our spirits leave our bodies frequently, Kyanko says, especially while sleeping.

"I lived in the palace with my wife and three children," she says.

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Members of the Kent Spiritualist Church typically sing two or three songs during a Sunday service.

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Old wives’ tales: fact or fiction?

...because grandma isn’t always right

Ever wonder if eating chocolate really causes acne or if going outside with wet hair really causes a cold? These and similar adages have been passed down from generation to generation as old wives’ tales. Some have been around since 7000 B.C., but are they true or simply myths? Osteopath Steven M. Takacs, owner of Newbury Family Practice, and neurologist Deborah A. Reed of American Migraine Center separate fact from fiction.

Feed a cold, starve a fever

"I have no idea where that one came from," Takacs says. "But I can’t think of a good reason not to eat." When people have an illness, they usually don’t have much of an appetite. Proper nutrition is important to maintain the immune system.

"I don’t think that there is any basis on which you can support this. Feed the patient and use acetaminophen or ibuprofen for the fever," he says.

Wait an hour after eating before swimming

"The idea would be if you’re eating, you have more blood going to the gut and then less blood going to the muscles. Supposedly, you’re going to get cramps," Takacs says. "But from a scientific basis, that shouldn’t happen, although you probably shouldn’t swim right after eating when you’re likely to have less stamina if you want to swim a long distance."

A migraine is just a bad headache

"No, there’s definitely a difference," Reed says. "There are physiological changes happening with the migraine—the changes in the blood vessels, the neurotransmitters released and the electricity in the brain."

Migraines are a neurological disorder. There is no cure for migraines; however, there are prescription medications for the symptoms, such as Imitrex.

Too much loud noise can cause hearing loss

The repetition of loud noises can cause sensory hearing loss. The louder it is, the quicker it can cause damage.

With people who are truck drivers for a long time, the left ear almost never hears as well as the right ear, Takacs says, "because the left ear is the closest to the window, hearing all the traffic and engine sounds."

If you go outside with wet hair, you’ll catch a cold

"Three things are necessary for an infection: adequate amount of virus, an acceptable host and a route of transmission," Takacs says. People have more colds in the winter because they're in more closed spaces and there's more exchange of respiratory droplets, he says.

"We're back to that acceptable host. If you're well-oiled, well-fed and your immune system is operating at a high level, you're good. Someone who is a smoker and an alcoholic, they're more likely to get sick."

Chocolate causes acne

"That one you learn in medical school," Takacs said. "Supposedly it doesn't."

But in practice it seems the doctors see a lot of people where there's a correlation. "If a person feels like it's making things worse, I wouldn't hesitate to say, 'OK, stay away from chocolate.'"

Spicy foods cause ulcers

Bacteria or increased acid can cause an ulcer, Takacs says, and stressful situations and acidic foods can aggravate it. He says people often confuse spicy foods with acidic foods, which is where this myth may have come from.

"I think probably part of it is people just think, 'Oh, if it's spicy, it must be irritating,'" he says. "Because if you touch a hot pepper and touch your eye, it's going to irritate it so, therefore, it must do the same thing in your stomach."

"The truth is that milk could potentially cause more aggravation of an ulcer," Takacs says. "People drink milk to coat the stomach, but the calcium in milk increases the production of acid."

— JENNIE HARDENBROOK

BUHN KENT.EDU SPRING 2007
**Old wives' tales: fact or fiction?**

...because grandma isn’t always right

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making noise

Your music, your stereotype

Writer Andrew Gaug offers a satirical look at the stigma that often accompanies different tastes in music.

Rap aficionado

Usually found with an entourage of friends, clad in a fitted hat with the sticker still on, wearing the latest line of Nike, LRG or BAPE clothing complemented with white-on-white Nikes or Timberlands. Often found in the club binging, rocking or walkin’ it out. A quick look through his CD collection will find flavor-of-the-month rappers such as Jibbs and Shinna, forgotten one-hit wonders such as J-Kwon and Murphy Lee and mainstream hip-hop leaders such as 50 Cent, Changy and Nelly. Often following the trends, there’s rarely an artist who has a long-term career. The rap aficionado is more interested in what gets the party going than a rapper’s longevity.

Pop princess

Everyone loves a great pop song, whether it be from ‘90s bands such as ABBA, pop group Boys II Men, or more recent acts such as Justin Timberlake. But then there are those who love pop music. The type that fill their AIM and MySpace profiles with inspirational quotes from Beyoncé and Paris Hilton, worship Jessica Simpson and dream about Usher and Pharrell. She is the type who made Kelly, Fergie and JoJo famous by buying their CDs for one or two songs. These pop princesses continuously support mainly vapid artists who come straight off of the pop artist production line and on to the radio.

Metal head

Metal heads are like indie kids except with overly long hair and stained Levis. If you ask a metal head what’s metal, you’re almost guaranteed to get a different answer from each person. For some, it’s prog-rockers such as Rush or Dream Theater. For others it’s screamers such as Norma Jean or The Red. Still others prefer newer metal bands such as Disturbed, Escape Plan or Mastodon. Some still cling to metal legends such as Motorhead or Pantera for their head-banging needs. One way to get a metal head to put his horns down for a second is to call Linkin Park, System of a Down or recent Metallica metal — you are sure to generate dirty looks. While most metal heads channel their insecurities through the screams and intricate riffs of metal, they have a surprising amount of confidence when defining what constitutes the genre.

Indie kid

If you won’t do ego check, tell an indie kid your taste in music — the verbal attack you’ll receive will sting for weeks. Usually appearing as a pop-punk fan with a more refined taste in clothing, indie kids often gather in groups to discuss and rip apart each other’s latest music discoveries. To them, The Shins were good until Garden State came out. Modest Mouse sold out by getting popular with "Float On." Death Cab for Cutie and The Postal Service were dopes until they started selling albums. An indie kid’s never-ending quest to be satisfied with a music artist for longer than a month or so is usually fulfilled as the artist either fades away or does the unthinkable and gets discovered by a large audience. But it’s all shrugged off, for every Death Cab there’s another Pinback, Voxtrot or Explosions in the Sky waiting to be discovered.

Hip-hop head

The antithesis of a rap aficionado. Can often be found dreaming of the days when sugar was sprinkled on cardboard and the b-boyz took center stage. Though his tastes may not be as deeply rooted in legends such as Run-DMC and Grandmaster Flash, he still focuses on lyrics-based rapping with something to say. Think the ghetto drug stories of The Clipse, the eclectic sounds of Outkast or K-Or the deep thoughts of Mos Def or Nas. Occasionally he will admit to liking crossover rap stars such as T.I. or Lil Wayne, but it’s usually few and far between.

Pop-punk rocker

The trendiest of them all. Usually following which band has the hottest group member — Blink 182 trumps Green Day. My Chemical Romance trumps The Used, Panic! At The Disco trumps Fall Out Boy and All-American Rejects trumps Good Charlotte. Girls resemble either a Hot Topic model or the same type of female who would’ve been found screaming at a Backstreet Boys concert a decade earlier. The guys often wear tight pants, swoop their hair across their eyes and start their own band by rearranging the same 8 chords Green Day and The Ramones have been using for decades. Punk purists such as The Stooges, The Clash and The Buzzocks are often shunned because their music lacks the pop sheen, and their band members look like New York City street beggars. Eyeliner is optional but is encouraged for extra scene points.

Photo Illustration by
LESLEY CUSANO
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The antithesis of a rap aficionado. Can often be found dreaming of the days when sugar was sprinkled on cardboard and the b-boys took center stage. Though his tastes may not be as deeply rooted in legends such as Run-DMC and Grandmaster Flash, he still focuses on lyrics-based rapping with something to say. Think the ghetto-drug stories of The Clipse, the eclectic sounds of Outkast or K-OS or the deep thoughts of Mos Def or Nas. Occasionally he will admit to liking crossover rap stars such as T-I. or Lil' Wayne, but it's usually few and far between.

Pop-punk rocker

The trendiest of them all. Usually following which band has the hottest group member — Blink 182 trumps Green Day, My Chemical Romance trumps The Used, Panic! At The Disco trumps Fall Out Boy and All-American R Republic trumps Good Charlotte. Girls resemble either a Hot Topic model or the same type of female who would've been found screaming at a Backstreet Boys concert a decade earlier. The guys often wear tight pants, swoop their hair across their eyes and start their own band by rearranging the same five chords Green Day and The Ramones have been using for decades. Punk pioneers such as The Stooges, The Clash and The Buzzcocks are often shunned because their music lacks the pop sheen, and their band members look like New York City street beggars. Eyeliner is optional but is encouraged for extra scene points.
Chase Morris, a freshman offensive lineman, makes a cold trip from the training room to the field house for a spring training session.

TACKLING TRADITION

Kent State looks to break its failing football cycle with new determination and a new attitude.

A large portion of Kent State's student body wasn't all who heard it. Kent State football coach Doug Martin had been listening to it for years. So had Athletic Director Laing Kennedy.

It had been the subject of sports-talk radio, a topic on discussion boards on the Internet and a university-wide rumor for a decade.

"Why is Kent State going to dump the football program?" fans and media would ask. "The university just needs to focus on basketball."

And the criticism didn't come in the absence of good reasoning.

The Golden Flashes' football team has captured just a single conference championship in its 55 years in the Mid-American Conference (the last in 1972 when NFL Hall of Fame linebacker Jack Lambert played on the team). The team holds the same number of one-win seasons as winning seasons (seven), and before that '72 season, the last time Kent State entered a bowl game was the 1954 Refrigerator Bowl (yes, it really was a bowl).

Recent seasons weren't much different with Kent State sporting a 31-101 record during the past decade. The program reached a low point in 2006, Martin says, as the team went 1-10 despite high expectations.

Then came the 2006 season. How quickly things can change.
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Then came the 2006 season. How quickly things can change.
Kennedy says the idea of terminating football
was never talked about here. I'm sure it was
outside of the program, but never-in here.
His career now directed toward a student
body that may not understand how a successful
town can substantially benefit Kent State.

Keeping the faith
Martin worked vigorously to instill a positive
mindset when he was hired in 2004 shortly af-
ter former coach Dean Neu departed for a job
in the NFL. The problem, he admitted, was the
negative attitude that seeped into Kent State foot-
ball had spread beyond his realm of control.
"It wasn't just the players," Martin says.
"Everybody had this negative feeling or
thought that Kent State was something other
than what it could be. And getting through
that is difficult."

Lester Troutman, a red-shirt sophomore defensive lineman, does an abdominal workout as part of his spring training regimen.

Patience is virtue
The relentless attitude emanating from
Martin wasn't just by chance. Martin
knows too well what it takes to transform a los-
ing team into a winning one. He experienced
change firsthand as a player at the University of
Kentucky and then as an assistant coach at East
Carolina University.

"I came over my coach's first year (at
Kentucky), and the next two years we actually
started by going to talk to student groups
as many groups as I could get to — dormi-
tories, sororities, fraternities, any group that
would listen," Martin says. "I just began to
explain to them what we could have here and
what my vision was for this place."

The plan seemed to be on track when Kent
State finished with a respectable 6-6 record in
Martin's first year. But the negativity quickly
spread throughout the university yet again
after the 1-10 season in '05. Martin says that's
when he started to notice the players doubting
themselves and buying into the downbeat atti-
dute that surrounded the program.

"That's tough because to keep the players
in a positive frame of mind, I can talk to them
for an hour or so at practice," Martin says, "but
then they're going to spend the rest of the day
around people in the community, the student
body, and all they're going to get is bombarded
with negativity."

And bombarded they were. When senior
defense tackle Tyus Muir came to Kent State from
Maryland, he says he never saw such pes-
siveness surrounding a football program before,
and he was confused as to why it was
so harsh. "It was frustrating because a lot of guys ac-
cepted losing," says Muir. "It was just like 'OK,
we lost — let's go party.' And it was weird be-
cause we just lost; we just got blown out. So I
was like, 'Wow, guys are just going out and
partying, and that team just ran up the score 40
points on us. It was different.'"

A big reason for that, Martin says, was because
there were players he wouldn't have recruited on
were merely content with a scholarship.
The combination of losing, a student body
that mocked its team and the bad attitude of the
players soon created a team in turmoil. And the
only way to fix it was to ignore the negativity.
"I think we just have to out-stubborn ever-
body," Martin says. "I was not going to listen to
the negativity. I was not going to be a part of
what could be here, potentially."

Above: Junior receiver Coleman Lynn works
hard during the off-season months. Sophomore receiver Phil Garner spots him in the background.
Right: Coach Tobias Jacobs, Coach Matt Horton, and players Shawn Donaldson, Josh Perry and QO.
Lumley shares a laugh at the Kent State held
house during a 7 a.m. lifting session.

But Martin isn't backing down. He is aggres-
sively attempting to continue the reversal of the
program and steer away from the trend of fol-
lowing one winning season with several losing
ones. And he wants to assemble the rest of Kent State on his side.

Kennedy is obviously beside him. The 13-year
director of athletics has been waiting for one of
the only sports that hasn't excelled since his ar-
risal at Kent State to prosper, and he is no lon-
ger pleased to keep the program afloat.
In fact, if

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Everybody had this negative feeling or thought that Kent State was something other than what it could be. And getting through that is difficult.

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**Keeps the faith**

Martin worked vigorously to instill a positive mindset when he was hired in 2004 shortly after former coach Dean Nees departed for a job in the NFL. The problem, he admitted, was the negative attitude that weighted Kent State football and had spread beyond his realm of control.

"It wasn't just the players," Martin says. "Everybody had this negative feeling or thought that Kent State was something other than what it could be. And getting through that is difficult.

So Martin embarked on a journey to change the hopscotch attitude of the students, and he has made some strides.

"It started by going to talk to student groups — as many groups as I could get to — draminories, sororities, fraternities, any group that would listen," Martin says. "I just began to explain to them what we could have here and what my vision was for the place."

The plan seemed to be on track when Kent State finished with a respectable 5-6 record in Martin's first year. But the negativity quickly swelled through the university yet again after the 1-10 season in '05. Martin says that's when he started to notice the players doubting themselves and buying into the slow-velocity attitude that surrounded the program.

"That's tough because to keep the players in a positive frame of mind, I can talk to them for hours or, on practice. Martin says, "but then they're going to spend the rest of the day around people in the community, the student body, and all they're going to get is bombarded with negativity."

And bashed they were. When senior defense tackle Yauriel Muir came to Kent State from Maryland, he says he never saw such a pessimism surrounding a football program before, and he was confused as to why it was so harsh.

"It was hard coming from a place where they love the football team and love the football players," Muir says. "You think it's going to be the same in college, but it wasn't. It was like the student body didn't even respect the football team — like we were a bunch of jerks. That was hard to deal with.

Muir says the discouragement slowly crept into the minds of the players and when the losses began to pile up, the players began to give up.

"It was frustrating because a lot of guys accepted losing," says Muir. "It was just like, 'OK, we're just losing, let's go play.' And it was weird because we just got blown out. So I was like, 'Wow, guys are just going out and partying, and the team just ran up the score 40 points on us. It was different.'"

A big reason for that, Martin says, was because there were players he wouldn't have recruited on the team — someone who weren't giving effort and were merely present with a scholarship.

The combination of losing, a student body that mocked its team and the bad attitude of the players soon created a group of which Martin says, "I was just going to listen to (the negativity). I was not going to be a part of that. I was going to keep builing the drum of what could be here, potentially.

Patience is virtue

The relentless attitude emanating from Martin wasn't just by chance. Martin knows too well what it takes to transform a losing team into a winning one. He experienced change firsthand as a player at the University of Kentucky and then as an assistant coach at East Carolina University.

"It was my coach's first year (at Kentucky), and the next two years we actually made bowl games," Martin says. "And I saw how did it that.

Before Martin and former head coach Neal Logan took over at ECU, the Pirates suffered losing seasons in 10 of their last 12 years. But in the last 13 years Martin and Logan coached, they jointly led the team to six winning seasons.

"At East Carolina, (the rebuilding) took a little longer — about three to four years — which is about the same pace we're on here," Martin says. "I know it's tiring. I'm not going to happen overnight. But I know if you can do it a place like East Carolina, you can do it here."

Martin says it was at those places he attuned the mindset of not giving up when something bad happens and to keep the "vision" he imagined for the program paramount in his mind.

As bad as the '05 season was for Kent State, maintaining that focus wasn't easy. But Martin says he started to see signs of his determination paying off in the off-season. The players witnessed how passionate he was about making this a winning team, and they began to rally behind him.

"Our team just seemed to be bonding together," he says.

The attitude the players exhibited at the '06 spring practices was one which Martin had never observed before — even when he chose to hold every practice outside in the snow, some- thing few coaches attempt.

But the turn-around didn't show right away. The Golden Flashes started the season 0-2, and another season of struggles seemed imminent for Kent State. Then came a turning point, Martin says. Strangely enough, it came in a loss.

The Golden Flashes suffered a heartbreak- ing 17-14 overtime loss to Army in their second game of the year. Kent State tied the game late in the fourth quarter, but a fumble early in overtime set up Army's game-winning field goal.

"That was about as down as I've ever been in my three years here because I really wanted that game for our kids," Martin says. "We played a great game at Army. We played with passion, we played with intensity. It was heartbreaking. It was fast — we just didn't win.

"When we got back that night, we had a meeting in the locker room. I told them I had a vision in my head of what I wanted our team to look like and today was the first time that team showed up. And I think their believed me and knew that what I was telling them was from the heart."

The following week, the Flashes beat MAC-rival Miami on the road in another close contest. And the victory ignited the team to five straight wins.

"These two right there really made us," Martin says. "We had been in one of those close games but hadn't won them. There's something about close games that go down to the wire that really pull us team together."
Sustaining success

As excited as Martin is about last year’s success, maintaining that progress is his goal. And he makes sure his team knows that, too.

“That is the issue right now,” Martin says. “And I throw it in the players’ faces every day — that everybody is expecting them not to be around this year because that’s been the trend here. So I don’t try to duck that, I don’t try and hide it — put it right in their face and I make them embrace that fact.”

A big step in that process was bringing in quarterback Julian Edelman. A junior college transfer, Edelman earned the starting job after returning starter Michael Machen was injured. Edelman wasn’t highly recruited out of high school because of his height — about 5 feet 11 inches — but Martin says he’s a perfect fit for Kent State.

“Being able to add Julian Edelman made a huge impact,” Martin says. “He’s the perfect fit for our team because Julian plays with a chip on his shoulder. A lot of people overlooked him in recruiting, and he carries that around.”

The team embraced his attitude, Martin says, and Edelman says one reason he knows the team won’t cling to last year’s success is because the losses are the games that stick out.

“We really don’t have anything to be complacent over,” says Edelman, who says he never heard about the struggles of Kent State because of his lack of proximity — he’s from Redwood City, Calif. “I mean, 6-6 might be good for the old Kent, but we’re new out here. Guys are going to think about the Ball State loss and the Ohio loss and the taste that it left in our mouth after we lost and were eliminated from first place in the MAC.”

If football wins, KSU wins

A first-place finish in the MAC would be unprecedented for a program that was on a roll from ESPN.com of teams most likely to make the Toilet Bowl two years ago.

But as Kennedy says, Kent State could flourish in many other areas that may not seem as apparent.

“We were becoming a national story because we were one game away from a bowl. We were starting to get on the national radar,” he says of last year’s success. “The marketing experts who teach it and practice it in this campus say that’s a difficult price tag — you can’t buy it. What that should transfer into is more of everything — student enrollment, student retention, areas that hit the university’s priorities.

“We need to be a significant part of President LeFon’s strategy for enrollment and retention.”

Another example of how the team’s success can help the university is by attracting potential contributors, he says.

“Before every home football game, the president is entertaining major prospects and donors for the university,” Kennedy says. “And if they come in on a weekend like the Akron weekend, and we have a great environment, great crowd, great student attendance, suddenly more people want to come back. While they’re back, let’s talk about the needs of the library... and stuff like that.

“Athletics has to become more pro-active in that strategy with the university vision.”

Martin pointed out the impact the basketball program has created and how the football team can generate the same type of atmosphere.

For that to happen, though, the Golden Flashes can’t be a one-year wonder. They have to come back this year and do even better, Martin says.

“We have a great window of opportunity this year,” he says. “If we’re complacent and think it’s just going to happen because we want it to or because we had a decent year last year, then it won’t happen. We’ve got to outwork people again. We’ve got to pay the price just as heavy as we did last year, and I think they’re doing that.”

Kennedy says he’s not ready to say the Gold-en Flashes “have turned the corner,” but he’s noticed drastic improvements.

“It was a hard, slow change — kind of like turning the Queen Mary around in the harbor,” he says.

Martin says he’s had enough with the bad attitudes and off-the-field issues of the past, and he’s ready to bring the ship home.

“I’m not going to try and hide from the history of Kent State football because it doesn’t have anything to do with me, and it doesn’t have anything to do with these current players,” he says. “So there’s no sense in worrying about that and there’s no sense in worrying about other people talking about that. You can change all that. Go out and win a MAC championship this next year and all that will change.

“You have to get a vision of what you want this place to look like and don’t take your eyes off it. Don’t look at what it is right now, just keep looking at what it’s going to be, and sooner or later you’ll get there. We’re almost there.”

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Joe Simon is a senior newsweekly journalism major. This is his first story for The Burr. Contact him at jsimoni@kent.edu.

Above: Dan Hartman (left), a red-shirt freshman defensive back, and Andy Jayjack (right), a red-shirt sophomore running back, lift at the Kent State Field house. Left: Andrew Tudor, a freshman running back, fills out a training bag during a lifting session in the Kent State field house. The football team uses inspirational quotes to get through daily workouts.
As the debate over beauty pageants continues, two students have found ambition and poise through these competitions.

Vaseline is administered to the teeth. Duct tape, safety pins and badger glaze are securely in place.
Months of preparation and sleepless nights led to this one moment.
Nerves, excitement and sheer adrenaline fill the women who will be standing on stage — but the Vaseline and a lot of practice keep their lips from changing to the eager position of expectation their nerves really want their lips to make.
A crown sparkles in the distance like the Holy Grail of future opportunity.

And each woman waits.
The names are announced, and one by one, the contestants' faces shift from learned smiles to ones of real disappointment.

Then there are two.
One will hold the title and don the crown. One will need to be satisfied with first runner-up.

"There is nothing better than getting to the two final girls, hearing the other girl is the first runner-up, then having everyone cheer for you," says Marianna Hewitt, an enthusiastic pageant competitor who received her highest award by being named Miss Teen Galaxy 2006.

Beauty pageants, scholarship pageants — whatever you want to call them — grace everything from the pages of American history books to blogs in today's Internet world.

Pageants were a popular target for the women's movement and the subject of Sandra Bullock's hit, Miss Congeniality. Many famous women have titles sitting on their resumes beside Oscars, Emmys and various career achievements. Many also have them on their list of no-no's for a society of equals.

Pageants have been an institution of creativity or controversy for decades, depending on how one looks at it. A new generation of feminists is forming its own opinions about beauty pageants. These critics struggle with the positives and negatives of the competitions. For those competing, however, the pursuit is for the crown, the title, the opportunity and the experience.

Left: Miss Teen Galaxy 2006 Marianna Hewitt displays one of the crowns she keeps in her room. The sophomore broadcast major is working toward competing in the Miss Ohio preliminary.
As the debate over beauty pageants continues, two students have found ambition and poise through these competitions.

Months of preparation and sleepless nights led to this one moment. Nausea, excitement and sheer adrenaline fill the women who will be standing on stage — but the Vaseline and a lot of practice keep their lips from changing to the eager position of expectation their nerves really want their lips to make.

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Marianna Hewitt:
A model student

Marianna Hewitt can’t count the number of pageants she’s been in on two hands. She had been Miss Junior Teen Ohio, Miss Ohio Teen USA, First Runner-Up, Miss Teen Ohio Galaxy winner and several other runner-up positions and “almosts.” The title she is most proud of is the title she was given last year: Miss Teen Galaxy 2005.

“Winning is the greatest feeling in the world,” the sophomore pre-journalism major says. “It took time, desire and money to get where I am.”

“Lots of money! You cannot do it without proper financial support,” Hewitt says. “There is pageant coaching, interview coaching, personal trainers, stylist, hair, nails, tanning, traveling to other pageants to watch and see girls in person, wardrobe, everything.”

She has a pageant coach in Detroit whom she visits once a month. When time creeps to only a few months away from the pageant, Hewitt drives to see her coach every weekend, where she gets help with walking, interviewing, physical stance and stage presence. She and her coach must even agree on her wardrobe. Not a detail is missed.

While her pageant coach lives north, Hewitt travels east to New York City to visit her interview coach.

“Lots of money! You cannot do it without proper financial support,” Hewitt says. “This is amazing,” she laughs. “He really teaches you to think on your feet and answer without thinking about it.”

Most of the pageants Hewitt competes in are modeling-based. The pageant requires an interview, along with eveningwear and swimsuit modeling. The two parts of the competition are the most nerve-racking, she says. To compensate, she has a personal trainer when she lives at home and works out in the morning and the evening.

“Lots of money! You cannot do this without proper financial support,” Hewitt says. “I’m so busy,” she laughs. “I have to start early.”

The 19-year-old is a Delta Gamma and lives with two of her sisters who also compete in pageants. She says it is nice to have the support of her roommates because they understand why a busy social life is hard to fulfill sometimes.

The black-haired, dark-eyed, dark-skinned half-Vietnamese, half-Italian can’t be described as anything but striking. The trips to Detroit and lessons on enunciation have trickled down to every aspect of her life, she says, mentioning that she finds it easier to speak in public and in class because of her training.

The combination of looks and hard work led to her winning her competitions. The most incredible experience of her life, she says, came when she was crowned the winner out of all her competitors from around the world after traveling through preliminary competitions.

Angela Funovits:
It’s magic

Angela Funovits’ story is a little different. The current Miss Maple City first runner-up admits that competing in pageants has one large attraction. There are a lot of reasons to participate, but the scholarships are great,” says the 19-year-old integrated life sciences major and NOLCOM winner then goes on to compete for talent and onstage questioning, along with most of the winners go on to compete for the title of Miss America. There are 22 local preliminaries throughout the state of Ohio. The winners go on to compete in Miss Ohio. The Miss Ohio winner then goes on to compete for the title of Miss America.

The pageant circuit has judging portions and is practicing for a Miss Ohio preliminary. There are 22 local preliminaries throughout the state of Ohio whose winners go on to compete in Miss Ohio. The Miss Ohio winner then goes on to compete for the title of Miss America.

Funovits poses with the playing cards she uses in her magic tricks. The 19-year-old has been performing magic and modeling for almost ten years.

Hewitt hangs up one of her dresses in her bedroom closet in the Delta Gamma sorority house or Fraternity Circle. It's not easy, the 19-year-old says. "I have to start early."
Marianna Hewitt: A model student

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The combination of looks and hard work led to her winning her competitions. The most incredible experience of her life, she says, came when she was crowned the winner of all other contestants from around the world after traveling through preliminary competition.

As a part of her winnings, Hewitt says she has been able to make numerous connections with talent agencies and celebrities.

This statement is pretty modest of her accomplishments. She has been photographed for CMY Magazine, Mahkall Cosmetics and Marley. The camera can't keep its eyes off of her either. She was on last year's MTVU hit "I'M" and has acted in commercials for Wendy's. She also landed a modeling deal with a small agency that helps sponsor the pageants.

"While we don't get scholarships in Miss Galaxy, I'm making steps toward a possible career," she says. She is studying to become a broadcast journalist, but she says modeling can help pay the bills and would be a dream career.

Hewitt plans to continue competing and is practicing for a Miss Ohio preliminary. She says she likes to stay busy, and the discipline pageants teach has helped her handle college classes and schedules.

Angela Funovits: It's magic

Angela Funovits' story is a little different. The current Miss Magic City first runner-up admits that competing to pageants has one large attraction.

"There are a lot of reasons to participate, but the scholarships are great," says the 19-year-old integrated life sciences major and 2002/2003 student who is working her way to school to become a physician. She says the money she saves through pageants could definitely help foot the bill.

Miss Magic City is a part of the Miss America System, which is renowned for the large amounts of scholarship money it provides its victorious competitors. There are 22 local preliminaries throughout the states of Ohio whose winners go on to compete in Miss Ohio. The Miss Ohio winner then goes on to compete for the title of Miss America.

This pageant circuit has judging panels for talent and onstage questioning, along with swimsuit, eveningwear and interview. During the interview, each contestant is asked to speak about her "platform." This is in cause that the contestant would work to support and promote if she wins the title.

The interview and the talent portions compose the highest-scoring, Miss America talent test. Funovits found a way to combine them.

When she was in elementary school, Funovits's father had been a magician. "I was incredibly shy, I started to do magic to get comfortable in front of people," she says. "I'm largely self-taught."

"I would check out books from the library when I was little and not return them because I didn't want other people to learn my tricks," she jokes.

The Avon Lake native has gone on to perform in front of Masonic Auditorium and Performing Arts Center, Nashville Radio City and Cleveland Palace, but there is one audience that captivates her the most.

In high school, Funovits volunteered at hospitals around Avon Lake and would perform magic tricks for patients waiting in pre-operation rooms to help them relax before surgery.

"It was then that I realized my magic could help make a difference in someone's life," she says.

Sooner after, Funovits started Seraphim One Outreach. The program addresses the psychological needs of the cancer community. She works to pull together area magicians to perform in hospitals for cancer patients and their families.

"Performing for those is giving me purpose," she says. "Taking someone at such a difficult point in their life and empowering them is so fulfilling for me."

Funovits says she decided to use Seraphim One Outreach as her platform. As Miss Teens Cleveland, she was able to nationally promote "Using Magic to Achieve Holistic Healing," which focused on the goals of Seraphim One.

"With a (pageant) platform so far as promoting a program," she says. "If you have a crown, everyone, everywhere is going to have your best interest."

Miss America pageant participants also have a big responsibility to work extensively with their platform during the years of their reign, she says. Funovits says the circuit's dedication to service is important to her and a good argument to the stereotype that pageants are pointless.

An estimated 12,000 young women participate in some circuit of the America Organization at state or local levels. In 2005, the organization's total awards given to competitors at state and local organizations in the form of cash or scholarship assistance totaled about $5.8 million, according to its Web site.

Contestants performed 13,384 community service projects in 2005. The total number of hours recorded for those service projects was 57,177.

Funovits says the many pageants she has competed in have made her a stronger, more confident person.

"It's amazing the way it can help you grow as a person," she says. "And if I can put myself up on a stage in a bikini and walk around — I can do anything."

"Bra Burners" Versus "Cattle"

In 1968, the Miss America beauty pageant was an American institution. It was a tradition. Female competitors showed their strengths in cooking, cleaning and looking beautiful in a baking suit, and the public embraced those baking beauties.

That same year, second-wave feminism ignited in the pageant. Women's liberation activists protested outside the arena in Atlantic City where the Miss America contest was held. Their goal was to show how all women were hurt by Miss America and similar beauty competitions.

And to make their voices heard, the feminists decided it was war — of the activist sort.

Posters held by protesters lined the Boardwalk. A crow and slogan proclaiming "Miss America" adored a live sheep. Stiletto shoes, bra, makeup and hair curlers were pitch into a raging fire. The protest was put on hold, however, when a representative threatened to sue.
“Women in these pageants are not ugly. They are not overweight. They are not the average American woman.”

Before the fame and paparazzi
Recognize these names? Before they were leading successful careers and high-profile social lives, these women were feeling the pressure and rewards of beauty pageants.

Oprah Winfrey
Winfrey held the titles of 1971 Miss Fire Prevention in Georgia and Miss Black Tennessee before becoming one of the most powerful women in the world. But it wasn't all crowns and glory. She also competed in the Miss America Pageant preliminaries but didn't make the finals.

Paula Zahn
This television journalist star of CNN, Paula Zahn. Now worked her way through school by earning scholarships through the Miss Teen America Pageant. She made the finals in 1973.

Naria Maples
She was named Photogenic after placing fourth in Georgia's Miss Teen Pageant. Now, paparazzi take pictures of this second Mrs. Donald Trump.

Vanessa Williams
This singer who wowed the world with her voice in "Save the Best for Last" was also the first black woman to win the Miss America Pageant. Her reign, however, was riddled with controversy. She was asked to give up her crown and title when Penthouse published sexually explicit photos she had posed for prior to her career in entertainment.

Diane Sawyer
This journalist standout might not be what she is today if it weren't for beauty pageants. After being crowned Miss America Junior Miss, she used the money she earned from the title to attend Wellesley College. She went on to work as a weather girl, a press aide to Richard Nixon and a 40-Minutes correspondent.

Tiffani-Amber Thiessen
Who knew the girl who played cheerleader Kelly Kapowski in "Saved by the Bell" was a former beauty queen? Before she was starting an acting and modeling career for herself on "Saved by the Bell," Thiessen was Miss Junior America and won the Teen Magazine Model search.

Halle Berry
Before college-aged men across the globe drooled over her nearly nude appearance in "Swordfish," this actress was making a name for herself throughout the American beauty pageant circuit. Although she now holds the claim of Oscar-worthy actress, Berry was Miss Teen All American, Miss Ohio-USA, first runner-up to Miss America and third runner-up to Miss World that same year.

That's the way they are
But that's the way they are, isn't it? Women come in all shapes and sizes, and pageants can be a way to celebrate diversity. However, it's important to remember that beauty is subjective and that pageants can perpetuate unrealistic standards of beauty.

Wasting Energy?
Watt's Up with that?

To share an energy saving tip, report energy waste or for more information, contact Campus Environment And Operations energy@kent.edu
Individuals, but we also realize there will always be people who feel otherwise," says Hilda Pettit, director of the KSU Women's Resource Center. "The most unfortunate example of this, in my opinion, is mothers who enter their daughters in competitions at an early age, encouraging both competitive behavior and setting unrealistic standards of beauty."

She says the average female viewer may feel "very inadequate and ugly when watching a pageant, and younger girls may develop expectations of ideal beauty that are unrealistic and may possibly lead to the development of eating disorders or self-esteem issues."

Pettit's next statement, however, shows the jury is still out on whether those participating are degrading themselves. "On the other hand, the women in the pageant have chosen to compete because they are very proud of their beauty as they perceive it," she says, "and it would seem unfair to me to condemn them for pride in the ideals of beauty that they value."

The feminist movement, Pettit says, has changed its focus from beauty pageants to something else. "Frankly, I believe that most feminists have just written beauty pageants off as a waste of time. I think that we pay very little attention to them," she says. "Unfortunately, their impact may have been replaced by other media portrayals of women in advertising for products."

The idealistic beauty that is so prevalent in beauty pageants is now seen in promotions for clothing, perfume, jewelry and other products used by women, Pettit says. These advertisements have become a bigger concern for feminists because the public sees them every day—pageants are optional to view. And women aren't the only ones affected by this "idealistic beauty." "Men who see all the advertising also learn to expect the standards of beauty in ads to be held by typical women," Pettit says. "This in turn puts more pressure on women to conform to societal perceptions of beauty because, despite feminist intentions, women do care what other people think about their appearance. A horrible, vicious circle."

Hewitt and Andryscik say that the pageants have changed their lives and made them better people. "Since there have been changes in the goals of the pageants from decades before, feminists today aren't so worked up about them—but they will never completely agree with their ideals. "Like pornography, it's a good thing and a bad thing," Hewitt says. "And let's face it; Miss America is a type of pornography minus the facial at the end—only the participant is more rounded characters with goals."
Weber

Heidi

by

Photos

Mussig

by

About 20 million Americans have genital human papillomavirus, and nearly 6 million new cases are diagnosed each year. Of that number, about half of those infected are between 15 and 24 years old.

In August 2005, Melissa Keenan requested an STD test when she went in for her yearly doctor's appointment. She was surprised to find out she'd tested positive for HPV, which causes genital warts and, in some cases, cervical cancer.

After finding out she had HPV, Keenan, an alumna of Youngstown State University, says she spent some time researching the virus and learned that it is the most common sexually transmitted disease.

"It was something I didn't know I could get that easily," the 22-year-old says.

Her situation isn't unusual. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at least 50 percent of sexually active men and women acquire genital HPV at some point in their lives.

A closer look

There are more than 100 types of HPV, and about 40 of these affect the genital area. The 40 strains of genital HPV are divided into high-risk and low-risk categories.

What distinguishes high-risk from low-risk HPV is that low-risk types are benign—they cause a skin reaction but don't become integrated and change the cell DNA, says Wendy Clinger, obstetrician and gynecologist at PrimeHealth Women's Health Specialists. High-risk types can lead to changes in cells lining the cervix and, in cases such as Keenan's, may develop into cancer.

Tests, tests, tests

Keenan says she saw her doctor every two months for Pap tests, and they all came back abnormal. Pap tests that are abnormal don't necessarily mean a patient has HPV—a local irritation or infection unrelated to HPV or a lab error could result in an abnormal Pap. Multiple Pap tests and an HPV DNA test, which can detect the 13 types of HPV most commonly found in cervical cancer, can also be administered, according to the CDC.

"There are many tests that it's worth to use it a condyloma, Clinger says.

A positive attitude

According to the CDC, about 90 percent of women diagnosed with cervical cancer are between 35 and 55 years old. These women were probably exposed to high-risk types of HPV while in their 20s, and because it went unnoticed, the cells became cancerous.

"I could pick a good cancer, that's probably the best you could have," Keenan says. "You have to look on the bright side—a glass half full. There are so many worse things that could happen to a person."

"It was that positive attitude that helped Keenan finish her last year of school. She missed a lot of classes, but says she was honest with her professors and informed them of the situation. In May 2006, she graduated with degrees in chemistry and biology.

"Melissa Keenan, 22, tested positive for HPV, developed cervical cancer, had it surgically removed and is now living cancer-free."

"The controversy"

In January, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued an immunization recommendation that by the age of 11, girls should receive the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, Gardasil. Sarah Adams, pediatrician and section chairman of pediatrics at Robinson Memorial Hospital in Ravenna, says "although the vaccine is recommended for women between the ages of 9 and 26, in practice, the target age is 11 to 12 years old."

The CDC's recommendation has left lawmakers in a dilemma: require the vaccine to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and future cancer cases or leave the decision up to the discretion of parents.

"There's controversy because some people view it as a permission slip to become sexually active," Adams says. "Cost is another factor prohibiting widespread approval of the vaccine."

Although many insurance companies are recognizing the vaccine, Adams says women without help from insurance, the three-shot series during a six-month period costs $110 to $130 per shot. To help make the vaccine available for low-income and uninsured families, Kristopher Weiss, a supervisor for the Ohio Department of Health, says the department has distributed more than 24,000 doses of the vaccine through the federal Vaccine for Children program.

Because of its recent release, Adams says "the long-term effectiveness of the vaccine is still unclear, but so far the booster shots have been recommended."

— Jackie Valley

Gardasil: The controversy

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— Jackie Valley

A recent study completed at Washington State University shows that 1 in 1 female college students is infected with HPV.
HPV: Deadly and symptom-free

About 20 million Americans have genital human papillomavirus, and nearly 6 million new cases are diagnosed each year. Of that number, about half of those infected are between 15 and 24 years old.

Get vaccinated

DeWeese Health Center

Price: $450 for all three shots

Insurance: Check plan to see if Gardasil is covered

Planned Parenthood

Price: $465 for all three shots

Insurance: Offers Merck assistance program for uninsured patients

In August 2005, Melissa Keenan requested an STD test when she went in for her yearly doctor’s appointment. She was surprised to find out she’d tested positive for HPV, which causes genital warts and, in some cases, cervical cancer.

After finding out she had HPV, Keenan, a student at Youngstown State University, says she spent some time researching the virus and learned that it is the most common sexually transmitted disease.

“It was something I didn’t know I could get that easily,” the 22-year-old says.

Her situation isn’t unusual. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at least 50 percent of sexually active men and women acquire genital HPV at some point in their lives.

A closer look

There are more than 100 types of HPV, and about a third of these affect the genital area. The 40 strains of genital HPV are divided into high-risk and low-risk categories.

What distinguishes high-risk from low-risk HPV is that low-risk types are benign – they cause a skin reaction but don’t become integrated and change the cell DNA, says Wendy Clinger, ob-gyn at St. Mary’s Regional Medical Center.

Keenan did indeed have HPV, Clinger says. But she didn’t have the type of HPV that causes cervical cancer.

Keenan says she saw her doctor every two months for Pap tests, and they all came back normal. Pap tests that are abnormal don’t necessarily mean a patient has HPV – a local irritation or infection unrelated to HPV or a lab error could result in an abnormal Pap. Multiple Pap tests and an HPV DNA test, which can detect the 13 types of HPV most commonly found in cervical cancer, can also be administered, according to the CDC.

The severity of the abnormality determines the treatment. In most cases, the person’s immune system fights off the infection, but Keenan’s infection wasn’t going away. Keenan’s doctor took biopsy of her cervix during a colposcopy, which allowed her to examine Keenan’s cervix more closely.

Keenan says the first biopsy was done to determine how many cell layers deep the abnormal cells penetrated and whether they were precancerous or cancerous. In all cases, moderate to severe abnormal cervical cells need to be removed.

“Once you cross over that threshold, you need to get those cells out,” Clinger says. “They can turn into something bad.”

Like the Pap tests, Keenan’s biopsies kept coming back irregular. After five colposcopies in a year, Keenan says the doctor decided to do a large surface biopsy. The result: Stage 1 cervical cancer.

“It was probably caught the earliest you could,” Keenan says.

After being diagnosed, Keenan had surgery to remove the cancerous tissue. She says the doctor removed most of her cervix, cutting out about an inch and a half.

“I had to look at it after,” Keenan says. “I just had to. It’s so graphically unappealing.”

The doctor left just enough for the cells to regenerate so her cervix could grow back.

An early defense

Keenan jokingly laments that Gardasil, the first vaccine to prevent cervical cancer caused by HPV types 16 and 18, came out two years too late for her. The Food and Drug Administration approved the vaccine in June 2006.

Dr. Ray Leone, chief university physician at DeWeese Health Center, says 50 women have received the vaccination on campus.

According to the CDC, if a woman has already been exposed to a strain of HPV, Gardasil won’t protect her from that particular strain. Because women can be infected with more than one type of HPV, Gardasil will protect her from the types she doesn’t have.

Because HPV has no symptoms, the infected person can pass it on without knowing, Clinger says. HPV is found on the skin around the genital area and can be transferred by touch, so people don’t have to have sex to spread the virus, but a study by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists found persistent, undetected warts increase the spreading of HPV by 70 percent.

That’s enough of a decrease that it’s worth to use it, Clinger says.

A positive attitude

According to the CDC, about 50 percent of women diagnosed with cervical cancer are between 35 and 55 years old. These women were probably exposed to high-risk types of HPV while in their 20s, and because it went untreated, the cells became cancerous.

Keenan’s situation was a little different. She discovered she had cervical cancer a year after finding out she had tested positive for HPV.

“That freaks you out,” Keenan says of how she felt after learning she had cervical cancer.

But through it all, she remained positive.

“If you could pick a good cancer, that’s probably the best one you could have,” Keenan says.

“You have to look on the bright side – glass half full. There are so many worse things this could happen to a person.”

It was that positive attitude that helped Keenan finish her last year of school. She missed a lot of classes, but says she was honest with her professor and informed them of the situation. In May 2006, she graduated with degrees in chemistry and biology.

Jennifer Mussig is a senior magazine journalism major. This is her first story for The Burr. Contact her at jennifermussig@kent.edu

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Cost is another factor prohibiting widespread approval of the vaccine.

Although many insurance companies are recognizing the vaccine, Adams says without help from insurers, the three-shot series during a six-month period costs $210 to $210 per shot.

To help make the vaccine available for low-income and uninsured families, Kristopher Weiss, a spokesperson for the Ohio Department of Health, says the department has distributed more than 24,000 doses of the vaccine through the federal Vaccine for Children program.

Because of its recent release, Adams says, the long-term effectiveness of the vaccine is still unclear, but he expects booster shots have been recommended.

— Jackie Valley

A recent study completed at Washington State University shows that 1 in 11 female college students is infected with HPV

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Living an Americanized LIFE

If you think college is hard now, try studying in another country.

Story by Shelley Blundell Photos by Heidi Weber

Today, more than 500,000 people from around the world are pursuing higher education in the United States. Natalie Barrett, Heman Zhang, Fu-Chih Lai and Antonio Brencher are four of them — all studying at Kent State University. Their reasons for attending Kent State are as diverse as the cultures each one comes from, as are their experiences. While these students have found things in common with their American peers and with each other, there are many aspects they acknowledge will always be different.

We’ll let them explain.

Fu-Chih Lai — Prescription for progress

Fu-Chih Lai has had almost seven years to adjust to life in the United States, but there are many things he misses about his life in Taiwan. “The only nightlife here is to go to the bar or the dance,” Lai, 37, says of the after-hours Kent scene. “In my country, there are bookstores open 24 hours — some are bigger than your department store. You can spend all night in the bookstore, if you want.”

Originally from Hengchun, a small town in southeast Taiwan, Lai moved to Ohio in 2000 to pursue a master’s degree in nursing at Case Western Reserve University. Lai completed the program in 2002 and moved on to the doctoral program in nursing at Kent State.
Today, more than 500,000 people from around the world are pursuing higher education in the United States. Natalie Barrett, Heman Zhu, Fu-Chih Lai and Antoine Beauchemin are four of them—all studying at Kent State University. Their reasons for attending Kent State are as diverse as the cultures each one comes from, as are their experiences. While these students have found things in common with their American peers and with each other, there are many aspects they acknowledge will always be different.

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Originally from Hengchung, a small town in southeast Taiwan, Lai moved to Ohio in 2000 to pursue a master's degree in nursing at Case Western Reserve University. Lai completed the program in 2002 and moved on to the doctoral program in nursing at Kent State.

Fu-Chih Lai, doctoral student in nursing, flies the flag from his country, Taiwan, in his office.
“The first couple weeks, I was calling home and adjusting. I was worried, but I fit in right away.”

Natalie Barrett - Finding a home team

Growing up in Glasgow, Scotland, Natalie Barrett spent a good portion of her life playing field hockey and dreaming of playing at the collegiate level; however, as in much of Europe, sports are secondary to academics, and Barrett feared once she left high school, she would no longer be able to play at the level she enjoyed.

When a fellow hockey player and older classmate enrolled at Kent State and joined its field hockey team, Barrett began to contemplate making the move for herself. She was 10 years old. Years later in 2005, Barrett was accepted by Kent State and its field hockey team. “The first couple weeks, I was calling home and adjusting. I was worried, but I fit in right away,” she says.

The sophomore marketing major credits her swift adjustment to her teammates, many of whom are international students as well. The American teammates do everything they can to make the international girls feel welcome, Barrett says, often inviting them home for holidays such as Thanksgiving.”

“A huge benefit for me was I came to a new team with 19 new best friends,” Barrett says. “I was given a life. Lots of internationals come over here and have nothing.”

Barrett, who spoke English at home, acknowledges the difficulty the language barrier and difference in culture can play for some international students trying to adapt at Kent State.

“There are a lot of American traditions in Brit­ain, but everything here is so much bigger and vast,” Barrett says.

This, Barrett feels, may have dened American students from understanding why many are under­educated about other countries and cultures.

“I’ve been asked some ridiculous ques­tions that I just can’t believe 21-year-old don’t know,” Barrett says. “The majority of people that I’ve spoken to really are clueless about anything to do with Europe — I think they kind of have the stereotypical view that Scotland is still in the British Empire.”

Barrett does not have a car and dislikes the lack of public transportation to Kent, often having to rely on friends and friends to get places. “At home, I got used to getting on a train or going on a bus,” Barrett says.

Despite the difference in lifestyles, Barrett feels she has been well-served.

“For me, it was the biggest decision I’ve ever made in my life,” Barrett says of leaving home and attending Kent State, where the pre­business management major intends to become a graduate field hockey coach after completing her undergraduate degree. “It made me more independent, it forced me to grow up in a lot of ways and I had to look after myself and be more responsible — but I enjoyed it.”

“I never regret the decision I made. It’s an opportunity of a lifetime that I could never have given up.”

Heran Zhu — An acquired taste

Heran Zhu, a 24-year-old international student from Shenyang, China, was brought to a new experience when he graduated with a bachelor’s degree in economics from Nankai University. He learned his credits into the undergraduate finance program at Kent State and has been at the university for a year and a half. Although he is adapting to life in the United States, Heran says there are still things seem strange to him.

“There are different social systems (in the United States),” Zhu says. “In China, you don’t need to understand everything. That here (at Kent State), the school is very open-minded, and the culture is not that hard,” Zhu says. “It’s just the language problem. Sometimes I have to use a dictionary.”

One thing that bothers Zhu about Kent State is the lack of public transportation. Not having a car can be difficult if you live in a suburban environment, he says, adding suburbia itself was another element he had to become accustomed to.

“I grew up (in China), in a big city, and I know everything about it,” Zhu says of his initial feelings of displacement at Kent State, saying it was easier for him to study in China as well. American food has also been a major adjustment for Zhu, who had to learn to cook traditional Chinese meals for himself, not being a fan of American fare.

“The food here — you guys drink cold water, don’t we,” Zhu says as one example of

“Both places have advantages for living — it just depends where you want to be.”

The decline of international student enrollment

The team of international student enrollment in universities has always been a competitive one. After Sept. 11 and the discovery that many of the terrorists linked to the plane hijackings had enrolled in the United States on student visas, restrictions and laws regarding issuing of student visas became tougher than ever.

A 2005 survey conducted by the Institute of International Education, in conjunction with various national and international educational institutions, reported that international student enrollment at U.S. institutions suffered a decline in recent years, particularly at the undergraduate level.

The institute, an independent non-profit organization based in New York City, noted in its 2006 annual report that enrollment was beginning to stabilize across the country, mainly credited to a more effective visa issuing process for the stabilization.

Although Kent State initially bucked the trend, seeing an increase in international student enrollment figures post-Sep. 11, the international student enrollment is now decreasing.

Kelly Pickerel, executive director for International Affairs at Kent State, says
This, Barrett feels, may have done American students a disservice, saying "Both educated about other countries and cultures. I've been asked some ridiculous questions that I just can't believe 21-year-olds don't know," Barrett says. "The majority of people that I've spoken to really are clueless about anything to do with Europe - I think they kind of have the stereotypical view that Scotland is still in the British Empire."
Barrett does not have a car and dislikes the lack of public transportation to Kent, often having to rely on friends and friends to get places. "At home, I used to get on a train or go on a bus," Barrett says. Despite the difference in lifestyles, Barrett feels she has learned a lot. "For me, it was the biggest decision I've ever made in my life," Barrett says of leaving home and attending Kent State, "when the pre-business management major intends to become a graduate field hockey coach after graduating her undergraduate degree. "It made me more independent, it forced me to grow up in a lot of ways and I had to look after myself and be more reliable - but it's lonely."
"I never regret the decision I made. It's an opportunity of a lifetime that I could never have given up." 
He ran Zhu — An acquired taste
Heran Zhu, a 24-year-old international student from China, left Shanghai for a new experience when he graduated with a bachelor's degree in economics from Nankai University. He has spent his credits into the undergraduate finance program at Kent State and has been at the university for a year and a half. Although he is adapting to life in the United States, Zhu says some things still seem strange to him. "There are different social systems (in the United States)." Zhu says. "But you cannot understand." That here (at Kent State), the school is pretty open minded, and the culture is not that hard," Zhu says. "It's just the language problem. Sometimes I have to use a dictionary."
One thing that bothers Zhu about Kent State is the lack of public transportation. "Not having a car is difficult" if you live in a suburban environment, he says, adding suburban itself was another element he had to become accustomed to. "I grew up (in China), in a big city, and I know almost everything about it," Zhu says of his initial feelings of displacement at Kent State, saying it was easier for him to study in China as well. American food also has been a major adjustment for Zhu, who had to learn to cook traditional Chinese meals for himself, not being a fan of American fare. "The food here — you guys drink cold water," Zhu says. "I can't drink hot water, just like we do in China."
Zhu says some examples of "Both places have advantages for living — it just depends where you want to be."
The decline of international student enrollment
The trend of international student enrollment in universities has always been a competitive one. After Sept. 11 and the discovery that many of the terrorists linked to the plane hijackings had entered the United States on student visas, restrictions and laws regarding issuing of student visas became tighter than ever. A 2005 survey conducted by the Institute of International Education, in conjunction with various other national tertiary educational institutions, reported that international student enrollment at U.S. institutions suffered a decline in recent years, particularly at the undergraduate level. The institute, an independent non-profit organization based in New York City, noted in its 2006 annual report that enrollment was beginning to stabilize across the country, mainly credit to a more effective visa issuing process for the stabilization. Although Kent State initially bucked the trend, seeing an increase in international student enrollment figures post-Sep. 11, international student enrollment is now decreasing. Kent Cushner, executive director for International Affairs at Kent State, says figures have gone from about 904 in 2004- 2005 to 841 current international enrollees at the university. "We kept increasing the number of international students," Cushner says of the initial enrollment in enrollment after Sept. 11. "But now all those students have graduated." "I think it is primarily because of tuition costs," says Deb Lyons, interim director of International Student and Scholar Services, of the decreasing enrollment. "The cost of education in the United States is not getting any cheaper."
Zhu says Kent State, as well as other American universities, is living competition from Australia and the United Kingdom for international students because of tuition costs and obtaining visas. "The students are looking elsewhere," Lyons says. "The federal government is getting in the way of it, but we will take another year or so for us to realize this and to start applying to the United States again." Cushner says he is hearing conversations with Kent State President Lester Leighton regarding ways Kent State can improve international student enrollment in the future.
Antoine Beauchemin — A search for diversity

Antoine Beauchemin has more experience than most adapting to life as an international student. Since age 12, he has lived in several different countries — from his home in Montreal, Canada to Warsaw, Poland. His family's most recent move to Hudson because of his father's company transfer led Beauchemin to apply to Kent State. Beauchemin has been at Kent State since fall 2006, studying for his master's degree in community counseling through the College of Education, Health and Human Services.

"From an educational point of view it's been really good," Beauchemin says of his decision to attend Kent State. "Counseling exists almost exclusively in the United States, and it's a profession I think suits me well — Kent State's really good at it."

One thing that does bother Beauchemin is the lack of other international students in his program — people he could relate to about being an "outsider." Beauchemin has many international friends in Ohio that he has met through his involvement with the International Students and Scholar Services office and its programs but has yet to meet another Canadian student.

"Every university says they're pretty diverse," Beauchemin says. "But here, people are from a 20-mile radius of Kent in my program — diversity, here, I feel is minimal."

Beauchemin says diversity at McGill University in Montreal — where he received an international baccalaureate in psychology — was "everywhere, culturally and politically." He says he misses those interactions in his program at Kent State.

"It's a fairly big adjustment but not anything too shocking," Beauchemin says. "It's been positive, challenging but positive.

Beauchemin has not decided whether he will remain in the United States and practice counseling when he has completed his studies, or return to Montreal.

"I'm spending a lot of time now thinking about what this is over, what am I going to do, but I'm looking forward to it," he says.

Shared international perspectives

Barrett, Zhu, Lai and Beauchemin all had the opportunity to meet one another and discuss their experiences at Kent State. While each student had a different perspective on what life is like as a Kent State student, they shared a common belief stemming from their interaction with many Americans during their stay in the United States.

"I am lucky that in Taiwanese culture we are exposed to many different things," Lai says. "American students draw their culture from the past, but you need to understand that past doesn't count now. You have to learn about other cultures and other countries to stay strong."

Barrett agreed with Lai, adding that although some people she met were a bit of a culture shock, she went through this too and "survived".

"On the whole, it's something that could be improved," Barrett says of the lack of exposure to international cultures in American schools. "It's a shame, sometimes I wonder how they can be so sheltered."

Beauchemin was shocked when some of the people he spoke to didn't know where Montreal was, adding many people were surprised English wasn't his first language.

"My brother's girlfriend doesn't understand why we speak French at home," Beauchemin says. "It's like people think, 'Why would anybody speak anything other than English?'

Zhu says he feels China and the United States have more in common than some Americans may realize. While he would like for people to learn more about China on their own, he says he will not force them to learn about its culture if they don't want to.

"These reasons, among many others, are why Kent State needs international students," says Ken Cusmer, executive director of International Affairs. "To provide multiple perspectives and experiences."

"They bring opportunities of first-hand interaction for other students," Cusmer says.

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Shelley Blumfeld is a history graduate and an intern at the Kent State journalism major. This is her first story for The Burr.

When she's not researching, she's writing for various student publications.

The Burr, Kent State. Contact her at sbblumfeld@kent.edu.
homies & hook-ups

(Fun) sex education

The average amount of male ejaculate is about 1 tablespoon, or 10cc. This is how the bands 10cc and Lovin' Spoonful got their names.

Fifty percent of all pregnancies are unplanned.

When a person is developing a loving relationship, surging levels of brain chemicals cause a “high” similar to that caused by amphetamine drugs, resulting in giddiness, euphoria and elation. This high doesn’t last because the body develops a tolerance for the chemicals, and the intensity of the relationship typically decreases.

Sex by the numbers

In a study of 18 to 24 year olds:

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<tr>
<td>having only one</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>sexual partner</td>
<td>2 to 4 sexual partners</td>
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<td>5 to 10 partners</td>
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Males typically report curiosity as the reason for their first intercourse. Females typically report affection for their partner as the primary reason.

On average, the age at which people lose their virginity has increased by about six months since the 1970s.

It is a tradition in Thailand to perform free vasectomies on the king’s birthday.

A woman’s clitoris contains more nerve fibers than a man’s penis, making the clitoris more sensitive.

Before the late 1960s, many campuses upheld a “one foot on the floor” rule: A woman could have a man in her dorm room only with the door open while each person had one foot on the floor.

NATIONAL AWARDS – 2006

Magazine Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

Best Single Issue of an Ongoing Print Magazine: General Excellence


“Selection of stories and presentation, both layout and photography, and the first-rate reporting and excellent writing gave readers of the Burr a magazine to dig into.”

Judge: John Walsh, executive editor of ESPN magazine

Best Single Issue of an Ongoing Print Magazine: Design

Third place: The Burr, Kent State University, Katie Phillips, editor, Logan Sommers, art director, spring 2006 issue.

Judge: Bob Gray, design editor of National Geographic

Best Single Issue of an Ongoing Print Magazine: Editorial


Judges: Editors of Outside magazine
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How does Kent State stack up?

Chinese students such as Zhu comprise the second-highest number of international students enrolling in U.S. institutions, according to the Institute for International Education. India has the highest enrollment number.

These enrollment figures hold true at Kent State as well — Indian and Chinese students comprise more than 300 of the 841 current international students, according to Kent State's current international enrollment figures.

Deb Lyons, interim director of International Student and Scholar Services, says there are many faces to Kent State that make it a comfortable and comforting place for any international student.

"We try to connect them with a student from their own country," Lyons says of what 5% does when international students first arrive. "It's a son or a daughter through this too, and here's how you survived connection." Lyons says ISS also makes sure basic needs are being met because adapting to Ohio life can bring up issues students may not have thought about, such as whether a student is coming in winter and needs a warm coat when or she arrives.

In addition to ISS, Lyons says there are several very strong student organizations on campus, particularly for international students from China, India and Taiwan. ISS also advertises to holiday hosts within the Kent State community at various times during the year to international students can experience American holiday traditions such as Thanksgiving.

If students need help with other issues, such as transfer of visa status, Lyons says if ISS cannot help, it'll do its best to point the student in the right direction.

"We gave 110 percent," Lyons says.

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