A Home in the Mean Time

Kent State University
Spring 1996
I could see through the slit in the mailbox that the postman had stuffed it full. I eagerly unlocked it and grabbed the bundle of envelopes. But as I sifted through the pile, my heart sank. No sweet letters from my boyfriend, no cards from thoughtful relatives, nothing but advertisements, letters for roommates and—bills. Lots of them.

Car, phone, electric, insurance, Master Card payments—all due the same week. Only two weeks earlier I had forked over $200 to pay rent, and my checking account statement read $150—enough to cover my car payment.

For a minute I panicked. Then I schemed: ‘If I hold off on the car payment until a week after it’s due—just this once—I could use that money to pay off my insurance and phone bills,’ I told myself. ‘Then I could scrape together the minimum payment of $15 for Master Card and $20 for the electric bill, and pay the car payment when I get my paycheck in two weeks.’

I took down a canister of quarters, in better times reserved for laundry, and counted it out: $15. I checked my wallet: $10. But no amount of searching underneath couch cushions and through dirty pants pockets resulted in the additional $10.

Distraught, I called my mother to plead my case, hoping she had a few bucks to donate to the poor-daughter-in-college fund. She came through, just like she did every month, and mercifully saved me from two weeks of peanut butter sandwiches for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

If it weren’t for my parents’ ability to help me out now and then, I wouldn’t have the finances to pay the cost of education at Kent State. Of course, most students can identify with my situation, but how often do we really step back and think about how fortunate we are to have relatives willing and able to see us through?

I have to admit it had been a while since I thought about it—until I met the women of Harvest Home, a transitional housing unit for women and children in Akron.

Meet Stephanie, a 27-year-old woman who has for the past four years tried to support herself and her 4-year-old son Caleb on part-time job salaries while she goes to school at Akron University. Never quite able to make ends meet, she turned to Harvest Home in December 1994 to avoid living on the streets. She’s been there ever since.

Then there is Deanna, who, when she lost her daughter to cancer five years ago, went into a deep depression and watched her marriage and job crumble. Today she lives at Harvest Home and is struggling to rebuild her life. She searches for a job and home so that she might reclaim her new baby, 3-month-old Katie, who is in foster care.

Both of these women have known hardships far greater than my own, and they struggle to accomplish their dreams on limited finances and support. Their stories are gripping because they are just like me in so many ways; I am all the more grateful for my own family, friends and home.

This semester’s Burr staff strived to feature stories of social importance, stories to make students think long and hard about their attitudes and ideas. Read about affirmative action and how it affects students’ ability to get into school and land jobs. Or read about Kent State’s recent efforts to monitor the Internet and how other universities are doing the same. Also featured this semester is a story about the language barrier that often exists between black and white students and teachers in the classroom.

On the lighter side are stories about students’ love of the great cult movie classic, “Rocky Horror Picture Show.” After 21 years on the screen, students continue to watch it weekend after weekend, helping out the actors on the screen by shouting out movie lines and throwing props. Or if you’re a blues music lover, you’ll be interested in “Music’s Mother Tree,” a story about the resurgence in the popularity of blues around Kent and across the nation.

I want to thank an incredible staff for working long hours together to produce this issue of The Burr. I hope you will be as excited about reading it as we were about producing it.

Julie Ralston
Editor
A Language of Their Own
Black students and white teachers are faced with a language barrier that hinders understanding in today's classrooms.

Censoring Cyberspace
Does free speech apply to the Internet? Kent State may soon find out.

Digging into the Past
World renowned anthropology professor Owen Lovejoy examines everything from fossils to corpses.

Surviving the Storm
Two student veterans remember the vivid reality of the Persian Gulf War.

A Home in the Meantime
Kent student journalist Andi Lucas visits an Akron shelter and sees the similarities between herself and the homeless.

Music's Mother Tree
Music lovers eagerly rewelcome the sounds of the blues, once thought forgotten.

Coming Out of the Dark
Discover the thoughts, fears and expectations of four Kent students after they disclose their homosexuality.

Reading, ’Riting, ’Rithmetic or Race?
There's more to Kent State’s admissions policy than just academics.

The Apartment Complex
Students plagued with contract hassles take their leases and shove them all the way to court.

Running the Fast Track
Rigorous training is required for Jennifer Buckley, Kent State's Olympic track hopeful.

Rocky Horror 101
One of the country's most popular cult films has its own group of followers.

Left: Sylvia Davis and her family at the Harvest Home. On the cover: Tony, Sylvia's 7-year-old son, peers out the window of the Akron shelter, waiting for the school bus. Photo by Tanya Ackerman. Cover design by Robert Blesser. Contents photos by Tanya Ackerman.
In racially mixed classrooms, students and teachers strive to unite the lines of communication.

Language of Their Own
1960s civil rights movement with some arguing that students should be permitted to speak the dialect in school without having to learn standard English and others contending that black English had no place in the school system.

The controversy still exists, partially because standardized test scores in urban public schools often compare unfavorably to those in public schools in suburban areas, where speakers of black English aren’t as common. Today, however, the majority say black English is acceptable in some instances in schools, but think students also need to learn standard English.

The mission in Akron Public Schools, for example, is to teach students who regularly speak black English that mastery of standard English is essential for success, says Sylvester Small, Akron’s assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

“Everybody realizes that you have to be versatile,” he says. “You have to be able to converse in all kinds of dialects. That’s the only issue: to be successful, regardless of what area you’re in.”

Throughout Akron’s school district, teachers of first grade through senior high are encouraged to teach standard English as different, but just as important as, black English. “Some (teachers) do a good job of that, others don’t,” Small admits. “It’s a learning process. The best thing we can do is have people hold onto their identities and best equip them with enough skills so they can

Kent State elementary education major Kathy Lark teaches a class of fifth graders at Seiberling Elementary in Akron. Photo illustrations feature 10-year-old Jerome Jackson (top left) and 11-year-old Dirisa Ferguson (above).
"Because we good." Excitement and curiosity emerge from the face of the 5-year-old as he answers his kindergarten teacher in front of 26 of his classmates. He sits on his heels, poised to hear the teacher's response.

"Right," the teacher replies encouragingly. "Because we've been good."

On this day, the morning activities are routine at Orchard Elementary School in Cleveland. Kid-sized tables and chairs sit empty as the children gather around the teacher on a large navy carpet in the middle of the classroom.

"Why do we sometimes get a treat at the end of the day?" she asks.

The boy's answer is simple, and so is the teacher's reinforcement. But it's not quite that simple. The teacher is speaking in standard English; the 5-year-old is speaking in black English.

Black English, a dialect spoken frequently by African Americans in urban areas, is a mix of African and European language systems. It formed during the time of slavery when Africans shipped to the United States were not allowed to speak in their native tongues during the grueling hours on the plantations.

"The English language was the second language of the Africans," explains George R. Garrison, chairperson of Kent State's Pan-African Studies Department. "Many of the ideas and feelings they found impossible to express in the English language. As a result, it became necessary to stretch, to modify English with old African dialect to get to the concepts and the feelings."

The dialect remains a common form of communication in inner-city African-American families, whose children often receive their first introduction to standard English in elementary school. Because standard English is generally accepted as the international means of communication, public schools teach it to all students, regardless of background.

But educators' treatment of black English in the classroom has sparked widespread debate. The issue was especially hot during the
The use of "be" in black English and standard English is compared in the following sentences:

**Black English:**
- He be back tomorrow.
- He dancing.
- He do dance.
- He did dance.
- He done danced.
- He been danced.

**Standard English:**
- He will be back tomorrow.
- He is dancing right now.
- He just started to dance.
- He just finished dancing.
- He danced recently.
- He danced a long time ago.

exist in all the arenas out there."

It's a frustrating process for teachers, who are required to teach in standard English, and for students, who must trade in their old language habits for standard English. This continued push for standard English in the classroom also contributes to a perception that inner-city school teachers lack understanding of black culture, says Kent State's Garrison.

Garrison traces the problem to teacher training schools and cites poor training for education majors as the primary reason for inner-city students' scholastic difficulties. Therefore, he advocates more cultural diversity training for education majors.

Although no class in Pan-African Studies focuses specifically on black English, the way courses are taught in the department carries its own importance, Garrison says.

"We teach classes in standard English," he says. "What we don't do is make a student feel bad if they lapse into black dialect in our classrooms."

At Kent State, the Teacher Leadership Consortium Project seeks to draw minority students from urban areas into the College of Education. These teachers then return to their native areas as educators. Ida Johnson, a member of this project who graduated in December 1994, now teaches students living in Cleveland's projects.

Johnson began the 1995-96 school year eager to introduce new ideas to her 19 students in Alfred A. Benesch Elementary School. When she began to interact with the children, all between the ages of 5 and 6, Johnson immediately encountered a problem with poor language skills.

Phrases such as "I ain't" and "I'm gon"—expressions commonly used in black English—recurred frequently during the initial weeks of school.

"They couldn't tell me what I asked," Johnson recalls. "It was very hard for them to decipher what they said from what they really meant."

She began to model for the children every time they said something that did not conform to standard English. She would re-state the phrase in the standard and wait for the student to repeat. The
students have progressed since September, and now they speak standard English much more often in the classroom, Johnson says.

"Now they're beginning to read and write, and feel good about themselves, in terms of talking," she says.

Students who master the standard may feel good about themselves at school, but it's often a different story for those returning home to their families and friends who primarily speak black English.

It was two or three years ago, after spending a summer at her aunt's home in Maryland, when Kent State education major Shalana Phillips realized how different her speech had become.

Throughout her childhood and adolescence, Phillips commonly spoke black English at home. "I'm gon' to wear blue pants," she would say. But she knew there was a way to speak at school, too. "I'm going to wear blue pants" would be the standard equivalent, a language she mastered by the time she reached junior high school.

While she was in Maryland, every time Phillips spoke in black English, her aunt corrected her in standard English. By the end of the summer, Phillips spoke standard English regularly. Not all of her friends back in Cleveland were impressed.

"Why you talkin' white?" they asked.

Phillips tried to shrug them off with a "Yeah, whatever." But after that, she really began to feel embarrassed about speaking.

"I started to feel very self-conscious when I was with my peers talking," the 22-year-old says. "Then I didn't care. What came out of my mouth is what came out of my mouth."

There are no common rules to classify types of black English, but there may be 300 to 400 forms throughout the United States, estimates Walt Wolfram, former director of research at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C. However, almost all linguistics experts agree that black English is a complex language with its own grammatical system, Wolfram said.

Words are neither added nor taken away when the tense differs, only two words change in this form of black English. The language says more with less.

"(Black English) is more efficient in that it eliminates irregularities," says Wolfram, who has studied black English for nearly 30 years. "You don't need to worry about when to say 'was' or 'were,' for example."

"The English language was the second language of the Africans," says Garrison. "Many ideas and feelings they found impossible to express in English."

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But black English is still not regarded by everyone as a valid language. Phillips remembers a friend who once referred to black English as a sign of ignorance. Although she was offended, Phillips pushed back her anger and tried to educate her friend about the dialect.

"That's my culture," she says. "So I started giving him the roots of black English." The word "be" takes extreme importance in the African language, Phillips says.

"When we were in Africa, the fact you existed was so important," she says. "We had to find something when we came here to substitute for that. Now it sets us apart and builds up our identity, which was stripped 400 years ago. It's something that identifies us."

Cadence and rhythm also distinguish the African language from others, says Christine McVay, part-time instructor at Kent State's English, German and Pan-African Studies departments.

"African languages don't have long consonant clusters," she says. "How the vowels are dispersed throughout lends sort of a sing-song sound when you talk."

"I'm-a-gon," for example, adds the "a" sound and takes away the last syllable of "going" in the phrase "I am going." The phrase adds rhythm to the sentence when it is spoken in black English.

But the most distinctive feature of the language lies in the power of its spoken words. While standard English expresses its power through the written word, black English expresses its power through speech, says McVay, who teaches black literature in her English classes.

"This is one way to demonstrate that (black English) is perfectly valid," she says. But not all of McVay's students understand why she includes black English in her courses.

"Occasionally a black student will walk into class and say, 'Why are you having us read this? I'm embarrassed,'" McVay says. She answers that no language is inferior if its speakers can communicate effectively.

Black English continues to change with time, but the stigma that goes along with it has changed very little, says Garrison, who attributes this perception to a bias the United States holds against all minorities, especially African Americans.

Euclid native Adam Fender, a junior elementary education student, remembers a gym teacher at his junior high school who was black and always discouraged students from speaking black English.

"There was a lot of correcting going on," the 20-year-old says.

During basketball games, for example, Fender remembers some of the African-American students saying "We all gonna
win.” The teacher would smile and try to correct them without being offensive, he says.

“The teacher would stand there and say ‘We all,’ and really draw it out in kind of a joking way, without being mean,” he says.

Other school systems have created district-wide programs to deal with non-standard dialects and their stigmas. Nebraska’s most culturally diverse school system, Omaha Public Schools, is working to change the community’s perception of black English instead of merely teaching students the importance of the standard.

Fifteen years ago, community members in Omaha claimed the schools did not pay enough attention to minority groups within the district, says Joseph Gaughan, assistant superintendent for Instruction and Special Education in Omaha.

Administrators set up meetings with community groups and created committees to study the issues. This communication spurred ideas for a multicultural education program, complete with textbooks offering cultural perspectives on historical events, Gaughan says. Teachers also began attending workshops to understand the needs of the district’s 41,000 students, including African American, Hispanic, Native American and Vietnamese. Some workshops have included programs on understanding different dialects.

“There are on-going activities to make people aware of the nuances of various languages,” Gaughan says. “We create a level of understanding. We develop outcomes for every course at all grade levels. With each of those, there are multicultural outcomes.”

Nonetheless, Gaughan hesitates to say Omaha’s schools are ahead of the times. “It’s my opinion that we’re all behind,” he says.

Simply showing respect for black English in schools may be the most effective way to catch up, says Phillips, who began her student teaching at the end of February in Cleveland. When she has students of her own someday, Phillips promises to honor both standard and black English in her classroom.

“Everyone needs to be different,” Phillips says. “You need some type of identity. But I think it’s a shame that standard English is stressed so much. All kids should be allowed with no correction to use black English at school sometimes. Otherwise, it’s like telling America, ‘You can’t eat a hamburger anymore.’”

John Dipko is a senior news journalism major. This is his first contribution to The Burr.
ENSORING

CYBERSPACE
Laser printers screech and the overhead heating system hums in a back room of Kent State University library’s ground floor. Students work up a rhythmic clatter as they peck at the keyboards attached to 20 University Internet system screens.

About 10 backpack-toting students restlessly wait in line for their chance to hop on the Internet system better known as Phoenix, free to any student with a valid I.D. card.

Students can use the campus' worldwide Internet computer link to tap into scholarly databases — or they can use it to catch up on the latest in bestiality, read tales of voyeurism, group sex and incest, or copy erotic photos, all thanks to 4,000 discussion groups in a forum called Net News Reader.

Since Phoenix and the Internet were connected to the Kent campus a year ago, the number of undergraduate users shot up from 0 to 10,000. Kent State, like many campuses, has traditionally restrained itself from trying to filter out the filth or potentially obscene junk that drifts into college cyberspace.

In the last couple of years, however, college administrators have noticed a flurry of Internet hate messages — homophobic, racist, anti-Semitic — and sexually explicit language targeted at students and other groups.

Many campuses are putting up roadblocks to students who want to write or read hateful or sexual messages. Some colleges, such as Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, have already censored their Internet.

Kent State is just beginning to zoom in on its Internet system. Upstairs and away from the library’s first-floor Internet world, Kent State’s general counsel, Robert Beck, sits in his office, espousing the need for hate speech and harassment rules to govern student Internet use.

“I would be in favor of some standards,” Beck says. “I think it’s going to be really hard to figure out where to draw the lines.”

Last year, Kent State was swept up in controversy when administrators revised the speech and harassment code. The rewritten rules — which essentially prohibit students or faculty members from uttering discriminatory speech or “fighting words” at another person or group — should also apply to speech on Kent's Internet network, Beck says.

Beck started researching the issue of cyberspeech after President Carol Cartwright got a letter in January from the New York City-based Simon Wiesenthal Center, a human rights group.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, Wiesenthal’s associate dean, was worried about hate speech popping up on Internet networks at schools like Georgia State, Miami University and others. He asked Cartwright if Kent State had any Internet rules against “manifestations of bigotry and violence.”

If not, the Wiesenthal center wanted to help Kent “research the issue.”

“As part of the ongoing efforts to monitor the spread of racism and anti-Semitism, the center has instituted a cyberwatch program,” Cooper said.

While Kent administrators mull over speech rules, many Kent State students are flat against any form of 'Net censorship.

Students, who say they use the campus’ Internet mainly to send electronic mail to friends and relatives, file in and out of the library’s busy Phoenix hub all day. Most of them bristle at the notion of any control over what’s said on the system.

“I don't think there should be any limit,” says David Saenz, a 21-year-old senior marketing major. "They should be able to talk about whatever they want. There's probably stuff people object to. But I don't have a problem with it.”

Lisa Conn, a 21-year-old senior psychology major, was busy e-mailing friends across the state. “I really don't have any objections to (the material on the Internet). I have concerns about children and them having access to it. But at a university, it's a choice of what students want to do.”

story by Dick Billeter
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Twice a week, freshman Stephanie Smith drops by the library to e-mail her friends. "It's not right," she says of cyber-censorship. "Free speech is important. Censorship is wrong. They'll probably say it somewhere anyway. Kicking them off the system is not good."

Students who take a few hours to cruise Net News Reader on Kent's Phoenix system will find a spectrum of extremes. On one layer, they can find academic research on topics ranging from therapeutic massage to the likely future of the Internet.

Then, there's the seamy underside. Homophobic, racist, anti-Semitic language and graphic descriptions - even photos - of sexual acts are all pervasive in such groups as alt.sex, alt.homo sexuality and alt.bestiality. For example:

- A message directed at homosexuals: "I hope Satan himself shoots out of the ground ... and burns your ring. I hate you," wrote "KKKiller."
- An advertisement: "Pictures of sexy girls and their loyal pets," wrote "Tripod."
- Pedophilia: "I am a ... male looking for young, tender boys for sexual enjoyment," wrote a Missouri man.
- Child porn: A photographer says he has nude photos available of a 13-year-old Japanese girl in sexual poses.
- A Kent State user: Sex with statisticians "just doesn't happen."

Right now, there's no previewing of what Kent students post on the Internet, says Doug Lewis, systems analyst for the school's Academic Computing Services. Until now, administrators have been more concerned with space limitations and Phoenix's sluggish speed than the monitoring of content on the system, Lewis says.

The only real rules posted on Phoenix forbid chain letters, playing games, chatting and using another student's account.

Beck says there's been no test of cyberspeech at Kent State - yet.
About once a month, however, a test of speech limits has sparked controversy at some college campuses.

Carnegie Mellon students are still fuming over the university's ban last year of sexually explicit material coming from the "Andrew Network," an Internet link. Angry student groups responded by publishing directions on how to bypass the block.

The ban irked student body President Declan McCullagh so much that he founded the "Justice on Campus Project," a joint venture with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology designed to inform others about campus censorship.

McCullagh says it bothered him when some information dealing with avoiding sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy was axed by campus cybercops.

"Our mission is to ensure fair treatment for college students by fighting Orwellian speech codes and secret kangaroo courts," McCullagh, a senior cognitive science major, says about the Justice project.

Carnegie student Alma Whitten started her own group, the Coalition for Freedom of Expression (CAFE), on the 7,000-student campus.

"I think there is nothing that students should not be able to talk about on a university Internet system. I have certainly seen examples of highly obnoxious, irritating, and sophomoric speech, but I have never seen any student speech for which I thought censorship was an appropriate response," says Whitten, a 29-year-old computer science Ph.D. student.

University of Memphis students lashed out at their administration last March. Student David Hooper was kicked off the school's Internet network for graphically describing female anatomy. He was subsequently charged with violating the student conduct code.
UM officials dismissed the charge a month later when they ruled Hooper's comments were not obscene under the Miller v. California test set by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973. The High Court set a three-pronged test that defines obscenity as communication that appeals to "prurient interest," lacks community standards or lacks "artistic, literary, scientific or social value."

Nonetheless, the experience at the 20,000-student campus left a bad taste with 23-year-old Hooper. "I graduated in the fall of '95 and am never going back, never giving them any donations and will never recommend them to anybody I know," he says. "This is a university. A university's power lies in the students and the students' power lies in their access to free information."

Hooper's incident nettled fellow UM student Mark Dallara enough to join McCullagh's Justice on Campus project. "University officials are going too far in cyberspace and 'meat-space,' a.k.a. real student life, in limiting the First Amendment civil liberties of their students," says Dallara, a 24-year-old graduate engineering student. "But I wouldn't support speech that is already illegal, which basically consists of libel and death threats."

Tests of cyberspeech have stretched the country. Everywhere, campus officials face the arduous task of balancing the rights of student computer users to speak with the rights of on-line readers to pursue their education without being offended or harassed.

In one high-profile example last June, a judge threw out charges against a University of Michigan student who wrote fantasies on the 'Net about raping and killing another student. Last November, officials at the 19,000-student Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., pursued disciplinary charges against four freshmen who wrote a nasty e-mail message titled, "75 reasons why women (bitches) should not..."
1. Who is Kent's blues band?

1. Blue Stones
2. Blues Tones
3. Bluest Ones

...acquire the taste!
While Beck supports new campus standards regulating Internet hate speech, one university professor dealing with free speech issues does not.

"I'd be very reluctant to support additional rules and regulations," says Tim Smith, KSU's director of the Center for Privacy and the First Amendment and adviser of The Daily Kent Stater.

Smith also doesn't see the revised hate speech code applying to on-line communication. The school's hate speech code is designed to regulate certain kinds of "one-on-one, face-to-face speech," he says.

State law, however, does regulate threatening forms of written communication, Smith says.

For now, students tapping into the Phoenix system see a menu item in the corner called "Rules."

If they click on this option, they're told in the summary: "The computing environment at Kent is fairly liberal. Violations can result in your loss of computing privileges at Kent, have at times been serious enough to result in dismissal from the University, and may violate the laws of the State of Ohio."

Have any violations been serious enough to cause dismissal from the University? According to Kent's legal eagles, it hasn't happened yet.

Dick Billeter is a graduate news journalism student. This is his first contribution to The Burr.
Digging into the past
From determining that Lucy walked upright to identifying Jeffrey Dahmer's first victim, anthropology professor Owen Lovejoy's investigative work spans the centuries.

Story by Jen Sisson
Photography by Ryan Polack
What is COSO?

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“It’s now the oldest direct lineal human ancestor that we have—a million years older than anything we’ve had previously,” Lovejoy explains excitedly.

Lovejoy says the set of fossils, which was found over the course of the last two years, is probably the most important anthropological discovery since 1924. Lovejoy, who usually studies materials in the United States, says he traveled to Ethiopia because the new fossils are too important to move.

“Casts will eventually become available as they usually do, and one can wait for those but, in this particular case, there was no waiting,” he says.

Lovejoy’s interest in his work is evident in his voice. He speaks fervently of the fossils, leaning forward slightly in his chair.

A small-statured man, who appears markedly younger than his 52 years, Lovejoy has the distinguished stamp of an adventurer. Dressed in a light blue denim shirt, Lovejoy has traded a tie for a grin, which is framed by a salt-and-pepper goatee. His observant eyes, behind wire-rimmed glasses, don’t seem to miss much.

Because of Lovejoy’s formal education and impressive professional work, most people are surprised by his personable demeanor.

“When you see him on television, he is very serious, almost sterile,” says his wife, Melanie McCollum. “With his credentials, you might expect him to be stuffy or put-offish. But when you meet with him, he is so generous and likable. He has a great sense of humor.”

The son of an innkeeper, Lovejoy grew up in Paducah, Ky., along with four brothers and sisters. He was drawn to his

Owen Lovejoy recently spent 10 days in Ethiopia, where he examined a set of fossils that he says could be the most important anthropological discovery since 1924. The fossils belong to a recently classified human ancestor known as “ardipithecus ramidus.”
field at an early age.

“I’ve been interested in science from grade school,” he says. When Lovejoy first enrolled at Case Western Reserve University, he was a pre-med student. “But I decided being around sick people wasn’t all that much fun,” he says, laughing.

His interest in human behavior led Lovejoy to switch his major to psychology, graduating with a bachelor’s degree in 1965. But the summer before he was to start graduate school, Lovejoy decided to go with a friend to field school in southern Ohio to excavate early aboriginal sites. That trip, he says, inspired him to seek a career in anthropology.

“They just needed shovel hands,” he says. “We rented an old, abandoned farmhouse. We cooked out, got up at the crack of dawn, shoveled dirt all day, got hot and sweaty. That’s what started it.”

At the end of the summer, Lovejoy entered graduate school, this time with a focus on anthropology. “I was just doing (field school) on a lark, but it was too much fun to abandon,” he says.

After getting his master’s degree from Case Institute of Technology in 1967, Lovejoy began working toward his doctorate at the University of Massachusetts.

“The reason I went to the University of Massachusetts was because my first professor at Case, Olaf Prufer, got a job as chairman there,” he says. “When somebody like that moves, they usually take along one or two graduate students. I went.”

When Prufer moved to Kent, Lovejoy followed. His first job was as a temporary instructor in anthropology at Kent State in 1968. Then, in 1989, he was awarded the title of University Professor, Kent’s highest rank. The position recognizes outstanding professionals for their distinguished and continued activity in both teaching and scholarly/creative activities.

Richard Meindl, professor and chairman of the department of anthropology, has known Lovejoy for nearly 25 years and refers to him as an “excellent educator.”

“He really challenges students,” says Meindl, who studied with Lovejoy as a master’s student. “Rather than just giving them the facts, he gives his students a framework in which to make their own judgments. It’s the difference between providing knowledge and providing information.”

Lovejoy says he takes great pride in the success of his past students. “I get letters from students I had 10 or 15 years ago. It makes me very happy.”

Scott Simpson, Lovejoy’s former student who now teaches anato-
my at Case Western, says the most remarkable characteristic about Lovejoy is his "flat-out, raw intelligence."

"Owen is definitely one of the brightest in the field," Simpson says. "He is a very clear thinker and, once he gets interested in an idea, he won't let go until he understands it completely."

Simpson remembers an instance several years ago when he was conducting research on how teeth grow. "It was something that Owen had never been interested in," he says. "But once we started, he just took off with it."

According to Simpson, Lovejoy attacks everything in his life with vigor and enthusiasm. "He loves carpentry and is always remodeling his house. I don't think he'll ever be done changing it."

Right now, Simpson says Lovejoy is in the process of remodeling his kitchen by himself. "In fact, he got off the phone with me yesterday so he could go knock out a wall."

But Lovejoy hasn't spent all of his time teaching, researching fossil skeletons - or remodeling kitchens. He has also assisted the Cuyahoga County coroner's office for the last 15 years in identifying human remains that are too badly decomposed for a normal autopsy.

Considering Lovejoy's decision not to study medicine because he doesn't like being around sick people, his reaction to studying dead people could be expected.

"Well, there are some definite disadvantages," he says, matter-of-factly. "The smell - and maggots are a problem."

"But," he says, mischievously, "your patients never complain."

One of his more notable experiences with the coroner's office came when he was asked to identify the body of Steven Hicks, who was murdered by serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer in 1978. In 1993, Lovejoy also helped identify the body of Becky Knapp, a Rootstown woman who had disappeared nine years earlier. Knapp was identified by a small surgical pin located in her knee bones.

Because of his expertise in fossil footprints, Lovejoy was once called on to help analyze physical evidence from a crime scene.

Some years back, Tim White contacted him regarding a homicide case in Marin County, Calif. At the scene was a shoe print left in blood. Lovejoy's job was to determine whether the bloody print matched the shoe that had been collected from the defendant.

"It is possible in shoe prints to make a one-to-one identification between a shoe and its print," Lovejoy explains. "A shoe will acquire defects, like cuts and abrasions. If all of those things match, it becomes virtually as detailed as a fingerprint."

Through his research, Lovejoy concluded that the print in question was not made by the defendant in the case.

He admits that he never anticipated testifying in a case as important as the one in California.

"It wasn't like I never expected to end up testifying in court for a case," he says. "I just did not expect to testify about footprints."

But whatever the project - researching ancient skeletons, identifying decomposed bodies or putting French doors in his house - Lovejoy approaches each project with passion. In his words, "Learning new stuff is fun."

And this drive has earned him the reputation as one of the world's foremost scholars in anthropology. As Donald Johanson, the president of The Institute of Human Origins in Berkeley, Calif., once wrote, "I have admired Owen since my graduate school days at the University of Chicago. When it comes to how everything below the neck fits together, there's no one better."

Sisson is a senior magazine journalism major. This is her first contribution to The Burr.
On the eve that Operation Desert Shield became Operation Desert Storm, Miguel Pacheco, a junior physical education major, was on guard duty outside his camp in Saudi Arabia. He had patrolled the area previously, but that evening something in the air seemed different.

"As I was walking around, I just kind of looked off into the distance and noticed some fighter planes doing little drops and maneuvers," Pacheco says. "I thought, 'How strange,' because every night up until that point, there was never really anything going on."

A few minutes later, the dead calm was shattered by a piercing siren and explosive firing.

"You could just feel the tension in the air," Pacheco says. "For some it was fear, but for others, it was relief."

Blurry Details

The early morning of Jan. 17, 1991, marked the onset of a war known as Desert Storm. This war introduced a new generation to the meaning of combat, replacing the black and white images of World War II and the memories of Vietnam. For most Americans, Desert Storm was an event happening in a land oceans away. Despite extensive media coverage, many people remained unaffected by, and perhaps even apathetic to, the struggle taking place.

"I was 13 years old at the time, and Desert Storm was not real important to me," says Elizabeth Maddux, a freshman undecided major. "It seemed fake, like a show. It was more like America putting on a display for the public. Maybe it was because we never really saw the actual enemy."

Binh To, a freshman zoology major, says she also has a hazy recollection of the Persian Gulf War.

"Desert Storm didn't strike me as serious – more like a disagreement than a war," she says. "I don't remember much about it at all."

However, for the thousands of military men and women who serve our country, Desert Storm was much more than a 24-hour-a-day feature on CNN. Lt. Col. Rick Scott of the U.S. Department of Defense says about 555,000 troops were deployed in the Persian Gulf War. Close to a million service personnel were involved in the overall operation. For these Americans, Desert Storm was a reality they couldn't escape by changing the television station.

The War at Home

Although he was thousands of miles away from the actual conflict, Bernard Gearon, a U.S. Marine and Kent post undergraduate student in education, shared Pacheco's feelings of anticipation. Gearon had been stationed since November 1990 in Twentynine Palms, Calif., where he prepared equipment and trained troops to be sent overseas.

"We didn't know what we were doing, whether we would go the very next day or not at all," Gearon says. "The general sentiment was, 'Let's get this thing over with so we can go home.'"

Since he was attending school at the time, Gearon remembers how hard it was to concentrate on his studies, knowing he might have to
'No time in history has an air war proved so decisive,' says Bernard Gearon (below). 'When the Iraqis started throwing up their hands in surrender, we couldn’t believe it.'

photo by Cory Devereaux

Five years later, two student veterans recall the forgotten reality of the Persian Gulf War

story by Erika Germer
photography by Cory Devereaux and Tanya Ackerman
drop everything and leave the country at any given moment.  
“I felt prepared,” he says. “I mean, as a Marine, I’m trained for that type of situation. But it was still hard... the anticipation was terrible.”

Ironically, during a two-week military retreat Gearon had attended the previous summer, one of the chemical warfare instructors had cautioned the unit that Saddam Hussein could prove to be a threat. Three weeks later, Time magazine placed Hussein on its cover, dubbing him the “most dangerous man in the world.”

On Aug. 2, 1990, when Iraqi tanks began rolling into Kuwait, Gearon and his fellow Marine reservists tried to predict exactly when they would receive orders to go.

“I think for the most part, the attitude around Kent was that a lot of guys were scared,” Gearon says. “If they weren’t in the military, they were thinking, ‘Oh no, they’re going to draft me.’ My concern wasn’t whether they’d call me, but when they would call.”

The Fighting Front

Half a world away, Pacheco had similar concerns. His army unit was stationed in Germany when his superiors notified him that he’d be going to the Persian Gulf.

“We had just come back from a field exercise, and we were downloading our equipment,” Pacheco says. “Something seemed strange; everybody was acting funny. Maybe an hour or two later, they called us into formation and told us we were going over there.”

Although some people were given the choice not to be deployed, Pacheco said he definitely wanted to serve. He remained in a staging area from early September until December, where he underwent training. Pacheco’s unit then began its journey to Kuwait.

“I just remember traveling on this long strip of road that stretched for what seemed like two states,” Pacheco says. “We would pass little ghost towns, and I first thought of Arizona. But actually it wasn’t like anything I’d ever seen before. It was eerie, because for the most part, there was nothing, absolutely nothing, for miles. We were in the middle of nowhere.”

The first three days of Pacheco’s experience were what he recalls as “the worst days of my life.” Rain and cold dampened everything, including morale.

“Everyone expects the desert to be so hot, but it isn’t,” Pacheco says. “During the nights, it gets down in the 20s or below. It was really bad.”

Once the war actually started, things didn’t improve.

“At 4 or 5 in the morning, we’d be up and on the go,” Pacheco said. “We were always on the move.”

Pacheco’s unit was directly involved in combat with the Iraqi armed forces. At times, he could see the Iraqis no more than a mile away, and his own division received a few direct hits.

“It’s just such a sight to see all these warheads flying right over your head,” Pacheco says. “It just lights up the entire sky, kind of like a movie, but we were actually there.”

The final hours of Desert Storm were what Pacheco calls a “bittersweet experience.”

Awakened at dawn by a loud booming, he immediately assumed his unit was under attack.

“After that, we just fired (at the Iraqis) for 40 minutes straight,” he says. “We used up over 40,000 rounds, which is quite a bit. Right after that, it was over. We just moved in and, well, we knew we were going home.”

Pacheco is still amazed when he recalls seeing first-hand the damage they had done. Blazing oil fires, overturned buses and crumbling buildings surrounded the troops as they progressed into the enemy territory.

“The farther we went in, the darker it got,” Pacheco says. “It seemed like night; everything was caked with soot.”

Returning to Solid Ground

Back in the United States, Gearon clearly remembers when the first Marines started coming home.

“It was pretty exciting to see everyone arrive back safe,” he says. “Everyone was so happy... the celebrations, the parades, flags waving all over the place.”

In fact, Gearon recalls being surprised at the war’s abrupt end. He was expecting Hussein’s forces to put up a fight.

“At no time in history has an air war proved so decisive,” he says. “When the Iraqis just started throwing up their hands in surrender, we couldn’t believe it was going to be so easy.”

Gearon says he has mixed feelings about the role he played in
Desert Storm. As a Marine, he is extensively trained for combat, but in this instance, he was not directly involved in the fighting.

"I guess it was a little anti-climactic," he says. "But I wish people wouldn't assume that just because I didn't fight, my contributions and time weren't important to the overall operation."

**Remembering Without Regret**

Even though they served in different places and in different ways, Gearon and Pacheco both say Desert Storm taught them to appreciate life. Both were especially impressed with the realization that death and injury can occur so easily to anyone, any time.

"It's the luck of the draw, so to speak, if you were a casualty or not," Gearon says. "It didn't matter if you were on the front line, it didn't matter if you were asleep in your bunker and it didn't even matter if you were here in the States. People can get hurt anywhere."

Gearon and Pacheco say they have no regrets about their past and current involvement in the U.S. military. Both men had planned to serve in the armed forces since childhood, and they say their experiences have been personally beneficial and certainly worthwhile to their country.

**The Battle in a Far-Off Land**

As Desert Storm's fifth anniversary came and went this past January, many U.S. citizens were surprised to discover how quickly the intervening time had passed.

Rick Flaisman, a sergeant corporal in the U.S. Marines, has one explanation for why many people have been able to ignore or forget the Persian Gulf War.

"Consider the significant difference between Desert Storm and Vietnam," he says. "What did the Iraqis do that really threatened us? Not much."

Whatever the reason, the Persian Gulf War has lost much of its meaning, agrees Brian Roderick, a junior commercial leisure and finance major.

"For the general public, Desert Storm has been pretty much forgotten," Roderick says. "Unless you know someone or were someone who served, it's become a thing of the past."

Erika Germer is a sophomore magazine journalism student. This is her second contribution to The Burr.

Miguel Pacheco (below) remembers the journey he and his army unit suffered to make it to Kuwait.

'We would pass little ghost towns, and I first thought of Arizona... but actually it wasn't like anything I'd ever seen before. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, for miles.'
A Home

When a Kent State student journalist visits an Akron shelter, she sees that the faces of the homeless aren't very different from her own

In the Meantime

story by Andi Lucas
photography by Tanya Ackerman

28 SPRING 1996
"Welcome," says a small woman with short brown hair. "You can hang your jacket up there," she says, pointing to a metal rack draped with wire hangers. Beneath it stands four baby strollers and a pair of children's Nike tennis shoes. "Dinner is in 10 minutes. Make yourself comfortable."

I fall into a tan leather chair resting in the corner of the lobby. Above my right shoulder hangs a portrait of Marjorie Ruth Thomas, the woman who founded this building in 1978.

The mother standing before me shouts up the stairs, "Rejeanne, I'm not going to play games with you! Get your coat on and come downstairs now!" In her right arm she holds a baby. The clumsy fingers of a toddler clutch her left hand.

Soon enough, 6-year-old Rejeanne files down the stairs and the family marches into the living room. I follow and, along with five other families, wait by the side door.

"Do we have two buckets?" a voice calls out.

"What are the buckets for?" I whisper to the child in front of me. He is carrying one of the plastic containers filled with washcloths and soapy water.

He answers me bluntly: "To wash off the tables after dinner."

Then the doors open, a blast of cold air shoots in at us, and we all head toward the building next door, where the dining hall is housed.

I end up spending three meaningful days in the Harvest Home shelter in Akron where I meet 13 women, most of whom have at least two children. Each woman has a set of unique circumstances that brought her to the shelter. But their situations are similar in that they could happen to anyone – college students, full-time workers, teen-agers, parents.

As a full-time student with two jobs, I understand what it's like to struggle to pay bills. I think about my life, and it becomes clear that I am not any better than any of these women. After playing with their children, eating, watching TV and talking with them, I realize that the only difference between me and them is that when I walk out of the front door, I have a place to go home to.

While playing with Spiderman and X-Men figurines, Tony and I wait for that evening's devotion. Four women from an area church donated their time, leading the Harvest Home women into songs about faith, spirituality and personal strength. Tony even played the air guitar.

Taking All the Right Steps

In 1986, Stephanie, who asked that her name be changed because she is embarrassed about being homeless, was 18 years old and a Kent State student. She majored in journalism and remembers watching Bertice Berry perform a comedy act at the Ratt. Deciding she wasn't quite ready for college, Stephanie quit school and joined the Coast Guard at the age of 20. Unmarried at 23, she gave birth to a son she named Caleb. After six years with the military, Stephanie's service was finished. At first, she stayed with relatives in Kent, where she planned to go back to school. But because of financial problems, she kept putting off her education.

"I tried to find jobs," the 27-year-old says. "I almost took a third-shift job, but I can't do that with a 4-year-old child. So I decided that I needed more training, and the only way to get it was to go back to school."

Stephanie is now enrolled at the University of Akron, majoring in social work. While she is in class, Caleb spends time at the Akron University Development Center, where daycare is provided for free. Stephanie also has a part-time job at school.

But providing for her son and paying for her education with only a minimal income eventually led Stephanie to financial difficulties. It didn't take her long to realize that housing was going to be a problem. In December 1994, she registered with Portage Metropolitan Housing Authority. She has been on the waiting list for housing ever since. To avoid sleeping on the street, Stephanie turned to the Haven of Rest Ministries. From there, she was directed to Harvest Home, a shelter for women and children.

"When I first got here, they took me in for the weekend," she says. "They were so full we slept on a cot in the rec room. The workers said, 'We'll take Caleb to the playroom.' And I screamed, 'My son stays with ME!' As I was lying there, I thought, 'What am I doing here?'

Stephanie stayed at Harvest Home that Saturday and Sunday.
The Davis children – Tony at left, Cory at right and Larri behind the wheel – make themselves at home in the basement playroom. Their mother Sylvia proudly admits, 'They're good kids. They've been through a lot, but they're still OK.'

night, knowing that when she returned from class on Monday, she and Caleb had to leave. After calling other area shelters and finding that they, too, were full, Harvest Home allowed them to stay one more night.

"And then God gave me a miracle," Stephanie says. "A woman and her son who were staying here just left, without giving any notice. Caleb and I got their room. I was so thankful to have a bed to sleep in."

I saw pain in Stephanie's eyes – dark circles weave around them and the corners droop. She wants understanding and faith, but she seems to get very little of that. She says that people look at and treat her differently because of her homelessness.

"When people know you're poverty-stricken," she says, "they treat you as if you have a character flaw. They don't want to give you the dignity that you deserve. But it doesn't matter how much money you have in your pocket, you expect to be treated a certain way... There are certain characteristics that people think of the homeless and unemployed. That they're dirty and have mental problems. That they can't read and they're useless. But I'm homeless and I'm not like that."

Stephanie says she could ask her mom for help, but she wants to help herself right now. "I'm trying to be independent," she says.

While Stephanie tells me about her life, I think of all the things I have in my house that I don't think I could live without – music, my cats, long hot baths, books, photos. So I ask her, "What do you miss the most about having your own home?"

The quiet time, she says. The simple things, like playing music or being alone – things she can't have while living with nine other families in a homeless shelter. By now, though, Stephanie should have some of those things back again. When I met her, a housing authority representative had just called to say there might be a home for Stephanie and Caleb.

Lost, Empty and Alone

Her pale oval face is topped with long, auburn hair. Skinny legs fill her black denim jeans. Dark crimson nail polish that matches her lipstick decorates her hands. Sitting on a blue couch in the women's day room, 36-year-old Deanna Thorn tells her story.

"I used to have a job at Acme for 13 years," the husky voice says. "I was married and I had a daughter. But I lost her to cancer when she was only 5. My life just went downhill from there – it took the spunk right out of me.

"When she died, it was so awful, and a part of me died, too. They might as well have thrown me in the casket with her because I haven't recovered. I never will."

30 SPRING 1996
Deanna Thorn clutches a blurry photo of her 3-month-old baby, Katie, who is in foster care until Deanna finds a home of her own. After losing her first daughter, job, marriage and home, losing Katie is almost more than Deanna can bear.

After the death of her daughter, Deanna watched both her marriage and job crumble. She fell into a depression. She says she lost it all – a sense of control, hope and motivation. That was five years ago.

Today, Deanna stays at Harvest Home. She doesn’t like to talk much about her past. Although she’s looking for a job, she’s concentrating mainly on finding housing.

“I have a 3-month-old daughter who is in foster care right now,” she says, showing me a picture of Katie, a tiny, pink, bald baby wrapped in a fuzzy white blanket. “When I have my own place, I can have her back.”

Even though Deanna gets to see Katie once a week, it’s not the same as raising her. “I feel threatened,” she says.

Deanna and I walk over to the building next door for a brief church service with the homeless men of Haven of Rest Ministries before lunch. Inside the auditorium, which is filled with folded chairs, a speaker preaches about loving your neighbor and reaching out to others. The atmosphere in the room is thick with emotion, heavy worries and stress. Three men hunch over in their seats and sleep while two others listen intently and take diligent notes. Deanna leans over and offers me her last Butter Rum Lifesaver.

“You’re lucky,” she says. “You know you have a place to go every night. That’s what I miss the most.”

When His Fist Bruises Her Soul

On Jan. 9, 31-year-old Sylvia Davis moved into Harvest Home. With her, she brought her three sons: Tony, 7; Cory, 6; and Larri, 2, as well as the baby that’s on the way (Sylvia is five months pregnant).

“I left because of domestic violence,” she says. “He was hitting me and verbally abusing the children. Plus, he was on drugs and there was another woman involved. I got fed up and just left. I would be more scared in my own home than I would be sleeping on the street.”

Sylvia talks matter-of-factly about her life. Her voice sounds confident and she seems sure of herself, like a person who has been through counseling for the abuse she has suffered. But she hasn’t, and she says even though it is available at the shelter, she never really considered it.

“I was so busy trying to make sure my kids were OK that I never even stopped to think about it. But this is hard, too. We’re all in one room and I don’t feel we’re stabilized,” she says, sitting on a soft patchwork quilt.

Across the room from where Sylvia sleeps is the twin bed Tony and Cory share, and at the foot of her bed is the crib Larri occupies.

“I feel my children should be in their own home. But I’m learning so much here,” she says, describing some of the programs available to the women of Harvest Home. The shelter offers classes on parenting, nutrition, computer training, budgeting, religion, medical issues and more. “When we finally do get our home,” Sylvia says, “it will be a lot better than before.”

But strangely enough, Sylvia seems relatively content. Her children are well-behaved, polite and happy. “They’re good kids,” she smiles. “They’ve been through a lot, but they’re still OK.”

In their clothing/book/toy-cluttered little room, the Davis family has everything they need. “We don’t want for anything here,” she tells me, proudly.

Unlike Stephanie, Sylvia says she doesn’t feel mistreated by others because of her homelessness.

“Nobody would ever know that I’m homeless unless I tell them,” she says. “If we go somewhere, like to the movies or the mall, we look just like a normal family. My children are healthy and clean.”

Rachel, who also asked that her name be changed to protect her identity, says she left the comforts of her own home for the same reason as Sylvia: spousal abuse. Rachel endured the abuse for a while. She even stayed the time her husband knocked her down the stairs while she was four months pregnant. But when he severely injured their 8-month-old baby, Rachel left.

“He broke (my child’s) nose and then kept us locked up in the house for five days,” she remembers angrily. “He knew that if he let us out, he’d get in trouble. When we finally got to the hospital, you should have seen (my child’s) face – it was all red and his eyes were black and blue. It was awful.”

Because there wasn’t enough space at Harvest Home when they first arrived in January, Rachel and her child had to stay at other Akron-area shelters, which she says were awful.

“When I got here (in the beginning of February),” she says smiling, “I got down on my knees and thanked God that I was here. There was heat and a tub that worked. Being here, I just feel so fortunate.”

When Substances Take Over

Drugs and alcohol often play a harsh role in the lives of the homeless. In fact, addiction led four of the women, including 38-year-old
During an art therapy session, Harvest Home residents were given the opportunity to create goal boxes. Most did.

Pamela Jackson and 43-year-old Ramona McQuirter, to their temporary lodging at the shelter. “It got to the point where I didn’t have any strength,” says Pamela while spraying air freshener in one of the halls, completing one of her daily chores of cleaning. “I got stressed out and I binged (on alcohol and cocaine) and I ended up staying out all night and the next day. I was down by the river (in Toledo) where they were holding a festival. I saw how the street people lived, with their sleeping bags, and I saw how they survived. I thank God for that experience, because I know I don’t want to be like that.”

Getting ready for bed, Ramona admits that her former drug habit left her homeless. “I’ve been here two times now. The first time I just wasn’t ready to quit using. I was just using (Harvest Home) as a temporary place so I could get back on my feet and back out to the dungeon of the streets again.”

Neither of these women is ashamed to talk about her addiction. They both feel they are on the road to recovery, thanks to the help they receive at Harvest Home.

Eileen Thomas, director of the shelter, agrees. She says her shelter is particularly successful because each person who uses the facility is seen as an individual instead of a number. That gives the residents a sense of security and well-being they don’t find at most other shelters, she says.

“(Haven of Rest) is a $2.9 million-a-year operation, and we work solely on voluntary contributions,” Eileen says. “Not a penny of that money comes from the government, which is good. We have the separation of church and state, and we can do things the way we want to do them instead of how the government thinks we should.

“We recognize that each person here is a worthwhile human being, and we try to convey that to them, reminding them that they will work through this time in their lives.”

Eileen and I stand in the kitchen talking and drinking tea.

Pamela Jackson (right) treasures the few photos and belongings that she has in her room at Harvest Home. “I miss the companionship of family,” she says, “and the thought of having my own home. The hardest part of this is the waiting, the expectations I have – how am I going to handle the next situation that comes my way?”

“Mmm, Doesn’t this smell good?” she asks me, running her mug of apple cinnamon tea under my nose. “Here, take one for later,” she says, shoving a tea bag in my hand.

Eileen, the daughter-in-law of founder Marjorie Ruth Thomas, is a gentle and caring woman, characteristics that she tries to pass on to the residents of the shelter.

“These people are not just homeless,” she says. “There are reasons, and they’re complex. We need to address those issues. It’s being a supportive role. It’s what every human being can do for another. When they are stronger, they can help someone else. It’s just being a friend.”

Pamela accepts that friendship and support, and says she’s doing well with her rehabilitation – “no dirty urines and I’ve never been late to a meeting.” She attends meetings in Akron three nights a week for Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and Cocaine Addicts Anonymous. Pamela says she feels good about herself.

“Before, I had such shame,” she says. “People looked down on me because of the way I was – an alcoholic and a drug addict and I didn’t look up to par, but I was still human. So I don’t dwell (on it) or else I’d never grow.”

Ramona, who is in intensive treatment for cocaine abuse, feels the same way.

“There’s a Chinese proverb that says you can fall seven times and you’ll always get up the eighth time. Well, I’ve fallen so many times and each time, I understand my madness and why I’ve fallen. But now I’m tired of falling. Why should I continue to get up and keep falling when I can get up and stay up?”

Who’ll Save the Children?

At dinner, we space ourselves out at 16 long tables bordered with padded blue chairs. A white, green-rimmed bowl filled with pads of butter sits in the center of each table. We are served hot sausage, greens, sweet potatoes, bread and cupcakes.

Next to me I hear a small voice. “Mommy, I don’t want my fish.”

The mother sternly answers, “You’ll eat it if you want a cupcake.”

And still another faint voice cries, “I don’t want to eat my meat.”

The mother sternly answers, “You’ll eat it if you want a cupcake.”

While this exchange continues, I ask myself who the real victims are. Is it the mothers, some of whom have lost their dignity and sense of hope? Or is it the children, who grow up in the middle of all this suffering, who face the world with strikes already against them?

ReAnne Payne is a 24-year-old mother of four: Rejeanne, 6; England, 4; Deshanetia, 2; and Airica, 1. Each of ReAnne’s daughters has a different father, only one of whom pays child support.

“I feel trapped sometimes,” says ReAnne, who’s been at the Harvest Home since September. “It’s very stressful. But my kids like it here. They’ve never had so many kids around them and now there’s a whole group their age.”

Down in the basement is the playroom. A large, brown rug spreads over the center of the floor, and toys of all kinds outline the
'We recognize that each person here is a worthwhile human being and we try to convey that to them. They will work through this time in their lives.'

rest of the room. Seven small children run wildly around the room, screaming and laughing.

“What are you guys playing?” I ask, peering my head through the doorway.

Rejeanne proudly answers me: “We’re playing fiancé.

“I’m his fiancée,” she says pointing to a boy. “And I’m a cop, too.”

The game progresses with fake guns, shooting and arrests. While I sit and watch, a little bundle in a white sweater crawls into my lap. With sad eyes and a runny nose, she asks me for a hug. Rejeanne gives me the introduction: “That’s my sister Deshanetia.”

Up Against a Wall

Tomiko Turner, 26, looks sad. Her hair is pulled to the sides in French braids. Her round cheeks sort of droop. She glances over her shoulder into the living room to make sure her children are behaving. T.C. is 4 and Lamar is 3. “And I’ve got one on the way,” she says. “I think this one’s a girl.”

Tomiko finds herself at Harvest Home because of financial and housing problems. First, she was promised by an Akron landlord that she could live in the house with her Section 8 certificate, a government subsidy that helps low-income families pay their rent.

“But the landlord fell through on his promise,” she says bitterly. “He couldn’t have the Section 8, but he didn’t bother to call and tell me right away. No, he waited until the last minute. By the time he finally did tell me, my certificate had expired. Now I’m just waiting on the paperwork to go through so I can get another one.”

Even though the ordeal with her house happened in October, it took Tomiko until the end of January to bring herself to the shelter. She was scared because she associated being homeless with what she had seen on TV: a person wearing five hats and three coats, talking to a bottle covered in a brown paper sack, sleeping on a sidewalk grate.

For a while, Tomiko stayed with friends and family. But the arrangements were crowded and she didn’t want to overstep her boundaries.

“I was afraid to come here because then I’d be saying that I was homeless,” she remembers. “But my aunt said, ‘Tomiko, you are homeless.’

“So I called (Harvest Home) and they were so nice to me. They spoke to me like they’d known me forever. And now that we’re here, they treat us like we’re one big family. In fact, the first day I was here I met another woman staying here named Wanda, and we connected right away. When she left, I felt like my sister was leaving. We shed tears and she gave me her phone number. It was hard.”

Currently, Tomiko is enrolled in a trade school program, which she plans to start once she gets settled into her own home. “That’s what all my concentration is focused on,” she says.

Tomiko says she isn’t bothered by what other people think of her being homeless.

“I’m a strong-minded person,” she says, “and I can’t waste time worrying about what other people say. I’ve got my kids to worry about, and getting a place to stay. What people need to realize is that everybody’s situation is different. It’s easy to sit back and judge, but you can’t say anything until you’ve been in their shoes. I’m homeless and I have my reasons, which are different from the next person. But I know that if we had our choice, we wouldn’t be homeless.”
Take It As It Comes

"I graduated from Akron U. with a degree in science," says Marquita Bell, 37. "I worked for United Cerebral Palsy. I got married and had kids. We got divorced and now I'm here. You just never know what's going to happen."

She was staying with friends before she came to Harvest Home, but like Tomiko, Marquita didn't want to outstay her welcome. "My spiritual needs led me here - they brought me this way."

Marquita has six children, all of whom live with her relatives. Desmond, 19, and Brandon, 14, live with her mom; Quinton, 9, Jay Michael, 7, Angelica, 4, and Laurence, 2 months, live with her sister. "I'd like for Desmond to come here and see what this is like, how good it is here."

I first met Marquita through a wall. I was talking to two women in their room before they went to bed, and I asked them, "What do you think the government or society can do to help the homeless problem?" Before either of them could answer, a voice called out from an adjacent bedroom.

"I was waiting for someone to ask that!" the rasping voice beckoned out. "Why doesn't the government fix up the properties that are just sitting there empty - you know, the buildings that are just deteriorating. They could take two or three homeless families and put them in there. The families could pay some rent - it would only be a little, but it would be more than anyone's making on the buildings now."

"They can build more shelters and that's fine. But they need to give people the incentive."

She sat on a couch with a dimpled smile on her face. Wearing a Kelly green sweatshirt, apple green shoes, carrying a pea green bag and with a bright green plant behind her, Marquita looked more like a greenhouse attendant than a homeless person.

At the time, Marquita was giving herself three to four months to get back on her feet, an achievement that would require finding a sensitive landlord who could help her with the security deposit and first month's rent.

"I'm not happy, but I'm not unhappy," Marquita says frankly. "I can fit in any situation that you throw me in. I'll make the best of it."

Going Home

When the time comes for me to leave, I look around at the women of Harvest Home and I feel guilty about getting into my car and driving to my cozy Tallmadge apartment. I think about the women I spent the weekend with - women who dress, talk, walk and act just like me. But they're homeless and I'm not.

I know that having a home doesn't make me a better person. It just makes me lucky - lucky to have resources and parents that I know I can fall back on. I say my goodbyes and let myself out, and wonder what will become of my friends at the Harvest Home.

Andi Lucas is a senior magazine journalism student. This is her third contribution to The Burr.
‘You can play the blues on a porch or on the back of a truck,’ says Bob Goldthaithe, guitarist and vocalist for the Bluestones (left). ‘You can take that music anywhere and make it happen.’

Music’s Mother Tree

The resurgence of blues music brings the sweet old songs of the South into the 1990s

The cigarette smoke, suspended in the brightness of the stage lights, hangs in silvery clouds as the musicians begin the tune. With a swinging beat and a wailing harmonica, the guitar player moves toward the microphone, closes his eyes as if in prayer and growls out a gutsy song called “Love and Happiness.”

Several people in the audience begin grinding to the beat, almost as if the music is an extension of themselves. The music pulsates through the thickness of the smoke. A woman dressed in black shakes a tambourine and wiggles to the pounding rhythm like a plate of Jell-O on the seat of a Harley bike.

The music, known as “the blues,” is an American art form born nearly 100 years ago. Finally earning its recognition as the cornerstone of jazz and rock ’n’ roll, the blues has risen in popularity over the past 10 years after remaining virtually dormant for two decades. Many musicians, like Eric Clapton, Bonnie Raitt and Carlos Santana, have cited the blues as paramount in the shaping of their careers. In February, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum recognized the impact of the blues on rock ’n’ roll by devoting the
entire month to blues artists.

As the national blues scene gains momentum, local exposure of the music has also taken an upward turn. Area clubs are opening their doors to more blues bands, and listeners are flocking to hear the music.

Jim Fox, rhythm guitarist and vocalist for the Bluestones in Kent, says the band has already booked more gigs this year than it had during all of 1995.

“We played about 30 times last year,” Fox says. “This year, we’re already booked for that many gigs for dates five months ahead.” The Bluestones play in Kent at the Rathskellar, the Blue Moon Lounge, Michelle’s Lounge and the El Dorado Club.

“There’s just no question about the rise in popularity,” Fox says. “A few years ago, if you looked in Scene Magazine, you’d see a handful of (blues) bands playing out. Now it seems like everybody and his brother is in a blues band.”

The increased popularity of the music spurred the opening of the Northside in Akron last Thanksgiving. The club, located on North Main Street, features area blues and jazz bands every weekend.

“We’ve just been swamped with business since we opened,” says Jill Bacon, entertainment and advertising manager at the Northside. “We had no idea it would catch on like it did. (Some) nights, we have over 400 people through here.”

Owners Michael Owen, Brad Miller and Rockne Becker opened the bar so people could enjoy local blues and jazz music without having to travel far from home, Bacon says. “We were all tired of going clear to Cleveland to listen to our kind of music.”

But the demand for the blues isn’t the only indication that the music lives on. According to area blues band members, the diversity of the listeners reveals the timelessness of blues music.

The music is attracting people of all types, says Ralph Shick, harmonica player for another local band, Kingsbury Run. “From their 20s to their 50s,” he says. “People are just enjoying the music and each other.”

Fox says local blues fans seem to represent a cross-section of people. “Our experience is that the fans are really mixed, by race, age and sex. I’ve seen junior high school kids and people in their 70s that come frequently,” he says. “It’s very healthy.”

Beth Schlegel, a senior communications major, first started listening to the blues about five or six years ago after a friend got her interested. “The cool thing about the blues is that it hits all age groups,” Schlegel says. “We’re all out there for one thing, and that’s to listen to good music.”

The diversity of the crowds is part of the charm of blues music,
Jenny Maurer and Mike Lenz perform blues tunes at the Kent Folk Festival in February. The music attracts both young and old. "We're all out there for one thing, and that's to listen to good music," says student Beth Schlegel.

Schlegel says, "When I went to the Northside, I started talking to people in their 40s about good places to go to hear blues," she says. "It was just a lot of fun."

But local blues joints also draw many young listeners, says Julie Tennant, a senior fashion merchandising major. "When I went to the Bluesfest in Chicago two years ago, there were a lot of college kids there. I was surprised because a lot of the people looked like a Grateful Dead crowd," she says.

Robert Santelli, director of education at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum and author of "The Big Book of Blues," says there are two reasons for the blues' rising popularity.

"One is the advent of CDs," he says. "In the '70s, many of the blues albums went out of print, and it was extremely difficult to find them. Now, you can find more blues recordings than ever. You can buy Mame Smith's first blues recording if you want."

The second factor, Santelli says, is the listening habits of the Baby Boomers. "In the '60s, there were a lot of bands that were influenced by the blues, like Cream and the Rolling Stones," he says. Today, the 1960s generation is turning to the blues because of its close association to rock 'n' roll.

"These people don't relate to Nine Inch Nails, but they make a strong connection with the blues because of the influence the music had on the bands they used to listen to," Santelli says.

The image of blues has changed over the last few decades, says Bob Goldthwaite, guitarist and vocalist for the Bluestones.

"The blues is out of the dark clubs and into the festivals," he says. "It's in Memphis, it's in Helena, it's in Chicago. It's no longer dive. You know, smoke dope in the back room and get sloppy drunk kind of thing."

After nearly 100 years, the blues keeps wailing away with little deviation from its original form. Although the exact origin of the blues isn't known, music scholars believe it dates back to the late 1800s to early 1900s. Lawrence Jackson Hyman, author of "Going to Chicago," says the first blues sheet music was published in 1912. Eight years later, Mame Smith cut the first blues recording.

Some blues musicians, however, claim the blues have always been around. In Hyman's book, he quotes several famous blues musicians. "Big Eye" Louis Nelson says, "The blues? Ain't no first blues. The blues has always." Otis Rush claims, "The blues is as old as butter-milk." Even blues guitarist B.B. King tells Hyman, "The blues is like a Mother Tree."

The origin of the blues is difficult to pinpoint because of the lack of documentation, Santelli says. "Early white music historians didn't pay much attention to the blues because it was considered lower-class music," he says. "Of course, we are kicking ourselves now."

Spirituals, minstrel and medicine shows, work songs, field hollers
and black folk music from the Mississippi delta region are all incorporated in blues music, Santelli says. There are now dozens of blues forms, he says. One popular form is the primarily acoustic Mississippi Delta blues, a raw form of rural blues that became popular in the 1920s.

Delta blues really transcends time and place, Goldthwaite says. "I like more of the country guys," he says. "They've got that lightness about them. You can play it on a porch or on the back of a truck. You can take that music anywhere and make it happen."

Another popular form, the Chicago blues, emerged in the 1940s when a large population of blacks moved north, Santelli says. "Two things happened with Chicago blues," he says. "One is that the music became electrified. The other is that it has a back beat."

A third form, Piedmont blues, developed out of ragtime music on the Virginia coast and in the Piedmont regions of the Carolinas during the late 1920s, Santelli says.

The newest style of blues music, the Austin sound, originated in Texas. Played by guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan and the Fabulous Thunderbirds, Austin blues is a blend of rock 'n' roll and traditional blues. "People like Stevie Ray Vaughan borrowed from Jimi Hendrix as much as he did from someone like guitarist Buddy Guy," Santelli says.

Although it is dubbed a classic, the blues remains as contemporary today as it was in its beginnings. Its current health shows it has transcended time, place, race and gender. But many fans say it would become even more popular if more people would give it a chance.

"For most people, it's something they can relate to," says Ansel Weese, bass player for the Bluestones. "Everybody gets the blues. It's like a beautiful love song. There's a woman out there, and she's far away. It makes you feel a certain way."

Rick Christyson, guitarist for Kingsbury Run, calls the blues a "living thing."

"The blues is something to play with, stretch it out. You make it alive," he says.

Blues music also has a "sweetness" to it that listeners don't hear in every type of music, Goldthwaite says. "There's something in blues that sort of communicates with the musicians," he says. "There's more finesse. It's not a real bangy, distortion-type music. Even with fast, up-tempo songs, there's a main gear that keeps chuckin' away. Everything else kind of flutters around it."

Even though it's called "the blues," fans and musicians alike say the music isn't always depressing and sad.

"That's just a big myth," Santelli says. "There are happy blues, too. There are kinds that make you want to jump up and party."

Every kind of music conveys all types of emotions, Santelli says. "I mean, Pearl Jam's 'Jeremy' is about suicide. That's pretty depressing."

Another characteristic of blues music is its veiled references to sex expressed in humorous ways. "There's a song called 'No Lead in My Pencil,'" Santelli says. "It isn't expressed directly, but everybody knows what they are talking about."

The Bluestones perform a song called "Big Butt Woman," in which Goldthwaite says, "When I tell my woman to haul ass, she has to make two trips."

Recognizing the light and funny side of the blues is important, but there's no denying the power and poetry of its sadness. On the inside of "The Healer" album, John Lee Hooker says, "Sometimes, on stage, when I'm singing them, it gets so sad and deep and beautiful, I have to wear dark glasses to keep people from seeing me crying. The tears just start running. Sometimes I give my own self the blues."

The blues can move its listeners in the same way, Schlegel says. "I mean, when you listen to them sing, you can actually feel their pain."

Despite its growing appeal, Goldthwaite says, the blues isn't something everybody understands. He compares the blues to a fraternity. "It's like a special club. They don't just let anybody in."
"It's like the Masons or the Shriners, only we don't wear fezzes. We wear black hats like this," he says, laughing and grabbing his fedora off the table and placing it cockeyed on his head.

Schlegel says she thinks the blues is an "acquired taste."

"Either you're into it or you're not," she says. "I don't think you can be middle of the road with it."

Regardless of the debate of its future, it's clear that right now, the blues lives on.

At the Northside, the night winds to a close as the band begins its last number. Over the clinking beer bottles and clapping hands, the singer's raspy voice sings another chapter in the story of the blues.

Several more people jump up to dance to the music, and the woman with the tambourine doesn't miss a beat.

But as the soulful beat plays on, the crowd knows that the true purpose of the blues isn't about entertainment. It's about the healing of old wounds. They have come to resurrect happy spirits — to find shade beneath the Mother Tree.

*Jen Sisson is a senior magazine journalism major. This is her second contribution to The Burr.*
Coming Out of the Dark

Four Kent students find the courage to reveal their homosexuality. Now they must struggle to live with that decision.

"This has been the first time I really looked at myself and questioned what was on the inside," says art history major Jeff Zelli (right). Although it has been a year since Zelli came "out of the closet," he only recently told his parents he is gay.

story by Ali Cybulski
photography by Kristin Guscott
Jason Parent grew up in a small town in Maine where sports and girls were supposed to be the core of every young man's existence. No one was supposed to be different. No one was supposed to be gay.

"I lived in the kind of town where everyone knew everyone else's business. You couldn't go very far without someone knowing about it," says Parent, a sophomore secondary education major. "Well, over the summer my mom and I spent the day running errands around town. All day long, people kept giving me these dirty looks, and I couldn't figure out why."

On the lapel of his jacket, Parent wore a pin declaring "I Like Dykes" along with an AIDS ribbon. He had forgotten to take them off before going out with his mother, who pointed it out to him. Suddenly he realized why he had become the center of attention.

"I guess everyone thinks in a small town, there are no gays," Parent says. "But I know I'm not alone."

Before Parent officially declared his homosexuality eight months ago, he worried his "terrible truth" would alienate him from friends and family. So he hid behind a mask of heterosexuality, struggling with the issues of honesty, power and self-respect.

Meet Jason and three other Kent State students who have also concealed their sexuality at one time or another, and who have all suffered the pain of their deceit. Since then, they have pushed their fears aside and come out to themselves and to society. But while coming out has given them the opportunity to reacquaint themselves with the person behind the mask, they continue to face the day-to-day challenges of being openly gay.

Wishing for Acceptance

Parent was 12 years old when he first realized how different he was from the other kids in his town. In high school, he didn't play basketball or baseball, and he didn't care about being the most popular guy in school. He was a theater groupie, and he was threatened by other students because of it.

"You were either a hippie or a fag if you were in theater," he says. "And I'd get beaten up every couple of months or so."

Parent took verbal abuse from students, as well. He remembers one night going to a party where a student who suspected Parent was gay looked him straight in the face and called him an "AIDS-spreader."

"I freaked out and smacked him," Parent says. "I put my knee into his crotch, and he fell flat on his face and onto the ground."

"I knew there were several gays and lesbians there who were not out of the closet, and I wanted to take them down with me," he says. "Most of them knew I was a virgin. I was hurt because none of them stood up for me."
Parent came out of the closet to his friends on Oct. 13, 1995. He still has not told his parents, although his mother probably suspects he is gay. He believes his parents' reactions will be fairly predictable. "I think my mother will eventually be understanding," he says. "My father will flip out. At first, I think they'll both be upset and blame themselves."

"I want them to know that I don't have any dramatic plans to change my lifestyle. I don't want to be a big flaming queen, but I don't want to hide what I am anymore. I don't need to put on a show for anyone."

Parent says his younger brother probably won't take the news as well. "He thinks life should be like 'The Mary Tyler Moore Show,'" he says. "When he grows up, I think he'll have a better understanding."

Young gays who are thinking about coming out are often discouraged when they consider what other people will think about their newly disclosed sexuality. Thomas E. DiNardo, a counseling specialist at University Psychological Services, says closet homosexuals fear rejection and alienation from friends and family.

"Initially, the person may want to keep their sexuality hidden because they feel embarrassed or guilty," he says. "They may be in denial, and they may be thinking, 'Why is this happening to me?'

Uncertainty about the causes of homosexuality gives even more incentive for many gays to stay in the closet. While some researchers believe a person's sexuality is predetermined genetically, others believe it's a learned behavior.

Whatever the cause, most homosexuals wish to avoid explaining why they prefer partners of the same sex, DiNardo says. "Most people don't want to face the fact that they might be gay," DiNardo says. "It's too hard, too painful. It's easier to just be like everyone else."

The college years are often the time when students struggle most with their sexuality, DiNardo says. He suggests they read, ask questions, meet new people and fight back the urge to rush into telling everyone about their sexuality.

DiNardo advises young gays to tell a sibling first, asking him or her what they think parents' reactions might be.

"Start with the premise that everyone you tell will not be supportive," he says. "Assume that rejection is possible and begin carefully assessing the situation. I've seen parents split down the middle on the issue. One may be accepting while the other is very rejecting."

Many parents believe it's just a passing phase, DiNardo says. "They think, 'Oh, he shaved his head last year, and now he's gay this year. I wonder what it'll be next year.' It's not like that. This is not a passing issue."

**Telling the Ones Who Care**

"I first realized I was gay at a very early age," says Ron Conn, a freshman zoology and botany major. "But it was easier not to be public about it. It was very easy to sit back and just be quiet. Being different just made things harder."

Conn came out in high school when he told his close friends that he was bisexual. His friends - even his girlfriend - were supportive, he says.

"I managed to find the most bizarre group of friends," Conn says. "We were all close - more like a family. We were the outcasts. When I came out to them, generally everyone said 'Really? Cool.' There were no extreme male egos to deal with."

Conn says his mother knew he was gay before he even told her. He remembers how she used to prod his brother for information.

"My brother would come up to me and groan and say, 'Mom just gave me another third degree and wants to know what you're doing and what's going on. I told her to ask you.'"

When he was 20, Conn's mother approached him and told him she would support whatever decision he made, whether he chose to pursue relationships with women or with men.

"I know she was hoping I would end up with a girl," Conn says. "But she said she'd support me either way. She was not hurt or sad. She was ready to deal with who I am and not be ashamed of it."

Ever since Conn's parents divorced at a young age, he and his father have drifted apart. Conn says he has no immediate plans of telling his father about his decision to come out.

"I don't hate him," he says. "It's just that I don't see him any more than an acquaintance in a class. I wouldn't just walk up to someone I saw only once or twice a week in a class and say 'Hey, I'm gay.'"

Conn's aunt did, however, find out about her nephew's news, and she has yet to come to terms with it.

"She supports and loves me," Conn says. "But she thinks that if I don't have a boyfriend, how do I know I'm gay? It's just something you know."

Despite Conn's family's mixed reaction to his sexuality, Conn says he has become more comfortable with who he is since coming out of the closet. He is not just a homosexual; he's a botanist, a vegetarian - an individual.

"I have no reason to be ashamed of who I am," he says. "I now have a number of people to relate to in the gay community. I came to Kent knowing one person, and I met 10 through LGBU (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Union) in the first 3 1/2 weeks I was here."

"I want to be viewed as a person and accepted as an individual," Conn says. "People are surprised when they find out I'm gay because I don't run around wearing lipstick and skirts. There is no one set design for anyone or anything. Never guess or assume anything."

**Remaining True to Herself**

Like Conn, Susan Way knew she was gay at a young age. As a teen-ager, she disclosed her sexual preferences to friends in San Diego, which is home to one of the largest gay communities in the country. Way, a junior biological anthropology major, says she found a nurturing environment there - more nurturing than the conservative Ohio town of Tiffin where she spent her childhood.
Way moved west to San Diego after her parents split up when she was 13 years old. She joined a Unitarian church youth group while she was there, and she soon developed a crush on one of the girls in the group. Way was 14.

"I had been questioning my sexuality for quite some time," Way says. "I first came out in the church group during a discussion about sex and sexuality. They all applauded me and were very supportive. I felt very lucky.

"I came out to the rest of my family when I came out to myself," Way says. "There was that initial shock, but most are supportive now."

Way still has not told her grandparents that she is a lesbian, but she plans to ease them into it, she says.

"My girlfriend and I are getting married, and I want to invite them to the wedding," she says. "First, I just want to tell them, 'Grandma, Grandpa, sit down. I'm a lesbian,' and then maybe later I'll tell them I'm getting married. I just want them to understand who I am first."

Way has, for the most part, been confident about her sexuality. But it was during her senior year in high school, when she received a government scholarship to study in Germany, that she seriously considered the consequences of being gay.

Way says she was forced to hide her sexual identity because she feared losing her scholarship and being sent home.

"I lived in a small, coal-mining town near the Polish border," Way says. "I wasn't out because I feared physical violence...Skinheads...and (the consequences of) my host family finding out. My host brother and I had a good relationship. I did end up coming out to him, and it turns out he was gay."

Way offers advice to those who are struggling to find the courage to come out.

"Don't give up, even if you get a negative response. Someone else will listen to you," she says thoughtfully. "Believe in yourself and keep telling more and more people."

Overcoming the Stereotypes

Jeff Zelli worries about growing old by himself, especially now that he has come out of the closet to friends and family.

"I believed I had a clear-cut path in life," says Zelli, a 21-year-old art history major. "I was supposed to find the right girl, get married, have kids and grandkids. Now my path is a lot more vague. It's hard
Zelli came out of the closet to a close friend about a year ago. A few months later, he told his parents.

"They came up to visit me and to see my new apartment," he says. "We had a great time: We went out to dinner, my father helped me out with home improvements.

"I finally sat them down around 11 p.m. and told them I had to tell them something before they went home. That's when I told them I was gay."

Zelli believes his parents suspected he was gay, because in the years leading up to his coming out, he was depressed, hopeless and even suicidal. But they were still shocked to hear the truth.

"Right away my mom brought up all the cliches," he says. "She said to me, 'I don't want my baby boy dying of AIDS.' She asked why we (gays) have parades, since heterosexuals don't.

"My father didn't know how I could be sure I was gay. He thought that once I had sex with a guy, I wouldn't be gay anymore."

Zelli's parents are still coping with his decision to come out. His mother is slowly accepting the truth, while his father continues to believe his son's sexuality is just a passing phase.

"My mother has been great. She's trying hard to learn a lot of things," he says. "My dad is sticking his head in the sand. He wants it to go away."

Zelli's friends have, for the most part, been supportive of his decision. Only one - a former girlfriend from high school - "freaked out" when she heard the news. Although she now accepts his sexuality, Zelli says her initial reaction of shock and disgust has put some distance between the two.

Looking back, Zelli says he has always been gay. From the very beginning of his sexual development, he used to fantasize about men. And he always had been friends with more girls than guys in grade school and high school.

Zelli says coming out forced him to reexamine his life. The process has helped him to rediscover himself, and has brought him a new inner strength, he says.

"I was always handed everything," he says. "My home life was very stable. This has been the first time I really looked at myself and questioned what was on the inside."

Although Zelli and many young homosexuals have made strides by coming out of the closet and acknowledging their identities, outdated stereotypes often trap them into a life filled with discrimination and ignorance.

On Kent State's campus, LGBU tries to help dispel the stereotypes by educating people about homosexuality. Gays come in as many different shapes, colors and sizes as do...
heterosexuals, says Matthew Farrington, a junior history major and co-executive director of LGBU.

"We (LGBU) extend ourselves to straight people," he says. "They must come to terms with who they are and who we are. They have to come to an understanding that we aren't the only ones here."

Way says LGBU is beneficial both for young homosexuals looking to meet other people who have been through the challenges of coming out, and for anyone who is interested in human rights and equality issues for gays, lesbians and bisexuals.

"We're here for people who have roommates, sisters, cousins and parents who are gay. We're here for people who are questioning themselves and for people who want resources," she says.

Dealing with the Decision

Individual counseling is also available through University Psychological Services and Kent's Counseling and Human Development Center.

"We are available to help (young gays and lesbians) decide how to approach the coming-out process," says Maggie Hofstetter, a teaching fellow for Kent's Counseling and Human Development Center. "Coming out is a major life decision. We are here as an objective form of support to help them in battling with their identity."

DiNardo, of University Psychological Services, says counselors are also available to help homosexuals deal with issues of trust in the workplace, AIDS, safe sex, and political and religious dilemmas.

Homosexuals say they know they face these and many other barriers.

But despite the challenges, Parent plans to live as much of a "normal" life as possible. He says he wants to reach out to young students and make a difference in their lives. He wants to be more than just a gay man who is out of the closet.

"For every person that I meet, I don't want to have to say, 'Hi, I'm Jason and I'm gay,'" he says. "I don't want people to ever be afraid of me. The way I see it, the only difference between 'us' and 'them' is who we sleep with and who we fall in love with."

Ali Cybulski is a sophomore magazine journalism major. This is her third contribution to the Burr.

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Reading, ’Riting, ’Rithmetic

Affirmative action has changed the way Kent State recruits students

story by Dendy Fowler and Nicole Wisniewski

Illustration by James Breedlove
When Angel Frasolo was a senior in high school, she was trying to decide where exactly she wanted to go to college. Financial aid played an important role in her decision. But as a white female, she had an advantage and a disadvantage: Her gender might make her eligible for special consideration for some universities or programs, but her race would place her behind minorities.

"In high school I graduated with a friend and both of us had about the same grade-point average," says Frasolo, a sophomore secondary education major. "Our family income was under $30,000 a year while hers was over $100,000. I was in more extracurricular activities, and I had done more community service.

"Still, I didn't qualify for nearly the same amount of scholarships that she did. She happens to be a minority, so she has a full ride. I have always resented that."

Frasolo discovered what a growing number of students run into when applying for college enrollment and scholarships: Not all awards are granted on merit alone. Affirmative action has entered the college arena, benefiting people in certain ethnic classes and with particular characteristics like disabilities and veteran status.

Kent State is no exception. Programs aimed at minorities are used in the university's recruitment process and in awarding scholarships. Although Ohio has no specific goals for affirmative action in its state universities, Nancy Scott, vice president and dean for Enrollment Management and Student Life, has personal minority enrollment goals for Kent State. In fact, she says Kent rarely denies admission to any qualified student who has an interest in a college education.

In Fall 1995, Kent's total enrollment was 20,972. Minority enrollment, which includes African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans and Hispanics, was 1,859 or 8 percent. Scott says the percentage does not truly represent the American non-white population of 19.65 percent, as recorded in 1990 by the Ohio Data Users Center in Columbus. It is closer to Ohio's 12.19 percent non-white population.

This unequal comparison, Scott says, does not prepare Kent State students to do well in a diverse world.

"Our education for all students is only satisfactory when we reflect the diversity of the country," Scott says. "If we are a primarily white institution, students don't get the challenge they need when they go out into the world and deal with a diverse work environment.

"My goal is to overcome past imbalances and eventually we won't have a need for affirmative action programs. America is a blending of various ethnicities and we can learn a lot from each other. Eight percent isn't very
reflective of America."

Campus diversity can play a big role in preparing students for their future careers, agrees Kent State President Carol Cartwright.

"You are going to be working in a world where you cannot be successful if you are uncomfortable dealing with difference," Cartwright says. "If you graduate from here and can't talk to people of different ethnicities and relate to them in a sales meeting, then you weren't prepared. People want to think that it's all about a liberal social conscience. But it's very much about what life skills you'll need that we're supposed to be giving you so you can go out and be successful."

According to Christopher Barker, assistant director of Minority Recruitment, Kent has a program that directly targets underrepresented groups for entrance into the university. However, the admission standards are the same for everyone. The average grade point is 2.5 and the average SAT and ACT scores are 970 and 21.

Kent recruits underrepresented groups by marketing key areas in Northeastern Ohio with the highest concentration of minorities: the inner cities of Cleveland, Akron and Youngstown.

To help prevent minorities from feeling isolated, Scott and Cartwright have been speaking to groups of high school students to discuss ways to make the transition to college easier. Their goal is to target those students already accepted to Kent State and provide them from the start with the information to help make their educational experience a success. Specific programs include STARS and CompuTranisiones, which offer African American and Hispanic freshmen a chance to come to campus before
other new students and get to know people of the same ethnicity. While the Office of Admissions targets these underrepresented groups, many think it is at the expense of the majority. Critics say it gives an unfair advantage to minorities who lack the study skills or educational background to succeed in college and who drop out or fail because they are not as qualified.

When a university accepts a limited number of students, then some of the white students who qualify will automatically be replaced with minorities to fit an affirmative action requirement, says Mahli Mechenbier, a junior pre-dentistry major. "If you interview 250 white students and they all have 4.0 GPAs," she says, "you are going to have to cut some of those people to accommodate minorities, accepting 50 other people who may not be as qualified as the 50 white students who were cut."

But this is a misinterpretation, Barker says. Kent State welcomes all students and tries to create an atmosphere that is conducive to everyone's educational success, he adds. "We're not just letting people in because they are black and we want them to come to Kent," he says. "Yeah, we want you to come to Kent, but if you can't be successful here, we're doing an injustice."

The 1978 Regents of the University of California v. Bakke is the most widely known case regarding university admissions standards and affirmative action. In that case, the U.S. Supreme Court indicated that it was inappropriate to use race as the primary factor in the admissions process. The court ruled in favor of Bakke, a white male who claimed he was denied admission to medical school even though he had higher test scores than some of the minority students who were admitted as part of an affirmative action program. Because of this case, students began to take a closer look at the merits and achievements of one another. The true qualifications of minorities were scrutinized and the perception of "reverse discrimination" grew.

In March, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ruled that the University of Texas law school could not consider race in any way in its admissions process. The ruling affects Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. It would cover universities in other states if it were appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court and upheld.

"We'll all be watching to see what happens," Scott says. "Every institution will be watching. That case could stop any affirmative action endeavors and would color blind all applications."

Kent State administrators say it is a myth to think that "reverse discrimination" occurs at Kent, or that qualified students are turned away so that less qualified minorities can be...
Advocates of affirmative action say it is a system that is pushing for more than just minority opportunities. The end goal: to raise up the underrepresented people of the world.

admitted. As a state university with one of the lowest minimum requirements, Kent State opens its doors to practically any student who qualifies, says Cartwright. She feels most students are not affected by the minority recruitment process, because as she explains: If two students have 4.0 GPAs and one is a minority, Kent chooses both.

“We don’t have to make a choice, which to admit, given two 4.0 students,” Cartwright says. “We would go after both of them and be delighted to admit both of them,” especially now with enrollment at a low, she adds.

Still, some students suggest minority students with less than average grades should be required to take extra classes in high school to earn the higher grades and test scores, then be reconsidered for admission into the university.

“Everybody wants something done for them,” says John, who asked that his name be changed to protect his identity because he fears student reaction to his opinion. “They don’t want to go out and do it for themselves. If they can’t make the grade to get in, they want people to help them. If I couldn’t make it as a baseball player, I wouldn’t do it anymore, or I’d practice until I could do it. So, I’m going to study harder and be smart enough to get in or I’m going to go straight to work.”

Kent State’s Honors College, a program for the university’s intellectually elite students, admits students based on merit. The college also strives to enroll minorities. In spring 1996, the number of minorities in the Honors College was 139 out of 889 total students or 15.6 percent, about 7 percentage points higher than the university average.

The Honors College recruits students by visiting high schools and administering mass mailings, regardless of ethnic origin, to students who earn high scores on SAT or ACT tests, and to students recommended by guidance counselors.

“A minimum of three of us debate every student who comes in, so there is bound to be some subjective element,” Dean Larry Andrews says. “We have to make sure the students who we accept have a reasonable chance of doing well. We have no interest in admitting students that we would be setting up for failure in their first college experience. But at the same time it doesn’t depend just on the students’ paper qualification; it depends on the mixture of students we want to have in Honors for the education benefits of the whole student body.”

ON CAMPUS LIVING

Make the most of your educational experience by taking advantage of the residence hall program at Kent State University. This program is designed to enhance your classroom experience. The halls provide you with opportunities for personal growth and development through living and working with others from diverse backgrounds.
Despite special attempts to recruit minorities into the Honors College, keeping them in the program can be difficult. Andrews says his greatest frustration is losing students who have the potential to achieve but are caught up in the unfamiliar blend of culture surrounding them.

“Recruiting is less frustrating to me than retention sometimes,” Andrews says. “No matter what support minority students may find in the university, many of them are still experiencing culture shock or they may feel isolated in one way or another.”

Rob First, a senior criminal justice major, agrees an effort should be made to target and recruit students of underrepresented populations, but he still thinks minorities are getting “special privileges” where scholarships are concerned.

“It should have nothing to do with your race,” First says. “It is not fair when you have a college fund that only minorities can apply to. How many scholarship funds do you see just for white males? You don’t ever see them, and if you did, there would probably be an uprising.”

For the 1994-95 fiscal year, Kent State awarded more than $4.6 million institutionally funded scholarships to students. Connie Dubick, assistant director in the Student Financial Aid Office, says 13 percent, or about $600,000, of those scholarships were targeted to minorities. Some students think these percentages show how the majority is not suffering.

“Minority scholarships are so small compared to general scholarships,” says Leman Mitchell, a sophomore chemistry major. “White males are in no real danger of being denied funding.”

Advocates of affirmative action say it is a system that is pushing for more than just minority opportunities. The goal: to raise up the underrepresented people of the world and help them to get beyond their often-poor backgrounds.

Kent State is working to give minorities a chance to be successful, Dubick says, an opportunity they’ve historically never had.

“They have had some disadvantages and we are making a commitment to that group,” she says. “Affirmative action means that you are literally expressing an affirmative action to those groups that you’re trying to assist.”

Often it takes awarding scholarships and college admission specifically to members of minority groups in order to achieve that goal. But it can be a harsh reality for students who are overlooked because they do not have the right skin color or are not the right gender.

When students are not accepted for Kent State scholarships, Kent sends out letters informing them of outside scholarships for which they can apply.

“We tell people about the programs and scholarships available and encourage them to apply,” Scott says. “But we don’t want to give out the promise of aid because students have to fit into a certain criteria to be eligible.”

Unfortunately, Dubick says, Kent State doesn’t have enough money to give out scholarships to all the meritorious students who apply. “Most universities don’t have sufficient funds to give out a lot of scholarships,” she says. “We can’t bring in as large as a talented group as we want to bring in because we can’t offer them all funding.”

Because there’s so much at stake for both sides, the attitudes toward affirmative action continue to polarize. Michenbier, an Asian American, reflects on her success and feels guilty sometimes knowing she has a minority scholarship, while others just as deserving have to work during school to pay for their tuition.

“The average white male is not eligible for anything, and only half of them have the jobs to pay for their tuition and apartment,” she says. “Here I sit, no smarter than any of them, with a scholarship that took into account my minority status, as well as my grades. That isn’t fair.”

Dendy Fowler is a junior rhetoric and communications major. This is her second contribution to The Burr. Nicole Wisniewski is a junior magazine journalism major. This is her third contribution to The Burr.
From the dorm to the apartment and sometimes to the courtroom, students discover the hassles of living off campus.
story by Yamuna Ramachandran
photo illustrations by Cory Devereaux

Every year, swarms of Kent State students migrate from their dorms and homes into their own apartments. Many look forward to escaping the rigid rules of home and the dorms, such as visitation curfews, smoking and alcohol restrictions and dealing with RAs. What many don’t foresee are the problems that arise when inexperienced leasers eagerly sign without reading the fine print.

Some students have experienced larger-than-life quandaries. Nasser Midamba has learned a lesson from signing a lease without fully understanding it. Amy Romig and Geoffrey Martin might have avoided some problems had they gotten their promises in writing. And Ben Hanisko, Paul Miles and their three former roommates could have settled their dilemma out of court if they only had documented proof of their apartment’s original state.

Meet these students, delve into their sagas and learn what they have learned.

A Problem Around Every Corner

Signing a lease was a new concept to Nasser Midamba. In Kenya, where he was born and raised, students live with their families. But here in America, where students move away into dorms or apartments, Midamba felt pressured to secure an apartment before school started. Not knowing where to seek help, he signed a lease without understanding it.

Midamba subleased a room from his friend at Glenmorris Apartments in August 1994, not realizing that conflicts with his roommate would one day lead to police involvement. As the problems escalated, Midamba decided to move out and sought help from the management. But he says he was turned away.

What Midamba didn’t know until then was that he had signed an apartment-style lease, where up to four people are mutually responsible for one contracted amount; if one person doesn’t hold up his or her end of the bargain, everyone can be evicted. He says Glenmorris never informed him that there were two types of leases he could sign, the second being an individual-style lease, in which each person who signs the lease is responsible for only his or her own part of the rent. Under the individual-style lease, nonpayment of rent by one tenant doesn’t affect the status of the other residents.

Because Midamba himself was a subleaser, he had to take the same type of lease signed by the original tenant, which was an apartment-style lease.

Glenmorris is one of the few apartment complexes in Kent that offers two types of leases. According to a rental price chart provided by Glenmorris, rent for an apartment-style lease varies depending on the apartment building location. The closer the building is to campus, the higher the rent. A 12-month lease in the Phase II location – about a five-minute walk to the edge of campus – runs $525 a month. On the other hand, the cost of an individual-style, 12-month lease for one person in a Phase II apartment is $576 a month.

Midamba’s roommate, Jonasis Smith, had lived in the apartment for three years. Since Smith was the primary leaser, he had to personally give Glenmorris his permission to let Midamba off the contract. A tenant can be freed from a lease only if all the other roommates agree. But before Midamba’s name could be removed from the contract, he had to find a subleaser.

Midamba was leaving for Seattle over his winter break and wanted all the details of his move taken care of before he left. He sought the help of the management and was upset when office personnel could not help him find a subleaser. Eventually, he found a subleaser on his own, at the 11th hour, just days before he left.

“I met the subleaser for approximately 15 minutes before I went and signed the papers,” Smith says. “But when I came back, Nasser had already left for Seattle.”

Upon his arrival back to Kent, Midamba assumed Smith had not yet gone to the office to release him from the contract. He expected to stay in Glenmorris until his new apartment in College Towers was ready to move into the following week.

Smith, however, quickly informed Midamba that the contract had been canceled and if he expected to stay, he would have to pay. Smith gave Midamba a notice demanding that he pay $100 by that evening or he would kick Midamba out. This led to a heated argument, in the middle of which Smith called the police. But because Midamba was able to show the police a copy of the original lease, he stayed in the apartment that night. In the end, the locks to the apartment were changed at Smith’s request, and Midamba moved into a studio apartment in College Towers.

Howard Denemark, an associate professor of law at the University of Akron, says students like Midamba, who are not familiar with the leasing process, may feel they have been treated unfairly by apartment management when, in reality, the problem lies with roommates. “It’s very easy for students to think landlords are evil and they’re out to get you. But it seems there is a bigger problem with the roommate,” he says.

Julie Cox, leasing and marketing manager for Glenmorris, adds that one reason such conflicts arise is because many new tenants have never leased with each other or have never leased at all.

When roommates become rivals, there’s not much the management can do, unless all parties are in agreement, Cox says. Midamba agrees and says, “It’s the lack of knowing the people you move into an apartment with (that creates problems).”

Tensions had been building between Midamba and Smith for several...
eral months before police were finally called to settle their differences. For example, the roommates had scrapped over financial issues.

Glenmorris management delivered Smith and Midamba several eviction notices, which Midamba says were a result of Smith's late rent payment and bounced checks. However, Smith claims the late payments were a result of Midamba not paying his share of the rent on time.

The problems escalated when Smith's girlfriend began inhabiting their apartment. Midamba kept quiet at first, he says, but finally voiced his opinion when he began missing his space.

"The girl had been there since the fall of '94," Midamba says. The lease states guests may stay overnight only occasionally.

Gunnar Hultgren, assistant director of Commuter and Off-Campus Student Organization, blames lack of communication for the problems. He says Midamba's dilemma should have been solved through one of three channels — by talking with his roommate, the girlfriend or the landlord. Terminating the lease should not have been difficult, he says, because it was already broken after the guest had violated the visitor policy.

"You learn these things by experience, and you learn them when you have to," Denemark says. "The world is a very simple place in the dorms and at home."

Though Midamba feels Glenmorris management took advantage of him, he says he won't let that happen again. Now he knows his rights inside and out.

"Right now I would be more cautious. Nobody can just point and tell me to sign."

Put It in Writing

Amy Romig, a junior advertising major, and her fiance, Geoffrey Martin, a senior criminal justice major, thought they had found the ideal apartment in Silver Meadows: affordable, yet newly remodeled, and spacious, with a second bedroom for Romig to convert into a graphics studio.

Romig and Martin paid their security deposit, and in the summer of 1994, Diane Brown, the marketing consultant, called them to say a renovated apartment was available. The two expected a completely remodeled unit, but that's not what they got.

Romig and Martin say the apartment they were given was only 85 percent renovated and featured worn-out carpet and beat-up floors.

"Somebody came a week before we were supposed to sign our lease and didn't have a place to stay," Romig says. The landlord put them in Romig and Martin's spot.

But according to John D'Altorio, Silver Meadows property manager, "My policy is, if we promised someone a new apartment, they get a new apartment," adding that there were no new apartments at the time Romig and Martin moved in. Brown agrees and says tenants were promised not "completely" but "newly" renovated apartments.

D'Altorio says all tenants knew the complex was undergoing renovations at that time.

"We wanted to start in December of '94, but financing took a lot longer than we had anticipated." The delays meant that the tenants had to shelve their hopes for new apartments until at least July 1995, and D'Altorio says tenants were informed of the new timetable by letter.

Brown explains the reason for the mixup over Romig and Martin's apartment.

"We had a couple come in from New York City, and we had to do a quick switch because we couldn't let them sit there with their U-Haul," she says. They arrived before Romig and Martin were to move in, and because theirs was the most renovated apartment available at that time, the newcomers were placed in it. Brown says the apartment Romig and Martin were housed in was identical to the one they expected to receive.

Martin claims otherwise.

"It was move-in day, and the management said if we don't like it, we could get our deposit back and move somewhere else," Martin says. However, with school beginning in just a few days, there was no time to hunt for a new apartment.

Unfortunately, not much could have been done to improve this situation because Romig and Martin didn't obtain anything in writing. Hultgren says verbal agreements are for reserving apartments only.

"The way you protect yourself is to see the unit before you sign," Denemark says, adding that Romig and Martin could have just
walked away or done business earlier.

"When you're a student and have very limited time and money, the lease is the only thing to work with," he adds. Denemark has a philosophy: When a landlord makes a guarantee, like promising someone a remodeled apartment or a new sink in the bathroom, get it written into the lease.

With nowhere to turn, Romig and Martin resolved to make the best with what they had. But what they had soon sprung a leak. Shortly after they moved in, water began spewing from their kitchen ceiling.

Romig followed standard procedure and called the 24-hour maintenance line. She says the maintenance man promised to fix the leak right away, but, "I didn't hear from him for two hours, I called back and said, 'Did you do anything about it?' He said the people above us were thawing their refrigerator, and it would take time to dry up. I assumed he either called or went up there."

But when it didn't dry up, and the water began to leak faster, Romig herself went upstairs and told her neighbors about the leak. "They immediately looked under their sink because they had an overflow bucket. They said no one had come out or called them because they didn't have a phone."

Eventually, Romig and the other tenants tried their hand at plumbing and stopped the leak themselves. Then Romig put in another call to the maintenance man. Romig says she was furious, but remained cool-headed as she addressed the man again. "I said, 'I don't like being lied to, and you lied to me.' He jumped on the defense and told me he didn't like being called a liar." Then, Romig says, he threatened to shut off the building's water.

Experts say this crisis could have been remedied. The solution, they say, was for Romig and Martin to pay their rent into an escrow account. Law allows tenants to pay rent into such an account through the clerk of courts until the problem is fixed, says Steve Baughman, housing specialist at the Fair Housing Contact Service (FHCS) in Akron. Tenants who exercise this option can't be evicted because they've actually paid the rent on time. Then the landlord has to petition the court to get the money to pay for repairs.

Some maintenance problems pose a health hazard, and in that case, Denemark suggests calling the housing office to report a housing violation. Leaks can be especially serious, he says, because "all the wonderful diseases you don't think exist anymore" live in the pipes and can permeate an apartment.

Romig says the health department did come to look at their leak, but it still took quite a while for the ceiling to be fixed.

D'Alcorio says the reason it took so long was because Romig and Martin were never at home to give maintenance personnel permission to enter. No one called to respond to the notes left on the door, he adds. He says tenants must realize that repair people cannot enter an apartment without permission.

But, Romig says, "I don't want anybody in the apartment when I'm not there, and they would come when I was in school. I pay rent. It's not my problem when I'm in school."

Finally, on Nov. 30, 1994, the ceiling was plastered over.

This January, Romig and Martin moved into the long-awaited apartment promised to them one and a half years ago. They said they chose to stay in Silver Meadows despite the problems because it would have been too big of a chore to find a new place.

"The timing has been terrible," says Romig, who works 20 to 30 hours a week during school. "It's December, you're finishing up school, and it's Christmas. It's not the time to be looking for a new apartment, so we decided to re-sign."

Hultgren says, "I'm afraid school schedules don't figure into the law too much."

If I Knew Then What I Know Now

In 1993, Paul Miles and Ben Hanisko moved into Holly Park with three of their friends. They moved out with a lawsuit. These five tenants took Holly Park to court because they felt they were unfairly denied a complete refund of their $1,000 security deposit.

"I didn't expect any problems because you had to give them everything but blood to get in," says Miles, a senior radio and TV productions major. "You had to tell them how much your parents made and give them credit references."

Later, when moving out in August 1994, the roommates counted on a security deposit reimbursement. They say office personnel assured them not to worry, but a month rolled around, and there was still no check.

"Under Ohio law, (landlords) have to refund your security deposit within 30 days of the end of your lease," said Hanisko, a 1994 graduate of rhetoric and communications.

Mary Pamer, business manager for Associated Estates, which runs Holly Park, agrees.

"Our policy is to return the entire security deposit whenever possible," she says. "An accounting of the deposit monies and an itemized list of deductions is mailed within 30 days of lease expiration."

Normal wear and tear, which includes standard suite painting and
carpet cleaning (provided the resident has completed the first year of the lease) is not to be deducted from the deposit, Pamer says.

The refund check Miles and Hanisko finally received was about $400 short. Hanisko says they were charged for routine carpet cleaning and for stealing the drip pans on the stove, which he clearly remembers being there when moving out of the apartment.

Miles filed a small claims lawsuit. Thirty days later, they went to court. And won.

Associated Estates refused to comment on the specifics of the case, except to say, “The situation referenced does not follow our operational guidelines and should be viewed as the exception and not the rule. We have a professional staff trained to provide timely return of deposits and service to all residents.”

Eventually, the tenants were refunded the remainder of their security deposit, plus a few hundred dollars. Holly Park also repaid them for the fee of filing a suit, which was about $27.

Miles, Hanisko and the others took this to be a learning experience. Hanisko says student are easily manipulated because they are too busy to read and understand their leases before signing them. He has some seasoned advice:

- When moving in, read, understand and make a copy of the lease.
- Be thorough when completing the checklist, and make a copy of it.
- Unreported chips in the bathroom sink will come back to haunt you.
- Keep records of everything you tell the office.
- When moving out, walk through the apartment with the landlord to see everything he or she sees. “They’re very picky.”
- Call the office to make sure everything is turned in, such as keys.
- If your deposit isn’t returned within 25 days, remind the management that the legal limit is 30 days.
- And above all, take photographs.

Photos can be a tenant’s most solid pieces of evidence Denemark says, “I know people who have done it and have been well rewarded for it.”

Protecting Yourself

Learning the law is the best solution to the inevitable problems that arise when students move off campus.

Of course, not many tenants study the law, Hultgren says. That is why “most people don’t realize that the only reason landlords can keep security deposits is when the tenant damages the premises.”

Baughman agrees. “It’s the landlords’ business to know what they’re doing,” he says, “and it’s
the unknowing student who can be taken advantage of easily.

At Kent State, COSO acts as an advocate, speaking out for the needs, rights and concerns of commuter and off-campus students. Among its services is aiding students who experience landlord troubles. “The most important thing to know is who to go to if you have a problem,” Hultgren says. “If people think they’re being taken advantage of, they can come to us.”

All COSO members have had some training in Ohio Tenant Landlord Law and can advise students. A worthwhile but lesser known service is the landlord complaint file, which has on file the names, addresses and phone numbers of landlords along with any complaints filed against them.

“If there’s a landlord who gives a lot of trouble and has a lot of complaints, we’ll have the list,” Hultgren says.

International students are sometimes considered easy prey. Students like Midamba, who are used to a culture where students live at home, may learn the law only when it’s necessary.

Hultgren relates the worst case he has heard: “A landlord rented an apartment to a foreign student, wrote the lease in pencil, erased it, and rewrote it in pen.”

Any problem too complicated for COSO will be directed to the FHCS. The FHCS provides general information about tenant and landlord rights, and offers mediation services with a third party, if both parties agree to meet to discuss the situation.

“Sometimes, we’ll give referrals to lawyers if a situation is so complex that they need the expert advice of an attorney,” Baughman says. “Most often, people will get themselves into trouble and then call us to see what they can do. Some good advice would be to call us prior to signing a lease.”

Of course, experts point out, the landlord is not always at fault. It’s easy for those who have lived only the simple life of the dorms or home to think landlords are evil, Denemark says.

“But for every honest tenant, there is a dishonest one. Landlords often have to be harsh to treat everyone the same.”

Yamuna Ramachandran is a senior magazine journalism major. This is her third contribution to The Burr.
Jennifer Buckley crosses the line as Kent State's first female runner to train for the Olympic trials

She rounds the track for the fifth time in 10 minutes. Even pace. Graceful strides. Steady breaths. Her short, light brown hair flops against her head with each step. Her face is flushed, and drops of sweat brim over the tops of her eyebrows and run down her rosy cheeks.

At the end of a 20-minute jog, Jennifer Buckley gulps in the cold drinking-fountain water, then turns to her coach. With her knees locked, she pulls the bottom of her T-shirt over her face, wiping the sweat from her forehead. She asks coach Doug Molnar what to do next.

"How about six 100-meters sprints?" he half asks, half tells.

And she shoots off around the track, never whining for a break, never complaining of being tired, even though she is past the point of exhaustion. Why? Because Jennifer Buckley is in training, hoping to make it to the 1996 Summer Olympics.

During the week of June 14, Buckley will be the first woman from Kent State to run in the Olympic Trials. She's nervous, excited, scared and uncertain of what she will face. But no matter what happens, Buckley will always be in love with running.

"It was probably my dad who got me started," Buckley says. "He ran marathons when I was really little. He'd run a 10K, and with that race there was always a one-mile 'fun run,' which, not to be sexist, was for the wives and the kids."

At the time, Buckley was 5 years old and her brother was 4. Together they would race in the fun run, winning ribbons for finishing the course.

But Buckley hasn't always been a runner. For five years of her serious gymnast. "It was really intense," she remembers, "and I got burned out. It's so easy to do that with gymnastics." So she moved on to other sports, like soccer and softball.

Now the 5-foot, 4-inch athlete is in her ninth season of running, including eight years of competition through high school and college.

"I like running," she says, "I really do. But I miss the team sport. When I run an 800-meter, it's not the entire Kent team. It's just me."

The 21-year-old graduated from Kent State in December with a 3.97 G.P.A. With a bachelor of science degree in secondary education and concentrations in English and math, she is qualified to teach either subject. But instead of jumping right into the classroom, Buckley plans to attend graduate school in the fall, majoring in English literature. Her goal is to obtain her master's and doctorate degrees, and eventually become a university professor.

"I like school and learning, but I don't like the baby-sitting aspect..."
of teaching high school," she says honestly. "I did my student teaching at Hudson Middle School, and it was a wonderful experience. But in the middle of the class, this kid just threw a pencil across the room. It's like, 'Why did you just do that?' I know he was only a seventh-grader, but I would never have even thought of doing that."

Buckley is just as genuine and straightforward in all aspects of her life, her running partner Karyn Pomfrey says. A senior elementary education major who has run track for all of her four years at Kent State, Pomfrey says she admires Buckley's motivation.

"She's so dedicated in everything that she does," Pomfrey says. "And it's not just with track; she's that way with academics, too. And her work ethic is amazing. She just knows what she needs to do, and she does it. To be a world-class runner, that's how you need to be."

The past two years, Buckley made it to the National Collegiate Athletic Association track and field championships, which include indoor and outdoor competitions for the nation's elite college competitors. Her high scores earned her spots both years in the USA Track and Field Championships.

"You have to hit certain times to get into that. They're pretty hard times," she says, a little embarrassed to admit her talent. "Not too many college students make it."

Because 1996 is an Olympic year, this year's Track and Field Championships will double as the Olympic Trials. That means the qualifying times were even tougher. To qualify for the 800-meter last year, runners had to finish in 2:08.05. This year, the qualifying time was changed to 2:05.05. Once again, Buckley qualified, running a 2:03.01.

"It's unbelievable that I've come this far," Buckley says. "I'll be running on the same track as Carl Lewis! Some days it will hit me - this is the coolest!"

Buckley's enthusiasm shows in her face and in her voice. Friends say she is a funny woman, sarcastic at times, and truly dedicated to achieving her Olympic dreams. Her honest nature and friendly, cooperative personality make it easy for people to want her to succeed.

At the trials, up to 24 women will compete in the 800-meter, which is Buckley's forte. To make it to the Olympics, she needs to run the race in under two minutes, Assistant Track Coach Doug Molnar says. Molnar, who has been coaching Buckley for about three years, says her goal is within reach.

"She's extremely talented, and I'm confident that she can do it," he says, watching her run around the track through his wire-rimmed glasses. "After all, that's the goal. I just hope she can do it at the right time in the right place."

But does Buckley think she can do it? Blinking hard on her cornflower blue eyes, she admits she's not sure, and says she's trying not to put too much pressure on herself.

"I think it's great that I've gotten this far," she says, smiling, "but the odds of me making the team are tough. I'll be one of the youngest women there. I've seen women that are 30 and 32 years old that are still running, and running well. I figure I have 10 or 12 more years in the sport.

"I'm a realist - some may say I'm a pessimist. I have an outside shot at making the Olympics. It will be disappointing if I don't make it. I mean, this is every kid's dream. So I'm giving myself until the year 2000, when my body is fully ready."

Despite the odds, Buckley trains, preparing to rise to the challenge. Everyday, she wakes at 7:30 a.m. and runs for 30 minutes. Then, she goes directly to the Fieldhouse, where she lifts weights. At 2 p.m., the real practice begins.

If it's a hard practice, Buckley starts off by running a 200, a 400 and then another 200, with just two minutes of rest in between.

Then she'll jog for 10 minutes, before jumping into a set of sprints: a 600, a 400, a 300, a 200 and then a 100, doing it again when she's finished. To cool down, she runs for 20 minutes.

"It's a long practice and I'm running at really fast paces," Buckley says. "Plus I'm tired at the beginning. I'm training when I'm already tired, so I learn to train through the pain and through being tired. That way, when it happens during a race, you don't think, 'I want to stop.' You just keep going because you know you can. You run through it."

Molnar, a former college track runner, has blended his personal experiences and knowledge of the sport with ideas from other coaches to create Buckley's specific training program.

"Right now we're working on strength and endurance, which are two keys for running the 800-meter," he says. "For strength, she'll run anything, ranging from 10 200 sprints, to just 800 runs. For endurance, she'll do long runs - 40-minute or hour-long runs. And she lifts (weights) two to three times a week. For her, this is definitely a seven-day-a-week job."

Buckley says she relies on her parents to help her through the intense training. And her parents say they support her 100 percent.

"Jennifer has always been a very successful, motivated individual," says Kathy Buckley, Jennifer's mom. "And we discussed this with her when we knew (going to the trials) was a possibility. It really is the opportunity of a lifetime, and, for her, the timing was optimal.
I've been running for so long,' Buckley says. 'I know exactly when to move my arms and when to move each leg. I know how fast I'm going and how fast I need to be going.'
Every Saturday at midnight, film fanatics get set to do the Time Warp again.

Story by Kathleen Collins and Andi Lucas

photography by Tanya Ackerman
We love virgins here," says a tall, long-haired man standing in the corner. "You're not a virgin are you?" he asks the unsuspecting female as she walks into the lobby of the Highland Theater in Akron.

The mysterious man is wearing nothing but a long, black overcoat and black high heels. He walks closer to Caeli Twark, and she stares into a face with smeared blood-red lips and eyes outlined in black. He towers over her 5-foot, 5-inch frame, and warns, "You better keep your eyes open because you're in for a show."

Before the senior radio and television major has a chance to respond to the stranger, she is told to empty her pockets and to raise her hands above her head. She is searched by a security guard for weapons and alcohol. Her friend laughs at the nervous look on Twark's face and yells, "She's a Rocky Horror virgin!"

"Rocky Horror Picture Show" virgins are singled out and humiliated by film enthusiasts and actors at the Highland and theaters all over the country. But what keeps these viewers coming back is neither the riveting storyline of the movie nor the tremendous acting ability of the live actors. It's the audience participation that turns a person into a Rocky Horror cult follower.

With toast and toilet paper zinging overhead, viewers shouting retorts to movie lines and costumed audience members acting out scenes, Rocky Horror has become a Saturday-at-midnight tradition for thousands.

When it was released in 1975, however, Rocky Horror was not well accepted. In fact, film critics hated it. And no wonder. The musical/horror flick/comedy/drama takes place in Denton, Ohio. A young, innocent couple, Brad (Barry Bostwick) and Janet (Susan Sarandon), are plagued by a flat tire in a rainstorm, so they seek help at an old castle. There, Brad and Janet unknowingly encounter aliens called "Transsexuals" from the galaxy "Transylvania," and their lives are changed forever.

Slowly a loyal group came to enjoy dressing as the characters and acting out the parts on stage, Professor Robert West says. "Victoria Drag" (Dave Garbor) imitates Dr. Frank on the Highland Theater stage (facing page). At right, a castmember plays the part of Dr. Frank's 'creation.'

**What's in the Bag?**

Kent State graduate Luke Hannah enjoys the movie so much he is a member of the Rocky Horror Fan Club. Before every midnight showing, he prepares what he calls his "Rocky Bag" — and it's not buttered popcorn and jujubes, either. Like other Rocky Horror veterans, Hannah knows not to show up empty-handed.

If you're a curious "virgin" who wants in on their secret, get set because here's what you'll need and why.

First, Hannah advises, pack a bag of uncooked rice.

"At the beginning, during the wedding scene, people in the movie throw rice, so the audience throws rice," he says. And he does mean throw. Hurl, in fact. Minutes after the scene ends, grains of Uncle Ben's pass through the air.

"I remember one time I woke up in the morning after I had been to the movie and rolled over and looked at my pillow. I thought there were maggots all over it," Hannah says. "(Then) I realized that it was rice that fell out of my hair."

Two other essential items for your bag of goodies are a newspaper and a squirt gun. When Brad and Janet step out of their car in a rainstorm, they cover their heads with newspapers. Follow suit and squirt your gun to simulate rain. But remember, DO NOT put the newspaper on top of your head a minute too soon (i.e., when Brad and Janet are still in the car). You will immediately be deemed a "virgin," which will be shouted by your viewing partners — a most embarrassing situation.

Toilet paper, preferably Scottissue, is another item to bring along on your adventure. When the character of Dr. Scott enters the lab and Brad yells, "Great Scott," it's your cue to throw rolls of toilet paper up in the air. A helpful hint: Unroll the toilet paper a little before throwing it to create a streaming effect.

"Toilet paper was everywhere," Twark remembers. "It was all over the chairs and covered most of the floor. We barely dug ourselves out before it was time to throw the toast."

Yes, break out the toaster, and turn the monitor up to high, because you'll also need to pack toast, preferably burned. At one point in the movie, Dr. Frank-n-Furter (Tim Curry), the owner of the castle, proposes a toast. Reach in your bag, pull out the toast and throw it with a vengeance.

And don't forget the deck of cards. Dr. Frank sings a touching jingle, which includes the lyrics, 'Cards for sorrow, cards for pain.' Shuffle like mad.

Noisemakers, confetti and a bell also come in handy during a Rocky Horror expedition. Blow on the noisemaker just after Dr. Frank's creation speech, throw the confetti at the end of the "Charles Atlas Song" reprise, and ring the bell when Dr. Frank asks, "Did you hear a bell ring?"

**Shout it Out!**

Hannah says these and other audience antics developed because "Rocky Horror" can be hard to follow — and even boring at times.
So viewers started yelling and throwing things during scenes to make it more exciting. It caught on and is now a major part of watching the movie. The most frequent utterances from the audience are “Asshole!” (shouted whenever Brad’s name is mentioned or he enters the room), and “Slut!” (yelled whenever Janet’s name is mentioned or she walks into the room).

One other aspect of experiencing the movie is the “Time Warp,” a dance that Dr. Frank and his friends live for. When it comes on the screen, join the crowd and flood the stage. And then, “Take a jump to the left, and then a step to the right. Put your hands on your hips, and squeeze your knees in tight. It’s a pelvic thrust that really drives you insane. Let’s do the Time Warp again!”

“It’s really just a fun time,” Hannah says. “It’s sort of a fantasy world where you set the real world aside and do things you ordinarily wouldn’t do.”

Stepping Off the Screen

Besides yelling out witty quips and throwing things during the movie, audience members also get involved in Rocky Horror by acting out scenes and playing the characters. Robert Baldwin, a freshman psychology major, plays the character of the butler Riff Raff at the Highland. Before the movie starts, he interacts with audience members to get them excited for the show.

“We let the audience know that this movie can be offensive, but the most important thing is to have fun,” he says.

Dave Garbor has played the lead role of Dr. Frank for about 12 years in the Akron area and currently stars at the Highland, where the movie has been playing weekly for three years.

He says many different kinds of people come to the movie. On average, 65 to 85 people come to the Highland each Saturday for a midnight viewing of Rocky Horror.

“A lot of people just come to see what it’s all about,” he says. “Each week is different because the audience is different. If the audience is really into it, then we’re more outrageous.”

Robert West, associate professor of Journalism and Mass Communication, says Rocky Horror didn’t become popular with the general public until it was shown as a midnight movie.

A movie becomes cult, West says, when a segment of the public admires it and watches it over and over. He says some cult films, like “Casablanca,” are discovered by admiring critics. But others, like Rocky Horror, catch on and draw fans despite negative reviews.

“Rocky Horror is one of those movies that the public discovered,” he says. “Slowly a loyal group came to enjoy it. Then they began to dress as the characters.”

Alas, It’s Over

After the movie is finished and the actors take their final bow, Twink helps her friend pick up the cards and toilet paper that cover the floor. She almost slips on rice as she places leftover props into her friend’s bag to be used another Saturday night.

As she puts on her coat, she once again notices the tall, dark figure looming in the corner. As she looks over at him, he smiles and leaves. Her friend laughs. “You’re not a virgin anymore!”

Kathleen Collins is a senior magazine journalism major. This is her first contribution to The Burr. Aud Lucas is a senior magazine journalism major. This is her fifth contribution to The Burr.
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featuring a variety of fine foods including fresh carved meats and assorted pastries

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