Life is designed to see the writings on the wall.

Lyrics by
George Harrison

It's up there for all of us, written on the sides of passing trains, in between the beats of the music and on the faces of people seen every day, but most people never bother to read it. The people featured in the following stories have all walked the line, either to achieve their dreams, represent their beliefs or simply to survive.

The writing's on the wall, brother...

Take a look into the real American graffiti. Meet a true artist who has lived the lifestyle of spray paint on concrete canvas and representation on the run.

Your life is in your hands...

A staggering number of young people are infected with the HIV virus and they have yet to even find out because they have not been tested. Writer Mark Cena explores first-hand the emotional roller coaster of HIV testing:

The music's in the air mothers, you may have heard it call...

When the rave scene began to give way to the era of the dance club, the real DJs became a dying breed. Find out where they went and how they're still spinning after techno's prime.

It looks you in the eye mister, it's time we stand up tall...

The hippies of the 1960s stood up for causes just outside of mainstream America. Meet their successors in the new millennium who are still fighting the establishment for the causes they believe in.

Go, see and understand the writings on the wall.

Mandy M. Jenkins

Editor

The Burr, formerly The Chestnut Burr, is produced by students at Kent State University twice per academic year. No part of The Burr may be reprinted without permission. Readers are encouraged to send letters and feature articles to The Burr at the address at left.

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packing a punch
One Kent State student carries on his family's boxing legacy

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An alumna donates her kidney to keep her uncle alive

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The KSU field hockey team works together both on and off the field

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Some students will do the strangest things to earn a buck

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These five students fight the power on campus and internationally

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DJs are still spinning, even after the heyday of the rave

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A look into the life and times of one graffiti artist

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Kent State University has many hidden treasures for the careful eye

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On-campus HIV tests are making more students learn the truth

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Overeaters Anonymous gives an ear to those with food addiction

fear factor
These students fear more than just fear itself

on the web
surfing emotions
The Internet has brought about another trend — online diaries. And Kent State students aren't immune. Read why they put their diaries online and the psychology behind it

www.burr.kent.edu
a tale of two cities: the legacy of urban sprawl
This photo essay examines the consequences of urban sprawl on people, land and resources, contrasting the growth of new suburbs with the decline of old suburbs
A strong sense of testosterone and the musky smell of sweat pervade the body-heated main room of the Rubber City Boxing Club on South Main Street in Akron.

Three large, wounded punching bags sway slowly from the ceiling, resting after a long day of practice. A large mirror framed in 2-by-4s runs along the side wall next to a bulletin board displaying newspaper articles about the club members. Alcohol advertisements and boxing match posters line the opposite wall.

The bell sits in the corner, filling the room with a long, loud ringing every three minutes. A boxing ring made of rope, duct tape and unfinished 2-by-4s stands in the front of the room.

Nicolai Firtha, a Kent State freshman, is 6-foot-2 and a firm 240 lbs. He stands, shadowboxing, ready to practice in the ring. His workout today includes working on his jabs and hooks, intensive jump-rope training and 50 reps on an abdominal wheel.

His faded Alaska T-shirt and long khaki shorts are soaked in sweat, and he trains with a constant look of fierce concentration on his face. His deep, calculated breaths help keep him focused as he repeatedly punches the mitts worn by one of the club’s trainers.

The 22-year-old Akron native has a promising boxing career on both the local and national levels, but understanding Nicolai’s success requires looking back to his heritage.

Nicolai has boxing in his blood. He grew up in gyms and around boxing rings, getting patted on the head by some of the local and national greats, like Ray “Boom Boom” Mancini and Todd Hickman, when his father, Joe, lived the life in the ring.
Joe's story

The story of Joe Firtha's boxing career starts in Akron more than 25 years ago. Joe says he became interested in boxing when he was about 6 years old.

"We had a group of three or four teenagers who had boxing gloves in the neighborhood," Joe says. "During the summer, they would get out the gloves, put up trash cans and rope off an area to box."

The kids who boxed ranged in age from about 6 to 14 years old. When he was about 7, Joe boxed for the first time. The boy he fought was four years older, and the teen who helped him get ready told him that he was going to get beaten because he was so young.

But Joe ended up winning the fight. Joe boxed in the summer with those kids for four years. The group drew as many as 60 children, all under the age of 15.

Joe says while he didn't box for a few years after that, it was something that was strong in his mind, leading him to learn all he could about boxing. Then, as a junior at Hoban High School, he went to a "stag party" at the school that led him back into boxing.

The head boxing coach at Hoban brought trainers to the stag night and set up matches. The manager who came that evening passed out cards to some of the boys and told them to call him if they wanted to start training to be boxers. Joe and his brother both got cards.

Joe's boxing career almost ended prematurely when he had his first big fight at the Pittsburgh penitentiary. He was in great physical shape, but he didn't have the skills to win the fight, he says.

"I was set up with an inmate in the penitentiary, and I got banged up pretty bad and I lost," he says. "I almost quit then."
Above: Nicolai practices his power hitting on the heavy bag.

"At the time, my attitude was that I had to not just win, but dominate at that level before it made sense to go pro," Joe says. "I had to be spectacular. If you have a shot at being a millionaire, the risk is conceivable. I didn't see it as conceivable. The risk relative to the reward wasn't worth it."

While Joe tried to get himself out of the boxing arena in the following years, his son's burgeoning career would bring him back.

The generation gap

Because he considered boxing to be such an all-consuming and dangerous sport, Joe didn't want his children to get involved. He says that he was just being a protective parent, like anyone would be.

"I tried to get them to avoid boxing like the plague," Joe says.

When Nicolai and his brother, Matt, were about 5 years old, Joe bought them boxing gloves to teach them self-defense.

Joe's trainer set him up with Johnny Cerrone, a trainer in his 60s from New York with more than 200 fights under his belt.

"I never knew my grandfathers," Joe says, "so he became a grandfather figure to me."

Joe started boxing again when he was 17 and continued until he was 21, when he stopped to attend the University of Akron. When he was 23, he decided that he would give himself one more year to see if he was good enough to go pro. The last guy he ever fought, Jeff Lankin, who was then ranked fourth in the nation, went on to become a world champion.

"I'm a bleeder – you hit my nose, and it's dripping on the floor"

"I just wanted them to know how to handle themselves and protect themselves from bullies at school," Joe says. "After a few years, the gloves were put away and never brought out again."

The attempt at an out-of-sight, out-of-mind approach didn't work, however. Despite all of the exposure to the sport in his youth, Nicolai claims to have found boxing on his own. His "God-given talent" didn't reveal itself until three years ago when, at the age of 19, Nicolai "popped the question" to his father about becoming his boxing coach. Nicolai says he had reached a time in his life where he needed discipline. He was out of high school, and not sure about college.

He says that he needed something to keep himself grounded.

"I was like, well, I either go into the service, which I wasn't too eager to do, or I start boxing," Nicolai says. "Now that I'm getting into it, it's like it's in my blood. You get sucked in. If you box, you box. It's hard to do anything else."

Joe says the decision wasn't as simple as Nicolai makes it sound. When Nicolai approached him to be his coach, Joe knew that it was something he had thought about for a long time.

"Reluctantly supportive" is the phrase Joe uses to describe how he feels about his son attempting the boxing circuit.

"Boxing is a dangerous sport. If you have a bad day, you get banged up, you get hurt," Joe says. "The reason I got involved with Nic was out of protection. I was extremely well trained by a defensive trainer, and I thought that I would have the best opportunity to keep him safe if I helped him."
Nicolai's story
Nicolai insists that he became a boxer simply out of love for the sport, not to be a bully. "I like teddy bears and flowers," Nicolai says. "I don't like beating people up. I'm the nicest person in the world — I couldn't hurt a fly. But the thing is I like to win. Whatever it is, I have to win. I'm so competitive." Despite his competitive nature and heritage, the road into boxing hasn't been easy. Early on, there were many people in Nicolai's family, aside from his father, who thought that boxing was a bad idea.
"My mom, for the first year, she wouldn't come to any of my matches," Nicolai says. "She's still on edge, curling her program when she comes to the matches, but she does come."
His uncle, also a boxer, questioned his motives. "My uncle basically said, 'What are you doing?'" Nicolai recalls. "He wanted to make sure that I knew that boxing wasn't a wishy-washy thing.
"You can't say you'll be in today and out tomorrow because if you get in that ring, and the other boxer knows you're not completely dedicated, that guy's going to knock your head off."
Unfortunately, Nicolai got his first taste
of "head-knocking" early in his boxing career, which just added to the fuel of his relatives' fire.

"In my third fight, in Cleveland, I caught a punch and fractured my nose," Nicolai recalls. "I'm a bleeder — you hit my nose, and it's dripping on the floor. I was just a bloody mess.

"The worst thing was that I had a family get-together the next day, and my nose was like a big tomato."

Nicolai has had more than 50 fights since that early mishap, and in all he has lost only 14 of his matches. In November, he fought the top-ranked national amateur champion, Jason Estrada, in Kansas City. While he didn't win the match, he says simply reaching that point shows that he has paid his dues in three years of fighting.

He says his family now accepts his love of boxing. But just because his confidence has soared since he began to fight, doesn't mean he's immune to injury.

In another November match, Nicolai had an accident made him rethink his entire boxing career.

"I was fighting this Mike Tyson-type guy, and I was boxing his pants off," Nicolai recalls. "He had on this Velcro head-gear, and I knocked it off. This was actually to his benefit because the referee called for a break, and I had him hurting."

After the break, Nicolai says he let his emotions dictate the fight and override his intellect, bringing his inexperience into play. A slugging match ensued, and because he had his feet in a bad position, his opponent caught him with a hook and knocked him down. The referee called another break, after which another slugging match ensued.

"He was a smaller guy than me, and he came up with his head and blasted me in the eye," Nicolai says. "It wasn't a glove that hit me. It was bone-on-bone, and it sliced my eye open.

"It opened right up and started dripping," Nicolai remembers. "I had to have six stitches. I tried to pull my headgear over the cut so that the ref wouldn't notice."

Nicolai says that the bone-on-bone cut made him rethink his boxing career.

"On the night that it happened," Nicolai says, "I said to myself, 'Do I still want to do this? This is crazy.' The next morning I woke up and decided that I was going to start training with a vengeance. I know I can beat this guy."

**Fighting for gold**

Nicolai says he hopes to bring more athletic ability to the sport instead of relying on sheer power. He contrasts it with prison fighting to reinforce his point.

"Boxing has rules and regulations, but in those fights, that wasn't really there," he says. "In those fights, whoever bleeds the most and loses the most teeth wins."

Nicolai says to be a boxer, one has to be a total athlete. This attitude shines through in his daily workout regime. He breaks the cycle down into three types of exercise: roadwork, technique work and strategy.

"It varies from week to week and day to day," he says. "If it's nice enough to train outside, we train outside. I get that in..."
about five times a week. I also cross train two to three times a week. I also go to the gym two to three days a week."

Nicolai says he knows he needs at least eight hours of sleep a night, so he starts his daily planning from there. When he first wakes up, he does push-ups, sit-ups, and various other morning exercises. Then he is off to class until early afternoon. After class, he’s off to train.

“My days are school, boxing, eating right and training right,” Nicolai says. “If one aspect of my life is weak, it will affect the rest of my life. That’s why boxing becomes so engulfing — there’s no room for error. But I love it that way.”

Nicolai’s hard work just may end up paying off in gold. He has his sights set in the east, on a little town named Athens, Greece. He hopes to visit there in the summer 2004 Olympics to fight for the gold medal.

Despite his Olympic dreams, Nicolai says his main goal is not to become too egotistical or self-confident in his abilities. He knows that boxing won’t be his career forever, which is part of his reason for attending Kent State. He plans to someday teach and coach at the high school level.

“I don’t want to be a one-dimensional boxer,” he says. “Some of the people that I fight, boxing is all they do. I wonder, what are they going to do if they lose that big fight, and then a few others after that? I don’t want to spend my life living in memories like some of these guys.

“I want to be a champion,” he says, “but when I’m done, my life will go on. I’ll bask, but I won’t have to live in my memory. Boxing won’t make me or break me.”

Below: Sweat gleams on Nicolai’s forehead during workout.
Robert Watson has three extra days a week to watch NASCAR.
The Cleveland man had to go to a clinic three days a week for kid­ney dialysis until Rachel Dissell, his niece and Kent State alumna, donated one of her kidneys to him. Now, he can spend the time doing the things he enjoys in life.
Watson was diagnosed with hypertensive renal failure at 39 and has been on a waiting list for a kidney transplant for the past seven years. High blood pressure caused the condition, damaging the kidneys.
"With my bad kidney they gave me five years," Watson said, referring to how much time he would live had his niece not given him the kidney when she did.
"Even with dialysis you can't clean all the blood," Watson said. "The leftover toxins accumulate until they eventually kill you."
Dissell, who is a reporter at the Daily News-Record in Harrisonburg, Va., took time off from work to travel to Cleveland and provide her uncle with the life-saving organ.
After everything was over and both of them were in recovery, Dissell said, "It makes me feel a little uncomfortable to have someone indebted to me that much. He is really young and he deserves to work and be with his children, not go to dialysis three times a week."

“He is really young and he deserves to work and be with his children, not go to dialysis three times a week.”

**Opposite above:** Dissell waits on the operating table while Marsha Pantalone, an anesthesiologist, injects sedatives into her IV.

*Opposite below:* Dissell lies on a hospital bed at University Hospital in Cleveland going over X-rays with nurse Mike Hoban and her mom, Tracy Dissell, after having an angiogram done. Hoban explains how the kidney will be removed during surgery. An angiogram maps out the internal organs for reference during surgery.

**Left:** Watson walks by the dialysis center's main desk, saying goodbye to everyone after his final visit.

**Below:** Dissell waits with her boyfriend, Tim Harrison, before getting ready for surgery.
Dr. James Schulak carries Dissell's kidney into Watson's room next door. Watson had already been prepared for its arrival. **Above:** Dissell's kidney can be seen in Watson after the blood supply was reattached. Within minutes the kidney began working. **Right:** Dr. Amy Van Antwerp holds a fiber optic camera in place while Dr. Christopher Siegel cuts the tissue holding Dissell's kidney in place.
"I owe my life to Rachel"

Top left: Dissell’s kidney can be seen on ice while final preparations for the transplant are made on Watson. Above: Pastor James Link holds hands in prayer with Watson and his mother, Etelle Tretinik, in the recovery room. Left: Harrison keeps watch over Dissell as she sleeps in her recovery room.

theBurr • spring 2002
Orange, yellow and white balls dot the turf. It’s early. The balls blend together and look like candy corn. Maintenance workers are still vacuuming the turf. The lights in the field house drone. Elderly couples and friends walk the track around the field for early morning exercise.

And at 6:50 a.m., the women’s field hockey team is running back and forth across the field. They don’t talk to each other. They don’t even look at each other. At least not until they wake up.

They’re getting warmed up for their individual training sessions. About four or five attend a one-hour session every morning to work on skills for their specific team position. This is part of their off-season training routine.

The women’s field hockey season is in the fall, but they train and practice all year. During season, they practice three to five days a week and typically play two games on the weekend. They watch videos of themselves to improve on techniques and videos of opponents to find weaknesses.

During the off-season, training continues, beginning with two weeks of conditioning where they run and lift weights from 7 to 9 a.m.

“The girls have to come back in decent shape after break,” head coach Kerry DeVries says.

Over the summer no practice is required, but DeVries recommends they go to various summer camps.

“Our coach runs a camp for younger girls, so she encourages us to work at that,” sophomore Becky Rahaim says. All their hard work does pay off though. Last fall, the team was ranked ninth in the nation by the NCAA.

It’s early, really early

At 7 a.m., the first five girls start off sitting in a line on the turf. They do crunches, push-ups and speed exercises like bicycle kicks. They’re starting to wake up and become more attentive to instructions from DeVries.

They are excited that it’s finally Friday.

“It’s my last individual,” one says with a smile. They know full team practices start Monday.

Huge nips fall down around the field, protecting the walkers on the track.

It’s time to get serious.

They pair up to hit balls into the net. They run in what seem like random patterns with the ball through cones that are spread out across the field — somehow without crashing into each other. The gunshot-like noise that comes from a ball being slammed into the goal is harsh enough to wake anyone who is still logging behind. Then they hit “air balls” — volleying the ball up in the air with their sticks.

They don’t even get a break as they retrieve the balls. They jog around and pile them in their shirts to take back to the basket.

A quick sip of water is their only relief.

As they go one-on-one, they become humorless and the first signs of frustration peek out. They attack every exercise as though in the middle of a real game.

Being seven months pregnant doesn’t stop DeVries from joining in to show correct motions and stick placement.

Toward the end of the practice, the girls start to liven up.

They line up to shoot into the goal. Each girl approaches the ball and strategically attacks it — as a predator would its prey — and slams it into the goal with an echo.

They cheer at the good shots and laugh at the misses. By the time practice is over, they’re not even tired.

“I’ve had worse,” Rahaim says. “Today was more stationary. Sometimes we do a lot more running, and that’s more tiring. As long as you’re standing in one place, it’s not too bad.”

“Yeah, it wasn’t too bad today,” several other players agreed.

“Don’t say that too loud,” another girl laughed as they all look around for DeVries.

By 8 a.m., the next group of girls is ready for individual training. Maybe because it’s later, this group seems more energetic from the start.

Freshman Lauren Grandinetti, whose laughter often rings above the rest of the girls, looks up from her stretch.

“What are we doing today, Kerry? What’s on your mind?” she asks, as though afraid to hear the answer.

And with that, they bounce into their drills.

‘Work it hard, blue!’

Regular team practice starts at the end of February and goes until the end of April. Each practice lasts about two hours a day. Junior Megan Spurling says it’s hard to get up for the morning practices.

“Some of us have morning classes,” she says. “I have a 7:45
Over the summer no practice is required, but DeVries recommends they go to various summer camps. “Our coach runs a camp for younger girls, so she encourages us to work at that,” sophomore Becky Rahaim says.

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“Some of us have morning classes,” she says. “I have a 7:45
a.m. class, so I practice 6 to 7:30, go to class and then practice 12 to 1:30. You try to schedule your classes around practice, but sometimes you just can’t.”

They start warming up in different ways — some run, some practice shooting, but they all come together to stretch before practice begins. To energize themselves, they clap together, faster and faster, and move into a close circle and cheer.

DeVries says the girls have a healthy competition with each other.

“They all want to improve, not just be the star of the show,” she says.

And they prove this every morning as they cheer each other on in practice.

“Yeah, good job you two!”

“Keep it up!”

“Good job, Steph!”

Cheers from fellow teammates echo off the walls so that you can’t trace their origins.

They have to go through four stations of exercises. In one, they crouch down and pass each other the ball while running back and forth within a square.

In another, four women have to jump onto an elevated, blue rectangle that is about 1 foot by 3 feet. They start off jumping at different paces, but by the end of the one-minute drill, they are nearly in unison.

“We have to do this for a minute?” one girl says after 10 seconds.

They also have to work on running back and forth across the field and they have to jump rope.

“This is so frustrating,” one girl says, as she trips over and over on a rope that is too short for her height.

All 13 girls run in patterns through cones, pushing the balls as they go, much like they did in individual training. The snaps of the balls sound like popcorn popping as it echoes off the field house walls.

“Let’s go! Work it hard, blue!” another teammate yells referring to their uniform color.

There’s no question they’re working hard.

They run to tape weights on their sticks for the next exercise. This time they have to hit the ball to themselves in different patterns on the floor in front of them.

“One more time. If anyone is not working at 100 percent pace, working their feet and working their hands, we’re going to add one,” DeVries says.

After all this work, they have a five-minute break to clean the field up, get some water and change equipment before they continue.

Getting global

The teammates come from all over the world — Canada, Bermuda, Scotland — as well as across the United States.

“The experience of learning about each other and each other’s cultures makes us special,” sophomore Jennifer Melnyk says.

Athletic Director Laing Kennedy says it gives the teammates an opportunity to mature and grow with different opinions.

DeVries says it is important to recruit all over the world.

“You go out and try to find the best players you can, no matter where they are in the world,” she says. “If you want to have a great team, you need to recruit all over the place.”

Spurling is from Bermuda and found Kent State on the Internet.

“I was looking for an American school with field hockey,” she says. “The coach invited me to come up and look around, and I liked it, so I sent in my application, and here I am.”

After she graduates, Spurling plans to return home to teach field hockey.

“My main reason for coming here was to see how Americans trained and then use that in my teaching,” she says.
YOU GO OUT AND TRY TO FIND THE BEST PLAYERS YOU CAN, NO MATTER WHERE THEY ARE IN THE WORLD'

Rahaim moved from Ann Arbor, Mich. for field hockey. Though her major is pre-business and she doesn’t intend to play field hockey beyond college, she played in high school and didn’t want to stop there.

“That will probably be it after college,” she says. “I’ll maybe coach a youth team or something.”

When you spend as much time together as this team does, a close bond is expected. Not only do they train together, practice together and travel together — they also hang out together.

“I mostly hang out with my teammates and some male athletes,” Grandinetti says. “We have a few other friends here and there, but it’s mostly my teammates.”

Melnik says they go out together all the time to parties, dinner and movies.

“We spend a lot of time together,” she says. “It kind of forces us to be close to each other. I think anyone in that situation would be close.”

DeVries says the team often hangs out at her house. If they travel to a game in a teammate’s hometown, it’s their house they go to for relaxation.

“Last season we had team building every Wednesday,” DeVries says. “We would take turns going to different coaches’ houses and just get together and talk. You have people from all over the world. You’re going to be different people. But come game time, they all have to be in harmony.”

Many of them live in Prentice, where DeVries placed them when they were freshmen. Many came back and even roomed together.

“It’s very important that they’re a family and they’re there for each other,” DeVries says. “They develop as a person and a player and want to work harder.”

It’s also convenient.

“It’s good to room with a teammate because if Lauren wasn’t on the team she’d have to put up with me getting up at 6 in the morning,” Rahaim says of her roommate.

The girls can often be seen eating in groups in Prentice. After practice, they are the only ones awake and eating in the cafeteria. They sit at two or three tables talking about field hockey and devouring some well-deserved eggs and potatoes.

At dinner, they’re at the same tables — dominating the upstairs section of the cafeteria in their blue and yellow sweat suits.
Out with the old...

In with the new

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University Affairs

David Sagen
Community Affairs

Lauren Shultz
Student Relations

Seth Kujat
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WAGING THE MONETARY WAR

HOW FAR WILL YOU GO TO WIN THE BATTLE OF THE BELLY-UP BANK ACCOUNT?

WALKING ACROSS CAMPUS

or through the Student Center, you’re almost guaranteed to hear the familiar phrase, “Dude, I’m so broke.”

Students on campus hold a wide variety of jobs from waiting tables to telemarketing, but some students have found non-traditional ways to make ends meet and have a little cash left over. Moneymaking doesn’t have to be the boring drudgery it’s made out to be — there’s always a creative way of getting around asking the question “Would you like fries with that?”

So until you’ve received your degree and landed that great-paying job you’ve always dreamed of, keep in mind there are many ways to make money that don’t necessarily take a lot of time and hard work — just willingness.
Gary Cullen is not a high roller. The senior painting major requires only the simple things in life: beer on the weekends, gas for his car and cigarettes.

While school is in session, though, Cullen spends a lot of time in class and in the studio painting, making a regular job next to impossible and pocket money rare.

So, to make a little cash, Cullen donates plasma. He donates twice a week to Aventis Bio-Services, Inc. in Akron. On his first visit for the week to Aventis he gets $20, on his second visit he receives another $30.

This may sound like a great way to make $50 a week, but there are some drawbacks.

First, donors should get to the plasma bank early — like 6 a.m. early. Second, after waiting in line, donors must be weighed, get their fingers pricked and have their temperatures and pulses taken before they can proceed.

Cullen says that, physically, giving plasma isn't as simple as one might think, either. For Shane Meyers, a junior general studies major, says his dream job is no job at all.

"I don't really like to work," he says. Which would probably explain why, for three years, Meyers didn't have a job but still made money.

Meyers started selling sports cards on eBay when he was 20.

"I originally started selling cards I had from when I was a kid," he says. "Then I started going to card shows and buying cards for cheap and selling them for more online. I was making about $500 a month."

Selling sports cards on eBay fit perfectly into Meyer's work-as-little-as-possible mantra. He'd go out once a week to look for cards, which only took about four hours of his day, and wait for bids the rest of the week. A little savvy bargaining at card shows and competitive bidding online made for quick profits.

Rob Vanhoose, an expert in sports card collecting and employee of 1st Choice Sports Cards in Kent, says there is money to be made in selling sports cards.

"A lot of collectors collect players' rookie cards," Vanhoose says. "Players like Ken Griffey Jr. and Kobe Bryant — famous guys you see on TV all the time. We've got a Michael Jordan rookie card worth $1,600."

The fame of a player isn't the only thing that makes a card worth money — the condition of a card is important as well.

"People are picky about condition," Vanhoose says. "You can send cards away to have them graded on the gem mint scale. If the card gets a 10, which is extremely rare, it makes the card have ridiculous value. A Derek Jeter card that's usually worth about $100 sold for $22,000 online because it was a 10 on the gem mint scale."

Meyers had a lot of his cards rated on the gem mint scale, which rates the edges, surface, corners and centering of a card. There's not enough money in sports card trading to become fabulously wealthy, but Meyers can attest that it can be enough to pay the rent. He once sold a Kobe Bryant card for well over $1,000.

Meyers has stopped selling cards online full time but is keeping a hand in the game while looking for his dream job — one that will make him a lot of money fast.

Above: Shane Meyers peddles his expansive collection of baseball cards — including Indians legend Rocky Colovito — on eBay to pay the bills.

EBAY FOR PAY

Shane Meyers, a junior general studies major, says his dream job is no job at all.

"I don't really like to work," he says. Which would probably explain why, for three years, Meyers didn't have a job but still made money.

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Above: Shane Meyers peddles his expansive collection of baseball cards — including Indians legend Rocky Colovito — on eBay to pay the bills.
POsing for Profit

Amanda Schuster had an empty bank account and one month to come up with $1,500.

Schuster, a junior pre-communications major, had recently lost her job and by mid-fall semester was desperately combing the want-ads. But Schuster says the prospects were pretty grim. Few places were hiring and she was running out of time.

When Schuster found an ad in the Daily Kent Stater looking for amateur nude models, she didn't laugh it off. Her semi-annual rent payment was due soon and she ad promised a lot of money fast.

So she made an appointment to fill out the paperwork and do test photos.

"The appointment was at this woman's house," Schuster says. "I took my roommate with me because it seemed a little shady."

Gwen Thomas, a representative of East Coast Media Group, conducted the application process and also acted as the photographer. East Coast Media Group creates pornographic Web sites and is a recruiter for the adult entertainment industry.

Schuster had to sign model-release forms and prove that she was at least 18 years old before taking test photos.

"The test shots were basically like naked mug shots," Schuster says. "I had mixed feelings about being naked. It felt foreign and kind of uncomfortable."

After taking test photos, Schuster was told the amount of money she could make would depend on what she was willing to do in front of a camera. She says Thomas told her she could earn up to $250 an hour if she wanted to pose with other models and try some positions and props. But Schuster says she would only do photos by herself, which would only make her about $75 an hour.

"I asked a lot of questions," Schuster says. "She told me that everything was kept professional and that she would always be at all the shoots to ensure my safety. She said the pictures were for an adult Web site that this guy, she never said exactly who, was running out of San Francisco."

"A guy from San Francisco is using models from the middle of Ohio?"

Schuster never actually went through with it, though. She says she thought it sounded too good to be true.

"I didn't want to call my parents," Schuster says. "I wanted to try to (earn the money) myself."

Schuster wound up asking her parents for the money she needed after all.

"I have a lot of money to pay back, but you just have to manage the debts you have, decide who to pay first and who can wait."

"I think it's good for people to struggle in college," she says. "We'll be less likely to hit bottom when we're 30. After we graduate we'll have good jobs and be able to daw our way out of debt."
THE NEW RADICALS

It's hard to examine student activism without resorting to comparisons of the late 1960s and early '70s. That was a time when a war had escalated to the point where it was hard to find an American citizen who had not been affected by it. Student activists grew visible in circles that opposed the war and are now often associated with historical representations of that period. The various progressive campaigns that followed the war (anti-nuclear weapons, power, anti-apartheid and environmental) featured students raising awareness. But student activism never again achieved the status it had during the anti-war movement.

"Student activism often goes in ebbs and flows," says Patrick Coy, assistant professor of political science and applied conflict management at Kent State. "And right now it's in a peak."

Now, Coy says, the peak of student activism surrounds issues of globalization, fair labor and animal rights, to name some dominant ones, and peace and war to a lesser degree.

Steve Brown, a professor of political science who has been at Kent State since 1967, has seen the ups and downs of social and political movements on the Kent campus and says that often these phases of interest happen when progressives feel threatened by the country's conservative leadership. While this may be true, Coy says there are many other factors in the growth of activism today. The dissemination of information through the Internet, increased awareness and the abuses of police power against activists in Seattle, Quebec City and Genoa, Italy are among those reasons.

Brown pointed out that throughout these ups and downs there has always been a "backwash" of individuals who have been dedicated to raising awareness of progressive social and political issues.

Today, the progressives on campus find themselves part of the peak in student activism. While it may seem there is a difference between the students and the rest of society, Coy says there is not. These students and the rest of society are merely employing their democratic tools to enact change, the same tools each citizen has.

What follows is a glimpse at five students who employ those tools on campus and abroad.

University Counsel James Watson met with CHANGE members to implement CHANGE's demands and the university set up a committee to research the issue. They campaigned vigorously and by May 3, 2001, President Cartwright endorsed a code of conduct. This code of conduct requires factories producing Kent State clothing to operate under humane and fair labor practices. This code is continuously monitored by the Workers' Rights Consortium, an independent organization designed for this purpose.

In addition, the School of Fashion Design and Merchandising and a non-profit group called Equal Exchange were able to form a partnership. This partnership could make Kent State the first university to own a manufacturing facility in Mexico. This would allow the university to encourage fair labor in their own factory.

Pesa and CHANGE didn't stop. They still monitor the efforts being made by the Worker Rights Consortium and plan to meet with officials from university sports teams to promote fair-trade endorsement clothing.

Opposite page: Chris Fox wears a gas mask. Above: Mike Pesa is surrounded by his activist materials. Both are prominent activists on the Kent campus and in the community.
ike Pesa, Changing the face of economy

Before coming to Kent State University in fall 2000, sophomore history major Mike Pesa was more of a mainstream liberal. The fact he was that far to the left was remarkable, he says, considering he is the son of conservative parents who raised him in a conserva-
tive suburb of Youngstown. But as a freshman, he started getting involved with various activist groups on campus and then a group of students who traveled to Cincinnati in opposition to the Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue, the trade conference for corporate officials and government, in November that year. It was there that Pesa had what he considers to be a political awakening.

"The neighborhood we stayed in was just this really bad neighborhood. It was poor. It was scary," says Pesa.

"I had never been exposed to that kind of neighborhood before. It just really hit me hard to see the level of poverty, knowing that this was in my own state. I never even knew this stuff and how the government and the city and everyone could just abandon them."

But what really stuck Pesa was, while he was standing on streets littered with several weeks of trash, he could look across the city and clearly see the shimmers of the skyscrapers of the business district. It was then that he began to frame his political ideals in terms of economics.

As a founding member of the student group CHANGE (Coalition for a Humane and New Global Economy), Pesa was instrumental in the organizing of the "Sweat-Free" Kent State campaign, aimed at sev-
ering Kent State's relationships with sweatshop clothing manufacturers known for inhu-
mane and unfair labor practices. The group brought anti-sweatshop activists Jim Keady and Leslie Kretzu to campus to speak about their efforts in opposing these work environments. In addition to this, CHANGE also held a "sweatshop fashion show" in the Student Center Plaza and circulated a petition urging the administration to adopt a code of conduct that would require Kent State products to be made under good working conditions.

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ment clothing.

Also on 20-year-old Pesa's agenda is establishing a living wage for all Kent city workers. According to Pesa, CHANGE has the backing from some members City Council and research is underway to deter-
mine what a living wage for Kent would be.

If effective on the city level, Pesa and the rest of CHANGE plan on asking Kent State's administration to do the same for all lower-level campus employees.

Although Pesa's concentra-
tion and passion is in CHANGE, his efforts and initiatives bleed into other stu-
dent groups such as the KSU Indian Student Association and into various other issues, such as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation in Fort Benning, Ga., formerly called the School of the American. But Pesa is quick to dismiss those who protest and don't follow through with their actions.

"Don't get me wrong," Pesa says. "Public protest is a very important tool but just going out there and protesting and not doing anything else is not going to change anything. It's just one tool in the toolbox."
Lauren Yates: 'I don't take no for an answer'

She was raised on a small section of land that was set aside far away from people who hoped to get rid of her and her kind. The nearest McDonald's was an hour away. Her grandmother spoke a language that her schoolteachers told her was wrong. Her family was given food rations and subsidies from a government that hoped to shut them up. Then she moved to a city, filled with people who talked different, looked different and had completely different values. She went to a school where kids laughed at her and told her she looked funny and talked funny. Then her teachers taught her that everything she learned the first 11 years of her life was wrong. For Lauren Yates, a senior sociology major, this has been her life. She was born and raised in Utah on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation, whose residents are mostly Shoshone Utes. It's the seventh-poorest American Indian reservation in the United States.

Yates moved off the reservation to Cleveland in 1989, starting school a week later. She went home crying the first day and asked her mother where all the Indians were. She cried every day and didn't know a lot of what people were talking about. When her teacher told the class they were going to write a paper, Yates remembers being confused about what writing a paper was. When she graduated from high school, her dream was to move back home to the reservation. Her mother suggested attending college. Yates applied to a college about an hour from the reservation in Utah, but missed the deadline and was denied. She then ended up at Baldwin-Wallace College, which she paid for by selling her own beadwork. While walking around the Baldwin-Wallace campus, she still wondered where all the Indians were. She knew they were there somewhere so she restarted a stagnant Native American Student Association that attracted about 13 regular members. Yates then transferred to Kent State in fall 2000 with a desire to do the same.

She obtained a list of 91 Native American students on Kent's campus and began pushing to establish her own Native American Student Association, which was officially recognized in August 2001. Yates wasn't satisfied. She wanted to have a powwow, the American Indian social event involving dancing, food and music. She knew it could be done because the annual Ann Arbor powwow in Michigan (a nationally recognized powwow attracting American Indians from all over the states) was originally started on a college campus.

But Yates says she was given the run-around. She was told under no circumstances would she ever have a pow-wow in the Student Center, and she could not have it in the MAC Center for fear of crowding the basketball teams for space, and she could not have it in the Commons because, among other things, University Scheduling didn't want the grass trampled or people climbing in trees. But she told them "Hi, my name is Lauren Yates. I'm president of the Native American Student Association and I don't take no for an answer." She was denied scheduling a powwow for December 2001 and denied again for February 2002. She then gave University Scheduling two possible weekends in March and they said no. As a last-ditch effort, she sent a letter to Cornell Morton, dean of student affairs, and he seemed enthusiastic. Morton called University Scheduling and discovered the last weekend in April was open in the Commons. The idea was then passed by Undergraduate Student Senate on February 4.

So, why all the trouble for one powwow? Personally, says Yates, "a college that preaches they are diverse really didn't impress me when they started telling me no. Considering you have 91 registered self-identified natives, I would consider it important. That's their culture."


Above: Lauren Yates, the president of the Native American Student Association, wants students to take pride in their heritage.

J

try to promote awareness of issues is hard enough, but it's even harder when most of your audience is apathetic. Jatika Teague, a junior psychology major, says she faces this apathy quite often among black students on campus.

She has worked to raise concerns about issues facing black students such as AIDS, police brutality and recently the school voucher system and its role in racial stratification in society.

Teague is active in Black United Students as the Political Affairs and Grievances chair. Her duties involve raising awareness of issues facing black students on campus as well as local-

ly and nationally, and implementing programs, most recently REKINE. This was to promote for black students to express concerns over racial tension on campus.

Teague's other awareness programs included one about police brutality focusing on Timothy Thomas, a black man who was shot in the back by police in Cincinnati, and a program on AIDS. Teague says she is most proud of the AIDS program that took place November 2001 in Oscar Ritchie Hall. Although she feels the large audience was attracted by guest speaker Mohammed Bilal from MTV's "The Real World," she still sees it as an achievement.

She says she grew interested in the subject when she was researching AIDS and discovered small statistics showing large numbers of AIDS cases in Africa among black women and gays.

So, where does the inspiration come from to promote awareness among people who Teague claims are uninterested? Well, it's in the injustices she sees and in the efforts of her ancestors.

"People fought so hard for us to get here," says Teague. "I feel like I need to continue." Hale Teague is that even though the injustices toward blacks are not as blatant as they were during segregation, they are still evident. She says it's in the fact that drug penalties are more harsh on blacks and in the fact that blacks make up 13 percent of the U.S. population yet almost half of the 1.2 million federal and state prisoners are black.

"By the time I was 17, which means everybody in school had their license, all my black male friends got pulled over by the cops for absolutely no reason. Some don't care about it," she says. "I do."

As a junior, Teague's time remaining at Kent State is limited, but she still wants to work for the black students.

She would like to push for administration to curb the drop-out rate among black students. She also sees plenty of room for improvement in the way the university deals with diversity.

"It's really funny when this school likes to say they're so diverse, but it's a joke," she says. "We have a diverse group of students here, but they're not doing anything to make sure that a diverse group of students feels comfortable here," says Teague. "They put them in a dorm together and that's it."
WHERE HAVE ALL THE DJS GONE?

As the rave scene dwindles, they’re still spinning

It looked more like a county fair than a party. Mark Kolesar arrived at a farm with three barns, all of them filled with people, electronic music and lights. People were dancing all around him in wacky new ways he had never seen before. Hands and bodies twisted in every direction with colors of light bouncing off them.

And on a platform above the mass of bodies and color was the DJ.

Kolesar says he could not figure out how the music was being made. He watched in fascination as the DJ’s hands slid across the records and twisted various knobs. This DJ was unlike the normal disc jockeys on the radio who only played CD after CD. He was taking different sounds and songs and mixing them on top of each other, controlling the music in a way Kolesar had never heard before. After two hours he was hooked.

"From that day on I said to myself, I want to do that. I want to hear this music," Kolesar says, his eyes dancing in the dim light of The Avenue during its weekly techno night.

Behind the turntable

Now known as DJ Kolo in the techno world, Kolesar moved from attending raves to studying electronic music. He purchased turntables of his own, an investment of several thousand dollars, and began building a record collection.

Like anyone trying to learn a new musical instrument, Kolesar began to experiment with the turntables, learning their ins and outs. Two turntables and a mixer are needed to truly be able to create the intricate sounds of techno music. The mixer controls volume, bass, treble and cross-fading, a technique that dictates how much of each record the audience hears.

First Kolesar places a record on one of the turntables and starts playing it. Then he starts playing another record on the second turntable that only he can hear through his headphones. He adjusts the tempo of each until the beats of the two records match exactly. When the beats are locked in, he waits for a cue. At this precise moment he lets the audience hear the second record in harmony with the first.

“A real DJ would know every sound and every cue in all of his records,” Kolesar says, explaining the importance of precision in mixing. “So when you get up there you can have a seamless, professional, perfect mix, even if you’re winging it.”

Kolesar says the key to this is being able to feel the music. Techno is typically in standard time, meaning that every four beats makes one measure of music. For every eight measures, something changes in the track, like another instrument added or a change in rhythm. The DJ seeks those moments and must know them to avoid clashing in the final mix the audience hears.

“It’s a lot of memorization,” Kolesar says.

One of the trademark moves of the DJ is scratching, which involves pushing and pulling a particular spot on the record past the needle.

The Technic 1200 is the standard brand of turntables among serious DJs. The difference between this turntable and your parent’s is that the motor sits on the center pin rather than being connected by a belt. This, paired with a heavier tone arm that doesn’t bounce from the record, allows for scratching.

Left: Like many DJs, Dave Hutchinson, aka DJ Hutch, learns to create the best sounds through experimentation.

Story by Dana Curcio

Photos by Greg Ruffing
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Left: Like many DJs, Dave Hutchinson, aka DJ Hutch, learns to create the best sounds through experimentation.
Most of what Kolesar has learned about scratching he discovered by experimenting.

Kolesar emphasizes this is not as simple as just pushing the record around, as is often seen done on television and in the movies. The hand motions must be in exact rhythm with the tracks playing and not throw the rest of the beat off. The hands are constantly in motion, scratching on the first record, adjusting the tempo of the other, and fading each of the turntables in and out for added effect.

"Sometimes it’s like chaos when you’re scratching," he says. "Your hands are moving as fast as they can on the record and cross-fader. But your mind automatically focuses on what you’re doing because you’ve done it so many times before.

Up from the underground

While Kolesar was swept away by the musical value of the rave scene and the magic he found on the turntable, others were drawn to raves for the drugs often associated with them.

Ryan Fitzgerald, aka DJ Prophet, a psychology major, says many rave-goers were wooed by the drug availability. "Most people didn’t know what was going on with the music. They were just trying to escape," he says.

The abundance of drugs at raves gave the entire scene a bad image. Kolesar says the negative attention from the media, especially on the use of ecstasy, had an impact upon the rave scene.

As the scene’s reputation changed, Kolesar says there was a noticeable drop in attendance — especially among drug users. While this is creating a safer, more music-oriented scene, Kolesar says it is harder to get a large attendance at raves, making them happen less frequently and giving DJs fewer venues to spin.

Most resilient DJs found refuge in nightclubs where the influence of electronic music can be heard blended into commercials and pop tracks, so people are listening to techno without even realizing it.
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As the scene's reputation changed, Kolesar says there were replaced with 50 cent draft specials.

"It's really a club culture now, not a rave culture," Kolesar says.

Small, smoky clubs like The Avenue in Kent still hold a weekly techno night, but even those are becoming more difficult to find without going to a larger city.

Tom Sikler, a sophomore electronic media production major who spins under the name DJ Kritikal, says there is a lack of a scene right now. There are plenty of people willing to listen to electronic music, but there aren't many places for them to gather, he says.

He says more and more people are listening to techno music without realizing it. Electronic influences can be heard blended into pop tracks and as background music in television commercials.

"Eventually people will develop a taste for it," Sikler says. "The problem now is there is not too much of a demand, especially in this area. In New York and L.A., it's a lot different.

Sikler says he has seen raves with up to 30,000 people in Los Angeles, while the few raves in Northeast Ohio may attract 1,200 to 1,500.

Finding places to play and hear techno music is not impossible, though. People just have to actively search them out.

The future of a genre

Despite the negative media attention and the challenges that have faced them, loyal techno performers and followers have stuck by the genre, waiting for the rest of the world to catch up.

Wilson says techno is transcendent of all cultures, races and ethnic boundaries. It can be found in countries all over the world, overcoming language barriers with its focus on beat and rhythm.

"It's a worldwide phenomenon," Wilson says. "That's not true about a lot of music."

Kolesar says the ability for musicians to be a "one-man band" in the genre gives DJs more ability to express themselves than they would in a rock band with four or five people.

While rock musicians are limited to the instruments they can play, a DJ has access to any instrument he wants with electronic clips.

With the excitement of many still buzzing around techno music, Kolesar sees big potential for electronic music in the future.

"Something is going to happen here," he says. "I am waiting for it to get super big. You never know."
PORTRAIT of the artist
A Kent State student shares his story of life as a graffiti artist

The only thing left of Rob's life as a graffiti artist is the album of photos he lovingly produces for friends. And the looping arcs and drastic lines he scrawls on his college notebooks "when I'm just sitting there bored and the teacher's babbling about something I don't care about."

For three years after graduating from his northeast Ohio Catholic high school, the 23-year-old Kent State visual communications design major lived in eastern Virginia, near Virginia Beach — and lived graffiti.

By his own account, Rob, who wants his real name concealed to keep his past in the past, went out and "wrote" with members of his "crew" on hundreds of nights over that three-year period. He figures he painted his work on 200 to 250 freight cars and "God knows how many" walls, rooftops and highway overpasses.

He looks back on that period with mixed emotions. Until Virginia, Rob had never done graffiti. He'd never been arrested, either. Eventually, Rob decided to leave graffiti behind, came back to Ohio and started all over — again.

But in the meantime, he lived the 24/7 existence of a graffiti artist. He lived graffiti's constant pursuit of anonymous fame, the quest to get up his "tag," or graffiti pen name, as much as possible. He threw quick tags up on walls. By night, he and his crew ventured into the world, stoned, with plans for pieces already drawn up.

They sought a balance of representing themselves in their area and painting on trains to send their work to the rest of the country.

Graffiti culture

"Graffiti art today is like the cave paintings of yesterday," Rob says. "It is the only noncorrupted part of hip-hop. We don't do it for the money, we do it for the art. We do it to present the culture."
Graffiti was actually the first of the four main components of hip-hop to develop, says David Badagnani, a Kent State ethnomusicologist who teaches a class on the history of hip-hop. He says the first graffiti artists surfaced in the late 1960s and early '70s in Philadelphia and New York.

At first, Badagnani says, graffiti "just involved writing your name everywhere." Then street parties with turntables and rapping began to appear in the Bronx, he says. Then breakdancing evolved. They all became inextricably tied to graffiti. "It was all about representing yourself, your neighborhood and your status through your art form," Badagnani says.

Rob's photo album is his key to the past, to the days when he represented the area around Virginia Beach. It's full of pictures of walls and trains he and his crew painted, or others they stumbled across that they admired. The pictures are grainy, hazy, most of them taken at night. Rob stands at the lower corner of one, shrouded in baggy jeans and a hooded sweatshirt, a can of spray paint in hand.

At first, he did it wrong, Rob says. He wasn't a real graffiti artist. He was just some kid, some "toy" as the lingo goes, out there alone, painting because it seemed cool to be vandalizing something. "You can either stay a toy and go out and vandalize 'cause it's a rush and it's illegal," Rob says — or you can do it right, become a true graffiti artist who "goes out and does it because he wants to be known."

Behind the tag

One night some of Rob's friends brought a real graffiti artist with them to Rob's apartment. The kid was 16. He did a quick tag on a piece of paper. Rob was mesmerized. "Sweet — you do that stuff?" he asked.

Soon the kid, whom Rob would come to know as "Over," was teaching him the ropes. Rob slowly became friends with other graffiti artists. He proved he was cool. He proved he wasn't a rat — the most important component to being a member of a crew, he says. He gradually became accepted into the "fraternity." He started to learn tricks. He wanted to learn more. Soon, he was hooked on graffiti.

"It didn't matter whether I slept," Rob says. "It was the only thing in my life that I loved."

He woke up at 7 a.m., often after only a few hours of sleep, and he thought about graffiti. All day long, while working in construction, he thought about graffiti. When he finally did go to bed, he thought about graffiti.

He stared at trains and walls in Virginia and elsewhere, scrutinizing the graffiti. He noted where it was from, noted each writer's technique. Graffiti artists admire the work they see traveling the country on the sides of trains. They may recognize the writer's tag, but most likely they'll never meet or know each other's names, Rob says.

Rob's crew called itself the Area Kode Terrorists. It's common for graffiti artists to paint their area code on any large piece, so anyone who looks at it knows immediately where the artists live.

There were two other crews in the Virginia Beach area: MC and MDS. All three had 10 to 15 members, Rob says. But if a writer was friendly enough with another crew, he could sign that crew's name on his work.

Most people Rob painted with were white, he says. But in the hip-hop and graffiti worlds, there are painters of almost every race and creed, Badagnani says. "Over" was a skateboarder. His standard uniform was baggy pants, skate shoes and T-shirts. "Vers," another crew member, was about 16 when Rob went to Virginia Beach. "Phone" was a year younger than Rob.

"He was a character, man," Rob recalls of Phone. "I never would've figured that he wrote. No offense to him, but he was kind of a dorky kid. Tall, lanky."

"Cyke" was a friend of Phone and about a year younger. The two were childhood friends. They grew up down the street from each other. Cyke was of Mexican descent. The other painters used to tease Cyke, saying police would single him out before them. "At least we won't get caught," they'd say, "cause Taco'll get caught."

Rob most frequently painted with Over and Vers. All three lived in Chesapeake, west of Virginia Beach. On a typical night, he'd call his crew to see who wanted to paint. Two to five of them would get together, smoke pot and usually draw up blue-
the cave paintings of yesterday

Opposite: Karl Walter of Kent paddles his kayak past the graffiti-laden underside of the Route 59 bridge on his way down the Cuyahoga River. Below: Rob flips through an album of snapshots of his own work and the work of other artists.

prints for what they wanted to paint. They then headed out to the train yards or a wall or rooftop somewhere. Sometimes they wouldn’t have blueprints. They’d just go out and paint what came to them.

The tags they painted didn’t mean anything. They were just letters that seemed to flow well together. But the tags attach to artists like nicknames. For a while, Rob painted the word “Bones” on walls and trains. Then he switched to “Lion.” He liked the way the letters fit.

Plus, he says, “I used to have blond dreadlocks, and in the morning, it looked like a lion’s mane.” There’s a Julian Marley song he liked called “Like a Lion in the Morning,” so the name fit.

Rob’s album has more than 90 photos. About a dozen of them are his work. Most of the pieces are on the sides of freight cars in letters at least three feet tall. The graffiti styles vary widely: easy-to-read bubble letters that overlap, futuristic-looking letters with jagged edges, letters that have almost ceased to become letters but instead morph into a maze of frenetic arrows. Some of the pieces bear “AKT” at the bottom. Colors leap out from the bland industrial surfaces — eye-catching blues, reds, yellows, oranges, greens and pastels. In one photo, a robin’s egg blue “Lion” is centered at the bottom of a grain car, the letters distorted slightly where the vertical ridges of the car slice through it. One “Phone” piece is adorned with a Mighty Mouse-like cartoon character giving the world the finger.

Most of the pieces are surrounded by a light-colored frame. That’s usually how pieces started, Rob says. They would lay down a basic frame of white or yellow on the car, then fill in the letters. Then they would accentuate the letters’ curves and lines with black or another dark color. They switched nozzles on their spray cans to achieve wide or narrow sprays. A good piece, a clean piece, Rob says, is drip-free and flows well.

Scouting the turf

Sometimes on the weekends, Rob and some crew members would go on graffiti road trips. They went to Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Greensboro, N.C., and throughout eastern Virginia — “Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Newport News, Hampton, Richmond,” Rob rattles off without thinking.

In the morning they would drive around, looking for train tracks. They’d follow the tracks, searching for places where the trains “laid up.” If they stopped near a factory, the crew noted what hours the factory operated, when people were coming and going. At night they’d leave their car in a residential area, close but not too close.

“You really have to search for the best place,” Rob says. “We don’t ever see trains and then immediately go paint them.”

Rob remembers cruising the highway, scouting for buildings with roofs at eye level. He remembers standing on a rooftop in 20-degree weather. He had on gloves, soaked in paint and freezing to his fingers.

Once he saw a train he’d painted come back from wherever it had been. On its side was his piece. A simple but profound sensation washed over Rob. That train had gone somewhere. His piece and his tag had been out there, moving. And people saw them.

“It was an unexplainable feeling,” he says. But he adds, “It’s kind of a cool feeling to never see it again. Because that means it’s out moving.”

continued on page 45
Most students have visited the Music and Speech Building, but few have ventured down a side hallway into the world’s largest museum devoted to hearing aids. Nor do most students hiking toward the Student Recreation and Wellness Center realize they are passing a crumbled artwork once valued at half a million dollars. In fact, nearly every building on campus has a treasure buried within—all it takes are open eyes and an inquisitive mind to find them.

Story by Adam Gibbs and Monica Arjev
Photos by Jeff Bowen
Hearing aid museum

How do you start the world's largest hearing aid museum? By accident.

In spring 1966, Kenneth Berger, a professor of audiology who died of cancer in 1994, was misquoted in an interview with the National Hearing Aid Journal. During the interview, Berger said he wanted to start a "museum" of hearing aids. However, when the interview was published, it used the word "museum." Soon, boxes and boxes of old hearing aids began to arrive from all over the world.

From pre-electric resonators to digital hearing aids, the Kenneth W. Berger Hearing Museum in the Music and Speech Building is home to more than 3,000 hearing aids. However, it is not the only hearing aid museum. The Central Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., are among some of the places that also have hearing aid displays.

While most students don't know it exists, the museum has received some publicity. Alabama's Heather Whitestone, who was crowned Miss America 1995, visited the museum after giving a speech on campus. Whitestone, who is deaf, is the only Miss America winner to have a physical handicap.

Two years later, The New York Times put the museum on its front page.

That same year, David Letterman and Jay Leno wanted to feature the museum on their shows but were turned down because Irvin Gerling, director of the hearing aid museum and associate professor of audiology, knew featuring the museum was for comedic purposes.

"The humor would be a slap in the face to the hearing impaired," Gerling says.

With a collection appraised at more than $1 million, the museum continues to add to its collection through donations.

"Any old hearing aids that manufacturers feel they can't sell sometimes get sent here," Gerling says.

"Ohio has pretty cloudy winters...If I keep a light on them, they don't know"

Kent State's greenhouse

Few students are aware that near the center of campus, there sits a lush green oasis — even in the middle of January.

Kent State's greenhouse, officially known as the Herrick Conservatory, is attached to the back of Cunningham Hall. The 7,500 square foot greenhouse was built in 1960. It is primarily used to supply biology and botany classes with plants or to provide plants to researchers at Kent State, greenhouse manager Chris Rizzo says.

The greenhouse, which welcomes visitors with its warm, earthy aroma, is divided into several rooms based on the type of plants within. Cacti and succulents, for example, prefer dry warmth, while ferns need humidity to thrive. Orchids are notoriously difficult to grow, yet the greenhouse has nearly 200 different varieties of them.

"They need constant wind movement and fairly low light," Rizzo says over the soft whir of a fan in that room.

Above: Irvin J. Gerling, director of the hearing aid museum and associate professor of audiology, holds a Tympanette, an "in the ear canal" type of hearing aid.
With the delicate blooms of so many varieties of orchids available year-round, it’s easy to see why they are one of the most popular attractions in the building.

“Most people are attracted to the orchids and the carnivorous plants,” Rizzo says. “The kids always like these,” he says, proudly holding a Venus’ Fly-trap.

Even though the Herrick Conservatory is warm and lush throughout the year, Rizzo admits that some plants can tell that it’s winter outside.

“Ohio has pretty cloudy winters, which means there can be a shortage of light,” he says, indicating a row of plants under lamps. “If I keep a light on them, they don’t know.”

**Taxidermy in Cunningham**

David Waller, assistant professor of biology, says he remembers a Kent State student sent a collection of small birds back from Korea, but the origins of most of the other specimens are unknown.

The specimens — stuffed foxes, birds, ducks, and turkeys — fill twenty glass cases in the basement of Cunningham Hall. In one case, a gray fox stares off into the distance. Down the hall, another gray fox lurks with a dead mouse in its teeth.

“It probably deserves more attention than it gets,” Waller says. While the location of the display is a mystery to most Kent State students, the origins of the stuffed animals are perhaps a bigger mystery. While the display cases do not look dilapidated, some of the specimens do not have labels next to them, and some labels have fallen down.

“It’s hard to find money and time to put the display to better use,” Waller says. Despite the fact that most of the specimens will probably never leave Cunningham Hall, Waller says he has sent some preserved birds to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History to make sure they would be cared for properly.

**The Partially Buried Woodshed**

When conceptual artist Robert Smithson came to Kent State in January 1970 as a visiting artist, he decided he wanted to “do a piece” on campus, recounts emeritus art professor Brinsley Tyrrell.

“He wanted to pour mud down a hill originally and photograph it,” Tyrrell says. “We took him aside and asked, ‘Well, what else could we do?’

“He finally said he had always wanted to bury a building.” And that’s what he did. The official media listed in constructing the artwork are “one woodshed and 20 truckloads of earth.” The building had been a mostly abandoned storage garage in a remote corner of campus.

Smithson, with help from a group of art students, fulfilled his plan to bury one side of the building in dirt until the support beam cracked. And then it was art.

“We talked about what he wanted to do with the work when it was completed,” Tyrrell says. “He wanted it to just age naturally.”

When the piece was completed, it was valued at $10,000 — not that anyone could buy it.

“We had to ask for a piece to justify to the university why they should preserve it.” Several years later, based on the growing fame of the artist and the acclaim for the piece, it was valued: $250,000.

“There was a fire between an art critic and an important art critic, and it was settled on campus,” Waller says. The piece deteriorated for years, until the snowplow, it seems. According to the official media, the artwork on campus for about six years.

“I don’t think it was a very popular piece,” Waller says. “And it’s not really a piece of art or architecture.”
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"We talked about what he wanted to do with the work when it was completed," Tyrrell says. "He wanted it to just age naturally."

When the piece was completed, it was valued at $10,000—not that anyone could buy it. "We had to ask for a price to justify to the university why they should preserve it."

Several years later, based on the growing fame of the artist and the acclaim for the piece, it was valued at half a million dollars. "There was always controversy between artists saying it was an important work and people on the campus saying it was garbage," Tyrrell says.

The piece lasted in its slowly deteriorating state for about 14 years, until a fire and an errant snowplow, it is rumored, sped up its demise. According to Tyrrell, no one on campus realized it had collapsed for about six months.

"I find it funny that the university got this internationally known piece they didn't know they had," he says. "And when they lost it, they didn't really realize it was gone."
positively

AWARE

As HIV rates rise, students are flocking to health centers to get tested.

They do not even realize the mark of a 12-month exposure period. Many people are still in the process of finding out if they were exposed to HIV. They do not even realize the mark of a 12-month exposure period. Many people are still in the process of finding out if they were exposed to HIV.
As I placed the testing stick in my mouth, a series of anxieties and questions flooded through my head, but mostly it was: “What if it comes up positive?” I didn’t know what to think taking my first HIV/AIDS test that cold winter morning. Up to this point, I had put myself at risk a couple times, but an HIV/AIDS test never seemed like an option to me. HIV/AIDS seemed like something that happened to other people, not a Kent State journalism student. But as I dialed the number to Student Health Promotion — 6...7...2... — to schedule the test, it never seemed so real.

I took the test two days later at the DeWeese Health Center. It was cold, and I just wanted to get it over. I wondered whether I’d see anyone I knew. I sat down in the waiting area across from another student who, like me, looked embarrassed and didn’t make eye contact. Most of the other sign-ins were between 18 and 22. I sat still and kept quiet and filled out a self-assessment form about my sexual history: Was a condom used during vaginal sex during the past 12 months? Was a condom used when you put your penis in someone’s rectum during the past 12 months? How many sexual partners have you had during the past 12 months? The final question jumped out: “If you test positive, would you like help notifying your partner?” I checked the “not sure” box. I thought of any way I could have contracted the disease. Maybe I had kissed too deeply. Maybe I had had a cut in my mouth and hadn’t known. Every sexual activity I had participated in kept revolving in my head. It hit me then that I could have the disease. What would I do?

Even though I had waited only 15 minutes, it seemed longer. I kept staring at the strand of yellow light coming through the crack at the bottom of the door where another student was being tested.
"Ready?" The counselor appeared at the door.
I walked into the small white room that reminded me of the nurse's office at my high school. Some condoms and lubricants were in a container on a table in the corner along with pamphlets on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

The counselor, a friendly man who had been conducting tests at colleges and universities for the past year, asked me why I had come for the test. He asked other questions about my hobbies and classes to relax me.

I wasn't nervous during the test, and I was surprised that no blood was drawn. Instead, I just slipped a lollipop-like gadget called OraSure into the bottom of my mouth and placed it next to my gum. The test would take a sample from my gum and determine from my cells whether I had the disease. I could even talk while I tested.

The counselor and I talked about films I had seen and then played a game in which I drew five cards and had to answer "stop" (for no), "slow" (for maybe) and "go" (for yes) in terms of my behavior. "Share a razor," the card read. "Stop," I said.

The test was over within 15 minutes. I pulled the device out of my mouth, handed it to the counselor and got my code number.

One week for the results. Thursday, 1:05 p.m. I didn't think about it as I walked to class.

A jump in testing
When I got tested, I joined 150 other Kent State students who did the same thing last year. In the early '90s, Kent State began offering students free, anonymous and confidential tests. Now Kent State's health center, as well as those at some other colleges and universities, reports a rise in the number of students they're seeing, something they credit to more awareness and friendlier methods of testing.

At Kent State, all of the allotted appointment slots — usually 25 or 30 on a given day — have filled quickly this year. Cleveland State, which began testing in 1990, experienced a 5 to 10 percent increase in the number of students it tested. College of Wooster, a private school that up until a year ago had directed students to the county health department for tests during an anonymous session Feb.-March, tested 300 of its 3,000 students last year.

"We could not survive without this program," said Charles Flood, Oberlin's student health promotion council, who runs the test in the campus mind that HIV has not gone away.

The campus-testing surge comes at a time when the young adults account for 13 percent of HIV and AIDS cases, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC statistics for those 13 to 24 were compiled from 25 states that reported HIV infection from 1993 to 1999.

Typically, school health officials said, students who are aware of their disease and keep it in the campus mind that HIV has not gone away. It also has many of their school health centers offer it for free or at a low cost, and in some cases, they offer testing for a small fee.

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"We could not survive without this program," said Lori Flood, Oberlin's student health promotion coordinator. "It keeps in the campus mind that HIV has not gone away."

The campus-testing surge comes at a time when teen-agers and young adults account for 13 percent of HIV and 3 percent of AIDS cases, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC statistics for those 13 to 24 years old were compiled from 25 states that reported HIV infections from 1995 to 1999.

Typically, school health officials said, students test the most after their awareness has been heightened. It also helps that many of their school health centers offer it for free. Students usually respond when they see fliers on campus.

"It used to be difficult getting students to show up for testing," said Carolyn Mesnak, coordinator of Kent State's Student Health Promotion, which offers anonymous exams four times a semester and confidential exams anytime.

Awareness is one reason for the increase, Mesnak said, but she believes more are also testing because needles and blood aren't used. In the fall, Kent State began using OraSure, the lollipop-like device placed near the gums that can detect HIV antibodies.

She said it is quick and reliable and most students prefer it to the traditional method of testing.

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on-campus testing said it only encourages those who might otherwise neglect it.

"Testing on campus is convenient and feels safer than going to a public health clinic," Oberlin's Flood says. "It helps reduce the number of individuals with HIV because they know their status."

Sarah Gareau, a Health Education and Promotion graduate student, said she found HIV testing to be "a struggle" last year. Yes, it was nerve-racking. But she had an equally frustrating time finding transportation and someone to go with.

Her school, Ursuline College, 13 miles west of Cleveland, didn't offer testing and referred her to an outside clinic, which Gareau said was scary because it was in a rough neighborhood in Cleveland. After asking around, no other students felt like making the trek, so she took a bus and tested alone.

"It became a big process," Gareau said. "It was scary enough, but then having to worry about transportation..."

**Passive prevention**

School-based testing hasn't had an extreme impact on student testing, but it is a prevention step, said Robert Ward, an HIV/AIDS project director for the Baltimore-based American College Health Association, which conducts surveys on college health issues. And it has definitely attracted students and made testing more accessible. That's positive

Fighting denial

Your years ago news reports talked about a class of HIV medications, mainly protease inhibitors, which made HIV a chronic disease rather than immediately leading to AIDS.

HIV medication ads featured healthy, energetic young people living with the disease. And AIDS-related deaths, at the time, also dropped significantly.

Few worried or practiced safe sex.

What was not mentioned, those infected with HIV said, was the exorbitant costs of medications and the side effects — the nausea, diarrhea and unknown kidney damage — and the even stronger emotional toll.

"I worry about my health every day," said Stan Thornburg, 38, of Akron, who has been HIV-positive for six years and now takes 14 medications a day. "If I could go back and end the worrying for myself and my family, I would."

Last year, the CDC estimated that at least half of all new HIV infections in the United States are among people under 25, and the most of young people with HIV are infected sexually.

"Young people did let their guards down," said Matt Schmid of Westlake, who tested positive for HIV last year. "It was all positive for a while, and they thought, 'Well, even if I get this, it's something I can manage.'" He contracted HIV through oral sex. While those risks are rare — mostly through cuts or bleeding gums — Schmid had injured tonsils at the time and didn't know.

Schmid, now a men's health coordinator for the AIDS Task Force of Greater Cleveland, said he still sees young people who are "in denial."

Most freshmen "have a lot harder time dealing with this because they're still in that high school mindset," even though they are having sex.

"But they still think it won't happen to them."

Even today, Kerr said, not everyone uses condoms. Their reasons: They were in a relationship. They didn't have one. They were drunk or used drugs. They were talked out of it.

"Sometimes the knowledge doesn't translate into practice," she says. Kerr, former director of the American School Health Association in Kent, said scare tactics to raise HIV/AIDS awareness only work short-term.

"Remember those gory driver's ed movies in high school?" she said. "You drive slower for about a week, and the scare wears off, and you go back to the attitude, 'It will never happen to me.'"

Instead, she said, skills training is more effective because young people can incorporate communication, decision-making, refusal skills and practice putting on condoms (even if using barstools in class).

"Research has shown that practicing these skills in role playing situations carries over into real life situations," she says.

She said offering testing at school encourages more to test because it makes it more convenient.

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which Gareau said was scary because it was in a rough neighborhood in Cleveland. After asking around, no other students felt like making the trek, so she took a bus and tested alone.

"It became a big process," Gareau said. "It was scary enough, but then having to worry about transportation..."

**Passive prevention**

School-based testing hasn't had an extreme impact on student testing, but it is a prevention step, said Robert Ward, an HIV/AIDS project director for the Baltimore-based American College Health Association, which conducts surveys on college health issues. And it has definitely attracted students and made testing more accessible. That's positive news for a generation that, Ward said, has "grown up with AIDS" and whose views on the disease have shifted from cautious to complacent in recent years.

Most still think it cannot happen to them, said Dianne Kerr, a Kent State associate professor of health education. More young people have HIV, she said, but do not know it, and neither do their sexual partners.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated last year that at least half of all new HIV infections in the United States are among people under 25, and the majority of young people are infected sexually.

"We know a lot about this disease," Kerr said. "As the beginning of the epidemic, this was a gay man's or drug user's disease, but with education, people got over that idea."

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If you test positive, you would like help notifying your partner? I sat down in the same waiting area I did a week ago and looked at the half-dozen penciled-in birdbathes on the sign-in sheet. I wondered whether any of them had tested positive. After waiting a couple seconds, the counselor appeared and called me back in the room.

He asked me how my week was, but secretly, I wanted to cut the small talk and get the results. He handed me a sheet of paper. My heart pounded.

"What does it say?"


I sat there and wondered what it would have been like if positive had appeared. How would that have changed my life?

In the past, I've taken my health for granted, but until I tested — until I really had the time to escape classes and think about my sexual history, my mistakes — I never realized how lucky I am.

As I walked to class, past students congregating in the Kent State Student Center, waiting in line at McDonald's, standing outside the Memorial Athletic and Convocation Center and walking past me in the halls of Bowman, I thought more of these young people, my peers, are doing what I had just done. And that was reassuring. But, even more than that, I wanted to be with the other students and be a part of the who tested positive for HIV last year. "It was all positive for a while, and they thought, 'Well, even if I get this, it's something I can manage.'"

Schmid, now a men's health coordinator for the AIDS Task Force of Greater Cleveland, said he still sees young people who are "in denial."

Most freshmen "have a lot harder time dealing with this because they're still in that high school mindset," even though they are having sex.

"But they still think it won't happen to them."

Even today, Kerr said, not everyone uses condoms. Their reasons: They were in a relationship. They didn't have one. They were drunk or used drugs. They were talked out of it.

"Sometimes the knowledge doesn't translate into practice," she says. Kerr, former director of the American School Health Association in Kent, said scare tactics to raise HIV/AIDS awareness only work short-term.

"Remember those gory driver's ed movies in high school?" she said. "You drive slower for about a week, and the scare wears off, and you go back to the attitude, 'It will never happen to me.'"

Instead, she said, skills training is more effective because young people can incorporate communication, decision-making, refusal skills and practice putting on condoms (even if using barstools in class).

"Research has shown that practicing these skills in role playing situations carries over into real life situations," she says.

She said offering testing at school encourages more to test because it makes it more convenient.

"She said testing may help give people peace of mind if they have some concerns about their risky sexual behaviors. She has seen couples, just starting a relationship, get tested together.

"Somewhere along the way," she said, "students are getting the message that testing is important."
Thursday, 1:05 p.m.

I hadn’t thought much about the test until the walk to the health center that afternoon to get my results.

Occasionally, during the week, the thought entered my head. As I crammed for a statistics exam the night before, I remember thinking, “I get my results back tomorrow,” but that’s as far as it went.

The walk down the long, white-painted walls of the Dewees Health Center basement seemed to take forever. My heart pounded.

“If you test positive, would you like help notifying your partner?”

I sat down in the same waiting area I did a week ago and looked at the half-dozen penciled-in birthdates on the sign-in sheet. I wondered whether any of them had tested positive. After waiting a couple seconds, the counselor appeared and called me back in the room.

“He asked me how my week was, but secretly, I wanted to cut the small talk and get the results.”

He handed me a sheet of paper. My heart pounded.

“What does it say?”

“I replied. I had tested negative.


I sat there and wondered what it would have been like if positive had appeared. How would that have changed my life?

In the past, I’ve taken my health for granted, but until I tested — until I really had the time to escape classes and think about my sexual history, my mistakes — I never realized how lucky I am.

As I walked to class, past students congregating in the Kent State Student Center, waiting in line at McDonald’s, standing outside the Memorial Athletic and Convocation Center and walking past me in the halls of Bowman, I thought more of these young people, my peers, are doing what I had just done. And that was reassuring. But, even more, I owe it to myself to look past the threat of the unknown, the stress and the fear. And test.

Mostly, I felt free after taking my HIV/AIDS test. I now walk with certainty and with a piece of knowledge I will forever safeguard.
They remember when they noticed a problem, many down to the moment. Most saw it in the faces of their children or heard it in the worried words of their spouses. Still others recognized it on their own. Until then, they thought they could manage alone.

"I saw it on the old Donahue show," Rose says. "There were silhouettes of people talking behind a screen. I figured if there was a name for what I was experiencing, there must be something I could do about it."

Dan says as his condition worsened, people who loved him pushed him to even as the echoes of playing children ring through the modest space. It isn't the silence of angry standoff, but of intense absorption. The appearance of the group isn't what the name implies. None of the men or women is morbidly obese. Rose, for example, is comfortable in jeans and equally at ease sharing after nearly two decades with OA.

Dan's relaxed posture comes from many years working for a family welding business, cooperating with family as well as customers. In turn, everyone has a chance to speak. The moderator passes OA literature around the circle, and each member reads a passage. On this night, the spotlight changes position several times as each member shares and comments after their passage is read. The members have known each other for varying lengths of time and to varying degrees. It is an emotional nudist colony — no one is embarrassed because no one is holding back. Twinges of reserve, however, manifest themselves physically in the group. In deference to a leftover habit, the men and women of Overeaters Anonymous are here because they want guides overeaters through recovery. This worldwide non-profit organization has no centralized authority, and exists on the loyalty of its members. Like Alcoholics Anonymous, a spiritually oriented system invented by a New York stockbroker and an Akron surgeon to help alcoholics through recovery — OA offers a 12-step recovery program. OA is a network of people connected by food addiction. A brochure for new members says the only membership duty is a desire to recover.

Locally, OA meets Monday nights at the Stow United Methodist Church. Surrounded by amateur artwork and a large calendar announcing birthdays, the small group is composed mostly of women. Chairs are in a circle, which loosens when members take their place. Some read OA literature, while others prefer to sit quietly with their hands on their laps. The atmosphere is one of heavy, quiet reflection. This doesn't seem unnatural, even as the echoes of playing children ring through the modest space. It isn't the silence of angry standoff, but of intense absorption.

The appearance of the group isn't what the name implies. None of the men or women is morbidly obese. Rose, for example, is comfortable in jeans and equally at ease sharing after nearly two decades with OA. Dan's relaxed posture comes from many years working for a family welding business, cooperating with family as well as customers. In turn, everyone has a chance to speak. The moderator passes OA literature around the circle, and each member reads a passage. On this night, the spotlight changes position several times as each member shares and comments after their passage is read. The members have known each other for varying lengths of time and to varying degrees. It is an emotional nudist colony — no one is embarrassed because no one is holding back. Twinges of reserve, however, manifest themselves physically in the group. In deference to a leftover habit, some members cross their arms over their chests.

As the book makes its rounds, members introduce themselves. When it reaches Leeann, she states her first name and adds that she is a compulsiveovereater. Her expression shows no shame. OA teaches that acceptance is the first step toward recovery, and the other members will introduce themselves the same way.

"Hello, Leeann," the group replies. After she reads, she removes her glasses and speaks collectedly. The group listens with the patience of an elementary school teacher. Like the best teachers, the members learn as well as teach. When Leeann says she ate to bury pain, she is not alone. Because she ignored the problem for so long, she has difficulty recognizing her weaker emotions.

"My life isn't perfect," she says. "But at least I can say I know when I am angry now. That is a big step for me. I knew when I was crying I was sad, but I felt so many things I couldn't identify."

Rose nods her head and smiles, indicating she understands.

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**fighting COMPULSION**

Support group guides overeaters through recovery

Story by Jennifer Krebs

Right: The 12 steps of Overeaters Anonymous.
acceptance is the first step toward recovery, and members will introduce themselves the same way.

"Leeann," the group replies. After she reads, she takes off her glasses and speaks collectively. The group listens to her. Like the best teachers, Leeann has a way of making her students feel valued.

"I'm not perfect," she says. "But I know when I was in therapy, I felt so many things I couldn't identify." She then turns to her head and smiles, indicating she understands.
"I know exactly what you mean," she says. "I knew something was off, too, but I could never put my finger on it. It was so frustrating to try to explain it to someone not knowing what was wrong myself.

These small gatherings seem to be breeding grounds for realization. They aren't on a crusade to shed pounds, only to know themselves and improve their relationships. It isn't about losing weight, although many members do. OA says that family pressures, job stress and an overall sense of helplessness.

"My husband didn't work steady for 9 1/2 years," she says. "It was a hard time, but I found when I relied on a higher power, my needs were always met."

Rose and Dan say eating was a temporary pacifier during hard times, and it only made them feel more lost.

'It works if you work it'

One goal of the program is to move food to a healthier place on a member's list of priorities. When this aim has been achieved, members begin the daunting task of filling its place. Dan, who says loved ones referred him to OA two years ago, has begun that journey.

"The key to breaking the obsession is finding something with depth and weight," he says. "I accept tasks with enthusiasm now, and I'm able to add to the work situation. It occurred to me that I could be helping myself instead of sitting around thinking how lousy I've got it."
His crew went through a “pure” phase where they didn’t take photos.
They stoically sent their anonymous art into the world, with no record of it but their memories. But that didn’t last long.

“Photos show your weaknesses, help you improve your technique, Rob says. And if he was going to spend so much time painting, he at least wanted something to remember it by.

Legal technicalities
Rob never got busted for graffiti, directly. But he says that once police in Chesapeake suspected he was a writer, they began to harass him and watch his every move.

Police in the greater Virginia Beach area had already been cracking down on graffiti before Rob moved there. And about a year and a half into his stay there, he got careless.

He was out with Over and Vers one night, painting the back of an abandoned store. They’d been sloppy, had parked the car right there. Rob heard the sound of another car. He put his can of paint down, stepped away from the wall and tried to warn the other two. But it was too late - the police car rounded the corner while Over and Vers were still painting.

The policeman arrested Rob for contributing to minors. He got the other two for vandalism.

He couldn’t pin any graffiti charges on Rob, but after that, Rob says, he began to get pulled over frequently without cause. He was as if cops were always on the lookout for his truck.

About four months later, Rob was at the laundromat when the same cop who’d arrested him before pulled into the parking lot and began to shine his flashlight around looking for him. The policeman arrested Rob for contributing to minors. He got the other two for vandalism.

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“Got any spray paint in here?” he demanded. “Got any drugs in here?”

There was an open 40-ounce of beer in the truck.

Upon searching the truck further, the cop also found a marijuana pipe. He tried to cut a deal with Rob: no charges if Rob gave him information about graffiti.

“I’ll let you go tonight if you talk to me,” the policeman said.
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“I ain’t telling you shit,” Rob told him.
“Fine, you get arrested here; you spend the night in jail.”
The policer officer persisted with the bargaining. Finally Rob said he’d go back to the station with him. There, the cop showed him photos of graffiti from all over Virginia Beach.
“I don’t know names,” Rob said.
“Nobody tells me names. I’m just a photographer”—he added this because that night at the wall, the same cop had discovered a camera among Rob’s things.
The cop let Rob go on the grounds he’d return for interrogation the next day. The next day he talked to a detective from Portsmouth, another city outside Virginia Beach, who specialized in graffiti.
The detective was cool for a while, Rob says. But he grew aggravated when Rob still refused to talk.
“You know, you can give us some information and you can leave here happy,” the detective said. “Or else you can stand your ground and take a lie detector test tomorrow.”
“Give me a lie detector test!” Rob yelled furiously. “Give me the test!”
There never was a test, but the detective did proceed to flip through three more photo albums full of graffiti.
“I don’t know who that is,” Rob said again and again. Some of the photos he saw were his own pieces, pieces he’d never even photographed.
He was at the station for five or six hours. Then they let him go. The charges were eventually thrown out of court, Rob says, on the grounds that the search had been conducted illegally.
Rob was through with being hassled in Chesapeake. He sold his truck and moved to Virginia Beach proper.
Around that time he started to work for Service Master Restoration Services, a company that cleaned carpets and repaired water damage. It was different than construction; he had a lot of idle time where he just rode around in a van, traveling from one work site to another.
When he wasn’t driving, he was doodling, constantly scribbling graffiti-scratches in a notebook with colored markers. At night he was with his crew.

Going straight
But those daytime scribbles were on Rob’s mind. Here he was, working a manual-labor job and doing artwork only when he could steal time during the day or when he was out doing graffiti at night. It was a realization that slowly grew on him over the following months. He wanted out. He wanted to go to college. He wanted to get paid to do artwork.

Now, well along in his college studies, Rob looks back objectively on his graffiti experience. He got in trouble with the cops. He never had any money. Graffiti was a “day-to-day” existence for him.
“I can’t say that it was one of the best times of my life,” he says. “But at the same time, I was so engulfed in graffiti that I didn’t care.”
He was living on his own, not going to school. A lot of girls he hung out with were still in high school, he says, and you can’t have a relationship with someone in high school.
“Graffiti was kind of like my comfort zone,” he says. “It was my love. I got my full attention. It was the only thing that I was accepted for that I could do well.”
He doesn’t regret his graffiti years. He decided he would get good, and he did. And in the process, he met all kinds of people from all kinds of places. He learned a lot about life, he says.
“With graffiti, that was actually the first thing I followed through with, the first thing I completed,” he says.
“You may be really good and you may have your whole heart in it. But there comes a day when you need to raise a family someday, and you need to take care of yourself, too.
“Just wasn’t the high point of my life, so I left it behind me.”

It’s a universal graffiti theme, Badagnani says. One generation leads to another, which leads to another. Artists reach their 30s and have families and fade out of the graffiti scene. And they’re replaced by new artists, constantly trying to up the ante, making drawings more realistic. Some early 1980s artists have turned professional, doing murals for pay. But they’re in the minority.
Rob painted almost nonstop for the last four months he was in Virginia Beach. Every time he went out, he says, he got better. The paint flowed more smoothly. His pieces came out cleaner.
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Looking back

Rob still listens to hip-hop and surfs graffiti sites on the Web. Rob still notices trains. Once he was eating with his parents at the Akropolis in Kent, and he couldn’t take his eyes off the trains coming and going across the river. He says Kent is strategically located between Pittsburgh and Cleveland, so it sees a lot of freight — and graffiti — traffic. He once saw a familiar freight car downtown; he hadn’t painted it himself, but he’d been there when it was painted.

Rob had originally hoped to continue painting in Ohio. He’d hoped to meet other artists, but that didn’t happen. His first summer back, he lived with his mother in Alliance. He sneaked out at night and painted. His mother knew he was into graffiti, so he lied and said he was going to the bars.

Rob doesn’t paint anymore. He never found another close group of writers. He’s only done two or three pieces since the summer he came back from Virginia Beach. He can’t rightfully consider himself a graffiti artist, he says. "I still love it to death," he says. "To be a graffiti artist, you have to go out and paint. I don’t take the risk of getting known."

Keeping it real

Rob returned to Virginia Beach just once to visit, and that was only two months after he moved back to Ohio. So he’s never really been back, he says. Phone called Rob from Virginia about a year ago. Things weren’t going too well for his crew, Rob says. Some of them were on heroin now.

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They got to the age where they wanted to be experimental," Rob says. "We were never trying to be rebellious. You’re definitely not doing it because it’s breaking the law."

And Over, the kid who taught Rob the ropes, still gets in trouble with the cops. Rob says that doesn’t have anything to do with graffiti — it’s just their lifestyle. They got to the age where they wanted to be experimental," Rob says. "We were never trying to be rebellious. You’re definitely not doing it because it’s breaking the law."

And Over, the kid who taught Rob the ropes, still gets in trouble with the cops. When Over was still a freshman in high school, art schools already were offering him scholarships, Rob says. He had talent, but he didn’t use it for anything but graffiti. He’d been in and out of juvenile detention since he was 12, once for stealing cars. "All that time that he spent in jail — he lost respect in school all together," Rob says. "He knew that he was talented and he knew that he was good... He’s just throwing it all away. I wish I could go down and talk to him."

Rob does say that part of being real for him and his friends included stealing spray paint. It saved money. And Badagnani says on-the-street graffiti culture remains steeped in traditions not too distant from those of the 1970s and ’80s. "Being real" for many graffiti artists still involves stealing paint, he says. Respect, anonymity and "representing" are still vital elements.

"We’re not bad people," Rob says. "We’re just looking at as bad people because we do graffiti. We paint people’s stuff, you know?"

Rob likes his studies as a visual communication design major. He’d like to work at a graphic-design firm someday, he says. He wouldn’t mind doing graffiti again in the future, he says, but only if he’s living in a city with an established graffiti culture. In Kent, he says, graffiti wouldn’t be appreciated. It would just be writing on a wall, not art on a wall.

Badagnani agrees.

"As for local graffiti, I think Kent is mostly a backwater," he says. "Every now and then you see a CSX (train) come through and you’ll see some beautiful multicolored cars come through and it blows your mind."

In Rob’s room, beside the drafting table he uses for class work, hangs a piece of posterboard adorned with Magic-Marker graffiti scumble. Rapidly scrawled tags crowd the poster. The name “Phone” leaps out. The paper is signed by many of Rob’s old crew. It’s accompanied him every time he’s moved, he says.

"It was hard to leave it," Rob says of graffiti. "But at the same time, it was the best thing I could’ve done. I don’t have any regrets about what I did." [5]
He “was having the time of my life.”
But he left Virginia Beach in June 1999 and enrolled at Kent State that fall.

**Looking back**
Rob still listens to hip-hop and surfs graffiti sites on the Web. Rob still notices trains. Once he was eating with his parents at the Acropolis in Kent, and he couldn’t take his eyes off the train coming and going across the river. He says Kent is strategically located between Pittsburgh and Cleveland, so it sees a lot of freight — and graffiti — traffic. He once saw a familiar freight car downtown, he hadn’t painted it himself, but he’d been there when it was painted.

Rob had originally hoped to continue painting in Ohio. He’d hoped to meet other artists, but that didn’t happen. His first summer back, he lived with his mother in Alliance. He sneaked out at night and painted. His mother knew he was into graffiti, so he lied and said he was going to the bars.

Rob doesn’t paint anymore. He never found another close group of writers. He’s only done two or three pieces since the summer he came back from Virginia Beach. So he can’t rightfully consider himself a graffiti artist, he says.

“I still love it to death,” he says. “To be a graffiti artist, you have to go out and paint. I don’t take the risk of getting known.”

**Keeping it real**
Rob returned to Virginia Beach just once to visit, and that was only two months after he moved back to Ohio. So he’s never really been back, he says. Phone called Rob from Virginia about a year ago. Things weren’t going too well for his crew, Rob says. Some of them were on heroin now.

They just kept trying to push the limits, Rob says. But he says that doesn’t have anything to do with graffiti — it’s just their lifestyle.

“They got to the age where they wanted to be experimental,” Rob says. “We were never trying to be rebellious. You’re definitely not doing it because it’s breaking the law.”

And Over, the kid who taught Rob the ropes, still gets in trouble with the cops. When Over was still a freshman in high school, art schools already were offering him scholarships, Rob says. He had talent, but he didn’t use it for anything but graffiti. He’d been in and out of juvenile detention since he was 12, once for stealing cars.

“All that time that he spent in juvey — he lost respect in school all together,” Rob says. “He knew that he was talented and he knew that he was good... He’s just throwing it all away. I wish I could go down and talk to him.”

Rob does say that part of “being real” for him and his friends included stealing spray paint. It saved money. And Badagnani says on-the-street graffiti culture remains steeped in traditions not too distant from those of the 1970s and ‘80s. “Being real” for many graffiti artists still involves stealing paint, he says. Respect, anonymity and “representing” are still vital elements.

“We’re not bad people,” Rob says. “We’re just looked at as bad people because we do graffiti. We paint people’s stuff, you know?”

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Right: Janira Teague stands before a mural of Malcolm X in Oscar Ritchie Hall.

and Ktn Hechler, former West Virginia secretary of state, to speak against the large-scale coal mining operations in that state.

Gumerman says her environmental focus comes from the fact that everyone can relate to it.

"It doesn't matter what political party you're from," Gumerman says. "You have to admit that one shouldn't cut down trees and that recycling is a good thing."

Chris Fox. Call him a left-wing anarchist

Chris Fox calls himself left-wing anarchist with a desire to end human suffering. He doesn't necessarily believe he can end all human suffering, but at least he'd like to really try.

Chris Fox's definition of anarchy may vary from most. The image comes to mind of Johnny Rotten spitting words of anarchy and all you can think is violence and a total disregard for everything.

Why would an anarchist want to end human suffering?

Anarchy, by definition, is a rejection of authority and French political writer and socialist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon was the first person who claimed to be an anarchist. He believed the laws of society had nothing to do with authority. In the 1860s, Russian nobleman Mikhail Bakunin, first declared anarchy possible only through violent revolution, the destruction of institutions.

This may have had impact on negative attitudes towards anarchy that exist today.

"Anarchy isn't a rebellion against all norms," Fox says. "I obey traffic lights, but I don't obey them because it's the law. I obey them because it's a good thing to do."

But what about the anarchist groups operating today, such as the Anti-Capitalist Convergence, which has gained fame opposing globalization? Is tearing down of a McDonald's a good thing? To answer that, Fox refers to Bakunin's theory.

"A lot of anarchists have engaged in property destruction, which is distinctly different from violence against people because it's not just random property destruction," says Fox. "It's going after specific things, specific corporate and government objects that are directly themselves causing oppression..."
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Fox used to be a “staunch capitalist” buying into Ayn Rand’s philosophy of objectivism where happiness is the only reason for living and production is man’s noblest achievement.

“Staunch capitalist” seems a far cry from “left-wing anarchist” but there’s always time for transition in one’s life. Fox experienced it when he started noticing conflicting views between his own moral and ethical theories and that of Rand’s. He then read up on the literature of anarchism and something clicked.

Now he has taken that theory and put it to use as an active member of Anti-Racist Action, the Kent State Anti-War Committee and the Burning River Revolutionary Anarchist Collective. He has been instrumental in arranging anti-sexual assault workshops for campus residents, as well as programs for resident assistants on how to handle these situations. He has also worked to arrange police brutality marches, including the one in October 2000 where nearly 50 people ignored a frigid rainstorm to march through Kent. He has helped to disseminate information on political prisoners. He also spent March 2 in New York protesting the World Economic Forum.

Even with all that on his shoulders, Fox still finds time to escort women through crowds of protestors after leaving abortion clinics in Cleveland one Saturday out of each month.

Most dictionaries list anarchism as the theory that all forms of government are incompatible with individual and social liberties and should be abolished. But what about the traffic lights? Wouldn’t those be abolished? What would be keeping one from ignoring the light and hurting others?

“Morality,” Fox points out, “does not come from government. It comes from what’s right.”

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From Velveeta to road kill, Kent State students face fright every day

Nearly everyone has some sort of fear. Something that increases the heart rate induces sweating and causes general discomfort and nervousness. But what happens when this mild fear becomes unmanageable? Now it is a phobia.

Catherine Cherpas, a licensed psychologist at the DeWeese Health Center, says that a fear has reached the level of a phobia "when it becomes destabilizing and it is significant in your everyday function."

It is not always clear why people have these somewhat irrational fears, Cherpas says. "Some of us are predisposed to developing fear and anxiety disorders," Cherpas says. "We are wired that way."

No matter what the cause, the following Kent State students have severe fears that Cherpas says sound like possible phobias.

**Wright** says she believes her first traumatic encounter with yellow cheese was at the age of 6, when her brother insisted she enjoyed the product and felt the need to prove it to her.

"My brother got a lot of those Kraft Singles and was like 'You are going to eat cheese! You are going to learn to like cheese!'" Wright says. "He then started cramming them down my throat, so then I vomited."

Wright says she believes her first traumatic encounter with yellow cheese was at the age of 6, when her brother insisted she enjoyed the product and felt the need to prove it to her.

Wright was given a bowl of Velveeta noodles by her roommate who told her they were plain.
In actuality, Wright says, a fingernail-size amount of cheese had been added. "Ewww," Wright says, obviously remembering vividly the encounter with Velveeta cheese. "I'm not hungry anymore."

And cheese cubes are also out of the question, she declares. Wright often has problems with the drive-through windows of fast-food restaurants.

"I tell them no cheese, no cheese, and then they give me cheese," Wright says. "And then I freak out."

Wright is wary of telling people of her fear because she knows it's a little strange.

"It's embarrassing," she says.

Despite efforts from her friends, Wright has no desire to overcome her hatred for cheese.

"I will never like it," she says.

**Water under the bridge**

Walking around campus, you will undoubtedly come across multiple openings to the underground tunnels covered by a metal grating.

These grates are nothing more than air and access vents to the utility tunnel system holding piping, data, phone and power cables. Dawn Fellner, a junior in biology major, says she has a fear that these grates may one day give way while she is crossing them.

Her biggest fear, however, is crossing over grates she knows have water under them. It doesn't matter the height, as long as there is water, Fellner says.

"It is a petrifying fear. I freeze up," Fellner says.

Wherever Fellner walks she is conscious of any grates ahead of her path and she will always walk around them.

Small grates like sewer openings are to be avoided, but bridges with water under them are the absolute worst, she says.

Her first memory of this fear is from the age of 10 while in in the Flats of Cleveland with her family. There was a grated bridge crossing the Cuyahoga River and everyone was walking over it.

Everyone except Fellner, who was too terrified to cross.

"I don't know why I have this fear. Nothing has ever really happened, but it freaked me out," Fellner says. "Ever since then, I cannot do it."

Occasionally she will accidentally find herself standing on top of a grated opening.

Fellner says that her fear of grates is not too severe because they usually can be avoided easily enough. But this is not always the case.

One of the worst encounters Fellner had with grates was on the Mantis ride at Cedar Point.

Approaching the ride, the stairs are all grated, but there was ground underneath, so Fellner says she was not as scared.

Getting off the ride, the grates were built above water, putting Fellner in a frightening situation.

"I froze and did not want to move," she says. "But I had to because of people trying to get off the ride."

For her to get off the ride, she says, her boyfriend at the time had to give her a piggyback ride to safety.

"My family and friends kind of think it's silly and they just
laugh at me," Fellner says. "I mean it is kind of silly. Fellner has no problems with water, she even water skis. Yet she still fears water underneath grates. "I mean it really does not make any sense I guess," Fellner admits. "I feel like a freak now."

**I-76 special**

Drive along any major highway and you will find scattered carcases that decorate the road like a hunter’s taxidermy collection. In other words, road kill.

Aimee Tomaric, a senior in advertising, says she fears passing over road kill while driving in her car. 

"If [road kill] is in my lane, I will do anything to go to either side," Tomaric says. Once the road kill is sighted, Tomaric gets a "really gross feeling" and she usually tries to close her eyes while passing over. She does admit, however, to peeking every time.

Tomaric, who grew up in Chardon, says there are a lot of animals there and road kill "all over the place." Plus, everything is "mutant size," she claims, especially the raccoons.

Though Tomaric is disgusted by road kill while driving over it, it does not affect her if she is walking near it. What really grosses her out is the possibility of getting "blood and bone stuck in your tires." A while ago, Tomaric’s sister hit a deer while Tomaric was driving behind her. Unfortunately the deer did not die immediately, and a state trooper had to shoot it, Tomaric says. This was a traumatic experience for her.

"It was really sickening," Tomaric said. "The first time the trooper did not shoot the deer properly. It was terrible. Really sad."

On another occasion, Tomaric witnessed a truck strike an opossum. "It was like instant dread. I hoped it was dead because I don’t like to see anything in pain," Tomaric says. Tomaric had to turn around to know for sure. It was not dead, so Tomaric pulled up behind it and put on her blinkers to protect it from other cars, she says. She sat there for nearly a half hour until it crawled off the side of the road.

"Probably not very smart, but I felt bad for it," Tomaric says. "The next day it was not there, but I don’t know if it made it or something else."

"I felt really sick to my stomach because I couldn’t do anything," Tomaric says. After hitting an animal, Tomaric always feels the need to turn around and see if the animal is OK. Even when she hit a chipmunk she says she turned around.

Tomaric says she has also struck a bat, which "looked like a little brown cotton ball" in the road. This fear is rooted in the grossness. The first time she remembers seeing road kill was when she was 8 years old. She turned to wave to her aunt and uncle, who were in the car behind her. As she waved she saw the car strike a rabbit.

"Most people don’t actually see the vehicle hit the animal," she says. "That’s probably why this fear started." Tomaric says she does not think it is possible to overcome this fear, mainly because she encounters road kill too much. She somewhat consoles herself, however, with the thought that the animals go to "a nice place with green clovers."

"I have a soft heart," Tomaric says. A soft heart and a fear of "juicy" roadkill.
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