SLEEPING WITH YOUR CELL PHONE COULD BE DEADLY

BRB, BLACKBERRY
COULD YOU SPEND FIVE DAYS WITHOUT TWEETS, TEXTS & TECHNOLOGY?

TWO TALES OF THE CITY
THE LATEST CHAPTER IN THE CASE OF STUDENTS VS. COMMUNITY

THE NEW GREEN DINNER PARTY

A LIFE OF NEVER KNOWING
SHE'S FINALLY READY TO LEARN THE STORY OF HER BIRTH PARENTS
Florence Program

Study abroad in Florence, Italy, with the College of Communication and Information.

- Study in the home of Da Vinci, Dante and Michelangelo.
- Immerse yourself in a culture other than your own.
- Have a life-transforming experience while earning credits toward graduation.

Open to all students enrolled in the schools of Communication Studies, Journalism and Mass Communication and Visual Communication Design.

CCI students will enjoy:
- International communications courses taught by European professionals.
- Field trips to Italian media outlets and landmarks.
- Long weekends to travel through Europe.

Scholarships are available to help with tuition and housing, and financial aid does apply to study abroad coursework.

Where You'll Study & Live
The Palazzo dei Cerchi is a prestigious building in the historic center of Florence, just north of the Piazza della Signoria and within walking distance of the Palazzo Vecchio. Built in the 13th Century by the Cerchi family, a powerful merchant clan, the palace was fully restored in 2004. It now combines state-of-the-art classrooms with the historic frescoes and wooden ceilings of Medieval Florence. Students live in fully furnished apartments in the historic center of Florence within walking distance of the Piazza.

Contact CCI advisor Deborah Davis at dldavis@kent.edu or 330-672-8293 for more information. For more information on the Kent State Florence program, visit http://www.kent.edu/oia/StudyAbroad/Florence.

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ON THE COVER
Jinae West photographed by Adam Harris, Nov. 6, 2009, at Kent State

ABOUT THE BURR
The Burr informs students and faculty about
events, issues and people at Kent State and
in the surrounding communities. Readers are
encouraged to send comments, suggestions
and feature articles to the addresses listed
above. The Burr, formerly The Chestnut
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100 words to introduce
100 years of our history
Kent State celebrates its 100th year in 2010, and as you can imagine, a
whole lot has changed in those years. While this magazine looks at many
current themes, we haven’t forgotten the school’s past. Throughout these
pages, there is a timeline of major events for the university, everything from
the construction of its first building in 1912 to the first black squirrels that
came to campus in 1961. Take a peak at these facts as you browse through
the magazine — you’ll be surprised at what you learn about the university
you walk through every day. Happy birthday, Kent State!

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ON THE COVER
Jinae West photographed by Adam Harris, Nov. 6, 2009, at Kent State

From the Editor
Aren’t we all trying to be better?
We wake up each day on an innate mission to improve.
We make decisions, considering the outcomes:
Wake up or sleep in?
Take the faster route or the scenic back road?
Initiate a necessary, difficult discussion or avoid it?
We choose the better option — for ourselves, for others, for
principle or for no good reason at all.

With this issue of The Burr, our mission is to find ways to be better.
For Jinae West, whose story is featured on the cover, being better
meant opening a 21-year-old manila folder. Inside, she’d find the names
and story of her birth parents — two people she’d always been curious
to know but only ever dreamed of before spilling the folder’s contents.
Read her story on Page 30.

Kristina Deckert gave up her obsession with social networking
and techno-gadgets. I kept her covered BlackBerry, laptop and iPad
on a shelf in my apartment for her five-day hi-tech hiatus… and I’m
surprised she never broke in. Follow her journal entries on Page 18.
Ben Wolford talked to singer-songwriter Justin Townes Earle to
find out why he’s finally kicked his addiction to drugs. Learn about
Earle and other rock stars who are dropping the drugs, sex and boozing
for healthier habits on Page 34. We had a difficult time tracking down
Eric Clapton for photos, so my mom let us borrow a few of her shots
from the ’70s — the heart of the blues years.

Sarah Steimer asked students and Kent community members why
they can’t get along. She talked to more than 15 people to get as many
sides of the story possible. Find out their ideas for a solution on Page 30.
Browse Brittany Mosleye’s slow cooker recipes on Page 7 and whip
up your own home-cooked meal instead of ordering out again. I main-
toned the chill, and it’s delicious.

The Burr began with a mission to be better, and even as these
stories blossomed and bloomed, I watched it emerge. Somewhere in the
chaos of reporting, writing, taking photos, designing and editing, we
all found ways to be better.

Maybe when you read this, you’ll find a way to be better, too.
— Caitlin Saniga

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- Caitlin Saniga
THE DANGERS OF CELLPHONES

They're things you use without even thinking about it. They're things you may be using right now. Find out how to use the following items the right way.

CELL PHONES

According to the study mentioned to the left, radiation emitted during cell phone use can result in eye cancer, increased risk of brain tumors, salivary gland tumors, testicular cancer, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and leukemia.

A wired headset kept 6 inches from the body can reduce the radiation emitted from a cell phone by a factor of 10,000.

Children have a higher risk because their cells are dividing at a higher rate.

Researchers behind this study met with communication industry specialists about this concern at a Senate hearing Sept. 14. It was determined that no action can be taken until further research is conducted. Groups on the other side of the debate include CITA-The Wireless Association, representing the wireless industry, the Federal Communications Commission and the American Cancer Society. "No research indicates they are harmful," says Al Stabilito, spokesman of the American Cancer Society. He added that it will take time to have thorough research on this topic. There is one thing that both sides can agree on: People should keep their cell phones as far from their body as possible. "Anywhere immediately next to your body is highly dangerous," Morgan says.

AVOIDING POSSIBLE CELLPHONE RISKS

Do not sleep with cell phones by bedside or under pillow.
Use speakerphone or send text messages when possible.
For longer phone calls, headsets are the safest.
Turn off the phone when not in use.
Phones in standby mode are still radiating.
Avoid use in buildings, especially those with steel structures.
Avoid use in moving cars, trains and buses around cell phone towers.
Use a landline when possible.

Water bottles

According to an article from U.S. News and World Report, the National Toxicology Program says the amount of Bisphenol A released may depend on the temperature of the liquid or the container itself rather than the age of the plastic bottle. The Canadian government is considering declaring the chemical toxic. The evidence warrants "a higher level of concern than those expressed by expert (scientific) panel for possible effects of BPA on prostate gland, mammary gland and early onset of puberty," an NTP report states in the article. This chemical is present in our bodies. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has conducted studies that show almost all Americans have BPA levels in their body.

Tips on how to avoid BPA

Use a glass container instead.
Avoid plastic labeled 2, 73 or 8.

Source: National Resource Defense Council

CELLPHONES ILLUSTRATION BY TESSA RAKISZIEK OTHER PHOTOGRAPHY: (C) NY
EVERYDAY LIVING

using right now. Find out how to use the following items the right way. KELLY PETRYSZYN

A.VOIDING POSSIBLE CELL-PHONE RISKS

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**The Dangers of Everyday Living**

**Hygiene Products**

Cosmetic companies aren't required to list all ingredients on their products' labels, says Stacy Malkan, co-founder of the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, a coalition of non-profit and environmental health organizations that promotes non-toxic personal care products. This becomes a problem when some ingredients may be toxic or may be contaminated. To avoid the risk of exposure, she advises using the simple products that contain the fewest ingredients. "If you don't know what most ingredients are, keep looking," Malkan says. A good source is the Skin Deep database, sponsored by the Environmental Working Group, Malkan says. This database includes more than 50 toxicity and regulatory databases.

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*Success with a slow cooker*

**3-bean turkey chili**

>> Instead of ordering the usual pizza and wings at your next game-day party, impress your friends with your cooking skills by trying these recipes. Even if your team loses the game, this meal will definitely win over your guests. **BRITTANY MOSELEY**
Success with a slow cooker

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3-bean turkey chili

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SAM TWAREK

>>
Success with a slow cooker

Creamy spinach dip

This tasty dip doesn't take long to prepare, and it goes great with everything.

INGREDIENTS
- 8 ounces cream cheese, cubed
- 1 cup whipping cream
- 1 cup frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
- 2 tablespoons pimento, diced
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- \(\frac{1}{2}\) teaspoon garlic salt
- 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, grated
- 2 teaspoons onion, grated or finely chopped
- \(\frac{1}{2}\) teaspoon thyme

DIRECTIONS
Combine cream cheese and cream in slow cooker. Cover and cook on low for 1 hour or until cream cheese is melted. Drain. Add remaining ingredients. Cover and cook on low for 1 hour or until cheese is melted. Drain. Serve with raw vegetables, crackers or pita.

3-bean turkey chili

This crowd-pleaser is the perfect hearty dish for a cool day.

INGREDIENTS
- 1 pound ground turkey
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 can (28 ounces) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (15 ounces) garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (15 ounces) kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- \(\frac{1}{2}\) red pepper, chopped
- \(\frac{1}{2}\) teaspoon chili powder

DIRECTIONS
Cook turkey and onion in skillet over medium-high heat. Stir to break up meat until turkey is no longer pink. Drain. Transfer turkey mixture to slow cooker. Add remaining ingredients to slow cooker and mix well. Cover and cook on high 6-8 hours.

Mulled apple cider

This drink keeps for at least a month. Just reheat and enjoy.

INGREDIENTS
- \(\frac{1}{2}\) cup brown sugar
- 2 quarts cider
- 1 teaspoon whole allspice
- \(\frac{1}{2}\) teaspoon whole cloves
- 2 sticks cinnamon
- \(\frac{1}{2}\) orange, sliced
- *Add 1 cup of rum for a more spirited drink.

DIRECTIONS
Combine all ingredients in slow cooker. If desired, tie whole spices in cheesecloth or put in tea strainer. (If spices are added loose, strain before serving.) Cover and set on low 2-8 hours.

REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD OWN A SLOW COOKER

There are always leftovers.

It's the easiest way to cook. Just put ingredients in the slow cooker, turn it on and enjoy.

Easy cleanup. No one likes washing pots and pans. Luckily, slow cookers aren't difficult to clean.


It travels well. Take it on your next road trip. All you need is an electrical outlet.

It's a healthy alternative to the fast food joints you frequent.

It's a great investment. You can buy one for as little as $20 or as much as $130, depending on how much you're willing to spend.

* Wondering how you're going to make three dishes with one slow cooker? All of these dishes can be prepared ahead of time and reheated. Make the cider the night before. When ready to serve, either heat individual mugs of cider in the microwave or pour the entire batch into a small pot and simmer on the stove for a few minutes until warm. You can also make the dip the night before and reheat it the next day.
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Getting started

TRY THIS Hang all your clothes back in the closet with the hanger hooks facing you, suggests author Donna Smallin in her book, “The One-Minute Organizer: A to Z Storage Solutions: 500 Tips for Storing Every Item in Your Home.” When you wear an item and hang it up again, face the hook in the opposite direction. At the end of the season, all the hooks facing you are items you should donate or toss.

What don’t you want, need or even like anymore? Organize your clothes into piles based on those questions, suggests author Julie Morgenstern in her book, “Organizing from the Inside Out.” Keep these tips in mind:

- If you haven’t worn it in a year, toss it.
- If it doesn’t fit or flatter, get rid of it.
- Items that are still in good condition can always be donated.

Organizing

For seasonal items like sweaters or anything bulky, Smallin suggests folding and placing them in a container under your bed. This not only helps keep their shape better than a hanger, but also leaves more room in your closet. Then color-coordinate your clothes, which makes it easier to find items and coordinate outfits.

QUICK TIP If you don’t have additional containers, use your suitcases as storage. Placing a dryer sheet in the luggage helps maintain item freshness.

Recycle, reuse, reinvent

This is a chance to truly make your closet as personalized as your wardrobe. You can reinvent common household items or save some money on organizing tools by hitting up a local discount store.

- Use an over-the-door shoe bag holder to store socks, underwear and hosiery, ties, rolled belts or scarves.
- Shoe boxes (on closet shelves) are great for storing recipes, memorabilia, photos or jewelry. Decorate them with magazine cutouts or wrapping paper.
- Hangers are perfect for scarves, belts and ties. Fold and hang large or heavy scarves on individual pant/skirt hangers with clips. For a lot of scarves, try hooking several shower curtain rings together and hang one ring over the neck of the hanger. Then thread scarves through the rings.
- To hang more items, attach wall hooks behind your dorm or apartment room door, closet door and anywhere with extra space.
- Outfit dresser drawers with store-bought containers or reuse empty tissue boxes, gift boxes and shoe boxes to store socks, jewelry, hair accessories and underwear.

REMEMBER

The secret to a well-organized, functional closet is keeping in mind that everything has its place. Morgenstern suggests evaluating your new closet space after a couple of weeks to make tweaks if needed. Put things back where you hid them and resist the urge to use your closet as a storage unit.

1946 Kent State's first joint branch campus in Stark County.

1947 Oscar Ritchie becomes the first black person appointed to a faculty position at a mostly white university in Ohio — Kent State.
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Bold colors and thick plastic frames dominate this season’s eyewear trends. “Metal frames ruled in the late ’90s, early 2000s,” says Liz Segre, editorial director for AllAboutVision.com. “But people are more interested in experimenting with color now.” Unusual combinations of colors, such as brown and turquoise, are coming into play for women this year. Darker colors, such as gun-metal gray and black, are in high demand for men, Segre says. Introducing the eyewear of 2010: a smart, modern twist on quirky, retro roots. LAURA LOFGREN

eye-catchers

MEN’S FRAMES (OPPOSITE, FROM TOP)
OGI $210, Prodesign: Denmark $195, Ray Ban $165, Ray Ban $195, Brooks Brothers $175

WOMEN’S FRAMES (THIS PAGE, FROM TOP)
Vogue $150, Prodesign: Denmark $195, DKNY $180, Juicy Couture $100, Bebe $180

Frames available as of November at Kent Optometric, 330.678.8079 Photographs by Adam Harris, Styling by Adam Griffiths

Go to TheBur.com to see which frame shapes work for your face
eye-catchers

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Going green isn't difficult; it just takes good planning. Take it one step at a time. First, a green dinner party. Next, green habits. Most of these eco-friendly tips can be applied beyond the dinner party, and you can find other party ideas at TheBurr.com.

1 Party prep
SEND online invites via Facebook or a free invitation Web site like Evite.com. MAKE a note that guests should walk or carpool to the party.

CHOOSE a menu that features seasonal and local produce. Purchase ingredients from the farmers market and local businesses. Aim for free-range, organic, fair-trade and pesticide-free foods.

WHERE? Haymaker Farmers' Market in Kent holds winter events on Dec. 12 and 19.

BUY alcoholic beverages from local brewers and wineries.

BRING reusable shopping bags when buying party supplies and groceries.

WHY? According to an EPA report, more than 4 million tons of plastic bags were used in 2007. Only 9.1 percent were recycled.

USE things you already own, such as a fishbowl with fish or seasonal plants for a centerpiece.

2 In the kitchen
DEFROST food sans microwave. Set out ingredients four to five hours in advance.
DEFROST 4-5 hours
COOK

REMOVE all ingredients from the fridge at one time.
WHY? The more you open and close the fridge, the more energy you waste. Kitchen appliances account for about a quarter of total household energy use.

USES vegetables in cold water on low pressure.

STEAM vegetables.
WHY? This method uses less water than boiling.
PLUS You can use the leftover liquid to water houseplants.

DEFROST food from the fridge at one time.
WHY? The more you open and close the fridge, the more energy you waste.

USE small stove burners for small pots and pans and large burners for large pots and pans.

TURN OFF the oven a few minutes before cook time is up.
DONT WORRY. The oven will hold the heat.

PREPARE food in a slow cooker, instead of an oven, if possible. (Find tasty slow cooker recipes back on Page 8).

3 Dinnertime
HOST the party in the afternoon or early evening to make use of natural sunlight.

KEEP cloth dish towels handy in case of spills, and invest in cloth napkins — or better yet, make your own from fabric scraps. Don't buy paper towels or napkins.

ASK friends to bring extra dinnerware if you don't have enough for all of your guests. Don't buy disposable plates, cups or utensils.

TURN DOWN the thermostat a few degrees in cool weather. WHY? Your guests' body heat will make up the difference.

DON'T FORGET to label your recycling and garbage bins.

TURN OFF unused appliances and electronics during the party.

What's for dinner? Find recipes for the dishes below on the next page.>

1950 WKSU-FM is given a home in Kent Hall. A student staff airs regularly scheduled programming five hours a day, five days a week during the school year.

1954 Originally published in 1936, the Kent Stater is transformed into the Daily Kent Stater, becoming the student-run newspaper we know today.

4 Clean-up

COMPOST food scraps (egg shells, vegetable peels and rinds, etc.) if possible.

STORE leftovers in reusable containers. Avoid using plastic wrap, foil and resealable plastic bags. Invite guests to bring their own containers if they're interested in leftovers.

WASH dishes by hand. Plug sink and allow dishes to soak before scrubbing and rinsing. PLUS Sanitize old toothbrushes with rubbing alcohol and reuse them to clean narrow champagne flutes, vases and intricate dishware.

MIX equal parts water and vinegar to clean coffee and food stains.

MAKE a paste of baking soda and water to break up grease on dirty dishes.

SEPARATE recyclables from garbage, and make sure they get to the curb or recycling center.
DINE WITH THE PLANET IN MIND

>> Going green isn't difficult; it just takes good planning. Take it one step at a time. First, a green dinner party. Next, green habits. Most of these eco-friendly tips can be applied beyond the dinner party, and you can find other party ideas at TheBurr.com. CAITLIN SANGA

1 Party prep
SEND online invites via Facebook or a free invitation Web site like Evite.com. MAKE a note that guests should walk or carpool to the party.

CHOOSE a menu that features seasonal and local produce. Purchase ingredients from the farmers market and local businesses. Aim for free-range, organic, fair-trade and pesticide-free foods.

WHERE? Haymaker Farmers’ Market in Kent holds winter events on Dec. 12 and 19.

BUY alcoholic beverages from local brewers and wineries.

BRING reusable shopping bags when buying party supplies and groceries.

WHY? According to an EPA report, more than 4 million tons of plastic bags were used in 2007. Only 9.1 percent were recycled.

USE things you already own, such as a fishbowl with fish or seasonal plants for a centerpiece.

2 In the kitchen
DEFROST food sans microwave. Set out ingredients four to five hours in advance.

DEFROST COOK 4-5 hours

REMOVE all ingredients from the fridge at one time.

WHY? The more you open and close the fridge, the more energy you waste. Kitchen appliances account for about a quarter of total household energy use.

WASH vegetables in cold water on low pressure.

STEAM vegetables. 

WHY? This method uses less water than boiling.

PLUS You can use the leftover liquid to water houseplants.

USE small stove burners for small pots and pans and large burners for large pots and pans.

TURN OFF the oven a few minutes before cook time is up.

DON'T WORRY. The oven will hold the heat.

PREPARE food in a slow cooker, instead of an oven, if possible.

(You can find these recipes on Page 18.)

3 Dinnertime
MOST the party in the afternoon or early evening to make use of natural sunlight.

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY TESSA BARGAINNIER

1954 Originally published in 1926, the Kent Stater is transformed into the Daily Kent Stater, becoming the student-run newspaper we know today.
Maple-glazed meatballs

**INGREDIENTS**
- 11/2 cups ketchup
- 1 cup maple syrup
- 1/3 cup soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon quick-cooking tapioca
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 2 packages (16 ounces each) frozen fully cooked meatballs
- 1 can (20 ounces) pineapple chunks, juice drained

**DIRECTIONS**
Combine ketchup, maple syrup, soy sauce, tapioca, allspice and mustard in slow cooker. Thaw meatballs. Carefully stir meatballs and pineapple into ketchup mixture. Cover. Cook on low 5-6 hours. Stir before serving.

Bruschetta

**INGREDIENTS**
- 3 medium-sized tomatoes, diced
- 1/2 cup basil, sliced finely
- 1/2 cup Mozzarella cheese, diced into 1-inch cubes
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinaigrette

**DIRECTIONS**
Combine all ingredients. Serve chilled. Can be prepared a day in advance.

Bacon broccoli salad

**SALAD**
- 4 strips bacon, cooked
- 1 small head broccoli, chopped
- 1 small head cauliflower, chopped
- 1 cup chopped white onion

**DRESSING**
- 2 cups of light mayonnaise
- 1/3 cup of sugar
- 1/4 cup of white distilled vinegar

**DIRECTIONS**
For dressing, combine mayonnaise, sugar and vinegar in small mixing bowl. Crush bacon into bits. Toss with broccoli, cauliflower and onion. Pour dressing over bacon-vegetable mix. Stir to combine. Serve chilled.

Warm winter fruits

**INGREDIENTS**
- 3 apples, cubed
- 2 pears, cubed
- 2 peaches, cubed
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons butter

**DIRECTIONS**

And to drink...

Tony Carlucci, an oenologist and geography instructor, suggests pairing this menu with Syrah from Ravens Glenn Winery. It's a medium-bodied, dry red wine with soft, fruity notes. $12.99
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- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons butter

**DIRECTIONS**
Heat all ingredients in a saucepan on low. 10-15 minutes. Stir occasionally. Serve warm.

And to drink...

Tony Carlucci, an enologist and geography instructor, suggests pairing this menu with Syrah from Ravens Glenn Winery. It's a medium-bodied, dry red wine with soft, fruity notes. $12.99

The best way to get more of The Burr is by visiting www.theburr.com.

Our newly redesigned Web site features blogs about fashion failures, what to do if your significant other is constantly texting and how to get rid of a nasty hangover.

See slideshows on how to shop for a green party and how one inspiring woman helps other women give birth — the natural way.

TWITTER: @theburmagazine
FACEBOOK: facebook.com/theburmagazine

DINE WITH THE PLANET IN MIND

1999 LSU Holtz graduates with a degree in history. He goes on to be an ESPN sportscaster and three-time National Coach of the Year in college football.

Burr Fall 2009
I'm more addicted to technology than anyone I know. My friends and family constantly yell at me for playing with my BlackBerry or looking at Facebook or updating Twitter about, well, everything. So when my editor told me she wanted me to give up all technology that wasn't around in the mid-90s for five days, I was pretty apprehensive. But I figured I could look at it as a personal challenge — even though I knew I'd get frustrated without any means of real-time communication.

Commentary by KRISTINA DECKERT  Photo illustration by DAN MAXWELL

BEFORE MY BREAK FROM TECHNOLOGY

Last night was the last full night with my BlackBerry. Just for reference, my bedtime routine usually goes like this: Brush teeth. Pee. Wash face. Put on Chapstick. Get into bed. Text a friend. Check out Twitter and Facebook. Tweet something on Twitter via BlackBerry. Check CNN via BlackBerry. Fall asleep.

Not many people I know go through steps 6-9 prior to sleep. And it usually takes me about a half hour to do so. Yeah, I'll admit it. I'm addicted ... obsessed ... to the point that my editor will be taking my BlackBerry, MacBook, iPod and digital camera away from me at midnight. I'll also go without Facebook, Twitter, Gmail and my ATM card.

I expect to cry by Friday.

But maybe I'll learn to experience life without a BlackBerry in my hand or an iPod's earbuds in my ears. Rather than texting someone I'm not with or tweeting to the world, maybe I'll focus on the person I'm with (or I'll actually pay attention in class). Live in the moment, all that crap. We'll see.

For the next five days, I'm going to be a hot, hot mess.
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1961 Ten black squirrels are imported from Canada and released in Kent.
And I'm really sick of hanging around the newsroom where I work to use the phone. (My apartment doesn't have a landline.)

Yesterday, I bought a disposable camera to take pictures at the homecoming game and other festivities. I've already turned it on after snapping a picture to see if the flash worked. I hope to remember that disposable cameras aren't equipped with a screen on the back. Half the time, I can't even get the flash to work. But honestly, I'm sort of excited to see how these pictures turn out. It's a sense of anticipation I haven't had since high school. It'll be a nice surprise to get them developed. I just hope they turn out.

I really can't explain why I bought this disposable camera. I just know I want to immediately take a picture to see if the shot looks bad. I have to remember that disposable cameras aren't equipped with a screen on the back. Half the time, I can't even get the flash to work. But honestly, I'm sort of excited to see how these pictures turn out. It's a sense of anticipation I haven't had since high school. It'll be a nice surprise to get them developed. I just hope they turn out.

I'm so close I can almost feel my Blackberry's keys under my thumbs again. I had a meeting for the newsroom today, and I realized that Franklin Hall is locked on Sundays. With no way of calling someone to let me in, I had to pound on the window to try and get someone's attention so I could get inside. I scared the crap out of some poor poor soul in a security uniform.

In general, it's just nice to be "in the know" always. Yeah, I didn't really communicate with anyone outside of my immediate circle of friends. Because I couldn't use Facebook or Twitter, I couldn't interact with the friends I talk to on those sites. In general, it's just nice to be "in the know" always. Yeah, I was able to sort of excuse my responsibilities because of this experiment, but I liked not being constantly bombarded by everyone and everything all the time.

I'm feeling nostalgic about hanging around the newsroom where I work to use the phone. (My apartment doesn't have a landline.)

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Wednesday, October 9

All I really want is to know what time it is. I feel like I’m going to be late to every class because I don’t have a watch. Last time I wore a watch, it had the Little Mermaid on it.

And my alarm clock sucked. I used to wake up to the hot beats of Kenny West on my cell phone’s alarm. Now, a loud beeping noise harasses me until I wake up.

It’s interesting, because now that I don’t constantly have my hand bowed, staring at my cell, I feel like staying at all of Kent State walking to class. The students are all like I usually am — constantly texting or talking on the phone. It’s weird to watch people text. They always have goofy-ass grins on their faces as they look at their phones. It makes me want to laugh and joke at the same time.

Thursday, October 9

I have two jobs: multimedia editor for KentNewsNet.com and online editor for The Burr. I can’t exactly do my job if everything involved in them consists of editing audio and video and updating Facebook and “Twitter.” Those things weren’t around in the mid-90s. Essentially, I’ve had to quit my jobs for a few days, and well, that’s fine by me. I’m excited to see how the pictures turn out, though.

I had to plan my nights with friends hours, and sometimes a day, in advance because I had no way of talking to them unless I was with them. Not opening a tab at the bar helped save some serious money. Well, probably only like $3, but I didn’t have to worry about meeting a $10 minimum to be able to use my credit card.

I didn’t really communicate with anyone outside of my immediate circle of friends. Because I couldn’t use Facebook or “Twitter,” I couldn’t interact with the friends I talk only to on those sites.

In general, it’s just nice to not be “in the know” always. Yeah, I was able to sort of excuse my responsibilities because of this experiment, but I liked not being constantly bombarded by everyone and everything all the time.

And I’m really sick of banging around the newsroom where I work to use the phone. (My apartment doesn’t have a landline.)

Later, I bought a disposable camera to take pictures at the homecoming game and other festivities. I’ve already turned it on after snapping a picture to see if the shot looks good.

I have to mention that disposable cameras aren’t equipped with a screen on the back. Half the time, I can’t even get the flash to work. But honestly, I’m sort of excited to see how those pictures turn out. It’s a sense of anticipation I haven’t had in high school. I’ll be a nice surprise to get them developed. I just hope they turn out.

Tomorrow is my last day.

SUNDAY, October 10

Last Day

I’m so close I can almost feel my BlackBerry’s keys under my thumbs again.

I had a meeting for the newsroom today, and I realized that Franklin Hall is locked on Sundays. With no way of calling someone to let me in, I had to pound on the window to try and get someone’s attention so I could get inside. I scared the crap out of some poor Sophomore!

And just as a last note: The radio sucks. Ironically, I keep hearing bands like “Backstreet Boys” and Third Eye Blind... classic ’90s tunes. It’s like Northeast Ohio radio stations are torturing me, reminding me that I can’t listen to any of my favorite songs on my iPod.

MONDAY, October 11

The After

It feels so nice to have my stuff back. I can actually listen to songs I want to listen to in the car, do work on my laptop from home and TEXT God. I love to text. Also, I felt like I was wasting time on my way to class because I couldn’t make phone calls. Now, I can get things done... but I sort of miss just relaxing and enjoying my (really long) walk to campus.

Looking Back

All in all, this was a very enlightening experience. By Thursday, I stopped reaching for my phone in my back pocket and began doodling a lot more during class instead of playing on my BlackBerry. There were a lot of perks I hated, but I’m glad at least tried. And I never cried! Just complained a lot. n

Kristina Decker

is a senior visual journalism major.

"Well, I’m not very important to them."

Child says that attempting to communicate without technology can show someone how much they mean to you. For example, sending a letter is bound to impress younger people.

"If you send a letter to anybody in the young’lins generation... they’ligh. Wow," he says. "It’s because of the effort that comes through in doing that. I think people will look at the relative contributions you’re making, and technology has just made it easier to send more impersonal messages."

But he says it’s overly simplistic to call technology a good or bad thing. As much as it has taken away from human interaction, it has made everyday tasks and distant communication much easier.

"If you take a retrospective look back, there’s a lot of things that have changed since (the ’90s) in terms of technology," he says. "The way it changes the way we interact with each other — some people say, ‘Is it good? Is it bad?’ They’re overly simplistic questions because there are good and bad things that happen simultaneously."

Christina Sillah

"I think you take away from that," he says. "(You might think,)"

"If you interact with people, and the only way you do is to send brief messages, I think you think you’re doing something better."

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Nobody thought it was a good idea.

In the spring, my feature writing class was assigned first-person experience stories.
We were supposed to go out, do something and write about it.
There was only one problem: I had no idea what I was going to write about.
So when my turn came to explain to the class what my story idea was, I hesitated, and then …
“I think I’m going to become a smoker for a week.”
The response was immediate. “You’re kidding, right?” Nope.
“You’re going to get addicted.” We’ll see.
The question they asked most was, “Why?”
I didn’t know. But I was going to do it, and nobody was going to stop me.

COMMENTARY BY Doug Gulasy  ILLUSTRATION BY Christopher Sharron

DAY 1

The BP on East Main Street was empty except for the clerk, a fact I was
grateful for. I didn’t really want my first cigarette-buying moment to be
witnessed by dozens of nosy gas-station customers.
I wasn’t sure exactly what to do, but I acted as though I did. I strolled up to the
register with my hands in my pockets, acting cool but feeling nervous.
“Can I help you?” the clerk asked. He was one of those 20-something, smart-
alecky types with a soul patch and wrinkled shirt. I disliked him immediately.
“Yes,” I said. “I’d like a pack of Marlboro Lights, please.”
I said it quietly, but I knew he had heard me. Still, he acted as if he hadn’t.
“I’m sorry, what was that?” he asked, smirking.
“A pack of Marlboro Lights,” I said, trying to sound like I did this all the time
but knowing all the while that I was failing.
“Do you have ID?” he asked, snatching a pack of cigarettes from beneath the
counter. I nodded, taking my wallet out of my pocket and sliding my driver’s
license out of its plastic sleeve and onto the counter. Still, I wondered — I’ll turn
21 in three months. Do I really look younger than 18?
He glanced at the license for a second and shrugged. “That’ll be $5.25,” he said,
ringing it up on the register.
I took a 10-dollar bill out of my wallet and slapped it on the counter, then waited
impatiently as he slowly — too slowly, in my opinion — got the change.
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"Thanks," I said when he finally gave it to me. He nodded and turned away as I left the store.

Outside, I took my last breath of fresh air as a nonsmoker. It tasted more like gasoline. I fumbled with the cigarette pack from my pocket before getting it open.

Then I realized something. I didn't have a lighter.

After buying a lighter without an incident, I tried again. I managed to light the cigarette, inhaling all those dangerous chemicals outlined in the scourge general's warning. I'd had cigarettes before at parties, but this felt like a new experience. I was a smoker now, and it felt good — until I started to cough, that is.

Unsurprisingly, that first cigarette was my last one of the day.

DAY 1 CIGARETTE COUNT: 1

DAY 2

"Doug, let me show you something," my friend Sarah said, beckoning for the pack of cigarettes clutched in her hand.

I handed them over, and she immediately shook them at me. "Marlboro Lights are the sign of an inexperienced smoker!" she announced to the entire newsroom.

Rolling my eyes, I took back. "I am an experienced smoker.

Sarah's alone in giving me unwanted advice. By now, everybody knows about my project — and nobody thinks it's a good idea. Some people are telling me I'll ruin my health, while others are telling me how I should carry out the experiment. Quite frankly, I want them to leave me alone.

On the other hand, I am getting better at smoking. I didn't cough today, and I increased the number of cigarettes I smoked from one to three.

However, I am having some side effects. "You smell like a giant cigarette," Sarah said later, wrinkling her nose.

She's right. After my third cigarette of the night, my gray shirt smelled like a tobacco factory. But I couldn't really do anything about it because I was at work.

When I got back home, I took a shower, hoping to get rid of the scent. It didn't work.

DAY 2 CIGARETTE COUNT: 3

DAY 3

All of a sudden, people can't stand to be around me.

"You smell like ass!" my friend Ben exclaimed when I stood within a few feet of him during a conversation. "Get away from me."

He's right, of course. By now, nicotine seems to be my natural aroma. I tried to get rid of the smell again this morning by using spray-on cologne, but because I smoked again after that, the effect was short-lived. As much as I try to explain my project, nobody seems to understand. They don't know what I'm trying to prove. I'm not even sure if I know.

But I'm doing on — alone, if necessary. "I hope you don't get offended," my friend Josh said when I pulled out a cigarette as we walked toward our separate dorms, "but I'm going to take a different way than you. I can't smell the smoke of cigarettes. It actually makes me want to puke."

He sprinted off. Struggling, I took out my Bic and lit the cigarette.

DAY 3 CIGARETTE COUNT: 5

DAY 4

I couldn't breathe.

The DeWesse Health Center track was covered with Kent State Relay for Life participants, none of whom seemed to be having trouble navigating the 80-degree heat.

None but me, of course. I was representing the group Students of Scholarship at the 24-hour cancer walk, and I couldn't breathe because of the tobacco I had been inhaling into my lungs.

I gave up after two hours and went back to my dorm. But something caused me to go back that night for the luminaria ceremony, when the event organizes lit candles in remembrance of people who died from cancer.

As I walked the track, gazing at the hundreds of paper bags filled with lit candles, I felt a lump in my throat. My grandmother had always lit the cigarette lit — her name has been on any one of those bags.

All of a sudden, I wanted a cigarette. To this point, I had compelled myself to smoke — but this was a different feeling. I couldn't stay away from it. It was too much.

Sitting on a ledge outside my dorm, I smoked cigarettes back to back for the first time.

I had these while listening to upbeat music on my iPod.

Still, I couldn't get a song that I'd heard at the ceremony out of my head. "Somebody said someone was crying."

Someone was me. But somehow I didn't feel alone.

DAY 4 CIGARETTE COUNT: 6

DAY 5

I need to buy more cigarettes.

That was the first thought that hit me when I opened my pack at 9 a.m. Sunday and saw that only five cigarettes remained. Without noticing, I had smoked three-quarters of a pack in four days. With three days left in my experiment, buying more cigarettes was a must.

It took me to buy cigarettes.

DAY 5 CIGARETTE COUNT: 5

DAY 6

Marlboro Lights are the sign of a novice smoker. I found that out quickly. They were awful.

Having learned that important consumer lesson, I stopped at the Circle K on East Main Street to buy a new pack of cigarettes. A few customers buzzed around the back of the store, but I went right to the counter.

"A pack of Camel Lights, please," I said to the clerk, a middle-aged woman whose body language and facial expression screamed, "I'm irritated because I hate this job."

Two minutes, another $3.25 payment and an ignored "Have a nice day" later, I was back on the street, wondering what I had to do to have a pleasant cigarette-buying experience.

But the Camel Lights went better, as I soon found out — which I was glad about, as I had the feeling I would be smoking a lot of them because of stress.

I had a 14-page paper due the next day, which we all semester to work on it, of course, had put it off until the night before it was due.

Tim, who was in my class, hadn't finished his paper, either. At 5:30, sensing a potentially stressful situation, we decided to have one final smoke break together before we split up to work on our papers.

Tim has told me that he tends to smoke either when he's out with friends or when he's stressed.

"When I smoke alone, it's usually because I'm pissed off," he said. "It gives me a reason to go somewhere and chill out."

That became the case for me on this night. I took a smoke break every time I finished two pages of my paper. Each break enabled me to forget about the homework, if only for five minutes.

DAY 6 CIGARETTE COUNT: 7

DAY 7

"I'm done."

Those words had two meanings for me on this day. First, I had finally finished my paper, and it had only taken 12 hours to do so.

More importantly, however, I had come to the end of my working smoking experiment. Finally, I could answer "yes" to the question people asked me all week: "Are you done smoking yet?"

Of course, I still had to get through the day.

"Want to celebrate?" I asked Tim that afternoon, showing him the pack of cigarettes in my right hand.

He shook his head. "I have stuff to do."

"Sorry, that's all right with me. I had begun the project by myself, and it seemed almost appropriate that I finish it by myself. I smoked that celebratory cigarette by myself."

At 10:00 that night, I decided to have one final cigarette before I officially ended my experiment. As I sat outside my dorm, I thought about the week.

TOTAL CIGARETTE COUNT: 34

"I'm done."

Doug Batik is a senior newspaper journalist major.

1968 Thurman Masson, who attended Kent State, signs to the New York Yankees and wins MLB's Rookie of the Year award in 1970.

1969 Tom Batik, comic strip author of Funky Winkerbean and Carnival, graduates with a degree in fine arts.
DAY 6
Sarah was right. MarlboroLights are the sign of a novice smoker. I found that out quickly. They were awful.

Having learned that important consumer lesson, I stopped at the Circle K on East Main Street to buy a new pack of cigarettes. A few customers buzzed around the back of the store, but I went right to the counter.

"A pack of Camel Lights, please," I said to the clerk, a middle-aged woman whose body language and facial expression screamed, "I'm irritated because I hate this job." Two minutes, another $5.25 payment and an ignored "Have a nice day" later, I was back on the street, wondering what I had to do to have a pleasant cigarette-buying experience. But the Camel Lights were better, as I soon found out - which I was glad about, as I had the feeling I would be smoking a lot of them because of stress.

I had a 14-page paper due the next day, which we'd had all semester to work on. I, of course, had put it off until the night before it was due. Tim, who was in my class, hadn't finished his paper, either. At 5:30, sensing a potentially sleepless night ahead, we decided to have one final smoke break together before we split up to work on our papers.

Tim has told me that he tends to smoke either when he's out with friends or when he's stressed. "When I smoke alone, it's usually because I'm pissed off," he said. "It gives me a reason to go somewhere and chill out." That became the case for me on this night. I took a smoke break every time I finished two pages of my paper. Each break enabled me to forget about the homework, if only for five minutes.

After my six-page smoke break, I returned to my dorm room and looked at the clock on my microwave. It was 11:55. Day 7 of the experiment had almost arrived ... and I still had at least six pages to go.

"I'm done," Those words had two meanings for me on this day. First, I had finally finished my paper, and it had only taken 12 hours to do so. More importantly, however, I had come to the end of my weeklong smoking experiment. Finally, I could answer "yes" to the question people had been asking me all week: "Are you done smoking yet?"

In my mind, the experiment had been a success. I'd learned a lot about smoking, both bad and good. I had verified some of the "truths" about smoking: It does make your clothing, your skin and your breath smell unpleasant. I'd debunked another "truth": Addiction doesn't necessarily happen after just one cigarette. I also learned some things about cigarettes that people generally don't talk about. I hadn't known beforehand about the smoking subculture - how smokers can spot an outsider - and I found out about it the hard way.

Doug Gulasy is a senior newspaper journalism major.

TOTAL CIGARETTE COUNT: 34
If words didn’t come naturally

Attaining a certain level of comprehension is first on these international students’ roads toward success

STORY BY REGINA GARCIA CANO
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TESSA BARGAINNIER

Like many young adults, Jamal Alsakran owns all seasons of the comedy show “Friends” on DVD. Yes, unlike those who simply watch the series for a hearty laugh, Alsakran does it with the underlying purpose of improving his English vocabulary. True communication requires language proficiancy. Whether for everyday interaction, such as ordering food at a restaurant, or for specific situations, such as those presented in a learning environment, listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities are crucial. Yet, what happens to those who struggle in one or all of these skills?

More than 1,000 international students are enrolled at Kent State this semester. Most of these students met the university’s required score for the Test of English as a Foreign Language, which is an assessment of a person’s ability to communicate in English in a college environment. Still, some of them struggle to convey their ideas in a language that is not their native tongue.

Japanese student Ajisa Fukudenji says she began to learn English at age 13. Years of English lessons and a “good” TOEFL score gave her the confidence to move to the United States to pursue a master’s degree in counseling. Her trust in herself, however, quickly faded when she was unable to communicate effectively in her American life.

“American people—it’s always ready to say opinions or tell something to others. But in my country, people put emphasis in community harmony, so you better not tell your opinion like always,” Fukudenji says. “You cannot insist in something. There you have to listen to others and shouldn’t be opinionated.”

From her experience as an instructor of English as a second language courses, Bernadette Mizicko Beler says Middle Eastern students tend to be more comfortable with their speaking abilities, while their reading and writing skills are weaker. On the contrary, Asian students, like Fukudenji, are proficient in reading and writing due to an emphasis on grammar in their countries’ educational systems.

Yet, Mizicko Beler says, across the board, international students struggle with listening, a difficulty students don’t expect.

And certainly, the struggle surprised Alsakran, a doctoral student in computer science.

“I was like totally lost when I first came two years ago,” Alsakran says. “I heard people, but it was not English to me. Every single word here, people pronounce it different from what I (was) used to. I couldn’t understand a word.”

A Jordan native, Alsakran began learning English at age 16. While most of the textbooks he used during his years as an undergraduate student were written in English, Alsakran admits he had only spoken English on one occasion outside a classroom before he moved to the United States. “I was shocked by not being able to express my opinion when she first moved to Kent. I was afraid of making a mistake.”

During a cramming class in her first semester, Fukudenji suddenly found herself alone in the middle of the classroom, while the rest of her classmates worked in teams. Unaware of what was happening, she stared at her classmates for a moment, hesitating to ask for help, hoping somebody would instruct her. Helpless and terrified, she turned around and asked the professor to repeat the instructions.

Fukudenji partially attributes her fear of making errors in English to the way she learned the language in her home country. In Japan, she says English instructors place emphasis on grammar and written tests. Therefore, she learned technical English, not practical English. All Japanese students interested in pursuing an undergraduate degree in their home country must pass a language proficiency test.

Fukudenji adds that her fear of speaking out in classes or social events is also of matter of cultural difference.

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A Jordan native, Alsakran began learning English at age 16. While most of the textbooks he used during his years as an undergraduate student were written in English, Alsakran admits he had only spoken English on one occasion outside a classroom before he moved to the United States when he visited the U.S. Embassy to ask for his student visa. Alsakran was not ready for a 24/7 English-speaking life. Alsakran says he constantly felt frustrated — and still does to a lesser degree — every time he was not able to convey a message the way he hoped. Describing himself as somebody who was praised for his classroom presentations whether as a student or as a professor in Jordan, Alsakran says he feels anything but satisfied with some of his educational experiences in America.

Alsakran still remembers the first time he had to deliver a presentation to a class and how it ended up with “not-so-good” results.

“I hate myself sometimes,” he says. “After two years, I still don’t have the guts to tell people that I want to teach, even though I want to teach. Deep inside, I just love teaching. This semester, I just do gradebook. But it is not fun; it is not what I want to do. I want to teach.”

Mizicko Beler says she encourages international students to interact with native speakers and suggest that they not rely exclusively on other foreign students with whom they may share a native language. She says international students should seek conversation partners and get involved in extracurricular activities, whether by joining a club or simply visiting the Student Recreation and Wellness Center.

Alsakran watches TV and concentrates on dialogues. Joining and memorizing new words and browsing Web sites designed for English proficiency improvement are all ways he tries to pursue his goal to teach at a university. But even today, he doesn’t know if he’ll ever master the English language enough to feel comfortable asking for a teaching position.

Alsakran, now in his second year of living in the United States, says he has slowly regained his confidence and isn’t afraid of raising his hand in class to ask a question. It doesn’t bother her to ask people to repeat themselves. She says she found courage the day she confronted herself with the desperate decision of either leaving America without completing her degree or stepping up. Alsakran and Fukudenji still haven’t decided whether their temporary lives in America will become permanent.

Regina Garcia Cano is a junior newspaper journalism major.

2009 On May 4, 4 Kent State students were killed and nine wounded when the Ohio National Guard opens fire on Blanket Hill.

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Story by Regina Garcia Cano
Photography by Tessa Bargaiannier

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Jamali Alsakran, Jordan

Alsakran holds a heart keychain and box his younger sister Feda gave to him before he came here. “It means everything to me,” he says. “It gives me comfort. It takes all the stress away. I hold the heart with my keys so it’s always close to me.”

“Ah, wow, my English is very bad,” Fukudenji repeated several times as she was shocked by not being able to express her opinions when she first moved to Kent. “I was afraid of making a mistake.”

During a chemistry class in her first semester, Fukudenji suddenly found herself alone in the middle of the classroom, while the rest of her classmates worked in teams. Unaware of what was happening, she stayed at her classmates for a moment, hesitating to ask for help, hoping somebody would instruct her. Helpless and terrified, she turned around and asked the professor to repeat the instructions.

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On America

Facing a foreign country and culture where you can't speak your native language is a challenge. Five international students share their experiences.

INTERVIEWS BY Amy Cooper PHOTOGRAPHS BY Emily Horne and Abra Williams-Witkzy

Xinyue Yao
Sophomore international relations and affairs major from China

EXPECTATIONS BEFORE SHE ARRIVED Xinyue says she thought the United States was the land of freedom, but also a place where the law is strictly enforced. She imagined a place full of big cities with tall buildings. Instead, she got miles of countryside and animals. "The only tall building I have seen is the library on campus."

HOW PEOPLE REACT TO HER She says, although people are very friendly and accommodating, she finds it difficult to make friends with American students. It is tough for her to find topics to discuss with them in social settings. She says it's easier to interact with other international students who go through the same challenges that she does. "I think it is just two cultures with different interests."

CHALLENGES IN CLASS Xinyue struggles to keep up with the lectures in class because English is not her first language. "Americans can get through assigned reading quickly, but I take hours looking up the words in my dictionary to get through it."

Teejay Avans
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HOW AMERICANS ARE DIFFERENT He thinks people are very open and tend to show more emotion. "It is unacceptable for men to cry or show any emotion in Kenya. Even if your mom or sister died, you are not allowed to cry."

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Freshman international relations and affairs major from Rwanda

HOW PEOPLE REACTED TO HER "They are so friendly, but they talk so fast it is hard to keep up with them at times," Gisa says.

DOES SHE BELIEVE IN THE AMERICAN DREAM? "The American dream definitely does exist. It just is something that is acquired with time and lots of hard work."

HANGING ONTO HER IDENTITY Gisa says she thinks she'll always keep her identity as a Rwandan woman, but being exposed to so many cultures in the United States will also be better. "Learning about all different types of people helps me to be more accepting of different cultures," she says.

Meenakshi Das
Junior psychology and pre-med major from India

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HOW SHE ADAPTED TO THE FOOD Das ate fruit for a whole month when she first arrived because she found American food too unhealthy. She didn't have access to home-cooked meals, so she had to settle for fast food and what was available on campus. "I got sick a lot and had to gradually find healthier places to eat."

Learn how other international students feel about America at TheBurr.com

Andreea Patrasc
Freshman sports management science major from Romania

FIRST IMPRESSION OF AMERICA Patrasc thinks everyone is intelligent and different from the people in Romania. "People in the United States work as one big team."

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1975 Robert Longhurst graduates with a degree in architecture. This wood sculptor created the Design Emphasis Award for the International Woodworking Fair.

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It's just the way it is. Local college students and the Kent community have been at odds for decades.

Now, the city and the university think they have a solution — but history says otherwise.

You Just Have a Assumption

Each of these plans, however, still severely neglect the other. Yet in the end, it's up to us to help uphold traditions of diversity in the city. We must remember that we are here not just to live and eat food, but to help others. Through this, we can ensure that the city and the university will work together for the betterment of all.
Local college students and the Kent community have been at odds for decades. Now, the city and the university think they have a solution — but history says otherwise.

Story by Sarah Steimer

The ongoing saga of student-community relations in Kent would be a much easier tale to tell if it were a simple case of good vs. evil.

But the good guys do not wear white, and the bad guys do not wear black. This is not a clear "good vs. evil." Kennedy vs. Castro. Ferris Bueller vs. the principal. Finding a resolution to such an abstract problem is nearly impossible. That's why finding a solution before this year was often mentioned but then ignored for bigger issues. Like sidewalk snow removal.

So what incident finally sparked a possible resolution? The 2009 College Fest that sent many students and non-students to court and gave the rest of us remembrance T-shirts ("We didn't start the fire: College Fest 2009").

Let's look back at the day. That particular April 25 was an unusually warm evening — and half of East College Avenue was on fire.

But don't worry — everyone was just doing his or her job.

The police got the young people off the streets and generally calmed the situation. Just doing their job. The young men and women of Kent State were blowing off some steam and celebrating a gorgeous spring day. Just doing their job.

Each of those jobs, however, will always negate the other. Yet as the old adage goes, there can only be one sheriff in this town — and if we want to read that literally, the job of sheriff will be more apt to go to an officer than a 20-something frat boy.

But because cities aren't run by phrases from the Wild West, and also because we live in the much less exciting Midwest, a standoff (College Fest?) won't help decide who's right and who's wrong. It's going to take time. It's going to take patience, and it's going to take one smart liaison between both parties to help rid Kent of its hostility. It just may be crazy enough to work — or not.

"I know the perspective is that there's tension or whatever terminology we want to use," Kent Police chief Jim Peach says. "From the police perspective, we don't have tension. We really don't."

"I think it's a little worse here (than at other schools)," says Chris Dolan, junior hospitality management major and College Avenue resident. "It's easier to get in trouble.

But both sides have their assumptions, and there's really no way to gauge which side is right.

You just have to assume..."
October began. But his housemates had a litter about police with the couple noise. Peach, Chief of the generation man of its down-right office and see "We should have an educational city," Shaffer says, adding that one of the first steps the city took was to distribute welcome literature to students. The police not only served as a "go-to meet you" for law enforcement, but they gave phone numbers to call, as well as party tips, myths, violations and facts (yes, my). Council members luckily realized it would take more than some fancy graphics and nice second-floor-town pictures to open a conversation with students. They came the idea of a town-student liaison, someone who would remain as students-one and go. Shaffer and Shaffer both pointed out that it's difficult to make permanent progress on an ever-changing group. Although students will live in Kent as long as the university is here, it will (usually) not be the same students. As the students cycle, so will the problems.

"We've got an educational university. We should have an educational city," Shaffer says, adding that one of the first steps the city took was to distribute welcome literature to students. The police not only served as a "go-to meet you" for law enforcement, but they gave phone numbers to call, as well as party tips, myths, violations and facts (yes, my). Council members luckily realized it would take more than some fancy graphics and nice second-floor-town pictures to open a conversation with students. They came the idea of a town-student liaison, someone who would remain as students-one and go. Shaffer and Shaffer both pointed out that it's difficult to make permanent progress on an ever-changing group. Although students will live in Kent as long as the university is here, it will (usually) not be the same students. As the students cycle, so will the problems.

Following College Fest, Kent City Council sat down with history hearts and very tight pants. (The incident cost me $26,000.) Something had to be done to fix this animosity for good. The Kent community and the Kent State students needed to learn to get along. The solution almost seemed too easy: Both sides need to start a dialog. City council talked to the university. The university talked to people like Cunningham and Hancock. They talked among themselves. And they realized it was time to talk to the students. "We've got an educational university. We should have an educational city," Shaffer says, adding that one of the first steps the city took was to distribute welcome literature to students. The police not only served as a "go-to meet you" for law enforcement, but they gave phone numbers to call, as well as party tips, myths, violations and facts (yes, my). Council members luckily realized it would take more than some fancy graphics and nice second-floor-town pictures to open a conversation with students. They came the idea of a town-student liaison, someone who would remain as students-one and go. Shaffer and Shaffer both pointed out that it's difficult to make permanent progress on an ever-changing group. Although students will live in Kent as long as the university is here, it will (usually) not be the same students. As the students cycle, so will the problems.

Just the facts, please

Contrary to popular belief, the FBI has never opened a full-scale field investigation into Collinwood Kent College and the investigation Kent Police Department. Initial inquiries have been made after people have filed complaints to the FBI, but never a full investigation, says Scott Wison, Cleveland FBI special agent. James Peach, Kent police chief, will not deny that there have been some bad seeds in the police department. But they have always been dealt with and never ignored, he says. Four fires were started during College Fest on East College Avenue, and 53 people were arrested during the April 25 affair.

Sarah Steinher is a senior journalist at The Record.

Visit TheBurr.com to see the city's welcome fliers for students and local tidbit pamphlets.

1978 Linolenating with other community groups, Kent State builds the King Kennedy Community Center in Ravenna.

1979 Connie Schulz graduates with a degree in journalism. She went on to be a columnist for The Plain Dealer and win a 2002 Pulitzer Prize.
heavy-handed. By the beginning of October this year, he and his housemates already had a couple run-ins with the police about litter and noise.

Chief Peach, on the other hand, believes Dider's generation needs to learn a little respect. "This, of course, coming from a man whose office screams respect — right down to his leather chairs and tightly patterned wallpaper. "We see within our community and throughout the country a lot more need of authority by the younger people," Peach says. "It's a societal issue. It's not a Kent issue. They are more challenging, argumentative than ever before. There's a sense of excitement now with younger people. It's just the way it is."

According to each, it's the other's fault. At face value, the situation has a "be this, said this" quality. No one wins in those arguments, though, and it gets annoying after a while.

Karen Cunningham, a professor in the Center for Applied Conflict Management, says part of the problem is that both sides of the situation assume the other is out of control. Therefore, neither side believes it's the one that needs to change its behavior.

"It's not just the police and students who hold strong assumptions. Heidi Shaffer, Kent's 5th council member, says many permanent residents often blame students for problems.

"I think we tend to paint the students with one brush," Shaffer says. "The concern is the relationship with police, and I know it is a concern, but I think that there are all different types of people represented in the student population — and many of them will never have encounters with the police."

Some residents have opinions about students may stem from Kent State's history. Sour feelings remain from the May 4, 1970, shootings in the city of Kent, she says. The tension between townpeople and studentsingers on because the legacy of that event is still linked to the university. So of course, Cunningham says, "no one wants "that thing" to happen again. And just maybe, she says, that's part of the reason there's such a push to get things under control as soon as possible — and history doesn't repeat itself.

People in town aren't the only ones making such sweeping generalizations, though. The entire nation is under the impression that Kent, Ohio, is where students go to get in trouble and where the authorities go to throw a big, fat warrant in their plans. Kent's bias, and it's not a history that will soon be forgotten as long as baby boomers have their memories and the media have their footage.

During College Fest, Kent city council had a "gut feeling" about some of the issues. That's when Cunningham met with some of the students. Then came the meetings in which students, police, community members and business owners would be represented. Each would be given a chance to discuss some issues pertaining to others in the group.

"It could also help put some names to familiar faces, Hancock says. Instead of the police, community members and students all existing as nameless creatures to each other, they can become individuals. He says this focus group will help all sides air grievances much easier without the tight formalities of going into front of city council.

The details of the job are worked out, the position will be filled, and he or she will begin the long road of work ahead.

One no one is promising that the position will fix every problem for everyone. If you subscribe to Peach's view, it will at least put forth the idea that there is an opportunity to harbor better feelings between everyone involved.

The liaison will not make police officers nicer. The liaison will not keep empty beer cans and cups from decorating certain yards around town. The liaison will certainly not keep students from partying.

"You're going to have to police yourselves, too," Peach says. "But can putting a man or a woman in charge of such a historical conflict really make that much of a difference? It makes about as much sense as forcing the police to give up their Taser gun and pepper spray balls. Or turning Kent into a "dry" town so students can't even get alcohol to turn them into a party."
Justin Townes Earle was headed down the path of many rock stars — toward death by drugs. But unlike some of those who came before him, he cleaned up and gave himself a second chance.

Story by Ben Wolford
Photographs of Justin Townes Earle courtesy of Joshua Black Wilkins
Justin Townes Earle was headed down the path of many rock stars — toward death by drugs. But unlike some of those who came before him, he cleaned up and gave himself a second chance.

Story by Ren Wulford
Photographs of Justin Townes Earle courtesy of Joshua Black Wilkins
Justin Townes Earle died in Nashville, he says, on the phone from Manhattan. But his polite, country voice is anything but Big Apple. He gets to the point as old friends do, as Southerners do. He’s got a charm that’s unmistakably Dixie. No, despite what he says, Justin hasn’t died in Nashville any more than Nashville’s died in him.

He just killed his drug addiction there.

“I’d been smoking pot since I was 10,” he says in that deep drawl that impressed crowds at the 2008 Kent Folk Festival. “I was strung out by the time I was 15.”

He says it in a storyteller’s cadence that’s bebidding of his type of music. Justin’s music isn’t like his dad’s. Steve Earle learned more toward Bruce Springsteen than Hank Williams. That’s not so for Justin, the eldest of two boys. Justin sings country.

When it comes to drugs, though, Steve and Justin were both Hank Williams at some point in their lives. Father and son, doing whatever it took to get high. They didn’t do it together, though. Steve cleaned up first. But Justin was fading away. He would’ve died one night if a friend hadn’t dragged his doped and dying body off the floor and into a hospital. But that’s rock ’n’ roll. It’s nothing new.

Hendrix and Morrison simply didn’t have a friend there to call an ambulance.

Justin has since gotten off drugs and is into better things. More rockers, it seems, are doing that now. Or maybe it’s just that they’re less visible and don’t have time to get stoned.

Anastasia Pantsios works for Cleveland Scene, and she used to take photos at rock shows in the ‘80s. At a Guns N’ Roses show, the band’s manager told Pantsios that the former lead guitarist Slash had cleaned up — only two bottles of Jack Daniels a day now. In an unincidental incident, Slash placed on her friend.

“I’d like to think everybody’s cleaner than they used to be, but I don’t know that’s the case,” Pantsios says. “I still see enough stories going about, ‘Oh, you know, our drummer died, and it turned out to be an overdose. I think it’s still happening but maybe on a less high-profile level.’ ”

Drugs won’t ever leave the rock music scene. They’re too ingrained in it. Sex, yoga and rock ’n’ roll doesn’t sound right. Kenneth Bindas is the chair of Kent State’s History Department, and he’s studied jazz and rock musicians. “With the development of popular music and with the rise of it as an industry, he demands on a musician were extreme. They had to perform every night,” he says.

Musicians starting out performed in dark, smoky nightclubs, he says. There weren’t gratifying towers of fans. They had to be in a different city in 24 hours to play the same songs again. It was easy to push drugs or shoot up after a set, before getting in a van to drive all night. “You drank a lot to take the edge off,” Bindas says. Or to keep you going, as Eric Clapton explains in his autobiography. He’d been sober for years now, but around 1970, he spent a lot of time jarring and recording — musicians and drugs were all around him at his home at Hertwood Edge.

“We keep ourselves going with fry-ups and a cocktail of drink and drugs, mostly cocaine and Mandrax,” he writes. “Mandixes” were quite strong sleeping pills, but instead of letting them put us to sleep, we would ride the effect, staying awake by snorting some coke or drinking some brandy or vodka, and this would create a unique kind of high . . . God knows how our bodies stood it.”


Drug use was built into Justin Townes Earle’s lane and into the music he listened to. “My dad wasn’t always around, but he did a lot of drugs when I was around him, and my mom’s boyfriends were no strangers to various substances,” he says. “I also grew up a son being raised by a single mother in the inner-city in Nashville, and my mom didn’t make very much money at all.”

Drugs were easy to find in Nashville. But he made sacrifices for them. A 1943 Martin 000-18 acoustic guitar can go for $15,000. He sold his for $80 worth of crack cocaine and Dihydram. “That’s one thing about, especially drugs like heroin and cocaine — it doesn’t matter what you lose,” he says. “You’re gonna hurt it on these drugs. You’re gonna fuck it up.”

It happened to the best of them. Ozzy Osbourne was fired from Black Sabbath because of his addiction. Drugs strained Johnny Cash’s relationship with his wife, June Carter. Hendrix, Joplin and Morrison simply didn’t have a future. Hendrix, Joplin, Morrison and Cobain didn’t. But Justin almost didn’t make it to 23. At 22, he says, his liver was “daddy near cirrhosis.”

“I ended up in a hospital bed unconscious for about seven days after being scooped up off the floor at a friend’s mini’s house where I’d literally dropped dead in her living room,” he says. “After I kind of woke up and I got high — I had somebody bring me some dope as soon as I woke up — for some reason, that’s when the supposed moment of clarity came.”

After that, he got his act together. He stopped going bars. He’s since started eating healthier on the road. “I don’t do the Watts House thing anymore. I did that for years, too. ’Will you join me at just a coke wall? ’He gets left nights of sleep. And he does stretches.

“Most of the people I hung out with back then are dead or in jail,” he says, though some are still there and still addicted. “And that’s why I left Nashville, Tennessee. I was tired of watching all the same motherfuckers sitting at the same bar drinking fucking Pabst Blue Ribbon until they started talking shit about that they don’t have any business talking shit about. That shit gets old.

“I lived an entire life’s worth of existence and died on the streets of Nashville, Tennessee,” he says. “And I don’t think it’s good luck to do somewhere twice.”

Kenneth Bindas doesn’t say much directly to the question about whether he sees hard drug use in the Kent Akron music scene. His band, the House Pops, in which he plays guitar alongside a group of University of Akron professors, was formed about nine years ago. They’ve put out two CDs. “As a professor, I’m not ingrained into that life.”

But he doesn’t doubt it’s there. “Back in the day when I started my first band — I was a punk rocker — you start a band because you want, if you’re a boy — and this is from rock lore — because you want to get girls and because you’re interested in the night life. And night life is in a bar.”

And drugs and alcohol are in bars. Bindas says he finds different kinds of drugs in bars, though.

“This is from a musician: Music is like a heroin.”

Ben Wolfstaff is a junior newspaper journalism major.

For a quiz about the history of rock ‘n’ roll and drug use, visit TheBurr.com

I’d like to think everybody’s cleaner than they used to be, but I don’t know that’s really the case.

Anastasia Pantsios, photographer, Cleveland Scene

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“I’d like to think everybody’s cleaner than they used to be, but I don’t know. That’s just that they’re less visible and don’t have time to get stoned,” Pantsios says. “I still see enough stories going by about, ‘Oh, you know, our drummer died, and it turned out to be an overdose. I think it’s still happening but maybe on a less high-profile level.’”

Drugs won’t ever leave the rock music scene. They’re too ingrained in it. Sex, yoga and rock ‘n’ roll don’t sound right. Kenneth Bindas is the chair of Kent State’s History Department, and he’s studied jazz and rock musicians. “With the development of popular music and with the rise of it as an industry, the demands on a musician were extreme. They had to perform every night,” he says. Minutiae started to perform in dark, smoky nightclubs, he says. There weren’t gratifying horizons for them. They had to be in a different city in 24 hours to play the same songs again. It was easy to push-does or shoot up on a set, before getting in vax to drive all night. “You drank a lot to take the edge off,” Bindas says.

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Pick a rock band in the 1960s or 1970s. They probably did something to ruin their bodies. Lynyrd Skynyrd. The Doors. The Rolling Stones. The Beatles. Aerosmith. Led Zeppelin. The Who. For a time, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll were indivisible.

“They’ll never totally part ways. But pick a rock band in 2009. It’s not as easy to find a ‘Vivis: Behind the Music’ tale of addiction and abuse, The White Stripes. Coldplay. Green Day. John Mayer. Ben Folds. The Black Keys. None of them have garnered the kind of reputation for heavy drug use that Steve Earle (jailed for drugs) or Townes Van Zandt (drunk himself to death) or Hank Williams (drug-related heart failure) did. Drug use was built into Justin Townes Earle’s name and into the music he listened to. ‘My dad wasn’t always around, but he did a lot of drugs when I was around him, and my mom’s boyfriends were no strangers to various substances,’ he says. ‘I also grew up a son being raised by a single mother in the inner-city in Nashville, and my mom didn’t make very much money at all.’

Drugs were easy to find in Nashville. But he made sacrifices for them. A 1943 Martin 00-18 acoustic guitar can go for $11,500. He has no interest in the kind of crack cocaine and Dilaudid. ‘That’s one thing about, especially drugs like heroin and cocaine — it doesn’t matter what you low,’ he says. ‘You’re gonna hurt it on these drugs. You’re gonna fuck it up.’

It happened to the best of them. Ozzy Osbourne was fired from Black Sabbath because of his addiction. Drugs strained Johnny Cash’s relationship with his wife, June Carter Cash, and presented a shadow on the band, The Carter Family. ‘I wasn’t the cleanest person on the face of the earth. I carried a pistol with me everywhere,’ Justin says, thinking of his teenage self, a kid with a mean demeanor (‘Look at me wrong, and it’s time to fight’), who was always getting high. ‘I came out of it like a really fucked-up and overweight child’

Steve Earle didn’t say much to him about getting clean. He couldn’t, really. Justin says his dad hadn’t been there before, and, besides, by the time Steve was finally cleaning himself up, Justin was already plummeting toward bottom with a severe cocaine addiction. Steve didn’t want an addict coming around, son or not. Justin’s 27 years old, and it looks now as though he’ll make it to 28. Hendrix, Joplin, Morrison and Cobain didn’t.

But Justin almost didn’t make it to 23. At 22, he says, his liver was “danan near cirrhosis.”

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After that, he got his act together. He stopped going to bars. He’s since started eating healthier on the road. “I don’t do Waffle House thing anymore. I did that for too. It’ll kill you just as fast as cocaine will.” He gets left nights of sleep. And he does stretches.

“Most of the people I hung out with back then are dead or in jail,” he says, though some are still there and still addicted. “And most’s why I left Nashville, Tennessee. I was tired of watching all the same motherfuckers sitting at the same bar drinking fucking Pabst Blue Ribbon until they started talking shit about that they don’t have any business talking shit about. That shit gets old.

‘I lived an entire life’s worth of experience and died on the streets of Nashville, Tennessee,” he says. ‘And I don’t think it’s good luck to die twice.”

Kenneth Bindas doesn’t respond directly to the question about whether he sees hardcore drug use in the Kent/Akron music scene. He’s a professor, the House Pops, in which he plays guitar alongside a group of University of Akron professors, was formed about nine years ago. They’ve put out two CDs. “As a professor, I’m not in that game.”

But he doesn’t doubt it’s there. “Back in the day when I started my first band — I was a punk rocker — you start a band because you want, if you’re a boy — and this is from rock lore — because you want to get girls and because you’re interested in the night life. And night life is in a bar.”

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1975 photograph of Eric Clapton, above, courtesy of Stephanie Saniga

fashion design and merchandising school ALSO The University School building closes as a teachers’ school and reopens years later as the Michael Schwartz Center.

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from Denise to Sienna

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SUICIDE GIRL

STORY BY Denise Wright
PHOTOGRAPHS BY Adam Harris
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THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SUICIDE GIRL

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I was tops in a recording studio, and there were two guys I didn't know making music in the booth just watching me, I was sure. Yet, the sporadic music I was listening to took a backseat when my photographer pointed out to me that I was covering my breasts, it was important to me, something that made me happy. But gradually, those smiles went away and were replaced with bitterness toward my faith. It was a God who even gave me a felt led me astray.

At the time, I figured that because God wouldn't control my life, I would do it myself. I did so by first taking control of my sexuality, gradually selecting new partners and developing a side of myself I never really knew. By the time I began dating my second boyfriend in January 2008, I had only "been with" one or two people, but felt I had a great deal of sexual prowess. Ultimately, that sexual development became something I took pride in.

Change of pace

Fast-forward to 2009. My newly资源共享 relationship just ended, and I was moving into a new apartment near campus because I had been living with my boyfriend. Before my roommate moved in, I spent my first few weeks alone in the apartment -- usually watching sappy movies that left me crying and feeling worse about myself. I was ashamed that I had allowed my hope around for weeks. I've heard that some women get haircuts after a breakup -- a semi-change in their appearance that allows them to feel better about themselves. But that wasn't going to be enough for me. I needed a Change in my life. That's when I remembered modeling for Suicide Girls about six months prior to my breakup. At the time, I was familiar with SuicideGirls.com and had seen some of the girls in magazines such as Print and Prick. I investigated the site myself. I realized modeling for the site would give me the chance to express my sexual and creative sides.

Ultimately, my friend and I decided that applying would be a fun project to do together. During car rides to the mall, we would brainstorm ideas for sets, usually stealing ideas we'd seen on "America's Next Top Model." Although we were both excited about the opportunity, we were dating people who weren't big fans of their girlfriends posing nude and getting attention from other people. So neither of us pursued it.

Aside from my appearance, I'm demure in every sense of the word. I'm shy when I meet new people, and I dress conservatively, so most people would never guess I'm a nude model in my free time. To be honest, I never would have guessed I'd end up here, either.

Life before Suicide Girls

I grew up in a rather conservative home, and while my immediate family wasn't too spiritual, I found comfort in my own faith.

I attended weekly services with a close friend's family. I went to youth retreats and conventions. I was an active member of my church's drama team. You could probably wager that, given my involvement in church activities during high school, I would have continued my spiritual walk during college. I always thought I would, too -- until I was raped in Fall 2006, when my boyfriend and I were having problems. Once I was single, I needed to take advantage of my newfound freedom. And because of my parents' religious restrictions, the timing was perfect for apply for the site.

A new face in the community

I decided the word "love" on my wrist wasn't enough to appeal to the audience and I was itching for a new theme, so I got "disaster bells" tattooed on my side. Meaning "beautiful disaster," the tattoo reminded me of one of my favorite Jon McLaughlin songs. Now that I looked a little less like the girl I'd dated before, I sent in my application and, without looking back, shot my first set with a photographer friend.

I wanted to do an auto-shop theme, so my photographer got permission to shoot at a garage in Akron. We met up on a cold Sunday in January. While taking off my clothes in front of a married man was a little disconcerting, I was more concerned with getting good shots. The shop was freezing, and I was in a rush to put my sweatpants back on, but I stripped every now and then. I remember the frames, adjusting poses and expressions as I went. It wasn't an ideal shooting situation, but I had a good idea of what I needed to work on in the future, and I'm sure we'd changed like we'd gotten some great shots. He prepped them, and within a day, I submitted them to the site.

I wasn't expecting much, as the site receives more than 1,000 applications from new models every week. Yet, within two weeks of submitting my photos, I received the following response: "Congrats! Your photo has been accepted, and you have been given a free one-year account! Thanks for sending us your submission. We're excited to have you as a member of our community! xoxo Model Coordinator."

On April 10, about two months later, I was officially welcomed into the world where my set went up on the site. At the time, I was absorbed in working on a class assignment. When I logged on two hours later, I was surprised to see how many people had looked at my photos. That day, I drew in more than 200 friend requests and several messages from friends offering to cook me dinner, draw my portrait and, of course, shoot my next set.

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On Suicide Girls Essentially, they're famous -- the celebrities of the alternative realm.

Dual roles and addiction

I spent the following week looking forward to presenting my set on my friend's radio show. I hadn't even told him I was a model on the site, but he sent me a message indicating he was a member of SuicideGirls.com and was surprised, yet impressed, when he saw my photos. As a DJ for a Cleveland radio station, he wanted to have me on his show to promote my set. And while I began to wonder how many more of my friends might be members who would stumble across the site, I gladly accepted the free promotion.

The show went smoothly -- aside from my worrying about listeners recognizing me by something I said. I was glad that the last I'd worn that day, it difficult to recognize me on the webcast. But worse began to disappear. The show's "guys" read listeners' messages about how can I, and the employees at the station wandered in to introduce themselves, commenting on my sexy skins, pants and boots ensemble. One of the models we met that day was wearing a set of animal-print leggings I'd seen and fallen in love with. I got a message inviting me to an official Suicide Girls event. And even though I wanted to hang out after the show, I had to rush back to Kent to sneak an extra 40 minutes of studying for scheduling next semester's classes.

That Saturday, I got a new tattoo: a series of blue stars trailing down my neck, accented in orange. I went to a yoga party that evening and received compliments on the piece. I couldn't help but think how great it would look in my new career.

The next day, I went into my job at a local gas station. During my shift, my worst nightmare came true. One of my co-workers revealed that he was a member of SuicideGirls.com and had seen me. He prodded me to say if I was the one, which I didn't. I sent him a few people, but I felt like I was earning a living. When my shift was up, I dumed to the office to clock out, relented to escape the question-and-answer session. Shortly after getting home, my mom called, saying she'd seen my newest tattoo, courtesy of a picture I'd sent her via my cell phone. I wasn't surprised when my conservative mom expressed her disapproval. I should have expected that after I nearly ruined Christmas by revealing my wrist tattoo.

Does my mom know that I pose nude online? One of the major reasons I decided to set up a post office box for when I went home that summer so my mom would never see any Are my family and I didn't tell her if I had a death wish.

Nevertheless, I still participated in the site after the spring semester by writing blogs and submitting my songwriting set in early August.
I attended weekly services with a close family friend. I went to youth retreats and conventions. I was an active member of my church's women's group and youth group. You could probably wager that, given my involvement in church activities during high school, I would have continued my spiritual walk during college. I always thought I would, too — until I was raped in Fall 2006.

When my boyfriend and I were having Dual roles problems, I needed to get out of the situation. I was conflicted about my faith. It was clear to me that I was in a God who had led me astray.

At the time, I felt that because God wouldn't take control of my life, I would do it myself. I did so by first taking control of my sexuality, greedily selecting new partners, and developing a side of myself I knew I really knew. By the time I began dating my second boyfriend in January 2008, I had only "been with" one other man, but I felt like I had a great deal of sexual prowess. Ultimately, that sexual development became something I took pride in.

Change of pace

Fast forward to 2009. My newly yo-yoing relationship just ended, and I was moving into a new apartment near campus because I had been living with my boyfriend. Before my roommate moved in, I spent my first few weeks alone in the apartment — usually watching sappy movies that left me crying and feeling worse about myself. I was ashamed that I had allowed myself to be used again. The only thing I felt like was "okay." It didn't feel like I had a great deal of sexual prowess, but I wanted to be able to have sex without thinking about it.

I decided a Change in my life. That's what I referred to in my e-mail to Suicide Girls about six months prior to my breakup. At the time, I was familiar with SuicideGirls.com and had seen some of the girls in magazines such as Penthouse. My friend and I realized modeling for the site would give me the chance to express myself as a sexual being. Ultimately, my friend and I decided that applying would be a fun project to do together. During car rides to the mall, we would brainstorm tattoo ideas and see what we would be interested in getting. We would discuss the girls' tattoos and their stories.

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Putting on a show for the rest of the world

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The next day, I went into my job at a local gas station. During my shift, my worst nightmare came true. One of my coworkers revealed that he was a member of SuicideGirls.com and had seen me. He proceeded to ask if I knew I was on the site, where I'd gotten my set idea, and that he was participating in a new project. I didn't realize until later that he was revealing my private information to others.

Would I do it again? I couldn't imagine not getting my tattoos. When I see a piece of my body that I originally thought of as the "unattractive" part, I see something else. I see beauty. I see strength. I see beauty. I see strength. I see beauty. I see strength. I see beauty. I see strength.

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I was tops in a recording studio, and there were two guys I didn't know nothing music in the world. It was just looking who was watching me, I was sure. Yes, the sporadic hitting. I just took a boot camp when my photographer showed up. I was covering my backside.

I regained my focus, focusing on my memories and changing my facial expression. I could deal with strangers seeing me naked. I couldn't deal with not getting good shots.

I was shooting my third photo set for SuicideGirls.com, a nude pinup Web site for alternative girls with tattoos and body modifications. The set features me in a recording studio, seemingly writing and laying down songs — my favorite pastime.

This just had to be the set to make me "go pink." Going pink on the site meant dropping my unpaid status as a hopeful and becoming an official Suicide Girl — one of 33 in Ohio. Suicide Girls receive $500 per accepted set. And while "Songwriter's Showcase" hasn't done that for me yet, I feel like I'm nearing that possibility. As of October, the set had drawn nearly 200 comments after being up for just over a week. My first two sets, which were up for months, were closer to 400.

I've wanted to become an SG for a year now. With my natural brown hair and lack of facial piercings, people probably wouldn't describe me as "alternative." But sometimes I prefer it that way. During meetings, I can wear a long-sleeved shirt or a bracelet to cover the word "f**k" that's tattooed on my inner wrist. The only time someone sees the tattoo on my side. When I'm sitting in a meeting.

Aside from my appearance, I'm decent in every sense of the word. I'm shy when I meet new people, and I dress conservatively, so most people would never guess I'm a model in my free time. To be honest, I never would have guessed I'd end up here, either.

Life before Suicide Girls

I grew up in a rather conservative home, and while my immediate family wasn't spiritual, I found comfort in my own faith.

My first semester of college. I can't claim that the experience completely tore me away from my religion — I mean, among other factors, there was always anxiety new people who were different from the friends I'd cling to in high school. But it definitely played a huge part in my fall out with spirituality. I'd once been told that I'd see when I talked about my faith. It had to be something that I...
I've heard that some women get haircuts after a breakup — a semi-drastic change in their appearance that allows them to feel better about themselves. But that wasn’t going to be enough for me. ... That’s when I remembered a friend mentioning she wanted to model for Suicide Girls.

See more photos from this shoot at TheBurr.com
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See more photos from this shoot at TheBurr.com
The show goes on

I wanted to shoot a multi-set -- a set with another model -- so after the third set went up Sept. 22, I began to seriously explore the option.

On Sept. 26, however, I thought those plans might get cut short. That was the day my boyfriend asked me out. I already told him about the site, and he said he was OK with it as long as I was faithful. He even seemed proud that he was entitled to some "bragging rights."

But where was the cutoff on that? Did fooling around with another girl for a photo shoot constitute cheating on him? We talked about it, and again, he went along with it, joking that he would only do so if he could watch the shoot. Although I would give my boyfriend priority over my work any day, I was glad my relationship fit in just fine with my side project.

Meanwhile, my birthday was coming up, so I was playing with the idea of treating myself to a Monroe facial piercing and one, maybe two, more tattoos. I had wanted a side piece for months, but I didn't know how much longer I could keep hiding behind the "tattoos are addicting" excuse. I knew most of my addiction actually came from the compliments I received when I got naked to show off each new piece. And I knew that, with each bigger piece, I would increase my chances of being recognized by my tattoos.

So why do I do it?

Do I enjoy feeling like I put on a show for the rest of the world? Not so much. It becomes increasingly difficult to keep track of who knows what, and I have a feeling it's going to be more difficult to keep my double life under wraps with a pseudonym that can be found on Google. Alexa.com lists SuicideGirls.com in the top 1 percent of Web sites generating consistent, unique user traffic, so that probably wouldn't make it any easier.

Maybe it's because I like being in front of the camera. Up until my first set, I actually hated having my pictures taken. High school senior portraits were a serious pain for me. But I admit photo shoots make me feel special now. I love the attention that comes with people playing with my hair, tugging on my clothes and telling me they loved my last pose. I also love feeling like I'm becoming a better model, which is reaffirmed by the comments I got on my latest set, including: "You're going from good, to quite good, to particularly great. Songwriter's is intense!"

Who wouldn't want to read flattering comments like that?

But the deal-sealer for me is how friendly a lot of the SGs are. I was sold when I met my favorite SG, Radeo, and a few others at the Columbus Hell City tattoo convention in May. The girls were really encouraging, giving me tips on how to amp up my sets.

Most of my friends are guys, so I'm really jealous of how closely knit the girls seem. I want to be part of that bond more than anything. Every girl I met that day seemed to have that "thing," that special quality that gives you stars in your eyes. Essentially, they're famous -- the celebrities of the alternative realm.

So I want to be famous? I don't think that's it, either. I actually get weirded out when people I haven't told ask me about my involvement with SG. And although I like talking about it, I'd rather have money than fame, and it's not like SuicideGirls is bringing in any cash for me right now. If anything, it could prevent me from getting a job in the professional world, which I've taken into consideration.

Honestly, I can't really put my finger on exactly why I like modeling for SG or even how long I'll do it. There are girls on the site who are 30 and have kids. I don't think I'll want to do it by that point in my life, but who knows? All I know is that I'm having fun right now.

Denise Wright is a senior newspaper journalism major.
Facts

The term "Suicide Girl" was first used by "Flight Club" author Chuck Palahniuk in his novel, "Survivor." Courtney Love is an active member of the site and even brought three Suicide Girls (Emma, Robin and Rudy) with her to a 2002 MTV appearance titled "24 Hours of Love." Suicide Girls have been featured on several commercial products such as Pepsi machines and iPhone applications.

Source: SuicideGirls.com

(Continued from Page 4)

The show goes on

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But where was the fun in that? I was footling around with another girl for a photo shoot and found myself cheating on him? We talked about it, and again, he went along with it. I guess it was the feeling that he was only asking for it. Although he would give my boyfriend priority over my work, any day, I was glad my relationship fit in just fine with my side project.

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Dude, you know you love them

... them being Maxwell, Stansbury and Chunk of WMMS' Maxwell Show. After a visit to their studio in Independence, it's obvious why the audience hates to love them and loves to hate them.

Interview by Sarah Steimer
Photography by Laura Torchio

It's a lonely drive home from work and school during rush hour. You sit alone in your car, trying desperately to figure out what the vanity license plate in front of you is supposed to spell out. But after flipping the car stereo on — you've got company. Here are your best friends from 3 to 7 p.m. on 100.7 WMMS. Here's Maxwell, Stansbury and Chunk: the Maxwell Show. They're that sometimes crass, sometimes emotional but constantly entertaining radio show that won't stop — won't stop talking, that is.

ON HOW THEY TOOK THE BIG STEP TO AN ALL-TALK PROGRAM

STANSBURY (DAN STANSBURY) That Opie and Anthony is competing radio show thing happened. They put them on across the street from us again.

MAXWELL (BENJAMIN BORNESTEIN) They came back.

STANSBURY And (Maxwell) came in the studio one day and said, "Look, we're either going to be fired now or we're going to be fired later. So I'm going to put both of our jobs at risk right now and take all the records off." And I was scared to death, but what am I gonna do? Maybe if we get fired, he'll take me with him somewhere else and we'll try to work somewhere else. It ended up being right. It was the right time.

MAXWELL We were in a position where you're kind of doing a talk show, but you're still playing some music. This other talk show comes on across the street that people love that (it) has history — they've been on here before. And I'm like, "This is it, dude, they get our music anywhere now. They're not sitting around waiting to hear shit, their music on the radio. I told Dan, we either pull all the music off right now and get fired doing what I think is the right thing, or we do what they want and get fired by a talk show." And we're what people want and gets fired in six months. It was like, either way, we're gonna be out of a job. I would rather lose my job doing what I think is right and yank the Band-Aid off now than play this long, drawn-out game.

ON HOW THEY KEEP UP WITH MATERIAL EVERY DAY

CHUNK (Tiffany Pere) Most of our topics are personal. A lot of the time, we don't even use the audio that we prep for.

MAXWELL For days, we'll talk about Stansbury thinking his relationship is over, and you strive because you sit there and you go, "This is kind of egocentric to think that people care about what's happening to him or me or to her." But they do. It's kind of awkwardness. You feel like a dick.
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because you're grandstanding, talking about your life. Why would people care that I went to the pumpkin patch with my wife and my kid and the gay time we had? And then you find out that people do.

CHUNK: We talk about a lot of things that people don't talk about. I had a yeast infection I could talk about all day on the air but did not want to tell my boyfriend.

MAXWELL: I had moles lasered off of my penis, and we talked about it for like a day and a half, and people loved it. They're so scared to talk about that stuff themselves that they're just like, dude, this guy's got things growing on his penis, and he's talking about it?

STANSBURY: I wouldn't tell one person at work, and he told the whole city.

ON HOW TALKING ABOUT MAXWELL'S AND DAN'S PAST WITH USING DRUGS AND BEING SEXUALLY ABUSED HELPS THEM AND OTHERS

STANSBURY: A lot of men have that macho, 'I'm tough, I control my own destiny.' And Maxwell and I are just—we're not those kind of guys. I remember we went to Starbucks, and we had been working together for like two years, and he was like, 'Dude, just tell me what the fuck happened.' Not a girl I dated, not my family, nobody knew (about the sexual abuse). Then the next day we walk into the studio, and he's like, 'Let's do this.' And I remember my heart was pounding out of my body. I was sweating like crazy. But as soon as we let it out, I did feel better. It sounds so cliché, even though I was in my 30s— that felt like the last day that I lived as a victim. I felt like a survivor of that.

MAXWELL: With the drug problem, too, I had e-mails from people about going to treatment. And that's a dangerous thing to talk about because if you know anything about it, at any minute I could start using again. And everyone was like, 'Don't talk about it. Don't discuss it.' I was like, I'm going to rehab, and I'm gonna come back and deal with life. And there's people who have gone to treatment because I have. I guess there's still a stigma about it because there's people in the media in this town in recovery, and they don't talk about it. There's still a stigma about it. It just shocks me. It's 2009. We understand.

ON THE CRAZIEST THING THAT'S EVER HAPPENED ON THE SHOW

MAXWELL: Metallica was here for the Rock Hall. We decided to say that, at 6 o'clock, Metallica was going to play live in the parking lot, a free concert. We did that for an hour and didn't really think it through because there's a lot of implications there. People believed it, and an hour into it, all the managers came in and said, "You can't do this."

STANSBURY: I remember this guy called in, and he was laughing about it, and that's when I realized people have a decent sense of humor. He goes, "I own a construction company, and I let all three of my crews leave early because I was trying to be a cool boss." I was like, "Dude, go see Metallica."

CHUNK: One guy actually went home to put on his Metallica T-shirt and was driving to the station.
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**STANSBURY** A lot of men have that, choking-beer-cans-on-hair-football-head thing.

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**CHUNK** One guy actually went home to put on his Metallica T-shirt and was driving to the station.
My family I (don't) have to know

Story by Jinae West

By blood, I am not related to my parents or brother. We look nothing alike. In a sense, we are strangers, bound by signed government documents and a last name and obligation and love.

By blood, I am related to a man and woman I've never met. They live halfway across the world in miles I can only fathom on elementary school globes. I do not know their names or their favorite colors. I have no knowledge of their birthdays or present whereabouts. Sometimes I wonder if they're even alive.

The only information I have is 21 years out of date, a frayed manila folder that's 2 inches thick and 12 inches wide. On the front, it reads: "Jin Yong Ae, K88-1515," my birth name and case number.

At 8, I was naive to think that finding my birth parents would be like finding a friend in the phonebook. And if then it still proved to be difficult, I had faith in good fortune. Like the Nancy Drew and Encyclopedia Brown book I read about in books, I would discover a clue that would lead to their identities. Or worse yet, they would come looking for me.

Around the same time I stopped believing in Santa Claus and magic and superheroes, I realized they wouldn't.

(continued on Page 35)
I (don't) have to know

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(continued on Page 55)
S
o. The folder is a good place to start. I was born in Dongdu, South Korea, in May 1989. My parents were unable to have biological children and looked into adopting overseas. They adopted my brother, Min, from Korea three years earlier and wanted a second child. On a walk in the park, pushing my brother in the stroller, my mother turned to my father and told him she was ready for another one. He smiled and said, “Me, too.”

According to an article by Joan Heftiz Hollinger in “Adoptions Quarterly,” nearly 50 percent of foreign-born adoptees came from South Korea in the late 1980s in the aftermath of the Korean War. At its peak, more than 6,000 children were sent abroad a year, mostly to the United States. At the time I was born, Seoul was the host of the 1988 Summer Olympics. Holt International, an adoption agency, told my parents, instead of their child arriving in September, the flight would be delayed until February. The agency said it didn’t reflect well on Korea, exporting its children to other countries during the international games. My parents were heartbroken. They checked into getting visas to get me themselves but didn’t have to. I arrived in September.

“We have no idea why it changed,” my mother says. Rippling through my baby book, “Sept. 29, the flight came into Detroit. Look, there you are!”

She leans against the dining room table, staring at the overexposed photographs and handwritten captions. Her fingers glide over each photo, touching it gently and remembering that split-second moment as only a mother could.

“See this photo?” she says, pointing. “This is whispering in my ear. I remember he said, ‘She doesn’t have very much hair, does she?’” “Oh, and this one,” she says. “I love this one.”

After a while, I leave her at the table with her phone. They are hers, after all, more than they are mine. She’s lost between the pages of memories I’m unable to recall but she’ll never forget. 5-by-7s of candid smiles and first birthdays and first everythings.

When I come back downstairs an hour later, she’s still poring over the photo album. “Are you coming up?” I ask. “Mom!” But she’s far away and doesn’t seem to hear me. I watch as she presses her finger against the laminated page, bemused and bewildered by how all those years have melted away.

I’m seventh grade, my health teacher taught us about different families. There were single-parent families, families who had both parents, families who had none and families who had adopted. It’s not that I was ashamed of being adopted; I feared being different. My classmates knew my parents and knew we didn’t look alike, but I didn’t care to bring it up. It was what set me apart from my friends and I was longed to fit in.

Although I sat with my back to the teacher, I felt her eyes on me. “Jinie, you’re adopted, aren’t you?” she asked.

At the sound of my name, my shoulders slumped forward and I sank in my chair. My face glowed red. I wished she would stop picking on me. But I half-nodded, half-shrugged that yes, I was.

“Do you want to tell us about it?”

I concentrated hard at the textbook in front of me until the words began to blur. I couldn’t see her or my classmates. I was disappearing into a haze, safe from all the stares outside it.

“I don’t really want to talk about it,” I said.

It was something I struggled with for a while. Growing up in a predominantly white middle-class suburb in Akron, I had always felt uncomfortable, always knew I didn’t quite fit in and, at the same time, couldn’t see why. My parents were white, and I wasn’t. That was never a question. Neither was the fact I was adopted. But I didn’t appreciate people assuming my mother wasn’t my mother because we didn’t look the same or I wasn’t Korean or good at math. I ran some crying when I was made fun of at school. And I became painfully aware that I was different, but not in a way I thought was special and not in a way I could change.

As a child, I drew stick figures with brown hair and blue eyes. My dolls were blond. I pretended to struggle in school, even though most of the assignments came easy to me. I refused to perpetuate a stereotype I thought others expected me to fulfill. I looked at my parents unfairly for reasons they couldn’t understand, telling them I hated them for bringing me here.

When I was 10, I had a bad fight with my mother. By then, I knew I had nothing else to gain. I screamed at her until my voice was raw and my lungs burned. It started as a trivial argument, the kind you remember for its foolishness but not its cause. I felt backed into a wall and let fly, the words I knew would hurt the most. As a child, I was the only real leverage I had.

“You’re not my real mother,” I told her. “I hate you. I wish I lived with my real parents.”

The words lingered, hanging between us, stinging a reverberating silence. I waited for her rebuttal. A lifetime punishment. A week’s resentment. But none came because she sat there and took it and said nothing.

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olt International’s Web site offers services to adult adoptees to find their birth parents. It’s unrealistic to think I’ll find them in a short amount of time, but I hope for the best. I click on a link called “Information request,” which brings me to a blank form. It asks for general knowledge, like my birthplace, the names of my adoptive parents and so on. The Web site also has a message board. A lot of the topics deal with reaching out to birth families. Most of the posts are about how to begin finding them, but not what actually happens when you try. One user is in the process of tracking his birth family. He says it took more than six months for him to send the information he requested.

The frayed manila folder now sits on a shelf in my room and is the only thing that connects me to my birth parents. While I’ve always been curious, part of me never wanted to know what’s inside. Knowing for sure why they decided to give me up would make it real and final. The mystery gives a sense of fiction. For all I know, they died in some tragic car accident or house fire and abandoned me involuntarily. I’ve built them up in my mind as a loving couple who would’ve kept me if they could, not allowing myself to believe otherwise. I think of them on almost every birthday.

It’s the only time I feel a real kinship because I figure if they think of me at all, it would be on the day I was born. And it’s nice to know
The folder is a good place to start. It's not that I was ashamed of being adopted; I feared being different. My parents were white, and I wasn't. That was something I struggled with for a short amount of time, but I hope for the best. I clicked on a link called “information request,” which brings me to a blank form. It asks for general knowledge, like my birthplace, the names of my adoptive parents and so on. The Web site also has a message board. A lot of the topics deal with reaching out to birth parents. Most of the posts are about how to begin finding them, but not what actually happens when you try. One user is in the process of tracking his birth family. He says it took more than six months for Holt to send the information he requested.

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I was born in Daejeon, South Korea, in May 1988. My parents were unable to have biological children and looked into adopting Koreans. They adopted my brother, Ben, from Korea three years earlier and wanted a second child. On a walk in the park, pushing my brother in the stroller, my mother turned to my father and told him she was ready for another one. He smiled and said, "Me, too."

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“We have no idea why it changed,” my mother says. Flipping through my baby book, "Sept. 28, the flight came into Detroit. Look, there you are!"

She leans against the dining room table, staring at the overexposed photographs and handwritten captions. Her fingers glide over each photo, touching it gently and remembering that split-second moment as only a mother could.

“See this photo?” she says, pointing. “Ben is whispering in my ear. I remember he said, 'She doesn't have very much hair, does she?’”

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When I come back downstairs an hour later, she's still poring over the photo album. "Are you coming up?" I ask. "Mom?"

But she's far away and doesn't seem to hear me. I watch as she presses her finger against the laminated page, bemused and bewildered by how all those years have melted away.

...I drew stick figures with brown hair and blue eyes. My dolls were blond. I pretended to struggle in school, even though most of the assignments came easy to me. I refused to perpetuate a stereotype I thought others expected me to fulfill. I looked out at my parents unfairly for reasons they couldn't understand, telling them I hated them for bringing me here. When I was 10, I had a bad fight with my mother. By this time, I knew I had nothing else to gain. I screamed at her until my voice was raw and my lungs burned. It started as a trivial argument, the kind you remember for its foolishness but not its cause. I felt backed into a wall and let slip the words I knew would hurt the most. As a child, it was the only real leverage I had.

“You're not my real mother,” I told her. "I hate you. I wish I lived with my real parents."

The words lingered, hanging between us, stinging a reverberating silence. I waited for her rebuttal. A lifelong punishment. A week's resentment. But none came because she sat there and took it and said nothing.
we’re thinking of each other at the same time, a world apart.

In the past, I’ve told friends I remember my birth mother, or at least, one brief moment with her. I was in my crib, and she was staring down at me — a split-second memory. Of course, it defies all logic. Children don’t develop a sense of memory until they’re 3 or 4 years old. But I’m positive it was her. I don’t know who else it could’ve been. And her face was full of love and adoration. On cue.

When I call my mother to ask if she has ever tried to find her birth parents, he tells me no. His answer is abrupt. He doesn’t want that burden. He doesn’t want to have to take care of them if they need it. “You never even thought about it?” I ask.

“No. Never.”

Around the same time I began to wonder about my birth parents a few years ago, my mother and father had told me about Ben’s. His birth mother was dead, mute and unmarried. Her circumstances were grim. She was very young and didn’t have money to support a baby, so she gave him up. They said Ben never asked about his file or his birth parents. On the phone, Ben tells me about how difficult it was growing up, feeling like a loser at recess, having trouble making friends and being made fun of all the time. It’s then when I realize we’ve never talked about this before. My phone calls to him are usually short and polite. I ask him how he’s doing in Baltimore, he asks how I’m doing in school and then we hang up. But this time is different. We laugh and reminisce about what was great and awful about being adopted — the teasing and loss of culture but, at home, a sense that we belonged. I tell him I decide to try to find my birth parents, and by the end of the call, he seems to have a change of heart. “Well, maybe I’ll try to find them, too,” he says. “Maybe one day.” His voice trails off.

Silently, we both know he won’t. And I decide not to tell him I know about his file, to hide the fact that, deep down, I don’t think there’s anyone to find.

At the beginning of my baby book, a photo is missing. The caption reads: “Time with her foster mother, 4 months old.”

I ask my mother what happened to the photo. She says she doesn’t know but will keep an eye out for it.

“Mom,” I say, “what do you think about me trying to find my birth parents?” I don’t ask, but what I really want to know is if it will bother her. I wonder if she’ll get mad.

“I want you to do whatever would make you happy,” she says. I look for hints of insincerity in her voice, in her open face, but find none. She’s being honest. All she has ever wanted is for me to be happy.

I go up to my room, back to the folder that has sat on my shelf for so long and open it. My parents gave it me years ago, and I pin it out of sight and out of mind until now. The first page is a pre-flight child report that lists my eating and sleeping habits, speech abilities and personality: “Squeals and laughs aloud. Recognizes a familiar voice. Likes to break (but a bath). Is a gentle, cute baby. Loves to be held in one’s arms.” Some of the papers are just brochures to take trips back to Korea, but most are agreements between my parents and the adoption agency, saying they can’t give me back if they find something wrong — a return policy, all sales final.

But there is a packet stapled five pages deep that catches my interest: “Confidential information.” I can feel my heart race faster. In movies, the protagonist always has a turning point. It’s the moment when his or her life changes forever. He gets bitten by a spider or goes to the mattresses for his family or takes the red pill instead of the blue one. To a lesser extent, I realize this is one of those moments.

The first page is basic information, like my height and weight when I was born. The second is a little more interesting. It mentions my foster family, “composed of five members: her foster mother in her late 40s, two foster brothers and one sister.” Her foster mother is a diligent woman with a loving nature.”

I turn the page. In cold, flat type, it reads: “The natural parents were legally married and had three children. As they were very poor, they practiced birth control not to have any more, but they came to have the baby unintentionally due to failure of contraception. The natural parents could not bring up the baby adequately due to their unfavorable financial circumstances. They relinquished their parental rights toward the baby, wanting the baby to be adopted into a good home for the sake of the baby’s optimum future.”

The baby.

According to the file, they were poor farmers, both receiving only a primary school education. My birth mother was 32 and my birth father 34. I was taken into the adoption agency the day I was born. It doesn’t say, but I get the sense she never held me. It makes me wonder if she saw what I looked like or if she thought it was better to let me go. I also learn the social worker who named me.

To my birth family, I was, simply, the baby. The next two pages are medical forms and don’t hold my interest. I close the folder and put it back on the shelf. At first, I feel numb, unchanged. There was no tragic car crash or house fire, but I think they did care for me in the only way they knew how — by giving me up to someone else. Learning I have three siblings, though, when all this time I assumed I was an only child, is off-putting. Two sisters and one brother, and I got the golden ticket out.

I’ve always wanted a sister.

I decide to send the request to Holt, but I don’t expect it to lead anywhere. And if it does, I don’t have the funds to pursue it further. Korea is a long way from Kent, and the older I get, the farther it seems ... To me they exist as fiction, an intangible idea that’s far removed from reality.

Of course, it never even crossed my mind when I was five or six. But as I thought about them, they started to haunt me. He doesn’t want that burden. He doesn’t want to have to take care of them if they need it.

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I turn the page. In cold, flat type, it reads: “The natural parents were legally married and had three children. As they were very poor, they practiced birth control not to have any more, but they came to have the baby unintentionally due to failure of contraception. The natural parents could not bring up the baby adequately due to their unfavorable financial circumstances. They relinquished their parental rights toward the baby, wanting the baby to be adopted into a good home for the sake of the baby’s optimum future.”

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Society of Professional Journalists’ Mark of Excellence Contest

Best Affiliated Web Site

First place, CyBurr, spring 2008

Jackie Mantery and Savannah Nusivok, editors

Adam Griffiths and Megan Perez, Web editors

Stephanie Blackstone and Adam Griffiths, Webmasters

Best Student Magazine

Second place, The Burr

Jackie Mantery, editor, spring 2008

Sarah Nusivok, editor, fall 2008

Best Magazine Non-Fiction Article

“Jinae Bai 2008

Jessica Lentine & Jackie Mantery, editors

Katie Alberti & Elise Franco, Web editors

Adam Griffiths & Rick Salsbery, Webmasters
we're thinking of each other at the same time, a world apart.

In the past, I've told friends I remember my birth mother, or at least, one brief moment with her. I was in my crib, and she was standing down at me—a split-second memory. Of course, it defies all logic. Children don't develop a sense of memory until they're 3 or 4 years old. But I'm positive it was her. I don't know who else it could've been. And her face was full of love and adoration. On cue or not.

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"No. Never."

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His voice trails-off. Silently, we both know he won't. And I decide not to tell him I know about his file, to hide the fact that, deep down, I don't think there's anyone to find.

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--Jenn West is a senior magazine journalism major.
Facebook SUCKS.
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- independent
- private
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