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From the Editor:

We suddenly seemed closer to our goal of describing Life At Kent State when Andy Netzel pitched his idea for a story and mentioned the p-word: parking. But this issue is more than the Spring 2001 “Parking’s a Bitch” Burr.

We have stories dealing with important issues such as the rapid growth of the number of women students (page 20), Another story examines the anxiety associated with graduating that throws students into the woes of a quarter-life crisis (page 8).

This issue also discusses topics that are not as mainstream. Mike Dussel shares his conflict between the family farm and college life (page 32), and Kim Stenger gives readers a look into finding independence at Kent State (page 38). Also, Harry Potter mesmerizes an English class (page 44), and some students find foreign language bliss with a class where they are required not to talk (page 2).

I would like to thank the staff for working long hours on this issue. I would also like to thank the readers, and I hope everyone finds something of interest in this magazine. Be sure to visit The CyBurr at www.burr.kent.edu for extra coverage.

– Lisa Aichlmayr
signing on to a new language

by Sarah Jenkins
photos by Bridget Comisso
It's 8:50 a.m., and a large, nondescript room on the first floor of White Hall is silent except for the soft mumbles of groggy students. Twenty-five students are bent over immense textbooks, trying to imitate the illustrations. One student fires rapid hand signals to another, who then nods and signs back her answer.

Shortly after this manual conversation, a man in his early 30s wearing a maroon necktie, khaki pants and an earring, strides into the room armed with a stack of papers and a smile. He hops onto a chair so the entire class can see his hand gestures. As soon as he stomps his feet, heads emerge from books. The full attention of the class is focused on him.

Elementary Sign Language II, taught entirely in American Sign Language by instructor Steve Vickery, is ready to begin. But Vickery, who is legally deaf, uses different teaching methods because no verbal communication is used. Students are only allowed to sign. In fact, Vickery won't even respond to a spoken question.

"Sometimes I have to think about how it is they are seeing the language and then go back and think about how I can teach, explain or model a word differently so they can understand the concept I'm teaching," he says.

Alisha Drake, a junior math education major, wasn't surprised about the format of the class. "My teacher in Sign Language I was deaf too, so I kind of expected it," she says.

More students are learning this complex language once used primarily by the deaf community — about 28 million people, a relatively small segment of the U.S. population. The reasons for the increase may lie both in the university's decision last fall to consider ASL a foreign language and the growing number of students pursuing degrees in deaf-related fields.

Rick Newton, chair of the modern and classical languages department, says the university's decision to implement ASL as a foreign language complied with Ohio laws to recognize ASL as a foreign language.

"Offering ASL as a foreign language is an activity that supports our mission to academic diversity," he says. "Since the College of Arts and Sciences oversees the foreign language requirements for students, we were able to adopt ASL as a foreign language."

Pamela Luft, associate professor of deaf education, says she also believes learning ASL can be beneficial to
Students going into social service fields where they might interact with the hearing impaired.

"It's important for them to develop a grasp of the language so they will have some communication skills and a background and an understanding of deaf people in the deaf community," she says.

Jonathon Trent, a freshman recreation management major, plans to use his ASL skills to enhance his career in recreational activities.

"I'm sure I'll end up running into deaf people at some point with my job," he says. "It also gives a sense of self-esteem knowing I have the ability to communicate with deaf people."

Newton says more than 300 students are enrolled in the seven sections of ASL offered this semester. Two hundred of them are majoring in fields other than education.

"We've seen tremendous growth in the number of students taking ASL," he says. "It's a language that cuts across many different fields of interest."

In fall 2000, Kent State offered eight sections of ASL. The classes were so popular the department had to establish a waiting list for spring along with more sections of ASL.

This year, all 15 sections offered through modern and classical languages and special education were filled.

"The dean had to tell freshman orientation instructors not to announce the ASL foreign language option because the classes were being flooded with freshmen," Luft says.

Eight of the 12 ASL instructors Kent State employs are deaf. Eleven of the 12 instructors are part-time faculty members. The department hopes to add classes, but the sudden surge of interest in ASL has resulted in a shortage of instructors.

Luft says a lack of qualified teachers has also caused problems filling teaching positions.

"We were really struggling because we had to find enough staff to teach all of the sections," she says. "The enormous response to ASL classes has strained our resources to some extent."

A master's degree is required to teach ASL at Kent State's main campus, and instructors must have at least a bachelor's degree to teach at the regional campuses.

"This policy severely limits who we can recruit," Luft says. "Our preference is to have deaf people who have experience in teaching sign language, but in many ways the deaf community is like other minority communities because they are very much underrepresented in higher education and degree programs."

Vickery is currently working toward his master's degree in liberal studies at Kent State after receiving a second bachelor's degree in history.
Jamila Sherife-Kekulah, a senior dance performance major, responds to a question by signing, "What?"

“I thought it would be a great experience for me, and the department thought I was a qualified candidate, so I was hired,” Vickery says.

Vickery earned his bachelor’s degree in engineering from Rochester Institute of Technology, where 1,100 out of the 12,000 students are hearing impaired.

According to Student Disabilities Services, 15 students at Kent State are hearing-impaired.

Even though most deaf people grow up using sign language exclusively, Luft says little emphasis has been put on the structure of the language.

“One of the issues is that deaf people have had little or no training in their language,” she says. “Until recently, ASL was not considered a language, and they can’t articulate the grammatical rules to the students.”

This obstacle is something Vickery says he tries to conquer in his class.

Vickery, who was born deaf, says 30 years of being hearing impaired has taught him the art of reading facial expressions as well as lips. One glance at a student’s face reveals if he or she comprehends a lesson.

“Students in an environment like this struggle and sometimes feel awkward having a deaf instructor,” he says. “If they don’t ask questions, I’ll ask them to ask questions. I also notice students will ask one another in class about what I said and things like that. I catch those things, and I ask them to direct those questions to me.”

Drake says learning sign language was more appealing than memorizing the verb tenses of a foreign language.

“I think it’s easier than trying to learn Spanish or French,” she says. “And since I’m an education major, who knows, I might have a deaf child in my class someday.”

One of the methods Vickery uses to better illustrate ASL is review sessions, having students sign out everyday words like “parking lot,” “Pepsi” and “cookie.”

When Vickery pulls out a stack of index cards, a collective groan ripples through the classroom because numbers are a new concept.

“Try this one,” Vickery signs to a
Vickery is open and responsive to all of his students' questions. The number — 123,456,789 — is barely contained on the card. He nods his head in encouragement to the woman, who looks terrified. It takes her awhile to sign the number, but her flawless execution brings cheers from the class.

"Good job," says a woman sitting next to her. Vickery smiles and gives her the thumbs-up sign, praising her for a job well done.

Vickery says he tries to view his teaching through the eyes of the students. "I don't think I'm really the type of teacher who shows something once and if a few pick it up, fine; but if the other students don't, too bad," he says. "I try to reteach concepts and thoughts until they understand it. As long as the students are willing to make the effort to understand the material, it works great for everyone."

Stephanie Rodrigues, a freshman deaf education major, says Vickery's class has reaffirmed her fascination with ASL and the deaf community, which started when she was in elementary school in Pennsylvania. "I became really good friends with some of the deaf kids in fifth grade," she says. "Some of our classes were integrated with deaf kids. I became really interested in sign language and deaf culture in general."

When she went to observe a deaf preschool class a couple years later, Rodrigues says she wanted to do this with her life.

"When I saw all those little kids signing to each other, I fell in love with the deaf community and deaf culture," she says.

Trent had his first encounter with sign language at a movie theater in Akron, where he worked during high school. The theater was showing a movie with subtitles, and more than 900 hearing-impaired people showed up.

"I was watching everyone signing back and forth, and I was amazed," he says. "That experience touched me so much that when I found out that Kent offered sign language classes, I was really excited."

Even though Trent is taking ASL to fulfill his foreign language requirement, he says he would have taken the class just for the learning experience.

"He (Vickery) does a really good job at motivating the students and encouraging participation," he says. "It's

Dear Students,

Congratulations as you complete this busy spring semester! Whether you continue your studies, hold a job or internship, or enjoy some R&R, I wish you a wonderful summer.

I extend special congratulations and best wishes to those of you who are about to graduate. Your Kent State education will allow you to “hit the ground running” as you pursue your career or advanced education.

Sincerely,

Carol A. Cartwright
President
cool that I know how to communicate in a way that most people don’t.”

Vickery didn’t learn sign language until he went to college. Until then, he had relied on his speech and lip reading skills to communicate with others.

He says the deaf community in college didn’t accept him until he learned sign language.

“I would see them signing fluently and communicating fluently,” he says. “They rejected me because all I would do was speak, using my limited speech abilities, so I didn’t really fit in.”

This lack of communication roused Vickery to learn sign language fast.

“I actually acquired the basis of the language in about a two-week period,” he says. “I then continued to learn and grow in that language when I was immersed at college.”

When Luft was a student teacher, she was also forced to learn sign language quickly.

“I tried to learn from a book because there were no classes offered at the time, since the kids in my class were signing really fast,” she says. “But I ended up being able to hold my own in class in a couple of weeks. It really was just sink or swim for me.”

Even though Luft has been signing for 25 years, she says she can still learn more. “As a hearing person, I hate to judge my own skills because it’s very hard for a hearing person to become fluent,” she says. “But I’m very pleased that the deaf community does feel that I’m fluent.”

Vickery says ASL is comparable to other languages. New slang or catch phrases are always being created in ASL, and members of the deaf community rely on each other for the latest knowledge and information.

“Every day we continue to learn something different and new,” he says. “Within ASL, there are many dialects, many regional influences, just like there are in spoken language.”

Drake says she believes knowing ASL will be an important skill for teachers in the future.

“Schools will need teachers who know sign language,” she says. “In integrated classrooms, I’ll have an advantage because I can communicate with the deaf kids.”

Rodrigues says knowing ASL gives her insight into the deaf community.

“They are a lot more open,” she says. “Deaf people use many different descriptions that hearing people wouldn’t use. Instead of saying, ‘Look at that guy with the red shirt over there,’ they would sign, ‘Look at that guy with the big nose.’”

As Vickery’s lecture draws to a close, students smile and wave goodbye to their teacher.

A young man approaches Vickery for clarification on the signs of various clothing items. He patiently demonstrates the words for the student, who nods after Vickery shows him the signing differences between short-sleeve and long-sleeve shirts.

“Thank you,” the student signs as he walks out of the classroom.

Vickery says he will continue to teach ASL as much as he can.

“It can be hard at times, but I love teaching,” he says. “This is not a lecture course. We are learning an actual language, and I need to make sure they understand the material and that they participate.

“It’s a two-way street in the classroom. That’s the philosophy I try to live by when teaching.”

---

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Danielle Bufalini graduated from Kent State in December, but she still spends her weekends at the Outback Steakhouse delivering platefuls of food to hungry customers who may not even tip her.

"It's not by choice. Everybody's like, 'Oh, you have a break, you're going to work for the rest of your life,'" she says over a glass of funny-tasting tea. She ordered iced tea, but the waitress forgot the ice. Bufalini still leaves a tip on the $2.38 tab.

"But I just kind of feel like I'm such a loser now," she says. "Like I don't do anything. I work at a restaurant. I'm furious because I have a college degree, and I'm working for $2 an hour."

Bufalini's dilemma is a nightmare for students on the cusp of graduation. Students worry about finding jobs in the field they've spent the last several years studying, not to mention leaving family, friends and significant others behind. Forget about a midlife crisis: Some students face a quarter-life crisis.

In a Kent State survey of its 1999 graduates, 89 percent got a job related to their field within the first year of graduation. Another 7 percent went on to continue their education.

More than likely, today's graduating students will face the conundrum of sorting out too many options, says Denzel Benson, professor of sociology. But that can be just as stressful as having no options at all.

What I'm seeing more now in students is not, 'What am I going to do?' but, 'What choice am I going to make?'" says Benson, who is a student adviser.

"Because there are so many opportunities, people have a lot of choice, and choice can be frustrating, even more so than only having a couple choices," he says.

He remembers when graduates took the first job offer because it was the only option they had. Today's students have it a little better, he says, but "if you've never experienced the situation of no choice, then this probably seems pretty freaky to you."

Bufalini, who received a bachelor's degree in advertising, sums up the situation well: "It just seems like I've been on a direct mission ever since I started to get through. As soon as you start you are working toward that goal, and I'm just kind of like, 'OK, I'm done. Now what?'"

But whatever the options before them, graduating students see a strange new door swing open only at the expense of others slamming shut. Walking through that door causes more than a little stress. And adding to that pressure is a preconceived

by Dave Schafer
photos by Shannon Szwarc

quarter-life

THE END OF COLLEGE CAN PRESSURE STUDENTS INTO SUDDENLY EVALUATING THEIR LIVES
This notion of life after a college degree is rooted in a socially constructed timeline of life’s milestones. The timeline dictates that after four years of college, graduates have until age 30 to find a permanent and profitable place in society, marry a beautiful wife or husband and have 2.5 children, a dog and a white picket fence.

Laina Alber, a junior philosophy and psychology major, knows about the timeline. Every once in awhile her mom will say to her, “You know, people start getting married when they’re 25,” Alber says.

“And I’m like, ‘Yeah, thanks for the reminder,’” Alber says. “I’ve always seen my life like that. I’ve always thought, ‘Yeah, I want to graduate from college,
Right: Tim Zgonc, a senior, is about to graduate, but his girlfriend Laina Alber still has another year left.

Opposite Page Top: Staff Psychologist Jennifer Zak Place encourages students to talk through their fears about graduating.

Opposite Page Below: Zgonc and Alber spend some time together while they are still both in college.

and I want to go and get my master's, and I want to get married when I'm 25, and I want to start having kids when I'm 29.' Stuff like that. I don't know. I've always seen things like that.

"I don't know if I should because that kind of puts pressure on me. I guess it happens when it happens."

The timeline is a notion graduates deal with, says Jennifer Zak Place, a staff psychologist with University Health Services.

It may have been true in the past, she says, but this generation will live longer and work in a better economy.

"I really do think it's outdated," she says.

Benson says the timeline could come from parents who didn't go to college. The ideas represented in the timeline — stability of life and income — are parents' reasons to encourage children to go to college.

"That timeline has never been an actual standard in reality. That's always been a cultural idea that people learn," Benson says. He adds a small percentage of students actually follow that model.

But the pressure is still there.

MARCH MADNESS

Typically, stressed-out seniors start pouring into Psychological Services in March when the realization of what they are about to embark on really hits them.

One woman illustrates the most common complaints by students, Zak Place says.

A woman came in hysterical, saying she had done everything people had told her to do: get good grades and a high GPA. But when she was about to graduate, she wasn't sure what she wanted to do. She had assumed that as long as she was a good student everything would fall into place.

But it doesn't just fall into place, Zak Place says.

Benson says students don't freak out as much now as they did when he first started advising a few years ago. He's not sure why, but he suspects it's because of the strong economy of the past several years that produces multiple job opportunities and because of the older age of many graduating students. Older students are already established, so they aren't experiencing all these life-changing transitions at once.

Zak Place lists factors contributing to senior stress: job or graduate school prospects, nostalgia, fear of the unknown, anticipation of adjusting to a new way of life and uncertainty about changes in relationships. The pressures come from different places, including society, parents or individuals.

"Even if you know what you want to do, it's a lot of work to get there," she says. Applications have to be filled out, resumes have to be written and interviews have to be sweated through.

Benson has found parents can freak out more than the students. In his experience, they are unsure what their son or daughter could do with a sociology degree.
He calmly tells the parents, statistically, degrees in the arts and sciences are better because they offer more flexibility and lead to higher pay. The stress is only temporary.

Robert Bacon will graduate in May with degrees in international relations and Spanish, and this semester he needs to prepare for life after graduation.

But those preparations are time-consuming, and as spring semester began, he had not mailed out his graduate school applications to Yale University, American University, Columbia University or Georgetown University. And he hadn’t taken the Law School Admission Test or the Graduate Record Examination.

But if he doesn’t get around to it, it’s OK, he says; he’ll just take a year off to travel. He’s also trying to get an internship overseas, he hopes paid. But if not, his parents are willing to foot the bill for a year, he says.

“My source of stress is the fact that I have a lot of choices,” Bacon says. “I’m not sure what I’m going to do.”

Thoughts of the near future are both positive and negative.

“I’m anxious to enter that next stage,” he says. “I’m excited about it, about my career, my future and what’s in store for me.”

But with his next breath, Bacon says, “I’m not pushing to go into adult life, though.”

That leap into adulthood after 16 odd years of school causes a lot of anxiety for students.

“They really say adolescence now goes until about the age of 23,” Zak Place says. “And I think that’s one transition a lot of people consciously haven’t made. They kind of feel like they are supposed to be adults now because they are over 21, so it’s embarrassing to go back home.

“But the reality is most students don’t make enough that they can go off on their own immediately after graduation.

So that’s one big stress people have,” she says.

But while Bacon has too many choices, Tim Zgonc, a pre-med and chemistry major, isn’t even sure what his choices are.

Zgonc says he is not a high-stress person. So he’s not worried that, as of March, he had had an interview with only one medical school, the University of Toledo.

“I don’t really have a plan if I don’t get into med school,” he says. “So that interview will be pretty important. So that is a source of stress.”

Zgonc admits he has alternative options ready. He can stay at Kent State for a master’s in chemistry, he might go into statistics, or he could try to get a job in the medical field.

If he doesn’t get in medical school, Zgonc will have “some serious thinking to do.” Either he will re-apply to med school, or he’ll just say it didn’t work out and go in a different direction.
“That would be a tough decision,” he says.
But while Zgone heads out to whatever the future holds, his girlfriend will stay behind for another year of undergraduate study. He deflects the question of whether that bothers him.
“I think it’s causing her a lot of stress,” he says.
He’s right.

SCHOOL’S MY SECURITY BLANKET
Angela Petrella admits she’s afraid of leaving school.
“Part of me is really scared to go out into the work force and just jump into something,” the English major says. “And school’s kind of a security blanket. But I think I’ll be ready at some point. I think. I’ll have to be.”
She points out for 20 years she depended on somebody, and the thought of suddenly being independent is traumatic.
“It’s sort of surreal,” she says.
“College has just gone by so fast, and the suddenness of finding a job — you just sort of put yourself outside of it, so you don’t have to be worried and have it consume you. Because it can so
easily. You can totally think about it and go crazy and start looking at the headhunter Web sites and go, ‘Oh my god, did I major in the right thing?’ and, ‘Am I going to make a lot of money?’ That sort of thing.”

And, she says, the hardest part will be finding a job.

“There’s no listing: ‘English students wanted,’” she says.

She’ll just have to see what she can find, probably in the teaching field. So she’s not thinking about it. She’s looking at the present, concentrating on her “intense” reading load and preparing for the GRE.

Petrella is a senior, but she won’t graduate until at least next spring because she needs to finish her liberal education requirements. After that, she thinks she’ll go to graduate school for creative writing or education, maybe somewhere in Boston, New York or here at Kent State.

Even though she tries not to think about it, she wonders, “Am I going to get a master’s degree that’s not worth the paper it’s printed on?”

**Forks in the Relationship Road**

Bufalini is waiting for a possible job offer in Cleveland with EMI Music, where she interned in December. But with the offer would come a choice.

“Would I move?” she asks. “Then I start thinking, ‘Would I be ready to leave my friends, leave my family, leave my boyfriend?’” They’ve been dating for four years and perhaps marriage is in the future.

She says she doesn’t know if she’ll be ready to leave, but she probably won’t have to decide now. She doesn’t think she’ll get the job. But the dilemma will probably come up again.

After putting so much effort into school and working toward a goal, she says she’s now reassessing her priorities.

“Hopefully he’ll just do what I want,” she says, referring to her older boyfriend.

Petrella is less concerned about moving away from her boyfriend of four years. The first couple years they dated, she lived in Ohio, and he lived in North Carolina.

Alber is already anticipating the relationship changes. Zgonc, Alber’s boyfriend of nearly a year, will graduate in May and leave her behind while she finishes her final year.

“Honestly, I’m kind of sad,” Alber says. “I’m excited that he gets to go away, and I’m very excited that he gets to have his dream to be a doctor, but it’s kind of hard for me to say goodbye.”

And she understands that Zgonc will have the added pressure of medical school if he gets accepted, which would put more stress on their relationship.

“But whatever happens, happens,” Alber says.
IMAGINE!

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She would have graduated in May if she hadn’t transferred from the College of Wooster and switched her major. But she’s glad she’s not graduating.

“I think I’m a very mature person, but I’m not ready for all the stress and pressure of starting my life,” Alber says. “I want to enjoy my time here, I’m never going to get it back.

“I’m really glad I’m going to be here another year. Hopefully by then I’ll be ready to go. Hopefully, I’d better,” she says.

But she’s already feeling the pressure of post-graduation life. Alber says it is depressing not knowing the future.

“It almost makes you not able to breathe because you don’t know what’s going to happen next,” she says. “I think about how stable this semester is, but when I think about after May, my entire life is going to be up in the air. And then after next May, who knows what’s going to happen? So it makes me want to scream and cry into a pillow.”

DEALING WITH THE STRESS

For Edward Bronson, the thought of life after college brings thoughts of welfare and Job Corps.

“I was wondering what I was going to do with a psychology degree,” he says. He doesn’t think he’ll get into graduate school.

But then he went to a “For Seniors Only” workshop sponsored by the Office of Campus Life. He was the only one there, so he had plenty of time to talk about his fears with a counselor.

“The interaction and getting to talk things out in a relaxed atmosphere really helped,” he says. His next plan is to hit campus job fairs and get interviews with various companies.

Talking is one of the tips Zak Place gives to anxious graduating seniors. She also recommends students step back, assess their situation and plan.

“Think the biggest thing is to calm down and become rational about it,” she says. “Because if you get swept away by emotion, that’s not effective, and it doesn’t help.”

Students need to realize it takes a long time to establish a life for themselves, Zak Place says. Most people will switch careers twice in their lives.

The Career Services Center can also help students, Zak Place says.

And the key to getting the most out of it is to start early in the academic career, says Ann Motayar, interim director of Career Services.
Students often wait until March to start coming into the Career Services Center. Many even wait until April, Motayar says.

“At that point in time, students see that they will be leaving,” she says, and they feel unprepared.

“Certainly it’s human nature to procrastinate,” she adds.

And many students feel embarrassed when they do finally come because they haven’t even begun looking for a job. But the sooner students visit, the sooner they are working toward finding a job.

“Even one visit is a step in the right direction,” Motayar says.

After students post their resumes and register with Career Services, the center will recommend people for jobs based on the student’s resume. The center sends out about 40,000 resumes a year.

“That’s one of the perks of registering with us is that we do some of the work for you,” Motayar says.

She also recommends students meet with their professors, who may have connections with possible employers.

But getting to Career Services will only help students find a job. It may alleviate some stress, but students are still going to have to deal with the other worries of post-graduation life. And how they deal with it is as individual as the reason for the stress.

When things get overwhelming for Alber, she likes to take a break and get away from her problems.

Bacon says he’s comforted by the thought that everyone is going through the same stress. He also feels better just knowing nearly every senior bitches about it.

As for Bufalini, she’ll feel better when the phone rings and an employer is on the other end.

Leaving college can be a sad, stressful experience for students. They’re leaving friends and the safety net of school where there’s always tomorrow to make up a bad grade. They leave that safety net to venture down a road they’ve spent their whole lives working toward. But it is also a road that will take them to unknown places.

“You’ve had a wonderful experience here,” Moyatar says. “But there are more wonderful experiences to be had.”
Surinder Bhardwaj remembers when he first saw the woman who would become his wife of 39 years. “All I had seen was a picture of hers,” says Bhardwaj, a professor in the geography department specializing in Indian studies.

Two professors who were friends of his family set them up — in a way. The friends talked to both families about compatibility issues, and after about a year of discussion, the decision to marry was made. It was a little like a blind date, except the couple never actually dated or even physically saw each other.

His wife, Vinay Bhardwaj, says she didn’t even see her husband’s photo.

“I wasn’t involved at all,” she says, adding she didn’t mind because she had confidence in her parents’ choice.

“Anyone could have come in and said he was my husband, and I would have believed them.”

That’s a far cry from the typical American ideal of boy meets girl, boy woos girl, then they fall in love and live happily ever after. For many Indians and Pakistanis, arranged marriages are often the cultural norm even though there are no statistics to show their prevalence.
Sreekala Bhagwat, a graduate student studying international marketing, says while she had a love marriage, arranged marriages are important to the majority of Indians.

"In our society, the trend of arranged marriage will never change for another 50 years," Bhagwat says. "Only in the urban areas because of their cosmopolitan nature are things changing but at a very negligible rate. Maybe 2 percent of Indians have love marriages today."

Bhardwaj says arranged marriages became widespread mostly because of their practical merits.

"Arranged marriages in India as well as in Pakistan, of course, have been going on for a long, long period of time, but it has been only one of the ways of marriages," he says. "The predominant one, of course, has been arranged marriages. The philosophy behind that was since marriages occurred at a relatively early age, the two persons might not even know what to do.

forced marriage. Instead, it means taking into account the opinions of the entire family before marriage.

"More important was the fact that marriages were always between families," he says. "Although two persons got married, it really meant that two families got together. The decision to get married was a much bigger one than just two individuals."

Bhardwaj says arranged marriages are often popular among these cultures because of their emphasis on family as opposed to the American ideal of rugged individualism.

"I remember one of the gentlemen asking me (for my opinion), and my reply basically was, 'You're wiser. You know better. If you know both the families, then you know whether we'll be able to get along well or not, and that's the most important thing in my life,'" Bhardwaj says. Hafzah Mueenuddin, a Pakistani Muslim in the six-year medical program, that's usually the way things turn out."

She says arrangement can be easier.

"Not having an arranged marriage just leaves you out there to pick your own person," she says. "To me, the benefits just have to be things like your parents approve of it, and their parents approve of it, and I guess the weeding out process is easier if you share it with somebody else."

Jeyavarna Karthikeyan, an Indian Hindu in the six-year medical program, says letting her parents decide will take some of the pressure off her.

"I think I will pretty much give it all to my parents," she says, laughing. "I told them, 'It's all your responsibility. If I don't like him, it's going to be your fault.'"

Because she intends to have an arranged marriage, she says she is not concerned with dating protocols.

"I'm all for arranged marriages because I think it just provides so much more security in life," Karthikeyan says.

In other words, elders were the ones who could make better decisions."

Fifty to 100 years ago, he explains, the age of marriage might have been in the prepubescent range in certain castes and areas. But that rarely happens today, he says. More likely, people may marry from age 15 and up, depending on their background and region.

But Bhardwaj cautioned immediately that arranged marriage does not mean agrees that compatibility with her family will be important when she chooses a spouse.

"That's a big part of whomever I'm going to meet and get married with," Mueenuddin says. "My parents have to agree with him for me to agree with him. That's just the way it is. It's not so much like I'm out to please my parents; it's just that I know in the long run that will be better for me because

"You don't have to be worrying about how you look every day. Americans are forced to look good because they never know when they're going to meet the right person. Our parents are the ones who are going to be looking for us, so it doesn't matter."

Vinay Bhardwaj says she has observed arranged marriages as well as love marriages break up.

"We can't tell our children to marry
Indians because the marriages are more stable," she says, adding divorces do happen under both systems, but exact figures are not available. "People don’t report it because of shame."

Surinder Bhardwaj says the method of arranging marriages can vary with culture, geographic location, time and circumstances of each family.

He says arranged marriages have followed two basic patterns in India. Village exogamy requires marriage between people of different villages, which is more common in northern India. These people will most likely not know each other before the wedding. Village endogamy calls for the marriage of individuals belonging to the same village, a practice more common in southern India.

In the United States arranged marriages are becoming less common, he says. Bhardwaj, who is also a Hindu clergyman, says he has performed about 20 weddings in the United States. He says the majority have been love marriages.

He also says arranged marriages have begun to diversify in nature, ranging from his own situation, in which friends introduced the families, to matrimonial advertisements placed in newspapers and over the Internet.

"These sorts of things were less prevalent in earlier time periods," he says. "This has really taken off in the last three or four years. There are a number of Web sites that you can reach through a site called Samachar. The so-called arranged marriages have used the new technology as much as any other institution has made use of the new technology."

The matrimonial ads in the newspaper India Abroad, for example, specify things such as age, religion, caste, complexion, profession or other factors important to the family.

"Punjabi Hindu parents invite correspondence for their beautiful daughter, 22/5/6," senior consultant with big accounting firm," reads one ad. "Seek smart, handsome professional boy. Write with photo and biodata."

"Parents of handsome, fair, clean-shaven Sikh son, Canadian born, 32/5/10," MD (specialist) in practice; seek very attractive, fair, slim, 5’4”+, professional Sikh/Hindu match, raised/educated in Canada/U.S.
she would like to marry but would expect what kind of man she would like to marry but would need more than a photo to make her decision.  

"I know I want somebody who has the same profession as I do or at least understands the demands that profession has on me," says Mueenuddin, who plans on entering pediatrics. "I know I'm pretty stubborn sometimes, and I want someone who will be right back in my face. I want someone who complements my personality. By complement, I mean somebody who gets along with me and who sees things from a different perspective but can relate to me."

She says she has begun talking to her parents about their expectations.  

"When I talk to them, I wonder what kind of guy they picture me having, and I think they have similar viewpoints on security in the marriage as well. And at the time of a little bit of infraction, then the reconciliation can be brought about by the same network."  

Shravan Agrawal, an integrated life science major who moved to the United States four years ago from Lucknow, India, says seeing American views of relationships has changed his mind about arranged marriages.  

"When I was in India, I had the thought of arranged marriage," he says. "But when I moved here, I decided I want to marry an Indian girl, but now I don't want to have an arranged marriage. If I don't find one, an arranged marriage could happen. I think I'm going to find the right girl hopefully someday."

Amy Kroska, assistant professor of sociology, says many Americans have a hard time accepting the concept of arranged marriages because they do not believe love can exist in them.  

Vinay Bhardwaj says her American friends sometimes ask about her affection for her husband.  

"If I did say, 'I love you,' he'd say, 'What's the matter?' He never says it to me, but I know he loves me. We don't have to say it repeated.  

"Our marriage starts with respect, then love grows."  

Karthikeyan says love can exist, and she describes her own parents' marriage as filled with love and friendship.  

"My mom told me this: The first day my parents met, which was after their marriage, she told me, 'We talked (through) the night, and I fell in love with your dad that day. And after that, I always grew to love him more.' So I got that picture, and that's the way I want my life to be," she says.  

Agrawal says while his parents are an example of a successful arranged marriage, he believes love eventually plateaus.  

"Since my parents didn't know each other, I don't think they had love to start with," he says. "It grew out later."

But Bhardwaj says regardless of the arguments, he is happy with how his marriage has turned out.
BethAnne Shaup was a little nervous when she walked into the first class for her major. "Is there going to be another female here?" Shaup remembers thinking. "Most of the time there’s usually one to three, but that’s it."

Shaup, a senior technology major, is in an unusual situation. There is no shortage of women anywhere else on campus. In fact, females now make up 61 percent of Kent State students, outnumbering men by about 5,000 students, according to statistics provided by Kent State’s Office of Institutional Research and Decision Support.

And, according to the U.S. Department of Education, women account for 56 percent of the undergraduate student population nationally in 1996.
Even though female students outnumber male, they are still searching for equal representation.

By Phil Novak

Photos by Bridget Commissio
But many students don’t seem to notice.

“I think it’s mostly male. In my big lecture classes, it seems like there is a lot more guys,” freshman exploratory major Amanda Klonowski says. “Maybe it’s because there’s more men in the freshman class?”

The freshman class is 61 percent female, too.

“I wasn’t aware there was such a difference between the number of guys and girls,” says Nancy Sutherland, a senior intervention specialist major in the College of Education. “The bars are like meat fests. These hordes of men just follow you. It’s not like you couldn’t go out and find somebody.”

So maybe the bars aren’t the best way to look at the difference. But Eugene Walters noticed it in his classes. The sophomore fashion merchandising and design major says men are a definite minority in the program.

“I’d say the female-to-male ratio is about 20-1,” he says. “I enjoy it. Those are good odds.”

Across the country, women have outnumbered men in higher education since 1979, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Now there are nearly 2 million more women than men in degree-granting institutions nationally.

But Sutherland doesn’t care about the shortage of men on campus.

“That’s not why I came to college,” Sutherland says. “I came here to get an education. I don’t think that’s the reason more women are going to college.”

Twenty-five years ago, Kent State had about 1,000 more men than women. No one is sure what happened to turn the tide.

President Carol Cartwright says women have been presented an opportunity they didn’t have in the past.

“As recently as when I was in college — and that is awhile ago now, but it is not ancient history — it was not at all considered to be the thing to do for women,” Cartwright says. “Most women will say that they kind of had to fight for the opportunity within their families to go to college. But there has been more deliberate encouragement for women in the past few decades.”

Paul Deutsch, director of admissions at Kent State, says more career opportunities are available for women.

“I think what happened is as career fields have opened up for women, which were traditionally male types of careers, more and more women are going to college,” Deutsch says.

“Advertising, journalism and business are fields that we’ve seen significant increases in the number of females,” he adds.

Advertising and journalism began attracting many more women in the mid-1970s.

“If you listen to any of the women who have been involved in journalism and mass communication fields for the last 30 years, back then it was unusual to find a woman in the newsroom,” says Anne Reid, an academic adviser and coordinator in the College of Fine and Professional Arts. “If there was, it was one. Editors would say, ‘No, we’re not hiring you because we already have a woman.’ I think people now are not aware of how enormously drastic the change is.”

How drastic is it? Last fall, twice as many women as men enrolled in the pre-journalism, news and advertising sequences. The College of Fine and Professional Arts, which includes journalism and architecture, had 277
Last fall, women outnumbered men by 2,027. Reid says she thought the architecture program had gained momentum among female students as well, but it doesn't appear to be as close. Since the architecture program absorbed the interior design program, the numbers do appear closer with 272 males to 151 females. But the architecture major alone has 271 males and 100 females.

The number of women has also increased in the College of Business Administration, a drastic change from a quarter century ago.

"I myself worked on an undergraduate business education in the '70s, and there were not many women in my class," says Elizabeth Sinclair-Colando, assistant dean in the College of Business Administration. "There were some, but still, women did not outnumber men. Now more women are interested in business, and in general, interest in business is increasing."

Twenty-five years ago, more than 2,000 men majored in business at Kent State compared to 500 women. Today, the business school has 1,800 men and more than 1,400 women.

According to a U.S. Department of Education report, "Trends in Educational Equity of Girls and Women," women earned only 9 percent of all the bachelor's degrees in business management and administrative services 30 years ago. By 1985, the percentage had increased to 45 percent, and in 1996, women earned more than 48 percent of all business bachelor's degrees.

"In the '70s, women started taking an interest in business careers," Sinclair-Colando says. "Then it was in the '80s that we really started to see a change, where women were just flocking to business."

Sinclair-Colando, who has been with the university for about 20 years, says she thinks the change in women's career choices is because the outlook of female students has changed.

"Attitudes of young women are becoming more like those of young men," she says. "Part of that may be due to the fact that my generation didn't compete in sports. We did all the..."
female things. I think young women
have learned to be more competitive,
and that’s important in the business
world.”

Female students appear to be joining
some of the programs that were
traditionally male-dominated. The only
school at Kent State that still has a large
majority of men is technology, with
402 men and only 69 women.

“There are maybe one or two in
a class,” says senior technology major
Anthony Ralph. “This one girl is really
advanced — way above the rest of
the guys, and she’s going to graduate
No. 1. It’s very rare, though, because
you never see any girls in class.”

Ralph says he thinks women may
have misconceptions about the college.
“I think a lot of women may feel
it only has to do with construction or
something like that because of lot of
the classes fit into that stuff,” he says.

“I think they may be intimidated,
but there’s no reason that any woman
couldn’t do it. Like that woman I was
talking about, she’s going to graduate
way over me. Some women may have
an interest in it, but they see how many
males are in the class, and they may feel
weird,” Ralph adds.

Shaup, whom Ralph is talking about,
says she thinks most women aren’t
interested in the kind of work
involved in technology, a field similar
to engineering.

“From my personal view, I don’t
feel that women really want to work
with their hands,” she says. “It’s more
labor-intensive, and it’s more hands-on.
I love it. It’s great, and the professors
are really nice.”

Shaup says most of the professors
are male, but only one of them acted as
though he thought women didn’t
belong in the program.

“He was kind of older, and he
was set in his ways, and he felt women
shouldn’t really be here,” she says.
“But other than that, all of the other
professors have been great.”

Why is there a higher percentage
of female students here at Kent
State than across the country?
“It may have something to do with
the specific fields that Kent is known
for,” Deutsch says.

He says Kent State has been known
for its journalism, education, nursing
and business programs. Nursing and
education have always been regarded as female programs, and the numbers show things haven’t changed. Last fall, 903 women were enrolled in nursing with only 63 men. In education, 2,805 women enrolled with only 836 men.

“Education and nursing have always been dominated by women, I think, because historically the jobs don’t pay as well as others have,” says Deborah Barber, academic program director of the Office of Administrative Services in the College of Education. “That’s not necessarily true anymore, but I think that stigma still exists.”

Barber adds a lot of men go into teaching to coach.

Sutherland, who plans to teach deaf students, says she does not see a lot of men in her classes.

“I have 22 students in my (deaf education) classes and only two are males,” she says. “One’s a grad student and the other is deaf himself. When you get into secondary education and middle education and the sciences, social studies and history, you get more males — not more than females but more than in my classes or in elementary education.”

Karey Verhovec, an elementary education major, says there are no men in her classes.

“There’s 25 girls and no guys,” she says. “In the one cohort before us there’s about seven guys, I think, but there’s still about 30 girls. I think there should be more guys because some of these kids need that. They need some male role models.”

Deutsch says he thinks Kent State’s male-to-female ratio would be different if there were some other programs.

“If we had a strong engineering program, perhaps the mix would be slightly different,” he says.

Maybe he’s right. Ohio State University, one of the most populous colleges in the country, is well-known for its strong engineering program, a field that is still considered to be male-dominated. Maybe that’s why the male-to-female ratio is closer to 50-50 with 26,890 men to 28,153 women.

But this still doesn’t explain some of the numbers nationally and at Kent State that show tremendous growth in female student population but not for male students.

Nationally, from 1988 to 1997, the male student population has increased by about 5.4 percent, but the female student population has increased by 13.6 percent. Also, the report showed in 1997, only about 64 percent of males who graduated from high school were enrolled in college the following fall, but more than 70 percent of females were enrolled.

“Men have frequently been drawn away from college for a variety of big reasons. They move into the military, and they move into industrial sectors because they can make really good money without a college education.”

if this will send young men back to college campuses.

“The ability to move into the high-tech world was drawing some of the young white men who disproportionately are spending their youth on computers,” Musil says. “But now that all the dot-com companies are nose diving, will we see the men (going to college) increasing? I don’t know, but it’s certainly a possibility.”

At the same time, women have had more incentive to go to college.

The salary gap closes slightly when looking at the median earnings with a bachelor’s degree. In the same age bracket, females still earn less — $25,558 to $32,875 — or 78 cents for every $1 a man makes. This number has increased from 57 cents in 1970.
Another study in the report shows females earn 84 cents for every dollar a man makes when comparing fields, but that study only looks at starting salaries.

"There are plenty of so-called labor jobs for women, and women are moving into what used to be male domains, like police officers or firemen, even construction work," says Kathe Davis, associate professor and director of women's studies. "I don't think there's any lack of those jobs for women. It's just that they're often low prestige, heavy labor and lower pay. They're often unrewarding jobs with not much chance of moving up."

Deutsch says the university is not trying anything special to attract more men.

"We're not trying to make our flyers look more masculine or anything like that," he says. "We certainly don't market to women or anything like that. We market to any student we think would have an interest and would be a good fit for Kent State. It's certainly not a conscious effort."

Cartwright says she heard the issue is a nationwide trend.

"There is some talk about whether there should be more deliberate strategies, but mostly I think it's about understanding the phenomenon," she says. "There's been a lot of push over the last few decades to get women interested in a college education, and I guess you have to ask the question, 'Did that focus inadvertently discourage men?'

Even though female students have outnumbered male students in higher education for more than 20 years, women are still underrepresented in faculty.

Nationally, there are 131,279 full-time male faculty members who are full professors and only 32,353 full-time female faculty members who are full professors, according to The Chronicle of Higher Education.

At Kent State, 186 male faculty are full-time professors, but only 35 females are in the same position. Nationally, that means 80 percent of professors are male and only 20 percent are female. And at Kent State, 84 percent of professors are male and only 16 percent are female.

The gap narrows as you go down in rank from associate professor to instructor, but that does not ease concerns that female faculty members are passed over for promotions.

The female population increase "is not represented in the faculty," Davis says. "In some departments it's better, like English, for example, where it's almost 50-50 now, but that's not true everywhere."

This fact has sparked controversy at Kent State. According to the Chronicle, in 1993, the American Association of University Professors filed a complaint with the Labor Department against Kent State on behalf of 124 women. The complaint said women were unfairly paid less and promoted less often. In November, the complaint was settled when 24 female professors, including Davis, were awarded a total of $219,000 from the university for delays in promotion. But the university said it settled only to avert the legal costs.

Cartwright says she thinks female professors will be moving into the full professor rank soon. But Cartwright herself represents an area where women are underrepresented. She says only 13 percent of university presidents are women.
“That’s the pipeline effect,” she says. “That’s a matter of having been engaged long enough to have moved into that top rank. We should see some very robust gains there because a lot of the new appointments that we made, coming off an early retirement plan for faculty, were females, and they’re progressing very well through the system.”

So is there still work to be done? Nationally, traditionally male programs, like technology and engineering, are still male-dominated, with men earning nearly 85 percent of engineering degrees. And traditional female fields, like nursing and education, are still female-dominated, with women earning 75 percent of education degrees.

But the changes are also dramatic. Six of the nine senators in fall 2001’s Undergraduate Student Senate are women, with one of the women serving as executive director.

In 1996, women earned more than half the degrees conferred in biological and life sciences — a 20 percentage point jump — and accounting — almost a 40 percentage point increase from 1975.

And the numbers keep rising.

Women also earned 55 percent of all bachelor’s degrees and accounted for more than 56 percent of students enrolled in graduate school.

And with all the women in college, maybe more change will come.

“We’re just beginning to catch up,” Davis says.
It starts during the plane ride. A storm of emotions begins to brew: fear, anxiety, intimidation and excitement. Thoughts fill their heads about everything they may encounter during their stay in another country.

Out of the 193 countries around the world, citizens of 81 different countries attend Kent State. Including its eight branches, 32,753 students are enrolled at Kent State. A total of 721 of these students come from other countries, not including 20 foreign exchange students who are in the United States temporarily. Most of the international students come from China, Japan and India.

They come to the United States for a variety of reasons. Some of them want exposure to different cultures, while others want a better education. Some of them move here with family, while others are participants in a foreign exchange program. Each international student has a different story to tell.
As the forces of Slobodan Milosevic increased a reign of terror in Kosovo, the United States and NATO launched missile strikes and bombing missions in Jelena Pavlovic’s hometown of Belgrade, Yugoslavia. In her Kent apartment, Pavlovic watched the bombings on television and feared for her family.

Pavlovic came to the United States when she was a senior in high school. She was a foreign exchange student at Lorain High School in Lorain.

“I wanted some exposure to different cultures,” she says. After graduating, she enrolled at Kent State and received a bachelor’s degree in psychology and is now pursuing a master’s degree in clinical psychology.

Despite her decision to stay in the United States, Pavlovic says she still has deep connections with her family back in Belgrade. During NATO’s bombing campaign, bombs exploded 150 feet from her house and left debris in her front yard. She had trouble sleeping and called home every day to make sure her family was still alive.

“It was hard for me to be here,” she says. “I feared for my family and friends.”

Pavlovic says she wanted to be home with her family both during the bombings and also last October when a furious Serbian revolution ended Milosevic’s 13 years of tyranny.

“I wish I had been home when Milosevic was overthrown by the people,” she says. “My family protested in the street that night.”

Pavlovic has been in the United States for seven years. Unfamiliar laws and holidays were some of the new cultural experiences she first encountered.

“We don’t have an age limit on drinking alcohol in Yugoslavia,” she says. “It surprises me when I hear college kids brag about consuming a lot of alcohol.”

Yugoslavia does not celebrate Valentine’s Day, Sweetest Day or Halloween.

“There are a lot of commercialized holidays in America,” she says.

But she says she liked Halloween.

“It was fun dressing up in costumes and walking downtown,” she says.
After she earns a master's degree, she plans to pursue a doctorate.

"I want to teach or practice clinical psychology, but I don't know what continent I will be on," she says.

SUNG BAE JEON

"It was hell," Sung Bae Jeon says, laughing, as she describes what it was like to attend high school in Seoul, South Korea. Jeon’s school day began at 7:30 a.m. and ended at 10 p.m. She attended school for 15 hours Monday through Friday, plus another eight hours on Saturday.

With the heavy workload and strict discipline from her teachers, college in America wouldn’t seem that difficult. But Jeon thinks differently.

"In Korean high schools, the teachers forced me to study," she says. "Now I don’t have anyone telling me to study, so it makes it more difficult.

Jeon, a graduate student, is studying geography at Kent State. She has a bachelor’s degree in geography from Kyung Hee University. Her father, a former visiting professor at Kent State, advised her to enroll to pursue a master’s degree.

Jeon has had to become accustomed to many aspects of American life. In Korea, it is basic etiquette to bow to the elderly, and it is unheard of to enter a house without removing your shoes. Physical contact in friendships is greater in Korea as well.

"In Korea, I can hold hands with one of my girlfriends," she says. "But in America, they would think I am a lesbian."

The most challenging part of living in America that Jeon has had to adjust to is the English language.

"I am the only Korean person in my classes, and my professors all speak English, so it is difficult to understand them," she says.

Jeon has no regrets about coming to the United States except that she has missed some important events in the lives of her family and friends.

"My sister had a baby while I was here," she says. "I wish I could have been there so I could have seen it."

ANAMARIA TEJADA

As she drives down state Route 59, Anamaria Tejada is amazed by the calm drivers.

"Traffic is less crazy in Kent," she says. "In Lima, the people are very aggressive drivers."

Tejada says since there are more
Janeth Carrillo Duarte

people on the roads in Lima, Peru, the traffic is more stressful, and drivers can be more hostile. She could be right since Lima has 7.5 million people compared to the 35,000 in Kent.

Tejada, 28, came to the United States from Peru in May 1996 after she got married. She obtained a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. She is pursuing a master’s degree in community counseling.

After five years in the United States, Tejada has discovered many cultural differences between Kent and Lima. She says it is customary to kiss on the cheek when you greet someone in Peru. There are few limitations on alcohol or smoking in public.

“People can smoke in college classrooms,” she says. “There are few restrictions as to where one can smoke.”

Even though she is fluent in English, Tejada has met other Spanish-speaking students by attending Tertulia meetings. Tertulia is the Spanish word for chatting. The meetings are held every week for Spanish-speaking students to meet for coffee and talk.

When meeting new people, Tejada has had more good experiences than bad. But she does recall one unpleasant encounter.

“One day, I was speaking Spanish to one of my friends, and someone approached me and said, ‘Do you realize that we speak English in America?’” she says.

Tejada did not let the rude remark bother her.

“I just took it as a stupid comment from a stupid person.”

“**In Korea, I can hold hands with one of my girlfriends. But in America they would think I am a lesbian.**”

JANETH CARRILLO DUARTE

She has passed many exams up to this point, but if Janeth Carrillo Duarte is going to pursue a master’s degree in international relations, she must pass one test first: the Test of English as a Foreign Language.

Duarte came to the United States through Kent State’s foreign exchange program. She is from Cuernavaca, Mexico, and has a bachelor’s degree in public relations from the Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Morelos.

International students at Kent State face new cultural norms and practices as well as leaving friends and family behind. These students share their stories about experiencing life at Kent State.

Duarte is taking classes in English as a second language to prepare her for the TOEFL, which is given to all foreign exchange students who are from non-English speaking countries. The TOEFL is administered to ensure that international students are proficient in speaking English.

“I have found many people to help me learn. I think I will pass it.”

Duarte says being a foreign exchange student is not easy because she misses her family.

“I call my family every weekend and send them e-mails,” she says.

It is difficult for Duarte to communicate because she does not know enough of the English language. But the language barrier has not stopped her from making new friends.

“Since I have been here, I have made friends from Chile, Columbia, Venezuela, America and even Korea and Japan,” she says.

She says she won’t let language hinder her.

“The English language is challenging, but it is not going to stop me from doing what I want to do,” she says.
sweet corn, pumpkins, hay, soybeans and wheat grow on the land Mike Dussel calls home. “I’ve grown up here. My dad’s grown up here. My family has been here awhile,” Mike says.

Mike sits in his family’s kitchen at a rectangular, oak table that dates back 150 years. Four generations of meals have been served at this table.

Mike and his younger brother will someday inherit the oak table and the family business.

But they have other plans. Mike, a sophomore business major, is the first male member of a family of farmers to attend college.

More than 100 years ago, farming was a major occupation in the United States. But now farmland is disappearing and so is a new generation of farmers.

Even though Mike does not want to discard the family’s occupation, he does want to explore his options.

“I started seriously working on the farm when I was 12 years old,” Mike says. “I can remember doing easier chores around the farm at age 6. Now that I’m in school, school comes first. I’ll help out when I can. In the summer, I’m back to 14-hour work days.”

THE FAMILY TRADE

Farming has been the Dussel family’s main source of income for 60 years. Mike’s great-grandfather bought the Brimfield farm in the late 1940s for $12,000 in cash.

Fourteen years ago, the Dussels decided to stop raising feeder cattle and stick to crop farming with the addition of one new crop: pumpkins. Today, pumpkins produce a substantial amount of the family income.

Mike’s father, Mike Dussel Sr., says more of their income comes from nontraditional farming.

“Halloween decorating is competitive with Christmas decorations,” Mike Sr. says. “There is a strong market.”

In October, muddy pumpkins pepper about 50 of their 385 acres. The farm is transformed into a Halloween wonderland. Rows of hand-picked pumpkins border the right side of the 19th century home. Halloween decorations
are hung on the barns. Every year, a straw replica of the fabled headless horseman straddles a straw horse holding a pumpkin head in his right hand. Customers and their children swarm to the farm to purchase a soon-to-be jack-o-lantern.

"Halloween is a big production around here," says Linda Dussel, Mike's mother. "Customers tell me they drive by throughout the year, and their children recognize the farm and say, 'Look, Mommy, it's the pumpkin farm.' Farming pumpkins has let us maintain our farm within the suburban area. We get customers from Cleveland. I would love to hang up an Ohio map and have customers put a pin up where they are from, just to see what kind of spread we get."

While Mike, his father, his brother Chris and employees are in the fields harvesting the pumpkins and Indian corn, his mother and grandmother run the stands.

"Pumpkins are the culmination of the summer," Mike Sr. says. "We plant the seeds in spring and harvest the pumpkins in early fall."

Mike says it takes a special skill to plant the pumpkin seeds. He pushes the seeds down a tube one by one while riding a pumpkin planter through a plowed field. The placement of the seeds is important to the crop's success. A machine-operated planter cannot determine the size of the seed, which is also vital to production.

"Drop. Drop. Drop. You hear this in your head," Mike says. "Every three seconds, you drop a new seed. We blend a lot of seeds, and this is really the only way to do it. It can get really boring, but it has to be done. If we couldn't sell pumpkins, hay and Indian corn, this farm would probably be a giant Kmart."

Linda says she likes knowing her family helped all those tiny seeds grow into plump pumpkins.

"That big production we put on at Halloween, it all came from a seed," she says with a smile. "When you watch something grow, it's like watching kids grow. You feel proud. It's got to be something you're born with, to love watching things grow."
FINANCING AN EDUCATION
Farm life has given Mike an unusual opportunity to pay for his education.
He literally raised the money.
At age 9, Mike joined 4-H, a community youth group, as a member of the Portage County Steakmakers Club. He raised steers to be sold at the Portage County Fair until he was a senior in high school. The steers sell for $2 a pound, and the average steer weighs 1,250 pounds.
He put the money he made from the steers away for college. Chris, a senior in high school, has done the same.
Mike says raising steers is hard work. Every day he would get up before school and care for three young steers. Day after day he would feed them and walk them on a leash. By the time they were old enough to be sold, he had put so much time into them he was glad to see them go.
“It wasn’t that easy to let them go at first,” Mike says. “When I was 9, there was a particular steer I loved, Red. His black hide was sun-bleached, so he looked red. I cried the day we led him on the truck.”
Now that he’s here, he says he is taking advantage of his time at college.
As a freshman, he tried to juggle his work on the farm with classes. When his grades suffered, his parents allowed him to devote his energy to school. He has since improved his grades and joined a fraternity, Delta Tau Delta.
Mike says he is good to have around the fraternity house.
“One of the first times I was hanging around the fraternity house, some guys were complaining about the steps off the back door being broken,” Mike says. “They were going to pay someone a lot of money to build new ones. I just told them to buy the wood. I ended up building the steps myself. They were shocked.”
His fraternity’s homecoming float won first place in 2000. Mike lent the two-story tractor and 30-foot trailer used to haul the float.
Next fall, Mike hopes to move off the farm and into the fraternity house.
“I just want to live on campus so I can encounter the total college experience,” he says.
Rolling out of bed at 8:50 a.m. for a 9:15 a.m. class isn’t so bad because Mike is used to getting up at dawn. He says he usually makes the commute just in time for class, thanks to the pay lots.
“It’s crazy,” Mike says. “Going to college has allowed me to sleep in for the first time.”
“I'M NOT A HICK”
He looks like an average college student. He’s dressed in a tight orange ribbed sweater. He’s also wearing cargo pants, which in the past two years have become part of the quintessential college guy uniform. His spiky hair is peach colored, evidence of a dye job gone awry. He is tall and lean. The skin
around his nails is stained black. He has been working.

"I'm not the typical farmer," Mike says, stretching and pulling the sleeves of his sweater over his hands. "I'm not a hick. I don't wear Wranglers or insulated flannel. I don't drive a big truck. I don't smell like manure. I'm not what you see on TV."

But there are not-so-obvious signs that he is a farmer. When he talks about his past pets, he mentions a duck, a potbelly pig that he got rid of because it smelled, 14 cats, many dogs, bunnies, a pygmy goat, a horse and a donkey named Katie. In the dead of winter, his skin still looks tan, as if the summer sun has permanently stained him from his long hours riding shirtless on a planter.

"When my girlfriend Erica first found out I was a farmer, she was worried I was a hick," Mike says. "But she got over it. We've been dating for two years."

Mike says this is a common reaction from people his age when he reveals his family's occupation.

"If I talk in class, and I mention something about farming, people stop what they are doing and look at me in a curious way," he says. "People tease and say, 'Oh, you're just a dumb farmer,' or a 'dumb hick.' I'm not dumb. I've learned a lot from farming. I've learned carpentry. I've learned chemistry from mixing chemicals and studying pH balances in the soil. I know a lot about conservation. And I have a strong work ethic."

Sue Ellen Stout, a senior Russian translation major, can relate to Mike's situation. She grew up on 180-acre crop farm in Utica, near Columbus. Her father grew up on the land he farms. Even though Stout does not plan to farm in the future, she still has respect for the occupation.

"Without farmers, we wouldn't eat," she says. "When she first arrived at Kent State, she also experienced the ignorance of others."

"People have preconceived notions about farmers," Stout says. "At first I was embarrassed to say I was from a farm, so I'd say I was from Columbus."

Stout's fears were reinforced in classes when students assumed all farmers are poor and stupid.

"I finally realized that everyone comes from a different background," Stout says. "You can like me for who I am or we don't have to be friends."

When Mike brings his friends from college home, he says they are in awe.

"I have pride in what my family does," Mike says. "All my best memories have to do with farming. It's what I know."

In high school, Mike says he used to throw parties in the middle of the cornfield. A bonfire would blaze into the summer sky, and all his friends would listen to loud music, laugh and roast marshmallows.

"The first one was called Cornstalk '98," Mike says. "I'm hoping to have one this summer. I haven't had one since high school. Cornstalk 2001 would be great."

WHERE HAVE ALL THE FARMERS GONE?
Carl Shallenberger, part-time instructor at Kent State, knows the Dussel family. Shallenberger's son is a friend of Mike Sr., and his grandson works on the Dussel farm in the summer.

Shallenberger grew up on a farm in Chesterland. He graduated in 1956 from Iowa State with a bachelor of science in dairy husbandry. After serving in the military, Shallenberger bought a farm in Garretsville in 1959. He spent the next five years dairy farming while his wife was a teacher.
He would milk cows at both 5:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., milking 40 head of cows. He also would plant and harvest crops for cattle feed.

"I can’t remember a day where I wasn’t tired," Shallenberger says. "I remember falling asleep leaning up against a cow."

Eventually, Shallenberger left dairy farming. He says he couldn’t provide for his family the way he had wanted to and missed interacting with people.

“All 60 of my cows had names, and I would talk to them every day,” Shallenberger says.

“I loved farming,” he says proudly. "There is a great sense of accomplishment in farming. When the cows would go to their right stanchions in the morning to be milked, baling the last bale of hay before it rained — that was a good feeling."

Today, Shallenberger sells life insurance at Shallenberger & Associates in Kent and teaches life insurance and personal financial planning at Kent State.

More and more college-aged farmers are leaving farms in Northeast Ohio to pursue other careers.

Shallenberger says they are realizing there is more money to be made for a lot less work.

“Today there are a lot more career opportunities out there than ever before,” Shallenberger says.

Shallenberger says not only are farmers leaving the occupation, but farmland is also disappearing because of suburban sprawl.

“The size is cutting down to nothing,” he says, “Five acres is a farm.”

Shallenberger accredits the Dusse’s success to pumpkins.

“You can’t make a profit raising and harvesting crops, which is why the Dusse farming pumpkins, a niche crop,” he says.

Kevin O’Reilly, Ohio State University Portage County extension agent of agriculture and natural resources, says farming, like any other business, needs to be able to grow to ensure survival.

“When this happens, farms get larger,” O’Reilly says. “Since farmers are dependent on land, and there is only a limited amount of it available, farms grow by taking over other farms.

“This usually happens when a farmer retires or quits and another..."
farmer takes over that land. This dynamic of change results in fewer farmers. In this situation, the farmers who are the best businessmen will prosper and grow, and the others will not.”

O’Reilly says it is hard to imagine why a farmer wouldn’t want a college education to survive in the competitive business world. He says farmers have been graduating from agricultural colleges since the 1860s.

“Farmers are not only competing with other farmers but also against the growth of the city around them,” O’Reilly says. “Farming is a high-labor, high-capital business with a small profit margin.”

RISKY BUSINESS

Linda hopes someday Mike or his brother will want to return to farming once they finish college and pursue their own careers for awhile.

“There’s always that hope that 20 or 30 years down the road they’ll come back,” she says. “We plan on doing this for the next 30 years, and with farming, you never really retire.”

This seems apparent in a household shared with Mike’s paternal grandparents, who are still active on the farm.

Mike and Chris are faced with hard decisions about who will take over.

“Most businesses, not just farming, change after three or four generations of ownership,” Linda says.

Even though Mike says he’s not tired of farming, he wants to experience other things.

“I think I could some day apply a business degree to farming,” Mike says. “In the future I see myself returning to farming part time.”

Mike says he sees it more as his responsibility because Chris is adamant about becoming a doctor.

Mike Sr. says he thinks farming may be unappealing to a younger generation because it is a risky business.

“The total economy is changing,” Mike Sr. says. “Farming is a lot different than it was 10 years ago. Economics point toward less risky ways of making a living. Farming is very high-risk. We plop down a big chunk of money each spring and hope it grows.”

O’Reilly says farm kids don’t go back to farming for the same reasons the children of the local hardware store don’t take over the family business.

“The business world is forcing them out,” O’Reilly says. “Wal-Mart is taking the place of the local hardware store, and a bigger farm is taking the place of the smaller one. There are fewer opportunities to compete in this type of world. There will always be farmers, just less of them. Just like there will always be hardware stores, just less of them.”

And Mother Nature can make or break you in the farm business, Mike Sr. says.

“This job is tied to the weather, which is out of our control,” he says.

“Most farms are diversified, so if one enterprise doesn’t do as well, you can make up for it someplace else,” Linda says.

Sometimes farmers have to come up with other methods of income by starting other businesses, Mike Sr. says. The Dussels run a fork lift repair business in the winter and are considering opening an ice cream stand next summer.

Mike Sr. says it is disappointing to know his sons might not farm the land they grew up on. For him, there was never an option. He wanted to farm. But on the other hand, he says he is happy for them and thinks it is “good they are working toward a goal.”

Whatever Mike or his brother decide to do, Linda and Mike Sr. don’t plan on going anywhere and want to keep the farm in the family. Because it is paid off, this is easier to do.

“We are more fortunate than a lot of other farmers,” Linda says.
against all odds
She was born with congenital sensory neuropathy, a rare neurological disorder that left her with an impaired sensory nervous system. But Kim Stenger, a senior computer information systems major, is embracing independence at Kent State.

"I can do anything anyone else can do. I just have to do things a little bit differently," Stenger says. The disorder caused her to have no sense of pain, temperature or touch.

Stenger originally attended Immaculata College, a private Catholic college in eastern Pennsylvania. Because of the size of the school, it was unable to fully attend to Stenger’s needs as a disabled student.

"They tried," Stenger says. "They did the best they could. They don’t receive state money because they are a private school. Size was also a factor. There was not a large enough population of students who needed help; therefore, there was not enough students for an attendant care program."

Stenger’s family moved to Ohio two years into her education at Immaculata College. She chose to transfer to Kent State because of the services it offered.

"If I’m going to make such a change in my life, I might as well go
the whole way and get exposed to opportunity,” she says. “I wanted the opportunity to be exposed to different types of people and learn how to take care of myself and not depend on someone else as much.”

Traci Wright, a disabilities specialist with Student Disability Services, says the accessibility of Kent State depends on the perspective.

“When asking a student whether this school is equipped or asking someone like myself who does not have a handicap, you may have two different opinions. But we feel Kent is fairly equipped for these students,” Wright says.

On campus, there are seven accessible resident halls for students with disabilities. Most of the academic buildings are equipped with elevators and push pads to open exterior doors with the exception of Franklin Hall, which has not been renovated yet.

Every building must comply with Americans with Disabilities regulations. If a building does not comply, it must be renovated. This is the case with Engleman Hall, which was renovated last year.
Stenger plays an active role in Ability Unlimited, a student organization that deals with disability issues and rights.

"Just the other day we brought in a financial planner who specializes in persons with disabilities," Stenger says.

Ability Unlimited also organizes academic as well as social events, such as wheelchair football, basketball and a night at the movies.

To add to her active role on and off campus, Stenger is a part of the Phi Sigma Pi honors fraternity, in which she participates in scholarship, leadership and fellowship activities.

“Ability Unlimited allows me to meet other disabled students, but the fraternity allows me to meet all kinds of people on campus that I wouldn’t have met otherwise,” she says.
Top: Kent State provides transportation for students with disabilities, which can be helpful during the winter. But the bus is not always necessary.

Right: Stenger transferred to Kent State from a Catholic college in Pennsylvania for more accessibility.

Center: Stenger pauses for a moment of rest during a wheelchair football game.

Opposite Page: Outside of class, Stenger spends a lot of time with the friends she has met since transferring to Kent State.
At 10:45 a.m., the magic in Vera Camden’s classroom begins. Talk of potions, witches and wizards consumes the class discussions as the students talk about their homework.

“So, what is the boggart? Do you think it draws comparison to the boogeyman?” Camden asks. “Why do you think Sirius can be in both the Muggle world and the magic world?”

Muggles? Boggarts? To listen to this discussion, you might think this is a foreign language class instead of a literature course. But these words are part of a different language of sorts, the nimble-tongued intelligence of Potter-speak.

The Harry Potter books have become popular children’s literature worldwide. Published in seven languages, these stories about the young wizard have entranced children as well as this class and its teacher.

But these students aren’t kids, and Camden is not an elementary school teacher. The class is Literature for Young Adults at Kent State. Some of the students are even older than Camden. They study the relatively simple story of 11-year-old Harry, an orphan raised by hateful relatives. On his birthday, Harry receives an invitation from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, where he discovers the truth about his magical parents and himself.

People of all ages are getting hooked on Harry. The literary elite may think these novels and their author, J.K. Rowling, will fade into obscurity, but the readers tell a different story.

Once upon a time...
The Harry Potter novels were born in England. According to Publishers Weekly, native J.K. Rowling was a struggling author in 1990 when she...
Harry Potter goes to college

J.K. Rowling’s popular character casts a spell on Kent State students

by Mandy Jenkins
photos by Allison Walz
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got the idea for Harry Potter. By 1994,
she was working on her first novel with
a clear vision, but she was confronted
with poverty. A single mother, she lived
on public assistance as she worked to
finish and sell her novel.

Three book publishers turned
Rowling down, saying her book was
too long for children. The fourth,
Bloomsbury Books, helped her cash
in on her creation. The American rights
to the first book sold for $105,000
to Scholastic Books, which the British
press considered the highest sum ever
paid for a children's novel.

_Harry Potter and the Philosopher's
Stone_, which the first novel was titled
in England, was published in 1997.
It became popular with children and
adults alike, with bookstores selling
out. U.S. readers ordered the books
from British distributors through
Amazon.com. Eventually, Scholastic
published the book, now titled _Harry
Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone_, in the
United States in 1998.

Rowling's first book garnered more
than just sales. The book also won
numerous awards for children's literature,
including a runner-up position for the
1998 Carnegie Medal for young adult
fiction, the 1997 National Book Award
(UK), among other awards. The books
have also won the Gold Medal Smarties
Prize (UK), a book award chosen by
young readers, for three years in a row.

Rowling has seven books planned
for the series, but only four have been
written and published so far.

_Harry Potter and the Chamber of
Secrets_, _The Prisoner of Azkaban_ and
_The Goblet of Fire_ are the follow-ups
to _The Sorcerer's Stone_.

THERE WAS A BOY NAMED HARRY..

The first Harry Potter book spent more
than six months on _The New York
Times_ bestseller list. When _The Prisoner
of Azkaban_ came out in 1999 in the
United States, the first two novels held
the first and third slots on _The New
York Times_ bestseller list.

This demand for children's
literature was unprecedented, so the
threat to the adult bestseller list was
unheard of — until Harry Potter.
Eventually, the publishers asked _The
New York Times_ bestseller list to
exclude children's literature and make it
a separate list. At Christmas 2000,
Harry resided on the children's list in
the top 20 titles.

When _The Goblet of Fire_ came out
in the United States in July 2000,
books were struggling to keep up with demand. Heartland Books in downtown Kent tried to be prepared for the anticipated fourth novel.

"We had trouble keeping them in stock, especially Book 3," says owner and manager Fred Skok. "We thought we were ready on the first day the fourth book went on sale. We thought we had enough."

As it turns out, Skok's store, like many others across the nation, sold out quickly because of preorders.

"We had a great many copies on reserve. We didn't end up having enough for the shoppers who came in that first day," he says.

Many eager Potter fans were lined up in front of stores for the midnight release of the fourth book. Stores such as Borders and Barnes & Noble had special events for these early sales. Heartland did not have this promotion, but it didn't stop customers from coming in the middle of the night.

"I got calls to see if we were going to be selling at midnight, but we didn't have plans to," Skok says. "There were actually people here waiting outside at midnight that night. It was pretty exciting."

Tom Nix, a sophomore information design major, was one of those customers who went to Borders bookstore in his native Cincinnati at midnight for the 734-page book.

"I had read the first three, and I wanted the next one as soon as possible," he says. "So I was there that first night. I read it in a day. I couldn't put it down until I was finished."

Months after the release of the latest book, the series is still selling strong, but readers are waiting for the rest of the books.

"The sales have kind of trailed off a bit," Skok says. "Most fans have already bought and read the first four, and now they are just waiting for the fifth."

Local bookstores are not the only ones selling out of Harry. Colleges are embracing Harry as well. According to The Chronicle of Higher Education, in fall 2000, all four Harry Potter books were in the top five best sellers, with Goblet of Fire in first place.

The books remain popular in 2001. In the March edition of the Chronicle, Sorcerer's Stone is third on the college bestseller list with its follow-up, Chamber of Secrets, fourth on the list.

Here at Kent State, it is no different.
THE PLACE IS RAY'S
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Since 1937
Tom Parsons, general books supervisor at the University Bookstore, says he sold out of just as many Potter books as other retailers.

"It sold much better than other trade books even before it hit the bestseller list," he says. "At one point, when it was put out as a textbook, so many people picked it up that I ended up selling books from my section."

Parsons says even though the sales have trailed off, he figures they will pick up not only when Goblet of Fire goes paperback but also when the next book comes out. But Parsons says he wonders how long the books will be popular.

"Young adult books have a tendency to be hot for awhile, like the Goosebumps books were. They just flew out of here," he says. "Then they made the books into a TV series, and they weren't so popular anymore."

With the upcoming Potter movie in November 2001, Parsons wonders if it may be the end of Potter popularity.

"A movie can be a kiss of death for a series like that," he says. "It will be interesting to see how long this lasts."

AND EVERYONE LOVED HIM...

Skok says not all Potter fans are kids.

"Sure, this book has gotten a lot of kids into reading but adults as well," he says. "We have quite a few adults in here, too, some with kids and some without."

Marya Bednerik, a theater professor, is one of these adult fans.

"I had heard so much about these books, and I decided to check them out for myself," she says. "I was a bit skeptical because they were so popular, but I was impressed. I have read the first book, and I loved it.

"I really enjoyed the extremely talented writing and the depth of the story. This is great literature, and I want to read more of it," she says.

Nix was encouraged by his mother to read the first three novels in the series.

"I told her, 'No way. These are for 8-year-olds,'" he says. "But I read it. I was surprised how much I was sucked in. I finished it in four hours without stopping. Now my mom and I both like them."

This universal appeal made Camden want to use the novels in her class.

"These novels are so artistically rich in their nature," she says. "This is literature that survives on a chord it strikes within readers. It feeds their fantasies."

Potter books appeal to children's fantasies and the dreams of grown-up children as well. The idea of being a skinny little kid with glasses and messy hair is not that foreign to anyone. Harry doesn't fit in his family's world but feels he belongs some place else, Camden says.

"Every child, and the child within adults, has felt left out in life," she says. "They have felt left out in their families, as if they don't belong and that they belong to another, better family elsewhere."

Camden explains this notion of a "family romance," as Sigmund Freud called it, as the belief that an individual is a part of another, better life. Camden says she believes the fantasy of belonging to something more special than reality — a magical place where a child can be a hero — intrigues readers.

Nix says even though he is a huge Potter fan, he isn't sure why he enjoys the books so much.

"These books have a really great story, and they are so simple to read, but there has to be something more," he says. "I am intrigued at the possibility of having a school like his, one I could have gone to instead of junior high. All of the details makes it so easy to believe in."

What makes these novels different from other children's novels, Camden says, is that the characters grow and develop in each book.

"Look at Arthur, a popular children's book character," she says. "He has always stayed the same age. With Harry, he is another year older and wiser with each book. To children, this seems as if they can watch him grow. To adults, it feels more realistic to see this boy develop and become educated because they were there."

Lauri Neuding, a graduate student of visual communication design who also works at Oregon Trails children's books in Stow, understands the mass appeal of the novels. Even though she is older than her classmates, she still enjoys the books.

Camden enjoys reading the series of Harry Potter books because of their metaphorical, spiritual and creative writing. These characteristics compelled her to introduce the books to her class.
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“What Rowling says in these books with the stories and in the characters, she resonates with so many people,” she says. “I like the books more and more as the characters grow and develop.”

Having three sons and working at a children’s bookstore gave Neuding some insight into the novel’s audience.

“I read these books when they came out three years ago,” she says. “Children like these books because of the richness of the stories. Young adults, about the ages of the other students, like these books because they never had stories like this in their childhood.”

Neuding remembers an older couple shopping in Oregon Trails for their 90-year-old aunt.

“They had bought her the first two novels, and she loved them,” she says. “She had asked for the next two.

“I mean, a 90-year-old woman is just as interested as children and other adults. I am fascinated by that universality.”

SINCE HE IS PART OF A TRADITION...
There is more to these works of fantasy than just wizarding, spells and magic wands. Camden says the allusions to classic literary works are not only what brings in more well-read adult readers, but also what makes the novels good enough to stand the test of time.

“First of all, no matter what anyone says, the witchcraft in these novels is just a metaphor,” Camden says. “In truth, these books are very spiritual, much like other Christian writers such as C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. She successfully invokes a better world.”

Rowling’s works have some deeper meanings that children may not catch. For instance, the non-magic world, most particularly Harry’s evil relatives, is technology-driven and overly materialistic.

“She puts into Dudley (Harry’s cousin) all of the things that may not be good about society — the excess of being technology-driven,” she says.

“Harry describes this world as gray. But at Hogwarts there is no technology, but everything is so much more colorful.”

For these reasons, Camden says Rowling is a marvelous writer.

“She includes elements from all classics of children’s literature, such as Cinderella, Snow White and Alice in Wonderland, she says. “And it is not even just kids’ books. There are many great adult works of literature worked in, too.”

Camden says the story of Harry’s rise from his rough home life is much
like Dickens’ David Copperfield. It also alludes to works from Homer’s Odyssey, to Star Trek to mythology.

One example Camden brings up in class is Argus Filch, the caretaker of Hogwarts who is constantly looking out for mischief. In classic Greek mythology, Argus is a watchman with 100 eyes all over his body. Children are not meant to grasp these subtle hints, but they are included as treats for adult readers.

Camden says in invoking these works of great literature and culture, Rowling will help her books last beyond the fad state.

“I believe that Rowling will endure,” she says. “She has very deliberately placed herself in a long line of wonderful writers with her references.”

AND HE STILL ENTERTAINS
Camden’s class is reading all four Harry Potter novels, and, so far, it has been going well, she says.

“About half of the class had never read the books and a few were dyed-in-the-wool Potterites already,” she says with a laugh. “No one has expressed any dislike so far. I had a few skeptics in class. I myself was skeptical of the book’s popularity because my interest was in 17th century literature. But we have all been turned.”

Paul Meyer was one of those skeptics. Another adult student returning for his master’s in education, he took the class as a requirement for his English degree.

“I had heard so much about the books from my children, and I thought it was a fad,” he says. “Now after reading them, I agree with Vera Camden in that Rowling will become a literary mainstay.”

Camden says the most important part of the Harry Potter legacy is that children and adults alike are sharing in important lessons together.

“Harry has this power in every novel that keeps him alive,” she explains. “His special gift is the fact that he is loved by others. That is something everyone should understand.”

Visit The CyBurr
at www.burr.kent.edu for a story about the infatuation college students have with reality shows.
Running late, there was no time for her to walk all the way across campus. She needed to drive. After she found her way through the winding roads, she finally made it to her building. It didn’t take long. And then she pulled into the parking lot.

It looked like it was full, but she was sure there had to be at least one spot. She circled the lot, following innocent students like a shark hunting for its prey. Every student passing a car presented a glimmer of hope. Time was running out. She couldn’t be late. On the horizon she could see a glowing yellow parking meter. She’d be only a half hour; maybe nobody would notice her car in front of the 15-minute meter, so she popped a quarter in.

Returning, she saw the mark of Parking Services: a goldenrod ticket crammed under the windshield wiper. They had caught her.

Not wanting to face a late fee, she scratched out a $10 check and slid the envelope in the red fine box.

Later, in the Parking Services office, the envelope was opened.

“Carol Cartwright? Isn’t she the president of the university?” the staff member asked. “What am I supposed to do with this?”

The supervisor looked over. “Well, treat it just like any other fine.”

Parking is not just a problem for Kent State students. In fact, most colleges and universities in Ohio have parking problems. The only difference between them is what sacrifices are made and for what cost.

A KENT STATE PROBLEM
A delicate balance has to be struck between how many parking spots are available, where they are and how much students pay for them, Parking Services Director Randy Ristow says.

But that balance hasn’t been found, according to many Kent State students.

“Parking sucks,” says Lindsay Gebhart, a freshman pre-fashion major.

“There should be some way where we can park somewhere, anywhere, relatively close to anything.”

Ristow admits parking isn’t perfect but also says it’s not that bad.

“There are some problems,” he says. “But we’re in a lot better spot than we were 10, 15 years ago.”

Ristow says Parking Services constantly reevaluates where parking is needed. In the 16 years Ristow has been in charge of parking, there’s been a demographic change.

“About 50 percent of residence hall students have a car on campus now,” he says. “Ten years ago it was 45 percent, and I don’t have the records before that. More people are driving cars to campus.”

by Andy Netzel
photos by Shannon Szwarc

parking’s a bitch

PARKING PLAGUES MOST UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN OHIO WITH NO CURE IN SIGHT
Thirty years ago when much of the campus was pieced together, no one thought cars would overrun campus, President Carol Cartwright says.

“When our residence halls were built, it was unusual for students to have their own car,” she says. “Who could have imagined that income levels would permit more than one car in a family? It was unheard of to have a car in high school. Now it’s expected.”

Terry Webb, Residence Services director and a member of the parking commission, says the setup of the campus is also part of the problem.

Looking at a campus map, he says if he could rearrange the campus, it would look nothing like it does now.

“Unfortunately, you can’t pick up buildings and move them around,” he says as he slides his fingers across the map, as if pushing Tri-Towers off to the side. Laughing, he says, “They’re kind of planted firmly in the ground.”

Even if the buildings were rearranged, other priorities would have to be considered, Cartwright says.

“We have a commitment to preserve our green space,” she says. “We have a beautiful campus, and we don’t want to stick a parking lot in the middle of a nice area.”

But some students say while green space is nice, they’d be happy to lose a little if it meant they could park in convenient spots.

“Kill the trees. Kill the green. Give us parking!” Gebhart says with her voice rising. Then she smiles and says she just wants a place to park her car.

John Sojourner, a sophomore electronic media production major, says the university may have its priorities out of whack.

“I think they need to worry about students more,” he says. “I’ve been late to a lot of classes. I think students should be allowed to park wherever they want. I’m here for my classes.”

But everyone has needs. Parking is not just a Kent State problem.

A UNIVERSITY PROBLEM

No major university in Ohio can claim it has no headaches from parking. It’s not whether it is a problem, it’s how each university decides to handle it.

At Kent State, permits are cheap, but the spots are inconvenient. At the University of Akron, parking costs more but is more convenient with parking decks around campus.

Students at Ohio State University have options. They can either shell out
the bucks for a good spot or pay a nominal fee for a stadium-like spot.

At the University of Cincinnati, parking is very close to the buildings, but it comes with severe sticker shock.

No matter where you go, students are upset about parking.

Akron’s Parking Director Jim Stafford says parking is an unsolvable problem with universities’ resources. He says students should be the top priority before raising permit prices.

Akron has six parking decks scattered around the edge of campus plus another under construction and two more in the next three to four years. Even though permits are $80 a semester, that doesn’t ensure a parking spot.

“It’s a hunting license,” Stafford says. “Right now there’s a lot of turmoil and a lot of inconvenience, but I can guarantee there is some place to park.”

While Akron’s parking decks are close to campus, that’s not the case at OSU.

“Oh, it’s god awful,” OSU junior Dorian Ham says. “You have to pay a lot for a mediocre spot or pay a small amount and have to walk across Columbus.”

OSU has nine parking decks in addition to the paved lots speckled across campus — some as far as 45 minutes from the dorms, OSU junior Erin Roberson says.

“That was 45 minutes for me, though, and I walk pretty quick,” she says.

Roberson says the problem could be solved if buses visited that lot more frequently — a privilege Kent State has.

But a possible solution for OSU doesn’t satisfy Kent State students. Many say despite the frequent trips to the stadium, the buses simply aren’t convenient enough.

“They (buses) are full all the time,” says Kent State junior Randee Skeen, a physical education major, as she removes the yellow parking ticket from her car.

“They just have too many students at this school. They need to put a lower limit on students. We can’t admit everyone. There’s no more spots for their cars.”

At UC, there are no problems with buses; there’s no need for them. Most of the campus is encircled in a few city blocks with several parking decks.

But many students avoid the decks to avoid the strain on their wallets. Parking costs an average of $169 a quarter at UC, where most permits range from $84 to $204 per quarter.

“None of my friends end up driving,” UC junior Basel Saqr says. “They’ll just walk. I park a couple of blocks over and just walk. It’s not worth the money.”

Kent State, Akron and UC are trying to preserve green space. This upsets many students because grass is growing where a new parking lot could be.

Parking fines are also different at each school.

Ristow says the parking tickets at Kent State, which begin at $10, make up nearly half of the department’s revenue. Last fiscal year, Parking Services made more than $2 million.

But at Akron, the percentage of money made from fines is lower because the passes are more expensive.

“That’s negative revenue,” Stafford says. “We don’t like the negative revenue. That’s money I don’t want to pull in. I’d be happy if we got $0 in parking fines, but that’s never going to happen. People will always park where they’re not supposed to, and we

have to be there to enforce the rules to make it fair for everyone.”

UC hands out tickets that can break the bank: $50 for a car without a pass.

“There’s nowhere to park, so either get a permit or you’re screwed,” Saqr says. “Even if you just park (illegally) for a half hour, you end up with a ticket.”

AN EMPLOYEE PROBLEM

Parking Services officer Darrin Dreyer, a senior physical education major, seems a little nervous as he slits the newly printed ticket under the wiper of a gray 1991 Buick Century. He glances around and is relieved as two students run by without a confrontation.

“You’d be surprised with some of the people they say to you,” Dreyer says. “You have to be careful. But most of it is just idle threats. They’re just mad they got a ticket.”

He reaches into the black pouch hanging at his side for a piece of yellow chalk. He swipes it quickly over the top of the back left tire.

“One time some dude told me he was going to kill me if I put another ticket on his car,” he says. “You just have to laugh it off.”

His eyes shoot around at the cars as he walks by.

Dreyer says after working for Parking Services for more than a year, it’s easy to pick out fake permits.

“I’ve seen some good altered permits,” he says. “But you can always tell. Sometimes the color is just a little off. Most of the altered ones are the temporary tickets. People use Wite-Out on them. That’s a big fine.”

Dreyer lives in a house full of Parking Services officers. But it’s not because he needs a support group.

“It’s really not that bad of a job,”

Above: Four cars parked behind Tri-Towers display fresh parking tickets.
Right: Darrin Dreyer, a senior physical education major, enters the license plate number of a car whose time just ran out.
he says. “You have to get a little bit of a thick skin but after that it’s OK.”

Some students walk by and give him a dirty look.

Dreyer pauses at a row of meters and begins punching the first set of numbers into his ticket machine.

“You’ll get more tickets on a day it’s raining or snowing than you will on days it’s not,” he says, still punching in numbers. “People would rather get a ticket than walk in the bad weather.”

Three students are standing at the corner between Twin Towers and Eastway as Dreyer slides another ticket under the windshield wiper. A man with a goatee is glaring.

“You’ll get that,” Dreyer says. “I’ll tell you what, though,” he says. “People with personalized plates, Jeep Grand Cherokees and cars with fraternity or sorority stickers on them seem to get the most tickets. We don’t hunt them — we don’t hunt anybody says the job requires a sense of humor.

“There’s no glory in this business,” he says. “The best you can hope for is that people take you for granted and don’t notice you.”

A COMMUNITY PROBLEM
Bonny Graham Esparza hits the total button on the old cash register. She says the total is $5.24 with what looks like a forced smile. Her eyes are begging for sleep.

“I become aware of the parking problem when my lot’s full, and my store’s empty,” the Brady’s Cafe owner says. “The problem has been here as long as I have. Let’s see,” she says, counting the years in her head, “at least 15 years now.”

For someone who works seven days a week, at least 14 hours each day, she seems remarkably understanding about the problem.

“I think the biggest problem is out for that matter — but they’re always the ones with $20 and $30 tickets.”

Glancing at his watch, Dreyer gets ready to head to class. But he finally admits liking his job.

In fact, many people in arguably the most-hated department on campus like their jobs. Cartwright even seems sort of surprised at how much Ristow enjoys what he does.

“He has a very positive attitude,” she says. “He’s always smiling. He’s very service-oriented, though.”

Ristow’s office is dotted with signs of his sense of humor. A cartoon on his desk shows two cavemen chipping away at chunks of rock. One is making a wheel, the other a parking meter.

Stafford, Akron’s parking director, people always talk about the problem being the students,” she says. “But ‘the students’ is not an object. They’re all different people and as soon as someone will stop parking in your lot, someone else will discover it and think, ‘Hey, I can park here.’ It doesn’t end.”

Esparza says she’s tried to prevent students from getting towed from the lot she shares with other businesses. She hired an older man to sit in the lot and tell people they could get towed. But people just yelled obscenities at him.

“I just don’t like it when adults with jobs would come in who spend a great deal of money on food and not just coffee but can’t because there’s nowhere for them to park,” Esparza says. “My car’s even been towed one time. There But will the problem ever be solved?

“People tell me you can go look in the archives and find parking complaints all the way back in 1910,” Cartwright says. “I’ve never done it, but that’s what they tell me. There’s no easy way to fix the problem. It requires a lot of different issues to be balanced.”

Sitting back in her chair, Cartwright thinks about the ideal solution. A smile creeps across her face as she shifts her line of sight from the ceiling to eye level.

“Something very intriguing would be to build a parking deck underground,” she says. The deck could run from front campus all the way to the MACC. It would allow the current parking lots to be torn up for more green space yet with more parking available. Sounds great, but the price isn’t right.
“It’s just a dream. It can’t happen,” she says. “I think we have to educate people that we’re not going to have a perfect world. We have to look at the realities and pick the best possible option.”

Even though the parking committee suggested parking decks, Cartwright says that probably won’t happen because of the price.

Stafford says Akron spent about $10,000 a space on decks. Permit prices are up to $80 a semester there, compared to the $27 now charged by Kent State. But by fall 2002, the prices will double to $54 a semester at Kent State, says David Creamer, vice president of business and finance.

Many students say they’d be willing to pay extra money if the problem were improved by a parking deck. But the extra money isn’t going to add any drastic improvements, Ristow says. The parking prices at Kent State haven’t changed much in the last decade, so that may be why the prices are jumping up now.

“We have simply tried to keep parking down because other costs are going up,” he says. “The downside is we’re at the point where we’re not able to keep up with the maintenance. It gets to the point where you can’t fill the holes and patch the cracks anymore.”

The gravel parking lot near the Michael Schwartz Center will be paved by fall. The parking spots lost from the construction of the new dorms over the Dunbar soccer field will be relocated throughout campus.

Parking Services will also be cutting the price of stadium parking passes.

But many Kent State students aren’t happy about paying more without seeing a good enough solution.

Senior Curtis Shaw says students can pay hundreds of dollars for parking each year after fines.

“The higher price might not look good but bumping up the prices and having a parking deck to show for it would at least make students happy,” he says.

But students still complain about parking at other campuses, even though they implemented the same solutions Kent State desires.

Maybe, as freshman nursing major Amber Miller says, there simply isn’t a solution that will make everyone happy.
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