Stars & Stereotypes

Just to the north lies a country that watches our every move — and we ignore them
From the editor

Bagfuls of generic soda and 88-cent Wal-Mart cookies fueled this issue of The Burr. Since most of us avoided going out for coffee in the freezing weather, sugar was the driving element of production. These 64 pages are the result of a nine-week sugar high.

I hoped “my” Burr would include stories that were unexpected, funny and meaty. Thanks to enterprising writers and gifted photographers, there are many good reasons to read The Burr this semester.

The cover story, Jaclyn Youhana’s “Stars and stereotypes,” thoughtfully examines the United States’ relationship with its northern neighbor. Steven Harbaugh looks into the neglect of Oscar Ritchie Hall in “The renovation will not be televised.” Matt Peters finally tells the story of Kent State’s own New Wave legend, Devo. And that’s just the tip of the editorial iceberg.

My name is the one that will be attached to this issue, but I can’t take credit for everything. Many talented people worked on The Burr this semester, and it was the chemistry among us that gave this issue its personality and made working in our closet of an office so fun. I hope reading this issue is as enjoyable for you as making it was for me.

Spring 2005 staff

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Check out our exclusives

Got coverage? Paying for health care is a constant worry for some young people

Eat cheap Down-home cooking abounds at Pechin’s, a rural shopping center just three hours away

Hot shots Shots that should and should not be handled out on the town
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COVER

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   Just to the north lies
   a country that watches
   our every move — and
   we ignore them

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   This congregation's
tactics have some
people crying cult

License to steal
   A behind-the-scenes look at
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Ain't nothin' but a G-thing
   A day in the life of
   USS boss Gary Broadbent
A dark figure glances over his shoulder into the cold December blackness. The start of the grocery store exhaust fan reminds him of the sound of a rent-a-cop security patrol car. The man braces himself, grips the cold green metal of the Dumpster with his gloved hands and hoists himself up and over its 6-foot-high perimeter. He disappears from view, surrounded by bags of bread and packaged produce; he grimaces at the sight of slimy eggs that did not survive the trip into the Dumpster.

Working quickly by street light, Josh Brett Wilhelm, an international relations major, picks up a box of food while Chad Meyers, a junior philosophy major, climbs into a grocery store’s Dumpster. The two students found bags of potatoes, loaves of bread, a box of strawberry jelly, boxes of orange juice and lots of produce.

Sebrasky, a senior English major, digs through the wasted cuisine and loads crates of spaghetti sauce, boxes of orange juice, bags of pita bread and green vegetables into the trunk of his car. Sebrasky is providing himself and his eight housemates with another week’s worth of sustenance.

On any given night, the Dumpsters of large grocery stores, booksellers and office suppliers are filled with products they cannot sell. Since the winter of 2003, a group of students at Kent State — who refer to themselves as ‘freegans’ — have endeavored to capitalize on this surplus, turning what would otherwise occupy space in landfills into a way of helping those who cannot afford what they need to live. Many of the students involved in Dumpster diving are eccentric and artsy. The majority of the women do not wear makeup; many of the men wear the same pair of pants for weeks on end without washing.

Sebrasky says when he first heard of freegans, he thought it was a funny idea so he and his friends decided to try it out.

“We went to Giant Eagle and found three huge crates of vegetables, and we thought it was great,” Sebrasky says, wearing the same pale green plaid shirt he has worn for weeks.
Because they lived in a dorm at the time, they did not have room to store all that they found, so after one "huge feast" they gave the rest to organizations who work with "needy people." Since that first time, the group of Dumpster divers on campus has grown to include several dozen students. They now go Dumpster diving about once per week, usually about 2 a.m., when most store managers and security guards are sleeping.

Although most people have preconceived ideas of what Dumpster diving is like, when the freegans go, they do not see rats scurrying around in sludge, nibbling on moldy food. "New people are always shocked, they're like, 'I can't believe they throw away so much,'" Sebrasky says, as he sniffs a bag of spinach leaves that may have gone bad. "The vast majority of food never touches the Dumpster. Most of it is in huge garbage bags. Bags and bags filled with loaves of packaged bread and produce — it's the same food anyone would buy in the store and think is perfectly fine. To tell you the truth, we hardly ever see rotten food."

John Hoffman, a third-generation Dumpster diver and the author of two books on the subject, says Dumpster diving has evolved over the past decades. He decided to write about his experiences in hopes of inspiring others to Dumpster dive.

"When I wrote my book (Art and Science of Dumpster Diving) in 1993, it was quite obscure, unknown to the general population and not considered such a cool thing to do," he says. "It was inextricably associated with homelessness in the public mind. Since 1993, Dumpster diving has gained a better reputation as a way to get stuff without paying for it and as a way to help the environment. In general, Dumpster diving has entered the mainstream to a much greater degree."

Chad Meyers, a junior philosophy major and friend of Sebrasky, says it was a natural progression for him. He has been a vegetarian since he was a teenager, but only recently did he begin to think there were ethical problems with eating eggs and milk products. Since then he has become a vegan, a person who eats no animal products whatsoever, including milk, eggs and gelatin. He has also become a freegan.

From left, Josh Sebrasky,
Tim Mayer, Elaine Hullihen, Aaron Painter and Matthew "Stewie" Coate check out bags of food rescued from Dumpsters. Sebrasky found more than 100 energy bars and eight bottles of red wine.

"The vast majority of food never touches the Dumpster. Most of it is in huge garbage bags. Bags and bags filled with loaves of packaged bread and produce — it's the same food anyone would buy in the store."
Maria Jenkins, a fine arts major, and Jeff Tucholski, a geography major, enjoy bread and vegetables at a potluck dinner hosted by the freegans.

“We heard of vegetarians, then vegans and finally freegans — which means eating only what you get for free,” Meyers says matter-of-factly, his shoulder-length hair covering his left eye.

**Vegans and freegans**

Hoffman says freegans are an exciting new extension of the Dumpster diving population. He began Dumpster diving when he was 7 to supplement his family's income after his father was injured in World War II. He sees it as related to veganism but less strict.

"One of the problems of veganism is that it's so absolute that it's bound to cause moral quandaries," Hoffman says. "The most devoted and consistent vegans will be forever offending others, packing their own lunch, much of which comes in plastic and from the very same store that sells meat."

Freeganism allows an individual to eat anything that is free. In fact, many freegans eat meat and animal products as long as they are free. Attending family reunions gets a lot easier.

"The freegan emphasis on human justice as well as animal justice makes it a lot easier to drag in various issues without being trapped in a vegan moral quandary between plastic tofu wrappers and frozen, store-made hot dogs wrapped in biodegradable white butcher paper from the mom-and-pop store," Hoffman says. "Freegans have dealt with the practical reality of the cruelty-drenched, highly imperfect world in which we find ourselves and the practical limitations of a vegan lifestyle."

**The ethics of Dumpster diving**

Rather than purchase overpriced vegan food and contribute to a system they see as wasteful, freegans strive to live as ethically as they can in terms of ecology and economics.

Meyers says the key word is responsibility. “In American society, every citizen is responsible to follow the established laws, but nowhere in our educational system is anyone teaching that we are responsible to follow the laws of the earth,” he says. "As a rule, whatever can decompose is good for the earth; what cannot is not good."
Because American education is being privatized and tuition is rising, individuals are left with no choice but to buy into a system in which the pursuit of happiness turns into the pursuit of money, Meyers says.

“So now I have to go to school, and I can’t pay for food. So what am I supposed to do?” Meyers asks. “I don’t have a guilty conscience. As I see it, I’m reviving value that would otherwise have been waste. It’s a peaceful movement, but at the same time, Dumpsters are private property, so there is risk involved.”

Sebrasky adds, “It’s illegal, but it’s good for the world.”

Because it is cheaper to waste things than recycle them, freegans view the for-profit motive of a market economy as detrimental to nature.

“Americans comprise 4 percent of the world’s population yet generate 25 percent of the world’s waste,” Sebrasky says.

Although it may seem obvious based on those statistics, what seems like an excessive amount of waste from the perspective of the Dumpster diver does not seem to be a lot to a store owner.

“Compared to what the stores actually sell, from the perspective of the store or bakery, they may not consider themselves terribly wasteful at all,” Hoffman says. “Their math is cold, calculated and economic. It is apparently worth their while to, for example, get a good deal on kiwi in bulk even if they end up wasting a certain proportion of it. Despite what divers see as a lot of waste, the stores are making a hell of a profit.”

Slightly bruised fruit and other less than desirable things are quickly moved off the shelves to make room for items that are more attractive and more likely to sell.

A store will throw out 50 pounds of brown bananas rather than advertise 50 pounds of bananas suitable for banana bread, Hoffman says.

Store owners want to make sure items on the shelves are perfectly fresh. “This is a high-class joint, not a banana brothel, and space is at a premium,” Hoffman says. “This is how stores seem to think. They’re not going to sell you a month’s worth of fruit for a pittance, not when they can sell you a week’s worth of fruit at a premium.”

Elaine Hullihen, a junior fine arts major, looks at the food from Dumpsters stuffed in her refrigerator. Freegans learn how to cook creatively with what they find — mostly bread and vegetables.
Sebrasky and other divers say they are not bothered about using the system of waste to survive.

"Dumpster diving feels liberating in a way because you know you don't have to work to survive," he says. "I would like to be an ethical consumer, but as a student, it is economically impossible. If I was an ethical consumer, I would still be as dependent on the system as I am as a Dumpster diver. They are kind of like two sides of the same coin. But I'm no longer limited by the feeling that after I graduate I have to immediately get a job."

**Introducing Dumpster diving to your family**

Sebrasky says his family has always been cutting corners to make ends meet.

"We always clipped coupons to pay the bills," he says. "That's why they're cool with it - they don't have to pay for my food."

Sebrasky says his parents were not surprised when he told them what he was doing because he has always done unconventional things.

"They were really kind of disgusted by the idea," he says. "They never said I shouldn't, but they were really against it."

This changed when he took some of the food home with him.

"They saw that it was good food, and they saw how much there was," he says.

"Now they both eat it. My dad always makes sandwiches out of the sourdough bread I dig out. If I ever get caught and go to court, my mom said she would hire the best lawyer to defend me."

Chad Meyers says that when he took his best friend of four years diving for the first time, she experienced a different reaction from her upper middle-class family.

"We brought home all kinds of organic food from the Dumpster," Meyers says. "Her dad told her we were thieves and tried to kick her out of the house. Then he told her she shouldn't see me anymore."

Dumpster divers are not always seen as thieves. Many stores have no formal policy on how to deal with it. Some stores do not even attempt to discourage it, although they may frown on people actually crawling inside the Dumpster, says Scott Holland, the grocery manager at the Giant Eagle in Kent.

"Basically it's private property," Holland says. "We don't like people crawling in Dumpsters because of the liability issue, but some people like to get scraps for their dogs. We don't have a problem with that."

**Using waste**

Freegans are using Dumpster diving as a means for subsisting in a market-driven society, but in a sense they also are using capitalism to change capitalism and make
it more just, Hoffman says. The reason stores waste food is so more people will buy food at a higher price, but if freegans use wasted food rather than buying it, they are decreasing the control of the market over society.

"The very existence of the waste is an argument that using the waste will change the market conditions because the stores waste in response to market conditions," Hoffman says.

Peter Ghazarian, a senior English major and a housemate of Meyers and Sebrasky, asks, "Why should anyone pay for food if we can throw this much away? You don't really understand this until you see our refrigerator."

Meyers suggests we waste so much because the profit motive took the steering wheel and ethics took the back seat. American society cares more about money and power than the needs of the poor around the world.

Sebrasky, who lives between two Cleveland discount booksellers, decided he would see what books they threw away.

"I found Bibles, old literature, dictionaries, self-help books and trashy romance novels," he says. "Every day they throw out books. One day the Dumpster was half-full; the next day it was completely full."

Because the booksellers purchase used books from customers, Sebrasky decided to empty out the Dumpster of one bookstore and try to sell them to another bookstore owned by the same corporation.

"I made 25 bucks — they're kind of stingy," Sebrasky says with a smirk.

Later, at the same store, Sebrasky and Meyers were spotted in the Dumpster by the store manager. The store manager asked if he could help them, and Sebrasky asked if he could take anything he had gathered. The store manager said, "Absolutely not. It's illegal," to which Sebrasky said, "That's really stupid." "Well, it's the law," the manager replied.

"I think throwing away books is absolutely as bad as burning them," Sebrasky says.

For these Dumpster divers, using the excesses of the economic system is a way to work toward a more just society. It's rare when a visitor stops by their house and leaves without being fed and given a week's worth of food. In fact, the only time it occurs is if the visitor thinks things found in a Dumpster are garbage.
International students face increased scrutiny in a post-Sept. 11 United States

Eduard Junelov, a sophomore finance major, waits patiently for a U.S. airport security guard to finish rummaging through his bag as a stream of travelers brushes by and easily pass through security. A nervous pang twitches in his stomach as the minutes tick by, and he hopes his delay won't make him miss his flight home to Turkmenistan.

Halfway across the world, Italian graduate student Gabriella Mazza fills out an exhausting stack of paperwork, including an I-20 document that will assure her government of the need to obtain an F visa, or student visa, so she can finish earning her translation degree at Kent State.

Although Deborah Campbell, a student earning her doctorate in curriculum and instruction, misses her family back in the Bahamas, she is apprehensive about arranging a visit home because of the question and search she will undergo the moment she arrives at the airport.

These episodes are reflections of the hurdles — which include routine and rigorous security checks — that nearly every international student endures before stepping foot on a university's campus, let alone crossing the border into a post-Sept. 11 America.

**Aftermath of the attacks**

American universities have effortlessly attracted the world's brightest students for years, but a feeling of uncertainty is rising, as international student enrollment declines throughout the nation.

While there were about 500,000 international students entering the United States in 2003-2004, it was the first decrease in six years and is the first absolute decline in international student enrollment since three decades ago. The number of graduate students increased by 2.5 percent from the previous years, but undergraduate student enrollment declined by 5 percent.

"Where we used to have a very steady and increasing flow of students into the United States, that flow has plateaued and has almost started to decline," says Charles Nieman, the director of International Student and Scholar Services at Kent State.

Many experts blame the decline on the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, as security concerns pressed Homeland Security and other agencies to delay issuing student visas and enforce monitoring procedures once international students arrive in the United States.

"The events of Sept. 11 and the aftermath of those tragic events have brought the United States into a deep concern of safeguarding its own citizens," Nieman says. The Transportation Security Agency, Homeland Security and other agencies are working hard to not only protect the borders but also to protect the citizens. "In many respects, this has made it more difficult for more people outside of the United States to come here," he says.

Ted McKown II, assistant director of admissions for international recruitment at Kent State, says the decline is mainly due to restrictions the government has imposed on international students. "Our government is just not issuing visas to prospective students," McKown says. "They're limiting the type of student that can come into the country."

New visa regulations include security checks and the entry of student information into a national database. Prospective students may be required to complete face-to-face interviews with consulate officers. Students who do obtain visas risk losing them or having to renew them after going home for vacations.

"Consulate officers don't want to be responsible for issuing a visa to a future terrorist," says Deb Lyons, immigration assistant of International Student and Scholar Services at Kent State. "So they are being more cautious now and are sending more people into the second level of security check."

At top right, Eduard Junelov, a sophomore finance major from Turkmenistan. At bottom right, doctoral candidate Deborah Campbell from the Bahamas.
“Our government is just not issuing visas to prospective students.”
The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, known as SEVIS, was implemented to track international students through an Internet-based system. SEVIS, which was in the works prior to Sept. 11 and imposed quickly after, is used by schools to collect and record information about individuals who are issued F1 student visas, J1 exchange visitor student visas or M1 vocational/non-academic studies students.

SEVIS is a computer system every international student is aware of. "Immigration services can always find you and can know where you're at," Junelov says. "They can keep track of you."

Many international students are choosing to attend college in countries where visa regulations are less strict. The universities of Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan and Hong Kong are all undertaking aggressive recruitment campaigns, and China is promoting the transformation of universities into global research institutions as a national priority.

The decline of international student enrollment threatens America's reputation of world leader in areas including business management and science. Decreasing enrollment also affects the U.S. economy, which benefits from the $13 billion enrolled by international students from their tuition, living expenses and related costs, according to the Department of Commerce.

Other countries have caught on to the fact that education is a big industry, and they are attracting students with diversity and economics, says Adam Meier, a spokesperson for the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. "It's expensive to enroll in American universities, and those costs continue to rise, which may have an impact on students' ability to come here and study."

The decrease in enrollment may also be caused by perceptions international students have of Americans being unwelcoming — allegations Meier says he finds to be clearly false.

"We are, in fact, welcoming foreign students," Meier says. "We want foreign students to come here. It shows in the 500,000 students we have enrolling this year. People want to study here, and we want them to continue to study here."

International students Junelov, Mazza and Campbell continued with their American educations, despite mixed feelings about the effects of Sept. 11.

"I used to feel before Sept. 11 that the United States was the safest place you wanted to live in," Campbell says. "It's very hard when you have a particular impression about something, and then it changes so quickly."

Seeing the country unite so soon after the attacks was impressive, Junelov says. "It was just awesome to see people get together and fight against terrorism and join their forces together for a good cause," he says. "I just saw how this nation came together."

Mazza says the events of Sept. 11 actually made her feel safer because it forced the country to tighten security. The safety concerns of both American and foreign students have been addressed, she says.

Meier says, "In the phrase that Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice keep saying, 'Secure borders, but open doors.' Those are the two equally important priorities that citizens and foreign students are safe, as we continue to bring people in."

Kent State connections

Despite the apparent trend of declining foreign student enrollment, Kent State is one university refusing to submit to the decline. "We are seeing in effect here at Kent State, in a post-Sept. 11 world, that we've bucked our trend from other universities," McKown says. "Our international numbers have actually increased the last few years."

About 3 percent of Kent State's student body is international, McKown says, with two-thirds being graduate students and one-third undergraduates.

Within five years, the university increased its spectrum of international students by more than 20 countries, according to McKown, making the total of represented countries more than 100.

Endless interpretation arises with these statistics, as the university administration wonders about what would have been had Sept. 11 never occurred. "One has to think about what would have happened if the restrictions hadn't been placed with international students," McKown says.

The increase in numbers has actually hit a plateau this year, a feat that Nieman says begs the question, what is Kent State doing differently from so many other institutions?

"My best guess is that it's several areas," Nieman says. "Students will not stay at an institution where they don't feel comfortable. So having a safe environment, having a university environment that helps them meet their goals and helps them have a certain quality of life is a place you don't want to leave."

The international students will play an important role in the future, Nieman says, as Kent State confronts a series of steps to become a nationally recognized leader for its research and academic strengths.

"When we strive to join that upper tier
Being on the other side

She wasn't culture-shocked when she arrived. "It's the same in the sense that it's the Western standard of living," Yvonne Dunham says of Dresden, Germany. Besides, the senior English major has had practice adjusting to new scenery: Dunham moved to Prague with her parents her senior year of high school.

In spring of 2003, she was living on campus at the Dresden University of Technology, learning to teach English as a second language. Days before she arrived, the United States began bombing Iraq.

"It was so immediate," says Dunham, a senior English major. "If I made a new acquaintance, American politics would come up. Generally, most Germans dislike what we're doing politically as a country." Despite this, Dunham says people asked to know her opinions before labeling her a "dumb American."

The German government had been against the use of military force in Iraq, favoring continued negotiations with the United Nations instead. Criticism of President Bush's foreign policies was not only spoken in the streets — it was written on banners and signs hanging from windows and balconies in the city, Dunham says.

The Germans' reaction must be understood within its historical context. "To Germany, it's being too nationalistic," Dunham says. "Americans need to realize what we're doing looks to (Germans) like what Nazi Germany was doing." Fervid nationalism was a tool the Nazi Party used to command unwavering loyalty.

"I think it's very reasonable that Germany would think that about Americans," Dunham says.

After word of German sentiment reached newscasts and front pages in the United States, the U.S. popular boycott of German, as well as French, imports began. Freedom food names were coined. U.S. patriotism became visible, with American flags flying from car antennas and "God Bless America" signs hanging in windows.

The children of one elementary school in Germany had their own ideas about the war. Covering the windows of their school, flocks of construction-paper doves suggested the children's alternative.

— Jessica Rothschuh
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A temporary home

Their passports are put aside for awhile — Kent State FlashCards will be the only identification documents necessary on campus, as Junelov, Mazza and Campbell adapt to their international student status.

Although Junelov says he believes he is the only Turkmen on campus, “You name a country, and I’m sure Kent State probably has someone from there,” he says, then smiles. “I mean, they have someone from Turkmenistan, so they have people from all around the world.”

Campbell says she agrees. She thinks it’s an eye-opening experience to travel to America and be part of such a diverse environment. “It’s like I don’t have to travel the world to learn about the world because it’s right here at my fingertips,” Campbell says. “We have our own little globe here.”

That globe is really a wonderful — and mutually beneficial — experience that international students gain from studying in America and share when coming in contact with each university and its students, Nieman says.

“They bring young people’s culture from a different country, and they bring a lot of dreams of what they think America is, but also what they would like to do in the future,” he says.

Mazza says she was shocked that every image in America was the same as what she had seen in movies. “We have this idea of the American way of life,” she says, “and when I came here, I saw it was really like that. It was like being in the movies.”

Movie-like appearances aside, the crossing of cultures still proves difficult and is a challenge each international student may confront any time he or she steps into an airport and faces a security check.

“Of course (security agents) see that you look a little different,” Junelov says. “They know that you are probably an international student, and they treat you differently.”

He shrugs. “It just makes my life fun,” Junelov says, then he grins. “It makes it fun to travel.”

Katie Phillips is a junior magazine journalism major. She last wrote about a local barbershop in the fall 2004 edition of The Burr.
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Quirky and quotable

The new generation of cult comedies

compiled by CARRIE PETRICK

For some reason, it's always the most random and bizarre movies that develop cult followings, particularly among teens and college students. For the current generation, randomness seems to have become the prevailing sense of humor. The following four films embody this sense of whimsy with their eminent quotability, nonstop gags and bold refusal to make any sense whatsoever. If you're looking to watch them, they are likely playing at a dorm room near you.

Napoleon Dynamite

A sassy nerd at a high school in Idaho farm country befriends a Mexican immigrant and helps him become class president in this, the king of all random comedies.

**Domestic gross** — $44.5 million

**Production budget** — $400,000

**Released date** — June 11, 2004

Super Troopers

A satirical, slapstick comedy taking the viewer inside the topsy-turvy world of the worst state troopers ever.

**Domestic gross** — $18.5 million

**Est. marketing costs** — $11 million

**Release date** — Feb. 15, 2002

Office Space

A box-office flop after its initial release, this film has developed a staggering following thanks to its realistic portrayal of the soul-eating boredom that comes with corporate employment.

**Domestic gross** — $10.8 million

**Production budget** — $10 million

**Release date** — Feb. 19, 1999

Wet Hot American Summer

It may be a semi-obscure parody of 1980s summer camp flicks that is mostly known because of repeated, heavily censored showings on Comedy Central, but students like Dave Jackowski, a senior architecture major, love it.

**Domestic gross** — $295,206

**Release date** — July 27, 2001

**Widest release** — 12 theaters

Marquis Milton, a Family Video employee, says the movie was "genius." Despite the fact that it had no curse words or racy situations, it was extremely funny.

"It defied all logic of movie-making," says Michael "Zesty" Vaughn, an integrated language arts major.

"The previews were so bad I didn't want to see it in the theater, but when I saw it at home I watched it 20 times," says Julia Steinberg, a junior communication studies major.

"I don't want a large Farva, I want a goddamn liter of cola."

"Excuse me, I believe you have my stapler..."

"Well, I hope it's not jumbo shrimp because I'm allergic to oxymorons!"

"I see you're drinking 1 percent. Is that 'cause you think you're fat? 'Cause you're not. You could be drinking whole if you wanted to."

Figures from boxofficemojo.com
the Renovation will not be televised

Oscar Ritchie Hall is up for a facelift in 2007, but that doesn’t mean the fight is over

story by STEVEN HARBAUGH
photos by STEPHANIE SMITH

One professor fainted in class due to the lack of ventilation. Disabled students could never reach the third floor, which has no elevator. Mold sprouted in old carpet after the roof started to leak. Students had to watch their heads because of the occasional falling ceiling tile. The building sweltered in the summer and froze in the winter, making it a horror to teach in, according to some professors.

How the “house that Black United Students built” became the dilapidated ghetto of campus is no mystery to professors and students in the department.

One word: neglect.

And some think the neglect is directly linked to prejudice.

Students and faculty have complained that Oscar Ritchie Hall, built in 1949, is in dire need of an update.
Despite Kent State's commitment-to-diversity mantra, it was not until Black United Students held a protest in spring 2004 that the building got moved up on the renovations schedule, according to Mwatabu Okantah, an assistant professor of Pan-African Studies. The university poured $200,000 of renovations into the building. New air conditioners, shelving, new carpeting, new ceiling tiles and improved air ducts were installed.

Protesting had paid off. And now, Oscar Ritchie Hall is slated for a $9 million facelift in 2007 — one that many say is long overdue. The project will essentially gut the interior of the building and reshape it into a state-of-the-art facility for Pan-African Studies — a plan that has been on the drawing board for years.

One thing that differentiates Oscar Ritchie from other buildings is that not only is it an academic building, but it also houses a black culture center, an African-American community theater, an art gallery, a computer lab, the campus publication Uhuru, the National Association for Black Journalists and several other local civil rights organizations.

Because the building has so many historic features, the renovation plan both frightens and excites professors and students. Some are worried that the historical integrity of the building will be threatened, despite the assurance of the administration that the historically rich murals and other artifacts from the Civil Rights era will be left intact. Does this mean Oscar Ritchie Hall’s struggles are over? Not quite.

Oscar Ritchie Hall: Making history

Late 1968
- Two hundred and fifty members of Black United Students stage a walkout in response to inequality on campus. The university responds by placing black students on an interview committee and later offers an African-American Affairs Department.

Early 1969
- A panel of 10 black students selects Edward Crosby, a professor at the time, to start the Institute for African-American Affairs.

Late 1969
- The university’s first classes in African-American Studies are offered.
- BUS protests for the university to grant them a culture center. The university offers the Ward House, a ramshackle house on Summit Street.

1970
- Classes are halted due to the events of May 4th.

Mwatabu Okantah is an assistant professor of Pan-African Studies and the adviser for Harambee, a cultural organization. Okantah has supported the Oscar Ritchie renovation for years.
Still disenfranchised

In the early years of the building, the third floor of Oscar Ritchie Hall was dedicated to Queen Mother Audley Moore, a black civil rights leader, who was a wheelchair-user when she came to see the dedication of the floor that was named after her. She had to be carried up the stairs in her wheelchair.

A task like climbing three flights of stairs is not easy for senior general studies major Kimberly Tutstone, either. She had a liver transplant and has to take a lot of medications that fatigue her. She wishes Oscar Ritchie Hall had an elevator like other academic buildings.

Tutstone, who says she has not seen a single wheelchair-using student in the building, is displeased that the university has yet to make the third floor of the building handicapped accessible. "It's sad to say, but it leads me to believe that it's prejudice," she says. "It has always been a little hard for me here."

In addition to an elevator, Tutstone also hopes the university revamps the bathrooms. "I've never been to prison, but I think it's probably the same experience," she says and laughs, calling them "very ancient."

During the course of Tutstone's illness, she had to drop out in 1984 and returned to school just a few years ago. "The building looks exactly the same as when I was here before," she says. "That's not good."

One custodian cleans the entire building. Black United Students and other students occasionally volunteer their time to help clean the building. On the first floor, a hand-written sign on the bulletin board makes it clear to respect the hall's limited

1971
- Crosby asks the provost to give the program more space.
- The university tears down the Ward House to build the new Business & Administration Building. The culture center is immediately moved to the second floor of Rockwell Hall (now the Fashion Design Museum).

Late 1971
- Crosby petitions the university to have both the African-American Studies program and the black cultural center moved to the ground floor of the vacant Student Union (now Oscar Ritchie Hall) and to consolidate both entities.
Edward Crosby sits in his home in Stow among African artifacts. He is the founder of the Pan-African Studies program and believes Oscar Ritchie Hall is a historical facility that should not be used for classes outside of the program.

resources: “Oscar Ritchie is yours. Do your chores. Keep it nice. You know what’s right.”

Tim Moore, the associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences and a former president of Black United Students, says the university always said renovations were in their long-term plan, always insisting that they were not neglecting the building.

“There is an understanding here,” Vice President for Administration David Creamer says, “that we have not achieved enough, and we are continuing to move forward to a place where there is increased respect for and understanding of our differences.”

Edward Crosby, the founder of the Pan-African Studies program, says he fears the university is out to accomplish one thing only: “to reclaim its turf,” incorporating classes from outside the department in the cultural center of the building.

But Creamer seems to understand the role of the building.

“It is a very important facility,” Creamer says. “Because it not only serves academic activities, but it also functions as a multicultural center for our students and the entire community.”

More than just a class building

A white girl walks down the hallway of Oscar Ritchie with her friend. “Why is this building painted like this?” she asks, perplexed. “It’s the Pan-African building,” her friend replies.

Okantah once referred to the building and department as the “best kept secret on campus” — it appears that’s true for some.

“We called it the ‘Bufferin of the campus,” Moore says. “It was where you could come and relieve yourself of the tension and pressures of being on a predominately white campus.” Okantah has a similar sentiment. “You don’t just sit and eat your lunch in Bowman Hall,” Okantah says. “But you do here. Black students feel accepted, comfortable.”

Teddy Harris, the political affairs chair for BUS, describes the atmosphere of the building as feeling like home. “It’s not really the building. It’s who occupies it,” Harris says. “In a sense, it’s like a family there. That really differentiates it from other buildings.”

1972

• The institute and the culture center move to the old Student Union building after the opening of the new Student Center. The ground floor houses the program and the cultural center, now called the Institute for African-American Affairs and Pan-African Culture.

1977

• The old Student Union is dedicated as Oscar Ritchie Hall, after the first black professor at Kent State and at a public Ohio university. The department is still housed on the ground floor with the art department occupying the second floor and the Honors College on the third floor.

Early 1980s

• When the Honors College moves, Crosby petitions to have department space extended to the third floor. The second floor is still occupied by the art department, but the university grants space to Pan-African Studies on floors one and three.
Who was Oscar Ritchie?

Oscar Ritchie was born in 1909 in Hallendale, Florida. Ritchie quit school to help with family expenses after his father died and dropped out of college after the Great Depression hit in 1929.

He played banjo in a band and moved to Chicago, where he started his family with wife, Edith, and son, George. They moved to Massillon in 1933 where Ritchie worked for Republic Steel.

Ritchie got his first teaching experience helping immigrants study for their citizenship tests through Franklin D. Roosevelt's Works Program Administration. He began studying pre-law at Kent State in 1942 and later changed his major to sociology, eventually becoming a doctor of sociology.

In 1947 Ritchie became the first African-American to be part of the Kent State faculty and also the first at any predominantly white university in Ohio. Ritchie remained at Kent State even after being offered the prestigious W.E.B. DuBois Chair of Sociology at Atlanta University.

Oscar Ritchie died on June 16, 1967, at the age of 58. The old Student Union building was dedicated as Oscar Ritchie Hall in 1977, in response to a proposal made by Black United Students. This made him the first African-American to have a predominantly white public university building named in his honor.

— Brianne Carlson

Not quite a happy ending

A gold sign in the Oscar Ritchie Hall main office reads “Oscar Ritchie Furniture Fund.” A drawing of a thermometer shows the amount raised by Alpha Phi Alpha, a black fraternity on campus. The marker lies at $101.76, well short of the $7,000 goal.

The fraternity is raising money because the proposed $9 million renovations budget does not include furniture. The department budget for furniture and other classroom materials is very meager, says Diedre Badejo, the chair of the Pan-African Studies Department. The department hopes to hold an alumni fair in the fall to encourage donations to pay for the furniture.

Black United Students President DaMareo Cooper says there is still a problem at the university with prejudice. “They renovated a dorm before an educational center,” he says, referring to the renovation of Oscar Ritchie Hall’s neighbor, Engelman Hall. “I think that’s wrong. We pay the same amount of money as anybody else here.”

In the past, BUS said the university attributed the lack of enrollment in the Pan-African Studies program as the reason why it wasn’t getting renovated. But according to Badejo, enrollment in the program has remained steady throughout the years.

Members of BUS have criticized the university for not properly marketing the program. Okantah, an assistant professor of Pan-African Studies, agrees. “My sense is that in general, they do not mention our program in marketing efforts,” he said.

The woman in charge of marketing the program after the renovations are completed is Michelle Edler, a marketing coordinator in the Office of University Communication and Marketing. An extensive print advertising campaign and a new departmental Web site are on Edler’s list of projects for the next few years.

“I’m hoping to focus on the rich uniqueness of this program,” Edler says. “Most other colleges are African-American studies or black studies, but this program focuses on more of a global view with an interdisciplinary approach.”

Rejected again

Since spring of 2004, BUS has pushed for an anti-discrimination harassment policy after a student’s car had racist epithets scribbled on the side of it and another student found a racist note slipped under her door. In December 2004, BUS called the university and Faculty Senate
"Racism has been declared dead by the nation. But racism still exists. It's alive and well on the campus today."
Invading the turf

In the late '60s and early '70s, the Pan-African Studies Department taped lectures and played the videotapes for later courses because the department couldn't afford to pay the lecturers again. Moore, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, says the university never expected the department to take off and actually stay.

When Crosby was at Kent State, he says he would never let the university schedule classes in the culture center of Oscar Ritchie Hall in order to preserve the tradition of African-American culture there. "It's going back to what used to be. They're taking away those privileges once granted to black students," Crosby says.

Okantah agrees. "My skepticism said to me the university might not have been so quick to renovate if they didn't already have a plan in the works to schedule more classes from other departments," he says.

Tom Euclide, director in the Office of the University Architect, doesn't see things the same way as Okantah and Crosby. "It's very common, if not the norm, to have many classes outside the building the department is in," Euclide says. "The department gets first preference, and then others can use the space."

Doing the renovations and letting others from outside the department use the building could destroy the sanctity of it, Crosby says. "I think there are competing things happening here," he says. "When BUS protested for some renovations, they were talking about renovating the culture center, not the entire building. Black United Students are being dealt a deal. Something is happening here that isn't to the center's advantage. The registrar is only doing what they do with every other building on the campus."

But the building will remain committed to the mission set by the founders, according to Badejo, the chair of the department. "We are part of the university community, and we certainly understand the problems the university is having in respect to space constraints. We see a need to try to work with the registrar's office," Badejo says. "Renovations have been needed in this building for a long time. We can't quite get the technology that we need in here because the building is so outdated."

Crosby sees the university's reluctance to approve an anti-discrimination policy and to renovate the building as signs that the renovations are a double-edged sword — an improvement for the department in some ways, but also one that might push the department to be more integrated with classes from outside the
department. This could eliminate what Oklahoma calls a "safe haven for black students."

"They are ruining the concept of the Center for Pan-African Culture," Crosby says. "The racism is still at work. They're still trying to reduce the fact that black students have rights on the campus."

**The challenge continues**

Oscar Ritchie Hall's renovation presents another challenge — one that many haven't considered: While the hall is being renovated, the university will have to find a temporary home for the occupants there. "There's no empty building to move to," says Euclide, director in the Office of the University Architect.

Future funding for renovation projects is still tentative because of continual reductions in state funds, but Oscar Ritchie will be renovated, he says.

The new Oscar Ritchie Hall will still be devoted to the Pan-African Studies Department but also will have classes from outside the department because that is standard,

Marquis Myers, a freshman pre-med major, reads a newspaper in the computer lab in Oscar Ritchie Hall. The room is covered with historical murals, this one depicting the shooting of Malcolm X.

Euclide says.

Considering the variety of strong, conflicting opinions, there might be no clear solution.

A sign in Oscar Ritchie Hall near the paintings of black civil rights leaders such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. provides the best indication of an answer to the ongoing problems between Pan-African Studies, Oscar Ritchie Hall and BUS and the university administration.

It reads: "Our ignorance is greater than our knowledge, which means we need: HARD WORK AND STUDY."

*Steven Harbaugh is a senior magazine journalism major. He last wrote about sex in the dorms in the fall 2004 issue of The Burr.*
That clicking sound you might be hearing in the lecture hall or movie theater isn't a typewriter or the snapping of someone's fingers. It's the sound of a trend sweeping Kent State and the rest of the nation. That's right. Knitting — as well as other forms of needlework such as crocheting and cross-stitching — is making a comeback in a big way. The old-fashioned trend has spawned books and knitting groups and has inspired students around campus to knit their own winter hats, scarves and gloves. Even guys are getting in on the action in numbers not seen in decades.

Catherine Cartwright-Jones, who has taught knitting classes in Kent State's School of Fashion Design and Merchandising since...
1990, says the crafty craze's newfound appeal was bound to happen.

There seem to be 20-year cycles in knitting's popularity, she says. "There was a great deal of interest in the late '70s, early '80s and that was an extension of being a good, back-to-earth hippie. But then during the late '80s and early '90s, there was a 'why on earth would anyone bother' (mentality). To be honest, I was inclined to agree with them."

Cartwright-Jones raises a valid point. Why choose knitting when there's blogging, instant messaging and Facebooking to be done? Carla Scott, executive editor of Vogue Knitting, blames the terrorists.

"Some people will say that after Sept. 11, people wanted to stay home and go back
Above, Carol Volpe, a senior fashion design major, works on the knitting machine during Catherine Cartwright-Jones' class.

At right, Shannon Okey of Cleveland spins yarn when she’s not working on her book or attending a Stitch 'N Bitch meeting.

to doing things that were completely unrelated,” Scott says. “They wanted to go back to their roots. Plus, people see Julia Roberts and famous musicians knitting as well.” On top of celebrities picking up the needles, many fashion designers are experimenting with knitting. “It just all of a sudden blossomed into a very cool thing to do.”

Abby Walton, a senior fashion merchandising major enrolled in Cartwright-Jones’ knitting class, says she knew knitting was catching on when the trend’s three most popular words came out of her conservative mother’s mouth.

“The first time I ever heard my mom cuss was when I heard her talking about the book *Stitch 'N Bitch,*” Walton says with a laugh. The book her mother referred to spawned knitting clubs of the same name all across the country, including ones in Cleveland, Akron and Canton. The books are authored by *Bust* magazine editor Debbie Stoller, who writes in 2003’s *Stitch 'N Bitch: The Knitter’s Handbook* that the percentage of women under 45 who knit or crochet has doubled since 1996.

But it’s not only women who are getting into the craft. Senior integrated mathematics major Mark Bartholet learned how to crochet this fall after attending a workshop put on by his residence assistant. “Forty or so people
showed,” Bartholet says of the Beall Hall crochet seminar. “It was crazy. I thought I was gonna be the only guy, but it was like half guys, half girls. Pretty sweet.”

And there are plenty of other male knitters and crocheters where Bartholet came from. Shannon Okey, the Cleveland-based author of the forthcoming Knitgrrl — a knitting guide geared toward knitters aged 12 to 17 — can’t see what the big deal is about men wanting to try to their hand at a so-called “women’s” activity. “Historically, men were the knitters,” Okey says. “Men were the spinners and the knitters, especially in places like Ireland with a strong knitting tradition. Only in the last century did it really become ‘women’s work.’ So I think we’re just getting a sort of backswing toward evening things out.”

Bartholet has experienced minor ridicule, at worst, as a male crochet artist. “People joke with me every once in a while about it,” he says. “I thought I’d get made fun of a lot more than I do. And the thing is, it actually picks up girls. They’re like, ‘What were you doing last night?’ And I’m like, ‘Well, I sat in my room and crocheted.’ They’re like, ‘You know how to crochet?!” And I’m like, ‘Yeah!’ ‘Well, I knit. You wanna teach me how to crochet?’ That’s happened at least four or five times, which is pretty good for me.”

Erika Gadomski, owner of River Colors Studio in Lakewood — a newly expanded yarn and knitting boutique full of brightly colored yarns and fabrics — may not have witnessed knitting-related hookups at her store, but she has observed an increased male turnout.

“I would say that it’s definitely developed. It’s become more accepted, and people a lot of times are trying to legitimize it by talking about the fact that originally knitting was done for people in the army,” Gadomski says. “The bottom line is it’s very therapeutic, no matter who does it. There shouldn’t be a gender association.”

Although men still make up a relatively small percentage of her customers, Gadomski says the demand for a store like River Colors was felt immediately when the first one opened in April of 2004. “We were in a much smaller location and outgrew it very quickly,” she says. Her store’s workshops

Knitting vs. crocheting

The differences between knitting and crocheting are fairly basic, Okey says. “Knitting uses two needles, while crocheting uses one hook-shaped tool. In some cases you can use four needles for knitting, but with crocheting you manipulate one hook in order to make the stitches you need.”
Punk rock craft fair

In addition to authoring the upcoming Knitgrrl knitting guide, last December Shannon Okey arranged the very first Cleveland Bazaar Bizarre, a craft fair far from the typical church variety. Okey has been involved with Bazaar Bizarre since the very beginning in 2001, when the inaugural Boston show kicked off in a crowded VFW hall.

"It kept growing," says Okey, who lived in Boston at the time of the first bazaar. "They actually had to move into the YMCA, and there was still a three-block line to get in. One of the original founders moved to L.A., took (the Bazaar Bizarre) with him, and it was hugely popular."

Once Okey moved back to Cleveland last summer, she realized there was nothing in her hometown resembling the Bazaar Bizarre of Boston and Los Angeles, so she decided to take matters into her own hands.

"I knew there was definitely a crafty community in Ohio that was doing things like this," Okey says. "So I asked the girls in Boston if I could bring it here, they said, 'Sure, no problem.' Word spread fast to the point where I wasn't taking anymore people. We may even have to move to a bigger venue next year."

The bazaar attracted a vast spectrum of vendors, including the Cleveland and Akron Stitch 'n Bitch clubs and Kent State-based design group Little Jacket, and featured entertainment provided by belly dancers and a Santa dressed in bondage gear. But Okey was just glad people came. "It was so great to see people having fun and buying handmade things as opposed to going out to the mall," she says.

Find out more at www.bazaarbizarre.org.
Above, 8-year-old Jacob Corder of Lakewood knits with his sister and their mother at Gadomski’s River Colors Studio.

At right, a yarn-covered mannequin hangs from the ceiling of the studio.

crocheting. “It’s really relaxing. I’m a spatial learner anyway, so it’s nice just having something to occupy my hands because I’m always fidgeting.”

Speaking of fidgeting, Cartwright-Jones even suggests knitting and needlework as a solution to attention deficit disorder. She taught a child with ADD to cross-stitch, and it helped focus him. “It was amazing,” she says. “The child had driven everyone nuts for years, and all of a sudden with the cross-stitch pattern was an angel to be around because he could just put all that fidget into cross-stitching.”

According to Vogue Knitting’s Scott, the future of knitting lies in the fidgety hands of children just like the boy Cartwright-Jones taught. “Having young people knit is key,” Scott says. “They’re the ones who will be continuing this craft. Hopefully they’ll pass it on to their generation. That’s what we didn’t have back in the ’80s.”

but it’s young people.”

Bartholet, however, is happy to carry his own grandmother’s torch. “My grandma has crocheted and knitted for me all the time I’ve known her, so I have, like, afghans and stuff that she’s made me,” he says. “I actually crocheted with her over (winter) break, and my mom’s like, ‘Stop crocheting with your grandma!’ I guess it’s a sense of accomplishment, kind of, but I don’t know. I just enjoy doing it.”

Andrew Hampp is a junior magazine major. He last wrote about bowling in the fall 2004 edition of The Burr.

One surefire way to keep more youth actively involved and interested in knitting is if its public image is less AARP and more MTV. “I have a friend who goes to knitting circles once a month,” says Carol Volpe, a junior fashion design major in Cartwright-Jones’ knitting class. “And you would think it’s a bunch of old ladies getting together,
Just to the north lies a country that watches our every move — and we ignore them

STARS & STEREOTYPES

story by JACLYN YOUHANA
photos by RYAN BLACKWELL
WHO IS THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES?

A) Ralph Nader
B) John Kerry
C) George W. Bush

If you chose A or B, it is likely you are a Democrat with some reality issues. If you answered C, you are correct.

And you might be Canadian.

Now, who is the prime minister of Canada?

Though we may know little about that big ol’ country to our north, they know plenty about us. And, naturally, they have formed their own stereotypes.

Canadians watched our November election, holding their collective breath until the outcome. A group of students watched the election in a conference room at the University of Toronto campus on a projection screen.

“Canadians were having debates, too,” says Matthew Farish, an instructor in the American Studies department with the University of Toronto.

A ’99 Mazda 626 can get through Pennsylvania and New York to Toronto in less time than it takes to drive straight west on I-80 to Chicago. The U.S. border with Canada is the longest unprotected border in the world — including the Alaska portion, it stretches 5,524 miles — but this may be the first time you’ve ever read that the prime minister of Canada is Paul Martin.

But you can be sure Canadians know who we elected last November.

“It’s because we’re smaller,” says Bryan Ashton, the director of tourism for Toronto. “Your shadow is cast broader, so we will be more savvy. You have to be savvy because Americans think it’s arrogant for Canadians to think they have higher values or more tolerance.”

Well, that depends on your definition of tolerance. America calls itself a melting pot, a place where cultures from around the world can mingle and mix to form one new culture. Canada calls itself a mosaic, Ashton says, a country to which immigrants can move.
and retain their cultural identity.

But, he says, that description is a little backward. Ethnic groups in America maintain their own cultures in the Chinatowns, the Little Italys, the Little Havanans. But wander the streets of Toronto, and you'll notice the city is not gerrymandered according to culture.

The Imperial Pub is across the street from our hotel in downtown Toronto. A black man and a white woman play pool. About a dozen white and Asian men nurse their beers and make toasts every four minutes. America's interracial couples can't compare to Toronto's. Hispanic and Asian, white and Asian, black and Hispanic — interracial couples seem to be more common than same-race ones.

Canada certainly doesn't look any different from America. The radio stations play Usher, the newspapers scream "Iraq!" and the televisions show a Canadian version of MTV.

Because the two countries are so much alike, there's a lot of conflict, Ashton says, not on an individual level, but on a political level.

"Canadian politics is liberal," he says. "It's probably issued around tolerance. When you look at a Republican right-wing movement in the U.S., it seems strange and odd to us."

One University of Toronto student went so far to say that if the election had been held in Canada, a man who received only about 1 percent of the vote would have emerged victorious. "Most people here would have voted for Ralph Nader," says Thom Pearson, a fourth-year sociology and political science student.

Farish acknowledges that Nader would have received more support in Canada, but, "Here, Kerry would have won," he says.

The Liberal Party of Canada is the centrist party and the equivalent to the liberal Democratic Party in America. They have no equivalent to the United States' Republican Party.

But Ashton disagrees, saying those in smaller Canadian towns would see it differently. There, people tend to hold more conservative values, and Bush's "mistakes are seen by people as 'He's one of us. He thinks like us,'" he says.

Fiona Clarke, a first-year sciences major at the University of Toronto, says she was happy with the turnout of the election. "I would have voted for Bush because I agree with his values. Not terrorism," she specifies, "but his values on abortion."

The Munk Center, which is home to the American Studies program at the University of Toronto, is beautiful. The steps are wooden, and they creak, and Farish tells us the building was once a residence hall.

"Students used to sleep in my office," he says. The lounges are cozy, and the fireplaces keep the rooms warm. The leather couches invite naps, and Ryan, the photographer, accepts the invitation as Farish chuckles.

As a post-doctorate fellow, Farish came to the city a year ago to accept a two-year position with the University of Toronto. One class Farish teaches is called America in the Canadian Mind, part of the American Studies program, a rarity in Canada, he says.

The class has 14 students and no traditional textbooks. Instead, Farish uses novel-length books such as Fire and Ice, in which author Michael Adams writes that "while most people feel that Canada and the U.S. are drawing together, actually they're moving apart," Farish says.

Above, a scale model of the city is one of the first things you see in Toronto's city hall. TheCN Tower looms large in the foreground.

At left, a woman waits at the Eaton Centre bus stop at Dundas Square in Toronto.

The biggest problem Farish encountered in choosing the texts, he says, was finding books that didn't bash the red, white and blue.

"Typical anti-Americanism — it's what distinguishes us," he says.

Instead, the class focuses on America as it has been over the past five to 10 years, especially since Sept. 11. The students read their assignments and spend much of class discussing their opinions of the works.

Despite his attempts to make the class anti-anti-American, Farish says he understands why the negative American opinions exist in Canada.

"You're going to have to deal with that when it's politicians running their mouths," he says.

Late last November, Bush made the first visit of his presidency to Canada
Students sound off on Canadian stereotypes

The first thought of many Kent State students at the mention of Canada might be hockey, hockey and Wayne Gretzky, but some students have different ideas.

"Maple syrup," says sophomore advertising major Bridget Regan. "As sad as it is to admit, I think everyone has these stereotypes of Canadians, such as a Mountie drinking syrup while riding a moose."

Regan says she also noticed a cleaner country than her native United States during her trips to Canada in high school.

Junior art education major Tiffany Sericola thinks of Canada as a peaceful place, with significantly less crime and stress than American life. "Actually, I'd like to move to Canada one of these days," she says, "because I don't want to deal with stress."

Many people are thinking about moving to Canada, sophomore music education major Taylor Belling says. "It seems like a place where a lot of hippies want to go now that George W. Bush is in office," he says.

But that's not why Belling makes the trip.

Other things come to mind when he thinks of Canada — namely cheap, duty-free booze and cigarettes. "It's one of the few places where you can buy Kentucky-made moonshine," he says. "It's like your liquor store here, except everything is cheaper, and there's no tax. It's also the only place where you can get a three liter of Jack Daniels."

Some students, such as senior political science major Adrianne Brakefield, travel north for simpler reasons.

"It seems like the stereotypical Canadian just seems very nice," she says.

— Ryan Loew

to speak with Prime Minister Martin. The visit was essentially a bust, Ashton says: Bush came to the meeting hoping to convince Martin to support American troops in Iraq, and he was met with signs like "Go Home Liar," and "Drop Bush, Not Bombs."

"A lot of Americans are saying, 'What did we do wrong? Why is this happening?'" Ashton says of the reactions to Canada's refusal to help out in Iraq. "That transitions into, 'Why aren't you supporting us like we expected you to?'"

At the conference, Ashton says, Bush told the prime minister, "You have to join in on the missile strikes in the U.S. The U.S. protects you. So why don't you cooperate?" This is typical George W. Bush being less than articulate and inappropriate.

Not to say Canada has no troops anywhere. It's just that most of their troops are in Afghanistan, Ashton says.

"We put all our resources, which aren't great, in Afghanistan. It's hard to fight a number of wars on a number of fronts, no matter how big you are," he says.

But it's not surprising that Canada is staying out of American affairs, Farish says. The Canadian mindset regarding Iraq is simple: "Why should I bother with this?"

"Anti-Americanism is a long and unfortunate tradition in Canadian life," he says. "It's more anti-Bush, and the two are often conflated."

Currently, the United States is experiencing a slight national obsession with Canada. Between 10,000 and 20,000 Americans were ready to pack up and head to the land of the maple leaf after November's election, reported U.S. News and World Report in February.

The Canadian immigration Web site, which usually gets about 20,000 hits a day, got 115,000 hits from Americans alone the day after the election, said Rudi Kischer, a British Columbian immigration lawyer, to the Associated Press.

But it's all talk, Farish says.

"I never once met anyone who said, 'Yeah, I moved to Canada because I got sick of American politics,'" he says.

Ashton, too, notes that the country didn't get that flood of immigrants after the last election. "It's more talk than it is action," he says.

Maybe not.

Attorney Jeffry House gets inquiries daily from soldiers who want to
Above, a traveler prepares to enter the boarding area of Dundas subway station.

At bottom, trolleys glide through the streets of Toronto, offering an effective means of public transportation.

go AWOL in Canada. Though he has no definite way to verify his numbers, House estimates in the February edition of Time that there are between 75 and 100 U.S. soldiers hiding out north of the border.

Part of Canada's appeal is its liberal attitude. Check out CanadianAlternative.com. The site calls the country "the perfect alternative for conscientious, forward-thinking Americans," and it lists a number of reasons: The United States executed 59 criminals last year, but Canada abolished the death penalty in 1976; Canada has no laws restricting abortion; the country has little violence, perhaps due to the strict gun laws.

More lures are listed, and Ashton validates most, though he finds fault with a few. Though marijuana is legal for medicinal purposes, the Canadian Senate would like to legalize it — but the Senate is powerless, Ashton says.

And while it is true that there hasn't been a federal deficit in Canada since the 1996-1997 fiscal year, that just means the country isn't spending money. The Toronto infrastructure is 50 to 60 years old, Ashton says. One problem with the city is its accessibility, which is why public transportation is so popular.

Along with his director of tourism and councillor positions, Ashton is also commissioner of the Toronto Transit Commission, or the TTC. So he's in charge of busing, among other things. He once received a phone call from someone at a bus stop.

"My bus is late. You're in charge of the TTC. What are you going to do about it?" the woman asked.

"What do you want me to do?" Ashton says he asked the woman. "Get up 10 minutes earlier, and you won't miss it."

The response elicited a "Smartass" from the woman, but Ashton was only joking. "Don't worry. I'll take care of it," he said. And he did.

No sweat.

Despite any anti-American sentiments they may have, more than 70 percent of Canadians call America their "closest friend," The Associated Press reported. Eighty-seven percent of Canadian exports go to the States, and 83 percent of Canada's imports come from the States.

Sounds chummy.

And it has been since before Canada was a country. Except for one time...

"We burned down your White House in 1817," Ashton says.

The Web site www.whitehouse-history.org gives a slightly different account of the event: Yes, the torchers came from the north, but they weren't Canadians — they were British troops stationed in what is now Canada, and they burned the building in 1814 in the midst of the War of 1812.

Still, "We don't like to talk about it," Ashton says. "It upsets you."

Jaclyn Youhana is a senior newspaper journalism major. Last semester she was editor of The Burr.
It's an average day on the farm.
Five men dressed in black turtlenecks and bizarre red hats stand around playing New Wave punk music.

One of the five carries a whip and cracks it in the direction of a woman dressed like a young Mexican maiden. A beer-guzzling cowboy cheers in approval.

With whip in hand, Mark Mothersbaugh and the other members of Devo — Bob Mothersbaugh, Gerald and Bob Casale, and Alan Myers — made music video history. What sounds like a police report for domestic violence was actually Devo forever making its mark as an icon of the '80s with "Whip it."

More than two decades later, '80s nostalgia has reared its ugly head. The decade that brought us Beta videocassettes and legwarmers has become totally vogue. Twenty years have elapsed, but what has really changed? Conservative politics are still on top, Ohio's economy is struggling, and underground dance music is shakin' it back into the mainstream.

Sounds like Devo never left.
And indeed, a band considered by some to be a one-hit wonder played eight live shows in 2004.

What you may not know is that Devo got its start right here at Kent State, and the events of May 4, 1970, played a part in the band's development.
Beginnings

Gerald Casale decided to attend Kent State at the suggestion of a high school teacher. He had grown up around the Akron area in a working-class family. Due to money constraints, attending school out of state was not an option.

After filling out the forms given to him by his teacher, Casale received a scholarship from Kent State and enrolled in the Honors College as an art and English major. He worked summers at the Honors College, helping create the curriculum as a part of his scholarship. It was there that he met Jeffrey Miller and Allison Krause, two of the students killed on May 4. Casale, now 56, is the only member of Devo to have graduated from Kent State.

Mike Lunine was the dean of the Honors College during part of Casale’s time at Kent State. He remembers Casale as someone who wasn’t afraid to provoke people.

“I was a great fan of his when he was a raunchy undergrad,” Lunine says. “He was spirited and creative.”

Lunine’s favorite memory of Casale provoking was what became known as the “Chicken Soup Rebellion.” Casale and several other students made a huge pot of chicken soup one day and began serving it at the Student Center. Lunine recalls the rebellion as an act of protest against bureaucracy at the same time providing a service for fellow students.

“It was a wonderful, creative statement about the uniformity of college life,” Lunine says about the event, which made front-page news on the Kent Stater. “He really thought that as a human, you deserved to be treated fairly.”

The act may have had something to do with the quality of food, too.

“It was kind of both things. The food was really rank,” Casale says. “Just by creating a ‘disturbance’ that had some kind of message or purpose, that’s all it took to be labeled subversive and a troublemaker.”

Mothersbaugh came to Kent State after 12 dismal years in public schooling. He was at odds with both students and teachers at Woodridge High School in Peninsula. Coming to college was a fresh start for him.

“I loved Kent State, actually,” 54-year-old Mothersbaugh says. “I really disliked all my school years until I got to Kent. I loved the idea that the school was so big. I could be anonymous. I didn’t have to get into confrontations and fights every day.”

And he could spend all the time he wanted in the art department’s facilities. Mothersbaugh started out as a graphic design major in 1968 but eventually decided just to take as many fine arts classes as he possibly could. He was a dean’s list student but to this day is just three classes short of a diploma.

“My dad was like, ‘What are you doing?’” Mothersbaugh says. “I go, ‘You know what, I know I’m not going to be a school teacher, and I’ve gotten so much out of school. But I don’t need the degree for what I’m doing.’”

Would Mothersbaugh ever return to Kent State and finish those three classes?

“I don’t know. I heard tuition is going up, though,” he says with a laugh.

’Tin soldiers and Nixon’s coming’

The way Casale describes Kent State during the late 1960s, you’d think he was talking about a dream world.

He consistently uses the word “incredible” to describe his experiences as a Kent State student. He raves about how top-notch poets, filmmakers and artists would bring their art to the university. Meanwhile, the level of knowledge from both his peers and professors was unmatched. Culture was alive and thriving all over campus.

“When I tell stories to people that I know in Los Angeles, they don’t believe me,” says Casale, who now directs commercials. “It sounded like some man telling apocryphal stories. But I happened to go to Kent State at a point in history when some strange events happened. It was a hotbed of creative energy and talent and political radicalism.

“Believe me, it does sound like a fantasy because you can’t imagine it if you know the university today that there could have been this university then,” Casale says. “Berkeley and Columbia had nothing on Kent State.”

Just as Kent State will be forever tied to the tragic deaths of those four students on May 4, 1970, Casale cannot forget that day. To some degree, May 4 was a catalyst for Devo.

Casale, who was a member of an activist group called Students for a Democratic Society, was a senior at the time of May 4. Casale spent the day protesting along with friends Miller and Krause. It wasn’t long before he found himself in the middle of the shooting scene.

Thirty-five years after the shootings, Casale still recalls the event in graphic detail. “I still remember when the gun shots started. It’s become clichéd now, but it was like Raging Bull where it went into slow motion, and all the sound went into an echoplex,” he says. “I still remember the slow motion, the distorted sound, the wind and the trees that didn’t have leaves yet. And then everything, suddenly in an instant, snapped back to real time, where you just heard screaming and crying.”

When the gunshots stopped, Casale looked up and saw Krause lying on the ground about 30 feet from him. “I see this big exit wound and blood rolling down the sidewalk in the noon day sun,” he says. “I almost vomited from just human reaction to real violence and death. I fell down in the grass like I was going to pass out.”

At that time, Mothersbaugh, who now
composes music for film and television, was setting up his new art studio at the Davey Tree warehouse, an off-campus art facility on Water Street. Then he heard sirens and megaphones.

"I was decorating (the studio) when there were police cars going down the street with megaphones going, 'The school is shut down. The city is shut down. Please go to your homes,'" Mothersbaugh says.

From that day on, Casale became a determined man. Mothersbaugh, Casale and fellow Kent State student Bob Lewis had previously played with ideas of de-evolution (see sidebar). But now things had changed. Casale had witnessed first-hand what he considered to be mankind moving backward instead of forward, and he felt compelled to find a creative outlet to spread the message.

"We had all these theories of de-evolution, and then it became, 'Well, what would de-evolutionary music sound like?' That's how we started making Devo music," he says. "I think if I hadn't found a creative way to respond to it through Devo, which addressed this new dystopia that I found myself in, I think I would have turned homicidal. That radicalized me."

The fruits of their labor were still several years from ripening, but Devo was effectively born on May 4, 1970.

### The philosophy behind Devo

Those familiar with Devo know that behind the music is the philosophy, one that straddles the line between novelty and sincerity. Full of quirks and contradictions, the philosophy behind the band remains one of its most intriguing features.

The name Devo comes from the concept of "de-evolution," or the idea that human beings are de-evolving rather than evolving. The band embraced the concept after reading the book *The Beginning Was the End: Knowledge Can Be Eaten*, published in 1974 by Oscar Kiss Maerth, who wrote that humans evolved from cannibalistic apes.

In the worldview of Devo, human beings relying on technology more than on their innate abilities is an example of regression rather than progression. Conformity, while widespread, goes largely unnoticed.

Mark Mothersbaugh once referred to their song "Jocko Homo" as "the whole theme song for the theory of de-evolution and for Devo." It’s named after "Jocko Homo, Heaven-Bound King of the Apes," a religious pamphlet discrediting evolution Mothersbaugh received while at Kent State.

The lyrics depict mankind as a grotesque sideshow attraction. The band asks the question "Are we not men?" a reference to H.G. Wells’ *The Island of Dr. Moreau.* (In interviews, Mothersbaugh has said it was taken from the 1933 film *Island of Lost Souls*, which is based on Wells’ book.)

These ideas are represented not only in the band’s music, but also in its live appearances and music videos, which — ironically — are credited with first popularizing MTV.

There are, of course, the uniforms and red hats. But Devo also developed characters like Booji Boy ("boogie boy"), which was Mothersbaugh in an oversized baby mask. The potato is another recurring symbol for Devo (fans of the band call themselves “spuds”).

The members of Devo incorporated these ideas into a short film called *The Truth About De-Evolution*, which played at the 1976 Ann Arbor Film Festival. The film won over two fans named David Bowie and Iggy Pop, and the rest is history.

— Jon Dieinger
"We had all these theories of de-evolution, and then it became, ‘Well, what would de-evolutionary music sound like?’ That’s how we started making Devo music."
The aftermath

After May 4, the campus shut down until the next school year. Casale was set to graduate and attend a university in Ann Arbor, Mich., for graduate school. But instead he had to receive his diploma by mail and stayed in Kent. Casale says the graduate school pulled his scholarship because of his involvement with the anti-war movement. With few financial resources, Casale remained at Kent State and completed his graduate work in studio art.

Even after May 4, the Devo we know today was still years away. Casale had the vision but didn’t yet know how it would become reality.

In 1972, Casale hooked up with a local group called the Numbers Band. Robert Kidney, the singer and guitarist, met Casale while hanging around Kent State in the late ’60s. When the Numbers Band was out a drummer with a gig coming up, Kidney called Casale, whose preferred instrument was bass. But Casale had been practicing drums in his apartment, and he prepared for a week with the band. Kidney says he remembers his new drummer becoming frustrated with the experience, but Kidney thought he did fine. “It had a dark-earthy power. I thought it was a great thing,” he says.

At the same time, Casale was playing with ideas that would eventually become part of Devo. He began collaborating with Mark and his brothers, Jim and Bob Mothersbaugh.

“It was just the beginning of what really was to become the Devo sound and the Devo mentality,” Casale says. “That probably got my creative juices going, so on the nights I played with the Numbers Band, I probably started straying from traditional blues.”

Casale says he had “an epiphany” on that day. He likens his moment of enlightenment to the climactic sequence in *The Wizard of Oz* where Dorothy and company reach Oz only to discover the almighty wizard is just a little old man behind a curtain. “I felt like I got to see behind the curtain and through the illusion,” he says. “After that, I developed a real healthy disrespect for all illegitimate authority forever.”

Art rock

Bruce Morrill, now an assistant professor of visual communication design at Kent State, was among the first to experience what would become Devo. Morrill was an art student and had spent time in several local bands with Mothersbaugh while attending Kent State.

“The first time I got to meet Mark, I was trying out to replace his brother in a band,” Morrill says. “I could tell he could play. He was a talented guitar player, and he was very inventive. I wouldn’t call any of it flashy, but it was imaginative.”

Because of his past experience with Mothersbaugh, Morrill was invited over to jam one day with Casale. Morrill describes the sound as a little more normal than the futuristic brand of rock that was to come later. “It wasn’t anything like Devo,” Morrill says. Back then, Mothersbaugh and Casale were using mostly guitars, bass and Mothersbaugh’s Hammond B3 organ.

Mothersbaugh, Casale and Morrill all used the Davey Tree art studio on Water Street. One time Morrill Xeroxed Mothersbaugh’s face for one of his art pieces. Morrill remembers both Mothersbaugh and Casale sticking out from the crowd artistically. He says Mothersbaugh was highly regarded by the faculty for his talent and free-spirited approach, and Casale was conceptual, interested in confrontational art.

“The work (Mothersbaugh) was doing in high school was just amazing. The way he was raised, he wasn’t afraid to try anything,” Morrill says. “Jerry’s work stood out as pretty radical. He wasn’t afraid to stand out.”

From working at the studio, Casale and Mothersbaugh had seen each other’s works and began asking around about each other. Eventually the two met one night and hung out at one of the bars on Water Street.

“We had really similar aesthetics and ideas about art. Then we found out that we both played music, and we started applying our art concepts to music as well,” Casale says. “He had seen my stuff, and I had seen his. I didn’t know who he was, and he didn’t know who I was, but we kept wanting to meet each other.

“Like every good smart-ass, Dada kind of person, we spun...
because we kept doing things that were pissing everybody off.”

Similarly, Mothersbaugh remembers hearing some noise about Casale. “I had heard these stories about this wiseass in the English department that was writing acid porn,” Mothersbaugh says.

Together, the two had a knack for pushing people’s buttons with their art. “We were, you know, kind of like punk scientists or smart-asses that were like forerunners of graffiti or something,” Casale says.

Casale had a reputation in the art scene. He and a friend would attend art openings around campus and dress up for the occasion: Casale would come clad in a butcher’s jacket with a mask resembling Leatherface, holding an enema bag full of milk. His friend came dressed like an old Mexican wrestler.

“I would put him on a leash, and we would go to every art opening with all this bad art,” Casale says. “All these still-lifes, birds on a tree, crochet — horrible, uncreative stuff. I would point at each painting, and then he would hold his nose and pretend to pick his ass. He would suggest that the painting stunk, and then I would feed him milk as a reward.

“We would never last more than five minutes before campus security came and kicked us out. We were pretty reviled. People were just afraid we would show up at their event and ruin it.”

Mischievous behavior

Perhaps Devo’s biggest stunt at Kent State was the music video for “Jocko Homo.” Filmed in the Student Center Governance Chambers, the video features Mothersbaugh posturing himself as a mad scientist while the rest of Devo plays space aliens.

The aliens respond to Mothersbaugh’s call, “Are we not men?” with, “We are Devo.” By the song’s industrial-sounding bridge, the members of Devo are wiggling around in latex bags on the table in the Governance Chambers while a sea of extras cheers on the antics.

The video was finished in 1975, well before MTV began broadcasting. The inspiration for the video came from seeing laser discs in a science magazine and then taking the initiative to become forerunners of the music video era.

“Arguably, you could say that it was the first MTV-generation film,” Mothersbaugh says. “We made that film specifically for something that didn’t exist yet, which was music television and a new media of sound and vision.”

Casale and Mothersbaugh helped pay for the video by opening a graphic design shop in Quaker Square in Akron. The duo kept the shop open long enough to earn $3,500. Then it was just a matter of convincing Kent State to let them use the room.

“Like every good smart-ass, Dada kind of person, we spun some really high-minded, academic reason we needed to do a film in there,” Casale says. “We presented it as a serious academic film. We knew they’d be freaked if they knew the real content, but we secured the right to the Governance Chambers for about four hours.”

The video was later entered into the Ann Arbor film festival and took first place for best short film.

Moving backward, looking forward

If you ask Casale whether de-evolution is still happening today, you will get a very direct answer.

“I never thought there could be a worse incident or a worse time at that point in my life. I saw visions of a fascist America,” Casale says of the early ’70s. “I’ve lived long enough to say I was wrong. I think the country we live in today is far worse than the one I lived in then. I would give anything to go back and be in that time again.”

When the members of Devo aren’t working at their day jobs, they take their message of de-evolution to the road. The band hopes to tour with the B-52’s this summer, although Mothersbaugh and his wife’s plans to adopt a child from China may cut into tour time. Plans are being made for Mothersbaugh to bring his art exhibition to the Akron Art Museum in 2007.

Casale is returning to his blues roots with a record he hopes to put out with Warner Brothers this year. Jihad Jerry and the Evil Doers, as the project is titled, may even make an appearance in the clubs if demand is high enough. But, “Mine’s not a holy war,” Casale says of his project’s title. “It’s a war on stupidity, as futile and vanquished as the war on drugs.”

Several of the band’s costumes were on display several years ago at the Fashion Museum, but signs of Devo around Kent State are few and far between. Perhaps this is not entirely surprising, since the group’s legacy is one of artistic agitation and anarchy.

“Nobody had a name for (what we were doing),” Casale says. “They weren’t labeling it — except troublemaker.”

Matt Peters is a senior newspaper journalism major. He last wrote about the Cartoon Network in the fall 2004 edition of The Burr.
This congregation’s tactics have some people crying cult

story by BETH RANKIN
photos by PAT JARRETT

The church that hates churches

Multiple wives.
Communal living.
Ritualistic animal sacrifices at every Sunday service.
Over the years, members of the Church at Kent have been accused of every cult-like religious practice under the sun.
“People love to believe a lie,” says Sandra Weimer, who has been following the church’s teachings for two years. “They want to think the worst about us.”
Every Wednesday night, about two dozen people gather at church elder Jason Robinson’s home for worship and Bible study.
No orgies.
No communes.
No fatted calf.
So what is it about this group that makes it such an easy target for gossip and speculation?

At right, church member
Matt Cart street preaches outside Jacobs Field in Cleveland last July.
Unconventional evangelism

What if you knew Sept. 11 was going to happen, and you had one year to warn people? Robinson, one of the founding members of the church, uses this analogy to explain the church’s method of evangelism, called “street preaching,” which many students witness at some point during their tenure at Kent State.

“We know the truth of the day of judgment because of what the Bible teaches, and we know it and it’s going to happen,” he says. “People are so busy in the rat race just living their life that they need to be radically woken up.”

Members of the church regularly street preach on campus by handing out “tracts,” small brochures with religious messages on topics ranging from drunkenness to abortion. One such tract, titled “Who killed Jesus?” opens up to large red type proclaiming, “Your sins did.” Beneath the words is an image of a nail going into a hand, taken from Mel Gibson’s The Passion of the Christ, with the words “This is your hand killing Jesus.”

Church elders and other street preachers hand these tracts out on campus, outside downtown bars, on major party occasions like Halloween, at Indians games, at area festivals, outside movie theaters... “We go everywhere all the time,” Robinson says.

The church also has large banners emblazoned with scriptures and large, graphic images from The Passion that they use. “We get a lot of people that appreciate it, but we do get a lot of backlash,” Robinson says. “If you go to an event and there’s a bunch of people there that are not living their lives obeying Jesus, they’re not going to be happy that you’re there.”

Last Halloween, while some of the street preachers were evangelizing outside bars downtown, Robinson says they were attacked by offended partygoers. One person cut his megaphone wire, and someone else pulled a knife on him. “That was a pretty rough night,” he remembers.

Although some people become violent when they come in contact with church members, Robinson says, Church at Kent street evangelists never resort to violence themselves. “We believe in what’s called non-resistance, so we don’t believe in owning guns and defending ourselves or fighting back,” he says. “Jesus said turn the other cheek, and that’s what we do.”

But why risk physical harm just to preach to drunken college students on their way home from The Loft? Robinson says these wayward souls need the church’s help to keep from going to hell. “We want to go out and go to the streets. That’s what Jesus did,” he says.

Inside the church

Some people call it “The Barn.” Some call it “The Compound.” Whatever its moniker, Robinson’s home isn’t the creepy, Waco-esque compound many outsiders imagine.

The large farm house, sitting just feet from a main road, glows warm and welcoming on Wednesday evenings when church members gather to worship. A large privacy fence encloses the backyard, giving visitors parking space and a feeling of seclusion.

Inside the large house, men in boots and
flannel shirts talk among themselves, while women in ankle-length dresses knit and chase after the many children.

Robinson, a father of two who sells cars on eBay to make his living, is sitting at his computer watching a video of a street preacher arrested in Philadelphia for evangelizing at a gay rights rally. "The chief of police was a homosexual," Robinson says matter-of-factly.

Robinson, who grew up in Tallmadge and attended Kent State, started the church in August 2001 with Zac Poonen, an evangelist from Bangalore, India, who is a "spiritual adviser" for more than 40 churches worldwide. The Church at Kent now has more than 60 members.

As attendees of the weekly study group gather in the living room and sing hymns without musical accompaniment, the small, informal service seems reminiscent of most non-denominational Christian services. However, a closer look at the Church at Kent reveals that it is not like most other churches.

Unlike many modern churches, there is no "age-segregated worship." No Sunday school for kids, youth Bible study or adult worship time. Services and group studies are attended by the entire family, and sometimes 3- and 4-year-old children sit for up to four hours, listening quietly and stirring only for potty breaks.

The church is adamantly against being associated with any denomination, religious sect or any other group, including the government.

"We are independent from the bondage of any religious system," the church's doctrinal statement reads. It also states that the church is not associated with the state. The church has not registered for the tax-exempt status most other churches have.

The women of the church dress modestly, so modestly that their garb is reminiscent of that worn by women in the Amish community. That is not surprising because many of the families in the church are excommunicated from Amish churches around the country.

Phillip Yutzy moved to Kent from Middlefield, Ohio, a few months ago. Yutzy, his wife, Martha, and their four children were excommunicated from the Amish church there after they left the community to become members of the Church at Kent, where Yutzy's brother was already a member.

"(The Church at Kent) was really the only place we knew to go after we left the Amish church," he says.

Yutzy, who was a deacon at his former church in Middlefield, left the Amish church shortly before members were to take communion, which is given every six months in the Amish community. "In the Amish church, to take communion you have to believe everything the Amish church stands for, and if you don't believe everything they stand for, you can't take communion," he says. "There was no

Sandra Weimer says she covers her head because her husband, Gary, likes it. She says the head coverings are not that important physically but are more about being obedient to one's husband.

The women of the church

"I try to dress modest," says Katie Randles, who sits in Jason Robinson's kitchen with her daughter, Gabriella. "I think it's really important not to cause our brothers to stumble, and we can be held responsible for that."

Some of the women's head coverings are no more elaborate than a simple bandeau or piece of cloth tied in a knot at the nape of the neck.

Sandra Weimer, a mother of five from rural New York state, says her head covering has a lot to do with obedience and showing respect for her husband's authority.

"People see women in long dresses and head coverings and say, 'Oh, they must be slaves' or, 'They must be out of their minds,'" she says.

While some people make assumptions about her family life or her mental condition, many are just curious about why she wears her head covering, and she isn't bothered by people asking questions, Weimer says.

"Most people just want to know why (I wear a head covering), and I'm more than happy to tell them," she says.

None of the women in attendance is wearing pants, and some women in the church don't even own a pair.

"For the sake of some people being offended, I don't wear pants. And it's very hard to find a pair of pants that are modest," says Heather Rolli, the wife of one of the elders of the church. "There's nothing wrong with wearing pants. If you can wear a pair of pants and be modest, that's fine."

But the Church at Kent's ultra-conservative views of women's rights and responsibilities goes beyond women's apparel.

"Women, God created you to have children and be a wife and mother," says church elder James Cunningham. "There's your career."

Cunningham says he knows this isn't a popular message to preach in the 21st century, but this is one of the ideals of the Church at Kent that sets it apart.

While many women outside the church see these views as oppressive and outdated, women within the church accept these beliefs, which they say are outlined in the Bible.

"The women play a very vital role," Rolli says. "Our first place is to be a 'help-me' for our husbands for whatever they need to do. Then our second role is to make sure our children are taken care of."

Many women of the church say being a "help-me" isn't repressive. On the contrary, it gives them a sense of security.

Weimer says obeying her husband is like being beneath an umbrella.

"There's a protection there," she says. "If I rebel against my husband and step outside of the umbrella, that's a dangerous place to be."
way I could go through it again.”

Yutzy says his father sent him a letter after he left saying that until he “repented of his evil ways,” he wasn’t welcome to come home.

“I left the Amish community, but I’ve got a new family now,” Yutzy says.

Campus clash

“The Christian groups as a whole on campus can’t stand us,” Robinson says. “They’ve really spread some false rumors about us.”

When The Dive, a Christian campus organization, held a presentation last semester titled “The Power of Porn,” things between the church and the campus group became heated.

Some members of the church saw flyers advertising the presentation and became angry about the sexual nature of the posters, so Robinson and a few members decided to attend the presentation to hand out tracts.

According to Rick McKee, the director of The Dive, Robinson and a few other members of the church attended the presentation and were asked to leave after they began handing out materials to students. McKee says he asked them to stop, and when they didn’t, he called the police.

At this point, Robinson, who says the walls were covered in pictures of completely nude people, says one of his associates pulled a flyer off the wall and began shouting sarcastically, “Come to Jesus! Come to Jesus!” All of the members of the Church at Kent in attendance were soon escorted out, except for Robinson, who stayed to watch the presentation.

“They sat all around me waiting for me to do something, and I watched the presentation,” he says. “The name of Jesus was not mentioned one time. The cross was not mentioned, the word ‘sin,’ the word ‘hell,’ the word ‘salvation.’ It was total humanism from A to Z.”

McKee later e-mailed Robinson and told him that unless it is a student coming to learn and not pass out materials, no Church at Kent member is permitted at The Dive’s functions. McKee says there are groups on campus he disagrees with, “but it is certainly not open for me to walk into their meeting and just start yelling and handing out literature.”

In the same e-mail, McKee told Robinson that he has no interest in interacting with the church, and he asked the church not to contact him or Dive staff members in the future. “They don’t impress me as very stable people,” McKee says.

McKee says one good thing came of the church’s confrontation with The Dive at the Power of Porn event — it helped students differentiate between the Church at Kent’s teachings and those of The Dive.
“My hope would be that students would see that they don’t really represent Christ,” he says. “And sadly, I think that by using the name of Jesus Christ, these guys make my job a lot harder.”

Robinson says even though campus ministries dislike the church, its message will remain the same. “We are 110 percent opposed to Campus Crusades, The Dive, the Vineyard, all that,” he says. “It’s American, Western-culture Christianity where they try to be cool. It’s a joke, and I think kids see through it. They might hate us, but they know that we’re radical and we’re whole-hearted.”

Sophomore nursing major Christopher Taylor is involved in two groups some would say are contradictory in nature. Taylor sings in the gospel choir and is an active member of New Hope Church in Pickerington, Ohio. And as secretary of PRIDE!Kent, Taylor is an outspoken member of the Kent State sexual minority community.

Taylor says he had been handed tracts by Church at Kent street preachers many times in the past, but was never bothered by the group until he was confronted by a member in the Student Center last semester.

As Taylor and some friends were hanging out in the Rathskeller, a Church at Kent evangelist threw a tract about the dangers of homosexuality at Taylor and his roommate. Taylor asked the man if they could discuss the pamphlet, and they went to a booth where they discussed theology for more than an hour.

Taylor says the man told him repeatedly that he was going to hell because he is gay. “He said he didn’t see Jesus in me, although I am an active Christian Protestant, very active in my church in Columbus,” Taylor says. “I am a personal believer in Jesus Christ. I’ve accepted him into my heart.” The man, however, refused to accept Taylor’s faith.

“I love my religion. It gives me so much hope,” Taylor says, “but he would not accept those things because I’m gay. It’s not sending me to hell. It’s just a part of who I am.”

The man told Taylor he was welcome to attend church meetings — as long as he didn’t tell anyone about his sexual preference.

“It’s a big joke,” Taylor says. “I mean, who do they think they are? They’re ridiculous.”

Clique or cult?

While the term “cult” is sometimes hard to define, many outsiders don’t hesitate to place that label on the Church at Kent.

McKee was once contacted by a concerned parent whose child had become involved with the church and was beginning to cut ties with family. He says the group displays some very “cult-like tactics,” including an “authoritarian environment and isolation from other authority figures.”

Members of the church say they think people throw around labels like “cult” in an unnecessary and hurtful way.

“I think it’s because they don’t really know people,” says Ruby Mast, a woman in the church. “If they came here and felt the love, they would understand.”

Weimer, a mother of five and an active member of the church, says she also feels it has a lot to do with a lack of understanding. “It all depends on your vision of a cult I guess,” she says. “I think they don’t understand us.”

William Kalkhoff, an assistant professor of sociology, says the meaning of the word “cult” is complicated. “There are many different definitions of cult, depending on who you talk to,” he says.

Kalkhoff says cults are especially hazardous for college students because they can be susceptible to the close group atmosphere and community associated with cults. “College can be a lonely place, especially for new students, and social isolation can make students vulnerable,” Kalkhoff says.

While the Church at Kent may display some cult-like characteristics, Kalkhoff says, almost every group displays them — including society as a whole.

“Aren’t members of society sometimes called upon and commanded under threat of severe social disapproval and even criminal punishment to exchange their lives for the reigning high ideals?” Kalkhoff asks. “From this perspective, perhaps it is just the less popular groups with socially divergent views that have the dishonor of being referred to by those in the mainstream with an epithet like ‘cult.’

“Then again, I won’t condemn you or try to kill you if you disagree with me.”
License to STEAL

story by BECKY TURMAN
photos by GAVIN JACKSON

Tim Koskovics and Skip Blowers are just waiting to steal your car. Whether you know it or not, you have given them permission.

Many people don’t read the fine print on their loan contracts when they are buying a new car. If they were to look a little closer, they would see that the standard contract says the bank can repossession the property wherever they find it, without giving the person advance notice, making any demand or having any court hearing.

This is when repossession agents like Koskovics and Blowers get involved. It’s simple: When you stop making payments on your car, repo men make money by repossessing it.

While repo men may be perceived as evil thugs who lurk in the night, preying on innocent car owners, there is more going on behind the scenes in the repossession field than people think.
Repossession profession

Blowers and Koskovics both own repossession agencies in Ohio and belong to Time Finance Adjusters, an association of repossession agents.

Blowers started out as a part-time repossession agent in 1978, and he now owns Source One Adjusters and Skipco Auto Auction in Canal Fulton.

"Semi-trucks, cars, boats, planes — if the bank has a loan on it, we take it," Blowers says, wearing a collared golf shirt with the Ohio-shaped Skipco logo on it. While one might imagine a repo man to be an intimidating hulk, Blowers doesn't necessarily fit that description. He has an average build with graying hair and a warm smile. Also, one doesn't picture the typical repo man cutting loose on the golf course, but Blowers is an avid golfer and has golf decorations throughout his office.

When Koskovics worked for Bank One 20 years ago, he saw a need for a repossession agency in the Ohio area. Koskovics secured start-up loans, and his business, USA Meridian International Corp., took off in Youngstown.

Koskovics looks the part of a repo man, with broad shoulders and a sturdy build. It's not surprising that he has taken street fighting classes for three years, and he is studying for the high blue belt in karate. Although Koskovics keeps a stern face while working in the office, his glasses soften his appearance.

In the bathroom at USA Meridian International Corp., a toothbrush and toothpaste sit in a cup by the sink. Koskovics says he keeps them there because he never knows when he'll need them; he works anywhere from 80 to 100 hours a week. He sometimes catches a quick nap on his burgundy leather sofa when the hours get to be too long. But Koskovics doesn't mind the hours because his pay-off is a "comfortable six digit income," he says with tired eyes peering through his glasses.

Koskovics says the repossession agent job is stressful because banks can be overly demanding. Before banks begin to contact repossession agencies, they usually give owners about three months to make up the overdue payments. The banks try to work with people, but some of the people respond to the bank by "swearing at them or telling them they are going to burn the car," Blowers says. "Everything goes stupid."

On the opposite page, Skip Blowers takes a phone call while walking through one of several garages on his main office campus. The main office contains several facilities for repair, office space and an auction block.

Below, the keys of repossessed cars and RVs fill a peg board in a workshop on the Skipco lot.
Protect your wheels

A repossession is easy to avoid.

The first step in making sure it doesn’t happen to you is to make sure you can afford the vehicle. If you find yourself having difficulty making your payments, contact the bank immediately. The lender will work with you to make alternate payment arrangements, such as allowing time to catch up or refinancing the terms.

“If you are working with the bank and keep the arrangements you make, they’ll work with you as long as they can,” says Matt Edmonds, a sales representative at Waikem Auto Group.

A repossession is the last thing a bank wants to do, he says. “There’s an awful lot of cost in doing that.”

Edmonds, who worked as a loan officer at First National Bank in Massillon for about 12 years before becoming a repossession agent at Skipco for about seven years, explains the process a bank must go through in order to repossess.

When an account becomes delinquent, if the owner has not contacted the bank, the bank will begin to get in touch with the owner via phone calls and letters.

Often, the bank will try to refinance the original loan with a lower monthly payment and a loan extension. “The banks are not the bad guys here,” Edmonds says. “They really try to work with the customers.”

If attempts to resolve the delinquency fail within two to three months, the bank will then resort to repossession.

When a bank decides to repossess, it has to hire a repossession agency, which costs at least $150. Then the bank must sell the vehicle at a public auction, which also entails costs. After the sale of the vehicle, the bank calculates the deficiency — the balance still owed on the vehicle after the auction sale price.

At this point, the bank contacts the original owner about the amount still owed, even though the chance of getting the rest of the money after a repossession is slim.

This is the biggest reason the banks will try to work with the original owner as much as possible before repossession, Edmonds says. If the original owner refuses to pay the deficiency after public sale of the vehicle, the bank can go after the original owner’s assets and wages. But if doing so would cost more than what is owed, the bank may decide not to force collection.

— Angela Hoover

A typical stakeout

Koskovics and his men use the mapping software Microsoft Streets and Trips 2005 on Dell laptops to find their repossession locations.

“God be with us here,” Koskovics says as he begins a stakeout trip at 6:30 p.m. on a Monday. “I always let my little honey pie know where I am,” he says as he calls his wife on his cell phone.

Koskovics drives over several back-country roads to get to his first destination. He passes a road he was supposed to turn on. As he puts the tow truck in reverse, it beeps and red lights on the roof start spinning.

As Koskovics turns into the driveway, a caged dog starts barking frantically. Koskovics doesn’t see the car in question, but the homeowner comes out to see what’s happening. It turns out that the car had been repossessed already by another company.

Koskovics has a harder time finding the second destination because the area isn’t lit well. He thinks the address might be a trailer, so he pulls into the trailer park. He glances at the address tags on the mailboxes and realizes he is wrong. A woman standing outside of a trailer stares at the tow truck with curiosity, and she knocks on the passenger-side window. She asks Koskovics, in a cheeky tone, if he needs any help and helps him get back on the street toward his destination.
When he finally finds the house, Koskovics pulls into a side driveway to see if he can spot a truck in the person's back yard. He doesn't see anything, but it could be parked in the closed garage. While Koskovics assesses the area, the people living in the house peek out the back door.

Koskovics decides to approach so they won't be suspicious. Because the truck's owner is a contractor, Koskovics tells the man's son he is looking to hire a contractor for a job. The son gives Koskovics his dad's business card, and Koskovics leaves without revealing his motives.

**The shame game**

After Koskovics searches for the truck at the contractor's house, he does one last stakeout, but this one is a guaranteed steal. He picks up a black Cavalier that has been dropped off at a car dealership with the keys locked in the car. He says he suspects the owner did this out of embarrassment.

People can be very humiliated by the fact that their car needs to be repossessed and go to great lengths to prevent others from finding out. Koskovics says he works with people to avoid the embarrassment factor. On one occasion, he worked out an arrangement with a man from Norwalk to park his car in the parking lot of Midway Mall in Elyria, which is about 30 miles away, and Koskovics picked it up there.

It's not always simple for agents to repossess cars. Some people resort to desperate measures to prevent their vehicles from being repossessed.

Koskovics remembers the most life-threatening situation he ever found himself in when he repossessed a car on the east side of Youngstown in 1987.

The man whose car was being repossessed thought his car was being stolen and became irate. As Koskovics sat in the tow truck, the man fired a shot through his back window. The bullet would have pierced Koskovics in the collarbone, but it hit off of the small metal zipper on his jacket instead, leaving him unharmed. Koskovics recounts this with a stone-cold expression.

"For every one time it happens, it may not happen again for 100 more times," Koskovics says about the dangerous situations. Koskovics and his men don't get nervous or paranoid that something could go wrong during repossessions. They try to prevent and control the situations, he says.

Blowers says a few of his men at Skipco have been shot during stakeouts. One of his employees was killed in December 1984. Blowers says the 21-year-old employee, who normally didn't go on stakeouts without Blowers,
The motto, "We do it all," written on a map of Ohio, summarizes Skip Blowers' business. He has repossessed automobiles, planes and even seven pontoon boats.

decided to go alone on the night he was killed. Because of what happened to his employee, Blowers has never let his 21-year-old son, Keith, go on stakeouts with him.

The people who retaliate when their cars are being repossessed are usually mad about something personal going on in their lives, and the repossession can sometimes be the extra thing that pushes them over the edge, Blowers says.

While using a gun is the most extreme way to ward off the repo man, there are other creative methods people have used to avoid agents. Koskovics says some of his repossession agents have had trunks closed on their heads, with the owners then driving off. Other owners drive their cars right off the tow truck hooks.

Koskovics says some people just don't get it at all. "I was only a year behind, why did you repossess it?" a woman once asked Koskovics.

He says many repossession agencies have the motto, "We'll take it no matter what," but that can put them in sticky situations. "The right way to do business is to show respect to people," Koskovics says.

Even though people can get violent, Blowers says his repossession agents don't receive any kind of self-defense training. "We teach them only how fast their feet will move backwards," Blowers says. "If things are gonna go stupid, get out while the gettin' is good."

After hooking up a Chevy Cavalier to the back of his truck, Tim Koskovics drives away.

Two if by sea

Blowers says there have been a lot of exciting repossessions in his line of work. He recalls an instance when a bar was renting out pontoon boats to customers. But the club didn’t pay for the boats, so it became Blowers’ job to repossess all seven of them. Blowers and his crew of men took the boats by water instead of land, using trailers to sneakily haul them away. The bar had a guard working that was supposed to be on the look-out, but he didn't see what was coming, Blowers says.

Another man had a Corvette that was to be repossessed. The man refused to pay off his bills or to turn it over and instead put the car up for sale in Massillon. The car was a two-seater, so Blowers acted as a buyer and pretended that he wanted to test drive the car with his wife. "We test drove it right out of there," Blowers says with a chuckle. "The law says if (repo men) make a car disappear, you aren't at fault. That's how it is written. It's just a matter of smoke and glass. You have to be discreet."

"Our job is like anyone else's, fairly routine," Blowers says. "Can it get old? Yeah. You get tired of getting yelled and sworn at."

Although Blowers and Koskovics aren't thugs on car-stealing power trips, you probably don’t want to cross paths with them. Sending your car payments in on time is all it takes to keep the repo man away from your wheels.

Becky Turman is a senior magazine major.
This is her first time writing for The Burr.
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"It can be really draining when I’m always in the public eye. But the good days outweigh the bad. All in all, I really enjoy working with the senate and the students. It’s been a blast."
Dressed in a charcoal gray suit and crisp white dress shirt, Gary Broadbent, the outgoing executive director of Undergraduate Student Senate, is the epitome of a stereotypical politician. As the senior communication studies major strides across campus, he greets almost every student he sees.

Broadbent’s days are packed with classes, meetings, interviews and public appearances. While Broadbent often downplays his schedule, it’s busier than most people realize. The Burr had a writer and photographers follow him around for 24 hours to find out just how busy he is.

photos by MELISSA GAUG AND GAVIN JACKSON
reporting by DANIELLE TOOTH

Above, Broadbent prepares for a 3 p.m. meeting. He keeps a selection of ties in the drawer of his desk.

At left, Broadbent looks through the Daily Kent Stater in his office with Adam Croweak, the Undergraduate Student Senator for student relations.
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At top, it's easy to pick Broadbent out in a class — he usually wears a suit.

Above, Broadbent practices his one true talent: beer can juggling.

At right, Broadbent brushes his teeth in the bathroom that he and housemate Lauren Gibbons share on the first floor of the "Cat's Meow," his house on Summit Street.

"I went out for my 21st birthday and got a little sick, like many people do, and as I was outside being sick, someone walked by and said, 'That's my student body president! My tuition pays his salary!'"
"Without those triumphs and those failures, without the great sense of accomplishment and horrible pit of heartbreak, without the ups and downs, what would you have? You can't have sweet without the sour. So, if I had to do it all over again, I don't think I'd change a thing because I wouldn't be the person that I am now."

Above, Broadbent directs a game in his Recreational Group Leadership class.

At left, Broadbent walks to a meeting with William Ross, USS executive director-elect.
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