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Against All Odds
Facing the worst job market in 20 years, May graduates may have to improvise to find a job. But some students have managed to beat the odds.

Away From the Hood
Coming to Kent State is a big adjustment for African-American students from the inner city.

To Hell and Back
A survivor of a drunk-driving accident tells of the night that changed her life and her struggle to regain a normal lifestyle.

Working Girl
One student has an unusual way of making money. Although her job pays the bills, she isn't completely satisfied with her work.

The Art of Fiber
An inside look at the making of a fiber masterpiece.

Hit Me With Your Best Shot
Bartenders get creative when they make signature drinks, which become known for their distinctive look, taste or even smell.

A Different Date
Interracial dating causes problems, but also has its rewards.

No Place To Call Home
Homelessness hits small towns as well as big cities, and Kent is not excluded from this nationwide problem.

All My Children
A visit with the Chi Omega housemother.

Through the Years
A look back on the DeWeese Health Center’s history of healing.

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On the cover: A Kent State student works as an exotic dancer to pay her way through school. Cover photo by Elizabeth Malby and Aaron J. McCannel.
Against

The gloom and doom of the recession can be beaten

Story by Lisa Schaad

A six-figure salary, a job working 9 to 5 with weekends off, a two-week paid summer vacation at the beach, and a summer home with children to fill it... that's what dreams are made of.

But sometimes dreams can turn to dust. And sometimes expectations students have for themselves after graduating are different from what is feasible in the present economy.

Parents or students may end up spending thousands of dollars on a college education that may lead them into low-paying jobs in the service industry — jobs students never thought they would have to resort to if they graduated from college.

This May, as the class of 1992 leaves the safety of college life, they will be faced with the worst job market in 20 years. Not all graduates will get the jobs of their choice, but many will be able to beat the recession by being well prepared before graduation. Students may also find jobs in another state or in a position not directly related to their majors.

Many of today's college students find themselves graduating with a bachelor's degree and working at an occupation having nothing to do with their specialized field of study. This may not be a result of personal choice; this may be a result of necessity.

Take business management major, Edward Muffler, who graduated cum laude from Kent State in December.

"I graduated with honors," Muffler says. "I never expected to be working on an assembly line. It makes you wonder why you went to college in the first place."

After sending more than 40 resumes to various corporate representatives and getting no responses, Muffler, 22, accepted a job with a former employer at a safe
factory in Sandusky. Like many other graduates, he found the employment expectations he had for himself were snuffed out.

"I expected to take a couple of weeks off after I graduated, but I never thought it would be this slow," he says. "What I really wanted was an entry-level management position. It just isn't happening."

But the lack of jobs for college graduates isn't a new trend. In 1991, 1.4 million people graduated from colleges or universities, and at the same time the United States lost 2 million jobs to the recession, according to an article in *U.S. News and World Report*.

The recession has hit the airline industry hard, with both Eastern and Pan Am airlines folding and other airlines cutting back because of a lack of funds. These layoffs make aerospace flight major Domenic Maiani uncertain about his future employment opportunities.

Maiani graduated in May 1991, but hasn't left Kent State to enter the job market yet. Maiani spends his time at the Kent State airport where he is acquiring flight time by being a flight instructor.

"The recession has affected me because a lot of pilots have been laid off or airlines have gone out of business," Maiani says. "This has killed off the smaller commuter airlines, and enrollment is down in flight courses because people can't afford to pay for them." Unfortunately, fewer students in the flight courses means fewer students for Maiani to teach to acquire the flight time he so desperately needs. Ultimately, Maiani's goal is to work as a captain for United Airlines, but he'll need well over a 1,000 flight-hours before that would be remotely possible.

The conditions in the job market began to look unstable in the spring of 1990 when two of the largest employers of college graduates, General Motors and International Business Machines cut back the amount of college recruiting they did. According to an article in *Fortune* magazine, IBM, which normally recruits at more than 250 schools and hired 3,600 graduates in 1989, put a temporary freeze on hiring. GM limited hiring to 880 students, 600 of whom had GM scholarships or who had previously interned at GM.

David Baumgartner, director of the Career Planning and Placement Center (CPPC) at Kent State, says recruiting is down in all of the MAC schools.

"In the last two years, recruiting has gone down 40 percent among the MAC schools," Baumgartner says. "Actually Kent State's recruiting was up 20 percent last year. I'm not sure why (recruiting was up). But there have been a lot of cancellations this year."
Hobson Hamilton, a program officer at the CPPC blames the decrease in recruiting partly on the economy. He says some companies are in the process of downsizing and restructuring. “Recruiting becomes less of a priority. Companies want to recruit when they can, but they just can’t now.”

One reason recruiting may have decreased is because traveling to various colleges to interview students is time consuming and expensive.

“It’s right across the board,” Baumgartner says, “The companies cut back, and recruiting is usually the first to go.”

Aside from inviting companies to recruit students for employment opportunities, the CPPC has an entire program designated to assist students in finding a job after graduation. Counselors work directly with students and even alumni to help them plan their careers and to be placed in the work force.

According to Baumgartner, the CPPC conducted a survey studying graduates of Dec. 1989, May 1990 and August 1990 for five reasons: to provide information useful in career decision making for students and alumni; to provide information for academic and faculty advisors; to provide information and feedback to academic departments; to serve as a resource document for students, alumni and faculty whereby salaries, job titles, employers can be researched for various majors and occupational clusters; and to meet proposed Federal and accrediting agency guidelines.

Information was solicited from 1,913 graduates, and data was received from 1,100 at a response rate of 57.5 percent. Baumgartner says that graduates were mailed surveys, and if they didn’t respond, they were telephoned. Those who were still unemployed at the time of the survey were given some guidance, he says.

“One positive aspect of the survey was that we were able to help graduates who needed help at the time of the survey. Some people were discouraged about not having a job, and we could give them some help.”

As for the mission at the CPPC, Hamilton believes students are all different and must know their specific wants and needs before they can begin their job search. “I think the main mission (at the Career Planning and Placement Center) is to provide as many resources as we can for students to know themselves better and to make good career choices for themselves.” Freshmen and sophomores can use the facilities anytime the office is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and they have access to the career library and professional staff members with counseling appointments. There is also a computer guide program available for students to use.

“In general, they can use the computer guide program to get in touch with the values that match them with a career,” Hamilton says.

For juniors and seniors, the services at the CPPC are more detailed. Students wishing to interview with visiting employers are required to register with the Center and then complete a series of three, one-hour long workshops, which include job searching, interviewing and resume writing. The registration fee costs $10 for current Kent State students.

“When they’ve done that, we provide them with a disk and a six-digit code that enables them to sign up for interviews by touch-tone phone,” Hamilton says. “Students are a lot happier with this sign-up service. They don’t have to stand in long lines or go through the secretary here.”

Once students are registered, their information is put into a computer system. When an employer calls looking for an individual who meets the company’s criteria for an available position, the information about that individual can be pulled from the computer and sent directly to the company. Even when students graduate, their information is kept on file so the referral service can continue for up to a year.

“A resume brief is kept on the computer that can be sent out to employers on request,” Hamilton says. “People who register as undergrads can remain on the system for a year if they need us. Alums who want to be in the system have to pay $25 and fill out forms. They can waive the three workshops.”

But not all students use the services at the CPPC. Neither Muffler nor Maiani did.

“I really didn’t think I needed anyone’s help to get a job,” Muffler says. “I thought I could get one on my own, and I guess I might have been too lazy to use Career Planning and Placement.”

Scott Goemmel, a May 1991 graduate, used the services at the CPPC, but says that the Center can’t do everything for an individual. “Career Planning and Placement can only do so much,” he says. “People rely on them getting you a job. They are there to get people (recruiters) on campus. It’s your job to get yourself a job.”

Goemmel, 23, received his first job offer in Oct. 1990. He accepted a job at Deloitte & Touche in Cleveland before he graduated. As an accounting major, he says it wasn’t any easier for him to get a job than anyone else.

“Even though the job market sucks — it sucks in accounting, too, but if you take an initiative to go out and research what you want to do and make contacts, finding a job will be easier for you.” As for advice, Goemmel recommends that everyone start planning a career early. “Don’t wait until the end. Start in your junior or sophomore year. Meet people, and get to know the industry by going out and doing research.”

Seniors may register with the Center any time. Probably the best time to join is January or September, Hamilton says, because the average time it takes to complete the actual job search is nine months.

Once a student graduates, a willingness to relocate may be essential to finding a job.
Secret of Their Success

The future may seem dim for some college graduates because the job market seems to be slow, but there is proof that many Kent State graduates do find jobs.

One class of 1991 graduate was highlighted in a May 1991 issue of U.S. News and World Report as a success story. Sherry Gallagher, 24, graduated in May with a degree in human resources. Gallagher was offered a job with Progressive Insurance in Cleveland in February before she graduated.

Ironically, when representatives from Progressive came to recruit at the Kent State campus, they weren't looking for human resources majors. The interviewer took Gallagher's name anyway, and when a position was available, she was called and offered a job.

Aside from interviewing, Gallagher thinks it's important to use every avenue available when looking for a job. "I did all of my networking at Career Planning and Placement," she says. "I met a lot of recruiters, and there were human resources people there for me to talk to."

If it wasn't for her active participation in her job search, Gallagher may have never found her job. She says her job is challenging and her responsibilities keep her busy, but sometimes she longs to be back at Kent State.

"I never thought I'd say, 'I want to get back to college,' but you get out in the real world — there's taxes to pay and limited vacation time." Another Kent State graduate who managed to find a job, Becky Hileman, 31, was a non-traditional student. Hileman started college after high school and quit. After taking two years off, she returned to get a degree in computer science in 1988.

Hileman originally interviewed with British Petroleum America in Cleveland. She received an offer and turned it down because she wasn't sure the job was right for her. After changing her mind two months later, she interviewed with the company again and accepted the new position offered to her.

For the most part, Hileman thinks Kent State prepared her well for her job. The computer systems she worked on in college were identical to the ones used at BP. Career Planning and Placement also readied her for graduation, she says.

"If nothing else, it will guide you in the right direction," she says. "It forced me to keep myself in constant flow with the job search. It would have been really easy to blow it off."

She suggested students may need all the help they can get with the job market in the condition it's in.

"I feel bad for new hires," she says. "Not a lot of people seem to be hiring."

Joe Vincent, another Kent State graduate who works at BP America, says finding a job is possible, but the individual must bear all the responsibility of searching for that job. Having graduated in May 1990, Vincent, 28, acquired a second job this past March teaching night classes at a technology school.

Vincent doesn't attribute the difficulty in finding a job solely on the economy. "It's not all the economy," Vincent says. "It's the foreign competition."

Even though the unemployment rate was the highest it's been since World War II in March, (7.1 percent), this is when Vincent landed his second job. By using a little persistence, he got a long way.

"The idea is to sell your qualities without sounding like a salesman," Vincent says.

Vincent thinks that in addition to persistence, individuals must be active in their job searching. "More than anything else, people need to take responsibility for their careers," he says. "No one is going to hand you life on a platter. If you take responsibility and handle it, you can do it."

--Lisa Schaad
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"Some people have family and friends here, and they don’t want to leave Northeast Ohio. They may have a significant other who’s trying to finish course work so they are trying to fit all of that together with finding a job," Hamilton says. "The willingness to relocate could open some doors people didn’t think existed."

If he had to, Maiani would leave the area to get a job. "I’d move in a second if it meant a good job," he says.

Baumgartner agrees that being willing to move to another state is important. "The key is if the person is mobile or not. It increases their chances of getting a job," he says.

Hamilton believes a person should be willing to adjust personal goals to find a job because some companies still have growth patterns. He also says it’s beneficial to know someone to land a job.

"Networking is essential," Hamilton says. "You’re not going to get anywhere if you don’t know someone who can help you."

Hamilton believes a common myth among students is that the CPPC cannot help them. For whatever reasons, some students will never come to the center for assistance.

"I think maybe the decision to look for a job is given low priority," Hamilton says. "It doesn’t hit people that time is moving quickly until their last semester of their senior year."

Baumgartner echoes Hamilton’s sentiments about there being myths about the Center. "It comes down to who you are as an individual, what your priorities and needs are and how that fits into the world of work. There are so many options out there. The critical thing is career planning and focusing."

The facts are that the job market is slow, but there are ways to beat it. So while students are struggling to fulfill all of their liberal education requirements and find the correct color of their cap tassels, in the backs of their minds they are fearing the worst — not being able to start their careers after graduation.

A job, any job...that’s what dreams are made of. The summer home and six-figure salary may just have to wait.
Away From the Hood

Adjusting to college can be difficult for black students from the inner city

Photos by Sharon Cekada

Story by John Horton

Matt Fox vividly remembers his first day at Kent State.
"My cousin came and dropped me off and helped me move in," says Fox, a former Kent student from Cleveland. "I didn't know anyone here or anything about this place. Nothing.
"But most of all, I remember there were no blacks here. I didn't see anyone. So I just started walking around campus trying to find someone for me to talk with, someone who would understand. I just kept walking around all day."
He didn't find anyone.
Now, more than two years later, Fox spends his days working in Kent trying to pay off the bills from his tuition. Enrolled in 1989, Fox is still considered a freshman by the university. He said he is debating whether to return and try college once again.
"I've tried to go and get help from the university since I've left so, when I come back, it wouldn't be so hard," Fox says. "But since I'm not taking classes, they said they can't help me. They said I had to be enrolled.
"I don't understand that. That's like taking someone out in a car and trying to teach them how to drive on the freeway. They should teach you and then put you in and then try to explain how to do it.
"So far, I have nothing to show from my time here except a bunch of bills. It's frustrating. Very frustrating."

Like many inner-city students coming to Kent State, Fox had difficulties with the transition from his home environment to campus. For the inner-city student, the world is turned upside down.
"Research has demonstrated consistently that people have transition anxiety," says Michelle Scott, director of the Office of Cultural Diversity. "When that is coupled with racial and ethnic differences, it only escalates the anxiety more. Until we can collectively come to terms with the reality that there are all kinds of people in the world with different preferences, that anxiety will continue to stay up."

Coming to a campus such as Kent State's is a big adjustment for a black student, especially one from the inner city. African-Americans make up only 8 percent of the student population, and coming from the inner city makes one a minority of a minority.
Cecil Shorts, campus minister of the ABC's of Salvation, says the biggest adjustment many black inner-city students have to make is to the rules. Shorts says he has seen many students from his hometown of Cleveland struggle.
"What's considered mischievous behavior in Cleveland is considered serious here," Shorts says. "It's not uncommon for a fight to break out in a classroom there, and it's no big deal.
"Then you come down here to Kent and you're used to reacting that way and not going to jail. You're so used to responding to life a certain way that you cannot understand how this system works. And it's devastating to you.
"This is not meant as an excuse — it's just the way it is."
Several students living in campus residence halls agreed that learning the rules was the hardest transition from the inner city to the college campus.

"In the inner city, you just don't have someone walk up to you and give orders," freshman criminal justice major Sylvester "Tone" Grant says. "And if they do, you usually respond by punching them. We run things around our neighborhood, and it's hard to adjust to someone telling us what to do around here."

Grant, who has since transferred to Bowling Green, was involved in several situations on campus in which he and residence hall officials and security were at odds. He says he felt the situations were brought about by racial differences and a lack of understanding of different cultures.

"People here treat blacks differently," Grant says. "It seems that there's one set of rules for blacks and another set for whites. I think they should stop harassing black students so much and allow us to have our freedom."

Ben Fagan, a classmate of Grant's at Glenville High School in Cleveland, also says some problems come from a sudden lack of freedom.

"It's hard to adjust to new rules and dealing with the authorities here," says Fagan, a physical education major. "We had more freedom in the inner city. This here (in the residence halls) just makes me feel like I'm trapped in a nice jail."

Interaction with roommates and other students on campus also creates problems.

"I got up one morning and heard my roommates talking about me," Fox says. "One asked another if he thought I'd steal anything from their rooms. Another asked if they thought I was in a gang.

"I didn't say anything to them then, but I talked to them later. I explained to them that just because I was black and wore some gold didn't mean I was mean or nasty or in a gang or a drug dealer."

Grant, Fagan and Fox say people act differently around African-Americans all over campus. When they are out walking, women will change their purses from one side to the other. When they walk by a stopped car, people often will lock their doors.

"It's almost funny the way people react sometimes," Grant says. "You just want to ask them what they're scared of, why they're acting like that."

Robert Gaddis, a freshman criminal justice major from Cleveland, says he learned more outside of the classroom his first year here. According to Gaddis, the struggle to adapt to the
A new environment became his
toughest course.

"It's like a very hard maze," he
says. "It seemed like I had to learn a
whole different language and
culture when I got here. The system
is based on the white student, and
we simply have to adjust to that.

"If you can survive your first
semester on campus, and if you can
deal with all the things you go
through here, you can make it
through anything in life."

Linda Lanier, assistant director of
admissions for minority student
enrollment, says the university
needs to offer black students alter­
native activities to make the tran­
sition easier.

"We need to make the university
into an environment that's receptive
to the students," Lanier says. "And
we need to teach the people who
create the environment here, the
RSAs in the residence halls, the ad­
ministrators and others, how to put
these programs and ideas into
effect."

Lanier thinks a new orientation
class directed toward the black stu­
dent is a step in the right direction.

Angela Neal, associate professor
of psychology and the director of the
program, says the class has received
positive comments from students
since it began this year
after
nearly
four years of planning.

"We've taken the outline of a
regular university orientation class
and given it an Afrocentric angle,"
Neal says. "What we're attempting
to do is facilitate the transition of
these students into an environment
where African-Americans are not
the majority."

Course work in many of Kent's
classes also gives the inner-city
black student problems. Scott told a
story of a black woman who came to
her with a complaint about a pro­
fessor.

"The woman came to me and said,
'Mrs. Scott, what do I have to do to
get good grades in class. No matter
what I do, the professor won't give
me a good grade,' " Scott says. "What
can I tell this person to make them
feel better?"

Scott says this feeling among
black students only detracts from
their studying abilities.

"The black student becomes self­
conscious," Scott says. "And that in
A high school scrapbook and pictures of African-American leaders help make Robert Gaddis' dorm room feel more like home.
A victim of a drunk-driving accident tells her story of pain, loss and recovery

Story by Beth Brown
Photos by Elizabeth Malby

A fter aerobics, 23-year-old Carm Barbera relaxes in a tweed and vinyl recliner, her dark hair pulled back in a ponytail. She is casually dressed in cut-off sweat pants and a T-shirt. Gingerly she moves her right leg sideways so her foot is pointing outward.

“When I do this,” explains the senior communications major, “it hurts. I have a real hard time if I lie on my right side. It hurts because I have no muscle tone, and if I lie on my other side, it hurts my hip because the muscle’s pulling at it.”

The pain and loss of muscle tone is caused by a metal rod that has replaced Carm’s femur for nearly two years. In June 1990, Carm was in a fatal car accident that killed three of her closest friends. In the two years since the accident, she has struggled to re-build her life.

Carm and her boyfriend, Frank Elliott, had decided to meet some friends to celebrate his birthday. She and Frank met her roommate, Carey Reitz and their friends, Kathy Hostetler and Jeff Hetzel. They headed toward Kent intending to spend the evening there. Carm and Jeff were both Kent State students, and all of them lived in the area. Kathy was from Ravenna, Frank was a student at John Carroll and Carey attended the University of Akron.

Instead of staying in Kent, they decided to go into Akron. They stayed out late celebrating at the Townhouse, an Akron bar. Around 2 a.m. on June 16, the five crammed into a white Geo Metro and headed to Kent. Frank, Carm and Jeff were in the back seat. Carey drove and Kathy rode in the passenger’s seat. Carey’s blood-alcohol level was above the legal limit, according to tests taken later.

“I fell asleep. I was kind of leaning on Frank,” Carm says. “When I did wake up, all I heard was the horn. That was just constant. And I heard the sound of people (trying to get us out) . . . just the sound of when you try to pry open something metal. And Kathy was screaming. I heard her screaming a lot.”

That night Leon Howlett had been drinking too. As he drove his Cadillac Sedan de Ville onto the Mogadore Road-Market Street exit of I-76 in Akron, he headed down the freeway the wrong way with no lights on and crashed into the Geo Metro.

Only Carm and Kathy Hostetler survived the accident.

“I remembered a few months later that when I was lying in the car, I really thought I was having a bad dream,” Carm says. “I said to myself, ‘Oh, this is just a bad dream. I’ll go back to sleep, and when I wake up, it’ll be over with.’”

Before the police and ambulances arrived, people stopped and tried to open the car doors to free the five passengers. Kathy told Carm she saw Howlett get out of his car and come over to the Metro’s hatchback. He
and Back

stared into the car for a few seconds before lighting a cigarette. Then he left the scene on foot. His family searched for and found him three hours later. They turned him into the Akron police.

Carm was taken to Akron General Hospital. Her right femur and her sacrum were broken so badly that they had to be replaced with rods. Her pelvic bone was broken in four different places. Her hip and four ribs were broken. Her wrist was dislocated, her lung punctured, her knee sliced down to the joint, and her nose and chin badly bruised. Her forehead, which hit the rear view mirror, needed plastic surgery. She had numerous glass cuts from the shattered car windows.

Kathy, the other survivor, had a broken leg. Shortly after the accident, she developed a paralysis, which went away after a couple of months.

Many of Carm’s injuries were corrected in a nine-hour operation. The day after the operation, the intensive care nurses propped her up with pillows and put her into a chair for the first time.

“I was so happy because I was sitting in this chair,” she says. “I was loaded up with morphine. It hurt really bad. It hurt like hell, but I tried to stay in there for as long as I could just so my mom could see me. I was in there for like an hour and a half, but it seemed like three days.”

Carm spent two weeks in intensive care. Just four days after the accident, she went into physical therapy.

“The first time what had happened really hit me in the face was when I stood up in physical therapy for the first time,” she says. “They stood me up, and I was holding on to the parallel bars. I couldn’t move my legs. I had no movement at all. It was like they weren’t even there.

“They had to stand really far away from me because all these metal rods were sticking out of me. And they couldn’t touch my back because that hurt, and they couldn’t hold my waist because that hurt, and I just looked so pathetic for someone who was 21 years old.”

Before the accident Carm ran 10 miles a week, went to aerobics and lifted free weights. Though she was recovering rapidly, she still had difficulty adjusting to the physical limitations caused by her injuries.

“I had worked so hard to get in shape. I finally was starting to be happy with the way I was toning up,” she says. “And then this happened. All that went down the drain — I just lost all of it.

“I didn’t have to start where I was — I had to start way before that. I had the muscle tone of a 9-year-old. I didn’t exercise right after the accident because it wasn’t fun anymore. When you start to exercise to get in shape, and it burns because it’s muscle — that’s fine. But when you exercise and it hurts, that’s not fun any more.”

Many of Carm’s friends heard her injuries were worse than they really were. One television station
even reported that she had been killed in the accident. Since only family members were allowed in the intensive care unit, many of Carm's friends tried to visit by saying they were family. Everyone showed his support.

"I get a lot of credit from people, and I got a lot of pity. But my very close-knit group of friends never pitied me because they knew I hated it," Carm says. "(They say) 'God, you're so strong.' I don't see it as that. You get into an accident or something that's beyond your control, and you have to recover."

John Clarke, a sophomore pre-med major, has been friends with Carm for more than seven years. He vividly remembers the pain Carm was in from visits he made to the hospital.

"The second or third time I came to visit her, they were going to sit her up, and they took everybody out of the room and closed the door," Clarke says. "We could hear her real well on the other side. We just stood out there for a few minutes just kind of thinking of everything that had happened and getting angry at Leon for all that she was going through, and kind of hurting for her.

"They opened the door again, and she was sweating pretty good, but she had a smile on her face again," he says. "Even with how much pain she was in and the trouble she had dealing with Frank (her boyfriend), she was never moody. She was always nice, joking around and laughing. She was never self-centered where maybe she had the right to be for a while. She worked so hard to make herself better."

Because of the many painkillers she was on while at the hospital, Carm wasn't immediately aware that three of her friends had died. When she did find out, it wasn't until later that she was able to grieve.

"I had to concentrate on my own recovery. I couldn't concentrate on grieving for Frank and for Carey and Jeff," Carm says. "The one thing that really bothers me is that I miss Frank so much. It's just unreal.

"He was the first guy that I ever dated that I actually seriously considered marrying," she says. "When somebody you know goes away for like six months, you miss them so much that it hurts. The best feeling
in the world is when they come home. They walk in the door, and you see that person's face and you hug him — that's the best feeling in the world. Frank's never going to come through the door and say, 'Oh, I missed you.' I literally feel physical pain sometimes. I can't even see him ever, ever again. I can't talk to him again. I still love Frank. I always will. I just can't love him actively."

Leon Howlett pleaded guilty to three counts of aggravated vehicular homicide and to one count of driving under the influence. Three charges of involuntary manslaughter and one charge of driving the wrong way were dropped in exchange for his guilty pleas. He was sentenced to prison for nine to 30 years. His blood-alcohol level registered at 0.14 three hours after the accident.

"He got three to 10 years for each person who died, and for me and Kathy, he basically got a smack on the hand," Carm says. "I got really, really angry one night after I came back to school because I had to walk with that god-awful cane. I had to walk slow, and I had to drive to all my classes. People stared at me and everybody asked me — and I couldn't handle it.

Carm, a senior communications major, relaxes after stretching in the Gym Annex.
It's Monday evening, and as Tonia enters the bar she says, "It's going to be a slow night."

She walks into the dressing room and comes out wearing a thong bikini. Then she steps onto the stage and begins dancing to the slow seductive beat of the music. Gracefully, she wraps her thin body around a pole, slithering down it like a snake.

And so begins another night of work for this college student.

A Kent State freshman communications major, Tonia (whose name has been changed because she is concerned about being harassed) isn't the typical student. While many of the other students are out at the bars drinking, she is at the bar working. She's not waiting tables or mixing drinks; she's an exotic dancer.

Tonia began dancing after watching a friend's girlfriend dance at the bar. Her first night of work was basically something she did out of curiosity. Tonia says the attention the dancers were getting intrigued her. After having a few drinks, Tonia was on stage doing her own dance routine. In a matter of hours, she had collected more money in tips than she would have in a day's work at her previous job waitressing at a Denny's restaurant.

"At first I said I'd only do it (exotic dancing) until Christmas, which was a matter of months," Tonia says. "But everyone kept telling me, 'You're not going to be able to quit.'"

They were right. Three years later, Tonia, at 22, is the youngest dancer at the Akron-area bar. However, now she dances without drinking and uses the earnings to further her education.

She says registering for classes was a last-minute decision. "One day I just decided to enroll in classes. I felt like I just wanted to go to college." Tonia says she's interested in the communications field because "that's what I'm good at."

Balancing school and work isn't easy, but she manages to keep the two separate.

"I'm a different person in the bar than on campus," she says. "I go into work dressed, covering everything I have because I don't want guys looking at me right away as a dancer. And when I walk out the back door of the bar to go home, I'm no longer a dancer."

Although Tonia won't disclose how much money she makes, she says it's enough to allow her to have whatever she wants and provide for the people closest to her. "Sometimes the money doesn't matter, though," she says. "It comes so easy. Yet it's nice to see something in the store that I can buy that day or the next."

Still, Tonia works for what she gets. Dancing around the pole, which is the main attraction on stage besides the girls, is literally a workout, she explains.

"The pole is like a nautilus machine," she says. "The workout I give myself on there is like an hour's aerobic workout. I'm in better shape now than I was when I

Tonia sits outside Taylor Hall to take a break between classes.
taught aerobics. And I’ve never really had to watch what I eat because I keep so busy.” Tonia claims to be one of the better dancers on the pole but admits it was a difficult learning process.

“When I first started doing the pole, I would get bruises the size of a baseball from all the pressure on my legs against the pole,” she says.

Twirling around the pole aimlessly like the other dancers didn’t satisfy Tonia.

“I knew I could get myself to the top of the pole, and then I thought, ‘What could I do once I got there?’ So I locked my thighs around it and hung upside down,” she says.

“Then it evolved into hanging upside down and going into a split. I just thought about it. What could I do and how could I get off this thing? It was more or less like trial and error.”

A graduate of Manchester High School, Tonia says she’s not ashamed of her work. However, she admits she was hesitant to break the news to her mother about her job.

“I told her I was a dancer,” Tonia says. “My mother said, ‘You’re a what?’ And I told her again . . . She thought it was disgusting and didn’t think too highly of me at the moment. She gradually has learned to accept it though.”

Kris, Tonia’s 23-year-old brother, says it took their mom at least a year to accept his sister’s dancing. He added that their father, who died five years ago from cancer, probably wouldn’t have approved.

“I was just shocked,” Kris says. “She sort of just came right out and told me.”

Tonia invited Kris to the bar, but he didn’t go right away.

“When she first asked me to the bar, I said no. Then I finally went,” he says, “but it was two years later.”

At first her dancing bothered him, but after watching her he changed his mind.

“It’s not like she’s stripping,” he says. At the bar none of the dancers are permitted to disrobe. “After I saw her dance, I told her she was really good. She’s really fit, and you need to be to dance like that.”

He won’t deny that he tried to persuade her into another occupation.

“I did ask her to do something else, but she wasn’t really interested in anything else.” Kris says. “If that’s what she wants to do, then it’s fine with me. I don’t feel there is anything wrong with it now.”

Although her brother has seen her dance a few times, Tonia doesn’t think he realizes what she actually does.

“He thinks it’s neat, but I don’t think he really understands the sickness of it,” she says. “I mean it’s not right. It’s not morally right. I’m sacrificing my morals for money, and that’s the bottom line.”

and at the time I needed to hear that. I thought it was nice that all these people were complimenting me on how good I looked. Then I thought, ‘These people aren’t complimenting me in a good way. I don’t want people to tell me how pretty I am. I want to hear that I’m pretty on the inside.’

The men come in the bar lacking something in their lives, Tonia says. They are either lonely, unsatisfied, confused or just looking for a pretty girl’s attention that they might not get otherwise.

“I’m there to fulfill that without going to the extremes of having them cheat on their wives,” she says. “A lot of guys are there to avoid that stuff.”

While Tonia is dancing on the stage, the men surrounding the bar order a drink, pay the bartender and subtly examine the dancers around them. Every once in a while, one of the dancers will go to the center stage

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Aaron J. McCannel
pole and perform. Swinging her head, flipping her hair and twisting around the pole seem to draw the attention of the male audience. When the performance ends, the dancer usually receives applause and sometimes a request for a repeat performance prompted by a wave of a dollar bill. Acknowledging the money, she begins to dance again. Slowly, she hypnotizes her client with a sexy swing of her hips and a sultry batting of her eyes.

Yet, Tonia feels a need to keep a distance between her and the men in the bar. "When I dance for people, I look them straight in the eye and straight through them," she says. "I don't even see them. I don't think about them. They'll ask me what I'm thinking about, and I'll say something like, 'I wonder if there's any good movies on tonight, what do I have to do tomorrow or what am I going to wear when I go out?' Contrary to what they think, I'm not thinking about being attracted to them."

Her customers usually know the rule: No touching. When someone breaks the rule, Tonia warns him. "I usually squeeze their hand or twist it," she says. "If it gets too bad, I'll tell the bar owner."

But Tonia says most of the men are regulars and know how to play by the rules. Regardless, there are some days when she just doesn't feel like dancing anymore. "One day I can remember, I just sat in the kitchen crying," she says. "All I wanted to do was go and cut off everybody's testicles. I didn't want to hear, 'Boy, you got a pretty ass,' or, 'I wish I was that pole.' I just didn't want to hear it. "It's sad to go in there (the bar) and see guys, and all their money is so easily accessible. The way I look at it is, if they're dumb enough to do it, then I'm smart enough to take it. If it wasn't me, it would be the person next to me."

However, she admits she wouldn't advise her friends into this line of work. "If they asked, I'd tell them I don't want to encourage it," she says. "It's something I wouldn't want them to get involved in. It's a job I'm trying to get out of by going to school. That's why I consider myself a success story."

"I know how to handle my job, and how to manage my money. I have whatever I want, and everybody I care about has whatever they want. But I don't want to dance forever. I started dancing at this bar, and I'll stop here."
The Art of Fiber

An artist weaves her way to a masterpiece and a program

Story by Sheri Lynn Phillips

Photos by Elizabeth Malby and Aaron J. McCannell

Tucked away among the math classes in the corner of the second floor in Franklin Hall, stand two eye-catching doors distinguished by colorfully painted windows. Behind the doors are two rooms filled with looms overflowing with yarns and threads from partially completed student weavings.

It's in these rooms that Kent State fiber arts students learn how to create works of art — art that, at many universities, is being allowed to die out. Art that instructor and fiber artist Janice Lessman-Moss is trying to keep alive through the university and her students.

Lessman-Moss' office sits between the two rooms full of looms. Woven pieces of art hang from the walls and clutter the tables. A utility closet overflows with a rainbow of yarns, threads and materials. As a student works, the pedals of the loom, called treadles, creak as she maneuvers the shuttle through the loom.

The office itself is crowded with books and, of course, woven hangings. Some lie flat. Another, a woven sculpture hanging by the door, looks like an elongated cocoon of cocoa brown. It has a hole near the top, like an opening to allow for its imaginary occupant to come and go.

Lessman-Moss looks very unassuming sitting in her office. With short brown hair, jeans and a loose fitting sweat shirt, she could easily be confused for a student.

Fiber artist Janice Lessman-Moss spends most of her free time in the two rooms behind the eye-catching doors.
time working in her studio. On a piece this size, she completes an inch per day.
"I took a weaving course as a junior," she says. "And I liked the process and the physicality of the medium. It seemed right for my temperament and for what I wanted to express."

Lessman-Moss has a well-rounded background in the field of art. She was in interior design, has worked in an art gallery and has worked in printmaking, drawing and painting. She even took some time off to get married. But it was while she was a student at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University in Philadelphia that she says she changed her mind.

"It takes a real different way of thinking," she says, "of making structures, thinking of space."

Describing fiber arts as creating from the ground up, Lessman-Moss says it can be either functional or artistic. But, she says, most people first seem to think of scarves or garments when fiber arts is mentioned. She says people are not familiar with fiber arts and think it is more limited than it is.

Even though fiber arts is a more laid-back, individualized art, it is also more structured than other forms. It is very labor-intensive and time consuming. Lessman-Moss says she usually completes an inch of weaving a day. Her eight piece "Rhyme and Reason" series took her about two and a half years to finish.

Kathy Armstrong, a Kent State graduate with a degree in fiber arts, works as a graduate student under Lessman-Moss. Armstrong feels that fiber arts is a more user-friendly form of art.

"It is not as intimidating," Armstrong says. "Painting, drawing and sculpture have all been elevated to such an elitist level that it is intimidating. People can get into crafts much more easily."

Lessman-Moss says fiber arts does require fundamental art skills of design and color. But it also provides a better understanding of fabric, a reason she thinks attracts fashion design majors to fiber arts.

She says that some artists are leaving the loom for less restrictive art media, but that she chooses to stay with it. At one time she created three-dimensional works, but now she is working on tapestries. Her current works are less geometric, using abstract shapes and colors. She also likes to employ negative spaces, using the holes to create shadows and emphasize the physicality of the piece.

An example of her method appears in her latest piece from the "Rhyme and Reason" series. The piece uses negative spaces of red, yellow and black to create shadows on its yellow backdrop. Pieces of rope are woven into it, creating a bumpy, textured surface that invites viewers to reach out and feel it.

The theme of the "Rhyme and Reason" series is one of dualities. She said the pieces represent a positive contrast from one another. If in one piece there is negative space, there are woven areas in another. In one where there is a textured surface, there is a flat surface in another. She says there is a contrast between precision and intuition in the pieces.

Lessman-Moss' studio, where the most recent piece hangs, is a converted garage. The door has been replaced by a wall of glass block, which makes the studio glow from the outside. It is filled with weaving swatches, balls of yarn, bottles of paint and shredded fabric. The walls are covered with drawings of possible works. The room smells of the kerosene that radiates from the small heater on the floor. She has one loom that is about seven feet wide and one that is about four feet wide.

The larger loom has a tension...
device she had specially made and is the only one like it in the world. This allows her to adjust the tension on the loom by one-inch increments. Lessman-Moss can purposely tighten or loosen the thread to add materials to the weave or to create a coarser texture.

A computer is attached to the larger loom, allowing her to take advantage of today's technology. With the computer, Lessman-Moss can create combinations that she could not have done otherwise.

Her work in fiber arts has made her an internationally recognized artist. Besides having numerous shows in the United States and serving as curator for others' shows, she has taken her art abroad. Lessman-Moss was one of only two Americans invited to a conference in Poland and the only artist to have her work featured. While she was there, she also lectured on American art and weaving.

Lessman-Moss was also one of a few Americans chosen to have her work shown in Japan in March. Her first piece in the “Rhyme and Reason” series was featured there. Twenty-three other countries were represented at the show.

“Traveling gives me a wonderful opportunity to get a sense of how people are dealing with the same things we are,” Lessman-Moss says. “It is very inspirational, and I was very excited and proud to be chosen. A select few get to go.”

Aside from traveling, Lessman-Moss has been teaching at Kent for 10 years. As a student she says she had to learn her techniques on her own. But she does not operate that way with her students. She says she tries to expose her students to new techniques, the history of the art and the new approaches to the art itself.

Armstrong says she became aware of the possibilities of fiber arts after taking classes with Lessman-Moss.

“I was so much inspired by Janice's work and past with material,” Armstrong says, “that it made me explore two-dimensional works in a different way.

Lessman-Moss is the only full-time fiber arts professor and coordinates the crafts program. Armstrong and another part-time instructor also help teach nearly 30 students in the fiber arts program.

Lessman-Moss is modest about her success and suggests that she owes her knowledge to the research she's done.

“Fiber's my life,” Lessman-Moss says. “I have learned a lot just through my investigations. It was a wonderful opportunity to develop the program. It was just what I wanted to do. I am much richer because of it, and I hope my students are much richer, too.”

She feels that what she does is important here because someone must continue this work. And she also feels that having art at universities is important to all students.

“I view art making as a real primary human involvement,” she says. “I think that having art at an institution, a university, really provides a rich opportunity for any student, but especially for those interested in art.

“Whether you involve yourself directly or are just exposed to art, it adds a richness to your life.”

Aaron J. McCannell
Mike Dalessandro, a manager at Ray's, serves a Futher Mucker, one of the bar's most popular drinks.
Hit Me With Your Best Shot

Story by Jennifer A. Scott
Photos by Kurt Myers and Aaron J. McCannell

Kent’s bartenders reveal some of their most popular potions

A man named Barf, driving a Cement Mixer, committed Vehicular Homicide resulting in Four Dead Men because he was distracted by people having Sex on the Beach, and only realized his mistake when a dyslexic Test Tube Baby yelled, “Hey you Futher Mucker, you just killed some pedestrians!”

Although the story doesn’t have any meaning, the capitalized words do. They’re examples of signature drinks served at Kent bars. Signature drinks are unusual or original concoctions that bars can become known for. They can become famous for their taste, smell, powerful effect or unappetizing flavor. Whatever the reason for their notoriety, one thing is for sure — requests for the unusual continually abound.

The Test Tube Baby, which contains amaretto, vodka, and one drop of milk, got its name because of its unusual appearance. Loft bartender Bob Bennett, a Kent State graduate, says the drop of milk is the key to the shot’s name.

“The drop of milk leaves a trail from the top to the middle of the shot glass,” Bennett says. “The milk congeals and it looks like a fetus.”

Mike Graves, a bartender at Screwy Louie’s, says the Four Dead Men contains tequila; 151-proof rum; Jagermeister, a German liquor made from herbs; and Rumple Minze, another German export. This potent combination of ingredients may explain the shot’s name.

One of the most popular signature beverages is Ray’s Futher Mucker. The pink, fruit-flavored drink is served in a 14-ounce mug and costs $3. Although other versions exist, the ingredients used in a Ray’s Futher Mucker are a guarded secret. Ray’s manager Mike Dalessandro estimated that Ray’s sells 75 Futher Muckers per night.

“People usually get it as a birthday drink when they turn 21,” Dalessandro says.

Though not as well known as the Futher Mucker, The College Street Library (formerly Franklin Station) offers an unusual signature drink, the Genocide. The beverage, which is served in a 23-ounce glass, contains five different types of liquor: vodka, cherry brandy, amaretto, rum, and Creme de Almond (an almond-flavored liqueur). Pineapple juice and sour mix top the creation, which sells for $6.25 — including the glass.

Bartender Leo Soloveiko, a graduate student studying management, says the College Street Library doesn’t sell the Genocide as frequently as in the past because customers are aware of the drink’s potent effects.

“One will get you a good buzz,” Soloveiko says. “Two will mess you up.”

The Shroom Delight (rum, cranberry juice and orange juice) is a signature creation of the Stuffed Mushroom. Kathy Foster, a manager for the bar, says that some of the bar’s signature drinks and unusual shots originate from experimentation.
"I just make something up, taste it, and see if I like it," Foster says. "It's important to make something that tastes good."

Many bartenders invent their own signature drinks. These creations can result from a stroke of "bartending genius," or pure luck.

Tony, a bartender at Cheers, has his own signature creation — Killer Kool-Aid. The drink, which is also known as Kool-Aid from Hell, contains Southern Comfort, amaretto, sloe gin, melon liqueur, Johnny Walker scotch, and orange juice.

"People want something that tastes good and will mess them up," Tony says. "There's so many things you can make up behind the bar that taste good."

Bennett of The Loft said bartenders get the opportunity to create a shot or drink — and also name it.

"The bartenders all make up unusual shots with names like Vehicular Homicide or Boonschwaga. Sometimes you'll make up something depending on the customer. I made up a drink called an M&M for two girls named Mary and Martha," Bennett said.

Bennett created his own shot, the Rasta Meltdown (three types of rum, Maui schnapps, melon liqueur, orange and pineapple juices.)

"It's something myself and a couple of regulars came up with on a Saturday afternoon," Bennett said. "Its reputation spread by word of mouth. It's got a small, hard-core following."

Requests for unusual combination drinks and shots are quite common, and can actually become a customer's own signature drink. These creations can often be delicious or disgusting. Joe Deluca, a bartender at Ray's, granted an unusual request for a customer's signature drink called a Hop-Skip-and-Go-Naked (one shot of gin, one shot of vodka, one-half beer, one-half orange juice.) He's sold two — both to the same customer in the same night.

The College Street Library offers its patrons an opportunity to be creative with a shot Soloveiko calls Barf.

"It's Bailey's Irish Cream, vodka and four other bottles of your choice," Soloveiko says. "It usually ends up being nothing one would think would mix with Bailey's. You have to be drinking hard to do this one because it looks like barf." Some signature drinks have been around longer than some of the bars. Dave Telban, former manager of Ozeez (formerly J.B's Down) says the Bend-Me-Over (amaretto, vodka, orange juice and sour mix) was invented in the early '80s at the Town House. Bennett says The Loft once had a signature birthday shot called a Flaming Asshole, which was invented in the '70s.

The shot, which contained blackberry brandy, 151-proof rum and tequila, was set on fire. Bennett says the second half of the shot originated with the customers.

"It tasted so disgusting that only an asshole would want to drink it," Bennett says.

Often a shot or drink is remembered for its unusual or explicit name rather than its taste or appearance. Though the names can border on what one could consider offensive, most drinks probably were named for fun by a group of drunk people who thought they were being clever.

Sex on the Beach is a popular shot according to Soloveiko. At the College Street Library, the shot contains vodka, peach schnapps, pineapple and cranberry juices. Soloveiko says different bars have different versions.

Some unusual shots are remembered not for the name or appearance, but strictly for being unappetizing. The Cement Mixer (one shot of Bailey's Irish Cream, one shot of lime juice) is notorious for the disgusting effects the two have when mixed.

"When you have both (shots) in your mouth, it kind of gives you the sensation of eating cottage cheese. It's pretty disgusting, but I guess some people like it," says Dalessandro of Ray's.

The Mongoose is probably the least requested shot. According to Deluca, the Mongoose is a combination of 151-proof rum and whatever liquid the bartender can squeeze out of his bar rag. Ray's refuses to serve the shot due to its unsanitary nature.

"It's a drink that only an asshole would think was a good idea," Bennett says. "It's one of those drinks that taste so disgusting people will try it just to see if it's really bad."

"It's a drink that only an asshole would think was a good idea," Bennett says. "It's one of those drinks that taste so disgusting people will try it just to see if it's really bad."

"I told the bartender that I was going to do it just to see if it was really bad. I ended up drinking it, and it was disgusting," Bennett says. "I never want to do it again."
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A Different Date

Couples share the joys and tribulations of interracial dating
Gina LoPresti has a brown cardboard box of memories near the kitchen counter and her homemade apple strudel. The fondest memories are those of her eight-year relationship with her ex-boyfriend, David Lange III. The relationship ended because of "technical difficulties," according to Gina.

A handful of photographs seem to tell it all... the prom, David's wrestling match victory and a cozy hug in a dorm room. But the pictures don't quite tell everything. Gina keeps the most painful memories in her heart.

Gina, a 24-year-old Kent State graduate student in rehabilitation counseling, got a crash course on racism the hard way.

When she met David, Gina never thought there would be so much talk and head turning. She was Italian and David was African-American.

"I never gave a single thought that he was black, and I was white," she says.

But Gina learned quickly that others were thinking about it. People like the cleaning lady at her high school who commented, "You need to have a nice Italian man. You're too pretty for that." Or like the ones who called her a "nigger lover," and said things like, "Once you go black, you never go back."

David and Gina's relationship did not evolve from planning or personal preference.

"I didn't pick Gina because she was white," says David, a 24-year-old Ohio State University graduate. "I don't go out looking for a particular person. I figure what happens, happens."

The two began dating when they were sophomores at Cleveland Heights High School. This is when Gina says it all began — the incidents and racial slurs. Reminiscing, she sat cross-legged in sweats on her bed near a row of windows neatly decorated with pink blinds.

"It was really hell for the next two months," Gina says. "A lot of people said a lot of hateful things to me."

It wasn't only the racial slurs she remembers, but real incidents involving overt acts of racism. When three white men got out of a car one day as Gina and David were walking down the street, things seemed more serious. These men were looking for trouble. They began to close in on Gina and David until they spotted some of David's friends coming to help.

"It was horrible," Gina says with a slight shiver. "I think they were really going to do some harm to us."

When the two went to see "Jungle Fever," Spike Lee's film in which an interracial romance was a major theme, Gina says they became one of the attractions. A little girl pointed, and people stared at the off-screen reality.

But dating between races is not just a black and white issue. The reality is that most interracial couples encounter prejudice. Sherry Hornstein, a white 23-year-old education major, snuggles close to her boyfriend Joseph "Joey" Huang, who is half Korean and half Chinese. The two met about nine months ago. Sherry said she didn't expect to meet someone who is Asian and actually go out with him.

As a cashier at a Hills department store in their hometown of Ashtabula, Ohio, she never thought she would be involved in an interracial relationship. Then one day, Joey, a 21-year-old pre-med major at Ohio State University, walked into the store. A mutual friend introduced the two, and before she knew what was happening, he called, and they planned a date.

"I had stereotyped him before he came over," Sherry says. "My whole view of them (Asians) was from a few people who went to my school — my view wasn't too good." Laughing, she tells Joey she expected to see a nerd on the other side of her front door when he came to pick her up.

"He's just like I am, and I thought he was so different," Sherry says.

Joey liked Sherry from the start, and his feelings haven't changed. In fact, they've only grown stronger.

"The reason I like her so much is because of the person she is," Joey says.

Sherry's relationship with Joey has given her a new perspective.
about prejudice on campus.

"I noticed more prejudice in my life now that I've dated him than I ever have before," Sherry says. She cited an example from her music class when they did a unit on music in Asia and Japan. "I was sitting there, and they didn't know Joey was my boyfriend. They started making fun, making slanted eyes, doing all that queer stuff. I felt hurt."

She also noticed the reactions of her friends who clearly disapproved of interracial dating. Gaining a new relationship with Joey jeopardized some old friendships. A once close friend of Sherry's is not so close anymore.

"I see this other side to her," Sherry says. "I didn't notice that she was very prejudiced."

One of Sherry's floormates expresses her disapproval openly. "She tells me to break up with him all the time," Sherry says.

Sherry's immediate family wasn't as hesitant about her relationship with Joey because of the experience they had with her older sister. Her father was prejudiced before her sister married a Spaniard, but Sherry says he's become more comfortable with intercultural relationships.

Joey, on the other hand, has dated other white women before, while his mother steadily prayed it was a passing phase. He says his parents want him to marry "an oriental girl."

Sherry believes Joey's parents think she is a nice person — but not for their son. She thinks his brothers share the same feeling.

Through their relationship, Sherry and Joey say they've learned how similar people can be to one another.

"We're very common in our values," Joey says. "It's just our different styles of living that makes it interesting."

Sherry added, "You learn through other people who are different from you."

But sometimes differences can inhibit a relationship when prejudice follows it. Gina says she would be reluctant to enter another interracial relationship because of this.

"The main reason people respond negatively is because I think a lot of people are raised to believe they are
the best culture," Gina says.

The racial slurs and negative confrontations were almost too much for her to bear. Gina says it took her a few years to adjust to the relationship she had with David.

Enduring outside disapproval was the worst thing about being in an interracial relationship for David. Unlike Gina, he didn't let it bother him.

"A lot of my friends didn't like it, but if they were friends, they stayed with me," David says.

Gina tried to make their relationship work, but she soon noticed things would not be easy. "It was hard for me that everyone had to look at us for the color of our skin," she says. "I got into this relationship and didn't think anything of it."

Gina's not the only one who recognizes racism as an obstacle. In a 1990 survey by the American Council of Education, over 79 percent of college freshmen said they viewed racism as a problem. Thirty-eight percent felt it essential or very important to promote racial understanding.

Eric Beasley, a December graduate of Kent State with a bachelor's degree in Pan-African studies, is conducting a study of interracial dating patterns, attitudes and practices at Kent State. The study, being done in conjunction with Jesse Grant, a Kent State graduate student in sociology, and Catherine Shaheen, a Kent State undergraduate in communications, is still premature. The idea came about last summer after Beasley and Grant saw "Jungle Fever." They were curious about trends at Kent State.

"The things that seem to be motivating (different races) to come together are no different than interracial relationships," Beasley says. "There's no major difference, at least right now."

However, Beasley says the study has found some existing deviations that are being studied. Five-hundred surveys will have been sent out to people in interracial relationships by the time the study is completed to define these deviations.

Timothy Moore, professor of Pan-African Studies, has a view similar to Beasley's findings. He believes many interracial couples exist because they simply liked one another's characteristics and qualities.

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group, will read certain reasons into this,” Moore says. “A lot of people tend to make it more than it really is.”

Rachel Bower, a 19-year-old sophomore majoring in fashion merchandising at Kent State, is West Indian and has dated out of her race about four times. Rachel says she doesn’t do this because she prefers it, but like Gina and David and Sherry and Joey, it was just an attraction.

Rachel has dated two white men, an Indian and a Hispanic. She enjoys befriending all types of people because she was raised in a family of various nationalities. Her mother is African-American, her father is West Indian and Spanish, and her uncle is Chinese.

The interracial dating issue isn’t usually discussed in terms of cupid’s arrow or color blindness. Instead, preferences, obsessions and identity problems are commonly debated.


“Some say the most common black-white pairing — a black man married to a white woman — may be more frequent because of shared feelings of powerlessness,” Wilkerson said in the article. “Others say that some black men gain a sense of membership in white-dominated culture through such marriages.”

When Gina talks about David, however, it’s clear that she didn’t date him because she was feeling any sense of powerlessness. She has a dreamy look in her eyes each time she describes what attracted and still attracts her to him.

“He’s one of the most amazing people I’ve ever met,” Gina says. “He’s the most honest person I’ve ever met. He’s a very true friend to me.”

Despite her strong feelings for David, Gina chose not to introduce him to relatives outside of her immediate family. She felt her Italian relatives would not understand.

“I kept him away from it,” Gina says. “I couldn’t see myself putting him in a situation where he’d be treated badly.”

David says he and Gina’s mother got along pretty well, but with her brother and sister, it was a different story. In fact, Gina noticed that her
sister had a problem with racism. As a result of all the tension, Gina and David spent less time with her family.

David's house became the hangout spot for the couple. It was there that Gina learned about barbecued ribs and religion.

"I think of his family as raising me," Gina says. "I'm close to them still."

David is more comfortable with the interracial issue because of his father's re-marriage to a white woman. At first David didn't like the idea at all, until he met Gina.

Gina says her past relationship with David "taught me a lot about black culture. It helps you learn how to be open and responsible toward people who are different than yourself."

Interracial relationships don't always have happy endings. Some end in break ups after battling the prejudices of families and friends, but Sherry and Joey are determined to keep theirs together. The two have already planned to get engaged this summer.

Gina, too, hopes for a story book ending. She says she wouldn't be surprised if she and David were to get back together. Because of their strong bond, she feels a wedding date wouldn't be out of the question either.

She says with pride, "He's still my best bud."

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No Place To Call

Kent's shelter provides for those who have nowhere to go

Story by Michael A. Kilroy
Photos by Steve Cutri and Jean Angelo

I walk up the creaking wooden steps and knock on the rotting wooden door. Today all I have in this world is what I have contained in my backpack, and all I have to look forward to is a night's sleep in a strange place. A staff member welcomes me. The shelter has that smell about it, that dingy, musty smell of people coming in and going out...the smell of solitude lost. Although I am not homeless, I am about to spend a night in their world. It is to be a night I wouldn't want to relive ever again.

Charles, 23, is sitting in a chair in the living room watching "Cheers" on television. Mike, 19, sits on the couch. His 2-year-old son, Jessie, is sleeping beside him.

This shelter is unlike many other shelters. It is like a home in appearance, but it really isn't a home in the true sense of the word.

But it's all they have.

Charles is bitter. What he says to me is full of disdain, disdain for his family, disdain for society, and disdain for me.

He has just prepared some goulash, and as he eats, I am sitting to his right. Mike and Jessie are sitting and eating in the kitchen. I can tell the food does not sit well in Charles' stomach. The food goes down his tightened throat roughly.

"It all started with my family," he says, staring down at his empty blue bowl and half-empty glass of Kool-Aid. "I lost $8,000 buying pizza every weekend for them."

His story is both sad and cruel. He lost his job at a factory in Twinsburg after a month and a half. He was locked out of his apartment a day after he got a job at Wendy's.

"It's illegal to lock someone out of their apartment," he adds with the same bitterness in his voice.

Charles stayed in the shelter two weeks last April, and he's back again. He says he plans to attend Kent State University in the fall as a nursing major.

"It's a very good program." Charles says as he begins to do his chores — clearing the kitchen table and putting the dishes in the dishwasher. Chores are a part of the deal he made to stay in the shelter.

Mike is bitter as well. He, too, holds the world in disdain. He clutches Jessie in his arms, tickling him and holding him up in the air.

As they finish eating the goulash Charles prepared, Jessie looks at me through his innocent, unknowing eyes and smiles. He puts his hands in front of his face, then pulls them away. Peek-a-boo. He is not bitter. He is only 2.

But how long will it be before he, too, becomes affected by the world around him?

"You have to do what you have to do," Mike says, looking at Jessie. "There are a lot more important things in life than money. There are those special things that come into your life. Right Jessie?"

Mike and his fiancee, Judy, stayed with Mike's mother. Because his mother didn't like the situation, they left.

"We had to get our lives together," Mike says.

Judy, 24, is at work. Mike doesn't mind that. He says he would be perfectly happy taking care of Jessie all day.

"You don't need money to be happy," Mike says. "All I want to do is take care of my family."

Lisa Gessler (left) and Cheryl Meiser are staff members at the shelter.
Home

Mike takes Jessie upstairs for a bath, and Charles sits down at the kitchen table to read the paper.

"I can tell you what's wrong with this country," Charles bellows. "Bush. I'm a Republican and I wouldn't vote for him. That's pretty bad when a Republican won't vote for a Republican."

Another couple had left a great deal of their belongings in one of the rooms upstairs. Later on, Charles, Cheryl, a staff member at the shelter, and I bag it all up to take down to the basement.

"Maybe they're in trouble," she says as she bags up some clothing.

When we finish, we have eight bags, a laundry basket full of toys and a black tool box to carry down to the basement.

Charles can't carry much. He shows me his left hand, revealing a three-inch scar on the top of the hand stretching from his finger in a diagonal toward the center of the hand. He says he got the scar at a job several years ago. That's all he'll say about it as he carries one bag down to the basement.

Bedtime is 11 p.m. As I lie in bed and stare at the faint image of the creamy white tile ceiling, light from the hallway filters in through the crack in the door.

There are three beds in the room. Charles is sleeping in the far bed. Only a dresser separates him from the vacant bed between us. I close my eyes and go to sleep.

Homelessness.

Just the word evokes fear in all of us, all of us struggling to keep our heads above the water of despair that is homelessness. Many can only keep their heads above that water for so long before either the water rises or their heads fall. And once this happens, they cannot hold their breath forever.

The temporary homeless shelter in Kent is an inconspicuous little island in the sea of choppy waters. It is a safe haven.

"Some people (in the neighborhood) probably don't even know there is a shelter there," Sabina Alasti, the shelter coordinator, says.

The people who stay there know it's a shelter, even though its appearance — on the inside and outside — wouldn't lend that opinion.

The shelter is just like any other house on the block: four bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen and a living room fully equipped with a 19-inch color TV.

The shelter was acquired by Kent Social Services in 1985. Alasti says...
"I have had to ask someone to leave and it's uncomfortable. No one wants to see someone be out on the street."

its acquisition met opposition from both the city council and the community.

Alasti says the shelter didn't fit into the zoning laws, but the city council zoned it so the Metropolitan Housing Authority could purchase the house and rent it to Kent Social Services for use as a shelter. As for the opposition by the community, "(People) always expect the worst," Alasti says.

The shelter can serve as many as 11 clients. One staff member is always on duty. Alasti says she has seen an increase in the use of the shelter by 30 to 35 percent since its opening.

Staff member Mary Ann Winters, who has worked a year and a half at the shelter, says she hasn't seen that trend.

"When I first started working here, the shelter was always full," Winters says. "But lately we haven't been as busy."

Winters has noticed several trends. She says the stays have been longer, an average stay of between 11 and 30 days. She has also noticed the number of single adults staying at the shelter has increased, and the number of families has decreased.

The shelter doesn't accept everyone. Only those who have exhausted all options and have no history of mental illness may be permitted to enter the shelter. Staff members do intakes over the phone and ask questions to determine whether the caller is right for the shelter. Those with mental illnesses are referred to the Kevin Coleman Center in Ravenna.

"The mentally ill tend to fall through the cracks," Winters says. "That's the sad part because it isn't their fault. There are clients who can control what they do, and when they don't do that (follow rules), it really makes you mad because they are taking the system and just abusing it," Winters says.

Once in the shelter, clients have seven working days to find housing. The clients can apply for more time if they follow the rules and show an eagerness to find housing.

The staff at the shelter helps the clients find housing by "pointing them in the right direction," Alasti says.

After the 8 a.m. wake-up call, the staff and the clients look through the papers for housing and jobs. At noon, the shelter closes and the clients go out and look.

"We give direction and referrals and give them resources that they can use," Winters says. "We don't do the work for them."

Occasionally, someone does break the rules.

"I have had to ask someone to leave and that's uncomfortable. No one wants to see someone be out on the street," Winters says. "The rules we have are not outrageous. The rules are lenient if you consider there are up to 11 people living in this house at one time."

The rules are very basic. Besides looking actively for housing, jobs and doing chores, no drinking or drugs are permitted. Smoking is not permitted upstairs.

"Those are major rules," Winters says. She adds that if they are broken, the client is asked to leave immediately.

Cheryl Meiser began working at the shelter as part of a field study for her family and consumer studies major at Kent State last January and was hired in March as a staff member.

"This is not your typical homeless shelter," Meiser stresses. "There's more of a homey atmosphere here."

The shelter has a fully stocked refrigerator and food pantry. The shelter also provides bus tickets, so the clients can get around.

"One of our main concerns is to make sure clients save their money," Meiser says. "We provide them food and bus tickets. Everything is provided for them here."

The future for homeless relief is bleak. In April, General Relief was cut for six months.

"It's going on a six-month-on, six-month-off basis," Meiser says.

That has increased shelter stays. Sometimes they (the clients) just stay here to save up money."

With emergency assistance and General Relief cut, another source of relief, the Community Action Council Homeless Relief fund, has "dried up," Meiser says. This fund helped with first month's rent and security deposits.

"The need is rising so much that the agencies are able to offer less and less because they are in such need," Meiser adds.

Meiser says the problem with families finding housing is there is a shortage of availability.

"We've had success with Kenwood Courts lately, but there are tremendous waiting lists."

Both Meiser and Alasti agree that the low availability of aid and affordable housing are further adding to the homeless problem.

"Of all the people who are eligible for subsidized housing, only 15 percent are in it," Alasti says.

She adds that there is a lack of low-income housing. Both single individuals and families are feeling the effect of the General Relief cut.

"The cut in GR (will) make it very difficult for a single individual to find housing," Alasti says.

Alasti also says that the increased population at Kent State is a factor into the problem because students are competing for housing as well.

All of these factors aside, however, it comes down to this: "If one thing sets these people back $20 unexpectedly, they can lose their homes," Alasti says.

On my second visit to the shelter, James and Robert are staying there. Both are in what they consider a transitional phase.
"I just think society needs to appreciate that not everybody is homeless because of something that they could have prevented."

James left college in 1984 to see the country and figure out what he wanted to do with his life.

Ultimately, he hopes to return to college, but he realizes the economic difficulties.

"Once you leave school, to return can be a difficult transition to make — finding funds, organizing aid," James says. "In today's economy, you can't depend on your parents. It's hard to support yourself and go to school too."

After he left school, he earned and saved money for his journeys by working in a convenience store. After he had saved enough money, he got on a Greyhound bus and headed for California. On the way he stopped in Colorado where he fell in love with the mountain life — and a Swedish girl.

Born in Michigan, James explains his childhood life as "gypsy like." He says his stay in the shelter is just a transition.

Another man staying in the shelter, Robert, doesn't expect to be there for very long, either. Robert hasn't seen his family in 12 years, so he has come back to this area to see his family again. He couldn't find a job or afford a place to stay.

All of a sudden, he found himself homeless.

It was once estimated by homeless advocacy groups that there were more than three million homeless living in the streets and in the shelters of America. However, Robert James Bidinotto contended in the June issue of Reader's Digest this number was greatly exaggerated. In 1990, census takers found 228,621 homeless, a considerable number below three million.

Peter H. Rossi, director of the Social and Demographic Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts, set the number at about 500,000.

Dr. E. Fuller Torrey contended in the August issue of National Review that there are twice as many schizophrenics living on the streets and in shelters as there are in all state and county psychiatric hospitals. Rossi estimated that one-third of all homeless suffer from some sort of drug addiction and another third are mentally ill. Torrey argued that these people stay homeless "to save their money to feed their addiction."

Bidinotto said that there are very few traditional families and very few "unlucky people" who just happened to catch a bad break.

But those who work with the homeless in Kent have a different perspective.

"If people don't see homeless people, they think there's not a problem," Meiser says.

As Mike and Charles spend a night in a homeless shelter, they know they may still be there tomorrow, but I know I won't. This is a luxury they don't have and one I often take for granted.

As Jessie moves his hands away from his face, there is something else that sees him.

Homelessness.

---

Charles, who hopes to attend Kent State in the fall, dines in the solitude of the Kent homeless shelter.
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All My Children

A visit with the Chi Omega housemother

Story by Stephanie Johnson  Photos by Aaron J. McCannell

Ann Walters, the Chi Omega housemother, begins her day early in the morning as she drives her white Cavalier to the Main Street Giant Eagle. Here she fills a grocery cart full of food necessary to feed 28 young women.

Kristen McCaffery, an alumna member of Chi Omega social sorority, often took trips to the store with "Mom," as she's called by all the Chi Omega sisters. McCaffery says Mom knows everyone at the Main Street Giant Eagle because of her daily visits over the past nine years.

"I went with her to the store when school was back in session this (past) fall, and there was a huge sign saying, 'Welcome Back, Ann,' on the wall," McCaffery says. "She knows everyone over there. She even knows the bag boy's problems and gives him advice."

Mom Walters is not only responsible for making up the menu and shopping for food for the meals, which the hired cook prepares, but she also has the same responsibilities as many household mothers.

"I'm the one who gets the men in the house to get things fixed," Mom Walters says. "I hire the cook, the maintenance men, the cleaning lady and the gardener. I, also, pay the bills."

Housemothers are responsible for making sure everything within the sorority house is running smoothly—the same duties of most mothers. Chi Omega has had a housemother since the sorority came to the Kent campus in 1947. The housemothers have always been an important part of the chapter's success.

Mom Walters started working for Chi Omega in January 1982. She had previously worked as a nursery school teacher at the Busy Bee school in Akron. Her daughter, Susie Van Schoick, read an ad in the Akron Beacon Journal about the housemother opening and immediately thought of her own mother.

"My daughter said to me, 'Mom, I have the job for you. It's perfect,'" Mom Walters says. "She wanted me to send my resume. I hesitated, but after enough pressure from my daughter, I sent it in."

According to Van Schoick, the housemother job was made for her mother. She says that her mother is always bragging about the sorority members as if they were her own children.

"Mom is a good listener," Van Schoick says. "She's strong in her faith (in God) and has always loved kids and young adults."

The housing corps, a group of Chi Omega alumnae who hire the housemother, asked Mom Walters how...
she would be able to relate to having 28 college-aged women in one house. “I told Mrs. Mounts (a housing corps representative) I had 12 children of my own. Five are mine, their wives and husbands make 10, and plus we have raised two other children.”

But when Mom Walters first walked into the sorority house nearly 10 years ago, she wondered what she had agreed to.

“I was scared to death on that first day,” Mom Walters says. “I didn’t know what kind of world I was getting myself into. I never slept away from my own home before. I knew if I could make it through the first night, I would be okay.”

This 65-year-old widow lives in a small apartment in the center of the spacious sorority house for eight months out of the year. It is a quaint, warm apartment composed of a living room, bedroom, bathroom and kitchen. On the wall between her bedroom and the living room, heading toward the kitchen, hangs a Chi Omega paddle. The kitchen is small and filled with plants her girls have left behind for her to nurse back to health.

The only time Mom Walters is away is during school breaks, when she returns to her Akron home.

Like a stereotypical mother figure, Mom Walters keeps a watchful eye on “her girls.” If they’re sick, she takes them to the doctor or the hospital. And she gives them her ear or shoulder if they need to talk or cry, says Kristin Winters, another Chi Omega member.

“Mom makes sure I’m eating right if I’m not. She takes care of me in many respects,” Winters says. “When we’re depressed about anything, she always talks things out with us suggesting various options. Many of the education majors, as myself, relate to Mom a lot because she was a teacher. She uses her experiences to encourage us when we are bummed about things like lesson plans.”

The sisters who live in the house, along with many of the out-of-house sisters, love talking to mom about their private problems dealing with boys or family, Chi Omega member Denise Wodowski says.

“Mom knows all the relationships in the house, and gives great advice for them,” Wodowski says. “When you run into Mom, you never just say ‘hello.’ She’ll talk to you for at least 15 minutes to a half hour.”

Mom Walters is also big on candlelight ceremonies. A candlelight ceremony is held whenever a Chi Omega member is lavaliered, pinned or engaged to her boyfriend. Once the member receives one of these honors, she tells Mom, who in return, plans the secret ceremony. The candle is passed around a circle formed by the sorority sisters. No one knows who received the lavaliere, fraternity pin or engagement ring until the young woman blows out the white candle in the ceremony.

Winters says Mom once stayed up a night to listen to her news after a dance. “Mom stayed up all night to listen how Jim proposed to me at the spring formal,” Winters says. “She knew he was going to propose to me because he spoke to Mom before the dance.”

Mom often dresses in the same style, wearing a pink cotton sweater, a blue and pink floral skirt, white beads, a decorative pin and a green apron tied around her soft figure. Her smile, rosy complexion and West Virginia drawl fit nicely with her compassionate nature. The houseboys at Chi Omega help set the dinner table, serve dinner, clear the table and wash the dishes. In return, they get a free meal every day. Matt Ogle, a houseboy for Chi Omega for the past two semesters, said Mom Walters always makes him feel at home and has done special favors for him and the other two house boys.

“Mom offered me rides home from the house when it’s raining,” Ogle says. “She made me feel welcome at the Chi Omega house. I remember a few weeks ago she led the girls at dinner to sing me happy birthday and invited me to eat a dinner of my choice.”

In return for all she does for them, the sisters at Chi Omega, as well as the houseboys, look out for Mom’s well-being. She has diabetes and must constantly watch her diet, says Wodowski.

“If she goes to take a bite of cake and sees us coming, she immediately puts it down because she knows that we will yell at her,” Wodowski says.

Because of her diabetes, Mom Walters also must exercise every day. She rides her stationary bike around two hours a day (approximately 20 miles.)

“The first day, I didn’t know what I was getting myself into, but now I love Chi Omega and everything I do for it,” Mom Walters says. “It will be very hard to break myself away from this house when I retire.”
Through the Years

The DeWeese Health Center has a long history of healing students

Story by Tracey Read

In the late 1940s, the saying went: "If you were well enough to get up to the Health Center, you probably weren't too sick."

The saying was coined because the DeWeese Health Center was originally located in what is now the Stockdale Safety Building, on top of a hill on front campus. The building is now the campus police station. Originally called "Pill Hill," the Health Center remained there until 1969 when it moved to its present address on Eastway Drive.

The first person to be concerned with student health at Kent State University was Dr. Arville Ottis De Weese. De Weese began teaching hygiene in the early 1920s.

"Interestingly enough, De Weese got together with some doctors from other colleges, and he ended up being one of the founders for the American School of Health Association," Cranston says. "This in turn evolved into the American College Health Association, which is our national organization today."

Over the course of many years, the Health Center staff has witnessed various diseases.

Dr. Jay Cranston, current chief of staff at the Health Center, who has been there since 1972, says there have been two major epidemics on the Kent campus.

"The first epidemic was in the mid-70s," he says. "It was a relatively severe influenza called swine flu. We started doing mass immunizations with an immunization gun, which we no longer use. They were air pressured operated guns — you could just walk down a row of people and go bang, bang — right up to their skin. Now, because of the risk of AIDS, we can't use that kind anymore. This was the first time we were given recommendations to immunize young adults."

The only other significant epidemic was the spring 1989 measles outbreak.

"At one point during that outbreak, we had the highest incidence of measles per capita of anywhere in the world," Cranston says.

Other than epidemics, the health center staff may treat patients for unusual ailments.

Bites from black squirrels do happen every so often.

"We get one or two incidents a year," says Tresa Saxton, director of the Health Center. "They usually happen when people are playing with the squirrels or trying to feed them, and the squirrel gets excited and bites them."

The Health Center accommodates about 200 patients a day during fall and spring semesters. During the summer, about 100 patients are seen every day. This amounts to roughly 40,000 patients each year. Most people come in for simple contagion (colds, viruses, strep throat and sexually transmitted diseases). Second to simple contagion comes trauma, which includes sprains, strains, fractures, bruises and cuts.

The busiest months for the Health Center are September and February.

"Everybody arrives on campus immune to their own viruses, but not to the viruses everyone else brings back to campus," Cranston says.

"A similar process occurs two weeks after the second semester begins. Also, after spring break, people come back from Florida or wherever, after sharing all kinds of diseases and want to be treated for them."

Saxton says most students don't know what services are offered. The Health Center provides an ambulance service, allergy injections, a laboratory, health education, STD testing and a pharmacy.

Photo by Elizabeth Malby
T.G.I.F.
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