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contents
fall 1997
I haven't done it before. I just knew there was a name for it — binge drinking, that is. That's what a recent Harvard study calls it. Before I knew there was a name for it, I just called it having fun. Usually, my fun would start innocently with one whiskey sour, then a second, a third, a fourth ... and then, what do you know, I'm losing count. I'm laughing, disco dancing, talking about virtually nothing to the cute guy (I think) standing next to me, and having a great time. It isn't until the next day, when my head is aching and I can't stand the sight or smell of food, that I wish I hadn't had all those whiskey sours. It's only after a bad hangover that I really appreciate how great it feels to be sober.

Apparently, I'm not the only one at Kent State who binge drinks. Binging is officially defined by the Harvard School of Public Health as having five drinks for a man and four drinks for a woman in one sitting (about three hours), within two weeks.

In this issue of the *Burr*, contributing editor Karen Motley interviewed roommates and students who spun some colorful tales of binge drinking, everything from wild to mild — from simply missing classes to waking up in the morning with a bloody elbow or even a missing ear. Motley says she found it disturbing that many students didn't realize they had a problem with drinking. "They played up their drinking and didn't think there was anything wrong with it," she says. "They said it wasn't interfering in their lives, when in reality, it was."

Certainly, binge drinking is a big enough problem to justify the existence of Kent State's Coalition to Reduce Binge Drinking, a group that aims to reduce occurrences of binge drinking on campus. The group's efforts are worthwhile, but it will be difficult to eliminate the problem completely, mainly because college students have always been fascinated with alcohol. The best tactic may be education — to show the negative consequences of binge drinking and to stress the importance of being able to drink in moderation.

To end on a lighter note, the staff of the *Burr* definitely had its fair share of fun this semester, especially assistant photo editor and writer Kevin Brosien. Brosien and his bartender pal J. decided to canoe the Cuyahoga River from Kent to the Cleveland Flats, in early September. I had never known anyone to take such a journey before, and I recall the day Kevin stumbled into my office to tell me about it. I remember thinking, "Is this guy crazy?" Well, maybe he is a little bit, but he's brave, too. He says it was the best and worst experience of his life, and you'll definitely believe him after checking out his story, "Two Men, a Canoe and a Dream."

Enjoy life and the *Burr*.

Yours,

~

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In the back corner of a darkened apartment, a cigarette burns away in the ashtray. Next to the ashtray, two hands are working overtime, flexing and relaxing in an almost involuntary dance. Above, a face glows with the flickering light of a television, expressionless.

The 20-year-old student hasn't slept for almost 20 hours. No crack pipe is in the room. No blood-stained syringes. Not a trace of marijuana. Only a Sony PlayStation and an empty video game case that reads "Final Fantasy VII."

This person isn't addicted to controlled substances. This person is a video game junkie.
home video games have quickly become an integral part of America's culture. Allowing kids of all ages to bring to life many different worlds of fantasy, these games bring countless hours of pleasure for many people. But like any mind-altering substance, these games also have a darker side.

Even at Kent State, there are those who have let these virtual worlds get the best of them, causing problems at work, school and home. They are hopelessly addicted to the sense of accomplishment that comes along with solving the secrets of computer-generated lands.

Charlie DeMarco doesn't own his own home video game system, but there's a reason why. The 19-year-old radio/TV major already spends enough, maybe too much, time with a controller in his hand.

"I already play for two or three hours a day, at least six days a week," he says. "I'm almost afraid to buy my own system because I'd play it too much."

DeMarco first noticed he was hooked on video games about two years ago. It was then that he first played a fighting game for Sega Genesis called "Mortal Kombat II" at a friend's house. From that point on, the addiction increased.

"The hard thing about playing video games is that they're like books — you get into it, you want to finish it, and even if you're not playing the game, you still think about it all the time."

"FIFA Soccer 1997" is his latest object of addiction. "I've spent close to 125 hours a week either playing FIFA or watching someone else play it," he says.

DeMarco once became so enthralled by a game called "Resident Evil" that he spent three days at his friend's house playing the video game for a total of 42 hours.

"My parents, who I live with, got really worried because they hadn't seen me for days," he recounts. "They ended up calling all of my friends to track me down."

DeMarco admits video games have hurt his grades and attendance in college. On one occasion, DeMarco and a friend decided to play one last game for the night, after five full hours of playing "Madden NFL '97."

"It's about 2 o'clock in the morning, and it's the fourth quarter," he says. "My team was the Raiders. Suddenly, 'Rocket' Ismael breaks down the left side of the field. Jim Harbaugh drops back in the pocket and just unleashes 60 yards of pigskin fury. It catches 'Rocket' at the 30 yard line and he strolls into the end zone for the lead. I ended up winning and my friend was all mad so we had to play again."

By the end of the game, it was 4 a.m. "So, I went home knowing I had an 'Art of Theatre' test at 10 o'clock the next morning," he says. "I slept right through my alarm and missed the test ... I ended up dropping the class."

Theresa Kish received her first real dose of video games in 1991 when she lived in Terrace Hall. "There were about eight guys crammed in a dorm room playing 'Road Rash' on Genesis and they refused to let me play, saying it was because I was a girl," the 23-year-old says. "For the next week, I would practice when no one was around. The next time there was a big group of people playing, I asked to play one game. I beat them all."

Then she was hooked.

"The next thing I knew, I had solved nearly every 'Sonic the Hedgehog' game, and realized that I needed my own system," she says.

"VIDEO GAMES, LIKE OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES, CAN BE USED TO AVOID OTHER
Atari - now that's the guy you want to visit.

Tony Meda doesn't fit the profile of a typical video game junkie. At 22, the English major is addicted to Atari 2600, the late 1970s predecessor to newer systems like Sega Saturn, Nintendo 64 and Sony PlayStation. Meda says he tends to go overboard with his Atari playing. "I have fetishes. I usually don't just like something, instead I get obsessed. Atari's no different - it's an addiction," he says.

Although Meda's retro video game obsession has yet to interfere with his work or school life, he says Atari has a major impact on his social life. "It's actually increased my social life," he says. "I mean, the guy who has an Atari - now that's the guy you want to visit."

When Kish finally bought her first system, a 3DO platform that plays CDs, video game technology had improved immensely with incredibly detailed graphics. "The summer that I bought the 3DO, I would lock myself in my house for days and just play 'Star Control' all night," she says. "I even called off work a few times because I didn't want to stop playing."

Video games have become a sort of therapy for Kish, helping her through depressing times with incessant fun. "It's escapism - 100 percent," she explains. "Games give you a sense of accomplishment when you haven't done a damn thing at all."

Justin Harvey, a 22-year-old radio/TV major, admits he plays video games more than anyone he knows. "There was a time that I'd play the PlayStation game "X-Com" for nearly 20 hours a day," he says. "I'd tell myself that it was time to eat and when I finally would get up to eat, six hours had passed. When I wasn't playing, I'd find myself humming songs from the game and talking endlessly about how far I had gotten in the game. I wouldn't want to sleep, and when I finally did, I'd dream about the game."

Harvey says he even missed several job interviews because he didn't want to stop playing "X-Com." "When your friends refuse to come over because you're playing a video game, you definitely have a problem," he says. "I had a problem."

But Harvey, with a laugh, says he doesn't need to be rehabilitated. "I'd say that if I played video games in the real world - with a family and a real job, I would need help ... I would definitely like to find a job where I'll still be able to play my video games."

"Right now, I'd say that I play video games too much," he says. "I'll stay up late at night and then have to come up with an excuse why my homework isn't in on time. Maybe video games are the reason why I'm still a freshman after four years."
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The mystery of Kent State architecture students uncovered

night

Jen McConnell works late into the night.

It's 3 a.m. Like a self-appointed lighthouse, Taylor Hall's top floor is a beacon. The intense light is visible to most of campus, from Tri-Towers to Engleman, especially in the middle of the night. Around 4 a.m., security aides make their rounds on the fourth floor, chasing students away and extinguishing overhead lights. For just a few moments, the entire floor, a studio lined with drawing tables, is dark. But once security has left, the architecture students slowly trickle back into the building and get back to work.

Students have long wondered about their routines and the work they do on the fourth floor. Do they ever sleep? Do they ever stop working? Do they ever have fun?

Occasionally, Jen McConnell reports, some architecture students get out of the studio and have fun. "You have to know when to take the night off and just get out of the whole situation," McConnell, a third year student, says. "Sometimes — when we're up in the studio and not really working on something — we get to relax."

McConnell's never considered changing her major, even though Kent State's five-year program is grueling. There are three projects per semester, and each project requires five or six preliminary models. On top of that, most students complete two or three hours of homework nightly.

"If you have a project, you spend eight hours, if not more, in the studio," McConnell says. And most students average five or six hours in the studio, even when no projects are due.

Besides the long hours, project expenses add to the stress. Many students build five or six preliminary models, costing between $50 and $60. Final models cost around $40 to build, and there's no guarantee a student won't have to spend more on incidentals.

Then there are worries about project accidents. Blueprints have been known to get blown out of the fourth-floor windows.

"I've seen it. The wind just picks them up," McConnell says. "Suddenly you hear someone running down the stairs screaming. Everyone watches from the window and you try to tell them where they went."

Part of being an architecture student is designing original stress relievers. Some stress relievers — such as hurling X-acto blades into the ceiling — can be dangerous. "No one ever takes them down," McConnell says about the hundreds of long blades protruding from the ceiling. "They might have been up there for years."

Some have more playful ways of relieving stress. For instance, when the cleaning crews move the desks against one wall to wax the floor, the entire open length of the fourth floor becomes a giant playground. Impromptu hockey or baseball games are organized by procrastinating students.

Simply making noise makes McConnell feel better. "I've had screaming matches with partners," she says.

Since Taylor Hall's fourth floor is lit up most nights, some may think architecture students rarely leave the building. But break times come and go.

"Sometimes you're working late and all of the sudden at 1 a.m. you get all sorts of ideas," McConnell says. "People work better at different times. A lot of people work better late at night, but I work better in the morning." These constant "shift changes" make it appear as if the architecture students are always at work in the fourth floor studio.

McConnell was prepared for the stresses of architecture before she began Kent State's program. "They tell you to plan to spend your life here," she says. "Don't plan on having a boyfriend or a job. I came expecting it to be this way."

Nevertheless, she adds, "Nobody can ever tell you how much it can take out of you. Nobody can prepare you for that."
mehndi debuts in kent
these temporary tattoos lack the pain and commitment of real ones

Across the candlelit table, steam seeps from a bowl filled with a dark green, pasty substance. The scent of eucalyptus fills the room as Kent resident Jen McIntyre prepares to perform an ancient Middle-Eastern custom. Known in India as mehndi, the process of staining intricate designs on the skin using henna dye originated 5,000 years ago. Now, henna “tattooing” is a widely adopted practice throughout many countries.

From Los Angeles to Kent, this decorating trend has gained popularity because it lacks the commitment and pain of tattooing. Although it can be a long process (from 30 minutes to three hours), it’s a more practical alternative to permanent body decoration.

In Kent, McIntyre, a former Kent graphic design student, and her partner, Anne Mitchell, have studied mehndi for several months. They are convinced that a potential market exists locally for this kind of service because of the popularity of tattooing and body piercing.

“Hammer’s henna tattoos start at $30 and rise in price depending on the intricacy of the design, but Mitchell and McIntyre’s prices are lower. ‘The price ranges from $5 to $100 depending on how detailed,’ Mitchell says. ‘It depends on whether the design is specially crafted or whether a stencil is used. People can bring in their own designs, and we scan them into the computer to make vinyl stencils.’

Applying henna tattoos to the body is an intricate process. The dye is prepared with lime or lemon juice, distilled water, black tea, eucalyptus oil and henna powder. The mixture is heated and applied to the skin with toothpicks, Q-tips and stencils.

Other “secret” ingredients are sometimes used to increase the staying power of the design. The longer the henna is left on the skin and kept moist with a blend of lemon juice and sugar, the more intense the color. The colors range from shades of brown to orange, red and black.

Mehndi’s appeal to Western culture and counter-culture can be easily understood, considering the current obsession with body decorations. But this body-painting technique is used for more than just cosmetic purposes in India and other Eastern cultures. In India, mehndi is a pre-wedding ritual, Mitchell says. The day before a wedding, the bride-to-be is decorated by her future mother-in-law.

The pre-wedding process is important, Mitchell explains, because the bride is decorated to be a gift for the groom. It’s important that mehndi lasts, Mitchell says. “The new bride doesn’t have to do housework for as long as the design lasts. It may be the only time in her life when she is a lady of leisure,” she says.

Other countries have different traditions and perceptions about mehndi. For instance, in Turkey, the practice is as common as Americans who paint their nails. “They sit around the kitchen table and do it,” Mitchell says. “But in Egypt, it is considered a real low-class, hooker thing to do.”
self-expression and African history shape today’s popular styles

hair as an art form

Wraps, micro braids, dreads, crops, Afros, curly tops, finger waves, hair threads and corn rows are much more than hair styles — they are ornaments of beauty and culture for the African-American women and men who wear them. Many of today’s most popular hair styles for African Americans have evolved from a vast African ancestry that considers hair an important vehicle of self-expression.

Hot styles for women are micro braids — thin braids woven into natural hair — and wraps — a sleek style achieved by applying relaxer lotion, wrapping the hair around the head and brushing it out later, says Kim Burnett, 26, a licensed hair stylist at Kent’s Cuttin’ Loose. For men, Afros and bald fades, which are gradually shaved for a “fading” look, are at the height of popularity.

Micro braids are “in” for Tamika Ferguson, a 20-year-old junior fashion design major. It’s her favorite style because of the versatility. “You can do a lot with them, pull them up in a French roll, ponytail or wear it down.” The braids are so thin, it looks like you have long hair, Ferguson says.

It’s not unusual for Karamojong women from Kalapata, Uganda, to wear their hair in very thin braids — a style similar to the micro braids worn by many African Americans, says Esi Sagay in her book, African Hairstyles: Styles of Yesterday and Today.

In Africa, hair sculpture has always been an art, a form of self-adornment handed down from generation to generation.

Christy Davis, 19, a sophomore marketing major, once had micro braids woven into her hair, and the process took about 25 hours. The duration of a styling session depends on the thickness of the braid extensions and the number of stylists working to complete one hairdo. But trendy doesn’t have to take hours, says Davis, who now takes a few minutes every morning to fix her high-neck crop that’s cut shorter in the back and angled longer in the front.

Meli Temu, an assistant professor of Pan-African studies, says Africans have long incorporated a sense of art into their hair styles. “When you look at Egyptians and Ethiopians, they’ve been decorating hair for a very long time. It grew out of your body, and so it needed to be decorated,” she says.

Sagay says in tropical West Africa, two traditional hair styling techniques have held their popularity for years: corn rowing — hair braided firmly against the scalp and varied in different patterns according to how the hair is parted — and hair threading — wrapping black thread around sectioned hair to create various designs.

Corn rows are a popular style for men and women and are worn all over the world. “I’m from the Caribbean, and I used to wear my hair in corn rows when I was little,” says Carol Harper, a senior sociology major. “It’s still here. It hasn’t really gone out of style.”

Ken Babour, a 32-year-old Kent resident and lab technician at the Cleveland Clinic, temporarily wears an Afro. Soon Babour plans to get his hair dreadlocked because, “It’s something not everybody has, and I hear women really like dreads. It’s my way of being a rebel.”

Michele Lisby, 20, a junior art education major, wants to change her hair to a curly look, which she will do by sewing or gluing in tracks of synthetic hair into her own. “There are a lot of things I can do with my hair,” Lisby says. “The possibilities are endless. I don’t want it to look the same. I really care a lot about my hair. It’s kind of an accessory. That’s how I think of my hair.”

For now, Lisby prefers the convenience of the latch braids that are attached to her natural shoulder-length hair. “They are easy, and they look nice. It’s a time thing. I just get up and go.”

Long braids have been a tradition of warriors in East and Northwest Africa for many years, Temu says. The Masai warriors of East Africa who live in Kenya and Tanzania spend hours braiding their long hair. It is still considered a symbol of pride and is cut only when a family member or loved one dies, she says.

Davis does wraps for Ema Temu, 20, a junior marketing major. “I’m on a college budget, so I go to friends,” Ema Temu says.

She says hair-style trends are continually influenced by other African Americans, the media and styles from Africa. “We get our hairstyles from each other, and the media have a lot to do with it, too. When stars have different hairstyles, I look at those and try them.”
Kent State women's soccer shows there is more to a team than winning

BY RACHEL WENGER
PHOTOS BY LINDSAY SEMPLE

Clockwise from left: Tieg Coleman kicks the ball past a Duquesne player. Antigoni Raptis works out. Bridget Wiese hugs Rachel Blankenheim after the Bowling Green game. Coach Marcum yells at the team.
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visualize

Locker rooms usually echo with the nervous hustle and bustle that accompany pre-game jitters. But Colleen Marcum's locker room is relatively silent — almost silent enough to hear a pin drop.

When the young women on Kent State's women's soccer team are told to lie down on the locker room floor and close their eyes, they are certain they won't be taking a cat nap. They're in for some hard work.

"I want everyone to visualize the field and the net," says coach Colleen Marcum. "You've just stolen the ball, and now you are running the ball towards the net. Keep going. Keep running. You run past the opposition's defense. Yes. You've just scored for our team."

The team members slowly open their eyes and smiles erupt across their faces.

"I was always taught that if you can visualize doing something, you can usually do it," Marcum says. "Meditating also helps everyone release pre-game tension and it lets everyone set some personal goals before the game."

Freshman forward Stacey Presock benefits from Marcum's unconventional coaching techniques. "The meditation really helps me during the game. I've often visualized myself playing very well while lying on this floor, and when I get out on the field, I just try to go through the same motions in my head," Presock says.

For the Kent State women's soccer team, the game is a victory whether they win or lose: these 22 women and their coaches are making sports history at Kent State. This is the team's first year as an officially recognized varsity sport.

After several years of existing at the club level, Kent State's women's soccer program is now recognized as a Division I team. In fact, most of the team's players had previously been involved with club soccer. At their very first game in August, the players were cheered on by a crowd of about 200 fans.

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coach

Colleen Marcum didn't come to Kent State this fall just to coach a team. She came to help build a new program. Kent State chose
Marcum as the new women's soccer coach out of 144 applicants. Before coming to Kent, Marcum, 28, coached women's soccer at Robert Morris College, where she received an award for being the "winningest coach" in the school's history. She helped the team clinch six wins within two years. Marcum realizes that this record isn't outstanding, but for Robert Morris it was a step up.

"I know that six wins doesn't seem like very much, but when I first started coaching at Robert Morris, the women's team really didn't win many games," Marcum says. "I had to rebuild that program. That's what I do. I help to build programs."

Marcum thinks the move to Kent State was just what she was looking for — a chance to help a team get off to a fresh start. "We have a clean canvas that we can create anything we want on. We can be the artists and paint anything we want.

"I like the fact that our team can start this program out, minus the cockiness and the attitudes that some teams have. We don't put up with attitudes on our team. If you can't stay positive and if you can't be part of our family, then we really don't need you."

Prescock says she admires Marcum's ceaseless optimism. "When we lose a game, she never lingers on it," she says. "She just focuses on what we did right. She is so energetic, and she's always clapping her hands and cracking jokes. She makes playing the game a lot more fun."

To find coach Marcum sitting down is rare. She can usually be spotted wearing a bright yellow jacket, standing with her team in the middle of the soccer field during practice.

"I'm not into paperwork and sitting at my desk throwing commands around," she says. "That's just not me. My job is to motivate and to accentuate the positive. You can't do that sitting behind a desk. You've gotta get out there and you have to become part of the action."

Mia Quintanilla feels like she's part of a family rather than a soccer team. "We are there for each other in good times and in bad times, and in most cases, we live with each other in the dorms," she says. "I love the fact that I have family away from home. It's great."

Quintanilla, a sophomore forward, says the team shares a close bond. "With a women's team, you always have closeness, but you can also have a lot of attitude. We don't have that. We all realize that if we stay unified, we really can do anything we set our minds to."

Prescock and stopper Sally Manley, both freshmen players, are team members and roommates. "The coach usually puts team members together because our schedules are the same," Manley says. "We both have early class, then we have practice in the afternoon, and then study table a few nights a week. It works out well having Stacey as my roommate, because we understand what it's like to play a sport and also go to class. It's tough being a student athlete, but we have a lot of fun with it."

While Bridget Wiese, a sophomore left-back, stretched her hamstring muscles on the grass, teammate Quintanilla just couldn't resist giving her a boost. "I just want everyone to know that Bridge is awesome. She's our star outside defender," Quintanilla shouts as she pats Wiese on the back.

"Thanks," Wiese says, blushing. "She's so crazy but she helps make practice a lot of fun."

Throughout the team's practice, frequent smiles indicate the sense of community between teammates. Pats on the back are frequent, and shouts of encouragement are uncountable.

The support team members receive from each other makes their stressful lifestyles a little more bearable. "Being a student isn't easy,"
Marcum says, "These women work hard, and they aren’t only tired mentally at the end of the day. They’re also worn out physically. When you are running four to six miles in every practice and when you are smashing into other people like Mac trucks, it can kind of bring you down. That’s when the support from your team kicks in, because they really know what you’re going through."

The team finished it’s first season with a 3-14-2 record that Marcum says they should be very proud of.

"I’ve never coached a better group team than I did this season. We learned so much and everyone stayed very dedicated and very committed," Marcum

says.

"We brought a group of young women together who were at all different levels and who were all very dynamic and fascinating in their own ways, and we were cohesive and successful. We made history at Kent State. That’s something to be proud of."

Tieg Coleman and Cherie Brusky frolic on the field.

With attendance at games rivaling that of Kent’s more established sports such as football and field hockey, the team doesn’t seem to be lacking spectator encouragement. "I can’t believe the amount of support I’ve gotten from other coaches and teams," Marcum says. "After our inaugural game, the volleyball coach and the football coaches came in and dropped a few words of encouragement. It makes all the difference."

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Looking out to the bleachers filled with cheering soccer fans is enough to lift the spirits of any tired player.

"I feel like I'm in heaven here at Kent. We have so much support here, rain or shine, it blows my mind," Quintanilla says.

Wiese says she thinks all the sports at Kent receive equal attention. "We receive as much support as any men's team ever has."

As the game begins, it is an almost soothing sport to watch, or so it may appear.

"It seems as though the game starts off with mainly passing around the ball, but in actuality, the game really starts when we start smashing into each other and then we have to try to bounce right back," says Cherie Brusky, a freshman who as keeper stands first in the Mid-American Conference and second in the Great Lakes Region. She was fifth in the nation with 60 saves through five matches.

"I love the feeling of running onto that field and knowing that my parents are out in the stands and that I'm going to try to play my very best," Presock says.

For Quintanilla, nothing can surpass the feeling of getting a goal. "I love that rush I get right before I put the ball into the net. It probably is one of the best feelings in the world. I work hard at playing this game because I love that feeling. I wish it could last forever."
Freshman football player Kwasi Rouse isn't asking for a lot — he just wants his bike fixed. But he doesn't have a lot of extra spending money, and the NCAA prohibits him from getting a full- or part-time job. It looks as if Rouse will be traveling by foot.

Rouse, who receives a full-ride scholarship to play football at Kent State, is one of a growing number of students who say Division I athletes should receive monetary compensation in addition to scholarships. But universities nationwide, including Kent State, cannot give athletes any extra money, even if the athletes' names are making money for the university.

Rouse says receiving spending money would be a plus, because he doesn't have time to get a job, even if the NCAA did allow it. "We're working every day, six hours a day, for football," Rouse says. "I couldn't get a job even if I could and I wanted to. If your mom sends you some money, after a couple haircuts, doing a couple loads of laundry, the money runs out. I can't even get my bike fixed because something else might come up where I need money."

Sophomore football player Dan Terrell says athletes with full-ride scholarships, depending on family income, should receive money. "What if some athletes come from families that they cannot count on for financial support?" Terrell asks. "Some families just can't afford to send money. Even with Pell Grants, that doesn't mean you are guaranteed to receive any money."

The fact that Division I athletes who are attending college on full-ride scholarships cannot seek employment has been a sore spot with the NCAA and colleges nationwide for years. Although the NCAA approved guidelines in January that would have given scholarship athletes the right to work, the regulation was immediately delayed. The NCAA and Division I colleges realized they had bitten off more than they could chew, says Athena Yiamouyannis NCAA director of membership services.

"The legislation was delayed due to the problem of implementation," Yiamouyannis says. "We wanted to make sure that colleges could monitor what was going on."

Kent State athletic director Laing Kennedy says the legislation would put an enormous burden on the university. "It's flawed legislation," Kennedy says. "The hard thing would be monitoring it. You're opening Pandora's Box. How could we tell where and for whom the athletes are working?"

Although Kennedy voted in favor of the regulation in January, he thinks athletes' spending money should be limited. "Our full-ride scholarship athletes should receive a nominal stipend per month — maybe $100 for miscellaneous purposes," he says.

Division I athletes argue they should be paid above and beyond their scholarships, primarily because some of them bring money back to their schools. Unlike a computer and information systems major, who doesn't have people spending $20 per ticket to see him design a program, fans pay money to see athletes play. Also, fans bring in money from sales of sports shirts and other memorabilia.

"(Athletes) do bring back revenue to the institution directly through ticket sales," Kennedy says. "They also bring money in indirectly through marketing and name recognition. Name recognition can do a lot for Kent State. Someone might be able to recognize our school due to the fact they know of an athlete who played here."

But students who don't have athletic scholarships, who have to finance their education through loans and part-time jobs, think scholarship athletes don't need anything more than the free education they are receiving.

Kent State sports fan lan Croft says paying Division I athletes would create a smaller version of professional sports, with athletes hungering for more and more money. "If they're already receiving a full-ride scholarship, I don't think they should get paid," he says. "They already have enough perks."

Croft says colleges offering the most compensation would have an unfair advantage over smaller schools that can't offer as much money. "Who would get the best players?" Croft asks. "The colleges with the most money would. You would have the same problems the pros have with small-market teams getting pushed out because of the big-market teams."

Sophomore Darrin Miller says giving athletes additional monetary compensation would take a lot of fun out of the games. "The reason college athletes play now is for pride. What would they be playing for if they were paid? Money."

Certainly, money is the bottom line. While athletes are left wondering how they will pay the bills, the NCAA struggles to remedy the problem it created with the proposed regulation in January.

"Hopefully, this bill we be in effect by the end of the year," NCAA's Yiamouyannis says. "We just have to make sure we can tell where the money is coming from. We do not want to start something that we cannot control."
the NCAA struggles to determine if scholarship athletes need more money
Urban myths are prevalent throughout every city around the world.

Emeritus professor of sociology Jerry Lewis says, "They are simply recurring rumors that have an urban theme to them, such as alligators in the sewer."

Some are true, like the one from my hometown of North Canton. A woman and her husband lived in a house set far back from the road, tucked beneath tall shrubs, oaks and maples. It is rumored that she killed herself by repeatedly bashing her head with a hammer. Although that much is true, the fact that the woman had Alzheimer's disease rarely accompanies the story.

Many urban myths are untrue. Myths like green M&Ms being aphrodisiacs and Mikey from Life cereal exploding from eating Pop Rocks with soda are so popular that they spread rapidly through many cultures.

One house in Kent has been graced with its own share of urban mythology. The house, as James Michener described in his book, Kent State: What Happened and Why, "... stood on a high hill smack in the middle of Kent and was so surrounded by trees that it looked as if it existed in the middle of a Grimm Brothers' forest in medieval Germany."

In the summer, the thick trees on the hill beneath the house obscure it from view. But come fall, the house looms high on that hill looking out over Kent with its paned eyes. The long and winding stairway that Norman Bates strode up to care for his mother in Psycho is replaced by a winding driveway at the house in Kent. The 12-unit Bates Motel that sat below the house is replaced in Kent by a church, an office building and parking lot.

The house in Kent does sit high on a hill looking ominous just like the Bates homestead. It has enough of a presence that if someone had just watched Psycho and decided to climb up the hill to look...
Alfred Hitchcock in Kent?
finally, the truth revealed

at the house late at night, that person might be inclined to hear the shrill shrieks of violins that accompany the shower scene for the ill-fated tenant of cabin No. 1. If there is a light on in the upstairs window, he or she just might see Mother’s silhouette rocking in the window behind the curtains.

Adding to the mystique of the house is the fact that for some time leading up to the events of May 4, 1970, the house became the crash pad and headquarters for the Kent branch of Students for a Democratic Society. Some have tried to scapegoat the radical students as a causal agent in the events leading to the May 4 tragedies.

Lewis, the Kent sociologist, says the so-called “haunted house” gained even further notoriety after the printing of Michener’s book in 1971. Michener spins a tale about an author named Robert Bloch who lived in Kent and used the house on the hill for the inspiration for his book, Psycho. According to Michener, when it came time to film the movie, Hollywood dispatched a camera crew to Kent to photograph the weird old horror house from various angles so that a replica could be built on the lot.

“I've been up there to see it,” says Kent resident Jonathan Fox, 30. “To tell you the truth, it doesn’t look much like it, but it has the same presence. I know the author (of Psycho) used to live in Kent.”

Kent resident Dan Malareck, 27, also knows of this urban legend. “I heard Hitchcock came here and took a picture of it,” he says. “I also heard there was a swimming pool in the top of Beall Hall, so who knows?”

On May 14, 1971, Alex Gildzen, then the curator of special collections in the Kent State library, sat down at his typewriter. He had finished reading Michener’s book and didn’t quite buy the bit about the house on the hill. In a quest for the truth, he sent letters to Hitchcock and Bloch.

To Hitchcock he wrote:

“Although students have called the house in question the ‘Psycho’ house ever since your famous film was released, I had never before heard the story Michener claims and very much doubt its authenticity. I would be most grateful if you could verify this tale.”

And to Bloch:

“Your biography shows that most of your life has been spent in Milwaukee and on the West Coast. If Michener isn’t mistaken, when did you live in Kent? Also, did you indeed have a certain house in Kent in mind when you wrote ‘Psycho’? Also, did you discuss the house in Kent with Mr. Hitchcock before the filming of your novel?”

A meticulous search through telephone directories dating 1930 to 1960 (under the premise that no one needed an unlisted number back then) showed that neither Bloch nor Hitchcock ever lived in Kent. Joseph Stefano, who wrote the script for Psycho, has also never lived in Kent.

On May 17, 1971, Bloch replied to Gildzen from his home in Los Angeles:

“Dear Mr. Gildzen,
Life is full of surprises. You were surprised when you read Michener’s statements about me in ‘Kent State: What Happened and Why,’ and now I am surprised when I read your letter.

To set the record straight for you —
1. I have never lived in Kent.
2. I have never set foot in Kent.
3. I know of no house or houses in Kent, either through description, photograph, or illustration, nor did I have any house — let alone one in Kent — in mind when I wrote Psycho.
4. The house constructed on the back-lot of Universal Studios was up, used and abandoned before I ever exchanged my first word with Mr. Hitchcock. For the record, that initial conversation didn’t occur until the first private screening of the film at the studio.
5. No house anywhere had anything to do with my decision to write Psycho.”

Soon after, the myths surrounding the house on the hill were officially put to rest. Carl Moore and Ray Heisley, communication studies professors at Kent during the 1970s, co-authored a paper pointing out numerous inaccuracies in Michener's book. The two interviewed people who were quoted in Michener's book and found that the discrepancies just kept piling up. After Michener read Moore and Heisley's paper, he said he had known the story was a local legend, but allowed it to be printed anyway.

Lewis, the Kent State sociology professor, thinks the radicals who lived in the house made up the story while being interviewed by Michener for his book.

“I had never heard (the house) described as having a relationship to Psycho before the book came out,” Lewis says. “In other words, it was not an urban legend prior to Michener being BS'ed by the activists.”

So then, the myth should have died off around 1972. Not so. Every year, more freshmen teetering on their first college beer buzz are dragged to see the infamous house on the hill. Others, just plain curious, go exploring for themselves. The story sounds pretty cool, and people want to believe it, so they do. It is, after all, an alluring myth adding a certain mystique to our quaint college town. 6
Kilns of Kent

Kent State not only has black squirrels frolicking around its campus, but two giant cats as well. The four-foot cats, weighing in at about 50 pounds each, guard a tree outside the pottery barn. The cats are the creations of Marika Patterson, a ceramics teaching assistant at Kent.

The pottery barn, at the corner of Summit Street and Student Center Drive, is just one of Kent's hidden treasures. At first glance, the building appears vacant, but behind the plain brown door, artists transform lumps of clay into works of art.

"It's an art form from the earth," says Debbie Weinstein, a graduate student who studies pottery. "That's what makes it so beautiful and pure."

The inside of the pottery barn could double as a set for a haunted house. Layers of dust cover everything. The scent of damp earth hangs heavy in the air, and fire from the many kilns produces an eerie glow. However, these students are not watching for ghosts. They are too busy with their work.

"We do it all from scratch," says Patterson, clad in clay-spattered overalls and shoes. "We even mix the clay, and we expect to get dirty."

Eva Kwong, a part-time ceramics instructor, says her students are hardworking. "It's a lot of long hours and manual labor, but the hard work and dedication shows in the work," Kwong says, pointing to shelves overflowing with pottery.

At Kent, pottery can be a major, minor, or taken as an elective course.

"Kent has a good variety of kilns. We have a great working program with Kent students, and others as well," says Kwong of the pottery program.

Graduate students come from all over the world to use Kent's facilities. The many different styles of kilns enable students to use their own techniques and to pursue their own artistic directions. Some students leave the warmth of Kent's kilns and take their work outside the United States. One student recently displayed his work in Nova Scotia.

The department plans shows and sales throughout the year. It also hosts speakers and reaches out to high school students via tours and displays. "We need to get our work out in the open, not locked inside," Weinstein says.

"Art is intended to be shared in order to be enjoyed."
Experiments and scientists lurk inside ... but what is the Agassiz house, really?

This old house

with its large lab, is ideal for research.

The Agassiz is one of five Summit Street frame houses purchased by Kent State during a post-Depression push for expansion. Others included the Summit House (located where Satterfield Hall now stands), the Ward House (where the Kent police department stands), the Regional Campus House to the east and the Biology House to the west.

Fire destroyed the Regional Campus House in 1987, says Kent State facilities planner Gary Casper. The Biology House was torn down in August, leaving the Agassiz standing alone.

Before it came down, the Biology House was estimated to be the oldest of the three neighbors under the water towers. Robert Fildes, former facilities planner, says carpentry design on the house indicated it could have been built as early as 1850.

For the past 10 to 15 years, it served only as storage space for outdated science equipment — and a population of stray cats. For many years, the Agassiz was equally dilapidated. When he first moved in 15 to 20 years ago, biology professor Dennis Cooke stuffed newspaper into wall cracks and wore feather-down slippers with his coat to stay warm during winter. The two-story building also had no fire escape.

"There was a rope you were supposed to throw out the window," he says.

Cooke still keeps the slippers in his right desk drawer, but after $50,000 worth of renovation, he doesn’t really need them. Private grants and money from the state legislature funded the remodeling.

Fildes predicts Agassiz will not stand much longer. "When they finish the addition to Cunningham Hall, the last of those buildings will come down," he says.

But Cooke says tearing Agassiz down wouldn’t be wise. "This building is a valuable component of our department," Cooke says. "The operation of this building does not cost the university very much, and the square footage is just immense."

By Christina G. Hange
more than a
In Kent’s twisted version of autumn, the sun does not simply disappear into complete darkness — it collapses in an overwhelming cloud of dead gray. The lost highway of state Route 59 is no exception. Any motorist who braves this sullen course from Kent to Ravenna in the evening is all too familiar with the routine. Nothing exists to break the morose monotony. Nothing, that is, except for the scowling visage of Demi Moore, miraculously performing one-handed push ups in the middle of the night sky.

For nearly 50 years, the Midway Drive-in has dwelled peacefully on Route 59, a silent resident of Nowheresville. Up to 500 cars populate the theater during summer’s apex, but the last Friday of September marks the Midway’s final show.

It is common knowledge that the drive-in is an endangered species. Although the Midway has no plans of closing permanently, it is one of merely four area outdoor theaters left in the area and 61 in the state.

On this year’s final Friday, rain, menacing clouds and wind circled above Midway’s two gigantic screens. Anticipating the cold, manager Joel Reynolds surveyed the gravel terrain from the concession stand. “The movie goes on and people stay whether it’s raining, lightning or anything,” he says, smiling in disbelief. “Fog is a problem, though, because you can’t see the screen. When it’s foggy, we ask people to start their cars to generate heat.”

Reynolds and his staff of two arrived at 6 p.m., two hours before the features were to begin. They prepared popcorn, jalapeno poppers, funnel cakes and buffalo wings as concession delicacies. As the aromas wafted through the damp air, Reynolds lamented the Midway’s recent cold spell and older film selection, both of which hurt ticket sales.

“Heart movies always seem to do well here,” he offers. “We had ‘Scream’ for weeks on end. It must be some kind of nostalgia thing, but people love to see a horror movie at a drive-in.

“I kind of like to think drive-ins are coming back again,” Reynolds predicts, in contrast with the statistics. “The trend is towards big multiplexes right now, but there will always be a place for drive-ins.”

The barely illuminated sky murmured a polite thunderclap, and shortly thereafter, the night’s first droplets of rain spattered on Route 59’s pavement. Perhaps an hour before showtime, the evening’s clientele slowly filtered into the lot. The price at Midway is $10 per car, but most of Friday’s brave souls boasted season passes for the year’s final go-round.

Midge Knepp has worked the Midway’s box office, a claustrophobic’s nightmare, since 1993. This particular evening, she greeted her customers with good cheer as the Indians game flickered on a portable TV behind her. Her son, John, owns the Midway and two other area drive-ins. He asked his mother to run the box office after her husband died.

“When he first asked me to do it, I said I didn’t want to deal with money,” she says, “but I love it here. I love to meet people and I meet lovely people up here.”

Still, Knepp says she is petrified by the frequent thunderstorms she has endured in her tiny alcove. “A couple weeks ago we had a tornado warning, and a mother drove in here with three or four kids,” she says. “I told her about it, but she just looked at me and said, ‘I don’t care. I came here to see a movie’ and went right in.”

As she spoke, cars crunched their way up to the box office. Drivers stopped to purchase their tickets and converse with Knepp. Only a few precious yards separate this checkpoint from Route 59, which makes for interesting logistics.

“During the summer, you would look at the road and all you would see is signal lights turning in left, all the way up to Wal-Mart,” Knepp says.

The image of cars lined along Route 59 bumper to bumper, awaiting spots in Midway’s spanning parking lot recalls the mantra of “Field of Dreams”: If you build it, they will come.

“People have come here from as far away as Texas and Michigan just to see a movie outside,” Knepp says. “This summer a family came by from Virginia. They don’t have drive-ins in Virginia.”

She whispered this with the same disdain as if they didn’t have indoor plumbing or kindergartens in Virginia, either.

The next morning, Midway closed for the year. There will be no more horn honking battles to see which side’s movie starts first. There will be no more jalapeno poppers.

“I told John I’d work here all winter telling people we’re closed,” Knepp says. “It’s sad, but I already put my application in for next year.”

There will be no more movies suspended in the evening sky over Route 59 until next summer. Then it begins again. b

movie
the vanishing species of the drive-in
How binge drinking can take over your college career

It's Friday night, and John Stockdale and his roommates are watching TV. Each drinks a six-pack before venturing downtown to the Kent bar strip to knock back a few more beers and hang out with friends. Early in the morning, John and his roommates return home and grab a few more drinks before finally dozing off on the living room furniture.

Stockdale, his roommates — and almost half of all Kent State students — are binge drinkers, and most don’t know it. A study by the Harvard School of Public Health, which surveyed 17,000 students at 140 colleges and universities, including Kent State, defines binge drinking as having five drinks in one sitting for men and four drinks for women. A drink can be one 12-ounce can or bottle of beer, a 12-ounce wine cooler, a four-ounce glass of wine, or a 1 1/2-ounce shot of liquor — either straight or in a mixed drink.

Many Kent State students interviewed say they were astonished that the amount of liquor defined as binge drinking is so low. In fact, Stockdale says, “Five drinks is just a beginning for us (him and his roommates).”

But campus experts say at the five-drink level, people start causing problems for themselves and others — missing classes, vandalizing and fighting with friends and roommates. Five drinks also causes a blood alcohol level of .1 in a 170-pound man and a 130-pound woman. That’s the legal definition of drunk in DUI cases.

“We didn’t realize the effects that come with binge drinking until the studies came out,” says Alice Ickes, crime prevention officer for the Kent State Campus Police Department and a member of Kent State’s Coalition to Reduce Binge Drinking. “Now we’re trying to reduce the problem on campus.”

BY KAREN MOTLEY
PHOTOS BY TANYA ACKERMAN
Anytime, anyplace

In Kent, students may binge drink on the traditional Thursday night out at a party, in a crowded bar or in the dorms. But Stockdale, a Kent State graduate with a general studies degree, says he and his roommates drink anytime during the week. "It's tradition," Stockdale says. "It's a good way to wind down from school. And it's not fun to go to the bars and not drink.

"It's a bonding experience," Stockdale says. "If I get drunk, I can stay on a friend's couch for the night if things get out of hand. But it's OK, because everything's forgotten in the morning.

"It builds good memories when I think of someone and can say I drank so much with that particular person. And besides, I won't drink like this forever."

Freshman Shaun Lindsey says he sees students in Dunbar Hall drink every weekend. "Some people like getting drunk," he says. "It takes the pressure off from school, it helps them relax .... it's a whole state-of-mind for a lot of people."

"I see people who drink starting on Thursdays and don't finish up until Saturday," says Janelle Kollar, a freshman who lives in Prentice Hall. "They'll chug it all down, then drink more just to say they did it."

Sarah Abrahamowicz, a freshman who also lives in Prentice Hall, says she has three older brothers who drink. "They say drinking gives them the courage to do things they wouldn't do if they weren't drinking," Abrahamowicz says. "That's why most people drink."

Some people think there's no party worth going to unless there's drinking involved, Abrahamowicz adds. "The first thing people say in high school is they can't wait to drink when they get to college," she says.

Sue Foster, former area coordinator for the first-year college experience and a coalition member, calls that an example of "state dependent" learning. "On the freshman and sophomore levels, many students learn social skills while under the influence," says Foster, who is now assistant director of student and staff development in Residence Services. "When they try to socialize in a sober state, the same social skills aren't there.

"People used to drink to socialize. Now students drink to get drunk. College students think college is a magical time-out and that what they do in college won't affect them once they get into the workplace."

Kollar says some of the attraction of drinking has to do with the rush of breaking the rules. She also says students who give the excuse "everybody's doing it" are mistaken. In fact, the Harvard study reports that 12 percent of Kent State students don't drink at all, and 36 percent have drunk, but do not binge.

Some students say they just grow out of binge drinking. For instance, Supriya Harris, a freshman from Canton, says she was a binge drinker with college-aged friends before she came to Kent State last year. "If I had been by myself, I probably wouldn't have binge drank," she said. "But I was with my friends, and it was just fun."

But Harris, now 25, says she drinks much less. "I started to realize that it is not pretty for a woman to be drunk," she says. "I'm a lot more mature than I was five years ago, and I just don't have the desire anymore."

The morning after

Nationally, 50 percent of people say drinking made them do something they later regretted, 40 percent say they've forgotten where they were or what they did, 30 percent had unplanned sexual activity and 15 percent have been injured.

Franco, one of Stockdale's four roommates, admits he's a binge drinker (by the Harvard definition). He remembers discovering one morning that his elbow was stuck to his shirt with blood. "I'm not sure how I was injured," Franco says.

Stockdale says it's common for him to forget what happened after a night of drinking. Franco joked about how the two of them used to be able to drink until 3 a.m. and get up the next day at 7 a.m. to go to work. "I basically still can do that," Stockdale says. "This summer I worked 60 hours a week and would drink three or four times a week."

But Franco says he couldn't keep up that routine for very long. Binge drinking affects more than the drinker himself - friends may be placed in uncomfortable situations when excessive alcohol is involved.
Senequa White, a senior from Youngstown who lives in Beall Hall, remembers a weekend night when a friend came home after pizza and mixed drinks. Her friend ended her evening hovered over the toilet. “But she missed,” White says. “There was puke all over the floor.” White cleaned up the mess and put her friend to bed. “No one else was there to do it,” she says.

According to the Harvard study, 50 percent of Kent State students said they’ve had to baby-sit an intoxicated friend, 54 percent said their sleep or studying was interrupted by a drinker, 22 percent of Kent State students experienced unwanted sexual advances by drinkers, and 19 percent had their property damaged.
Campus security aides deal with binge drinkers every day. Security aide Steve Caffrey says when he worked in the Small Group complex for two semesters, he saw binge drinkers in situations ranging from the routine to the unimaginable. "(Freshmen) were experiencing what they thought were the joys and wonders of alcohol," says Caffrey, who has worked as a security aide for three years.

Caffrey recalled a time when he was on duty and saw a freshman who was lying in a pool of vomit. The woman was unconscious. Once the paramedics came, she woke up, but could not remember her name, what room she lived in or any other information the paramedics needed, he says. "It's kind of sad to see when people binge drink that badly," Caffrey says. "It's sad when someone loses control, but we deal with it all the time."

Caffrey and Chris Beacom, also a security aide for three years, estimated that about 80 percent of their calls between Wednesday and Saturday — noise complaints, criminal damage, rescue squad calls and fighting — are alcohol-related. They report that they've seen some pretty interesting cases — cases even the most creative novelist could not make up.

Caffrey remembers a time when a freshman had come home from a fraternity party and went to bed. Later, he had to use the restroom, so he climbed out of the top bunk of his bed and fell to the ground, snagging his ear on his dresser on the way to the floor. "I came to the guy's room and I saw him holding a white towel to his ear," Caffrey explains. "The towel had turned red from the blood."

The man was holding his ear in his hand.

"He was so drunk he didn't even realize what had happened," Caffrey says.

Ickes, the Kent State Police crime prevention officer, remembers a man who fell out of the window of a fourth-floor building. He had been drinking and wanted to get out of his room to get more to drink. His friends had been blocking his door.

Profile of a Binge Drinker

Frequent binge drinking was defined in the Harvard study as binge drinking at least three times during the past two weeks. Stockdale and his roommates say they fit the frequent binge drinking category. But he says the definition of binging and frequent binging both are laughable and negative. "I would consider a binge drinker as someone who doesn't normally drink, but who gets really drunk once in a while," he says.

Scott Dotterer, health educator for the Office of Student Health Promotion, says he doesn't want students to get hung up on the five-drink number. Instead, he says, students should limit drinks to one per hour. The body's system can handle that far more easily than faster drinking, he says.
"CAFFREY RECALLED A TIME WHEN HE WAS ON DUTY AND SAW A FRESHMAN WHO WAS LYING IN A POOL OF VOMIT."

Some people say drinking brings out their creative side. A Pabst case worn as a hat is one such result.

**Solutions**

The Coalition to Reduce Binge Drinking was formed at the beginning of this year, and the group includes faculty, staff and students. Although the coalition readily admits it doesn't have all the answers, it says education is the key.

Dotterer says a main goal is to inform students of the dangers of binge drinking. "We had low attendance at drinking programs in the past, so we're trying something new," Dotterer says. "We challenge students to stop drinking after that four- or five-drink limit."

Foster says many students think there are no medium-term effects of drinking. "Students think they can binge drink on Friday, recover on Saturday and Sunday and take a test on Monday," Foster says. "They think they still have the same critical thinking skills, but they're really under a false assumption. The reality is that recovering those critical thinking skills can take up to 30 days."

The coalition is studying policy alternatives, including requiring white slips for every on-campus liquor violation. White slips send students directly to conduct court, while blue-slip violations handle policy violations within residence halls.

Franco says it will be difficult for the coalition to persuade students to drink less. "We've tried to find other things to do like bowling," says Kevin, one of Franco's roommates and a senior radio-TV production major. "But you drink while doing that. Then we tried going to the movies, but what do you do after the movies are over? Even when we find other things to do, we still drink."

b
This is the true story of four students who picked nontraditional majors for their gender, and they say it's pretty cool. It's a matter of sex—well, not exactly.
They say it doesn't really matter. They say they never feel out of place in the classroom. And they say they get treated equally by their instructors and peers. Meet Dowon, Jenni, Brian and Shella — Kent State students in majors that are nontraditional for their genders.

According to these four, it hardly makes a difference whether they are male or female. Most of the time, it just comes down to how well they do their jobs.

When Dawon Hawkins gets up in the morning, he likes to lay out his clothes on his bed before putting them on. "I'm very conscious about what I look like," Hawkins says. "I will stand in front of my closet and look and look and look." The Kent State junior wants to make sure his outfit stands out. He wants to be sure it makes a statement about his mood.

"I kind of think of life as a drag," he says. "It's all about who you want to be perceived as. When you wake up in the morning and get dressed, you're putting on a persona."

Hawkins says if he's in a bad mood, he'll wear something bland and reserved. "But some days, you cannot contain me," he says. "I have some bright, bright clothes that will make your head spin. Sometimes it hurts my eyes to look at them."

One of Hawkins' most creative ensembles is his St. Patrick's Day outfit — lime-green plastic pants and a green swimming cap. He poked holes in the cap so strands of his shoulder-length black hair could be pulled through. His favorites also include his so-called "construction uniform outfit" and, especially, his banana-yellow suit from a thrift store.

Hawkins is one of only 15 men in Kent State's fashion design and merchandising programs. Combined, there are 340 students enrolled in the two majors.

Tameka Ferguson, a junior fashion design major and friend of Hawkins, says he fits right in. She says she doesn't even think twice about his choice of clothes. "I don't think anything of it because I dress the same way," she says. "Eighty percent of fashion design students dress kind of weird."

When Hawkins gets a reaction about his choice of major, it's usually from someone he meets outside his
People's reactions to his major can reveal a lot about them, Hawkins says. But no reaction will change his mind about wanting to be a designer. "I like the idea of being yourself and not trying to conform to what other people want you to be," he says. "I love fashion with all my being. That's who I am."

Senior Jenni Huxel has a different morning routine than most students. She drags herself out of bed to run a couple of miles at 6:30 a.m. After running, she does 40 push-ups and 70 sit-ups within the required two-minute time limits. As a female enlisted in the Army ROTC program, Huxel works hard to prove that women are as physically capable as men.

"Sometimes I feel like I have to prove myself because I'm a female," she says. "No one ever says I have to prove myself, but I want to show that females can do the same things physically as men."

Huxel, a nursing major, has dusted some of her male comrades in the two-mile run. "I'm right up with the guys, if not in front of them," says the petite, 105-pound blonde.
Senior Brian Sente might disagree with the statement, "it's a man's world," because males make up only 12 percent of Kent State's nursing program. Even when he's the only one around who is strong enough to lift or move a patient, female nurses are more likely to make a group effort to get it done than to seek him out, Sente says.

As a member of Kent State's flight program, senior Sheila Medary frequently holds others' lives in her hands. And she says she's never carted a passenger who complained about her gender.

Medary, 21, started flying when she was 15. She's now a part of the 14 percent of women who study aerospace flight technology at Kent. In fact, some women are praised excessively for enrolling in the program, says Ruth Sitler, chief flight instructor of Kent State's flight operations. "I think it even impresses people more than it should," Sitler says. "Sometimes I think I get noticed more than men, and I don't think that's fair."

But she does remember meeting an older pilot who said he had never even met a female pilot before. He left a lasting impression. "I was flying solo cross-country, from Kent to Indiana. But there was bad weather, so I had to stop at a little airport in southern Ohio," she says. She came across the pilot, who was in his 60s, while she was waiting for the skies to clear up. He didn't believe she was a pilot, Medary says. And then he started telling stories about when he was a young pilot. "He told me about an airport with a bar right across the street, and how he would pick up women there and take them on airplane rides. He told them, 'Yeah, come look at my airplane. Do you want to go for a ride?'

"I just thought, I'm glad things have changed," Medary says.

Kent's Army ROTC program has 60 members, 14 of whom are women. Although women are outnumbered, Huxel says she never feels as if she doesn't belong. "The males in ROTC are accepting," she says. "If they have any bias, they cover it up well."

Dan Fenn, a senior criminal justice major and ROTC member, says the military doesn't lend itself to holding biases. "I think the military is the most integrated workplace," he says. "It really doesn't matter what your gender is or what color your skin is."

Women in the program must meet military fitness standards, but they don't have as difficult physical requirements as the males, Huxel says. But as far as sheer physical strength goes, being a woman can be a disadvantage.

Huxel remembers an exercise she had to do over the summer at Advanced Camp (similar to boot camp).

"We had obstacles where we had to use all 10 people in our group," she says. "The mission was something like having to get all the members of our group and these boxes over a wall — and the weaker component in that case was the female. You have to rely on the guys to help you get over because they're stronger."

Huxel says her grandmother once told her something that she will never forget. "She said that it's a male world," Huxel remembers. "Personally, I think it's gotten a lot better. But I don't know if it will ever be perfect."
“It’s not like everyone says, ‘Get Brian! He’s the male. He’s the biggest one here,’” he says. “They don’t give me all the dirty work or anything like that.”

According to Claire Nalepka, an associate professor of nursing, male nursing students rarely have a different experience in clinicals than females. When they do have problems, she says, it’s because they are afraid to do things because they are males. “I think sometimes men think they are at a disadvantage because nurses have to be in very personal, intimate situations with their patients,” she says. In situations like helping a mother breastfeed her newborn, some male students tend to be very timid, she says.

Sente, who became interested in nursing when his older sister joined the profession, says he doesn’t feel awkward as a male. The only time he says he’s at a disadvantage is when female patients don’t want him for a nurse. “I’ve lost out on a few things, like putting a catheter in a female,” he says. “The patient refused because she wanted to have a female do it. But you have to respect that. I didn’t leave the room all upset and mad — it’s just some people’s beliefs.”

He says it does disturb him that he’s deprived of learning because he’s a guy. “I’m on the same professional level as any of the female nurses,” Sente says. “We’re all professionals and we’re here strictly to do our job. I understand that people may feel uncomfortable. But it’s all about managing the care of people’s lives.”
"The idealized body is one that doesn't do work, that doesn't do any labor."

special section: body image

"It was like a rush. It was what I would imagine being on cocaine or heroin was like."

"But a full-bodied woman is culturally beautiful in many African cultures."

"There is social pressure on men to obtain the ideal physique."

"There is an increased pressure on men to obtain the ideal physique."

the cultural connection

diet drugs with a dark side

DAVID MCREA

GARY BUCHLER

MEGAN BOMEN
In contrast to the many women who fret about conforming to society's perfect body image, Michelle Mitchell wishes she could pack on a few more pounds. Mitchell, a senior criminal justice major, isn't all skin and bones like supermodel Kate Moss, but she carries her trim, 5 foot 7 inch, 125-pound frame well.

"I'm pretty happy with the way I am, but I would like my legs to be a little bigger," Mitchell says. Mitchell, like many other college-aged, African-American women, has a positive self-body image — at least more so than many Caucasian women within the same age group. In fact, during the past 25 years, studies have shown that African-American women have more positive body images, and the rate of eating disorders is markedly lower.

Historically, African-American women have taken pride in healthy, voluptuous body types, which some people in today's American culture mistakenly view as overweight, says Diedre Badejo, a Kent State professor of African world and cultural history.
a body many Caucasian females view as obese may actually be a healthy body, according to height-weight tables.

71 percent of Caucasian women possessed an intense drive to achieve thinness, compared with 33 percent of African-American women.

In the African-American culture, in terms of body perception, people are not expected to all be built to look alike.
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The lack of negative body image in the African-American culture also has to with family. Merryman says, and Mitchell is an example. Despite the quest to thicken her legs, Mitchell says she was never taught to focus on being thin while growing up, but just being healthy. "I just try to stay away from greasy foods and be healthy, but I don't really think about my weight," she says, "I just wish I had a little more — just sometimes."

Men also influence why African-American women are more accepting of their bodies. Typically, in the Euro-American culture, many men view larger women as undesirable. "But African-American men like big women," she says. "They don't necessarily want them fat, but they like them a little thicker."

Beyond the influence of family, pop culture icons contribute to an emphasis away from weight and body image for black women, Merryman says. "There are some extremely racist implications of how the bodies of women of color have been depicted — it depicts classism and racism in our culture.

"The idealized body is one that doesn't work, that doesn't do any labor. This racial
some people in today's culture mistakenly view this as overweight.

discrimination has excluded black women from being an icon, resulting in a certain freedom in imagery of the body," she says.
The perfect female has typically been seen as white, and the ideal of beauty is still determined by a white woman's features, Merryman says.

"(The supermodel) Iman has dark skin but her features are structurally more European. Even with Asian models it's not usually a traditional Asian face. The white, Aryan face and has been what is idealized."
The advantage of this idealization has resulted in less of an impact of body obsession on young, black women, she says. "It has given them a realistic view of the body."

Jennifer Jones, a Kent State sophomore, says she remembers when growing up, African-American women were portrayed a certain way on TV and in music videos.

"They're thick," Jones says. "They're not fat, but they have big chests, butts and hips." But white women on television always look like the stereotypical model, with thin legs, well-toned arms and a flat, muscular abdomen. Jones says she doesn't worry
about her weight and is happy with her looks.

As the African-American culture continues to mesh more each day with the United States' predominantly European-American culture, Merryman predicts more instances of eating disorders and the development of a more negative body image among African-American women. "As cultural identity blurs, we're seeing more and more incidences (of eating disorders)," she says.

Mike Register, a Kent State senior in information systems and criminal justice major, has witnessed this phenomenon among friends. Many of the African-American women he knows are growing more concerned about their body image.

"Women are concerned because it's just part of this society to be," Register says. "I just like women. I don't have necessarily a
But white women on television always look like the stereotypical model, with thin legs, well-toned arms and a flat, muscular abdomen.

preference about size – I'm beyond anything like that. But I do like women who don't look like sticks.”

Indeed, the ever-changing ideal of “the perfect body” makes it more difficult for young adult females to understand what a female body should actually look like, says Meehan, an eating-disorder expert.

“We emphasize large breasts, then no breasts and large hips, then no hips,” Meehan says. “We shouldn’t use these as a guideline for who is beautiful. These are genetic differences. But we’re all corrupted by attitudes of society.”
If magazines, television and movies are any indication of the American psyche, it would be fair to say that our society admires thinness. After all, the diet industry alone takes in billions each year and is still growing. In the past decade, new men's shape and fitness magazines have joined their female counterparts on the newsstand. Ads for products ranging from soap to cigarettes have a habit of exposing male abdominals, and those are, of course, rippled and toned.

Boys and men are now entering the world of objectified, rarefied bodies that females have inhabited for decades — it is a universe in which impossibly ideal shapes are displayed as essential. "There is an increased social pressure on men to obtain the accepted and ideal physique," says Steven Crawford, a physician at the Center for Eating Disorders in Towson, Md. "This increased pressure leads to heightened expectations for males to be muscular, in-shape and physically fit."

"It all started five years ago when I was at a very competitive school for the performing arts," says Roger, 24, who graduated from Kent State in May and asked that his real name not be used. "It was a factory school, so to speak, because they like to produce a certain specific end product from all of their students. I have always had a hard time with food and weight, and for me the stress of not having the body type that the school wanted was more than I could handle."

Roger learned a "neat little trick" from some dance majors who were always trying to stay lean and mean: how to make himself vomit. "At first, it was hard for me to shove my index finger down my throat, but after the first couple of times, it became second nature," he says. "Actually, it soon became unnatural to finish a meal. I wouldn't have to come close to my mouth with my pointed finger. I would just go to the bathroom and vomit."

Roger soon lost almost 100 pounds and says he had become so weak that he wasn't able to stay awake long enough to go to class, practice and then make rehearsals. "I was falling apart. I was unhappy with everything, and being that much skinnier really didn't seem to help."

After eight months of suffering from bulimia, Roger sought help. He says he had an excellent therapist and a nutritionist to help him make the changes he needed to get well. The hardest part for him, as for any person with an eating disorder, was gaining back some of the weight he had lost. The fear of losing control never goes away.

"I think that many people seem to view eating disorders purely as an issue for women, but this cannot be further from the truth," he says. "Since I have entered recovery, I have met so many guys that have had similar circumstances to myself."

Typically, men have been envied by the opposite sex as being able to eat whatever they want and not gain a pound. Although this stereotype may ring true for some men, a growing minority is voicing the complaints most often heard from women:

"I look/feel so fat."
"I shouldn't be eating this."
"I really need to lose some weight."

Society's emphasis on body-as-worth can have devastating effects on women and men. Eating disorders and body shame are starting to cross gender lines. In fact, a 1996 study by the Council on Size and Weight Discrimination found that 50 percent of 9-year-old girls and 80 percent of 10-year-old girls have dieted. Similarly, a second survey of fifth-graders showed that 43 percent of boys wanted to be thinner. Males as young as 10 or 11 are developing dangerous methods to stay trim and fit.

Nationwide, an estimated 10 percent of eating disorder patients are males. "It is estimated that up to 5 percent of college-aged men are bulimic," says Suzanne Brigham, a Washington, D.C.-based psychologist who specializes in eating disorders. "Between 5 and 10 percent of college-aged women suffer from bulimia."

Anorexia and binge-eating disorder also develop among males, a fact that may come as a surprise to many Americans who associate eating disorders exclusively with teenage girls. "I have seen an increasing number of men who have distorted body images," says Joe
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Napierala, a psychologist and the director of Success Individual and Family Counseling in Akron. “They are paying more attention to how their bodies look. Whatever it takes, they do not want to become fat.”

Owen, who also asked that his real name not be used, can’t remember a time when he wasn’t conscious of his weight. “Even as a little kid, I was always aware of being fatter than all the other kids,” the 21-year-old Kent State student says. “It got to the point that I just stopped eating.”

Owen weighed 130 pounds as a fifth grader. Seven years later, when he graduated from high school, he had grown seven inches taller, but his 5’8” frame weighed only 140 pounds. He says he’d only eat when he had to, that breakfast and lunch were nonexistent and he’d only “nibble” at dinner.

“I just convinced myself that I wasn’t hungry. Around that same time, I was also struggling with the fact that I was gay, and I knew very well that I didn’t fit in. Being skinny was the only way I could avoid being picked on even more.”

He says he would go entire days without eating anything, convinced that small amounts of food would pack on the pounds. He would be too weak to do much at all, except lie in front of the TV thinking how much better life would be if he were even skinnier.

“I was in constant search of the perfect person to fall in love with,” Owen says. “And I figured that the main reason I couldn’t find him was because I was still overweight, even though my pants were practically falling off, and my shirts just kept getting bigger and bigger on me.”

Owen’s eating patterns, or lack thereof, did not change throughout his first year of college. He says he was hanging out with people who were doing the exact same thing: Not eating to stay skinny.

“There is almost a sick kind of competition
to see who could go the longest without eating, and when you finally broke down and did eat, you'd try to see how little food you'd actually consume. No one wanted to admit they were hungry, and I just went along with that mentality of 'to eat is to be fat.'

But Owen's life did change during the beginning of his sophomore year — he finally found someone who loved him for who he was, not for how he looked. He says that for the first time in his life, he had a stable relationship, and that stability translated into a new outlook on his behavior.

"I'm just as critical of myself now, but I'm not as scared of gaining weight," he says. "I still think I'm fat, and if I eat stuff that I know is bad for me, I feel really sad and disappointed in myself. I guess that will never go away entirely."

Owen has gained weight in the past year, but he continues to work out six days a week. "I still have fat days, where I feel like I'm the biggest tub of lard in the world," he says. "But I'm trying to focus more on not losing weight, but on gaining muscle. I don't think I'll ever be able to eat a candy bar without berating myself for hours afterward."

Although eating disorders are well-known, researchers are still in the dark about what they really are and why someone may develop one. "Whether you're a compulsive overeater, bulimic or anorexic, those are just symptoms of deeper emotional issues," Brigham says. "Similar to drugs and alcohol, food is used to cope with painful feelings and emotions."

A fine line exists between someone who is extremely health conscious and someone who has an eating disorder, thus making diagnosis difficult. People who exercise regularly are often praised for their self-motivation, even though they may be exercising compulsively.

"When the eating, purging, exercising cycle starts interfering with normal life, then that's when it becomes a problem," Crawford says. Characteristically, men who suffer from eating disorder are perfectionists, over-achievers, do not know how to express emotions, avoid conflict and have lower self-esteem. (continued)
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Men who have eating disorders tend to be overly sensitive, as well. "In terms of their emotional makeup, they go to extremes. They eat to relieve anxiety, manage emotions and express sadness, anger, loneliness or boredom."

Napierala, the Akron psychologist, stressed there is no one set cause for a disorder. "A search for control appears to be an underlying trigger," he says. "They may have been a victim of physical or emotional abuse. They may have grown up in a dysfunctional family where alcohol was abused or where emotions were not expressed."

Like any other psychological problem, solutions range from individual therapy to support groups to inpatient treatment at specialized medical centers. "There is no cure for an eat-
On April 27, Jenny, a 28-year-old journalism student at Kent State, was in a devastating car accident. The physical pain from the accident prevented her from exercising, and she began gaining weight. At 5-foot-6, she went from 137 pounds to 167 pounds in a year. The possibility of losing her modeling job at About Face International made her desperate to shed pounds. Looking for a quick fix, Jenny took the appetite suppressants Redux and fen/phen. Jenny and the other students interviewed asked that their last names not be used because of the nature of this story.

The pounds might have dropped for Jenny and the 20 million people in the United States who were prescribed Redux or fen/phen, but some drug users experienced serious side effects. Doctors discovered that 33 percent of patients taking Redux or fen/phen developed a leaky heart valve or primary pulmonary hypertension, an incurable lung disease. This is why fenfluramine (which makes up half of the fen/phen combination) and dexfenfluramine (sold as Redux) were pulled off the market on Sep. 15 in the United States at the request of the Food and Drug Administration.

Phentermine, the other half of the fen/phen combination, remains on the market. The FDA did not ask manufacturers to pull phentermine, says Dr. Ray Leone, a physician at the Health Center. Now, fenfluramine and dexfenfluramine aren’t available anywhere in the world, Leone says. But that doesn’t stop people from wanting the drugs.

Though Jenny wishes she had never used the diet pills, some users who experienced minimal or no side effects, think the drugs should stay on the market.

Jenny hoped taking Redux would help her regain the figure she had before her accident. Instead, Redux made her fatigued. She switched to fen/phen, which made her feel the opposite — tense and uptight. “It was like a rush,” Jenny says. “It was what I would imagine being on cocaine or heroin was like.”

Eventually, Jenny ended up in an emergency room with an abnormal heart beat. “The doctor told me, ‘Whatever you’re taking, stop taking it.’”

Pam, a 26-year-old junior nursing student, is an emotional eater. She overeats whenever she is upset or excited. “I wanted to lose weight, because I didn’t want to be this size (252 pounds, 5-foot-4) when I have children,” Pam says.

Pam took Redux for a year and a half and lost 25 pounds, but she stopped taking the drug after her weight loss slowed. Now, Pam weighs 190 pounds. She says, “If the drugs had not stopped working for me, I would still be on them. I would recommend them to anyone.”

Fearing she might someday become diabetic (the disease runs in her family), Stacy, a 21-year-old senior education major, needed to lose weight. At 6 feet, she weighed 230 pounds before going on Redux. “I’ve been on and off diets since 1989,” she says. She first heard about Redux from her uncle who is a physician.

After taking Redux for a week, Stacy was constantly tired and hungry. “By the time I got off work, I would be really tired, and when I woke up, I would feel like I had not eaten in months. And so I would eat like I had never eaten before,” she says. Instead of losing weight, Stacy gained five pounds.

Stacy says she wasn’t aware of the risks associated with taking Redux, but she trusted her physician uncle’s judgment. To her, Redux is still a viable option for losing weight. “If (Redux) works for other dieters, go for it,” she says. “But I don’t feel that people who don’t have a weight problem should use it.”
sink or swim

What? You didn’t order the Three Cheese Quiche or the Meatless Cheeseburger Casserole?

It isn’t as if I come from a family of culinary experts. So, when I came to college last year, I truly didn’t expect the cafeteria food to be much more than edible. Apparently, I expected a little too much.

First off, who actually eats steamed brussels sprouts on purpose? University food service employees seem to think freshmen like to scarf down that fine vegetable nightly. One word: Ugh.

And few things in the world scare me as much as eating red meat. I once tried to eat a cheeseburger at a Kent cafeteria. Note the use of the words “once” and “tried.” That cheeseburger gave me my first case of food poisoning (I think).

It wasn’t all bad. I started developing favorites once I determined which foods were edible. Pasta days brought joy to my life. And, of course, grilled cheese on Fridays was always a treat. After weeks of suffering the indignity of swallowing the unknown and undocumented, grilled cheese was something a poor freshman could count on.

Nothing, but nothing, beats going home and eating real food — well, maybe my own bed and bathtub, but it’s a close call. All of my friends from high school were at different colleges — busy gaining the dreaded “freshman 15” — while I was at Kent State losing it.

Essentially, I survived my freshman year of cafeteria dining by learning what I could eat without getting sick. And now, as a seasoned sophomore, let’s just say I’ve been eating a whole lot of grilled cheese lately.

—ELLEN FREIBERG

TANYA ACKERMAN
students reveal their adaptations to college life

Aside from the requisite summer camp experiences, I have never lived away from home or with roommates. To make matters even more nerve-wracking, I was assigned to a quad — the equivalent of taking someone who doesn’t know how to swim and throwing her into shark-infested waters. The following is my version of the average day in the life of a freshman dorm dweller:

5 a.m.: Someone’s alarm goes off.
8 a.m.: Someone else’s alarm goes off.
8:15 a.m.: Another damn alarm.
8:30 a.m.: My alarm goes off. I hit the snooze button.
8:45 a.m.: Snooze button.
9:00 a.m.: Snooze button.
9:15 a.m.: I crawl out of bed and stumble to the bathroom.

Someone posted an asinine list titled “Ways to annoy your public bathroom stallmate” on the inside of the bathroom stall. Resting in the sink is a mound of something I pray is Grape Nuts. As I head to the shower, I am greeted by a wall of steam and the sight of gray, peeling plaster.

10 a.m.: After successfully retrieving my contact lens from the depths of the sink (the one without the Grape Nuts), I return to my room and dig out my jacket from the pile of clothes that is my closet. I grab my bag and almost lock the door before I remember to scan the bathroom for possible showering roommates. One day, I’m certain I will lock one of them out of our room.

10:15 a.m.: I walk from Harbort Hall to the Tri-Towers cafeteria and grab a bagel and orange juice on my way to class.
1:30 p.m.: I leave my history class in Bowman, walking quickly and glancing at students as they venture toward the Student Center. At least half of them, I figure, are heading to the exact place I am: the cafeteria. I speed up, hoping to pass most of the crowd. No such luck.

3 p.m.: I return to my room. Amazingly, no one else is there. I use this sacred opportunity to blast the radio (first checking carefully to make sure no one is asleep) and check my e-mail. I appreciate my free time much more now that it’s at a premium.

4 p.m.: Mission: To reach my car. To do so, I must trudge to the end of Loop Road, cross Summit Street (no mean feat, especially on Friday), catch the bus and attempt to find my car in the Stadium lot.

11:30 p.m.: I have reached my studying limit, so I plan to go to bed early and actually get some sleep for once. This is easier said than done when you have three roommates. I never make it to bed.

1 a.m.: I am no closer to sleep, but I am completely caught up on all the Harbort Hall gossip, as well as my roommates’ classes and lives.

1:30 a.m.: I finally drift off to sleep, when loud laughing and talking erupts in the hallway.

5 a.m.: Somebody’s alarm goes off. Damn.

4:45 p.m.: I lost my car. Not my history book and not my orientation assignment. My car. I know, or at least I hope, that it sits somewhere within the vast confines of the parking lot. I also know that there are at least three others just like it, because I’ve unsuccessfully put my keys in each one of them.

7:30 p.m.: Car found and errands run, I head to Eastway for a greasy fast-food feast. It’s the only cafeteria open after 7 p.m. and the entire free world is already waiting in line ahead of me.

7:45 p.m.: I return to my dorm. Two out of three roommates are already there. We attempt to study, but little distractions like the television, computer card games and the radio get in the way. I try to sit on my bottom-level bunk bed. In no less than five minutes, I have thoroughly tangled my hair in the springs of the top bunk. It takes me another five to extract my hair from the bed. I move back to the rug on the floor.

TANYA ACKERMAN

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11:30 p.m.: I have reached my studying limit, so I plan to go to bed early and actually get some sleep for once. This is easier said than done when you have three roommates. I never make it to bed.

1 a.m.: I am no closer to sleep, but I am completely caught up on all the Harbort Hall gossip, as well as my roommates’ classes and lives.

1:30 a.m.: I finally drift off to sleep, when loud laughing and talking erupts in the hallway.

5 a.m.: Somebody’s alarm goes off. Damn.

—CARRIE GARZICH
two men, a canoe and this is a dream

BY KEVIN G. BROSIEIEN

we got at each other thrice, but we never killed each other
While smoking a cigarette on the bench just below the waterfall, it struck me that it was possible to travel the Cuyahoga from the Kent bars to the Winking Lizard in Peninsula, and then on to the Flats — one big bar-hopping boat sprawl. The idea took up residence in my head, and by the end of summer, it had become an obsession.

At my second home, The Loft, I told people about my plans. The most often heard comment was, "That's crazy. That's up river." This is a common misconception.

Cuyahoga is the American Indian word for "crooked waters," an observation the area's first inhabitants made while using the river for transportation. The river begins 18 miles northeast of Kent at the confluence of two creeks near the tiny town of Welschfield. After running south through Lake Rockwell and Kent, it flows west through Munroe Falls and Cuyahoga Falls. Skirting the north part of Akron and running through the Gorge Metro Park, it turns north, snaking its way through the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, Brecksville, Garfield Heights and eventually dumping into Lake Erie in the Flats.

I found my co-captain in Jonathan "J." Fox, friend and bartender of four years. Everyone I told about the trip thought I was nuts, save for J. I told him my plan, and after slight hesitation, he looked up from the pint he was pouring me and said, "I'll go."

Neither of us is an experienced canoeist. Between the two of us, we had roughly 30-day trips under our belts. Neither of us is a bastion of health, either. Both of us smoke, drink lots of beer and eat entirely too much red meat to be considered healthy. As a matter of fact, for the length of time I've known J., we've seen each other outside The Loft only about 10 times.

It took the rest of the summer to find a cheap canoe for the trip. We had to be fully prepared to destroy or abandon our vessel. Knowing this left renting, borrowing or buying a nice canoe out of the question. In late August, with fall semester a week away and my dream of urban adventure fleeting, J. found a canoe.

The morning of Aug. 24, we loaded up our coffee mugs and headed out to Windham. After a bit of fumbling around on the back-country roads, we found her — 16 feet of oxidized aluminum full of water and green fungus. She had patches on both sides of her hull bigger than my boot and silicone and fiberglass patches peeling off her bottom.

For the next week, J. and I worked on making the canoe seaworthy. We scraped and sanded, removing the old silicone and Bondo that was chipping away. We resealed the cracks, applying new Bondo and silicone in excessive amounts.

On Labor Day, we took our canoe, now christened das Trinker, to Lake Hodgson for a test run. We paddled around the lake long enough to drink a couple of beers. Seeing no water seeping through the hull, we deemed das Trinker worthy of the trip and painted her black. That night we finalized our plans and began rounding up people for the support team. We would make the run on Sept. 6 and 7.

Our support team was to meet us at predetermined check points along the river in case of emergency and with extra supplies. They were
to help with the portage around Cuyahoga Falls, bring our camping gear to the Winking Lizard and pick us up in the Flats. Between check points, J. and I would be at the mercy of the river and each other.

On the night of Sept. 5, J. and I met with the support team to give them the weekend itinerary, complete with estimated arrival times and hand-drawn maps. The plan was to be on the river at 8 a.m. the next morning. With minor work to finish on the canoe, J. was to be at my house by 6 a.m. to help with repairs.

Over our last beer that night, J. and I made a serious pact. We knew there was some danger involved, even though we looked at the trip as a lazy, beer guzzling float down the Cuyahoga. We agreed, quite seriously, to keep our wits about us.

J. arrived at 7:48 a.m., right on schedule, as I was duct-taping the seats to the boat. By 9 a.m., we lugged our gear, boat and hangovers to the waterfall in downtown Kent. Excitement and apprehension rolled around in my stomach as it did when I was a little boy getting on my first full-size roller coaster. We were in for a ride for sure, but this one had no emergency stop button.

Not 10 minutes after shoving off, we hit a submerged rock that almost flipped us. The rock jarred the memory of the previous night’s pact back into our heads.

As we floated toward Stow, the Cuyahoga was teeming with life. Turtles and frogs jumped into the river from sun-baked logs, startled by our approach. We saw fish beneath us and hundreds of birds inhabiting the banks. A blue heron would become our spirit guide for the trip. We called him “Duck” in honor of the blue plastic duck we found, left over from the Kent Heritage Festival’s duck race.

for more information contact:
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About a mile from our first portage, around the waterfall in Munroe Falls, J. and I had our first encounter with two factors unaccounted for when planning the trip: The wind and the slow to no current of the river. We fought to keep the bow pointed directly into the wind while navigating through someone's backyard water ski slalom course. The wind tried to turn us sideways and blow us back, wasting valuable time and energy. Initially thinking the river's current would drag us along, we were stuck with the fact that the Cuyahoga, for the most part is a slow moving river.

J. and I were tired when we met the support team to portage around Cuyahoga Falls and Gorge Metro Park. We were an hour late, and the team looked ragged. We loaded up the car for the portage, stopped at Wendy's for lunch, and then went to Babb Run Park to get back on the river. J. and I requested the support team to bring us a 12-pack of beer, ice and smoking supplies to our 6 p.m. checkpoint at the Winking Lizard.

After carrying the canoe and gear a half-mile downhill, and after a run-in with a huge snake on the river bank, we were back on the river at 2 p.m.

Here, we began to notice that most of the Cuyahoga River is only a couple feet deep. Pebbled shoals forced us to get out of the canoe and walk as we dragged the boat. We were taking a chance of ripping patches off the hull on the rocks, but we didn't care. The boat was too heavy, and, at this point, we were both exhausted and secretly wanted 'das Trinker to sink.

During this leg of the trip, we noticed there were no more turtles or frogs, and the only fish we saw were an occasional school of minnows and carp. A minnow actually jumped into our boat at one point, trying to escape a famished carp.
We met up with a curious beaver that dived into the water as we approached. He swam alongside us, seemingly trying to figure out just what the hell we were doing. We were beginning to wonder ourselves, as exhaustion set in, and garbage cluttered the banks.

For the next five miles, the water was putrid brown as silt floated downstream. It was kicked up by a bulldozer that passed that padded the bank of a golf course. I wondered how much aquatic life was suffocating in the once sacred river.

About 3:30 p.m., and safely in the Cuyahoga Valley, we tied up to a fallen tree in the river and relaxed with a few beers, trying to kill off the sharp pain in our upper backs.

J. laughed and said, “Look at this cesspool.”

“No shit, man! This is disgusting,” I replied while looking at the river.

“No,” J. said, “I meant the boat.”

There was garbage all over the banks and garbage floating past us. Just past Akron, we began seeing more tires than birds. In one spot, hundreds of green, plastic soda bottles piled up in a logjam like some trashy Christmas tree. We even found an inflatable love doll. We were going to strap it on our bow as a figurehead before we decided it was probably used.

We made it to the Winking Lizard at about 7:30 p.m. We looked horrible. I told our support team we were exhausted, but they thought we were drunk. We were so exhausted we did not even set foot in the Winking Lizard, when the original plan called for us to stop in for a couple of shots.

At 8 p.m., with the sun sinking, we had a few miles to cover before we could make our guerrilla campsite. We got hung up on a rock in a fast-moving rapid leaving Peninsula and once again almost flipped. The canoe was now 100 pounds heavier with camping gear and riding much lower in the water. The most trying part of the trip was ahead of us, canoeing in the dark with the reflection of the moon on the water as our only navigation tool.

We paddled for more than 2 1/2 hours, navigating the most treacherous rapids of the trip in the dark. We almost flipped four more times. A flip would have left us with a wet tent and sleeping bags, and quite possibly facing hypothermia with no way out of the valley.

About a mile North of Interstate 77, we camped on a flat spot on the West bank, happy to be alive without serious injuries and relatively dry. By midnight, we had eaten, had a couple of beers and were sound asleep. About 4 a.m., I awoke to the sound of driving rain, lay there for a minute or two, figuring out where I was and why I was sleeping next to J. Then I thought about the canoe. We had pulled it all the way out of the river before we went to sleep, but if the river rose a couple of inches, there was the possibility that it would wash away.

I woke up J.

“Hey, man, it’s raining,” I said with worry in my voice.

“Yeah. So what?” said J. from his sleep-slogged mind.

“What about the canoe?” I asked.

“I’m not going out there,” stammered J.

I wasn’t too keen on leaving my dry bed either, so we went back to sleep.

In the morning, J. got out of the tent and said, “Damn it! It’s still here.”

Later that day, he admitted he hoped the rain would wash das Trinker away so our self-inflicted torture would end.

We were back on the river at 9 a.m., both let down and relieved to see that the largest rapids were behind us. We were empowered by our conquering the river at night. After working out the kinks in our backs, we found a stride in our strokes, not hinted at the day before. Our minds grew stronger as our muscles grew weaker.

After a portage in Independence which had us sliding das Trinker down a 25-foot cliff, we were on the last leg of the trip and would not see the support team until we reached the Flats. Das Trinker had a slow leak, and we stopped to bail her out three times before we finished the trip.

By 3 p.m., it was obvious we were in Cleveland. The water turned a darker brown and smelled otherworldly. Sounds of traffic were audible from the sheltered riverbed. Just before we reached the industrial district in Cleveland, we saw two fishermen putting a boat in the river.

I yelled over to them, “How much farther to the Flats?”

“About four miles,” the older man responded. “Where did you guys put in at?”

“Kent.”

He yelled back, “Holy shit! Kent! You guys are crazy!”

By this time we knew it.

J. and I celebrated by cracking open some cold ones.

Just before we saw the first factory on the river, Duck left us to finish the trip on our own. Before he turned back, he dropped a feather in front of the boat. I picked it up and put it in my hat.

By 4:30 p.m., with factories looming all around us and freighters with anchors that dwarfed our vessel, we noticed a group of boys playing on a wooded bank on the opposite side of the river. I looked over and saw one of them down on one knee furiously pumping a rifle. Then he took aim and we put our backs into our strokes. They fired five shots off our port side before we were completely out of range.
Finally, Jacobs Field and Terminal Tower came into view. We screamed with joy and began pounding beers. We had a leisurely mile to go, and we took our time, talking to a rowing team and stopping to talk to firemen on a fireboat. They thought we were crazy.

The sun was setting as we paddled past Nautica Stage, where Jewel played. J. recognized one of the security guards from The Loft.

"Where the hell did you guys come from?" the guard asked.

"Kent," J. said.

"Why?"

"We were bored," I said.

"What’re ya goin’ up river for?" he asked.

We waved goodbye without comment and paddled to our take-out point just before Shooters on the West bank of the Flats. The support team cheered for us as we rounded the bend. My mom and dad stood on the boardwalk smiling, glad we survived.

After unloading, we made a beeline for the closest outdoor bar, where my father and brother-in-law bought us celebratory shots and beers and my mother gave us painkillers. J. and I could barely even stand.

Looking back on the trip with a pinched nerve in my neck and itchy poison-something-otherwise on my ankles, I wonder why we did it. A month after the trip, J. and I are still licking our wounds and looking for free massages. It was a grueling 53-mile trek taken with abandon. We had no idea what we would have to put into the trip, physically, mentally and spiritually.

"We got at each other’s throat," J. said after the trip, "but we never killed each other."

For the majority of the trip, J. and I didn’t speak. We were in tune with each other and the river. We saw the same things, felt the same things and thought the same things. We grew spiritually in our silence. There were trying moments, and both of us desperately wanted to quit many times during our 23 hours on the Cuyahoga. The reason we didn’t was because we never talked about it. Even though it was in our heads, we knew it was not an option. We had something to prove to ourselves, even if it was just proving how stubborn we could be.

We got to see this part of Ohio in a way few people ever will, but why did we do it? I guess we just needed to get out of the bar, and the river was there.

"It was the most grueling thing I’ve ever done," J. said, reflecting, "but when we were done, it was the best thing I ever felt."

I have not seen J. outside The Loft since the trip.
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 - Seasonal
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.

Student Center, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio 330/672-2583

Reservations Requested: Sunday Brunch, 10 A.M.-2 P.M.
Lunch, Mon.-Fri.11 A.M.-2 P.M. • Dinner, Tues.-Sat. from 4 P.M.-9 P.M.