Spying On Carol
EDITOR'S NOTE

It was our last night in New York interviewing Kent State alumnus Bob Borden. In the city that never sleeps, writer Rebecca Anderson, photographer Diane Benner and I weren't about to go home. We went to Down the Hatch, a bar/restaurant on Mercer Street in Greenwich Village and made a vow not to go to sleep.

By 1 a.m., we were throwing coasters across the room trying to get them into an empty pitcher when Rebecca stopped everything and said to me, "What do you want to do with the rest of your life? Would you want to move to New York?" Rebecca is graduating in December, and I am graduating in May, and we can't seem to stop talking about the future.

"I used to live here," Rebecca continued. Intrigued, I fished for details: It was after her freshman year at Kent State. She had modeled for the fashion school and had heard from several people that she could be the next Kate Moss if she went to New York. "You can always go to school," they said. "If you were here yesterday, I could've got you a part in a movie," her friend Steven, an intern at Geoffrey Beene in New York at the time, encouraged her. And that was the comment that sent her packing in late July 1993 without a lot of money, without insurance, without any job prospects and without calling her mother.

Everyday was spent looking for opportunities. "I went to an audition for a music video for a sleazy rock and roll band," she says. Weeks were spent waiting for a return call. And rejections were plentiful. At summer's end, she had lost hope and was penniless. Paris USA, a modeling organization, had offered to arrange a photo shoot, but by this time her mind was made up; she was returning to Kent State as a news journalism major. As she drove home, the rock and roll band left her a message offering her a spot in their music video.

She decided to stay in Kent.

In college, we always think we're at the prime location for instant success. The truth is we have to work for it. Sure, there's a little bit of fate involved, and we are presented with a variety of at least 1,000 paths, but we choose which direction we're going in.

Don't get discouraged, just the fact that we're here is a start. But don't limit yourself either.

This semester's Burr delves into the unknown world of the after-grad. To some of us, it will come very easily. Take for instance, composer Halim el Dabh. It took him one performance seated on the edge of the Nile in Egypt, and he was an instant success.

To the rest of us, the road to life fulfillment will need a lot of paving. Alumnus Harry Vincent is the epitome of a person who has worked hard his whole life toward success. After eight abdominal surgeries, a stroke and two kidney transplants, Vincent completed a 45-day, 3,119-mile trek across the United States.

For me, who knows where I'll be travelling this May. I've always worked hard to get where I'm going, and I'm not about to stop now. But I know I've also had my fair share of luck.

And does Rebecca regret not going back to New York? "No, I don't think that life was the one for me," she says. "I'll really never know."

I have no doubts that she'll be back in New York soon, but this time, she'll be going as the next Woodward or Bernstein.
Eleven years ago in a small Pennsylvania town, two teen-age musical geniuses broke out of the strait-jackets that were their prospective high school band uniforms and collaborated on inventing yet-unheard noise. The gold that resulted from their insurgent alchemy was Nine Inch Nails, the most calculatingly nihilistic band to ever win a Grammy.

The town of Mercer, Pa., delivered to drummer Chris Vrenna, of nearby Erie, two artistic soulmates: an electronic drum machine and experimental lyricist/musician Trent Reznor. Vrenna met Reznor when he answered an ad for the instrument that brought him the sound he was looking for.

Their bond was intensified through poverty in a dank Cleveland apartment, technically an abandoned storefront, where they used LPs for currency and, as Vrenna put it, scraped together money for a burger. The fast food staple was Vrenna's quest on another occasion, when he was distracted en route to Burger King by the hypnotic cacophony of Reznor's yet-unreleased song "Down In It." Before the intro was even finished, Vrenna had to be part of it.

"I knew I was perfect for the gig," Vrenna says.

Reznor gave Vrenna the tape knowing they shared an interest in the same kinds of music. The song lured Vrenna into Reznor's artistic imagination and into his band, but the Vrenna who once sat on the other side of the airwaves at WKSR as a
radio/TV major was definitely not capable of being an artistic clone, according to his former professors. He and Reznor are two very different people; while Reznor “is Nine Inch Nails,” as an early press release stated, Vrenna is not.

Journalism and mass communication Professor Robert West says his former student was ahead of the mainstream but not necessarily a “shocker” like his partner Trent Reznor. “Reznor is more extreme, more into the show-biz end of things,” says West, who teaches a course on rock music and youth culture. “Chris was always more into the musician side than the message.”

As a drummer, Vrenna has surpassed the traditional expectations of his predecessors, from Ringo Starr to Bill Berry of REM. He has direct creative impact on the band and doesn’t follow the list of band members as “... and the drummer.”

West knew Vrenna when he was just making the transition from his first band, Cleveland’s Exotic Birds, to the Nails. He would talk to Vrenna in and out of class. One of their favorite topics was the music industry.

“Chris was never, never negative, and not arrogant. He is not the person you see on stage,” West says. “I doubt that he personally believes as much as he shouts.”

As a lab assistant in the editing suites, the future mega-million-dollar rock musician was helpful, hard-working and conscientious, says Professor Gene Stebbins, coordinator of the radio-TV program. The only thing unreliable about him was his hair color.

“Every semester it was different,” he says, laughing. “He didn’t flaunt any of this, though. He was just a nice guy.”

Despite Vrenna’s current success, Stebbins is more aware of Vrenna’s early band life than his career with the Nails. “Slam-bang rock just isn’t my thing,” he says. He recollects Vrenna’s move back and forth from the band scene to the academic world, always carrying an unexplained disillusionment with him but never completely cutting off his ties to the Nails. One semester before graduation, Nine Inch Nails were signed.

“I worked with Trent until 3 in the morning on ‘Pretty Hate Machine,’” Vrenna says matter-of-factly, “then I went to this internship at Channel 8. I edited for the 7 a.m. news from 3 a.m. to 7 a.m. Then I drove back to my 8:50 a.m. class. I had classes until around 1 p.m. and spent the afternoon working on research for a professor. I’d get a few hours sleep and go back downtown Cleveland to work with Trent again. I did that all semester.”

Through this, he maintained a 4.0 average in his major.

“I don’t know how he did it,” West says. “Let’s face it. The guy’s a genius.”

In a telephone interview, Vrenna sounds every bit the way his professors described him: friendly and unpretentious. His conversation is so rapid and restlessly intelligent that it’s hard to keep up with him. Overall, he’s funny as hell, with a sarcasm that’s more brains than bite.

The television can be heard in the background. He seems to watch intently as he talks, without losing his train of thought, unless he wants to.

“Oh, cool!” he blurts out 15 seconds into the conversation. “They have the ‘Toy Story’ figures at Burger King now. I gotta get one.”

He is someone who is easily bored. Full steam into a quickfire ramble about his enormous toy collection, he describes with fascination the African-American, “sex-education” doll with an anatomically correct fetus inside her womb, the rare Ken doll with an earring and regrets that Mr. Potato Heads aren’t what they used to be. Then he easily flows back into discussing the career that has him “set for life.”

Reznor’s has always been the face of Nine Inch Nails: deadly pale and sullen but enigmatically attractive, somewhat like Jim Morrison’s was for The Doors. Only diehard fans know who Vrenna is, and few even know what he looks like.

Vrenna says he is not resentful but actually grateful for Reznor’s greater level of fame, elaborating that his friend has a hard time just going out for dinner or to a movie without getting spotted or harassed.

Vrenna says that he thrives on tinkering with sound and prefers being the man-behind-the-curtain with the band. Since the early Nails period, he has been the sound engineer when the band records and the drummer when the Nails play live. “It would be nice to go on stage without a computer,” he says. “I’ve always been such a sample head/computer geek, and I like that stuff, but I’d like to do something new.” These days he’s been itching to do something different.

He’s teaching himself guitar and composing on the keyboard.

Recently, Vrenna has been moving beyond his role as NIN’s “official second member,” unplugging himself from NIN New Orleans’ studios for periods to lend an ear and hand to the production of the latest CDs of fellow Nothing Records artists Prick, Marilyn Manson and Metallica.

Vrenna says he feels trapped in New Orleans, a city he hates for its “crime, poverty, racism, heat, great flying cockroaches and ignorance,” which also could be a metaphor for the way he feels as an artist.

A. Bennett Whaley, assistant professor of journalism and mass communications, says he sees NIN as “Reznor’s trip,” and wouldn’t be surprised if Vrenna were outgrowing the band.

“Chris probably wants something that can allow him more creative input, more of his own talent,” Whaley says.

He could be reading his former student’s mind. Although he hopes his friendship with Reznor will survive another of many temporary separations, Vrenna says that his relationship with NIN is “in limbo,” and he is using this time between albums and tours to rethink his future, including the possibility of leaving the band.

“You work as hard as you can on something and get what you want ... and then what else?” Vrenna says. “I kind of want to start all over. Nine Inch Nails is pretty much Trent’s game. I want to try different types of music. ‘I don’t know what I’m gonna do yet. I’ve been approached by other bands,’” he says. “It’s been 10 years. It’s gone as far as it possibly can go.”

Denise See contributed to this story.
Harry Vincent's life has been filled with setbacks. He has lived with chronic ailments since the age of 20, when he was diagnosed with renal disease. But Vincent turns to exercise as a remedy for his illness. It helps him get the most out of life, he says.

An avid bicyclist, Vincent has used his cycling as a way to regain strength and keep him in recovery. Active in football, basketball and track during high school, Vincent has kept exercise a top priority from a young age. Living in Cleveland Heights, he used to ride his bike back and forth from work — a 20-mile round trip. He also occasionally makes a 40-mile trip by bicycle to visit his mother in Garrettsville, the town where Vincent grew up. "I ride when I can," he says.

But when his kidneys failed and he was placed on dialysis, exercising was more difficult than before. "I felt lousy ... ," Vincent says. "I remember in 1972 (when I was on dialysis) trying to run a mile, and I felt a feeling I never felt before. It was beyond fatigue." Difficult as it was, Vincent still remained active during his wait for his first kidney transplant. He says keeping in shape has helped him to recover quickly. "I remember beating my brother 6-0 in tennis when I still had the bandage on my arm from dialysis. I guess I've just always been active," says Vincent, whose 6-foot frame is slender but muscular.

A few years after receiving his first transplant in 1973, Vincent decided to make a three-week, 1,000-mile bicycle trip around Ohio to raise awareness about organ donations and to show other waiting organ recipients that having an ailment doesn't keep a person from staying active.

"I've been through so much and come out so well; it's important to know that you can have a healthy lifestyle after that," Vincent says about his exercise habits. "After I got back from my 1,000-mile trip, I thought, 'I can do anything.' With setting a goal and working hard, you can do anything."

In addition to bicycling, Vincent has participated in three Transplant Games, a biannual sporting event equivalent to the Olympic Games, but with transplant recipients as contenders. He went to the Transplant World Games in Innsbruck, Austria, in 1987, the U.S. Transplant Games in Indianapolis in 1990 and the U.S. Transplant Games in Atlanta in 1992, in which he won a bronze medal.

As if that weren't enough, when Vincent made his trip across the nation this past summer, he raised $5,000 to $6,000, half of which he donated to the Cleveland branch of the Kidney Foundation of Ohio in memory of a doctor who conducted one of his transplants. He gave the other half of the money to the Baltimore-based League of American Bicyclists in appreciation of his love of bicycling and the role it has played in his recovery.

"I had been thinking about the trip for 20 years, and I guess I never lost sight of it," Vincent says. "I guess it's a pattern in my life — to not let anything stop me."

Vincent's wife, Doreen, says her husband's illnesses and setbacks have not taken away, but added to his life. They have taught him not only to keep a positive attitude, but to take each day as it comes and to have fun as well.

"I didn't really feel down or hopeless," he says. And when referring to his close bout with death, Vincent just shrugs his shoulders and says with a laugh, "I guess I must've been really sick."

Serious illnesses can be trying on a marriage, but in this case, Doreen Vincent says they have brought the couple closer together. Vincent was ill from the start of their marriage in December 1972. Sometimes compromise is involved in making things work, Doreen says, but Vincent's health is a top priority. If the compromise requires pushing back other things to help her husband make time for his workout, Doreen says they deal with it.

"If the house is messy sometimes, it's OK," she says. "Instead of cleaning,
Just one of Harry Vincent’s life mottos: ‘I ask for wisdom and strength, not to be superior to my brothers, but to be able to fight my greatest enemy, myself.’

Below, Vincent rides a recumbent bicycle that provides more support for his lower back. ‘Certainly,’ he says, ‘you can go a long way by taking care of yourself half as well as you take care of your car.’

...sometimes maybe we need to take a bike ride instead. With this illness, there has been a lot to face. Something like this can bond you together or split you apart. It has bonded us together. It’s been an adventure and a challenge, but it’s always been fun, and Harry always believes it’s going to work out.”

Renee Stith, director of patient services at the Columbus headquarters of the National Kidney Foundation of Ohio, worked as the team manager for Vincent when he participated as a Team Ohio member for the Transplant Games. She says Vincent’s continued activity is not only an inspiration but also serves as a good example to others who have incurred setbacks in their lives.

“Harry is the epitome of success,” Stith says. “I think Harry sees every opportunity to do what he can. He puts no restrictions on himself. If he wants to do something, he does it. He goes after goals that are important to him. Harry is like the Energizer Bunny – he keeps on going and going and going.”
One Kent State student puts her bravery – and nerves – to the test

On a gorgeous day in April, I stepped out of a plane flying 7,000 feet above land. With a jump master attached securely to my back, I was flying, not falling, like the hawk I saw soaring across the horizon. In those brief seconds, I was not myself.

It ended all too soon, and our landing was so gentle, it was as if we had gracefully stepped down an imaginary staircase to Earth.

Today, I still cannot find the words to describe that rush. It’s a feeling that I crave again. But this time, I want the controls in my own hands. I want to depend on no one but myself. I want to free fall.

At 8 a.m. on a chilly Sunday morning in October, I arrived at Canton Airsports in Alliance. By 9 a.m., my six-hour ground school training had begun. I was going to jump from 12,000 feet and free fall for about 6,000, but this time I wouldn’t be connected to a jump master. I would pull the cord, I would steer the parachute and I would land, all by myself. I would be in control.

My instructor introduced himself as Alphabet and promptly began the class by assuring me and my classmates that we would practice our jumps enough on the ground that the motions would come naturally in the air. Two jump masters would jump from the plane with us to make sure we kept our senses and followed through with proper jump procedures.

First, Alphabet taught us “the circle of awareness,” a series of checks and double checks performed during free fall. Two circles of awareness, as well as three practice touches of the rip cord, are done during free fall until finally, the cord is pulled.

For the second part of the training, Alphabet taught us what to do after our parachutes opened. He explained all of the possible procedures in case of a malfunction.

Malfunction? Suddenly I had some questions. What do you do if your parachute only partially opens? What do you do if the parachute lines are twisted? What do you do if you are spinning?

All of this was on the tip of my tongue when Alphabet pulled me aside to explain a few “special” problems that I might personally encounter. See, my other four classmates were all men hovering around six feet. Evidently, my 90-pound, 5-foot-2-inch frame carries another set of problems.

Problems?

There was the chance that my parachute would not open the whole way or that the slider on my parachute lines might not come down. During the landing, there was the additional possibility that I would be blown off course or dragged across the ground in a gust of wind.

Alphabet gave me special instructions on what to do in each of these situations. Still stunned, I watched as he walked away to prepare the class for landings.

There is a “safe” way to have a not-so-perfect landing, Alphabet informed us: Tighten your muscles and roll over your shoulders. We all practiced a few tries on a gymnastics mat. But somehow, I was having trouble comparing this cushy mattress to the not-so-soft concrete that really would be catching my fall.

Doubts were creeping into my mind. Alphabet went on to ask us each to name a possible obstacle that might get in our way during landing. I was first, and, picturing twisted ankles and bruised knees, I said holes in the ground.

Alphabet and my classmates, however, painted grimmer pictures. They said things like trees, planes on the runway, nearby ponds, buildings and power lines.

Power lines?
That enlightening lesson ended our training, and Alphabet asked us if we were ready to sky dive. We all yelled "Hell, yes!" as loud as we could. I don't know about my classmates, but I was lying through my teeth. I wasn't ready for anything. The training opened my eyes to a whole set of issues that never entered my mind when I did my tandem jump.

All day I was told that I was going to be the first jumper in the class. But when the class ended, Alphabet told me I had been bumped to second. He was concerned that because of my small size, the wind would blow me off course.

So I waited and nervously watched as one of my classmates, probably the best in our class, suited up and got in the plane with the jump masters.

This would be a good opportunity for me to reassure myself that nothing would go wrong. I would watch as my classmate's jump went smoothly.

Just as I thought: His parachute opened perfectly. The two jump masters sailed down and landed right on target, while he hovered far up in the sky.

Then I watched as he drifted slowly off course and disappeared in a patch of tall trees.

Immediately, one of the jump masters hopped in a truck to find him.

Minutes seemed to pass like hours, but finally the two came driving up the road on the back of the four-wheeler. Although he was all smiles, I noticed that his chin was scratched and scraped, and blood had spilled all over his jumpsuit.

This was not the reassurance I was looking for.

I hadn't considered injury. The thought of death had crossed my mind once or twice, but death didn't bother me. Injury bothered me.

Pain?

Blood?

Broken body parts?

I was starting to feel sick.

Where had all of my confidence gone? What about the next level of thrill that I had so eagerly anticipated? All of a sudden, I just didn't care.

I was all ready to duck out, when Alphabet stopped me. Because of the wind and my size, they weren't going to let me jump that day, he apologized.

I nodded my head slowly, my face a picture of disappointment. "Well, if you really feel it's unsafe ..."

I was never so thankful for wind in all of my life.
Coach Gary Waters is taking men's basketball to new heights.
Now that Gary Waters has left Eastern Michigan for Kent State, the Flashes are gearing up for an aggressive, new style of play—a style similar to that which made Eastern Michigan conference champions.

Previous page, Waters gets freshman forward Al Moore and his teammates fired up before a scrimmage.

The breathing is heavy. Sweat drips off the forehead like water from a faucet that has just been turned off.

Kent basketball wasn't always like this. Up and down the floor they run. Last year or the year before that and even before that, it was never quite like this.

Now the positioning of the players on the floor has changed because the strategy has changed. And for the Kent State University men's basketball team, the tempo has changed. First-year head coach Gary Waters has seen to that.

"It's a lot different," senior forward D.J. Bosse said. "It's a lot more tiring."

Waters was on the Eastern Michigan sideline during the Eagles run to the NCAA tournament. He was there in the 1995-96 season when Eastern Michigan won the Mid-American Conference tournament championship. He was there when the Eagles beat basketball-power Duke in the first round of the NCAA tournament. He was there when the Eagles gave No. 1 seeded Connecticut a scare in round two.

He was part of the Eastern Michigan program that had found success by a fast-paced offense and

Although the tempo and style of men's basketball at Kent State has changed, Waters, above, stresses the importance of half-court basketball. "I think you have to, at times, let players use their talents, their own God-given talents to express themselves," he says.
an aggressive defense.

Now, with Waters’ arrival at Kent, the Flashes are gearing up for an aggressive, creative and up-tempo style of play – similar to the style that made Eastern Michigan conference champions and helped them advance to the second round of the NCAA tournament.

His job for seven years, as he said, was “defensive coordinator” for the Eagles. He would make the player substitutions that would strengthen the team’s defense on a certain play down the floor.

He and Eagles head coach Ben Braun worked in conjunction with one another. As Waters said, “We were dual coaches out there.”

“The defenses that were designed at Eastern, I designed them,” Waters said. “I helped the defense. He helped the offense. We made decisions together on what should be done.”

In the months following the conclusion of the 1995-96 basketball season, there would be a shake-up in the Mid-American Conference. Four head-coaching positions opened up as the 1996-97 season approached.

On April 5, 1996, Waters found himself as head coach of a Division I basketball program – the Kent State Golden Flashes – for the first time in his career.

Along with the coaching change in Kent, the style of basketball played would change as well. In the 1995-96 season, the Flashes had a half-court, motion-oriented offense. It was based on player movement and accurate, sharp passes.

In the 1995-96 season, Kent played Eastern Michigan three times — twice during the regular season and once in the first round of the MAC tournament in Ypsilanti, Mich.

Coach Waters remembers the Kent style.
"They were very patient," Waters explained. "What they did is they passed the ball trying to get a better opportunity. It's a good style but you have to have the people to play that style."

"If you've got more creative-type people, what that system is doing for those type of people is it's not using their talents properly. They're looking to create something, but instead you're creating it for them."

In contrast, Eastern Michigan bullied its way through the tournament with speed and creativity.

"If you remember the team we had last year at Eastern, we had quite a few creators," Waters said. "What that does is, if your offense breaks down, they can still create something out of it. I think you have to, at times, let players use their talents, their own God-given talents to express themselves."

Bosse recalls playing against the Eagles and their "tiring" style of play.

"It's tough because they can get out on you real quick," Bosse said. "It makes you or breaks you. That offense was definitely a threat, a big threat."

When Waters looks at his Kent roster for the upcoming season, he has to make a decision. How is he going to mesh this group of players together to get the same result that he did at Eastern?

"I'm not going to change my style," Waters said. "I just may have to alter some things to meet the talents of the players who are already here."

Those alterings may include getting the big men used to a different system. Kent's current roster includes 6-foot-11 senior Brook Bright, the 6-foot-9 Bosse, 6-foot-9 sophomore center Ben Bakken and 6-foot-8 freshman center John Whorton.

"What key factor I learned from Ben is to get your players to bring forth their talents," Waters said. "Our big guys may not have the style I want to play. But they have talents. Now it's up to me to bring forth these talents."

Bright, a native of Meadville, Pa., realizes that rebounding will be a key in this system for the big men.

"When you run, you need the big guys to start the fast break with rebounds," Bright said. "If we control the rebounds, we'll be able to run more efficiently."

The new style is quick, aggressive and assertive. The faster tempo of the game, Waters said, will be "based defensively."

It will mean constant pressure on the opposition when it brings the ball up the floor. Waters said the defensive pressure is designed to create steals that will turn into lay-ups or "whatever is given there for you."

"Defense is going to be fun to watch," Bright said. "It will be like chaos out on the floor for the other team. If they're not well organized, they're going to be in trouble."

Sophomore point guard Ed Norvell talked about the importance of the team's defense.

"We'll try to intimidate the other team with our defense," Norvell said. "We'll be like some bees just swarming all over the court."

Norvell, a graduate of Murray Wright High School in Detroit, will be one of the keys in making the system run effectively.

When Waters arrived at Kent, he said he had a conversation with Norvell about the contrasting styles of play.

"I said, 'You learned a great deal from (former
Kent head coach Dave Grube's system. Now you can play both styles,” Waters said.

Waters acknowledged that although the tempo and style will change, half-court basketball still will be played.

“Now when we push the ball up in transition, (Norvell) knows how to set it up and get into what we need to get in.”

Waters was there. He knows the feeling. He remembers the experience of the NCAA tournament. It is a destination to which Waters hopes he can lead the Flashes.

“It's a feeling and an experience that you'll never imagine,” Waters explained. “You're playing in front of 18,000 to 30,000 people who don't know you from Adam, but they're cheering for you when you do something well.

“I can truly say, if you get to the NCAA tournament, everything you dreamed about is in there.”

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Carol A. Cartwright
PRESIDENT CAROL A. CARTWRIGHT
Some Kent State graduates have found they make more money waiting tables than they do as schooled professionals.

story by Cheryl Grinder
illustrations by Brendan Firem

Sometimes, at about 7 p.m. on a Saturday night, I have to remember why it is I've been waiting tables for the last four years of my life. It's about that time of the evening — when the restaurant's hopping, and I'm running around like a mad woman, trying to figure out if table No. 54 still needs a refill of iced tea or if that's table No. 51, and what exactly did the guy at No. 52 ask for — and suddenly I stop, take a breath and whisper, ever so gently to myself, that this is how I pay my bills.

Without this job, my rent wouldn't get paid, my car would have no gas, and I would starve. It's at that moment that I remind myself that in less than a year, I'll have a real job and never again have to sweep up peanut shells from the floor, refill that kid's soda for the 10th time in five minutes or thank the jerk at table No. 54 for the 8 percent tip.

But lately my pep talks have been less than comforting. After talking to some college graduates, I've found it isn't easy getting your degree and finding a job that fulfills the expectations you've had since you started school. Sometimes college graduates who have paid their way through college waiting tables and pouring drinks decide to stay in the restaurant business, even after they have earned a degree in another field. Some just like the business, others find it pays good money and others simply can't find a "real" job.

Shaun Robinson is in the business because he loves it. Robinson graduated from Kent State in 1992 with a bachelor's degree in political science. He enrolled in the university after serving in the Army and made his major political science because he did well in history and government. After graduation, he worked in a restaurant while he sought out jobs relating to his major. That's when he decided he'd stick with it.

"While working as a bartender and server after graduation, I started to feel..."
kind of old," he says. "There I was, 26, and everyone else was 18 or 19 years old. I felt like I wasn't learning, and I wasn't growing. I noticed the job some of my managers were doing and thought that I could do better."

Robinson found an opening for a management position at Bobby Ribino's, a restaurant in Youngstown. He interviewed and was given the job. After about a year, another management position opened up at Damon's in Kent. He took the job, was transferred, and today he is the assistant general manager at Damon's Clubhouse on Howe Avenue near Chapel Hill Mall.

Robinson's friendly smile greets guests before his words do, and his presence is everywhere in the restaurant, whether it's at the tables as he visits guests or behind the bar, stacking a rack of dirty glasses.

Even on Monday evenings, when the place is packed with football fans watching the game on big-screen TVs, Robinson takes care of the guests. He makes his rounds, spending just enough time at each table to get their orders in before the next play. He greets all the regulars by name in a manner that is both laid back and professional. He carries off his role as host with ease.

Robinson says it's easy because he enjoys what he does.

"I really like the restaurant business," he says. "It's always changing. There is always something new happening and there are always new people to meet and know."

Robinson doesn't seem to mind that he hasn't used his degree for the field he had intended to pursue. But he is optimistic that if he decides one day to go into politics, his experiences and degree should suffice.

"I think the degree gave me a good background," he says. "I've allowed myself to become more well-rounded. That, coupled with my life experiences and what I've learned from managing, should make me a success."

Pamela Van De Weert, assistant director of Career Services at Kent State, says students should focus on the professions they wish to pursue early in their years at Kent State if they hope to get relevant jobs when they graduate. Ideally, students should address goals and find out early on if they are feasible.

But she concedes that doing so can limit other opportunities - like employment in service-related fields - that may be perfect for some individuals.
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IT'S THE POWER OF THE STATER
cent of last year's college graduates are underemployed or have much higher qualifications than what are necessary for their professions. Nationally, about 10 percent of 1995 graduates are unemployed and 20 percent are underemployed, according to the CAM Report, a newsletter on Career Movement and Management Facts.

Whatever the numbers, the reasons for underemployment are as varied as the degrees that go unused.

Tammy Bertsch waits tables at the Ground Round in Tallmadge. After graduating from Kent State in 1995 with a bachelor's degree in rhetoric and communications, she landed a job with a company in Akron as a marketing support representative. “Basically, I trained people at companies like Goodyear to use our equipment,” Bertsch says.

She soon was promoted to a higher-paying job as a sales representative, but she found that the money she made still wasn’t enough.

“I quit for a couple of reasons, mostly because I wasn’t interested in selling office equipment for the rest of my life,” she says. “Aside from that, the job was straight commission and the pay wasn’t very good. I just couldn’t afford to do it for a living.”

Now Bertsch works at the Ground Round between 30 and 35 hours a week. She says she makes better money waiting tables than she did as a sales representative.

“It’s a great place to work,” she says. “I have friends here and I make a living here.”

In the four years that Bertsch has been serving at the Ground Round, she has acquired many regulars who request her section whenever they visit – which is often two or three times a week. Tips are great, she says.

“Basically, you make contacts,” she says. “I have contacts all the time, just on a different level than my sales job. This is just like a sales job, but you control the money you make. The better the service you give, the better the money you make.”

The fun Bertsch has at her job is almost shameful. Conga lines and “Kick me” signs are just a few of the antics she and her fellow servers pull to keep guests - and themselves - amused.

“We really have a good time here,” she says.

Using her degree isn’t in Bertsch’s future plans, she says. Eventually, she says she would like to go back to school to get a bachelor’s degree in education.

“People think they’ll get this great job out of college, but that’s not how it is,” she says. “School is strictly education. People need to get experience before they graduate to find out what the job is really like.”

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Make a difference
Protease inhibitors, the new AIDS wonder drugs, have some potentially serious drawbacks: low accessibility and high cost

Michael has been living in an AIDS hospice in Akron since Nov. 17, 1994. Since that time, he has taken a myriad of drugs to help keep his white blood cell count at a healthy level, but his thin body has lost the battle against pneumonia, flu and other viruses many times. Michael, like the other people in this story who have AIDS or are HIV-positive, asked that his name be changed to protect his identity.

Today, the 42-year-old is on a new medicinal diet consisting of the drugs AZT, DDI, 3TC, Zerit and, most critical to the mix, Crixivan. Crixivan is one of three brands of drugs, called protease inhibitors, now on the market for people with AIDS. Approved by the Federal Drug Administration last year, they are causing a flutter of hope among the medical community, case workers and patients, who are optimistic the drugs will diminish AIDS' threat as a terminal illness.

The new protease inhibitors come with a hefty price tag, however. A single dosage of the "drug cocktail" prescribed for Michael costs $450. Luckily, Medicaid picks up his tab, and doctors say the pricey drugs will keep him from catching an opportunistic infection, which threatens the life of every AIDS patient. But not every patient with AIDS or HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is so lucky. Accessibility to the protease inhibitors is a major problem.

"The protease inhibitors are definitely the best news about AIDS in a long, long time," says Diane Kerr, assistant professor for health education with a specialization in AIDS education and prevention at Kent State. "Now if only we can make them accessible to everyone with HIV."

Protease inhibitors, when taken with other AIDS-fighting drugs, can effectively stop the AIDS virus from replicating. They work by inhibiting the virus from infecting healthy T-cells, which are types of white blood cells.

Normally, when the AIDS virus infects a T-cell, it forms protease and a viral protein chain. Protease cuts the viral chain into tiny segments, which emerge from the infected T-cell as new AIDS viruses. The new protease inhibitors, however, keep protease from segmenting the viral chain. Too large to disperse from the infected cell, the clump of viral protein becomes incapacitated.

Studies show that protease inhibitors are most effective on people who are HIV-positive. But the drug is not widely prescribed to people with full-blown AIDS, whose viral load is 10,000 and above. There were approximately 19,000 people between the ages of 20 to 24 in the United States with AIDS in 1995.

"I tend to prescribe the other drugs, like AZT, Zerit and 3TC, and use the protease [inhibitor] as a last resort," Ruby says.

The cost factor also keeps the new drugs out of the hands of patients who need them. For one person with AIDS, a year's supply of Crixivan costs $4,380. The two other brands of protease inhibitors, Invirase and Norvir, cost about $5,700 and $6,500 a year, respectively. The total cost, with the other drugs like AZT thrown into the mix, is somewhere between $12,000 to $20,000, says Gretchen Gibson, an HIV case manager at the Ohio Department of Health. That means unless a person with AIDS has insurance or is helped by Medicaid or non-profit groups like the Ryan White Foundation and the AIDS Drug Assistance Program, he or she is not likely to have the disposable income for this new treatment.

Financial help might be arriving in small doses soon. President Clinton announced July 23 that he would request an additional $65 million from next year's budget to be allocated to the AIDS Drug Assistance Program.

"That's a good step," Kerr says of Clinton's announcement, "but these drugs cost so much that even that contribution might not be enough."

Even if the added funding to AIDS-related foundations is approved, it's not going to benefit the people who are HIV-positive all that much, Kerr says. To qualify for help from Medicaid or the AIDS Drug Assistance Program, one must be diagnosed with AIDS and be unemployed. Being HIV-positive simply is not considered sick enough for assistance.

Robin, 44, has kept her T-cell count in the healthy 600s by staying active and keeping a positive attitude — even though she has been without medication since she found out she was HIV-positive four years ago.
“My biggest concern is that I have no insurance,” Robin says. “When the time comes for me to start taking something for the disease, the medication will be so expensive that the additional cost I have to pay will be more stress, and I’m a firm believer that the stress that is put upon you is a big factor on your health.”

Robin adds the only way to afford the protease inhibitors would be for her to stop working and use up all her money, so she could qualify for Medicaid. Qualifying for help to receive protease inhibitors would be impossible for most college students, most of whom do not have an extra $12,000 a year to pay for protease inhibitors. Often, the only way they can receive prescriptions is through government-funded assistance.

Twenty-five-year-old Bill is not in college, nor is he working. He has been taking two protease inhibitors, Epivir and Invirase, for almost a year. He lives at home and says he does not know the exact price of his medication. He doesn’t have to; he doesn’t pay for it.

“Everybody else’s wonderful Ohio state tax dollars pay for my drugs,” says Bill, who is on Medicaid, “and I’m very appreciative.”

Bill, a self-proclaimed bum, resides in Brimfield and has been living with AIDS since he received a tainted blood transfusion when he was 11. He says his first treatment for AIDS was AZT, which made him nauseated. Since Bill began taking the protease inhibitors (he takes Epivir twice a day and Invirase three times a day), his T-cell count has doubled.

“This is the year I started living again,” Bill says. “It may be the new drugs.”

However, Bill complains that Epivir often is back-ordered, and Michael says he orders the Crixivan a year in advance to ensure a continuous supply. That’s critical, considering the protease inhibitors work effectively only when the dosages are taken consistently each day.

“The trick is that you stay on it. As long as you stay on it, you can keep your viral load low,” Gibson says. “If you get off the protease (inhibitors), your viral load immediately escalates.”

And some wonder if all this hassle is worth it for a combination of drugs that is not yet proven to cure for AIDS. There is even more concern when other problems include the possibility that the virus eventually could become resistant to protease inhibitors and mutate. Information about protease inhibitors reaches back only 52 weeks, and Ruby says he has treated people who already are not responding to the new drugs.

Still, those in the medical community remain hopeful, despite the drugs’ impossible prices, potential loss of potency and side effects, which include liver problems and loss of appetite.

“I wouldn’t call it a miracle drug, but it is the most potent of the drugs we have so far,” Ruby says.

And just one fact has Kerr concerned.

“Is this cure for AIDS only going to be for the wealthy?” Kerr says. “It’s chilling when you think about it.”

Invirase is one of the three brands of protease inhibitors that are available to people with AIDS or HIV, but accessibility to the drug is becoming a major problem. Invirase costs about $5,700 yearly. A whole supply of all drugs used with Invirase can cost as much as $20,000 yearly.
Carol Cartwright met husband, Phillip Cartwright, while studying at the University of Pittsburgh. In June 1966, they married and took jobs as instructors at the University of Hawaii.

Under the Spy Glass

President Carol Cartwright’s life is one puzzle that can’t be put together easily

story by Andrea M. Weigl
photos by Tanya Ackerman

It was a dark and stormy night. Rain pelted soundlessly against the thick windows of a second floor office hidden deep within the library’s lair. The scent of copy toner lingered in the air. All was quiet. The fax machines and telephones lay almost too still. It was 11 p.m.

Lightening flashed, casting eerie shadows on the clean, white walls. On top of the desk lay a large pile of papers neatly stacked, ready to be tackled the next morning. I knew the real answers to my mission wouldn’t be that easy to find.

My eyes scanned the bookshelves where volume after volume of mundane-sounding titles rested, passively gathering dust. My assignment was clear: to uncover the unknown about the university’s most prominent figure. I reached for the desk drawer, my black-gloved hand shaking slightly with anticipation and nerves. All of a sudden, the shrill ring of a telephone shattered my reverie.

Blinking wearily, I reluctantly returned to reality. I sat under the glow of bright fluorescent lights, patiently waiting for my 3 p.m. interview with University President Carol Cartwright. Sure, the setting was different, but my mission still remained: to figure out who Carol Cartwright really is, and what she might have been if not president of Kent State University.
Because Cartwright's father Carl Becker was a salesman for the Missouri-Pacific Railroad, he moved his wife Kathryn and the family all over the Midwest, including Sioux City, Iowa where Carol Cartwright was born in 1941. Cartwright attended high schools in Tulsa, Kansas City and Milwaukee. Despite the frequent transfers, Cartwright graduated from high school at the young age of 16.

"Nobody in my family went to college," Cartwright says. "There wasn't a lot of conversation in my family about going to college."

Nevertheless, Cartwright set her sights on obtaining a university education, and she often remembered her father's favorite saying: "Can't never did anything."

"My father had a lot of optimism," she says. "He had the expectation that hard work will serve you well."

This type of determination and hard work led to her enrollment at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee and kept up her spirits when classes, campus activities and her three part-time jobs became overwhelming. Cartwright divided her time between a women's clothing store, cleaning people's houses and free-lance typing, not to mention keeping up with course work.

Cartwright majored in early childhood education, and graduated from the University of Milwaukee at Whitewater in 1962.

The next few years found her in Pittsburgh, where she taught at a growing suburban school district and enrolled in continuing education classes at the University of Pittsburgh.

She met her future husband, Phillip Cartwright, in fall 1964 at the university. Their first date was going out for a cup of coffee, Phillip Cartwright says; they exchanged wedding vows in June 1966.

Immediately after the wedding, the newlyweds set off for a honeymoon-like assignment by accepting teaching positions at the University of Hawaii.

But Cartwright didn't find the paradise she had anticipated, and says she was disappointed by the experience. "It was a nice place, but we didn't have the sense of being pushed or stretched" toward excellence, she says.

The next stop in Cartwright's itinerary was State College, Pa., where Phillip Cartwright assumed an administrative position and she completed her doctoral degree in special education.

Penn State became home for the next 21 years for the Cartwrights, whose family expanded to include three children: Catherine, Stephen and Susan.

Cartwright recalls the experience as rewarding yet challenging, not unlike the majority of her life's opportunities.

"I had what many people consider to be an extremely difficult situation with a full-time job, three children in a four-year period and not yet being tenured," she says. "But the job allowed me to spend time with my children and work. When they were in bed, I could hide and write."

Cartwright wasn't writing a fiction novel; she was working on her dissertation.

Juggling the roles of mother, wife, student and teacher,
Cartwright almost amazingly rose through the ranks at Penn State. She started as a part-time instructor, then was promoted to assistant professor, associate professor, professor, associate dean, dean and finally vice provost.

"I think it’s remarkable to start out at the lowest point on the totem pole, and because of her strength, she worked herself up to be the highest ranking woman at the university," Phillip Cartwright says.

His admiration and respect is shared by their 26-year-old daughter, Catherine, who said her mother’s career was the best thing to happen to her. “I never thought about not having professional goals,” says Catherine, who is an associate editor at Working Mother magazine. “If and when I am a working mother, I know that my mom did it, and I turned out just fine.”

In 1988, Cartwright accepted the position of vice chancellor at the University of California at Davis. Five years later, in 1991, she became the president of Kent State University.

Cartwright accepted the presidency and arrived alone in Kent during the summer. Phillip Cartwright decided to stay in California and let their daughter Susan finish her senior year in high school.

Cartwright says the year and a half away from her family wasn’t too bad because everyone knew that there was an eventual end. “We talked everyday,” she says. “It wasn’t that bad because they knew it wasn’t open-ended.”

But the distance did prove to be a problem when in fall 1992, Cartwright’s breast biopsy results came back positive after a regular doctor’s visit. “The major problem was that I was here and she was there,” Phillip says. “We had to talk in code because we hadn’t told the kids yet.”

Instead of panicking, Cartwright stayed focused on solutions. When the surgeon came back and told her, “You have cancer,” Cartwright’s response was, “What do we do next?”

“It’s my nature to focus on the options,” she says. Her doctor suggested surgery and, after receiving the same second opinion from a prominent doctor in Cleveland, she had a mastectomy.

“She carried us all through that,” Phillip Cartwright says. “She was always so positive.” But Catherine says that her mother’s optimism kept her worrying, “She just handles things. Because of that I didn’t have to worry.”

Cartwright took a week off after the surgery, and a week later she participated in all the activities during the Homecoming weekend. That year she didn’t ride a Harley in the parade, but only because she didn’t start that tradition until 1994.

Cartwright says her rise to be the first woman president of a state university in Ohio stemmed from the intrigue of the administrative positions above her.

“The job I had was always the best possible job.
even without thinking it was going to get you somewhere else,” she says. “After three or four years, you’d watch the person above you and think, ‘I could do that.’”

But with each promotion came compromise. As Cartwright’s influence increased, her free time and privacy decreased. She says she always has been very cautious when making career decisions because with each step up the ladder, she loses a measure of flexibility.

“College presidents tell you that they literally have no privacy,” she says. “They can’t go anywhere in the world without running into someone they know.”

Maybe that’s why Cartwright tries to guard her personal life from the inquisitive public eye. She has so little time to spare; there’s rarely an hour when she sits back and has absolutely nothing work-related to do.

When students see Cartwright roaming around campus in her blue and yellow suits or riding a Harley in the Homecoming parade, they may wonder just what hides behind her presidential facade.

Cartwright is a woman of many roles, most of them lurking far behind the scenes. For instance, if Cartwright had nine lives, she might have dedicated one or two to writing mystery novels, raising geraniums in her garden or being a cook in a gourmet restaurant.

When she’s not delivering speeches, attending meetings and fulfilling the other duties of a university president, Cartwright fills her minimal spare time with a few select hobbies, which include experimenting with new gourmet meals, reading novels, such as those written by Tom Clancy and John Grisham, and power walking.

Her husband says “she’s a demon” about her power walks, as she braves everything but the very worst weather in her pursuit of fitness and, perhaps, piece of mind.

She took a Chinese cooking class at the University of Hawaii, and Phillip Cartwright says it “colored our menus for years.”

But Cartwright maintains that she doesn’t regret one minute of it all, and she only wishes she had more time. At the mention of time, she glances at her watch, then down at the list of daily appointments still awaiting her.

As she walks me to the door, I glance back over my shoulder at the desk drawers I had envisioned earlier.

Who knows what pieces to the Cartwright puzzle are still missing?

But that will have to be material for a sequel.  

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THE WOMEN OF ISLAM

Three Muslim women prove that there is more to their religion than wearing a veil

story by Julie Ralston
photos by Tanya Ackerman
The man with dark, curly hair and a black mustache sits on the floor of the large room and quietly recites from his Koran. Like the other men who had come to worship this Friday at the mosque on Crain Avenue in Kent, the man recites the “al-fatiha,” which the prophet Mohammed said all Muslims must repeat with each of the five daily prayers: the fajr, thur, asr, magrib and isha. After each reading, he rises up on his haunches and kneels, forehead touching floor, toward the Holy Land.

At least 50 more men slowly enter, hugging and warmly welcoming each other. Soon, a man begins a slow, steady chant, a cue for the others to take their positions in three tight rows on the carpet. Then, the imam, dressed in a long white gown, enters and begins the sermon, first in Arabic and then in English.

In the basement of the mosque, the imam’s words drift down to 12 women through a set of speakers in the ceiling. We sit on the perimeters of a carpeted floor spotted with pools of sunlight shaped like the children’s paper decorations hanging in the windows. I am sitting so close to Arlyne Habeeb and Aisha Azeez that our shoulders nearly touch, and they smile as I look around the room at the other worshippers.

Two girls, not much older than 12, sit with their heads on either shoulder of their mother. All three wear dark scarves. Another woman, probably in her late 30s, sits against a wall, her knees pulled up to her chest, her eyes closed. The black, lacy scarf on her head contrasts with her white face.

Soon, I recognize the imam’s broken English and listen as he recites a parable about the prophet Jonah who was swallowed by a great whale because he disobeyed Allah. “Allah knows who is inside the whale in the darkness of the sea,” he exclaims. And then the sermon is over, and the imam asks God to bless humanity, the sick, the oppressed. The women are standing in a tight line now, and then they drop to their knees and prostrate toward Mecca, the holy center of Islam.

This was an impressive sight for me, a Catholic, whose only other experience at a non-Christian religious ceremony took place in the ninth grade when I attended a friend’s batmitzvah. I quickly forgot that I had been nervous about attending the service, and my concern about the religion’s apparent disregard for women subsided. I finally began to understand why Arlyne and Aisha, both of whom come from Christian families, so wholeheartedly defend Islam, which commands that they pray separately from men inside the mosque and always cover their hair and bodies in public. Those rules were written by Allah, not man, they told me, and to Allah they are devoted.

Even as women in Afghanistan make the news in their struggle against oppression by Taliban fighters, who captured the city of Kabul in September and forced on it a strict version of Islam, women at the Kent Mosque are not to be dissuaded from their faith. “The Koran lays out guidelines,” says Arlyne, who is a freshman political science major at Kent State, “and if Talibans are telling women they are going to be hanged if they go to work or don’t cover, I’m telling you straight out, that’s not Islam.

“Are women subjugated to men? That’s not an Islamic tradition. That’s a cultural thing,” she says. “The Mohammed says in the Koran that it is incumbent upon every Muslim, male or female, to seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave. If Muslim women know their rights and their religion, then they’re not going to be under any man’s thumb, because she already knows the rights that God has given her.”

More than 850 million people worldwide, including eight million in the United States, call themselves Muslims. There are only two major divisions in Islam: Sunni, the largest single sect which comprises about 85 percent of all Muslims, and the Shiite. Both sects interpret the holy text, the Koran, the same way. Neither promotes gender equality, or Westerners’ interpretation of equality, any more than the other, says Jeffrey Wattles, an assistant professor of philosophy who teaches a world religion course at Kent State and has studied the Koran for more than 20 years. However, because Islam requires that believers obey and follow civic law, the Islamic Muslim girls read from their Korans during a ‘halaqah,’ an Arabic word for ‘learning circle.’ Women and children assemble at the Kent Mosque every Friday at sundown to study the faith. Left, Aasiyah Abdal-Rahim recites part of ‘isha,’ the night prayer. Muslims are expected to say the five canonical prayers each day.
religion in America looks very different from the one in Middle Eastern countries, where women struggle for basic rights like the right to own property, pursue an education and hold a job, Wattles says.

The stereotype of the oppressed Muslim woman, however, has poisoned the minds of many Americans who are unfamiliar with the religion, Arlyne says. Looking at her, the stereotype is laughable.

For most Kent State students, a walk from the staircase in the middle of the Student Center to the entrance of the Hub takes about 15 seconds. For Arlyne Habeeb, it takes 15 minutes. First, she is stopped by an older woman who takes her aside and engages her in a fervent discussion. This debate stops long enough for Arlyne to say hello to a passerby twice her height with a soft punch to his shoulder. Finally, the conversation ends, and I think we’ve almost made it to the Hub when she stops again and approaches a girl passing out fliers. “Oh, your hair looks so cute short,” Arlyne chatters, brushing her long, white scarf covering her own hair away from her shoulder.

“I’m so embarrassed,” she says when I finally get her — all to myself — at a table in the Hub. “It’s always like that. My husband hates to go places with me.” She offers an apologetic smile.

In her black leather jacket, pastel shirt and blue jeans, Habeeb looks and acts like the average student at Kent State. Except for her scarf, I never would have guessed she was any more dedicated to God or her religion than the next person. I soon discovered, however, that Habeeb is a devoted follower of Mohammed.

But she wasn’t always so devoted.

Habeeb was born in Buffalo, N.Y., to a Muslim father and Baptist mother. Although her grandparents were devout Muslims, she and her parents did not regularly attend either mosque or church. Still, she remembers going to both places on certain religious holidays, particularly Christmas, Easter and the Muslim holiday Eid, which follows the 30-day fast of Ramadan.

As early as 11 years old, Habeeb began comparing the two religions, questioning their tenets and the way each faith’s followers worshiped. Many of the questions she had about Christianity she could not resolve by either reading the Bible or speaking with other Christians, she says. “I must have been about 11 when I went to church one day with my grandmother, who was a very religious Christian. I remember the preacher saying something about Jesus dying for our sins. I kept thinking, ‘Well, why are people dying then, and why are people still sinning?’ That question just stayed with me.”

Habeeb also remembers noticing the actions of her Christian friends who would go out on the weekends and drink, party and do what they wanted, then attend church on Sunday. Habeeb saw in Islam a purer way of life. “I saw a lot of practicing on Sunday, but in Islam the emphasis is put on...
practicing daily. Just because Friday is the day of worship doesn't mean you can go out all week long and do whatever you want and then come in on Friday and be absolved of all of that."

At 14, Habeeb began practicing the Islamic faith regularly. When she had her first menstrual cycle, she began covering in the traditional manner: No part of her body, except her face and hands, could be revealed, and her hair had to be covered with the "hijab," or scarf. Some cultures have used this to justify the subjugation of women: They are considered seductresses whose bodies must be covered to keep men's temptations at bay, says David Odell-Scott, associate professor of philosophy at Kent State. Habeeb, however, says covering actually removes Muslim women from the chauvinism of Western society and forces people to look at them as more than sex objects.

Still, she acknowledges that it was difficult at first to cover, especially since she clearly stood out as the only female Muslim in a high school of 3,000 students. Habeeb remembers one young boy who harassed her by flipping up her hijab to see her hair, and she remembers other students' strange glances as they passed by her in the halls.

But eventually Habeeb's bubbly personality won her a close network of friends, just as she has found a niche at Kent State. Today, the 38-year-old is a full-time student, finishing her education to pursue a career as a public administrator. She has lived in Kent for 10 years and has worked for such social service agencies as the American Red Cross, where she was the HIV-education coordinator; the Easter Seal Society, working as a development specialist; the Community Action Council; and the Kevin Coleman Center. She was also vice president of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Today Habeeb lives a comfortable life with her eight children, ages 13 months to 21 years, and her husband, Hameem, who also is Muslim and who works as an engineer at Thermodisc Corp. in Mansfield. In between being a mother, student, community leader and devout Muslim, she looks forward to the day when she will satisfy one of the five tenets of her faith by making her pilgrimage, or "hajj," to Mecca.

"In three years, I'll see it with my own eyes," she breathes. "God willing."

Aisha Azeez led a fast life as a student at Kent State. The typical weekend involved drinking before a party, drinking at the party and staggering home drunk late at night to her McSweeney Hall dormitory — only to start it all again the next night. "I was at the point where I was drinking every day of the week," the 26-year-old says frankly.

After a while, however, partying wasn't quite as much fun anymore, and Azeez began searching for more. At first, she tried to become a better Christian by attending Sunday Mass at the Newman Center, exploring the Pentecostal faith with her roommate's family and participating in religious organizations on campus. But Azeez got little satisfaction out of studying the Bible, because she says she noticed too many contradictions among passages. When she challenged those passages, she rarely received an answer that suited her. That's when she began to notice Islam.

Azeez was acquainted with several women who were Muslim and started reading up on their religion. In the Koran she found clear, consistent guidelines for living life religiously and a definite set of obligations to fulfill in order to find peace and happiness with Allah: Muslims must make their confession of faith, the Islamic creed "Shahadah;" recite the five canonical prayers at various intervals each day; be charitable; observe Ramadan; and, at some point in their lives, make the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Still, Azeez was not ready to give up her life of partying for one based on prayer, humility and abstinence — until she came across the story of Malcolm X through course work in the Department of Pan-African Studies. She identified
with this man and was inspired by his life, particularly because of his transition from being a follower of the Nation of Islam to becoming Muslim. The teachings of the Nation of Islam, an American religious movement that began in Detroit in the early 1930s, draw upon the Koran, the Bible and the liturgy of the Jehovah's Witness and Free Masonry, a Protestant men's religious group. It is a hybrid form of Islam that is not recognized by orthodox Muslims.

Azeez firmly believes it was Allah who inspired Malcolm X— and ultimately her— to revert (not “convert,” because Muslims believe all people are born into the world Muslim). She was 19 when she, too, turned to Islam.

“Now how one religion could change a man so completely, I felt it had to be something pure. It had to be from God,” she says. “It took Malcolm X from saying ‘all white men are devils’ to eating off the same plate with strangers, who were white and black, and whose only bond between them was their religion.”

Azeez’s parents— particularly her mother— were not thrilled with her decision to revert. Even though the family does not regularly practice Catholicism, they were not happy Azeez was abandoning the faith for what they considered a strange, oppressive one. And they especially did not like the idea of their daughter covering. “It was very hard, because my family knows I am outspoken and they kept giving me this flak, saying I would be oppressed. ‘I can’t believe you’re doing this,’ and ‘I can’t see you serving a man,’ they’d say. They bought into all the stereotypes. American; her mother is Italian American. Azeez tires of correcting people on Catholics; all would like to become Muslims themselves. None have so appreciated in this tradition.”

Perhaps that is why Habeeb delivers such a strong response to a question concerning why women and men pray separately in the mosque. Doesn’t it seem like an affront to the liberties of women?

Her response is practical and firm: “We literally prostrate toward Mecca,” she argues. “You don’t necessarily want a man looking at your behind. If it is crowded that day, your head literally could be at a man’s feet.”

The number of women who come to worship at the Kent Mosque on a weekly basis is decidedly fewer than the number of men. This is because the Koran does not stipulate that women worship in the mosque each week as men are required to do, Habeeb says. They also are encouraged not to attend the mosque while menstruating, because it is considered unclean, although Habeeb insists it has more to do with comfort’s sake.

“The religion doesn’t say you are not supposed to go to the mosque when you’re on your period; it’s more of a social protocol,” she says. “Not praying during that time is actually a blessing. You certainly don’t want to be bending and kneeling, bending and kneeling, when you’re suffering from cramps and bleeding.”

The women at this mosque represent a variety of cultures. They come from India, Pakistan, Sudan, Bangladesh, Turkey, Indonesia and many other Middle Eastern and African countries. It is this diversity that attracted Azeez, whose appearance is decidedly—and undeniably—ethnic: Her father is African American; her mother is Italian American. Azeez tires of correcting people on who feel very much Muslim even though they have liberal views. The tendency rather is ‘if I make a break, I am no longer Muslim.’

Azeez earned a degree in political science from Kent State in 1995 and is in the process of applying to law schools. Sitting before me in her tweed pants, crisp white blouse and denim jacket, she looks like a fashion plate. Still, I can’t help but wonder what her hair really looks like underneath the chocolate-brown hijab. It’s great hair,” she admits. “Curly, and I’ve never had to get a perm.”

Does she miss it?

“This is something that Allah has commanded, and there are good reasons for it,” Azeez says without hesitation. “For one, it distinguishes us from other women. It protects our chastity and our modesty. Other people see it as this burden we must carry, but you couldn’t pay me to take it off. It makes me feel so protected—and respected.”

Islam is one of the few traditions that has not allowed itself to change significantly with the times, associate professor of philosophy Jeffrey Wattles says. Even in the West, Muslims must follow the Koran’s teachings literally and religiously; otherwise, they are not considered Muslim. “The tension between Islam and modernity is a tension that has been experienced for many centuries,” he says.

“There has not evolved in Islam as in Christianity a widespread tradition of people who feel very much Muslim even though they have liberal views. The tendency rather is ‘if I make a break, I am no longer Muslim.’

Perhaps that is why Habeeb delivers such a strong response to a question concerning why women and men pray separately in the mosque. Doesn’t it seem like an affront to the liberties of women?

Her response is practical and firm: “We literally prostrate toward Mecca,” she argues. “You don’t necessarily want a man looking at your behind. If it is crowded that day, your head literally could be at a man’s feet.”

The number of women who come to worship at the Kent Mosque on a weekly basis is decidedly fewer than the number of men. This is because the Koran does not stipulate that women worship in the mosque each week as men are required to do, Habeeb says. They also are encouraged not to attend the mosque while menstruating, because it is considered unclean, although Habeeb insists it has more to do with comfort’s sake.

“The religion doesn’t say you are not supposed to go to the mosque when you’re on your period; it’s more of a social protocol,” she says. “Not praying during that time is actually a blessing. You certainly don’t want to be bending and kneeling, bending and kneeling, when you’re suffering from cramps and bleeding.”

The women at this mosque represent a variety of cultures. They come from India, Pakistan, Sudan, Bangladesh, Turkey, Indonesia and many other Middle Eastern and African countries. It is this diversity that attracted Azeez, whose appearance is decidedly—and undeniably—ethnic: Her father is African American; her mother is Italian American. Azeez tires of correcting people on who feel very much Muslim even though they have liberal views. The tendency rather is ‘if I make a break, I am no longer Muslim.’

Azeez says without hesitation.

“My mother thinks I am entirely different person.” Now Azeez says her parents and siblings actually think more like Muslims than She has found refuge at the Kent Mosque.

“Now it doesn’t matter what race I am,” she says. “On this campus I had so many people try to classify me. There is none of that here.”

“At the Kent Mosque, you don’t have to worry about a color or language barrier,” agrees Aasiyah Abdal-Rahim, a senior nursing major at Kent State. “I’ve never seen that in the Christian church—it may be, ‘Hi,’ but it’s never. ‘Come into my home’ like it is here.”

Aasiyah Abdal-Rahim was living in Anchorage, Alaska, when she was introduced to her husband’s friend, a U.S. Army officer and imam working to establish an Islamic learning center on the military base where she lived. He came at an opportune time: Aasiyah had become critical of her Baptist faith. The Bible particularly frustrated her because of its lack of consistent, coherent text, she says. In the books of Matthew and Luke, she explains, accounts of Christ’s resurrection vary. In one story, an angel is described near the body of Jesus; in another story, the angel was seen outside of Jesus’s tomb. “If there were two people seeing the same thing, why weren’t they writing the same thing? If we’re supposed to be one united religion, why aren’t we learning one set thing?”
More than 850 million people worldwide, including eight million in the United States, call themselves Muslims. Above, Sunday school at the mosque in Kent.
So, Aasiyah’s Islamic friend suggested she read the Koran. When she did, her questions were resolved, she says. At the age of 21, Aasiyah, along with her late husband, reverted to Islam.

The Koran is not without its own inconsistencies, says David Odell-Scott, associate professor of philosophy at Kent State, although there certainly are fewer in this text than in the Bible. Christianity has built-in contradictions because the Bible’s authors all disagreed over important issues, ranging from Christ’s resurrection to gender roles. “All religions have inconsistencies,” he says. “Judaism, Christianity, Daoism, Islam – they all have such massive texts, which may have been written over extended historical periods, that they can’t help but have inconsistencies, if not massive contradictions.”

Reverting to Islam was not an easy transition for Aasiyah, however. She remembers being very concerned about covering. As she puts it, a woman’s hair is her glory, and she wasn’t willing to keep it to herself. The first time she and her husband attended the mosque, she didn’t cover. But as the only woman there without a hijab, she says she felt strange. “The second time I wore a hijab, because I thought it would make me feel more accepted,” Aasiyah says. “I knew I had done the right thing when my husband looked at me and said, ‘You know, you look really beautiful. You’re like my little prized possession all locked up just for me.’”

Now, when Aasiyah can’t find a scarf in her drawer that matches her outfit, she changes her clothes. Plus, wearing the hijab has its advantages: “It’s saved me from a lot of bad hair days,” she says.

Today Aasiyah says she is completely comfortable abiding by the five pillars of Islam. For the first time in her life, she says, she knows exactly where she stands with God. She accepts the concept that there is no such thing as a non-practicing Muslim and that if you don’t abide by the faith’s tenets, you are simply not a Muslim.

“This is not something you can do or not do as you like,” she says. “It’s something that you have to accept as the word of God. And if you don’t do that, be scared that you didn’t.”
Music of the Egyptian Night

story by Jen Sisson
photos by Diane Benner
World-renowned maestro Halim el Dabh composes the rhythm of life from Cairo to Kent

It was a cool February night in Cairo, 1949. The musical performance was already under way at the city’s All Saint’s Cathedral. Perched on the edge of the Nile, the huge church was packed with hundreds of people.

Seated at the piano in front of the pulpit, Halim el Dabh knew it was his time. He would finally perform the music that he had spent months writing and that, until now, had never been performed publicly.

His stomach lurched as he stared into the endless sea of faces. With a deep breath and silent prayer, he lowered his shaking hands to the keys.

It was then that el Dabh became the master of his music. He was like a medium, conducting sounds from heaven. Echoing off the high vaulted ceilings, the music ebbed and flowed like the Nile itself. As the score and composer became one, el Dabh was surrounded by an unbreakable sphere of energy.

El Dabh became an overnight success — a success, in fact, that would span several decades and take him around the globe.

Today, the retired Kent State University professor regards his career with as much sense of awe as anyone. “It really has been amazing,” he says in a velvety accent.

Sitting in his tiny office, el Dabh talks easily about any subject — life, music, teaching, philosophy. His hands, making grand gestures, cast spells like a magician. His eyes glint like polished onyx.

El Dabh laughs when he says he celebrated his “75th anniversary” this year. Dismissing his age with a graceful wave, he says, “I am really 4,000 years old.” And looking at his life, it almost seems true.

Now a revered opera composer, he is known as Egypt’s greatest contribution to contemporary music. El Dabh has worked with such noted composers as Leopold Stokowsky, Irving Fine, Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copeland and Igor Stravinsky. Publishing dozens of works, his music has been showcased on venues like Broadway and PBS’s “Great Performances.”

To his own admission, el Dabh’s life has been a series of coincidences even he can’t believe. From that fateful night in Cairo so long ago, el Dabh has influenced the music world and its students and listeners through his revolutionary ideas and inspiring love of life.

Cairo was a prime place to cultivate musical talent, el Dabh says. Playing drums and piano, he grew up participating in small ensembles during elementary school and then studied piano at a conservatory between the ages of 15 and 27. In 1942, el Dabh participated in his first competition at the Egyptian Opera House where he placed first in competition and first in piano. “It was a great time
for me," he says. "Everything came to Cairo."

While studying music, el Dabh graduated from Cairo University in 1945 in agriculture. Although he says he never planned to make music his career, he continued to compose music while working at an agricultural firm. In 1948, he was finishing a piece called "It is Dark and Damp on the Front," which is about the Jewish migration to Palestine during World War II. It was then that an acquaintance approached him about the world performance at All Saint's Cathedral. The organizers of the performance were seeking an Egyptian composer.

"He mentioned my name and I didn't want to do anything," el Dabh says. "I didn't want to be in front of a lot of people. It was hard for me—emotionally hard."

In spite of his reluctance, el Dabh was commissioned to present several of his compositions for the performance. "It was tough," el Dabh recalls. "A friend of mine from Boston said, 'You look like someone told you they were going to throw you in the ocean and you can either swim or sink.'"

About four months later, the concert premiered in February 1949 at the huge cathedral overlooking the Nile. To el Dabh's surprise, he was a hit.

"The next day, all the newspapers were mentioning my name as a world-famous Egyptian composer. I said, 'No, I'm not...This is not me!' " el Dabh says with a laugh, throwing his hands on top of his gray, bushy hair.

"I was an overnight composer against my will."

After the sudden change of events, el Dabh decided to quit his job at the agricultural firm to pursue a full-time music career. This move came as a shock to his family. "They couldn't understand because I was actually on the way to becoming rich. They thought I was losing my mind," he remembers, touching his delicate mustache.

At 27, el Dabh found himself a celebrity. Flooded with offers to study at conservatories around the world, he decided to come to the United States in 1950 to study Native American music.

It was during this period, through another coincidence, that el Dabh met Stravinsky, a Russian composer whose works include "Oedipus Rex," "Le Sacre du Printemps," and "Petrushka." While studying at Denver University, el Dabh went to listen to a performance of the university's orchestra in Aspen, Colo. El Dabh accidentally missed the bus back to the university and was forced to hitch-hike home. Walking with his thumb out, el Dabh was approached by a long limousine. "It was Stravinsky," he says, laughing, amazed by his own tale.

El Dabh would go on to study with the man for several months.

Another coincidence would introduce el Dabh to two of America's greatest composers. In 1951, el Dabh's "It is Dark and Damp on the Front," fell into the hands of Fine, an American composer of sonatas for violin and other instruments, who then showed the score to Copeland, composer of "Appalachian Spring." Impressed by the complexity of the piece, they cabled el Dabh...
to come to Boston. "It was an invitation that extended my stay in America," he says.

But, while el Dabh’s extraordinary journey through time is difficult to characterize as fate or luck, one thing is a given: his love of music. Although he has made music his life, it seems more accurate to say music has made him.

He talks about music as if it were tangible. To him, it is a palpable entity existing everywhere — in vibrations, in people, in noise. Using words like "texture" and "exteriority" to describe tones, el Dabh casts an unconventional theory on conventional sounds.

"Everything has a sound, especially flowers," he says. "I wrote a system of colors when I was a kid in which colors reflect sound. I hear color rather than see it. "See this purple?" he asks, grabbing my nylon jacket between his thumb and forefinger.

"Ahhhh!" he says, shaking his hands and animating a boisterous pitch.

El Dabh likes to experiment with sounds and objects usually not associated with music, said Denise Seachrist, assistant professor of music at Kent’s Trumbull campus. About five years ago, he worked on a project at Kent State in which participants made instruments like drums and flutes. The group put on a remarkable performance, Seachrist says.

"He’s really a genius," says Blake Tyson, who is working on his doctorate in performance and literature at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y. "He’s interested in creating sound palates."

Tyson first met el Dabh while earning his master’s in percussion at Kent. After purchasing an Egyptian drum called a derabucca, Tyson persuaded el Dabh to give him lessons.

"I remember going to his house and he had sheets of music spread all over the floor," Tyson says. "I just looked at it and

El Dabh demonstrates how music reflects feelings, energy and life to two of his students, sophomore Ema Temu (on percussion) and senior Chinyere Ekechi (dancing). "I want students to learn to use their bodies, their voices and their knowledge ... to open the visions of learning," el Dabh says. The song they are performing, ‘Ya Amya Gammyr,’ is about the relationship between the high authority and the simple guy, el Dabh says. The sultan to the king wants to marry into the family of a camel man.
Halim is well thought of by students," says Walter Watson, director of the School of Music at Kent State. "He has helped make an awareness of world music at Kent. When I think of him, I think of words like peaceful, healing and positive."

El Dabh says he sees music as an energy. It is a physical thing and believes it should engage listeners totally. "The purpose of my music is to find yourself," he says. "It's about giving back to the people around me. Music is the life of people."

In collaborating with world-class dancer and choreographer Martha Graham for his acclaimed ballet "Clytemnestra," el Dabh recalls how the dancers said they felt as if his music "lifted" their bodies.

In spite of his enormous success, fame and recognition isn't something el Dabh worries about, says Tyson, who has found music scores from the last 12 years piling up in el Dabh's office. "He's written them and that's what's important to him," Tyson says. "Once he writes a piece, it has a life of its own. He thinks if it wants to be played, it will be."

El Dabh agrees that his music has never been about money. "I never pursued big, big financial success," he says. "I could have, but I would have been a different person."

With such a passionate love of music, it seems natural that el Dabh would be drawn to teaching. However, it became another fateful step in his career he never anticipated. "I just wanted to be a free-lance composer —
that's it," he says. "I didn't want to be a professor. For some reason, I thought there was something strange about that."

El Dabh says he was "dragged" into teaching and first began as an associate professor at Haile Selassie University in Ethiopia. In 1966, el Dabh came to the United States as a music professor at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Three years later, he received a call from the director of music at Kent with an offer to teach. "He said, 'We want you here at Kent State,' and I said, 'What's that?'" After considering the proposal, el Dabh decided to move to Kent because it was a "nice, quiet place."

"He's a great thinker," Tyson says. "He really gets your mind going. Every time I visit him, I learn more."

Likewise, el Dabh says he learns from his students all the time. "I like crowds. I like interaction," he says. "But I don't like students who can't be critical. I learn from their criticism of my music."

El Dabh tries to help students tap into their unlimited potential by making use of his infectious energy - not only for music but for language, culture, art and people. "I want students to learn to use their bodies, their voices, and their knowledge of design and sculpture to open the visions of learning," he says. "No one lacks that capacity."

"He's so non-assuming and polite," says Jerry Kuhn, provost and dean for undergraduate studies. "I've never known him to put on any airs."

With a peculiar mix of childlike fascination and ageless wisdom, el Dabh is reminiscent of an ancient mystic. "It's like he exists in another world," Tyson says. "He operates out of time."

Despite his age, el Dabh seems to have boundless energy. About a year ago, el Dabh injured his knee and had to walk with a cane, Tyson remembers. During that time, he participated in a percussion performance at the university with a group of students. "All of the sudden, I see him up on stage screaming and yelling and jumping around - without his cane," Tyson says.

And even though el Dabh retired in 1991, he still teaches part-time at the Pan-African studies department. Occupying an office at the university's Music and Speech building, he is surrounded with loose sheet music and a piano.

He says he uses the quiet of the space to work on his future projects, including writing original music for the opera on the lost days of Jesus and "Antony and Cleopatra" for the Great Lakes Music Festival. The show opens Feb. 1. He says he's busier now than ever. "I'm retired, but I work harder," he says.

El Dabh is happy with his life and attributes his accomplishments to the fact that he never planned anything. "Everyone has a path," he says, his dark eyes narrowing. "But you have to be open. If you want something so badly, I think sometimes you hold it away from you. It creates negative energy."

"What I have done is always been true to my creative self. It's not possible for me to stand still without writing music."
Stumbling into the Spotlight

photo by Diane Benner
Fresh out of college, Bob Borden lands a job in 'The Late Show' mail room, while comedian Drew Carey gets all the laughs on his own TV sitcom, and he didn't even graduate.
Comedian Drew Carey reveals that his bleary-eyed climb to the top hasn’t been all laughs

story by Ali Cybulski

It’s a typical Friday night, 1975. Fresh from a late afternoon nap, a skinny, long-haired Drew Carey anticipates an evening of beer-drinking and disco-dancing with svelte young Kent State women. The countdown begins before his night out on the town, and he starts making careful preparations.

Step one: Don snug-fitting polyester disco gear and practice hot dance moves in full-length mirror.

“I had the gold chains, the bellbottoms; I was smoking,” Carey says, nearly 20 years later, as he apologizes for slurping a popsicle. “I had dance partners and we would practice our dance moves and then go out and show off.”

Step two: Douse cheap cologne all over shoulders, pits and work evenly through long locks.

“Some girl once told me she liked Brut, and I had never worn cologne.”

photo courtesy of ‘The Drew Carey Show’
The main cast of 'The Drew Carey Show' from left: Ryan Stiles as Lewis, Diedrich Bader as Oswald, Drew Carey as himself and Christa Miller as Kate O'Brien.
before," he says. They didn't have a lot of different kinds of cologne back then like they do now. Well, I went out and bought it all — Brut soap-on-a-robe, Brut cologne, Brut shampoo. I must have fucking reeked."

Step three: Peruse selection of favorite board games to provide endless thrills for fellow fraternity brothers.

There were all these kegs during rush week," Carey recounts. "During those rush parties, they just sort of BS with you and ask you about your interests. I showed up at the Delta Tau Delta party during rush. I just love war games and board games, so I told this guy there all about it. The Delts seemed to like me, so they invited me back to the next party. I brought all these games with me — Risk and Monopoly. They all just kind of looked at me like, what a nerd, but then they said, 'Oh, why don't we just play.'

Step four: Scrounge up enough pocket and couch change to buy beer and pizza at the Loft.

'I had a great time partying," Carey says. "I had grants and loans to pay for school, so I spent all my money on pitchers and pizza. Man, they had the cheapest pizza at the Loft."

Drew Carey is one of Kent's most recognized alumni, but he

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questions whether or not he really was a student — in the traditional sense of the word, that is: one who studies and regularly attends classes. During his five-year stint at Kent State, Carey says he was academically dismissed not once, but twice. After his first semester of classes, he received a 0.5 grade point average, and even though he expressed a brief interest in criminal justice and signed up for an introductory course, that subject and no others ever really sparked his interest. He never declared a major and he has never received a degree.

He was, and still is, just a kid at heart. “I drank all the time and partied, got kicked out twice and tried to kill myself,” Carey says, laughing sarcastically. “I was 17. I should have been in high school when I started college. Before I came to Kent, I had never been drunk, never used swear words, and I was a virgin. Within the first year, that was all gone.”

Carey, however, has risen above the drunken confusion, academic defeats and crippling depression that characterized his days as a Kent State student. He brought himself and Northeast Ohio into the spotlight with his achievements in the world of comedy. After waiting tables at a Las Vegas Denny’s at the age of 23 and doing a few stand-up comedy routines at local clubs, Carey has gone on to become the star of his ABC-TV sitcom, “The Drew Carey Show.”

Carey and his TV persona are nearly identical, except that the TV Drew isn’t as temperamental and doesn’t swear as much as the real-life Drew. On the show, Carey plays a personnel director of a downtown Cleveland department store who dwells behind a tiny office cubicle that is decorated with miniature orange-haired trolls and a stuffed dog. With his spiky crewcut, black, thick-rimmed glasses and a pudgy pot-belly stuffed in a conservative button-down shirt, Carey even looks like the typical department store manager. He and his feisty secretary, Mimi, whose eyes are covered in gobs of thick, electric-blue eye shadow, act like two junior-high buddies who constantly try to outwit each other.

After work, the TV Carey and his group of thirtysomething friends hang out at various spots in and around the city, including the Warsaw Tavern in nearby Parma and in the kitchen of Carey’s modest Cleveland home. They’re always teasing each other and avoiding the typical activities and responsibilities that come attached to adulthood. They are all just a bunch of kids trapped, against their own will, in the bodies of adults.

The comedic material for Carey’s show is developed by a staff of writers, along with himself and the show’s co-creator Bruce Helford. The comedian’s roots are deeply planted in a love of entertaining and making people laugh, and he says he wouldn’t trade his job for anything. “I’m loving it,” he says. “It’s like winning the lottery, but you can’t quit your job. Financially, you have more freedom, but at the same time, I’m working 10 to 12 hours a day. I don’t have time for anything, except for promotions. I like doing them, because they’re good for the show and there’s alcohol, but you can’t really let loose and get drunk.”

Carey’s love for comedy began as early as he can remember. He is a self-described joker, always the class clown, he says, remembering how he would listen to the comedians on morning radio shows and mimic jokes for his friends.

Carey could never have realized he was headed toward a successful comedy career during his years at Kent State. As a student, he said he felt he was wasting time — just an empty, hopeless body taking up space. “I never studied in high

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“Society is so credential-oriented,” Carey says. “That’s why people BS so much on their resumes. I’ve always felt I have to prove that I’m not stupid since I never got my degree.” However, he says, “If I could do it all over again, I wouldn’t change anything. I read more and know more now. I work so hard.”

The comedian actually prefers stand-up comedy to TV because he says TV is so edited for language and content that it’s harder to be funny. About stand-up comedy, Carey says: “If you don’t like it, then you don’t have to watch it. I say, ‘Let them be offended.’”

Carey, who grew up in Old Brooklyn in Cleveland, recently purchased his childhood home. He plans to remodel it and return to Cleveland as much as possible to visit family, hang out, drink beer with old friends and maybe catch an Indians game or two. For now, though, he spends most of his time in Los Angeles, where the show is taped and where he recently bought a home in the glitzy Hollywood Hills.

Carey’s new-found career has its advantages financially, but he claims he has never splurged on anything really extravagant, except when he took a one-week vacation to the Disney Institute at Disney World. He drives a 1994 Mazda Miata and wants to buy a “practical” Jeep Wrangler. “A lot of people think TV stars drive expensive cars, but celebrity-school,” Carey says. “I did my homework right before class and never paid attention. It wasn’t that hard. I had plenty of friends (in college) to try and help me, but I had no goals. I didn’t until I was in my 20s.”

Out of frustration and anger, in the middle of a Delta party, an 18-year-old Carey says he grabbed a handful of sleeping pills, gulped them down and was rushed to the hospital by a group of friends. The suicide attempt did little to inspire him to change the course of his life and become a more focused student, and after five years, he left Kent State without ever receiving a degree. It took working a whole slew of minimum-wage jobs, another suicide attempt and several years spent in the Marine Corps Reserve to give him the wisdom, discipline and self-confidence he needed to pursue a comedy career.

Following his discharge in 1986, Carey’s career began with a walk-on at an amateur talent night at a Cleveland club. He worked to develop an act that really made people laugh, and within months, he was earning up to $300 a night for his performances. His biggest breaks came in 1987, when he made two appearances on Star Search, and in 1991, when he performed on “The Tonight Show.” These two gigs led to appearances on cable specials and a role on the 1994 NBC sitcom, “The Good Life.”

With the success of “The Drew Carey Show,” now in its second season, Carey has gained reasonable confidence about the direction of his life and career. “Society is so credential-oriented,” Carey says. “That’s why people BS so much on their resumes. I’ve always felt I have to prove that I’m not stupid since I never got my degree.” However, he says, “If I could do it all over again, I wouldn’t change anything. I read more and know more now. I work so hard.”

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most of them go for a fun car rather than an expensive car—like Ford Broncos.’

It’s been about two years since Carey has visited Kent State. When he’s here, though, he makes pit stops at the Delt house and the Loft. “I came back last time during the homecoming parade,” he says. “I was drinking in a rented Lexus and I hit someone else’s car. It was on a hill and I didn’t see him. I knocked out his headlight.”

Delta Tau Delta president Brad Currence says the visit was a riot—literally. “He was hilarious,” he says. “He really is a funny guy. You’d just sit there and talk to him, and he’d come back with all these one-liners.”

Carey makes an effort to set aside time for his Delta Tau Delta brothers of the past and present, talking to them when he’s not taping the show or making promotional appearances. He’s even given Carl Ferrara, a senior radio/television production major, tips on how to get started in comedy.

“He’s giving me advice here and there, and wanting me to do amateur nights when I get up to the next level,” Ferrara says. “He said I could call him up anytime for advice.”

Ferrara says Carey “is a real genuine guy who never forgot who his friends are.” For instance, Ferrara had met Carey only twice when the celebrity gave him and a friend free tickets to his New Year’s Eve comedy performance in Los Angeles last year.

“He’s a real good guy, and he always remembers where he came from,” Ferrara says. “He’s done a lot for Cleveland.”

Indeed, Carey’s fame has changed him very little. He’s still a hometown class clown from Parma who enjoys the simple pleasures in life. He spends what little free time he has relaxing at home, curled up on the couch with a book or listening to music. Sometimes he grooves to Snoop Doggy Dog and other times he prefers Garth Brooks or Pearl Jam. “I like to listen to all kinds of music,” Carey says. “I listen to everything—country and rap. I even love heavy metal. I’m pretty much open to anything. I get bored real easy with stuff. I won’t listen to just one type of music.”

Since Carey left Kent State, he has realized what he should have done to graduate. His suggestion to those students who are in the same apathetic mode he was in nearly 20 years ago: “Either shit or get off the pot,” he says. “Study, learn, find a major. Be there to be there, or get out—you’re better off saving your money.”

Carey learned the hard way. But he certainly has proven that failure in college doesn’t have to seal one’s fate.

“Having money and success keeps you from hiding from yourself,” he says. “You just have to let (the past) go and be whatever you want to be.”
Live from New York:
It’s Bob Borden
A Kent State graduate took 'starting at the bottom' to heart when he took a job in 'The Late Show' mail room

T

he elevator doors were gliding shut when Bob Borden peeked from the mail room door to offer his final comment of the interview.

"This isn't going to run, is it? This was all a ticket scam, wasn't it?"

His insecurity persists, despite the fact that he has found the spotlight as a late-night talk show celebrity – of sorts.

Bob Borden has climbed to the top of the proverbial heap, seven floors above the Ed Sullivan Theater, in the mail room of "The Late Show with David Letterman." But his job hasn't ended in filtering autograph requests, viewer mail and UPS deliveries. Over the last year, Late Show writers have crafted 26-year-old Borden – humble, humorous and Ohioan – into one of Letterman's favorite straight men. His assignments have included being sent to the Southwest on a four-state burrito run and to Washington as a Late Show political correspondent.
‘And you know,’ Sigourney Weaver says walking away from Borden, ‘A lot of great men started in the mail room.’ Right, Borden opens David Letterman’s fan mail. Borden is constantly being interrupted by writers, producers, and other Late Night personalities while working. ‘I’m the mail boy. I’m visible. I get to see everyone and meet everyone on a daily basis.’

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During Borden's junior year in 1994, he passed a Late Show flier on a bulletin board in the Music and Speech Building. "They were looking for an assistant to the head writer," said Borden, a radio-TV production major, "and I wrote them back a letter saying I don't have the qualifications for that job... but if they could send me any information on an internship."

By August 1994, he had interviewed for the show in New York and was told he would hear by the end of the month. "So for that whole week in Kent Village I waited in my apartment. They called me on the last day and said, 'If you want the mail room internship, you can have it.'"

Two weeks later, Borden was in Manhattan. While his mother, Joyce, was thrilled about Bob's internship, she said she was anxious about his moving to such a big city when he wasn't used to a town any larger than Kent or Steubenville, where he grew up.

Bob and his mother always have been Late Night fans; while Bob was still in high school, the two watched the show together nearly every night. In 1990, Bob wrote a letter about talk-show host Geraldo Rivera for Dave's viewer mail segment, and every Friday night the VCR was set to record — just in case the letter was aired.

"Yeah, right, Bob," Joyce would say. But one Friday night, "What's the deal with Geraldo?" was pulled from the viewer-mail bag and turned into a comedy skit mimicking the tendencies of Geraldo's more violent guests. She said it's hard for her to believe that her son now sorts through that same viewer mail and helps make his own Late Show comedy vignettes.

During Borden's internship in the mail room, another internship as a production assistant opened, and he quickly took on the second set of responsibilities. "So I was busy from at least 9 in the morning until 9 at night."

After his duties as a mail room and production intern came to an end in December, he offered his assistance after the holidays and at spring break to work and help train new interns. When a full-time position in the mail room opened, Borden was a natural candidate. He took the job in September 1995.

Borden had no idea that within a month of being hired, Late Show writers would be creating his segue into a late night personality.

Sigourney Weaver sat next to Borden in the green room of the Late Show, listening intently as she balanced a glass of red wine in her hands.

"I learned how to swim last summer," Borden said.

"Really? Swimming is very good exercise," Weaver cooed as her name was announced for her October 1995 appearance. "Can you hold this?" Weaver asked, handing Borden her wine glass. She rose from her chair and was almost out the door when she said, "You know, a lot of great men started in the mail room."

On the same night, Letterman introduced Borden to America as the new mail room guy, a Kent State graduate who needed a date. In a taped segment, Letterman tried to help Borden make the transition to New York life by encouraging him to lie about his position on the show. Acting as matchmaker, Letterman interviewed a few prospective women for Borden, who was introduced as his financial adviser and the show's executive producer.
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A glossy publicity photo is tacked to the bulletin board in Teleproductions' Studio A in the Music and Speech Building. Written across the top in black marker is “Teleproductions, thanks for everything. Bono.”

The photo is a remnant of Borden’s two years at Teleproductions, working for Dave McCoy, a producer-director.

“Bobby’s a very nice, down-to-earth guy,” he says. “He is what you see, but he is the most focused person I’ve ever met.”

As Borden’s friend, former boss and one of his biggest supporters, McCoy loves watching Borden play the part of “Dave’s foil” and tapes every Borden segment. He sees the Late Show mail room gig as Borden’s 15 minutes in the spotlight, but it will be his focus and determination that will lead him to a future in comedy writing and producing.

“The deadpan he gives...” McCoy says. “I don’t know, he has this sort of God-given gift for comedy.”

When he was at Kent State, Borden said he didn’t go downtown or to parties much because every semester it seemed he was failing a class. When he

Letterman asked one woman if she would kiss on the first date, and she replied that it depended on Borden. Letterman promptly asked the nervous Borden the same question, to which he replied “no,” much to the woman’s offense.

“Well, you’re the kind of guy to just lay back and let things happen, right, Bob?” Letterman asked.

“Yeah,” Bob said.

“Does anything ever happen, Bob?”

“No, no it doesn’t,” he answered as Dave fell into loud Letterman laughter.

The segment continued with Letterman propositioning other women, asking them, “How do you feel about getting your mail promptly? Fills you with admiration and respect for the men and women who deliver it, doesn’t it?”

Finally, the segment ended with a pseudo-wedding in which Borden and bride pushed a cart down a hallway on the way to the mail room.

“I’ll do anything,” Borden said. “I love it.”

Still, he speaks sparingly of his television appearances, frequently stopping in the middle of sentences to interject, “Uh, I don’t know. I forgot.”

So how does one so shy go from being the mail room guy to television personality?

“A writer just writes you in,” he says.

“The writer who wrote it didn’t know it was on for that week. She saw the schedule before me and came by and asked me, ‘You don’t have a girlfriend, do you?’ and I said, ‘No,’ and she said, ‘Good.’”

But why Bob Borden?

“I’m the mail boy. I’m visible. I get to see everyone and meet everyone on a daily basis.”

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When he was at Kent State, Borden said he didn’t go downtown or to parties much because every semester it seemed he was failing a class. When he
did go out, it was usually after Friday afternoon rehearsals, when he and the Teleproductions staff went to Belly's Deli on South Water Street. He and McCoy would play Dean Martin songs on the jukebox, and Borden would complain about classes. He had two academic trouble spots, foreign language and the grammar test required of Journalism and Mass Communication students.

"I thought I was never going to get out of there," Borden says. "I flunked Spanish like three times." Then his JMC adviser, Bob West, suggested he take Kiswahili instead. Borden passed the JMC grammar test and loved Kiswahili, finally fulfilling the language requirement for graduation.

"Tell Dr. Temu I said hello," he says wryly.

This guy loves ABBA, a Late Show worker says of Borden as he passes quickly through the mail room.

The mail room connects Late Show traffic between the elevator hallway and offices, and the atmosphere here is as busy as it is friendly and relaxed.

REM's "Automatic for the People" plays on a portable CD player in Borden's office. On a bulletin board is a "Third Rock from the Sun" card, copies of news articles about Borden from his hometown paper, a show schedule and, tucked behind the corner of the bulletin board, a cue card reading, "Watch tonight's show and win a date with Bob Borden."

Borden says he is content at the Late Show and so far, things are turning out well. Although he's made a few connections in the broadcasting world, he said he doesn't want to leave.

"Starting on at Worldwide Pants (David Letterman's production company) probably means I'll never touch a camera again," he says, adding that anything involving technical crew, like camera workers, goes through CBS and unions. "But I kind of don't want to go that way anymore."

"I want to be involved in other areas, getting a show together, doing scripts. There's just so much."

So for now, Borden accepts deliveries, passes out show schedules, and, if he finds anything amusing in viewer mail, passes it along to the writers. On occasion, he makes television appearances with David Letterman. "I don't go over to his house and break bread or anything," Borden says. "I mean he's a very busy man."

Today's cosmopolitan Borden, with silver octagonal glass frames and vest, may not be Dean Martin, but he's decided to work in New York and stay at his apartment in Hoboken.

"The mail gig, it's a good place to start out because you get to meet everyone," he says. "It's almost like I'm starting out at the bottom at the top."
Kathleen in the Mainstream

An intimate look at an extraordinary life through the eyes of a big brother

story by Joseph Thomas
photos by Tanya Ackerman
When Kathleen got back from the funeral home, she disappeared into the basement with a green crayon and a neatly folded piece of yellow construction paper.

The grandchildren were asked to write or draw something to leave in Grandpa’s casket, and Kathleen took to this task quietly in the three-hour interlude between calling hours. The rest of the family remained upstairs, trading memories of Grandpa and filling up on lasagna.

When Kathleen finally emerged at the top of the steps, a chorus of “Where have you been?” greeted her. She was in the kitchen where most of her 11 older siblings crowd during family gatherings.

“Working on my card for Grandpa,” Kathleen replied as she squeezed into a spot between Theresa and Mary Beth at the small table in the nook.

I knew it was none of my business, but I was too curious not to ask. “Can I see it?”

“Sure,” she answered, handing the card across the table to me.

Dear Grandpa, I love you so much. You are always in my heart. When I was little, you played with me a lot. I will miss that you are special to me. I love you. Love, Kathleen Thomas.

Each word was written in her nicest print. Clear language. No spelling mistakes. And, perhaps most significantly, no coaching.

I was moved with pride in Kathleen’s work, and she said she didn’t mind when I asked her if it was OK for me to pass it around the table.

She politely accepted each compliment she received. She sat up straight, humbly observing as we showered her with the glowing attention that is the birthright of a youngest child.

The card was just another piece of evidence that the baby of the family was becoming a beautiful, intelligent young woman, in touch with her emotions and wise beyond her 14 years. Full of wit and character. A Thomas, just like the rest of us.

Indeed, we were looking through the biased eyes of proud siblings, seeing something that the rest of the world doesn’t necessarily see.

The rest of the world looks at Kathleen and sees a girl with Down Syndrome.

It’s a world with a cruel tradition of pointing and whispering about mentally retarded people like Kathleen.

A world where prejudices are passed from one generation to the next.

A world in which parents still tell curious children that retarded people are “special” because they can’t really lead normal lives as functional members of society.

It’s a small-minded world, after all.

I sat at the kitchen table wishing the rest of the world could read Kathleen’s card. Then, I tried to figure out how many of those misconceptions about mental retardation she has already changed.

Too many to count.

Because every day, Kathleen is playing an active role in the community, touching other people’s lives and teaching people to change. She gives us every reason to be proud as a family.

And we are expecting great things from Kathleen.

She was born May 14, 1981. We were allowed to stay home from school that morning when Mother and Dad went to the hospital. I was in the second grade.

We sat in the den, waiting for the phone to ring and watching “The Great Space Coaster” on Channel 43. A puppet named Gary Gnu had just signed off from his spoof, eyewitness news sketch with his trademark, “No gah-news is good gah-news.”

Shortly thereafter, we got the good news.

A baby girl. Kathleen Marie.

Even my parents didn’t find out she had Down Syndrome until Kathleen was 5 months old. When doctors confirmed it, Mother and Dad sat down with us to explain exactly what having a sister with Down Syndrome meant.

Kathleen would need surgery to wire together the holes in the walls of her heart that threatened her life. She would probably grow and develop more slowly than other children. But if we showered her with love and support and help, there would be no limits to the things she could do. She could lead a happy, productive life.

The part about Down Syndrome didn’t disturb us as much as the news that Kathleen’s life was in danger.

She spent the next two years going in and out of the hospital, sometimes for months at a time. She was tiny and fragile, and we prayed for her as we held hands and sang the Lord’s Prayer together every night before we were put to bed.

We would often hear her restless
little body coughing and wheezing and fighting for breath in the middle of the night.

Whenever that happened, Dad would scoop her up in his arms and walk downstairs to the living room. We could hear the rocking chair creaking quietly. And above that, we could hear Dad’s voice drifting softly, singing “I’ll Take You Home Again, Kathleen.”

The lullaby was usually soothing enough to settle Kathleen and assure the rest of us that our little sister would be all right.

But one night, Kathleen experienced a burning fever and other complications that led to an unusual house call by our family physician. The commotion kept most of us awake in our bunk beds. Mother and Dad came around to each of us, kissed us, told us they loved us and asked us to pray very hard for Kathleen.

She went back to the hospital that night. We prayed as she fought the fight of her life. Three times during infancy, she had suffered congestive heart failure. But she always pulled through.

Kathleen always came back home to us.

I'm not sure if Kathleen understands the concept of irony yet, but it’s a fascinating part of her life story.

In 1972, when Marie Ann Thomas found out she was going to have twins (my sister Molly and me), she couldn’t wait to break the news to her husband, Raymond.

He was out of town on business at the time - he had just been commissioned to direct a new social service agency in Summit County. Ray was the head of the Association for Retarded Citizens.

Dad had been an Army lieutenant. He also had worked as a camp director for the Catholic Youth Organization. Mother was a maternity ward nurse before she became one of its busiest patients.

The 1972 appointment began a new chapter in the lives of my parents, whose family would soon include nine children. Advocacy for the mentally retarded would become a family vocation.

Although Dad was never sent away to war while in the Army, he stepped into a battlefield when he accepted the new job.

The movement to bring mentally retarded people into mainstream society was in its infancy. Up to that point, mental retardation was usually hidden away in prison-like institutions.

My parents campaigned to shut down the institutions and met with angry opposition from families who did not want their children or relatives to be removed from the institutional environment.

Dad received countless phone calls and letters demanding him to butt out - some even threatened violence. My parents were called hypocrites because they did not know what it was like to have a family member with mental retardation. The most outspoken opponents even voiced wishes that the Thomas family be punished by God with a mentally retarded child of its own.

A decade later, Ray and Marie Ann Thomas gave birth to Kathleen.

Kathleen was their 12th and last child. And as far as my parents were concerned, she was just as splendid a creation as the first 11.

Today she is an altar server at church.

Right, Scrabble is Joe’s forte and much to his chagrin, Kathleen giggles as she wins this round against him and their mother, Marie Ann.

‘She gives us every reason to be proud as a family,’ Marie Ann says. ‘We are expecting great things from Kathleen.’

‘The rest of the world looks at Kathleen and sees a girl with Down Syndrome,’ Kathleen’s brother, Joe, says. But to her family, she is an angel.

A member of a championship volleyball team with her St. Sebastian Parish School classmates.

A member of the youth choir.

A sixth-grader who received an A+ on her science project.

A voracious reader and a chatterbox.
As far as she is concerned, she is just another teenager. And she can’t wait to become an adult. Kathleen wants to be a teacher when she grows up. And she’s practicing for it by teaching her classmates about herself.

In January, Kathleen picked Down Syndrome as the subject of her science project. It was the same subject that I picked for my grade-school science project, so I volunteered to assist her with research and help her type the report on the computer.

The project gave the family an opportunity to find out just how much Kathleen understood about Down Syndrome. After several weeks of working with Kathleen, Mother decided to quiz her to see if she was comprehending any of the material they studied together.

“Kathleen, do you have Down Syndrome?” Mother asked.

“Yes,” Kathleen replied.

“Where is your Down Syndrome?” Mother asked.

“Downstairs,” Kathleen responded.

Although the exchange prompted laughter, Mother felt for a moment that hours devoted to studying weren’t sinking in at all. Either that, or Kathleen was just trying to make a joke in response to a question that was difficult to answer.

“Kathleen,” Mother asked, “can you show me where in your body Down Syndrome is?”

Kathleen pointed to her elbow. It still wasn’t the answer Mother was hoping for.

Two days later, I was driving on Interstate 76, taking Kathleen to the Kent State University Library — about a half-hour away from our Akron home. I also was curious to find out what knowledge she had gleaned from the heap of books that was collecting in the dining room.

“Kathleen,” I asked, “do you have Down Syndrome?”

“Yes,” she responded matter-of-factly.

I continued with the same line of questions that Mother had fired at her earlier.

“Where do you have Down Syndrome?”

“In every cell of my body,” she answered. A much different reply than my mother received two days earlier. Evidently, she finally
understood.

"Do I have Down Syndrome?" I asked her.

"No," she said.

"Do you know anyone else with Down Syndrome?" I asked.

Kathleen replied with the name of a classmate who had moved away.

"You’re right," I told her.

"Can you think of anyone on TV who has Down Syndrome?"

Kathleen answered like any student being quizzed aloud — fairly sure that she knew a correct response, but with a small amount of uncertainty still hanging on her answer.

"Corky?" she asked me, identifying a character on the television show “Life Goes On” that is played by an actor with Down Syndrome.

"That’s right," I assured her. This time, I decided to throw a trick question at her. "Can you think of anyone else on TV with Down Syndrome?"

She rolled her eyes, squinted them shut for a split second, and looked back over at me with a half-smile that told me she was about to take a wild guess. "Joey from 'Blossom?'" she said.

"What?!" I yelled out.

She chuckled, and I started laughing too.

She immediately began delivering her best impression of the character she named, chipping out Joey Lawrence’s famous “Whoa!” several times, making me laugh even harder.

She knew from the tone of my next question that her guess was wrong.

"Kathleen, does Joey from ‘Blossom’ really have Down Syndrome?"

"No," she replied confidently — as if she had known it all along.

"Right," I said.

As I kept driving, she occasionally glanced over at me, a smug smile creeping onto her face. Each time this happened, she whispered another high-pitched “Whoa!”

And laughter would erupt all over again.

 Presidents Day Weekend saw Kathleen and a handful of family members rushing around in a ritual that is observed in every household with children — scrambling at the last minute to finish the science report.

At the university library, Kathleen had looked up her own resources on the computerized catalog with very little assistance. She types slowly and carefully, and knows exactly where the delete key is located. She reaches for it often.

Kathleen was responsible for typing her own work on the computer. She knows how to use computers. Once she was done, a few of us helped to fix an occasional spelling or grammar mistake. She spent a total of 10 hours on the computer, punching in her report and bibliography. It was the leanest science report I’ve ever read — just 111 words long. But her work related everything that she firmly understood about Down Syndrome — and everything her classmates needed to know.

Down Syndrome means a person has one extra chromosome in each of his millions of cells. Instead of 46 chromosomes, he has 47 and this will affect his life. Like all children, he will grow to be a distinct person. Children with Down Syndrome are usually smaller. They learn slower, and they can have different nose, eyes, mouth, teeth, ears, hands and feet. Heart problems can also be present. It happens about once in every 600 to 1,000 births. They are more like other people than they are different.

The report, along with her class presentation and display, earned Kathleen an A+. It would be wonderful if everything Kathleen wrote was as succinct as her science report or the card she left in Grandpa’s casket. But during her first day back at school following the funeral, she wrote a journal entry that was difficult to decipher.

In fragments that wandered in several directions across the page, she wrote about how she did not entirely understand the sadness and frustration she was feeling.

As Mother and Dad grow older, they remind their children that Kathleen still needs all the love, support and assistance that we talked about together on that October morning in 1981.

For as much as we dote on Kathleen, she looks up to and follows examples set by the rest of her 11 siblings. She returns all the admiration and respect that we give her.

Kathleen used to sneak into her older sisters’ attic bedroom and spend hours paging through their scrapbooks. Now she keeps her own scrapbook, with pictures of friends and family, several of herself, and some cut out of magazines. She writes her own captions. Kathleen loves to show the scrapbook to other people. While some of her captions are hard to read, others are quite clear.

After Kathleen got back from the second set of calling hours for Grandpa, during which she placed her farewell card in his casket, she disappeared again. She went straight to her scrapbook, with a memorial prayer card from the funeral home. The small card was given a page of its own. It was perfectly centered.

As we watched our mother mourn the loss of her father, we could not help but be reminded of our own mortality, and our parents’ mortality as well. And we know that Kathleen will rely on us even more when Mother and Dad are no longer with us.

She will set her own goals and dreams — our job will be to continue encouraging her to achieve them. Her own determination so far gives us every reason to be confident in her future.

Kathleen will indeed be a teacher someday. She has already been one of the greatest teachers my family has ever known.
Kathleen and Joe discuss her day at school. Joe is very protective of Kathleen, and he struggles to learn how to overlook the world's prejudices against people with Down Syndrome. Left, Kathleen helps her mother look after the grandchildren. Her niece, Amanda Thomas, loves to be tickled.
Menu

Sunday Brunch
Join us for brunch. We welcome large groups such as church groups, family reunions and wedding and baby showers. Private rooms are available.

Daily Lunch Buffet
Monday - Chef's Choice Chicken
Tuesday - Stir Fry
Wednesday - Omelette
Thursday - Seasonal
Friday - Seafood
A la carte menu also available.

Dinner
Join us after work for our table d'hôte menu including tableside appetizers, entrees and desserts. Early bird dining available from 4 P.M. - 6 P.M.

Enjoy our elegant garden setting and tableside cuisine.
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