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On the cover:
A man who prefers to be called Gene Simmons expresses his appreciation of KISS by donning similar clothes and makeup at a KISS preconcert party. (Cover and contents photography by Laura Jo Quail.)

EDITOR'S NOTE

"I get a lot of shit for liking KISS," Ryan Woolley told contributing writer Tom Robinette. "Everybody gives me shit except for the few KISS fans I know."

I sympathize with Woolley because of my fascination with professional wrestling. The average wrestling show is hard-core, sweaty and violent. That's why I was dead set on having a story about fans in this issue. Photo Editor Laura Jo Quail took pictures of a December KISS concert in Cleveland. When she showed me her portfolio, it seemed reasonable to incorporate stories about both fan groups. From that point on, "buck wild and proud," became popular buzz words around the office. On a serious note, this issue deals with more complex subjects, ranging from clinical depression to student activism.

To that end, you don't need to be a Hulkamaniac or a Gene Simmons wannabe to enjoy. You drive us wild, we'll drive you crazy!

Yours truly,

[Signature]
KENT STATE CHEERLEADER TOSSES WOMEN INSTEAD OF TACKLING GUYS

By Susan DiMauro
Photography by Kathryn Deuel

During a typical day, Kevin O'Brien holds a standing 120-pound woman above his head with one arm, carries two women on his shoulders and, with the help of two men, tosses a woman nearly three stories above the ground.

O'Brien, a 23-year-old Kent State junior who is about 6 feet tall and weighs 205 pounds, played varsity football at Copley High School and started as an outside linebacker and tight end. He received recruitment letters from several colleges, but after suffering a concussion during the football season of his senior year, he found a new activity that kept his adrenalin rushing.
O'Brien defies and challenges stereotypes of men who break gender rules through his role as Kent State cheerleading squad co-captain. "I just knew I couldn't play football," he says. "But I knew I would be bored if I wasn't doing any sports. Cheerleading challenges me, and it takes the place of football just fine because it is just as demanding."

The rhetoric and communication major began cheerleading at Copley's basketball games, but he considered it "goofing off." O'Brien says he and several other men stood out of bounds with the cheerleading squad and had fun getting the crowd excited for the home team.

He saw male college cheerleaders perform, but he had no desire to become one because he thought flipping and tumbling was crazy.

During his freshman year at Bowling Green State University, the cheerleading coach there sought him out when he heard about O'Brien's high school cheerleading experience.

"Standing in front of people and getting them fired up was neat," O'Brien says. "It wasn't a squad that competed, but it was fun, and I kept in shape. I lived in the dorms, so I made some friends who helped me study and took me to parties."

After his grade point average suffered, O'Brien decided to take a year off from school to work and to get his act together, he says.

He returned to college in spring 1995 at the University of Akron where he got hooked on cheerleading.

"After the first practice, I did new stunts," O'Brien says. "I really got into it. And at the first home game, it was show-off time. I was like, 'Look what I can do.' The basketball players were cheering us on, and I felt like I knew everybody."

During his time as a cheerleader at Akron, O'Brien participated in several national competitions, which he considers the "Super Bowl of cheerleading." In January, he and the 23 other Kent cheerleaders vied for a national title in Orlando, Fla. They placed 16th in Division 1A. It was Kent's first appearance at a national cheerleading competition. More than 500 squads tried out, but only about 30 qualified.

Lené Buchman, Kent State cheerleading coach, coached O'Brien at Akron. She came to Kent State in 1996, and O'Brien followed because he says she drove him to be his best. Buchman says O'Brien is a reliable person and a talented cheerleader who is a leader to the 11 other men on the Kent State squad.

"When we were getting ready for nationals at Akron, some kids didn't pull their weight," she says. "Kevin could pull anything. I can place him anywhere, and he can execute correctly. When I came to Kent State, and Kevin came with me, he really brought a togetherness to the team. He brought confidence to the male cheerleaders, and he gave more of a core basis to the program."

O'Brien also was one of 10 instructors at the Cheer Ohio camp at Kenyon College, a summer camp for junior high and high school squads from Ohio that Buchman directs. She says O'Brien helped several girls conquer their fears of tumbling and stunting.

"At camp, a girl was struggling with her tumbling, and she was really nervous," she says. "Kevin took her aside and talked to her. He motivated her, and she was able to do it. Kevin is very confident, and he helps others be confident, too."

O'Brien's confidence has helped him deal with remarks about men participating in a female-dominated activity.

During a tournament basketball game against Ohio University at Akron's James A. Rhodes Arena, several Bobcat fans called O'Brien and the other Akron cheerleaders "gay, fags and fairies."

"It was packed, and the fans from OU were saying, 'Look at the sissies,' " O'Brien says. "The band was throwing stuff at us. I didn't go up to them, but another guy on the squad did. I just don't take things personally. If I had to, I would tell them that I get up at 7 a.m. to lift, work out and go to school, and I work with some of the best-looking girls on campus."

Dan Boarman, football coach at Copley, says he thinks O'Brien began cheerleading just to meet girls, but he says it still requires tremendous strength.

"You have to be a good athlete," he says. "He wouldn't be able to do those cheerleading things without being an athlete. And it seems to be fun and social."

The starting left offensive tackle for the Kent State football team, Jason Hupp, respects the cheerleading squad and recognizes its hard work.

"You've got to respect a guy who has the courage to do that," Hupp says. "He's out there doing his best. Cheerleading is rough and it takes a
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When he slings a girl in the air, I hold my breath and wonder who her mother is. It's breathtaking to watch, but it's his responsibility to catch them.

toll on the body. They work hard, and they lift. They can get hurt just as easily as anybody."

Ashley Dager, O'Brien's girlfriend and a member of the Kent State squad, says he will do anything for anyone. Dager says before she and O'Brien started dating last year, she hurt her ankle during practice and needed help.

"I needed to go home to Minerva," she says. "I couldn't drive because of my ankle, so he took me home. He would do that for anyone."

Dager says O'Brien also drove a squad member to Bowling Green on a moment's notice.

"This guy's ex-girlfriend was in a car accident, so Kevin took him up there," Dager says.

"He puts things aside to help other people, and he's really dependable."

Sean Wade, a Kent State squad co-captain, has known O'Brien since the eighth grade. They played high school football together and cheered together at Akron before transferring to Kent State.

Wade says he and O'Brien live by the phrase, "That which does not kill you makes you stronger," which helped them cope with a setback during a national cheerleading competition.

"The last time we were at nationals with Akron, we had a bad fall on the competition floor that took us out of the competition," he says. "The mount on top of my shoulders started to timber back, and it took me off my feet. Usually when I get hurt, I don't want anyone near me, but Kevin came over and picked me up. He is the only person who could have made it easier for me to deal with."

His co-workers at Screwy Louie's in Kent, where O'Brien is a bouncer, also say he is helpful and dependable.

Matt Stotz, a fellow bouncer at Screwy's and one of O'Brien's roommates, says the former Boy Scout saved his life when a group of patrons got out of hand last year.

"It was right before Christmas break, and we were closing the bar," Stotz says. "And one bouncer was having a problem with about five guys. So I went to help out.

"I took one guy outside. When I went to get another guy, I turned, and someone's fist was about six inches from my face. Out of nowhere, Kevin pushed him out of the way. We joke about it to this day about how I still owe him one."

O'Brien says he just wants people to have a good time.

"I don't want to hurt people there," he says. "I don't hit anyone because I don't want anyone hitting me."

O'Brien's mother, Linda, doesn't worry about her son's safety while he is at the bar, but she says she gets nervous when she watches the cheerleader in action.

"When he slings a girl in the air, I hold my breath and wonder who her mother is," she says. "It's breathtaking to watch, but it's his responsibility to catch them and catch them right. And when he holds a girl up in the air, and she's got one leg and one arm out, all it takes is one second for the whole thing to go down the tubes."

But she and her husband, Daniel, support their son and are excited for his cheerleading accomplishments.

"Participation in school activities is important," Linda O'Brien says. "Let's face it. When else would someone have this much fun? It would be sad to go through school without anyone to identify with. And as long as we're willing to pay for his school, he'll continue with it."

Daniel O'Brien, a member of the first men's gymnastics team at Kent State, taught Kevin simple tumbling when he was a child and says he has encouraged his son to stay athletic.

"It keeps him mentally and physically active," he says. "We're proud of him and glad he's done so well. He does something he's good at, and he enjoys doing it."

Above left, the cheerleaders and dance team share the floor during time outs. Above right, Kevin laughs with a cheerleading fan who brings candy to the squad before games. Right, their coach gives them last minute instructions before a basketball game time out.
THE VIETNAM WAR IS LONG OVER. THE CALL FOR CIVIL RIGHTS HAS AT LEAST BEEN PARTIALLY ANSWERED. TODAY'S STUDENT ACTIVISTS LOOK TO THEIR COMMUNITY AS THEY TRY TO CHANGE THE WORLD

By Melissa Hostetler

In November 1968, the Oakland, Calif., police recruiters came to the Kent campus. In protest of this police force, which they called racist and violent, African-American students and others walked off campus to set up a university in exile. Students returned only when the administration set in motion efforts to recruit more students and faculty of color and to create an Afro-American Studies program (now called the Pan-African Studies department).

On May 3, 1970, the Kent State University ROTC building was set on fire. Students cut the fire hoses when firefighters came to extinguish the blaze. The nation watched the building burn to the ground. Kent State students didn't want a military presence on campus. They thought it was encroaching on their freedom to be students.

Police actions, building occupations or flying bullets on campus are not a typical occurrence today — at least not at Kent State. Students are taking action throughout campus, though. Whether it is making memorials of the parking spaces where four students were killed by the Ohio National Guard nearly 30 years ago, or ensuring the campus and society offer the same opportunities and advantages to students of all races, students are raising their voices over issues they feel are important. Animal rights, freedom for political prisoners, racial equality, gay and lesbian rights, and other causes are being championed by students through rallies, forums and bulletin boards across campus.

The 1960s was a unique decade in American history, especially in terms of student activism, because those years presented a time of action that is yet unparalleled. Today, student activists are fighting the ills of society and the world, but they are dispersed over many causes. No common cause links students together, but activists still try to foster a community around changing the world.

There are fewer national issues to unite students than there were in the '60s, but students are active nationally and locally. The label of apathy that "Generation X" has so often been tagged with has been proved false.

Researchers, professors and students have found that college students today are almost as active as their predecessors. But community issues get students fired up today.

Students don't have body bags to identify, says Robby Stamps, a Kent State graduate student in journalism and mass communication. Stamps protested at Kent State on May 4, 1970, and was one of 13 students wounded by Ohio National Guard gunfire.

"There is no national issue that is pervasive," says Jerry M. Lewis, Kent State emeritus professor of sociology who taught at Kent during the Vietnam era and witnessed the May 4 shootings. "So, activists of today, and there are some, tend to work on local issues, which are important to them but certainly don't have the pervasiveness that existed in the '60s."

In 1990, undergraduate college students were asked to list the major events in their lives.

The Persian Gulf War, the Challenger Explosion, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union, the Exxon Valdez oil spill, the Rodney King trial and AIDS were the seven most frequent answers. And as reported in The Review of Higher Education, a journal of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, there was no singular dominant historical event that shaped their lives.

"Students in the late '60s perceived political and social events as dramatically affecting their lives," says Tom Hensley, professor of political science at Kent State who taught during the height of student activism. "And it did. We were in a period of incredibly profound change, and we were involved in events that dramatically affected students' lives. Certainly the Vietnam War was literally a matter of life and death for male students."

Left, BUS rallies for an Afro-American Institute in 1970. Right, Kent State students protest police recruiters from Oakland, Calif., in 1968. (University Archives photos.)
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Though our generation was confronted with war in the Persian Gulf in 1990, it was largely a technological war with few American casualties.

Despite the lack of a life-shaping or culture-defining events, students today work as hard and feel as strongly as students of the '60s who concerned themselves with anti-war and civil rights issues, Lewis says.

Actually, one issue that may hinder student activism today is that students work too hard in their part- or full-time jobs.

“Most students have to work,” says senior Kim Larson, co-chair of the May 4th Task Force and president of Kent's chapter of Amnesty International, a human rights organization that fights to release political prisoners of conscience. “Back in the '60s, many students didn’t have to. College is no longer just a place to become enlightened. Now it’s just a rite of passage, and you go there because you’re not going to get a job if you don’t go to college, basically. In the past, you went to college if you wanted a scholarly education where you learned about all the philosophers. I think a lot of the problem is really just environment, and that students just don’t have time.”

In fact, students are spending more of their time working than participating in extracurricular activities. An annual survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA and reported in The Chronicle of Higher Education, a periodical covering issues in higher education, showed in 1997 that 40.3 percent of freshmen get a job to help pay college expenses, and 6.2 percent take on full-time jobs.

Students may be taking on more jobs than in previous years because the amount of financial aid offered to students has changed. The balance between student grants and loans has definitely shifted, says Mark Evans, interim director of student financial aid at Kent State. Students' annual loan limits have increased while federal and state grants have not. Evans says between 1990 and 1998, federal loans increased from $25 million to $78 million, while federal and state grants increased from $12 million to $15.5 million.

Right, Nathan Solinsky, a junior political science major, duct-taped his hands together before confronting Charles Spingola, known as ‘Preacher Chuck,’ regarding First Amendment rights. After the recent altercation between the preacher and another student, Solinsky said, ‘I wanted to make sure we didn’t meet with violent ends.’ (Photograph by Laura Jo Quail.)
Larson says students must choose whether to be activists or to complete school in four years. Larson's choice: This is her sixth year at Kent because she chose to work and be active on campus.

"We can't compare ourselves to the people of the '60s anymore," she says. "I think that has limited students by trying to compare ourselves to those activists when you can't possibly do it. The environment is totally different. The social problems still exist, yet it's a different environment you are working in."

But being an activist does not always mean taking to the streets and protesting, Stamps says. "Students don't have the leisure time today that we had back then," Stamps says. But that is no reason not to be active, he says. Students can do many things as individuals to support causes. Stamps believes if students purchase socially conscious products, do not eat red meat or binge drink, they are making a profound impact on their world.

Others agree that the nature of student activism should change to reflect the modern environment.

"Student activism is good, but I think student activism needs to take on new forms," says Timothy Moore, assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Moore was a freshman at Kent in 1969. "It shouldn't be so much confrontation on a physical level. Getting out and having protest rallies would get people angry and lead to fighting and physical confrontation between so-called good guys and bad guys. We don't need verbal confrontations leading to violent confrontation."

The forums provided by groups such as Amnesty International and Stand, an independent student newspaper, are a step in the right direction, Moore says. Forums and discussions allow issues and concerns to be brought to light and allow people to make informed decisions without the threat of violence.

The Review of Higher Education reports that student activism today has almost reached the level of 1969, which was close to the height of campus unrest. In a study conducted from 1992 to 1997, 25 percent of undergraduates reported they had participated in a demonstration. This compared to 28 percent in 1969 and 19 percent in 1976. Though the number of reported student activists today is close to that of 1969, it is the local focus of activism that leaves protest activities nearly invisible to the public at large.

Many blame the news media for the low-profile coverage given to student activism. In a society that is largely dependent upon television for information, activism is rarely on the press's agenda.

"By the mainstream press, student activists are portrayed as silly radicals," says Nikki Morse, development director for the Boston-based Center for Campus Organizing, a national network for progressive campus organizations. Morse believes the media should talk more about actual student campaigns and victories. She says that because the mainstream media generally ignore student protest, the left-leaning press should be actively supporting these progressive student movements.

But being misrepresented or ignored is nothing new to student activists. In fact, it is a common myth that a majority of the student body in the '60s were activists. Hensley estimates that of the 20,000 students at Kent in 1969, there were 3,000 at the May 4 rally. Of those who attended, 2,500 were spectators or "cheer-
leaders," leaving a core group of 500 activists. "If anything should trigger student activism, those events should, because you had a dramatic increase in the Vietnam War and you had the campus occupied by 1,000 members of the Ohio National Guard," Hensley says. "So, if that is not going to trigger student activism, then what is?"

Those who were activists of the time were not seen favorably. Hensley recalls that opinion polls after the May 4 shootings showed little support for students and relatively little public outrage over the shootings.

Stamps agrees. "A lot of us were regarded very negatively not only because of our position on the war," he says. "It had to do with our long hair, the clothes we wore and the marijuana we smoked."

Possibly because of those negative stereotypes, students have turned to subtler methods of initiating change.

One thing that has gotten national attention is volunteerism. Though volunteerism rarely involves sit-ins or boycotts, some say it is a form of activism.

"People tend to forget that it is a form of political action because they are out there trying to solve problems," says Susan MacManus, professor of political science at the University of South Florida, Tampa, and author of "Young Versus Old: Generational Combat in the 21st Century."

The volunteerism rate among incoming college students is rising. The Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, in its annual report of first-year students nationwide, reported that 74.2 percent of freshmen in 1998 performed volunteer work in the past year, and 42.1 percent donated their time for at least an hour a week. The survey also reported that only 21.3 percent of the students attended high schools where volunteering was a graduation requirement.

Although these results look promising for the future of activism, only 18.9 percent of those who claimed to volunteer said they would continue volunteering.

Student interest in activism and volunteerism may dwindle in college partly because students are driven economically.

"Generally, they don't have fire in their bellies, and they aren't in the streets like students of the '60s," MacManus says. "They are driven more by economics than politics."

John T. Hubbell, director of Kent State University press and professor of history who taught during the '60s, places the blame more on society and universities than students.

"In the '60s, there seemed to be among undergraduates more of a sense of doing something that was socially redemptive, and that seems a little less so now. The difference was that when they were in high school, the movie 'To Kill a Mockingbird' was out, and they all wanted to be like Atticus Finch. People came along a few years later, and they wanted to be like 'L.A. Law,' a bunch of money-grubbers and ambulance chasers and divorce lawyers. I don't think it's an accident. I think during the Reagan years materialism and conspicuous consumption were encouraged."

Hubbell is suspicious of the universities' role in this behavior.

"I am not sure that universities as institutions promote altruistic behavior," Hubbell says. "Why do we tell you to stay in school after all? We talk about wages. You'll make more money if you graduate from college or high school. We don't say, well, if you learn certain things, it will be helpful to you. I think universities as institutions (tend) to emulate corporations and become amoral and not altruistic."

Moore says students today are more concerned with how they look than how they think.

"We are preoccupied with teaching them..."
how to make a living, and we've gotten away from teaching people how to live," Moore says.

Hubbell and Moore are not alone in saying that colleges and universities should be helping to promote social activism. As reported in The Chronicle of Higher Education, 62.6 percent of full-time faculty members nationwide say colleges and universities should be actively involved in solving social problems.

Larson says she believes the university's lack of social concern dissuades students from being active.

"A lot of times, I think they don't really know how to get involved, and I know our campus does not really encourage involvement in the sense of getting involved in organizations," Larson says. "They make us pretty hard to see."

With activist actions and battles remaining largely underground and universities seeking order over action, student activists get lost in the shuffle of a business-as-usual society. So, is it really that students are apathetic? Given that students are less interested in politics in its traditional definition (the Chronicle reported that only 13.7 percent of students frequently discussed politics and 26.7 percent felt that keeping up with political affairs was important), students are far from disinterested in events that affect their lives.

"We have a totally different type of student now," Larson says. "It's not that we are apathetic, but we live in a totally different time."

Richard Flacks, professor of sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, says the stereotype of "Generation X" is largely overblown.

"The Gen X image of apathy doesn't account for the fact that there is a good amount of protest activity and a good amount of service activism," Flacks says. "There are those who are cut off from the world, but that doesn't characterize the whole student body."

But the climate for student activism is promising. National organizations are springing up in hope of creating a national student movement. But just as campus activism is diverse, so are the national organizations.

"We know that student activists can be a catalyst for larger movements," says Nikki Morse, development director for the Center for Campus Organizing in Boston. "We're trying to lay the groundwork for this larger task."

The center links individual campus groups together in an attempt to create a national network, and thus a national agenda for progressive politics.

"You never know if any of these projects are going to click, where the idea of student activism begins to catch on like it did in the '60s" Flacks says. "People are out there trying to educate and get students to play that kind of role. There is more of this than there was 20 years ago."

Larson sees student activism picking up at Kent State.

"I've noticed that people have kind of been opening their eyes more," she says. "I've seen a change on this campus in the last two years even. More and more people are getting involved. I am just really pleased with that. People are starting to see that the American dream isn't all it's cracked up to be. It's limited to only a certain type of person."
As a nontraditional student and mother of three, she knew earning a nursing degree would not be easy. For the past eight years, Rhonda Perkins, 30, has taken at least two classes each semester and has worked part time. And she has managed to find a little tranquility through planning and preparation.

This is the story of one day in an ongoing struggle to provide a better life for her family.

Above, Rhonda Perkins studies for her genetics class. Opposite above, Rhonda unwraps Junior's breakfast at Child Time day care in Stow. Opposite below, 3-year-old Stewart Jr. reaches for his order at Burger King. Rhonda and Junior stop every morning on the way to his day care.
The alarm clock goes off, but Perkins doesn't budge.
"My two oldest get up at 6 o'clock," Perkins says. "I still have a half hour to sleep."
Fifteen-year-old Rondaline and 11-year-old Samuel tiptoe around the house trying hard not to wake their mother. It doesn't work.
"Mom, would you tell Ronnie to stop taking my stuff?" Sam says.
"Ronnie, be nice to your brother," Perkins replies from bed.
"But, mom, you didn't see what he did," Ronnie says.
"Ronnie and Sam, please stop before you wake up your brother," Perkins says.

Junior wakes up.
Stewart Miller Jr. is 3 years old. He walks into his mother's room with one hand tucked inside the pants of his Power Ranger pajamas.
"Mommy, I gotta go," Stewart says.
"Well, go!" Perkins replies.

The second alarm rings.
"I don't know why I try to sleep," Perkins says. "Sometimes they let me sleep, but usually it's like this. I don't know if they don't understand or what, but at least I don't have to get them ready anymore."
"I have to get Junior to day care by 8:30 a.m.," Perkins says.
On the way to Child Time in Stow, Perkins stops at Burger King for an order of French toast sticks, a sausage and egg croissant and a large orange juice.
"I don't have time to cook," Perkins says. "I feel bad, but the older two eat cereal or warm up a pastry. Junior and I always grab fast food. For real, girlfriend, who has time to cook?"

Perkins arrives back home.
"It's easier to get Junior off to school, then get ready," Perkins says. "That way he doesn't get dirty and neither do I."
Perkins uses the next 45 minutes to get dressed, gather her work, clean up and pray.
"I begin every day with a prayer," Perkins says. "Without Him I would not make it."
Perkins leaves for class. She has five minutes to make it to her Basic Aspects of Health Care class.

She arrives for class five minutes late.

"I'm always late. It's expected," she says.

After class, Perkins drives an hour to Stark campus, where she takes human genetics. The class wasn't offered at main campus in the fall.

"This drive should only take a half hour, but with construction sometimes it takes up to an hour and a half," Perkins says.

"I have a half hour, so I'll study for my quiz," Perkins says.

She studies for about 10 minutes. Her pager rings.

"That's my fiance reminding me to pick him up from work at 3 o'clock," she says.

Class is over. Perkins is nodding off.

"I cannot be tired right now," she says. "My day is not half over."

On the way back home, Perkins' pager goes off again. "That's Stewart again. He got a ride home. Good, because I need to go to the store," she says.

Perkins goes to Apples grocery store on South Water street. She shops from a list she wrote while driving back from Stark campus. She buys ground beef and a box of Thera-Flu.

"The kids love spaghetti, and Stewart has a cold," she explains.

Perkins picks Junior up from Child Time.

His huge smile and waving arms indicate he is happy to see her.

"Mom, I'm hungry," Junior says.

"Did you eat your lunch?" Perkins asks.

Junior doesn't answer, so she opens his lunch box and finds a half-eaten peanut butter and jelly sandwich and a bag of carrots. She just frowns.

The kids demand attention while Perkins prepares dinner.

"Mom, can I go outside?" Sam asks.

"Did you finish your homework?" she asks.

"No, he didn't," Rondaline says.

"Shut up," Sam yells.

"Kids, please!" Perkins says. "We have company!"

Dinner is served.
"We have dinner together every day no matter what," Perkins says. "There are so many parts of my life I cannot control. I'm always running. I'm always doing something for someone. But my kids need stability."

Dinner conversation consists of what the children did at school. Rondaline got a detention. Sam got all his multiplication tables right, and after a lot of probing, Junior says he colored.

Perkins tells the children how much help she needs during the next couple of weeks. "I'm really going to need your help around the house and with Junior," Perkins says. "My finals are coming up, and I'm really going to have a lot of work to do."

"We have school, too," Rondaline says.

Perkins ignores the remark. She gets up and clears the table.

The kids are allowed one hour of television before bed. Surprisingly, they don't argue over what to watch. Sam turns on Nickelodeon. The cartoon "Doug" is playing. Rondaline makes a phone call.

While they watch TV, Perkins washes dishes and cleans the kitchen until the phone rings. It's her next-door neighbor.

"Sam, can you take some sugar next door?" Perkins asks.

She begins running bath water.

"The kids have to be in bed by 9:30 p.m.," Perkins says.

By 10 p.m., all three are bathed and in bed. Perkins looks exhausted.

"I'm not tired," she says. "I still have homework to do, and I have to get their stuff ready for tomorrow."

Perkins begins her homework.

She studies until 11 p.m., when her fiance calls.

"I miss him," she says. "I mean I see him every day, but we haven't been on a date since I don't know how long. Sometimes I think we argue just because I'm so tired."

Perkins begins ironing with low, tired eyes.

"Rondaline can iron her own stuff," she says. "But Sam needs his clothes laid out or he will go to school looking a mess."

By 1:30 a.m. Perkins is finished ironing, cleaning and studying.

"I am so tired my muscles ache," she says. "I get this way every night. I'm lucky enough to not have to work like I have in the previous semesters. This year I took out an extra loan."

But Perkins doesn't regret her decision to complete her education. She loves the example she's setting for her kids that anything is possible.

"I want them to know that there are times when nothing can stop you," Perkins says. "When you really want something as bad as I want this degree, and as bad as they want to live in a house and not Allerton, you do what it takes."

"I can honestly say that the only thing that will stop me is the Lord."

Since this story was written, Rhonda Perkins' oldest daughter, Rondaline, moved out of their Allerton apartment so that she could raise her newborn child. Rondaline now lives with her grandmother in Cleveland. Rhonda wants to be a midwife after she finishes her nursing degree.
THE NATURAL SUSPECTS

By Marianne Kobak
Photography by Jamey Trigg

Many consumers are turning to herbal or natural remedies for their ailments today instead of science, and they decide which dietary supplements to take based on word of mouth. They follow the advice of their friends and neighbors instead of asking a doctor, pharmacist or herbalist about the herbs they should take.

Herbal supplements aren't nearly as scrutinized as common cold medicine because Congress gave in to deregulating nutritional supplements five years ago. The Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 has stripped authority from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration over most products labeled "supplement," as long as the product makes no claims to affect a disease, according to Consumer Reports magazine.

The promise of herbal products and their purported benefits has spread quickly through media reports and commercial advertisements. But as consumers become hooked on treatments purely for their "natural" appeal, they may not realize that none of these popular herbs have been clinically proved effective at anything.

"I started taking herbs because my roommate and her mother had such faith in them," says Patty Murphy, a Kent State senior business major.

Her roommate's mother was concerned that Murphy's health was suffering from the rigors of college life — late nights, junk food, drinking and stress.

"They felt that herbs could put your whole body into sync, and I was interested in seeing if that was what they did," Murphy says.

Family also can play an influential role in determining health care. Mary Munroe, a sophomore geography major, was introduced to herbal medicine by her mother.

"My brother got sick all the time. My mom talked to a lot of doctors, and they suggested trying echinacea," Munroe says. "Once it helped him, I started using it.

"If I feel a cold coming on I start taking echinacea. I haven't been really sick all winter. If I do catch a cold, it only lasts for about three days."

Other students trust the advice of their friends. Cathy Scalzo, a junior radio and television production major, says she began using herbs when a co-worker recommended them.

Teri Girrelli, a senior secondary education major and hammer thrower, says athletes trust the recommendations of other athletes, many of whom use herbs to stimulate recovery.

"Ginseng is one of the most common I hear about," Girrelli says. "And there is a good mix of male and female athletes who take them."

But most people don't know that dietary supplements are not tested by the FDA, and the concentration of the active ingredients is not regulated.

Dr. Irema Kodz of Ashland Internal Medicine says there are several types of ginseng, many with varying potency.

"People think that all ginseng works in the same way, but some types can be harmful to people with high blood pressure," Kodz says. "Siberian ginseng can raise blood pressure."

Kodz says another problem with herbs is the different companies that distribute them.

"I believe in alternative medications," Kodz says. "Herbal medicine is much older than other medications. Different companies are trying to put them in the market and there are no regulations on how many milligrams to put in the medicine or how much to take."
As more companies enter the market for herbs, consumers fall prey to vague advertising. Arlene Holbert, a certified natural health professional in Barberton who studies the effects of herbs on the human body, says consumers are easily fooled by the level of purity they’re buying.

“You may buy something that says 100 percent golden seal, and the golden seal that is in the pill may only be 3 percent pure, but the rest is not golden seal,” Holbert says.

Many herbs today, such as St. John’s wort, echinacea, ginseng and ginkgo biloba, are gaining popularity through advertisements and news stories. Some of these herbs are being endorsed by athletes, but the advertisements don’t seem to contain enough information for consumers to make educated decisions.

“Everybody thinks St. John’s wort is the perfect one for them, and it may not be,” Holbert says.

Scalzo says she thought she could curb her mood swings with St. John’s wort, but she didn’t notice a substantial difference when she started taking it.

Consumers should consult a knowledgeable source before taking a dietary supplement.

“A lot of over-the-counter herbs pass by a lot of the regulatory procedures because they are seen as vitamins,” Shellie Lepucki, a Kent Giant Eagle pharmacist says. “You have to be careful. Some herbs, like St. John’s wort, have side effects.”

Clinical studies in Europe found that St. John’s wort may be useful in cases of mild to moderate depression and caused fewer side effects than did standard drugs, according to Consumer Reports. Some reported side effects of St. John’s wort are dizziness, dry mouth and increased sensitivity to sunlight. A person who is photosensitive is more easily sunburned and...
may have to wear sunscreen to avoid severe skin damage.

"A lot of people ask about St. John’s wort,” says Kristy Mulneix, a junior gerontology major and Kent CVS pharmacy technician. “I see more older people asking advice on herbs than younger people. Young people seem to just want something to make them feel better quickly. But older people seem to want something that will make them feel better and make them healthier.”

When people see the word “natural” on a product, they may assume the product will not harm them.

“A person needs to know which part of the herb to take, the optimum dose to take and the side effects of the herb,” Amer Mikati, a Kent CVS pharmacist says. “If someone has questions about an herb, a good person to ask would be an herbalist.”

Supplements have been exempt from evaluation by the FDA since the 1994 legislation. That means herbs can be put on the market with little or no approval, and they can remain there unless there is evidence that the herb or other supplement is harmful when taken as directed.

The FDA must prove a supplement is harmful before it will be taken off the shelves.

According to the Harvard Women’s Health Watch newsletter, in 1989 an epidemic of eosinophilia myalgia syndrome — a dangerous immune system disorder — was caused by contaminants in L-tryptophan. About 1,500 people reportedly became seriously ill, and 36 people died from the disease.

Unlike pharmaceutical prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs, supplements are not inspected by the FDA to see if their ingredients are pure. If there are impurities in a supplement, it may take the FDA weeks to identify the contaminants, track down the source and remove all unsafe products from the market, according to Women’s Health Watch.

Germany is one of the few countries that tests the effectiveness of herbs. Commission E, the FDA equivalent, publishes reports on herbs that are widely used in Germany. Translations of those reports are located in the scientific database Medline.

St. John’s wort was one of the herbs studied in Germany. Some manufacturers suggest people take one capsule three times a day and others suggest taking two to three capsules three times a day.

“Nothing heals in under three months,” Holbert says. “By taking herbs you are giving your body what it needs to heal.”

Maria Laing, a visiting registered nurse in Ashland County, has been taking herbs for three years. She says she rejects modern medications. Laing uses herbs as a preventative form of medicine. Before taking herbs, she researches the supplements through pamphlets and other sources. Her distributor has a fax number its customers can call to learn about the herbs they are taking.

“I would especially urge people to take herbs from reputable groups,” Laing says. “Herb companies don’t always use the same concentrates. Sometimes you could get something that may harm you, or you may not be getting anything.”

Elisabeth Wilmott, one of the owners of Kent Natural Foods Cooperative, has discouraged people from buying herbs if they plan to use them incorrectly.

“I have urged people not to buy herbs because of the way they were going to use them,” Wilmott says.

Many factors will affect the way an herb works on an individual. Each person needs to know what his or her symptoms are, what
specific herbs are used for specific ailments and what his or her body type is because each of these conditions can affect the way an herb works.

"Guarana is one of the herbs that makes me nervous," Willmott says. "It is an appetite suppressant, and I have seen people who take it not eat anything nutritional. I have seen it work, but you have to be careful that you are still getting what you need."

Golden seal is another powerful herb that is used as an antibiotic and is supposed to have blood-cleansing properties.

"People don't know how to take it," Willmott says. "If you take it for more than two weeks, it could be harmful to your liver."

One of the myths about golden seal is that it will help you pass drug tests. "It will not help you defeat a blood test," Willmott says. "If someone is going to self-medicate, they need to be willing to read."

Women's Health Watch suggests that consumers follow three guidelines before using an herb or dietary supplement. Find out if the herb has been tested for effectiveness to know the quality of the testing. Check if the herb was tested through a clinical trial and find out how many trials were done. Take herbs that are manufactured by well-known companies. Grocery and drug stores may be safer than the average herb manufacturer. These companies are more likely to follow higher standards when choosing their suppliers.

Consumers should also talk to their doctor before taking a dietary supplement. Many doctors have information about dietary supplements, and they can report side effects their patients might experience.

"People won't tell their doctors if they are taking herbs, so you need to dig the information out of them," Kodz says. She almost always asks her patients if they are taking any alternative medications. "Nature is good, but you can make a poison from nature, too."

In treating the human body, Holbert favors elements found in nature over any modern medicine.

"Plants should be our first line of defense," Holbert says. "We need to strengthen our bodies, and drugs should be the last resort."

Holbert says your own body does the curing. "You use herbs as special foods to build your immune system so your body can heal itself."

Scalzo has mixed opinions about dietary supplements. "In some cases I think herbs help, but I am really skeptical to think that all herbs work," Scalzo says. "I think that it could be psychological. You really have to be careful because herbs haven't been approved by the FDA and the long-term effects are unknown."

Licorice, garlic, parsley and chamomile are examples of herbs considered as food. But consumers must be careful even when taking these herbs because they could still have adverse reactions, especially people allergic to those foods. "It is up to the person to educate themselves," Holbert says. "If someone is going to self-medicate, they need to be willing to read."

"Many voices...
one vision."
CAROL CARTWRIGHT, PRESIDENT
Packed arenas, screaming fans, plenty of costumes and frequently spewing blood. These are just a few of the similarities between the two heavyweight subcultures dominating Kent State University and beyond. Fans of both high-flying, heavy-hitting professional wrestling and the hard-rocking, leather-clad band KISS are currently lurking all over campus waiting to get wacky. But the popularity of these two loyal groups of radicals is not something to be taken lightly. In the dorms or the bars, on campus or off, no place is safe from the blasts of enthusiastic energy from a fanatic frenzy. Prepare to take a glimpse into the ritualistic and occasionally ridiculous realm of the hard-core fans.

Readers, let's get ready to rumble.
Sunday nights are not typical for Kent State students to spend their time and money inside bars. But on one November night at BW-3’s in downtown Kent, there wasn’t an empty seat in the place. Not at the bar. Not in the dining area. Not anywhere.

But there were plenty of hard-core professional wrestling fans. The crowd included men and women. Some were decked out in wrestling gear, and some not. Some were yelling and cheering, and some not. But all had gathered to watch World Championship Wrestling’s World War 3 Pay Per View event broadcast on BW-3’s big-screen televisions.

Then there are Mondays. The beginning of the work week and the end of the weekend’s lackadaisical comforts. But it is the biggest night for professional wrestling.

Monday night at Kent State is when loyal wrestling fans gather in bars, dorm rooms and apartments to watch the body slams and drop kicks delivered by their favorite wrestlers.

Not only are students supporting wrestling, they are also flaunting it. James Hamilton, a junior zoology major, remembers having a mural of wrestlers painted on the wall of his dorm.

“When I lived in Clark Hall, the guys down the hall from me painted three wrestlers on the wall outside their room,” Hamilton says. “They were big fans, I guess.”

Undeclared freshman Erik Allen hasn’t painted his dorm but is a fan of that caliber. And he’s proud of it. A proud wrestling fan was hard to find about five years ago when the sport experienced a popularity slump. But now, wrestling’s ratings are consistently at the top of the cable charts, and the fans are coming out of hiding like a wrestler leaping from the top ropes.

SCOOPS, the popular authority on professional wrestling on the Internet at www.scoopscentral.com, reported that Showtime Event Television Pay Per View has figures validating wrestling’s popularity surge. SET Pay Per View shows that wrestling climbed from $140 million in 1997 to an estimated $778 million in Pay Per View revenue in 1998, a 27 percent increase.

This boost in viewership has lots of fans excitedly declaring their allegiance to wrestling.

“I like wrestling, and I’m not ashamed to say it,” Allen says. “People will say, ‘Why do you watch that stuff? It’s all fake.’ But they don’t
STUDENTS TAKE PLEASURE IN WATCHING THE BODY-SLAMMING PAIN OF PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING

YEAH?

understand the entertainment part. If you ask them what they like, they'll say they watch a certain sitcom. But that's basically fake, too. Wrestling's just entertainment in its own sense."

Allen is right about one thing. There are still plenty of wrestling doubters. Cathy Zgrabik, a freshman education major, questions wrestling's legitimacy as a sport but admits to watching occasionally.

"I think it's fake," Zgrabik says. "How many people actually wrestle like that? But it's all right. I watch it for the comedy."

But there still are fresh faces who willingly join the legion of fans. Cory Sutton, an undeclared freshman, is getting reacquainted with his wrestling roots and liking it.

"It's pretty much like a soap opera type thing," Sutton says. "They always have things change. People hate each other. People like each other. People gang up on each other. And there's always something like backstabbing going on."

A one-time Hulkamaniac, Sutton is discovering the growing popularity of the sport and has found a new favorite.

"My all-time favorite wrestler used to be Hulk Hogan," Sutton says. "Now I like 'Stone Cold' Steve Austin because he breaks all the rules. He's ruthless. He doesn't care about anything. If someone tells him no, and he doesn't like it, then he'll just do what he wants."

But those are the least of Austin's bad habits.

"He flicks people off," Sutton says. "He drinks beer on TV. I think he's a strong wrestler, too. He manhandles people."

What happened to the days of wrestling when the most offensive thing the wrestlers did was try to act? The competition between the World Wrestling Federation and World Championship Wrestling, the sport's two heavyweights, has forced the organizations to push the envelope of cable TV standards, resulting in lots of bleeped-out foul language and gestures. Allen has a simple theory to explain wrestling's reach toward an older audience.

"It's part of the evolution of wrestling," Allen says. "It used to be just people wrestling, and who's the champion next, but now it's kind of rated 'R' almost. I'd recommend WCW for younger viewers, but for WWF, you'd have to watch it with them."

Sutton believes wrestling's attitude adjustment is a result of the sport growing with its fans. Sutton says people who were big fans of wrestling during its last popularity surge in the early '80s are now at the college level and demand something more extreme.

"It has to do with that age of the fans and how they're growing up," Sutton says. "They just can't let go of it."

And Kent fans are not outgrowing the sport, either. Wrestling has gone through a growth spurt of its own and caught up with its once huge fan base. Those fans from the '80s remember watching wrestling in grade school and junior high and are ready to embrace it again. To be more precise, the sport is being bear hugged with popularity.

It's even become a top fashion trend on campus. Wrestling's college-culture impact is so wide that students can be seen sporting T-shirts, bandannas and hats displaying wrestling logos and phrases as they walk to class looking like wrestlers approaching the ring. Downtown businesses such as Tela Ropa II sell T-shirts, and even the Student Center Bookstore sells wrestling magazines and magnets.

Sutton acknowledges wrestling's push for mass marketability with countless merchandise items as a competitive tactic between the two

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'It's part of the evolution of wrestling. It used to be just people wrestling, and who's the champion next, but now it's kind of rated 'R' almost. I'd recommend WCW for younger viewers, but for WWF, you'd have to watch it with them'
More than 25 years ago, an army began with the alliance of just four men. Over the past two decades that army has fought many battles and suffered the consequences of long-term warfare. It may have lost its share of conflicts but has never vanished.

Voyaging from tiny clubs to packed arenas to colossal stadiums, it only grew stronger until it emerged as a world power. Its thunderous music echoed across the cosmos. Truly a force to be reckoned with. And today its ranks are in the thousands with cadets spanning the globe.

Four generals execute the commands that direct the vast legion of loyal followers. Masked behind their black and white war paint, the Bat Lizard, Star Child, Spaceman and the Cat possess god-like powers of persuasion over their army. Within each of the leaders is enough influence to shake the heavens in the wild eyes of their cadets.

But this army doesn't fight its wars with guns and bombs. Guitars are its rifles. Drums are its cannons. All of its weapons combine to form the intoxicating anthems of rock 'n' roll.

This is the KISS Army.

"I've liked them since I was a kid, I guess," says Jim Thompson, a senior criminal justice major at Kent State. "I don't even remember how I started liking them. I saw them on MTV once in the early '80s.

"The first KISS concert I saw was nine years ago. Their stage show was awesome. Their set was awesome, and they played a bunch of awesome songs."

Thompson isn't the only one on campus who finds KISS awesome, either. The ranks of the KISS Army are generously represented at Kent State. But despite its size, it is relatively quiet for an army. Don't expect its soldiers all to have long hair and to walk around in leather underwear and monster platform shoes. He or she could be the person who sits next to you every day in class — waiting for the next concert to come and the generals to call the army out to battle.

Ryan Woolley likes KISS and is proud of it.

The senior computer information systems major has taken his share of grief, though.

"I get a lot of shit for liking KISS," Woolley says. "Everybody gives me shit except for the few KISS fans I know. But I don't deny it. I won't back down."

Woolley acknowledges others' dislike for the band with a sympathetic attitude.

"A lot of people have something against KISS or take it as a joke, which I can partially understand," Woolley says.

Woolley can understand people's misunderstanding of the band because his love for the band was born from fear of it.

"I was probably 6 or 7, and my uncle was totally into KISS," Woolley says. "He was moving out to California, and he didn't listen to the albums anymore, so he asked me if I wanted them. At first I was afraid of the album covers. I couldn't sleep with them in my room."

On Dec. 8, KISS played to the Cleveland Gund Arena with the intention of rocking the rock 'n' roll capital. Kent State's KISS Army cadets invaded the city to engage their leaders in a barrage of musical mayhem. Woolley was one of those cadets.

"It was a good show," Woolley says. "Not as good as the actual reunion show. One of my friends said it was the second best show he had seen since the reunion. It kicked ass. That's pretty much why you go see KISS. It's crazy to see them live."

That live injection of rockin' adrenaline is what many KISS Army members live for. The band's stage performance is what separates it from all the rest.

"They've got a cool aura about it," Woolley says. "It's a lot different than most of the shows I see, but it's definitely cool."

"Cool" might not accurately describe a KISS show. Burning hot might be more suitable considering the act has been known to consist of rocket-launching guitars and cannon-blasting drum sets. Fans can get so pumped up for KISS' concert warfare that they host preconcert parties and dress up like the band members at the concert. Thompson is a little less enthusiastic.

"I just put on the Gene Simmons makeup for Halloween," Thompson admits. "That's all I've ever done. I've never dressed up for a concert, but there are plenty of people who do."

Woolley has the desire to don the black and white for a concert, but he doesn't have the drive.

"I always meant to, but I never got around to it," Woolley says. "I'm just lazy or something. But I went to a pre-show party once, and about 50 people dressed up. It was pretty crazy."

KISS was the spawn of bassist/vocalist Gene Simmons and guitarist/vocalist Paul Stanley. While playing in a Manhattan-based band called Wicked Lester, the duo formulated an outrageous concept for a new band. The band members would paint their faces in Kabuki-style black and white makeup and get dressed in flamboyant costumes loaded with leather. Their music was to reflect their galactic cartoon image — hard and heavy rock.

It was to be something the world had never seen before. But it was still missing a couple pieces. An ad in Rolling Stone magazine soon landed drummer Peter Criss and a classified in the Village Voice hooked guitarist Ace Frehley shortly afterward. The band was formed and the rest was history.

**KIDS IN SATAN'S SERVICE**

"When they came out, nobody was quite sure what to make of them exactly," says Ben Whaley, assistant professor of journalism and mass communication at Kent State, who specializes in electronic media. "It was still pretty close to the end of the '60s, which were really eclectic. Literally the expression, 'it's all good,' expressed the '60s. David Bowie was as 'out there' as anybody got. KISS represented the big breaking point between the '60s and '70s.'"

Whaley himself was involved in the music scene to a small extent during what he calls his "young days, before disco." His musical escapades may not have made him very famous, but he did make enough money to help

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*Familiar Places*

Left, a Cleveland resident (who prefers to be called 'Gene') spits blood as part of his Gene Simmons imitation at a preconcert KISS party.

"When they first came out, they were perceived as really radical and dangerous. When you looked at their logo, the two S's closely resembled the Nazi secret service symbol. They were viewed much the same way Marilyn Manson is now."
him fund his education. He was a keyboardist for several bands like Chameleon and Spectre and occasionally covered a few KISS tunes. KISS' impact on the music scene was not immediate. But they were turning people's heads and catching the interest of a growing number of teenagers. And often they were getting attention for bad reasons.

"When they first came out they were perceived as really radical and dangerous," Whaley says. "When you looked at their logo, the two S's closely resembled the Nazi secret service symbol. They were viewed much the same way Marilyn Manson is now."

On their first three albums KISS was still defining their sound. But as their musical ability and cohesiveness was developing, their unusual stage show is what gained them popularity.

"I can't say I was ever a huge KISS fan. What they were doing musically was not cutting edge," Whaley says. "There were better players out there. KISS was really the band that made rock 'n' roll a spectacle."

KISS' longevity also has something to do with the band's business savvy. Over the years KISS has materialized in the form of action figures, a movie and comic books.

"They were really one of the first bands to control their own merchandising," Whaley says. "Everything was pretty much under their control."

The band's presence on the Internet is overwhelming. There are dozens of official and unofficial KISS web pages from fans all over the planet. KISS biographies, tour dates and even photos of fans' KISS tattoos can be found on various Web sites, such as www.kissfreaks.com, www.kissonline.net and www.kissvault.com. And the army marches on — successfully. KISS' hell-bent lust for touring has translated into album sales. Of the group's 24 albums, the last 23 have gone on to become gold records, which ranks KISS third behind the Rolling Stones and the Beatles for consecutive gold records. Part of this success belongs to its dedication to producing the same type of music that it always has, allowing for familiarity among all fans.

"KISS delivers the same old product at the same old stand," Whaley says. "If you liked it then, chances are you'll like it now. KISS recognized that they have a marketable product, and they pushed it."

"Somebody like KISS played the kind of music that four teen-age kids in a garage could do. Music has always got to be accessible. KISS made accessible, if not particularly inspiring, rock 'n' roll."
Of course there are still plenty of fans who grew up with KISS and still go see the band whenever they get the opportunity. These fans are the heart and soul of the KISS Army.

"It's kind of nostalgia more than anything else," Whaley says. "I'm not sure if any current KISS fans have anything in common with the original fans. The kid 20 years ago thought he was being dangerous, and the kid today is being charmingly retro."

Thompson has witnessed more than a few older KISS fans but can't imagine himself being their age and still going to KISS concerts.

"I used to be gung-ho about them, but now I'm just like, 'eh,'" says Thompson, who plays acoustic guitar. "There are always people who have just loved them forever and don't have anything else to do with their time and money. Rather than feed the kids, they bought 'Dressed to Kill.' Anymore, I guess it's either people who have never seen them before or people who are going to like them no matter what they do."

KICKIN' ASS WITH CLASS

But there's more to KISS than just nostalgia. Thompson attributes part of the band's original mystique to their ability to make it seem like they were doing everything for the fans. And fans of rock 'n' roll can spot a phony a mile away. Despite their costumed shenanigans, phony is one thing KISS is not. The band members display a passion for their music and their fans that can be felt from the farthest seat at a concert.

"The band gives a lot of appreciation to the fans," Woolley says. "You can tell that they're sincere. You can tell that they love what they're doing. Fans can pick up on that and appreciate the honesty."

Fan appreciation is something Thompson knows about firsthand. In 1995, KISS initiated another outstanding marketing move — an entire convention tour. At the end of each tour stop, KISS would perform a live acoustic set for the fans in attendance, even taking requests from the crowd. From these shows was generated the 1996 MTV Unplugged session. Thompson attended one of these conventions and got his chance to see KISS up close and personal.

"I got to sing with them," Thompson says. "It's just an all-day KISS thing. The whole thing went from about noon to midnight. At 7 p.m. KISS came in and they did a question and answer session, and then they did a two-hour acoustic guitar set."

But to get further into the convention, Thompson had to put on a costume of his own — a reporter costume.

"I snuck in and said I was a reporter," Thompson says. "I had my little bow tie and camera. I looked like George McFly. So I got in, and to make a long story short, they started passing around the microphone so I grabbed it and sang 'Detroit Rock City.'" Some fans may look to KISS as more than just rock idols. In the band, he or she can find what formal religion could not provide. The band members can become ministers in a fan's eyes. The concerts can become churches. Each of the songs can be hymns. Heather Wasler, a graduate assistant in sociology at Kent State, wrote a thesis on rock and religion in 1997 at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pa. Wasler's research showed the links between faith and music.

"The reason that people have religion is there are different things in life that they need," Wasler says. "They need a sense of purpose. Things in general that you would get out of church. A lot of times you aren't going to find those things there. Church is not really giving them grounds for what they're experiencing."

"In turn, you turn on the TV and there are people addressing these issues everyday. You turn on MTV, and there are people singing about them. With certain bands, there are their big fans, and it becomes a group. They create there own norms. There are certain things you wear, certain things you say, a way you dance. It creates this whole socialization process, and it gives them a sense of belonging. But it's not so much of a cult that you're worshipping Satan."

Wasler refers to a fan's band worship as an artist-audience relationship. From these relationships can come cults using rock as religion.

"Think of it more or less as the different denominations like Catholicism," Wasler says. "There is a prestige given to the priest. He's trusted. The artist-audience relationship is much the same. The artist is given a certain form of power. There's something about that person that makes them seem so important, but if that isn't legitimized, it diminishes. But you've got groups like KISS that have been around forever."

Religious or not, KISS has an identity all its own. And like many religions, the band has its own symbols — leather, makeup, blood and fire. These remain the symbols of the monstrous rockers and their army of worshippers. And one thing keeps that army growing — the band's expanding legend. The legend that is continually forged through countless intimate and invigorating live performances.

"It's the whole nostalgic thing of when I first used to listen to them," Woolley says. "I prefer listening to their live stuff. It brings you back to the concerts. KISS, at least for me, is about the stage show."

And after a quarter of a century, the show must go on.
AN EXCITING WAY TO SCORE ON CAMPUS

By Jocelyn Contner  
Photography by Jeremy Ferrato

He goes for the pass. He sprints down the field and stops to prepare for the score. As it soars in his direction, he dives for the Frisbee. This is not a backyard game. At Kent State, players like to think of it as the ultimate game.

Kent Ultimate, Kent State’s Ultimate Frisbee team, first stormed Manchester field in fall 1997. The Frisbee team distinguishes itself as one of several unconventional sports clubs being formed on campus. Those interested in roughing the elements can choose from kayaking, backpacking or rock climbing. Breaking the mold of traditional intramurals, broomball players have been seen wearing bandannas and camouflage pants with their tennis shoes — an unlikely scene for a physically intensive game played on ice.

Most of these clubs are free or maintain low membership dues. Photographer Jeremy Ferrato experienced each of these clubs firsthand. In February, he followed the kayaking club as they staunchly maneuvered over the Kent waterfalls. Later, he spent a weekend backpacking at Zaleski State Forest and Backpacking Trail in southern Ohio. He also met up with the free-spirited broomball players, who sport team names such as “Hostile Amish,” “Nuns in Bondage” and “Puck-Ups” to name a few.

Together, these clubs make up Kent’s version of extreme sports.
UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

Some refer to Ultimate Frisbee as the "college sport of the '90s."

"You just show up and play," says Chris Hercik, the club manager. "Some days we have four people and some days 20."

The disk must be passed to advance down the field, and the person holding the Frisbee cannot be tackled. Kent Ultimate has challenged teams from Case Western Reserve University, Ohio University and the Kent Stark campus.

The team meets from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays at the Field House during winter and at Manchester Field in spring.

WHEN NATURE CALLS

Members of the backpacking club enjoy it all — the scenery, exercise, campfires, folk music and oatmeal.

This venturesome group, which was formed in the fall, has already scoured the Allegheny National Forest, North Country Scenic Trail, Twin Lakes Trail and the Appalachian Trail. Members go the distance strapped with sleeping bags, stoves, boots and sometimes guitars.

"He just strapped his guitar on his back," says manager Matt Windt, about member Jason Dawson. "It was great. He played folk music for the group as they ate oatmeal around the campfire."

The backpacking club meets once a month in Room 278 of the Gym Annex. The club is open to all, but space is limited. Dues vary from $15 to $20 a semester, which covers transportation to scheduled outings. Members also need to invest in their own hiking and camping equipment.

UMAMI, HERE THEY COME

Broomball looks just like hockey, minus the skates, traditional sticks and pucks.

This coed intramural sport isn't as easy as it looks from the stands, though. First, the players wear tennis shoes instead of ice skates. In place of a regular hockey stick, they strike the puck with a 3-foot tall wooden stick that has a sturdy rubber wedge on the end, which slightly resembles a broom.

Left above, Mike Frampton goes out on a limb.
Left, Brett Erzon completes a catch for a point.
Stymie Doolan, a member of the team, "Uncle Sam's Misfits," says even the most athletic players come out of the rink struggling to catch their breath. Although players occasionally collide or slide into a wall, broomball involves less rough contact than hockey. Broomball players don't need to wear as much of the bulky pads and protective gear worn in hockey, and they're less likely to be called on penalties for unnecessary contact with a player.

A broomball game consists of two 15-minute periods. Six players from each team are required to be on the ice at all times, two of whom must be females. A maximum of 15 players is allowed on a team's roster, and when it reaches that many, there is a charge of $10 a semester.

"It's always competitive," Doolan says. "It takes a while to wind down after a game."

Kent State is home to two broomball leagues - 18 teams that compete for a title at the end of the semester. Some of the crazier team names are "V.D. (venereal disease) Free since '83," "Clogged Arteries," "Porn Stars" and "Umami." Most teams dress in original costume during games. Members of Uncle Sam's Misfits look like rebel guerrillas in their camouflage uniforms.

AINT NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH

Rock climbing requires an uphill battle from the beginning. Members pick up the slack for a mandatory $10 safety check to test the strength of their ropes. With only a rope to catch a climber's fall, undaunted members test their own balance, strength and patience on the way to the top.

The rock climbing club was formed last fall and meets once a month at the rock climbing wall in the Student Recreation and Wellness Center. Members take regular weekend trips to state parks and reserves.

Club managers suggest that members have their own equipment for climbing. Rental harnesses, helmets, ropes, shoes and chalk are available at the Rec Center pro shop.

ROUGH RIDERS

The kayaking club made its first splash in 1991. It has grown to more than 50 members who practice at 8 p.m. every Monday and Thursday in the Annex pool. Meetings sometimes begin with a short video on safety recorded from a member's trip. The club then moves to the pool to learn new moves and safety tips. The last half-hour is devoted to a game of Calvin Ball, which is played like water polo without rules, says club manager Jeff Mullins.

Members have kayaked the New River in West Virginia and Moose River in the Adirondack mountain range in northeastern New York. The club takes weekend kayaking trips year-round and usually stays at campgrounds.

"Even beginners will go on trips because there is so much to do," Mullins says. Some members also choose to go hiking or rock climbing during their outings. No experience is necessary to join, but instructional workshops will be offered in the Rec Center. For $10 a semester, students can join and gain full access to the pool and kayaks.

Above, Aaron Todman, manager of the rock climbing club, scales a cliff at Hinckley Park near Brunswick. (Photo provided by Aaron Todman.) Below, David Knox and Eric Quigley kayak down the Cuyahoga River at the end of their day.
"That's a great sweater," Matthew Terry says, impersonating Rodney Dangerfield in Caddyshack. "You get a bowl of soup with that sweater? But it looks good on you. No offense."

As a senior fashion design major and an artist in residence in the Verder Hall Studio, Terry has many opinions on fashion. He even constructed a bulletin board titled "The World of Fashion as Determined by Matt — a.k.a. Matt’s opinion is all that matters to him and him alone! But, hey! You’re reading this anyway."

In March, Terry returned from New York, where he created a polar fleece outfit with designer Sylvia Heisel for the master-apprentice program. In August, he won a scholarship after re-designing his senior line in one day based on a mere swatch of fabric. Terry admits his tastes are extravagant — he has an affinity for cashmere. His friends and instructors regard him as one of the most promising designers in his class.

On his board, "World of Fashion," Terry praises designer Yohji Yamamoto as the most modern designer of the decade because he combines Japanese design aesthetic and Christian Dior’s style. He says Yamamoto’s designs reflect what people will be wearing in the new millennium.

He doesn’t think so highly of Gucci’s hippie designs for this year. "Hippie equals bad," Terry says. "Here’s the equation: One ugly, boring Kmart top that even a Gucci tag wouldn’t make a fashion basic. Plus one pair of holey, ill-fitting jeans with embroidery (did I mention these were also ugly? Hey, consistency!). Plus one pair of beaded shoes, which are admittedly rather cute, equals one absolutely unwearable outfit. Where are the black, sexy clothes we all drooled over last season?"

Terry works among a clutter of markers, pens and marker paper at his drafting table in the Verder studio. The Violent Femmes sing in the background as he draws a line consisting of at least three garments that are cohesive in design elements and construction. One of his figures has "Frieda" written above her.

"Oh, she’s a woman artist," Terry says, turning to his bookshelf to grab a book titled "National Gallery of Art." He flips through to find an example of her work, then returns to his own designs.

Two other tables encompass his corner of space by the door. The tables hold knitting supplies, magazines, sketch books, a sewing machine, a serger and empty cups from the Prentice Hall Cafeteria.

Under the tables are boxes of patterns and fabric Terry says he likes, but really has no use for. There is also a paint pan, brush and roller left over from last semester when he painted the register in his room a proud parrot (a fluorescent green). His area walls contain various fashion ads, a napkin that reads, "Hungry? Fashion-
conscious? Mmm.... fashion student good,” and a poster of the pop band Hanson. Terry says he loves Hanson like he loves having his stomach pumped.

“Yeah, my girls put it there, and I left it because they were so amused,” Terry says, referring to the fashion students he advises in the studio.

Terry doesn’t mind being only one of two men in the senior fashion class.

“It doesn’t matter if you’re male or female, as long as you prove yourself and your dedication,” he says. “I love fashion, so that’s what I want to do.”

He made a conscious decision to pursue fashion his sophomore year because he enjoys being creative, and fashion provides an outlet for this creativity.

“He goes for expensive looks,” says Tiffany Merritt, senior fashion design major. “It can’t be mistaken for something at Dots.”

Josie Gleason, one of “Matt’s girls” and a sophomore, says she enjoys spending time with him. She recalls a time they went shopping at Off 5th Saks Fifth Avenue in the Aurora Premium Outlets.

“He convinced me to buy a pair of shoes I didn’t need,” Gleason says laughing. “Because he couldn’t buy them. He’s crazy and funny. He’s a goofy guy.”

CASHMERE FIXATIONS

Terry walks into the studio waving a bag from Off 5th, and another $189 on his nearly maxed-out Master Card.

“I have cashmere sweatpants,” he says proudly. “And a new cashmere sweater.”

In August, he applied for a scholarship for beaded fabric worth $400 a yard. The stipulation was that he had one day to redesign his senior line based on a swatch of the fabric. His designs were chosen, along with those of another student.

“He did a really good job using that beaded fabric,” says Melanie Carrico, assistant professor of fashion design and merchandising, who oversees the construction of the senior lines. “He did some sportswear pieces, like skirts and tanks, instead of all evening gowns. Everything is very well-done and looks really cohesive.”

After the school’s April fashion show, Sarajyet Imports, the company sponsoring the scholarship, will use his pieces in promotional ads for one year.

“It’s a winning situation for the school, the company and myself because we all get publicity,” Terry says.

However, several things went wrong. The fabric arrived much later than expected, and Terry says the construction was shoddy and incorrect. The sequins were black instead of silver, the shades of embroidery were wrong and spaced too widely, and the bead designs were not as packed as the original.

All Terry had left of the original swatch was a color photocopy. Half of the original swatch was sent to be replicated, but it was lost in the mail. The second half was sent to replace it.

“That’s when I snapped,” Terry says. “I had waited so long for this elusive fabric. When I walked into the office to pick it up, my jaw hit the floor. I almost cried. In fact, I did cry at home, later.”

He sent for new fabric that had to be re-beaded by hand.

“If everything had gone better, I wouldn’t have taken my fateful trip to Saks,” he says. “Instead of therapy, I just go to Saks.”

He wore his new cashmere sweater to speak with Elizabeth Rhodes, director of the Shannon Rodgers and Jerry Silverman school of Fashion Design and Merchandising. Sympathetic to Terry’s problem, she told him she would talk to the school’s contact with the company. The next day, Terry could relax because the fabric would be re-beaded and air-mailed to his house by Christmas Eve.

The fabric was late, but the second time it was nearly perfect.
"I think Matt will be one of those designers who are constantly on TV and in the newspaper. I'd be happy to see him and be able to say I went to school with him, that I studied with this guy."

"I grabbed the package, a pillowcase with a label taped to it, and hugged it," he says. Terry returned to the studio to construct his first clothing piece from the long-awaited fabric. After cutting the fabric, he sat hunched over the fabric to remove the sequins and beads along the edges so he wouldn't break the needle when sewing. Sewing the slip dress together only took five minutes, but re-beading the seams took uncountable, painstaking hours. Fortunately, Terry had prior experience working in an altering shop with beaded dresses.

"Why you got to be so mean?" he asks, looking at the fabric. He takes time out to go for a beer with some friends.

The next evening, Terry worked in the studio again. While he worked, he talked and gave advice to "his girls."

"We always make trouble together," says senior classmate Maggie Paquet as she works on the muslin for her senior line. "He's a schemer and makes you buy stuff you can't afford."

Terry and Paquet took a mini-break to dance around the studio. He twirled her around, dipped her, did a little strut, then placed her in the trash can.

"Matt's a fun-loving person, very professional and confident in what he does," Merritt says. "I remember I showed him a picture I had drawn of a female in a bathing suit. She was facing the back looking over her shoulder. It looked like her head was going to come off. He loved it and said when he gets rich he's going to frame it. I thought that was really cute."

**EXCELLENCE IN EXTRAVAGANCE**

Terry began making his own clothes during his junior year at Austintown Fitch High School, near Youngstown, because he couldn't afford what he wanted.

"My taste was a little more extravagant than what was offered at the local mall," he says. "I did it to learn how to sew."

Terry's own wardrobe includes burnt-orange and silver hologram pants. Some of his pants he sewed himself. He owns black sweaters galore, mostly cashmere. He is a self-proclaimed fabric snob. He says he would own cashmere underwear, but imagine the lint balls. He owns at least three pairs of Doc Martens.

Terry's personal designs were first recognized at his sophomore fashion show. Rhodes says Terry had been very depressed because he didn't think he had what it takes to be a designer. Charles Kleibacker was at the show looking for a piece to display at the Columbus Museum of Art when he decided he liked Terry's dress.

Rhodes says Kleibacker had been telling her he really liked the navy blue bias dress, and she couldn't figure out which one he was talking about.

"Finally I realized, 'That's Matthew Terry's dress. He's only a sophomore,'" Rhodes says. "He (Kleibacker) looked at me and said, 'Well, does that matter, Elizabeth? I could pick a senior.' I told him no."

Even Terry was shocked.

"I was so flabbergasted that my garment was on display with amazing creations from designers I adore and idolize," Terry says. Terry's inspiration comes from textiles, historic costumes and his knowledge of art history.

"He's a bit anal," Merritt says. "There's a part of me that wishes I were the same way."

His diligence must be working because he consistently wins awards for his work.

"He keeps floating to the top," Rhodes says. "We're proud of him."

Carrico says she would like to see more students with Terry's qualities walk through the doors. "I don't have to help him out much in the classes, which is nice," Carrico says. "It's really been a pleasure getting to know Matthew these past few years."

Merritt has big expectations for Terry in the next 10 years.

"I see him owning a business," she says. "He has far too much confidence to take orders for very long. I think he'll be one of those designers who are constantly on TV and in the newspaper. I'd be happy to see him and be able to say I went to school with him, that I studied with this guy."

Terry's expectations for himself are a bit more conservative.

"I'll be in a cardboard box on Madison Avenue in my Gucci boots and a pair of raggedy cashmere sweatpants," he says. "Actually, I hope to have an assistant designer position and live with Maggie in New York. We won't have anybody to love us, so we'll get cats and a fern."
CHEAP, POTENT AND EASY TO MAKE, CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE CREEPS INTO OHIO

THE DARKEST CRYSTAL

By David Frabotta
Illustration by Susanna Harley

He lay on his back in a stranger's bed wondering if he was going to die. He hadn’t slept or eaten in six days, and now he was throwing up water that his body desperately needed and was gagging on his own saliva. Occasionally he walked into the other room where his friends were smoking crystal methamphetamine and begged them to take him to the hospital.

"I was awake, like a zombie. All my muscles ached, and my body was starting to shut down, but I couldn’t sleep," says James, 18, of Bath Township. "I wasn’t hungry, but my body was starving. You can’t eat on meth because your stomach shrinks, and you just puke up anything you try to eat.

"Every couple of hours I would get up and tell them that I was going to die, and they needed to take me to the hospital. But they just kept telling me I was still tweaking, and I was paranoid and would be all right.

"A couple of hours later I told them that they didn’t have to take me to the front door. They could drop me off a block away and I would walk. I really thought I was going to die. But they didn’t care because they were still tweaking, and they kept smoking the stuff."

James, who asked that his name be changed because of his drug use, dropped out of his fifth year of high school. He illustrates an increasingly diverse subculture using crystal methamphetamine. No longer isolated in the twenty-something age group on the West Coast, meth has permeated the Midwest, and it is being used by people as young as 14 and as old as 60, according to Kevin McDermott, group supervisor for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency’s office in Cleveland.

"We have seen increased use in high school," McDermott says. "It may or may not be a result of the increased availability."

In 1997, 2.3 percent of high school seniors reported using meth annually, up from 1.3 percent in 1990, according to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, which uses the results from self-reported surveys conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

And Elaine Jones, a registered psychiatric and mental health nurse at Edwin Shaw Hospital for Rehabilitation in Akron, says increased availability of meth is a major reason for the increased use.

YOU CAN'T IMAGINE HOW BAD IT IS TO CRASH OFF A METH BUZZ.

AND IT'S MUCH EASIER TO JUST GET HIGH AGAIN THAN GO THROUGH THE ENTIRE PROGRESS COMING OFF.
Medical services offers a broad range of services including a full time medical staff, pharmacy, X-ray, laboratory and physical therapy. Health education programs and services are offered through the Office of Student Health Promotion at 672-2320. Kent State Ambulance offers emergency service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (during academic year). On campus CALL 911, off campus but within Kent city limits, CALL 672-2212.

Hours:
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Psychological Services provides a wide variety of services to the students. Whether the student has concerns around personal issues, managing the stresses of class work and tests, or living more comfortably with other students in a class or residence hall, Psychological Services provides high quality personalized service.

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"It moves in cycles, and right now it's in an active phase where kids can get it," Jones says. "I think people are making it here. I am told that the strongest stuff is coming from the Massillon area. And I am seeing that the kids are doing it because it is accessible and cheap. They have brothers or sisters or friends at the University of Akron or at Kent State who give them access to the drugs."

Crystal meth is manufactured easily in small, clandestine labs. Recipes differ, but the drug is commonly produced by combining poisons such as car starter fluid, drain cleaner and paint remover with varying amounts of legal stimulants such as caffeine, ephedrine and phenylpropanolamine, which are found in over-the-counter diet pills and decongestants. The result is commonly off-white to yellow powder or chalky crystal that can be injected, snorted or smoked.

Users experience a rush similar to the body's own adrenaline, producing varying degrees of euphoria, alertness, decreased appetite and fatigue and increased confidence, physical activity and respiration. The buzz can last from 12 to 24 hours, and similar to other forms of speed, prolonged use can result in vitamin deficiencies, malnutrition, anxiety, depression, paranoia and damage to the lungs, liver and kidneys.

Pharmaceutical methamphetamine was given to soldiers in World War II to relieve fatigue and widely prescribed to women in the '60s to lose weight, but its current medical use is limited primarily to treat obesity.

Meth has spread throughout America because regulations on the chemicals needed to make crystal methamphetamine are different in every state, and Mexico does not regulate pharmaceuticals at all. It is distributed easily via drug trails already blazed by cocaine traffickers.

"One of the problems is that Mexico doesn't control any of the precursor chemicals," McDermott says. "And we've seen some of the big labs move from Mexico into California and Arizona. We've seen them move as far north as South Dakota, and the methods for distributing already have been set up from the cocaine trafficking."

Although controlling crystal meth's precursors helps to discourage the large manufacturers, McDermott says it does little to detour the growing amount of small labs, which are difficult to monitor. It is the small, community labs that have made meth highly available and cheaper than similar drugs such as cocaine.

"Between 1990 and 1998, the number of labs has increased by 10 times, mostly in rural..."
I REMEMBER LOOKING IN THE MIRROR, AND MY EYES WERE SUPER DILATED.

I WAS TRYING TO BREATHE SLOWLY.

YEAH, RIGHT. I COULD FEEL MY HEART POUNDING IN MY CHEST, AND I COULD SEE THE VEINS IN MY NECK.

PULSATING.

areas," McDermott says. "We're seeing an increase in the labs producing one to three ounces at a time. The cookers (manufacturers) are using one, selling two and living off the profit until it is time to cook again."

He says meth is rarely smuggled into the country as it was in the '70s and '80s. Its production has boomed domestically because it is cheap, easy to make and profitable.

"You have to compare it to crack cocaine because it is domestically produced, cheap to make, and anyone can do it," McDermott says.

"An initial investment of $50 yields about an ounce of meth, and you can sell that ounce for about $1,200."

Psychiatric nurse Jones says her patients use meth for short periods of time because the drug is physically hard on the user, and the availability comes and goes in cycles.

"It doesn't appear that people are using the drug for a long period of time," Jones says.

"It could be because the supply dies."

But when the supply dies, many users turn to other drugs as a substitute. Or they use meth, when available, as a substitute for other drug habits.

"When the accessibility dries up, many users go on to something else," Jones says.

"We call them the garbage user. When one drug is no longer available, they move on to another drug. If red rock opium is around, then I will see an increase in the use until the supply is gone."

It was the availability of the drug that allowed James to slip into a cyclical habit of using crystal meth.

"I started using a lot when I found a good hook-up," James says. "I started hanging out in Kent, where I think I was pretty close to the source. We could get it almost any time, and it was pretty good quality."

James soon realized that meth wasn't just cheap and potent, it was also highly addictive.

"Meth is definitely very addictive," he says.

"You can't imagine how bad it is to crash off a meth buzz, and it's so much easier to just get high again than go through the entire coming-down process. That is why people stay up for a week getting high. Then you have to come down from a week's worth of meth, and then you're screwed."

"One night we drove around and smoked meth until none of us was able to drive, and none of us could go home," he says. "We called a friend whose parents owned a hotel, and she got us a room for the night. The first thing we did was unscrew the light bulbs."

Many smokers use light bulbs by first breaking off the metal base, then scraping out the white frosting on the inside. Meth burns at a relatively low temperature, so the powder is placed in the bulb and heated with a lighter until it burns. Clouds of smoke lift from the bulb, and it is inhaled.

"I remember still having a light bulb in my hand at 11 a.m. It was one of the first nights I did a lot of meth," James says. "I remember looking in the mirror, and my eyes were super dilated. I was trying to breathe slowly. Yeah, right. I could feel my heart pounding in my chest, and I could see and feel the veins in my neck pulsating."

"That morning we took one of the guys who was partying with us to his high school intramural basketball game. We were still high, of course, and he was a wreck. He was coughing up blood on the court, and he played so badly his teammates were yelling at him. But we were still laughing in the bleachers."

Although people who monitor drug use have seen a steady increase in crystal meth, many say the trend is modest in the Midwest. Law enforcers are not underestimating meth's potential for widespread use as in the Western states, but for now, they are thankful that use in the Midwest is not as widespread.

The Western Portage Drug Task Force, an area narcotics agency composed of officers from Kent, Kent State, Ravenna, Streetsboro, Brimfield and Aurora, arrested a Kent State student for possession of crystal meth in Apple Hall during an LSD crackdown in December. The student was not charged because of a plea bargain, according to a task force agent who asked not to be identified because he works undercover. He says meth is becoming an area problem.

"It's here, brother," the agent says. "And you can buy it in Kent, and you can buy it on campus."

But Dan Fitzpatrick, the project director for the group, says meth is not a high priority on his list.

"This is an extremely dangerous drug, and we have seen an increase," says Fitzpatrick, who is also the deputy chief at the Kent State Police Department. "We do think there are a few labs in the area, but the drug is not a critical concern for us right now."

DEA group supervisor McDermott says the Midwest has not been exposed to meth as much as other parts of the country.

"It has definitely increased on a large scale west of the Mississippi River," McDermott says. "We haven't experienced near the problem the West has. Last year (1997) we made five busts, and this year we made seven
And Dennis Thombs, associate professor of health promotion and health education at Kent State, also says meth's usage is growing, but usage is not widespread in the area.

"I think it is a growing problem in the Midwest, but it is not a major problem yet," Thombs says. "The concern is that it will become a substitute for crack cocaine because it is domestically made, and it doesn't take a lot of skill or sophisticated equipment."

Although meth users are diverse in the West, Thombs says most users are Caucasian in the Midwest.

"I gather that meth is basically used by poor, disenfranchised, white people," he says. "A lot of folks seem to be working class, and it is widely called the poor man's cocaine."

Thombs says the crystal meth problem could grow old with the user because of cohort use, which occurs when users continue to associate with other users of similar ages. He refers to the U.S. Justice Department's 1997 Annual Report on Adult and Juvenile Arrestees, a volunteer study composed of arrested people.

"This data set found that there is a cohort effect among aging cocaine users," Thombs said. "Meth is the same way. It is used by a group of folks outside the mainstream. It is an illegal drug subculture, and users tend to continue to associate with each other."

James says it was easy to fall into a drug subculture when his friends were using with him. Subsequently, there are no outsiders in the group to consciously evaluate the destructive, cyclical lifestyle.

"When I was using, the only people I was friends with were tweaking, too," James says.

James removed himself from his drug-ridden house in Akron last November because he realized how the environment was corrupting him and his friends.
“My roommates are totally screwed up, and I moved out because they are all tweaked out,” he says. “They use every weekend, and they are starting to do some scandalous stuff.”

On the morning James moved out of his Akron house, he says he caught a frightening glimpse of what he must have looked like when he was strung out on meth.

“I woke up at 10 a.m., and there were about a dozen people I had never seen before in my living room,” he says. “My roommates had invited people who they had met at a rave over for an after-hours party. They were all strung out, a bunch of cracked-out-looking people sitting around grinding their teeth.”

James moved in with his grandparents because he was kicked out of his parents’ house for stealing to feed his drug habit. His parents still don’t know the extent of his addiction.

“I just wrote my parents a long letter explaining how screwed up I was back then,” he says. “I haven’t mailed it yet. I’m still scared of what they might think of me.”

Despite James’ struggle to get clean, he is still not sure if he is over the temptation of crystal meth — a testament to its potency and addictive nature.

“When I was getting clean, I thought I would fiend for meth when I was around it,” he says. “Luckily I didn’t. I don’t think I will ever try it again. I hope not, but I can’t really be sure.”

THE AFTERMATH

James doesn’t run with the same crowd anymore. He still lives with his grandparents in Bath and has a new job at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. He is registered to take the test to earn his general education degree so he can begin college. He never sought formal treatment for his problem, and he admits he still uses the drug on special occasions.

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main organizations. But he says fans display their favorite wrestlers' iconic clothing to show support.

"They're showing who they like, and what their interests are in wrestling," Sutton says. "It's basically for show."

Sutton says the fashion inspiration comes from the wrestlers themselves.

"A lot of it has to do with what the wrestlers wear on TV," Sutton says. "I've seen 'Stone Cold' wear some 'Wanna raise some hell?' and 'Hell, yeah' T-shirts. Hell, everybody and their mother has got one of those T-shirts. Everybody's got the Wolfpack T-shirt with the red wolf on it."

Hamilton admits to having dressed up as Konnan, a wrestler formerly of the New World Order — a group of wrestlers within WCW — for Halloween.

"I went as Konnan for the hell of it," Hamilton says. "It was fun, and I think my costume looked pretty good. I saw some other people downtown dressed like wrestlers, too."

Wrestling fans express themselves verbally, too. Several wrestlers have catch phrases that have been embedded into the vocabularies of many wrestling fans.

A commonly heard phrase around campus is "Suck it," a taunt popularized by the WWF's Degeneration X. Another favorite phrase that belongs to the WWF's "Stone Cold" Steve Austin is "Can I get a 'hell, yeah?'"

Some of the WCW's catch phrases include "2 sweet," a boast of the New World Order, and "You're gonna get bang," "Diamond" Dallas Page's threat.

Not to be left out is the wrestlers' sign language. Members of Degeneration X raise their arms crossed in an "X" shape and thrust them down to their waists to emphasize the "Suck it!" phrase.

"Degeneration X has got the 'Suck it!' where they take their arms and whip them down by their crotch area," Sutton says while demonstrating. "That really puts a symbol on what they stand for."

Austin has a few gestures of his own. "'Stone Cold' has got the finger, and he's got the little beer-drinking symbol," Sutton says,

'Diamond Dallas Page has this little sign, and he holds it above his head. He goes like that, and you hear a synchronized bang. That fires me up for some reason'
tilting an imaginary beer can to his lips. “That stirs up the crowd a little bit.”

And NWO members can commonly be seen giving each other the “2 sweet” version of the high five.

Perhaps the king of wrestling signals is the WCW’s “Diamond” Dallas Page, according to Allen, who demonstrates the gesture by placing his palms outward, forming a diamond shape with both thumbs and fore fingers while holding his hands above his head.

“Diamond’ Dallas Page has this little sign, and he holds it above his head,” Allen says as he then throws his arms apart and downward. “He goes like that, and you hear a synchronized bang. That fires me up for some reason.”

The fans themselves are symbolic of the sport. Their enthusiasm is addictive, and their numbers are growing, which is partly why Sutton returned to the world of head locks and elbow smashes.

“I like the fans that get into it,” Sutton says. “You can see people in the background, and they get all busted out. We need more people like that in the world because I think deep down they’re good people, but on the outside they’re just buck-wild fans.”

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Some of the best people I know are crazy

AFTER HER SISTER COMMITTED SUICIDE, RUTHANN ROBINSON LEARNED TO ACCEPT HER FAMILY'S HISTORY OF DEPRESSION

By Ruthann Robinson
Photo illustration by Kathryn Deuel

Above, Ruthann sits with her daughter Sarah at the piano. Right, Susan stands near the Dry Fork River in West Virginia.
"Hello? Is this Ruthann Robinson? Are you Susan Carr's sister? This is an officer from the Hartville police department. Susan is dead."

I sank into the chair behind me, cries of grief coming from a place that had never before been touched. I was vaguely aware of David, my 11-year-old son, and Sarah, my 15-year-old daughter, staring at me.

"Mrs. Robinson, would you like to come down here?"

"NO!" I screamed.

Walk into Sue's home where she lay dead?

My God, no.

"OK, Mrs. Robinson, the Stark County coroner needs to talk to you."

The coroner? My stomach seized with cramps.

"Mrs. Robinson, are you Susan's next of kin?"

"No, my parents are."

Oh, God! My parents! How can I tell Mom and Dad? Fear gripped me as tightly as the grief.

"Mrs. Robinson, we'll secure everything down here. You don't have to come down. I'll call you back in about an hour. You'll need to be thinking of a funeral home."

A funeral home? My God. How can this be happening? Oh Susan, How could you?

Like a slingshot, that June 17, 1995, call sent me hurtling down a path toward healing on which I had just recently set a tentative foot. Along the way, my harsh view of life mellowed. I learned to appreciate and embrace my own unique personality traits, and, in turn, relax my grip on perfection.

That hot summer Friday started out like any other. I got up early to run errands. I bought Father's Day cards, rose bushes and had work done on my car. It was 1 p.m. when I got home. My son, Rudy Benjamin, whose high school graduation we had just celebrated the Sunday before, was watching TV with Sarah and David. I had to work that night and was going to try to sleep.

Then the phone rang. Sarah answered it and with a puzzled look, handed me the receiver.

That's when my world came crashing down.

My oldest sister, Susan Lorraine Carr, Suzy Woozy, my best friend, my confidante, my soul's twin, had killed herself. The coroner didn't need to tell me. I knew. I'd been through dry runs with her countless times in the past 25 years. In fact, on one of our first dates, my future husband Rudy dropped me off at a hospital to visit her in the psych ward. She'd taken an overdose.

Sue's bouts with depression were just a part of her. Frantic calls from college or work, while not commonplace, were a part of our relationship. She'd tell me she wanted to give up, that everything and everyone would be better off if she just wasn't around. I'd tell her that wasn't true and remind her how special she was, how much we loved her. We'd pray. Somehow, she'd get through it.

Sometimes she'd take an overdose, but she always called someone and went to the hospital.

But Sue's depression and suicidal thoughts hardly defined her.

Growing up, she was my most fun, older sister. The one with all the good ideas who took me and my sister Jeanette and brother Andy on high adventures. We spent hours exploring and getting into trouble on my paternal grandparents' farm and the surrounding mountain forests in West Virginia.

Sue loved her brother and sisters very much. During all of the talks we had together, she never once blamed or sounded angry with them. They were her world. If not for them, she would've committed suicide long ago, maybe even in high school.

— Mike McCartney, Sue's friend, former counselor and pastor

When Mom's anger and the problems of my young life were too much to bear, Sue's attic bedroom was a port in the storm. She rarely turned away my request to come up and listen to her records. In the quiet acceptance of her love, I'd put on her headphones and listen to her vast collection. Sometimes she'd put on a Bill Cosby or George Carlin comedy album, and we'd laugh together, temporarily forgetting the tempest raging below.

Looking back, I realize only two things kept Sue and me from living a content life free of mental illness — environment and genetics.

Environment

Sue was born in a maelstrom.

My parents' first-born was Gary. On Dec. 23, 1947, Mom and Dad left their precious 6-week-old with her mom while they did last-minute Christmas shopping. On the way home, they passed an ambulance. As she'd been taught by the Catholic church, my mom said a prayer for the person inside. When she got home, she learned it was her son. Her mom had checked on him and found him face down in his crib.

When my parents got to the hospital, the doctor met them with the news. He told my mom that God must have wanted another angel in heaven for Christmas. He told my dad the best thing he could do for his wife was to get her pregnant again.

Sue was born 10 months later.

When Sue was 2, Mom delivered a premature boy whom they named Larry. He lived an hour. Within a month, my maternal grandmother was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Mom nursed her mother until she died three months later.

I've always felt that Sue's intelligence and fierce spirit would have been a lot for an emotionally healthy woman to deal with, let alone one crippled with grief.

Sue and I discussed this often because she wasn't one to wallow in her depression. She fought it and analyzed it to death.

We concluded that neither Mom nor Dad ever dealt with their grief. But who did in the '50s? Counseling and group therapy were hallmarks of the '70s. Ignoring pain and putting your nose to the grindstone was how their generation got through hard times. My mom and dad lived through the Great Depression and fought in World War II, he in Paris with the 82nd Airborne and she in Akron, as Rosie the Riveter at Goodyear Aircraft.

But their pain surfaced. Mom's fierce anger at the slightest infractions. Dad's vacant helplessness in the face of her wrath.

Sue and I went to the same college in West Virginia. We weren't just cousins. We were good friends. But as well as Sue and I got along, I think in some way she disliked me. I was one of the younger grandchildren who were pampered and loved. Everything I did was cute and worthy. I think she was angry and jealous, because she was just as smart and creative, but she rarely got the attention she needed.

And really, when you stripped it all away and got to the basic building blocks, we were the same. We had the same intelligence, the same creativity, the same playfulness and the
same sense of humor. The only difference that I saw between us, and it was a fundamental one, is that my attributes were supported and nurtured, whereas hers were chastised and beat down.

— Jeff Carr, cousin and licensed counselor

Once Sue became a teen-ager, she no longer willingly accepted my mother’s beatings. She would run up to her attic room, Mom fast at her heels. I remember lying in bed wishing Sue would just quit aggravating mom. She was the family scapegoat—the target of years of mis-spent hostility.

Genetics

One of the earliest memories I have of my paternal grandmother was of her begging us not to leave. She lived in West Virginia, where my dad was raised. We lived in Akron, the Rubber Capital of the World, where he, as a former GI, had gone to find a job.

We spent every summer in West Virginia. My grandma baked bread, tended her vegetable garden, sang gospel songs and always had the grainy, old black-and-white TV tuned to a fire-and-brimstone, faith-healing preacher.

It was heaven. Except when it was time to go. She would get weepy, wring her hands and pace back and forth. When we hugged her good-bye, she dissolved into tears.

When I got older, I realized this was a sign of depression. Her mother died in a mental institution. Six of her eight children, as well as several grandchildren, suffered from various forms of depression as adults. The disease ravaged her son, Alfred, rendering him unable to function in the world past the age of 30. Uncle Alfred was in and out of the state mental hospital, depending heavily on his siblings to support him. He would run off into the mountains; they’d bring him home.

My dad didn’t escape the family curse. In his late 50s he began suffering blackouts that forced him to retire from truck driving. Since then, he’s been through one wave of depression after another.

I didn’t escape, either. While Sue’s depression came frequently and early in her life, mine lay quietly hidden under layers of acceptance and success.

I was the third child. Sue and I used to say that our parents were tired by the time I came along, so I flourished under their relaxed expectations while Sue took most of the heat.

I did well in school. Unlike my sisters, I dated in high school. I was thin and pretty. I got married. I had children. I did everything right.

It was a lot of work.

Like many women, I swore I wouldn’t be the kind of mother mine was. But the longer I parented, the more I saw her in me. I had sworn to never hit my children in anger, but I still raged at their childish antics. I knew something was wrong.

Like Susan, I began seeking answers for my problems. The journey took me to Bible studies, prayer groups, and eventually into counseling.

Once, during a particularly bad time, Sue suggested that I might need an antidepressant. The thought nauseated me. All I could think of was she and Dad fighting to hold on while their doctors tried different prescriptions that rarely seemed to work. And when life became unbearable, Sue’s suicidal modus operandi was to overdose on her hoarded antidepressants.

Nope, no drugs. Not for me.

I plodded along. I kept a prayer journal. I sought answers, and I sought God as I grew weary of Susan’s needs.

The year before she died was particularly trying.

Her job as a medical lab technician at Akron City Hospital had soured. She was relegated to a high-pressure, lonely position in the blood bank at a time when she was once again, battling severe depression.

And Sue’s debts were threatening to sink her. She had always been a big spender. Her closets bulged with clothes; her bookshelves groaned under the weight of books, cassettes, CDs and videotapes. She would buy an artist’s tape just to have one song to add to her tape of favorites. She made many different ones meticulously labeled with artist and song title. Then she labeled them with names like “Fabulous Females.” Sue actually had ones titled, “Favorite Songs,” “More Favorite Songs,” “Still More Favorite Songs” and “You guessed it! Even More Favorite Songs.” My sister was a lovable loon.

Over the years, Sue bounced back and forth from being financially independent to relying on my parents for shelter. It was a sick dance of codependence. During the last two years of her life, Sue lived in a condominium in Hartville. She loved it. The townhouse was away from the city overlooking a meadow. Best of all, she was on her own.

When Sue told me she was moving out to her own place again, my two thoughts were a paradox: “That’s a good move for her,” and, “It’ll be the end of her.” Somehow I knew that if she got in too deep this time, she’d be too proud to go back.

— Jeff
Sue’s depression kept her from taking care of herself as her high blood pressure and diabetes demanded. She was a “noncompliant” patient. I always felt that an unmet childhood longing to be cared for was the root of Sue’s problems. Toward the end, she’d been off work for three months and was $10,000 in debt. She faced eviction.

Where was I? Frantically swimming away from the sinking ship. Dad was depressed. Mom was still angry. Sue was failing and needed help — again. Rudy Benjamin was graduating and getting ready to go to Ohio State. I just started a new job and was planning to go back to Kent State to finish my degree. I didn’t have time. I couldn’t be bothered.

Ruthann was struggling with how much to get involved. In the past she jumped in and rescued. She was in graduate school in helping and saving people but in grade school when it came to taking care of herself.

— Larry Schwartz, Ruthann’s counselor

Sue’s landlord came to evict her and found her lying face down on the floor beside her bed. Next to her was a note she’d written in a counseling session. It read, “I’m free from suicidal thoughts.”

I barely made it through the funeral. Silly things like selecting flowers for her casket and rearranging the funeral home furniture to meet my exacting design kept me going.

I’d never seen a corpse look like the person did alive, and I had no desire to see Sue spiritless, either. We decided to keep the casket closed. My sister, brother and I spent hours pouring over family photographs to display. The bear she’d slept with since childhood sat on a table next to her casket, next to her Bible, which we opened to an underlined passage I knew she had memorized.

My older sister, Jeanette, went through and compiled a selection of Sue’s tapes to play as background music during calling hours. She dutifully labeled it “Songs for Sue’s Funeral.”

We wanted Mike McCartney, Sue’s former pastor, counselor and friend to deliver the eulogy. We felt lucky to have someone speak about Sue who was not only a man of God, but someone well-versed in mental health issues and who knew Sue so well.

When I looked at those gathered at the funeral, I could see a million question marks in everyone’s faces. I wanted to erase those question marks. I wanted especially to get a message to her dad. I started talking about manic-depressive illness and how it can permeate your life. But that even with this disease, Susan accomplished quite a bit. She graduated with dual degrees. She was a counselor at Cleveland’s Billy Graham Crusade. How many of us who are mentally healthy have the guts to go into a stadium full of strangers and share our faith in Jesus Christ? Sue was an incredibly intelligent and gregarious person.

I have no doubt that Sue was spiritually healthy. She had a mental illness. That was why she was in that coffin. It was not Susan’s fault, nor was it anyone else’s. I heard her dad say quietly to Susan, “You’re finally at peace.” I think all along it was his role in the family to try and keep peace. He knew for years that Sue rarely experienced any. But somehow he knew that she had it now. I really felt the presence of God in that room.

— Mike McCartney

The next day, we drove to West Virginia to bury Sue in the mountaintop cemetery next to Bright’s Chapel, the church we attended as children with our grandma. It is the quintessential country church: a one-room, white-clapboard, building with a steeple directing God’s praises toward heaven.

Sue’s friends spoke. The preacher gave a salvation message and an invitation to accept Jesus Christ’s free gift of everlasting life. We put on the tape and her uncles and cousins carried Sue to the grave site to the strains of Jimmy Buffet’s “Cheeseburger in Paradise.” We laid her to rest at grandma’s feet. Sue remembers her as the only one who stood up to mom on her behalf.

The rest of that year was a fog. We got Rudy Benjamin off to college, and I started college myself. And more like my mom than I’d want to admit, I overachieved. I got straight A’s. I continued to see my counselor.

Spring came. I wrote in my journal: “A part of me revels in the fact that there are no tragedies to face this summer. Who would commit suicide and turn my world upside down?” I’d overlooked the power of other problems.

Less than two weeks after that journal entry, Rudy Benjamin, who’d been back from Ohio State a week, got a letter saying he flunked out. The next day, he was fired from the landscaping job he’d had for three days. Outwardly, I was understanding and supportive. Inwardly, I was dying.

In August, Sarah came back from a church mission trip in the Appalachian hills of Kentucky. She was a zombie. Her friends said she cried the entire trip. Sarah said the whole thing reminded her of spending time with Sue in West Virginia.

A few months before, Sarah had started seeing a counselor because I suspected she hadn’t dealt with Sue’s death. Shortly after the mission trip her counselor said Sarah had something to show me. It was a letter she had written to Sue. I had forgotten Sarah was also away on a mission trip the year before, when I had Rudy Benjamin’s graduation party. That party was the last time we saw Sue alive. Except for Sarah.
Above, Sarah had her brother David pose with her in her senior pictures.

She felt cheated. And worse, while I was telling my mom about Sue's death, Sarah had to break it to her dad.

After seeing my mother fall apart, I saw my father and older brother, the men in my life, weep like babies. It shattered my reality in every sense of the word, yet rather than let myself break down, too, I buried everything, a skill that had become second nature to me. I tried to comfort everyone else in the family. That was my job, to make sure everyone else was OK. No one wanted to see me cry, or so I thought.

—Sarah

Sarah wasn't sleeping and suffered terrible headaches. Her counselor suggested an antidepressant. That was it. I'd failed as a mother, a sister, a wife and a daughter. I had anxiety attacks. I could barely function.

The idea of my daughter taking an antidepressant was more than I could bear. Susan had taken her life by overdosing on hers. I worked in an emergency room. Teen overdoses were commonplace. I couldn't let my daughter go down that road. My counselor encouraged me to tell her how I felt, but to let her make her own decision. With some guidelines firmly intact, I accompanied her to the psychiatrist.

I can remember thinking that I had to act crazy enough for the doctor to put me on medication because it was my last hope. I was tired of only having enough energy to lie on my bed and stare at my overhead light. I thought to myself, "This is your last chance at a normal life, so you better at least get THIS right!!" The doctor did put me on medication, and the storm clouds that had covered my life for the past year finally began to part.

—Sarah

A month later my insurance company insisted I be evaluated for depression by a psychiatrist. The company reviewed each case to see if treatment was working. Because I'd been
seeing my counselor for two years with no obvious improvement, the company wanted to see if I needed medication. I was scared. The day of my appointment, I felt great — healthy, on top of everything, functioning. I passed all the little tests with flying colors — counting back from 100 by sevens, remembering lists after being distracted. I thought she would send me on my merry, drug-free way. But the doctor surprised me.

"Ruthann, your family history of depression is very strong. I think you'd benefit from a long trial period on Zoloft. Like Prozac, Zoloft is a serotonin reuptake inhibitor. Research shows that a depressed person's brain reabsorbs the serotonin before it can be used as it should. The medicine just allows your brain to work more efficiently."

Though I decided before I went in there to go along with her recommendation, I kept that prescription in my pocket for a month. I couldn't bear to get it filled.

My dad never liked being on medication for depression. I told him for years that needing to take his antidepressant was no different or any more shameful than needing blood pressure pills or diabetes medication.

Now my words came back to haunt me. That first pill went down hard.

It was the end of November. I had a photography portfolio, an in-depth story and a term paper due within a week, as well as finals and my job. I was worrying over all this as usual when I said to myself, "Relax, Ruthann, you'll be fine. You are smart. You are a good student. Just figure out what needs to be done tomorrow and take care of that. You'll be fine."

My God, who was that? I turned around looking for the person speaking.

Through many years of therapy, Sue and I learned the value of positive self-talk. We'd tried it, but it never seemed to help. I now realize that it was because when I told myself positive things like, "You're a good mother," or "You're pretty," there was always a little voice inside of me saying, "Yeah, right. Are you going to believe that drivel?" Somehow it was easier to believe the mean voice over the sappy one.

But not anymore.

It took me a while to get used to the new voice. In the past I spent so much energy trying to figure out my problems, but now I was free to just live life. I began thinking this must be how normal people lived!

I don't know why medication worked for me and not Sue any more than I know why she was plagued with suicidal thoughts and I'm not. I don't have all the answers. All I know is, when you're depressed, it takes all your energy just to get by, let alone accomplish anything.

Sometimes it bothers me that my daughter and I take medication for depression. But this past spring, Sarah graduated as her high school's salutatorian and gave a speech before hundreds of people gathered in the Akron Civic Theater. I sat in the audience next to Rudy Benjamin, who was now back in college. Going through Sarah's graduation brought back sad memories for all of us.

I knew all along I wanted to share how Susan's death affected me. Before graduation, I had to give my speech to the senior counselor so she could look it over to see if it was appropriate.

She told me it sounded too much like preaching, and that I shouldn't say Sue committed suicide, just that she died.

I didn't listen to her. I told them:

"We've all been through tough times. Hopefully, they've helped us grow. The most difficult time for me was when my Aunt Susan killed herself. But through her death and bouts with depression, I learned that I had to talk about what was bothering me, to seek help for my problems, even if no one wanted to listen. Because if I didn't, I might end up just like her. During that hard time, God gave me a verse that kept me going. I still read it every night before I go to bed. Because I know He didn't intend it just for me, I'd like to share it with you. It's from the book of Philippians 4: 6, 7:

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

— Sarah

Like Sarah, I refuse to let our family illness embarrass me. I've come to realize that the tendency toward mental illness is as much a part of my genetic makeup as my blue eyes and broad hips. And joyfully, I'm still the same person. I didn't lose myself to the medication as I feared. The same things make me laugh. I still like to read, write, swim, garden and play games with my family. And the same things still make me cry. Just not as often. 1:
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A bright smile leads to a bright future.
It's not just a place where students eat, sleep and study. It's also where we live our lives. Since Kent State was established in 1910 as a teachers' college, then called the Kent Normal School, this campus and the city surrounding it have seen thousands of people come and go. But whether here to earn a degree or to raise a family, each person who sets foot on the sidewalks of Kent carries a mental diary of his or her experiences here. These are the memories of a few people who have been instrumental in making this university a place for others to remember.

THE PEOPLE YOU'LL REMEMBER TELL WHAT THEY COULD NEVER FORGET ABOUT THEIR ADVENTURES AT KENT STATE
PANTY RAIDS AND MUD SLIDING

"I remember the panty raids," says Randy Ristow, manager of Parking Services. "They were harmless and a lot of fun."

Ristow, who was a student at Kent State in the late 1960s, lived in an Olson Hall triple when the dorm housed men. He says the men of the Quad area would begin calling to each other from their windows. Eventually, they would gather in the grassy area between Olson, Lake, Stopper and Johnson halls.

"Then, we would head for the women's dorms — Prentice, Dunbar, Terrace, Korb," Ristow says. "I remember when there were a thousand guys marching over to Korb, shouting, 'We want panties!' Back then, all the girls' dorms had house mothers. They were trying to keep the girls away from the windows."

One house mother wasn't very successful. "Someone threw down from the top floor of Korb, the sixth floor, one pair of underwear. It was floating down toward this mass of humanity out in front of Korb," he says. "I was afraid someone was going to get pushed through the first floor window (in the men's effort to grab the underwear)."

Ristow also remembers going to women's dorms for another reason. "We'd go mud sliding, where you dive and slide in the mud after it rained," he says. "The guys would go into the girls' dorms and drag them out and push them in the mud. They would go into the girls' dorms — Prentice and Verder — and drag them out, even while this girl's mother was there screaming, 'Don't take my daughter.'"

FOOD SERVICE ON ICE

Mitch Schrader remembers his time at the university best through an event that didn't even take place in Kent. The National Ice Carving Association, which promotes the art of ice sculpture through education and competition, held its collegiate finals at the University of Akron in 1996, and Schrader competed as a Kent State representative.

"I have a lot of memories of the university, but this was neat because we (Schrader and his teammate) were kind of doubting ourselves," he says. "We ended up finishing about in the middle of the field — we beat some people and some people really beat us. We were happy because we proved we were supposed to be there."

For the competition, Schrader carved "Birds of Strength," a sculpture of a half-human, half-eagle figure. And although the competition wasn't held in Kent, Schrader's skills were honed here.

He was introduced to ice sculpting as a junior in high school working for Food Services, when the university was looking for someone to carve ice. With Kent State supplying him with blocks of ice, Schrader taught himself the art. Now he works on sculptures for graduation, weddings held in the student center and the occasional fund-raiser when he's not serving breakfast in the student center cafeteria.

TRUE LOVE 1960S STYLE

Anita Herington, now executive director of the Alumni Association, has a permanent reminder of her time at Kent State. While in her junior year, Herington was a member of the Chestnut League, an athletic boosters organization. Her membership in this group led her to join another, the Halftime Committee, a group largely composed of administrators who organized the events for halftime during football games.

That was 1969, the year Dix Stadium opened, and the committee was brainstorming what to do with the new facility. With acts such as Johnny Carson, the Carpenters and Henry Mancini having come to campus, the options seemed endless. Finally, another popular group was suggested, The Association, whose hits "Cherish," "Never My Love" and "Everything..."
That Touches You” topped the pop charts in the late ’60s. One of the administrators, not familiar with the group, asked what style of music the group played.

“The guy sitting next to me said, ‘Progressive rock.’ I said, ‘Uh-uh. It’s a pop group.’ He turned to me and said, ‘You’re going to be sorry you said that.’ Fifteen months later, we were married. We’ve been married 28 years.”

So who was the guy next to her? Leigh Herington, now the Ohio state senator for the 28th district.

IF YOU PLAY IT, THEY WILL COME

Dan Lewinter, a junior art history major and student president of Hillel Jewish Student Center, says he will always remember a weekend in early February. Lewinter had been playing music with a guy who was his neighbor when he lived in Verder Hall.

“We had worked it out, and now we have this chemistry together. We don’t have to talk, just play,” Lewinter says. Things changed when the two moved into a house with a roommate Lewinter hadn’t met. The three of them formed a band and started practicing.

“We were just jamming. There was no organization. Then we started putting more into it, organizing it,” he says. In early February, a friend built a bar in his basement and invited the band to play. Lewinter estimates 100 to 150 people came to hear the band play some covers, as well as some original songs.

“It was like a little club in the basement. There was a large crowd, a disco ball.... People were dancing to our music and having a great time. I’ll remember that forever.”

GIRL POWER

Physics Lecturer Thomas Emmons has a difficult time picking one memory to represent Kent State. After all, he has 19 years of teaching physics to look back upon. There’s receiving the university’s Distinguished Teaching Award in 1992, attending 13 graduations and putting on the planetarium show for the popular “Seven Ideas That Shook the Universe” course, for which he also wrote a book of supplemental notes.

But Emmons chooses instead an ironic turn of events that occurred during a serious time in the university history. In winter 1991 a gunman killed one person, wounded another and fired at the windows of several apartment buildings. While police were trying to track him down, the university took extra measures to keep students, faculty and staff safe.

“Because I teach big classes, and one of these classes was at night, they hired a guard to protect me — this 250-pound police person. One night he wasn’t there, and they had a woman guard instead. There’s nothing wrong with that. But she was about 90 pounds, and she was supposed to protect me.”

INFECTIOUS ENTHUSIASM

Two Kent State faculty members made a big impression on a second-year transfer student from Ohio University in the late 1960s. The Rev. Chuck Graham of United Christian Ministries says Jerry Lewis, emeritus professor of sociology who continues to teach part-time, and the late Glenn Frank, professor of geology, are at the core of what Kent means to him. Both men were faculty marshals on May 4, 1970, and are credited with helping to keep the situation on May 4, 1970, from becoming worse than it did.

“They really turned me around,” Graham says. “Not that they singled me out. It was their love of the subject matter and the way in which they taught. It was infectious. I thought to myself, ‘This is what going to a university is all about.’”

He says Lewis’ weekly advice to his students was to make themselves more aware of the world around them, even if it was just to “walk to class differently.” Graham says he also took to heart another of Lewis’ sayings, “You are your own best classroom.”

RAY’S POPULARITY

In his 20 years as the owner of Ray’s Place, Charlie Thomas has seen customers come and go. But if they’re famous, he pays a little more attention to their comings and goings.

He still keeps a clipping on the wall that tells of a time in 1894, when Ray’s Place was still the Central Hotel, and a man named W.C. Fields visited. Fields stayed at the hotel after performing at the Kent Opera House. The show wasn’t a success, and Fields was left short on cash.

He reached a deal with the hotel owner to leave some valuables behind in his suitcases if the owner would pay for his return ticket to New York. Fields was to send enough money back to cover his ticket and to have his suitcases sent east.

The money never came, and when the suitcases were opened, the hotel owner found only some old handbills.

The famous kept coming after the Central Hotel became Ray’s Place in 1937. Hamilton
Above, Dan Lewinter strums a note on his guitar. He wound up with at least 100 unexpected guests who came to hear him and his roommates perform. Right, Anita Herington, executive director of the Alumni Association, remembers meeting her husband at Dix Stadium as a student in 1969. Right below, Charlie Thomas isn’t the just the owner of Ray’s Place, he is also the keeper of its history.

Jordan, chief of staff and assistant to former President Jimmy Carter, came by after giving a speech.

“I remember he went to the restroom several times,” Thomas says. “Back then, it wasn’t the greatest restroom — it was back where the kitchen is now. I thought it was great having Hamilton Jordan in our restroom, but it probably wasn’t the best one he’s been in.”

The late Lyle Alzado, a former Cleveland Brown, also dropped by during a time when the Browns practiced in Kent. Thomas remembers this particularly well because he had to ask Alzado to step off the bar.

“He was like four of me, but I went over and asked him to get down,” Thomas says. “He grinned at me and said they’d (his teammates) dared him to get up there.”

The most recent renowned visitor to Ray’s Place was Drew Carey, who also mentioned the bar in his Playboy interview published in March. This was the second time Ray’s Place has been mentioned in the magazine. The first was in 1997 when the bar was named one of the 100 best college bars in the nation.

Thomas says Carey stopped in during finals week and handed his credit card to that night’s manager at about 11 p.m., saying all the drinks from then until closing time were on him.

“He tipped the bartenders a good bit of change, too,” Thomas says. “He gave them a few hundred dollars if I remember correctly.”
MEMORIES OF MAY 4

Molly Merryman, now director of the Women's Resource Center, was 6 years old when the four students were shot at Kent State on May 4, 1970. This event still figures prominently in her memories of Kent State because it hit so close to home — literally as well as figuratively because Merryman grew up in Alliance.

"I remember being shocked and deeply affected by it," she says. "It impacted my childhood, knowing that our soldiers were killing our students."

Looking back, Merryman says she is surprised at how aware she was as a child. Even then, she was conscious of the anti-war movement, and she agreed with it.

"I remember watching Captain Kangaroo in the mornings, but before it came on, I would watch footage from the war on TV," she says. "You could watch someone step on a land mine. I remember it upset my mom that I was watching that... that someone could be watching and see their son on TV."

While Merryman hadn't yet made the connection that what she was seeing on television was really happening half a world away, May 4 soon became personal. A cousin of Merryman was attending Kent State at the time of the shootings.

"I remember being concerned about her, not knowing if she was OK or not," Merryman says.

Now, 29 years later, May 4 is once again touching a nerve with Merryman. The theme for this year's remembrance deals with women and activism, a connection Merryman says should have been made long ago.

"May 4 was a big point in my social activism and my cynicism," she says. "It taught me that America isn't always as great as everyone believes it to be. America has done some things terribly wrong."

HELL WEEK

Timothy Moore, assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, also remembers the first week of May. Before he grew his Afro hair style, Moore was a bald-headed freshman pledging Omega Psi Phi at Kent State.

"It was interesting because when the May 4 incident occurred, I was sequestered because I was going through what is commonly known as 'hell week' for my fraternity," Moore says.

His isolation from the rest of campus kept him from a great deal of trouble. He was only near the ROTC building briefly for his Life Drawing class on May 3.

"I was sequestered over in Munzenmayer Hall — over in 'Small World,' as we call it now — so we only saw the smoke in the air on May 3 when they set the ROTC building on fire," he says. "Then I heard that when the firefighters came to put the fire out, they [the students] chopped the hoses, and the building burned down. The next day, we heard that students had been shot, but we weren't anywhere near it."

Although the news was shocking, Moore says he was still expected to continue with the pledge rituals.

"During hell week, we became what was known then as 'Que Dogs.' Our heads were shaved bald, we wore dog collars and we were required to carry purple bricks everywhere, even to class... In public, we were chained together," Moore says. "When commanded to, we had to bark and growl at people."

But the National Guardsmen intervened, preventing the fraternity from its purple-brick-carrying ritual.

"The National Guard made us put them down because they didn't want anybody carrying bricks and having a potential weapon. We were pleased to put the bricks down," Moore laughs.

"We didn't want to carry them anyway."
Schwebel Garden Room
Restaurant

Menu

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

Daily Themed Lunch Buffet
A la carte menu also available.

Dinner
Join us for our Chef's selected menus. 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, Wed.-Sat. from 4 P.M.-9 P.M.

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